



Continuing training for young adults - follow-on or second chance?



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The training routes

The available data (Tables 1 to 4) make it possible to identify six major factors in the relationship between training in its different forms and the complex training routes pursued by young people.

Blurred distinction between initial and continuing training

A priori one would assume the sequence of training that marks the transition from school to working life to be more or less as follows: A young person completes their schooling and may then supplement it with some form of specialised training. They then look for a job and when the job they find involves retraining or promotion or they move to a new job they launch into continuing training.

This preconceived sequence, which many hold to be the true one, is incorrect for a number of reasons (see Tables 2 and 4). In the first place the various elements in the training routes pursued by young people are more varied and secondly they do not follow a standard sequence.

As a result the distinction between initial and continuing training, whether in the form of courses or work experience, are steadily becoming less clearly defined. Training for young people is largely becoming a continuum in which school education and training, non-school training courses and work follow each other in no fixed sequence. Young people are taking increasing advantage of continuing training measures. This fact, which shows up clearly in the data produced by our study, is corroborated by other sources in the case of Spain and is also traceable in other European countries (AUER 1992).

The changes that have been taking place in industry in recent years - rapid technological progress, new manufacturing processes and products, greater job mobility and new forms of work organisation - mean that education and training are becoming necessary throughout a person's working life. They also influence the training routes taken by young people from the outset.

At the same time, the greater volume and variety of available training courses exert both an objective and subjective influence on the opportunities for training and the desire to acquire it of the population as a whole, but especially young people. The rise in the latter's basic education level in turn increases their demand for qualifications.

What is being referred to as a "lifelong learning" has permeated and altered the path of training young people pursue. On the other hand, if we observe how people update and enhance their knowledge and skills or seek re-training, we frequently find that the type of training is that already given at initial training level.

This article sets out to describe, on the basis of a longer-term project conducted with young people in the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona¹, how initial education and training provided under the school system can be linked to continuing training during the subsequent career of the young people concerned (aged up to 31).

While still at school some young people undergo periods of practical training similar to continuing training that will be of fundamental importance for their future.

Recent years have seen a marked increase in courses run outside the Spanish education system, which we refer to here as "non-school courses". These are an important element in training curricula and young people begin to attend them while still at school and as early as primary level, although the extent to which they do so varies according to social grouping and increases as they get older. Such courses are now playing an increasing role in young people's training, both as a result of private initiative when they are used as a supplement to training received at school and are paid for by the family or by a firm, or in the context of government measures to ease the transition from school to work. These measures have increased considerably since Spain joined

1) The study referred to was carried out by the Education and Work Research Group of the Institute of Educational Sciences of the Autonomous University of Barcelona, whose director is the author of this article. The purpose of the study was to analyse the routes followed by young adults as regards training, entering the job market and becoming socially integrated, as well as to establish the relationship between formal and informal training and then to see how they influence young people's integration into the world of work and society at large, but particularly their family. This long-term, retrospective study was carried out in 1991 with 650 young adults up to the age of 31 in the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona. The method used was interviews by the researcher concerned at the subjects' homes.



The concepts used

- ❑ Training components: The various elements of training within or outside the school system and of a formal or informal nature actually included in the training routes followed by young people. They fall under four headings:
- ❑ School training: Courses whether or not completed.
- ❑ Continuing training: We shall consider both formal non-school training courses and informal training such as work experience and life experience.
- ❑ Non-school training courses: Courses organised outside the education system which are shorter than school training courses but are clearly intended to provide training and formally organised. They are generally targeted at specific groups.
- ❑ Work experience: Experience acquired while doing a job for which one is paid, whether while still studying or afterwards.
- ❑ Significant life experience: Studies carried out show that an important part of young people's training takes the form of experience which, though difficult to classify, goes a long way towards explaining their working ability. It includes the ability to assume responsibility in a group situation etc.
- ❑ Complex training routes: Training components combined to build individual training routes.

have left school but that courses are pursued in parallel in a kind of continuum. As is logical the weighting of courses and work experiences tends to increase as students grow older, although there is a degree of overlap between school and non-school training courses and work experience at all ages.

