



## **SUPPORTING ADULT LEARNERS 1**

A Comparison of Concepts and Terms and  
Their Usage in the Adult Education Systems of  
England, France and Germany

Sheila M. Stoney  
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# PREFACE

An increasing emphasis is being placed throughout Europe on lifelong learning and on encouraging more adults back into education. Once embarked upon a programme of study, adults need to have the best possible support since many lack the confidence and skills to become effective learners, and they may be constrained in this by various practical problems. If adult educators from different European countries are to share their expertise and find the best ways of supporting adult learners on different types of programme, then they need to be able to communicate effectively.

When the present authors – from England, France and Germany – first began to collaborate, they found that there were very differing traditions within the three countries in the approaches adopted towards supporting adult learners. They also discovered that they lacked a common conceptual language and a set of comparative terms with which to talk about learner support provision.

This monograph seeks to provide a readily accessible comparative text for those researchers, policymakers and practitioners working in adult education who wish to collaborate with colleagues from the other main language areas in Europe. However, the paper is not just a simple lexicon of terms. Rather, it describes and analyses key learner support functions and the roles of different actors who seek to assist adult learners, and assesses the extent to which they are represented in the three adult education systems. As such, it will also help adult educators and researchers to gain a better understanding of learner support provision in their own country, and to identify opportunities for improvement.

This work is the outcome of a collaboration that began through the auspices of the Adult Education Programme of **CIDREE** – the Consortium of Institutions for Development and Research in Education in Europe. It was completed during the first year of the Supporting Adult Learners to Achieve Success (*ATLASS*) project, which is funded by the Socrates Programme of the European Commission.

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# 1. SETTING THE SCENE

Lifelong learning and, as a central part of this, adult education, now have a high priority in all European societies, with 1996 having been the Year of Lifelong Learning. Building on this year of focused activity, the European Commission's White Paper, *Teaching and Learning: Towards The Learning Society* (EC, 1996), the Delors Report for UNESCO (1996) and the OECD report (1996) have since been published. These important documents bear witness to the major societal changes which European nations are experiencing as the millennium approaches.

They identify the **acceleration of scientific and technological innovation** and the **rapid spread of communication and information technology (CIT)** that are changing everyone's way of life and require adults to acquire and update skills which they did not have the opportunity to gain while at school. They note the **growth of new business cultures and labour force patterns**, which result in citizens having more varied and often interrupted careers. This shift brings the need for adults to return for further study and training to prepare them for new jobs, to update their skills and/or to promote personal growth during periods of unemployment, leisure and retirement. They also mention the **impact of increasing internationalisation**, which is increasing collaboration and interaction between countries and their peoples, and is requiring individuals to gain foreign language skills, understand different cultures and prepare to be citizens and workers within a shared European culture, society and economy. In its paper, presented to the 1997 UNESCO conference on adult education, the EC summed up the value of general adult education as being:

*'an essential factor for achieving personal fulfilment and development, and for attaining optimal levels of social and political participation. It is rightly seen as being a major instrument against social exclusion and marginalisation and the essential tool for decoding an increasingly complex reality. General education is considered more and more as a fundamental component towards the acquisition of the "new" competencies and skills required by the information society and the challenges posed by a globalised economy.'*

Despite the growth of cross-national cooperation within education, and the need for European education and training systems to respond in a more unified way to the new challenges, there remain very different traditions within the adult education sectors of European countries. Considerable variation exists between states in the types of provision available for adults, the settings in which

this takes place, the usage of different learning delivery modes (e.g. face-to-face, distance, open and flexible), the types of actor involved and the roles which they play.

Variation is also apparent in the ways in which adult learners are supported during their learning programmes in different settings. Yet, adult educators across Europe are not just faced with the same macro-challenges of making their offerings relevant to changing economic and societal needs, as outlined above. They also share the same practical challenges of making these offers accessible to all groups of adults and ensuring that individuals maximise their learning potential and complete their courses and programmes successfully. This is particularly true for adults from poorer socio-economic and educational backgrounds. Once they have begun a learning programme, they may, more than other students, experience a range of difficulties, underachieve or drop out before completion. In fact, dropout from adult education programmes across Europe is a significant problem.

The problem not only leads to economic inefficiencies in educational systems, but also suggests that they are not being as effective as they could be in meeting adults' needs. Moreover, this prejudices the European goal of making more adults into lifelong learners, in that those who have unhappy early experiences are less likely to seek out education and training opportunities or engage in self-learning in the future – to everyone's disadvantage.

What types of problems do adult learners face? They may feel anxious about their ability to cope with the practical difficulties (financial, time management, personal) of being a student, as well as with maintaining their other responsibilities in life. They are likely to need help with settling into the new learning environment, with planning their learning, with learning how to learn and with diagnosing and addressing specific learning problems. They may need special help with developing their literacy, numeracy and communication skills and with the use of new technology and multimedia as tools for learning. They will require regular opportunities for receiving feedback and encouragement on their progress and overcoming the feeling of isolation of being a learner, particularly in open, distance and self-learning situations. They may also need guidance in choosing routes and options and charting their next steps after the course is completed.

