



Modular Education and Training in France

non academic VET

TRAINING INDIVIDUALIZATION AND MODULARISATION ARE BECOMING NECESSARY

Lifelong learning perspectives can be favoured by reinforcing the individual training paths. This principle has been confirmed by different factors :

- Legislative context

The validation of skills or experience validation (validation des acquis de l'expérience-VAE) and the new law about vocational training implying the individual right to training (droit individuel à la formation – DIF) reinforce the link between real professional situations and training contents even with the certification. That is why these two measures require a division between training paths which need to be better articulated to professional activities and to a diversified pace of experience acquiring.

Experience validation (or validation of skills) is a part of the recognition of experience. The job experience validation procedure was set out so that approved authorities, mainly the French government, could award officially-recognised diplomas and certificates to individuals who have not necessarily completed the coursework required. The “Social Modernisation Act” dated January 17, 2002 established a system of job experience validation (validation des acquis de l'expérience or VAE), which allows any person with at least three -years of job experience to obtain official recognition for skills , in the form of a professional diploma or a professional qualification certificate (CQP).

The VAE or job experience validation programme is more widely applied than the VAP or credit for professional skills system, which was set up for university training programmes in 1984 and which has been used for professional teaching diplomas awarded under the aegis of



the Ministry of Agriculture and the National Education, Youth and Sports Ministry since 1992. An accreditation jury has full authority to award certification. The French law dated January 17, 2002 also created a National Registry of Professional Certifications (RNCP). All professional diplomas, titles, and certificates must be included in the registry. The following types of qualification may also be obtained through the job experience validation programme as long as they are part of the National Registry and provided that there is no regulation prohibiting use of the programme (for health, safety, or national defence reasons, in particular) for a particular qualification.

- New modalities linked to training needs of the different types of trainees

These modalities resulting from the new legislation and from the more precise requirements of people are based on an individualization of training paths, that is to say:

- a division of training periods compatible with the more frequent changes in professional situations and in timetable adjustments
- a geographical proximity direct to the training place or a comfortable and efficient access to e-learning
- the shortening of the deadlines between the project of training and its implementation
- the possibility for the trainee to relate his path, to obtain progressively a certificate from trainings and working experiences realised at different places and periods
- the possibility for everyone to orientate towards educational modalities adapted to his profile, his abilities and previous experiences.

In France, we have observed a mature and diffused practice in Adult Education since the 70's which has to respond to the needs of :

- Trainees : to capitalise units in preparation for graduation (5 years max) and to qualify in a quick and targeted way
- Companies and Financial Backers : to optimize training investments (cost and time management)
- Training Organisations : to optimize training cost by combining various publics expressing diverse aims, either with a diploma or a specialised and quickly acquired qualification



What is a modular training ?

A modular training is a training made up of a determined number of modules.

A training module is a training unit which meets two requirements :

- it should be get on touch in an independent way
- it should have its own internal coherence

The coherence can be explained by the fact that the module is made up of identified objectives, of a specific content and it targets a skill or a group of linked skills. A module is designed from the expected result (targeted skill or group of skills) ant not from the knowledge to acquire (contents of a linear programme).

For each module :

- prior skills are defined upstream
- certificates of skill are forecasted

At the beginning of the module, a positioning is set : the skills acquired within a previous module or within a professional activity are taking into account and certified.

At the conclusion of the module, an evaluation or a global situation of synthesis allows to evaluate the control of acquired skills.

What is the content of a module ?

- targeted public
- place of the module in the training as a whole
- final objectives of the module
- targeted skills
- prior skills and their evaluation
- elements for remedial corresponding to the prior skills
- training contents
- educational and tutoring modalities
- a positioning on the final objectives of the module



- criteria of the final evaluation and modalities of the evaluation procedure
- practical modalities of self-learning and self-evaluation

Organisation of modular career path

The modular division of the training is made from the analysis of professional situations and training objectives.

Vocational modules or modules leading to a qualification are elaborated according to skills implemented during activities indicated for a work place and for a given work profile.

The modules can be designed from a “breeding ground” of modules leading to a certificate articulated together to contribute to the control of professional skills relative to this employment. Conversely, the career path leading to a certificate can be elaborated from an assembling of modules corresponding to the required skills to obtain the professional certificate and corresponding to the level of requirement set by the reference material of certification.

The elaborated modules have to be submitted to the partners of the sector and validated by them.

Modular training proposal is divided into elementary segments, into divided and independent units (independent from each other but which can be articulated together). This combination allows the trainee to achieve his goals (qualification or certificate) by following a personalised path likely to take into account his acquired professional experience (validation of skills - VAE).

Advantages of modular training

1. Efficiency

The modular approach is based on education of control and allows to detect and to offset weaknesses at the beginning but also during the learning and at the end. Control of the prior skills allows in particular to avoid setbacks.



2. Legibility

The modular organisation allows the participants to have a clear view of the training structure, of its aims and modalities.

3. Adaptability

The precision of the articulation of a module makes its integration easier in different trainings, in particular in the “common-core syllabus” of similar trainings.

The modular approach allows to individualize training, to organise the training follow-up spread over time, to process to partial validations (obtaining one or several modules before the final certificate), etc.

4. Opening

A modular teaching can be applied as in paths leading to a certificate as in paths leading to a qualification. It allows to mix publics.

5. Savings

Modular training allows to take into account trainees’ acquired experience and path savings. Indeed, the modular organisation allows the candidates to follow either the totality of the training or only certain modules.

6. Appropriateness with continuous training / Tools of lifelong learning

Modular organisation allows to realise validation of skills module by module.

Thanks to its adaptability and its opening, modular training is particularly well adapted to continuous education. It allows more particularly to decompartmentalize the pathways of training.

The evolution and diversification of training modes which has resulted from the development of information and communication technology is helping to reduce certain forms of inequality in access to training opportunities, offering widely-differing target groups individualised, and therefore more appropriate, training solutions.

E-learning systems can offer everyone, whatever their whereabouts, their position in society or their job, the opportunity to access knowledge, either via multimedia correspondence



courses, through schemes based on teaching resource centres, by distance-training systems or by any combination of these various forms of knowledge delivery.

The French Ministry of Education has for several years now been committed to developing e-learning, particularly in the field of further education, throughout the GRETA network and in universities. It has opted to concentrate on providing the necessary support services for learners (via occasional group sessions or distance support services), as being an essential factor of success.

Of course, the development of e-learning requires suitable policies as regards provision of equipment, both by the state (to computerise schools and local government services), and by businesses. It is also absolutely necessary to provide for the prior training of trainers for this new way of working, together with basic training in computer skills for everyone.

Various systems have been tested and applied more widely, both in France and as part of European partnerships inside projects conducted with funding from the European Social Fund.