Table 3 shows that two-thirds of the non-school training courses are further training courses or are highly specialised. This fact together with what has already been said testifies to the difficulty of distinguishing clearly between initial and continuing training. In fact, some young people have already adopted an attitude in line with "lifelong learning" while others, chiefly those with a lower education level, do not display the same dynamism.

Polarisation of training take-up...

Non-school training courses are not used as an alternative to initial training nor as a kind of second chance to make good omissions. On the contrary, as the breakdown of course attendance by educational level in Table 1 shows, training paths start to diverge according to the level of training received under the education system and it is those who have done best at school who go on to acquire the most training from other sources. A minimum of school education equivalent to the period of compulsory schooling is clearly necessary for acquiring subsequent training.

"Spontaneous" alternating of education and work experience

In the course of preparing for working life and gaining a foothold in the job market many young Spaniards combine their education with work. In a training system which, like the Spanish one, has until recently been mainly confined to a school environment we can, paradoxically, find elements of sandwich-type training with theory alternating with practice because young people have chosen to take a job while studying.

The figures given in Table 4 for the number of students in Spain as a whole, who at the time of interviewing were combining their studies with a job, and of workers who were also studying corroborate

"The number of courses run outside the Spanish education system has recently increased."

"Far from compensating for the inequalities in school education, other forms of training tend to widen the gap."

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the European Union thanks to the resulting access to the structural funds, especially the European Social Fund whose chief function is to promote initial training for young people and facilitate their entry into working life.

As things stand at present, approximately half of young Spaniards in the age group we are considering have attended courses of this type (Navarro and Mateo 1993). However, the training is not spread evenly over the population as a whole because, as the figures in Table 1 show, the ones who attend most non-school courses are those who already have a higher educational level. Far from compensating for the inequalities in school education, therefore, recourse to other forms of training serves to widen the gap. This is true both of courses paid for privately and those which are financed out of public funds which, paradoxically, are intended for young people with a low educational level or who are having difficulty finding a job.

The different elements do not follow a fixed chronological order but often run parallel to initial training

Tables 2 and 4 show that people do not wait to attend training courses or to acquire work experience until after they



rate the data obtained for the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona and permits us to assume that between one-third and a half of young Spaniards have worked while studying for a period of at least a year. This tells us at least two things, namely that a substantial proportion of the school-to-work transition was bridged by a period of school plus work, and that at least half the young people have some work experience. This implies a greater or lesser spontaneous "dualisation" of training in that work experience begins to be acquired while young people are still in formal education and not only once they have left the system.

School training tends to have a lesser weighting in the very varied training routes being followed as non-school training facilities increase, **although in qualitative terms its importance is increasing** because it paves the way for and gives some order to complex training routes both during and after school. This fact enhances the selective function of school training as regards the possibilities of life-long learning.

Complex training routes and how they come about

From what we have said it is clear that young people, at least those in the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona, do not follow a course of training that is pre-designed in the same way as school education. As a result their training tends to be far more complex and influenced by the changes in the content of qualifications and the increase in training facilities that society offers young people to enable them to obtain them.

The question of how young people have learnt to do what they know how to do currently demands an answer in global terms and an analysis of training routes that have departed from rigid institutional preconceptions.

To do this we must first consider the components of training and how they are combined in complex routes.

From what has been said it is clear that the training routes followed by young

**Table 1:
Breakdown by educational level of non-school courses attended up to the age of 31 (in %)**

	0	1	2 or 3	4 or more	Total
Primary	72.6	12.4	9.5	5.5	100
Voc. training	53.8	9.9	19.1	17.3	100
Baccalaureate + COU	38.7	19.3	24.2	17.8	100
Higher education	26.3	6.0	27.1	40.6	100

people are composed of at least three elements - formal education, non-school training courses and work experience.

A more detailed analysis (Planas 1991 and 1993) shows that to these more easily identifiable and quantifiable components there must be added others such as significant life experience and absorption of culture. However, since we are confining ourselves to the study carried out with young people in the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona we shall concentrate on those already mentioned, adding the occasional element of life experience such as the ability to fit into a group environment.

Table 5 sets out 13 models for training routes constructed on the basis of the variables mentioned². These models follow the trends identified using the previous data and show a polarisation of training routes A and B, which belong to the first two quartiles and define a poor level of training (always in relative terms) or destructuring. Routes C and D on the other hand are typified by a large number of the various components and by success.