From this, it appears that adult educators need to do much more than deliver knowledge and skills to adults, leaving them to assimilate and make sense of these for themselves. They need to deal with the whole person, with their life experiences and what it means to be a learner in today's educational milieu. They need to consider the kinds of help that can be provided through the learning process, how the crucial relationship between the learner and teacher needs to be structured, the kinds of assistance that can be

offered by tutors, counsellors and older students as an adjunct to learning and the professional advice and counselling that can be made available through specialised services outside individual programmes or institutions.

The whole area of learner support is very underdeveloped on a cross-national basis. Fundamentally, it lacks a unifying terminology and conceptual language by which educators and researchers in different countries can communicate, forge effective partnerships, learn from each other and work together to develop this important area. This fact emerged clearly when a group of researchers and curriculum developers from the Consortium of Institutions for Development and Research in Education in Europe (CIDREE) began to meet under the auspices of CIDREE's Adult Education Programme.

Colleagues from the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER), England, the Institut National de Recherche Pédagogique (INRP), France, and the Landesinstitut für Schule und Weiterbildung (LSW), Germany, took on the task of devising a comparative lexicon of concepts, terms and their usage for different forms of learner support in French, German and English. This paper is the outcome. The work was originally sponsored by CIDREE and the three CIDREE members, and has been brought to fruition as part of the *ATLASS* project, funded through the Adult Education Action of the European Commission's Socrates Programme<sup>1</sup>.

The document focuses on the key types of support provision, the educational settings and delivery modes in which they appear and the main types of actors involved. It uses terms drawn from the research and practitioner literature and from adult education dictionaries, and provides exemplars of their usage.

In order to help contextualise the work, the paper begins with a brief overview of the adult education systems in the three countries and then progresses through a series of terms and concepts, starting with the most general term used, that of *learner support*. It goes on to examine the support role of the *teacher* and then those, such as *course leader* and *programme coordinator* who fulfil a first-line managerial function. It then examines the broad areas of *guidance and counselling* and *tutoring*, and the role of *educational resource centres* before assessing the comparative meaning and usage of *lesser-used terms*. Finally, the paper offers a number of conclusions and observations which have emerged from this study and provides an extensive cross-national bibliography of papers which were consulted in the course of the study.

<sup>1</sup> The Supporting Adult Learners to Achieve Success (*ATLASS*) project is being undertaken by the present authors and its main aim is to identify and disseminate across Europe the best ways of enabling adult learners, particularly those with no or few qualifications and poor educational backgrounds, to make good progress in, remain motivated throughout and successfully complete, their learning programmes.

## 2. AN OVERVIEW OF THE THREE ADULT EDUCATION SYSTEMS

### England

The further education system of colleges for post-16 students is the main means of providing non-university education in England and Wales. The colleges now have independent company status and have become the major local centres for the organisation and delivery of adult education. They provide a wide spectrum of general academic, technical and vocational and leisure programmes, ranging from the most basic courses to those at advanced and professional levels. They usually include special provision for the disadvantaged and disabled.

### Funding

The costs of college infrastructure, staffing and course provision are funded in four main ways:

- ◆ through the core government grant provided via the *Further Education Funding Council (FEFC)*;
- ◆ through contracts for particular types of provision from national, local and, occasionally, European, agencies and programmes (e.g. educational programmes for the adult unemployed as part of specific government initiatives; the local provision of non-vocational adult education, by contract with the local authority);
- ◆ through contracts with local training agencies and employers for vocational training courses for their trainees and employees;
- ◆ through course fees from students themselves, some of which may be subsidised by one of the above funding mechanisms.

### Institutions and course subjects

Adult learners in the further education sector now account for the majority of the student population, and colleges are increasingly seeking to respond to their needs by making their courses more flexible, attractive, student-centred and accessible. As part of this, considerable attention is being given to developing the college's outreach, admissions, induction and student services.



Some colleges are also centres for the *Open College*, which offers open learning modules for adults in business and education, with various types of learner support. These non-advanced offerings seek to mirror some of the principles of the *Open University* (see below). Many further education colleges are, themselves, local Open University study centres and places where OU students go for tutorial support. In addition, the *National Extension College* is perhaps the best known of a number of organisations which publish a range of distance learning materials for self-study by adult learners. A very recent distance learning initiative is the launch of the *University for Industry*, which has been set up to facilitate work-based learning by adults through the use of multimedia materials and distance learning methods.

Many modern further education colleges are amalgamations of local post-16 institutions and often have several sites, including adult education centres, which enable adult courses to be available in close proximity to their clientele. As stated above, the local authority usually contracts with the local further education college for the organisation and delivery of the adult education for which it is responsible (recreational and non-vocational education). In some areas, however, the local authority maintains greater control over this and may run its own *adult education colleges, centres or institutes*, as well as contracting some work to the local colleges, community centres and schools. Indeed, some schools now call themselves community schools or colleges, in recognition of their dual function of serving both young people and their adult communities.

