

**Reforming Vocational Learning: Frameworks, Pedagogy and school-work connectivity**

The connection between education and qualification frameworks and the world of work is a widely discussed and investigated topic. The transfer of real-life challenges as they arise in work contexts into the teaching and learning arrangements of training contexts is one of the questions that have to be addressed in all systems of vocational education and training (VET). The transfer of changing challenges posed by an economic system that is more than ever characterised by processes of globalisation seems to be a challenge that affects all European countries (Green et al. 1999).

Therefore, this issue aims to collect papers from different national perspectives in order to generate a comprehensive picture for the ever-closer connected European countries. This is the reason for the first issue of *bwp@* in English – we hope that our German speaking readers will see this as a challenge rather than an obstacle. In order to make papers accessible for readers without specialised knowledge about the qualification system in question we asked contributors to provide

- a short description of the vocational training and qualification system covered
- an outline of the main state of the art issues of the discussion on VET in the relevant country and
- a discussion of the connection between VET and its output on the one hand and the challenges of the world of work on the other hand from their specific national perspective
- comments and evaluations regarding issues of skill supply and demand

in their papers. Our aim was to have two papers per country, possibly covering different aspects of the school-work-connection and providing different views on the current debates in the country in question. It became clear that research in our topic is done in a variety of ways by researchers from different areas in different countries; the diversity regarding scope, foci and methodological approaches that can be found in the papers of this issue reflect these differences.

## **‘Practical’ notes**

The papers in this issue are grouped according to their national origin, with the paper by LINDELL & STENSTRÖM comparing work-based learning approaches in Sweden and Finland. Apart from this national grouping, with countries ordered alphabetically, the papers appear in no particular order.

This issue will evolve in several stages. The first online version on this site covers one paper each on the following countries: Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Sweden, the United Kingdom and a draft paper from Switzerland. As indicated, one additional paper covers Sweden and Finland.

Moreover, we have planned four updates to this issue in January, February, March and April 2005. For an overview of forthcoming papers please refer to [www.bwpat.de](http://www.bwpat.de) “Forthcoming Updates”. We will keep the readers of [bwp@](mailto:eds7@bwpat.de) updated by announcing the authors, their titles and abstracts as soon as possible.

There will be also space on this site for comments and reactions to the papers by the readers. For sending comments please contact the authors directly or write a mail to the editors ([eds7@bwpat.de](mailto:eds7@bwpat.de)). With the last update there will be also an amendment to this editorial, outlining and summarising the ground covered by the papers and identifying overarching issues. It will also be interesting to comment on the differences between papers on the same national context. Further, areas and questions for a European research agenda on the various topics addressed in this issue will be posed.

We would like to express our gratitude to all contributors to this issue for their willingness to engage in a somewhat unusual publication process. We would also like to invite interested readers to contribute to the updates of this issue that will follow. There is ample space and opportunity to provide an alternative view on ‘your’ country, either by providing a paper of 3,500 to 5,500 words or a comment on the published papers (please send an email to [eds7@bwpat.de](mailto:eds7@bwpat.de)). In particular, we are interested in covering countries we have not in our list yet.

As usual, [www.bpwat.de](http://www.bpwat.de) wants to be an online-space for exchange of views, debate and interactive discussion in the area of vocational and business education. We invite a wider audience to participate and use our online journal as a tool and means for exchange, stimulating discussion using the innovative format provided by digital technology!

Hubert Ertl, Franz Gramlinger & Geoff Hayward