This polarisation is underscored by the correlation between training routes and their results in terms of working career.

Training routes and working careers - a double concordant dualisation

Table 6 shows that a correlation exists between the complex training routes and the results in terms of job success using the success indicators which the study we carried out found to have the greatest

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² These routes have been constructed using the Automatic Classification by Multiple Correlation technique (Lebart et al. 1981) for age quartiles of people entering the labour market and considering their relative weighting in the sample. The A routes represent stable employment or unemployment situations begun at the age of about 16 (the minimum working age), the B routes situations that began between the ages of 16 and 18, the C Routes those begun between 19 and 22 and the D routes stable employment situations from 27 onwards.



Table 2:
Percentage breakdown by age of school education combined with non-school training

Age	School only	School and non-school	Non-school only	Total
14	85.9	4.6	0.4	90.9
15	62.7	6.0	2.3	71.0
16	54.6	7.5	4.7	66.8
17	44.1	9.2	4.3	57.6
18	33.3	9.1	7.2	49.6
19	28.7	8.3	6.6	43.6
20	23.4	7.1	5.0	35.5
21	20.0	7.0	6.5	33.5
22	16.3	5.3	10.2	31.8
23	13.3	5.3	10.4	29.0
24	11.7	3.5	11.8	27.0
25	8.1	3.2	14.4	25.7
26	6.5	3.3	12.2	22.0
27	7.2	3.0	14.1	24.3
28	7.7	1.6	16.4	25.7
29	5.4	1.9	19.3	26.6
30	5.2	1.0	18.3	24.5
31	4.4	1.2	16.5	22.1

job and career prospects. D.1 on the other hand is an extended route rich in all types of training components which goes hand in hand with a successful career in stable employment, and a high degree of satisfaction as regards the training received and clarity as to personal objectives, achievement of which results in satisfaction as regards both job content and payment.

This general tendency towards polarisation in the training routes and the results in job terms are accompanied by a number of minor exceptions represented by route A.1 (2.5% of the sample) and route D.3 (6.5% of the sample). Route A.1 is the route taken by those young people who, despite starting work early with no training and in precarious jobs, overcome their initial training deficit by attending non-school training courses and returning to school in order to obtain an educational qualification. This route increases the probability of gaining a skilled job and attaining satisfaction as regards the achievements in terms of job level and stability.

validity, namely the job situation at age 31, the working career and each person's subjective view of his success.

The information given shows on the one hand a marked polarisation in training terms in the majority training routes for the extreme quartiles. On the other hand, they show the nuances introduced by training components other than academic qualifications, permitting a more subtle, qualitative analysis of the training processes undergone by the young people and their results in job career terms.

Table 6 similarly shows there to be a marked divergence in terms of career success, both subjectively and objectively, between the routes of the first and second quartiles (A and B) and those of the third and fourth quartiles (C and D).

The greatest difference, in terms both of training and of the results achieved, is between routes A.2 (17.4% of the sample) and D.1 (14.9% of the sample). A.2 is a minimum training route which correlates with a high probability of unemployment and job instability in unskilled jobs with dissatisfaction as regards training, the

Route D.3 is the opposite case. It covers young people with a high educational level but a disappointing record in terms of training and work. It shows a considerable failure in job terms which the subject experiences as such.

It is important to note that young people with the greatest chance of becoming entrepreneurs are those who have followed success at school with a large number of training courses.

Finally, the chief conclusion to be drawn from the data is the existence of a **process of dualisation which tends to polarise training routes on the basis of initial training and which continuing training serves to strengthen**. The correlation between this dualisation in training and the results in terms of employment emerges from Table 6, which shows a **"double concordant dualisation"** between the training routes and the dualisation of the labour market (Recio 1991) through the results in terms of employment. Moreover, this dualisation will logically tend to establish itself more firmly to the extent that firms concentrate their training on their best-qualified work-



ers, use of public-sector training facilities tends to shift towards secondary and higher education levels, and access to better jobs is restricted to those young people with the longest periods of initial training.

