

# Changing patterns of working, learning and career development in Europe

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## **Changing patterns of working, learning and career development in Europe**

**Seminar organised by European Commission  
DG Education and Culture  
Brussels, 12<sup>th</sup> November 2010**

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**Reporting findings from a major comparative ten country study (for DG Education and Culture): major themes**

- **Relationship between career development and learning while working**
- **Enhancing skill development at work** (additional analysis from UK TLRP Learning at work research programme)

**Implications for:**

- **progression from low-skilled work;**
- **mid-career change;**
- **making sense of own career development;**
- **better driver than employability to facilitate re-engagement with substantive learning and development?**

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## Project background:

- **literature review & survey of 1148 people**
- **mainly in full-time permanent employment in their mid-career (aged 30 to 55)**
- **mainly skilled worker or graduate qualifications in engineering, ICT or health.**
- **Ten countries surveyed: France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Turkey and the United Kingdom.**

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- **Knowledge society; labour market and technological change; globalisation; diversity within countries: upskilling vital**
- **National / sectoral strategies: but how do people develop their skills and how do their careers evolve over time?**
- **Our focus: learning and development, key transitions (upskilling, reskilling and reframing), life-course**

## **Three almost universal findings:**

- **Major reskilling facilitated by thinking more in terms of skill sets rather than organisational attachment and occupational identities**
- **Life-course: periods of relative stability and periods of substantive learning and development;**
- **Strategic Biographies: sense-making: welcome opportunity to tell their stories (coherent career narratives)**

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## Complementary role of different forms of learning in skill development at work:

### Acquisition of knowledge and skills to perform current or last job? %

○ your studies or initial training	71.5
○ additional training in your current work	51.6
○ self-directed learning, inside or outside the workplace	55.7
○ learning through work by carrying out challenging tasks	60.9
○ learning through life experience	47.6
○ learning from others at work	52.5
○ learning from networks, working with clients	32.1
○ other	5.1

Total number of respondents: 1148

**Knowledge, skills and understanding to underpin job performance can be developed in different, but complementary, ways**

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## Matching of skills and duties in current or last job: %

- I need further training to cope well with my duties 17.0
- My duties correspond well with my present skills 40.9
- I have the skills to cope with more demanding duties 37.0
- I am new to the job so I need some further training 5.1
- Total number of respondents: 1115

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**This seminar will report findings from a major comparative study of changing patterns of work-related learning and career development in Europe. The survey involved over 1,000 respondents from ten countries. The respondents were mainly in full-time permanent employment in their mid-career (aged 30 to 55), having achieved skilled worker or graduate qualifications in engineering, ICT or health. The ten countries surveyed were France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Turkey and the United Kingdom.**

- **The seminar will look at the relationship between career development and learning while working and the issue of enhancing skill development at work. The implications of the following findings will be discussed:**
- **Low-skilled work is not necessarily a problem but staying in low-skilled work is: encouragement and support so that people seek more challenging jobs as this is the most effective form of skill development for low-skilled;**
- **Promote a mid-career change if we want more older people to remain in the labour market;**
- **Support development of coherent career narratives (where I have been, what I am doing now and where I am going);**
- **Personal development and key transition points rather than employability as drivers in order to facilitate re-engagement with substantive learning and development for older workers.**

# How learning helps people in their career

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## **Successful transitions:**

- individuals reframe & refocus - require new perspectives
- support required to move on: problem-solving, decision-making & coping skills
- value of learning and development, including CVT

## **Support for successful transitions:**

- access to specialist labour market information
- new insights, focus, confirmation & confusion reduction
- support to motivate and increase self-confidence
- opportunities for reflection



# How learning helps people in their career

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## Key events and processes in life-course:

- Intensive *episodes of learning* across the life-course
- Many people *actively shape* their personal work biographies (but often value help)
- Reskilling: individual belief in **transferable skill sets**

# How learning helps people in their career

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## **Evolving careers and learning:**

- coherent career narratives.
- lack of engagement with substantive learning and development linked to downward career drift.
- key to career success of older workers in a new context is a positive disposition towards learning.
- value of a proactive approach to career development links to engagement with CVT and LLL.
- learning-rich work environments.
- Importance of encouragement, time and space to engage in self-directed learning and critical reflection.

# How learning helps people in their career

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## **Learning and development:**

- Learning to learn and link continuing learning strategically to career development is important.
- Development needs to deliver breadth and depth of learning across the levels: competence alone will be insufficient
- Premium on supporting the learning of others and creativity; changes in ways of thinking and practising
- Transferable skill sets (i.e. ability to switch between different contexts)

# How learning helps people in their career

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## **TLRP Learning at work: factors facilitating skill development**

- engagement with challenging work
- interactions at work
- knowledge at work: ways of thinking and practising; conceptual understanding; valued forms of knowledge
- self-directed learning at work
- identities at work: transferable skill sets – applied in different contexts
- supporting the learning of others: developmental model of expertise.

# How learning helps people in their career

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## European survey:

- **Learning while working** established form of learning in changing work environments.
- Patterns of career development vary according to: national, organisational & sectoral contents & nature of learning environment at work (expansive v. restrictive)
- **Individual access** to learning and development opportunities is constrained by **individual, organisational and contextual factors: opportunity structures**

# How learning helps people in their career

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## Learning from others:

- Learning from others and through networks facilitate a proactive approach to career development
- Aerospace: technical competence, but also ability to support learning of others and change ways of working
- Timely and appropriate feedback and support crucial for learner identities & proactive approach to development.

# How learning helps people in their career

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## **TLRP: Eraut – early career learning**

At any stage we might need to enhance our skills, knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

- Task Performance
- Role Performance
- Situational Awareness and Understanding
- Teamwork
- Personal and Group Development
- Decision-Making and Problem-Solving
- Academic Knowledge and Skills
- Judgement.

# How learning helps people in their career

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## Conclusions:

- need a developmental model of expertise (not a binary view of development of competence)
- need to encourage people to develop skills, knowledge and understanding in a variety of ways
- need to encourage **mid-career change** if want more older people to remain engaged in the labour market
- people need support to develop coherent career narratives
- guidance needs to support outcomes; access; change and experience
- value of formal and informal guidance.