In a context of job mobility, lifelong learning and a plentitude of educational qualifications, career success will be governed by a person's ability to gain access to continuing training whether formal or informal, which in turn, as the data in Tables 5 and 6 show, will largely depend on previous school education. In this sense the career success achieved solely on the basis of work experience and an early start to working life will tend to disappear.

The data shows clearly that the significance of continuing training is growing with the emphasis being put on lifelong learning. Moreover, it tends to be concentrated on young people who have acquired their initial training at secondary school or a higher level, and who throughout their life widen the skill and qualification gap between themselves and those who do not have sufficient initial training. If continuing training does not make it possible to compensate for deficiencies in initial training and provide access to the relevant formal qualifications, it is difficult to see it as a "second chance" to be seized as a means of complementing good initial training.

The new central role of formal education

Two other points must be added to our statistical findings.

The growing complexity of training calls for a new ability on the part of young people - namely the ability to design and manage their own training similarly to the way they build their own social and occupational identity (Dubar 1991). This ability is based on factors that are not strictly educational. There is a clear relationship between this ability, access to training, the family and the general environment in which the young person has developed (Carnoy, Castells 1995, and Planas, Garcia and Zaldivar 1995).

Table 3:
Attendance of non-school training courses (in %)

Level	Men	Women
Initial	33.7	34.1
Further training and specialisation	66.3	65.9
	100.0 (736)	100.0 (911)

From what has been said it will be clear that the school is assuming a new role that is central to the ordering of more varied training processes, developing in a more democratic manner than families are able to do the ability to manage complex routes. This is what G. Franchi (1984, 1992) called "the new central function of school in ordering the system of systems in which the new forms of training are being structured".

Training the least trained

In Spain as in other countries the difficulties encountered when entering the

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Table 4: Percentages³ of young people of various ages combining formal education with work

Age	Working	Student	Total ⁴
16	7.8	14.4	22.2
17	9.7	14.5	21.0
18	8.3	12.7	21.0
19	9.0	11.0	20.0
20	6.7	8.1	14.7
21	5.6	10.5	16.1
22	4.7	8.4	13.1
23	4.1	7.5	11.6
24	3.0	7.7	10.7
25	2.0	7.0	9.0
26	1.4	6.8	8.2
27	1.7	7.0	8.7
28	1.2	7.5	8.7
29	1.0	5.2	6.2
30	0.8	5.1	5.9
31	0.4	4.6	5.0

3) All the percentages are in terms of the reference population

4) Total percentage of young people who both work and study, whatever the proportion of the two elements. They could be described as student workers or working students.

**Table 5: Complex training routes**

Ref.	Description	%
A.1	Leave school early, return as adult and gain qualification, work during return to school and non-school training	2.5
A.2	Low level of all aspects of training	17.4
A.3	Leave school early, return as adult without gaining qualification, large number of non-school training courses	2.0
B.1	Compulsory schooling with certificate. No subsequent training	12.9
B.2	Compulsory schooling with certificate. Fail secondary school. Non-school training courses	3.0
B.3	Compulsory schooling with certificate or made good with level 1 vocational training, work experience while attending school and non-school training	6.1
C.1	Baccalaureate, short university course but no qualification, many non-school training courses and some experience of a group environment	5.8
C.2	Level 2 vocational training qualifications, non-school training and considerable experience of a group environment	4.0
C.3	Short-cycle university qualification with considerable work experience while in formal education and many non-school training courses	4.0
C.4	Compulsory schooling with certificate, some non-school training, late obtaining stable job	10.1
D.1	Great deal of all types of training: higher formal qualifications, much work and group experience, many non-school courses	14.9
D.2	Level 2 vocational training qualifications. Late starting work	16.0
D.3	Higher baccalaureate, late obtaining stable job, return to school (university) unsuccessful, little additional training	6.5

“The growing complexity of training calls for a new ability on the part of young people - the ability to design and manage their own training just as they build their own social and occupational identity.”

world of work affect all young people. However, as we have pointed out, it hits hardest those without a minimum of initial training. These young people are most at risk of seeing themselves condemned to job instability and precarious, low-grade jobs in the secondary labour market.

Although these young people have more training than their parents ever did, the changes wrought in the Spanish labour market by technological change, the

globalisation of the economy and the general increase in educational level of their contemporaries places them at more of a disadvantage. In other words, the way in which the Spanish labour market is evolving tends to exclude, or at best push into the secondary labour market, young people with less training. Whether because of their lack of qualifications or because of the differences in level compared with their contemporaries, young people with fewer educational and vocational qualifications are in general those who most run



Table 6: Relationship between complex training routes and initial employment

Situation at age 31		Training route				Subjective assessment						
Route rel. absolute value sample	Degree of activity	Occupational group**	Type of work	Entry level	Working career	Stability	Pay	Type of work	Vocational training	Study and inf. better	Study someth. else	Would look for other job or occupation
A1 (n=15) =2.5 %	full-time	GP-3	production	low middle	upward	slight success	not v. good	success	success	yes	yes	yes
A2 (n=105) =17.4 %	non-active	GP-4	production subordinate	middle/low	no change lengthy unempl.	not very good	not v. good failure	not v. good	little success	\bar{X}	yes	yes
A3 (n=12) =2.0 %	part-time	GP-3 GP-4	administration production subordinate	low middle/low middle	lengthy unempl. complex route	failure	not v. good	not v. good	failure	yes	yes	yes
B1 (n=78) =12.9 %	non-active irregular	GP-3 GP-4	production	middle/low	no changes	failure	poor	not v. good	failure	yes	yes	yes
B2 (n=18) =3.0 %	full-time	GP-3 GP-4	administration	low	no changes complex route	failure	poor	failure	failure	yes	yes	yes
B3 (n=37) =6.1 %	non-active	GP-3	administration	middle	no changes no info	failure	failure	failure	failure	yes	yes	no
C1 (n=35) =5.8 %	full-time	GP-2	manager/techn. director maintenance production	middle middle/high	upward	success	success	poor	success	\bar{X}	no	no
C2 (n=25) =4.0 %	full-time	GP-1 GP-2	manager/techn. director PR maintenance	middle middle/high	upward complex route	success	poor slight success	success failure	success	yes	no	no
C3 (n=24) =4.0 %	full-time	GP-1 GP-2	manager techn. director PR, technician R&D	middle	upward	success	success	success	success	no	no	no
C4 (n=61) =10.1 %	irregular part-time	GP-2 GP-3	manager PR	middle	upward lengthy unempl.	poor	poor	\bar{X}	\bar{X}	yes	\bar{X}	no
D1 (n=90) =14.9 %	full-time	GP-1 GP-2	manager techn. director R&D	middle middle/high high	upward	slight success	success	success	success	no	no	no
D2 (n=9) =1.5 %	non-active	GP-2	maintenance production	middle middle/high	upward	success	success	success	success	\bar{X}	n.c.*** no	n.c. no
D3 (n=39) =6.5 %	full-time	GP-2	administration technician R&D	middle/high high	slightly upward unemployed	failure	failure	failure	failure	no	n.c. no	n.c.

* See routes in Table 5

** GP-1 = company owners
GP-2 = technicians
GP-3 = skilled workers
GP-4 = unskilled workers

*** n.c. = no comment



“The new central function of school in ordering the system of systems in which the new forms of training are being structured.”

the risk of exclusion from both the world of work and from continuing training (Planas, Garcia, Zaldivar 1995).

What can be done to give young people with less training access to continuing training?

The reply to this question - that we should design continuing training able to meet the needs of such young people and create an awareness in them of the need for training - is banal. But the fact that it is banal does not mean it is easy to put into practice. Designing complex training routes is a matter of compromise between wishes and expectations and opportunities. When this compromise has to be reached at a time when more training is available but the future as regards employment is uncertain, the ability to design effective training routes is a must if they are to be comprehensible and consistent to other people.

Developing such an ability as far as continuing training is concerned means at least four things:

- a) A minimum of basic training in order to have access to standard continuing training courses
- b) The ability to use an offer of continuing training that is somewhat dispersed by accessing information and understanding the significance and content of what is available.
- c) A working environment that appreciates and rewards training, and
- d) A personal interest in acquiring training.

The analysis shows clearly that actions designed to encourage untrained young people's access to continuing training involve swimming against the tide and, to be effective, need decisive political intervention in the four areas mentioned.

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