There are a number of *adult residential colleges* sited around the country which are funded through the public purse, and these offer a range of general academic and/or specialised short- and long-term study opportunities for adult learners.

The **university sector** is increasingly opening its doors to adults, both on its normal academic courses, but also through its extramural courses and continuing education departments, which offer a wide range of provision. The *Open University*, one of the world's leading open and distance learning institutions, is of particular note here.

Lastly, mention should be made of the *Workers' Educational Association (WEA)*, which has a long tradition of offering adult education courses for the local populace, again often based at adult education centres and colleges.

## France

In France, the term adult education encompasses several realities. It first refers to *formation professionnelle continue* (continuing vocational training), which is governed by a well-defined legal framework and funding. It also refers to many other educational systems offering vocational education, as well as courses including cultural, personal development and recreational aspects.

Three ministries share responsibility for adult education:

In the **Ministry of National Education**, adult education is directed by the *GRETA (G***roupement d'***ETablissements* – groups of schools), which mainly deal with adults with a low or average level of qualification; by specific organisations, such as the *CNAM (Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers* – National Conservatory for Arts and Crafts) and the *CNED (Centre National d'Enseignement à Distance* – National Centre for Distance Education); and by continuing education centres or services in universities and *Grandes Écoles*. The *DAFCO (Délégés Académiques à la Formation Continue* – Regional Delegates for Continuing Education) and the *CAFOC (Centres Académiques de Formation Continue* – Regional Centres for Continuing Education) are in charge of coordination at a regional level.

The **Ministry of Labour** does not have its own training centres, but insures the tutelage of the *AFPA* (Association for Adult Vocational Training). It also funds and/or entitles all sorts of training offers aimed at companies' employees, at the unemployed and at young people without qualifications, through the *DGEFP (Délégation Générale à l'Emploi et à la Formation Professionnelle* – General Delegation for Employment and Vocational Training), at a national level, and *DRTEFP (Délégations Régionales au Travail, à l'Emploi et à la Formation Professionnelle* – Regional Delegations for Work, Employment and Vocational Training), at a regional level.

The **Ministry of Agriculture** also offers education for adults, within its own educational system.

Other types of organisations in charge of French adult education are: local authorities, private companies, chambers of commerce, private training centres and non-profit education associations. Altogether, there are more than 40,000 training bodies in France, less than 2,000 of them belonging to the public sector.

## Legislation and funding

Since 1959, many laws have been passed regarding the organisation of adult education. The most important one, which came into force in 1971 and has been amended many times since, governs most of adult education in France. Until that law, adult education was considered in terms of *promotion sociale* (social promotion), and most employees had to learn in their leisure time. The 1971 law introduced the principle of corporate financing of *formation professionnelle continue* (continuing vocational training). A percentage of the total amount of salaries (0.8 per cent at the time, which has now risen to two per cent) was required to be devoted to training each year – directly or through taxes – by all companies employing more than 10 persons.

This law allows all workers, under certain conditions, to study during working hours and still continue to receive their wages, with training fees being paid by the companies. It also recognises their right to choose training, which may or may not be directly related to their work activities.

Each year, about 8.5 million adults are trained and about 130,000 million francs is devoted to adult education, by the State and public administrations, local authorities, companies, unemployment funds and families. With the recent economic crisis, however, most of these funds are now used for courses close to learners' professional activities and employment needs, with a significant extension of training for out-of-work adults and young people.

Workers are also now more often requested to 'co-invest' in their training, at least in terms of time. This has led to a significant development of new styles of training, namely *formations ouvertes et à distance* (flexible – or open – and distance learning), which can take place at home as well as at work or in training and/or resource centres.

## Flexible and distance adult learning

Even though face-to-face learning, with short or long *stages* (training periods) or with evening courses in training centres, is still the most common type of training, flexible and distance learning is increasingly important. It now involves more than 600,000 students a year, most of them being adults. About half of them register in the *CNED* (see above), which is the biggest distance education organisation in Europe, offering a large range of courses at all levels.

The **FIED** (*Fédération Interuniversitaire d'Enseignement à Distance* – French Federation of Distance Teaching Centres in Universities) gathers 22 *Centres de Télé-enseignement Universitaire* (University Centres for Distance Teaching), which provide distance courses leading to higher education degrees for more than 30,000 students each year.

The **APP** (*Ateliers de Pédagogie Personnalisée* – Personalised Pedagogy Workshops) network groups together about 470 training and resource centres which use assisted self-learning techniques. These are spread all over France, and receive close to 150,000 persons a year, mainly adults or young adults with low qualifications.

Flexible and distance courses are also offered by centres belonging to the **Ministry of Agriculture**, by a number of private training organisations, by some large national or private companies and by a growing number of traditional training centres (*CNAM, AFPA*, etc.).

### Subjects

All subjects of initial training feature in adult education through face-to-face courses and, most of them, through open and flexible learning. They lead to a large number of established vocational and higher education degrees. Some training activities, however, are more specifically aimed at adults, such as literacy and foreign language training courses.

## Germany

Adult education is recognised as an integral part of the education system and, since 1970, has often been referred to as the '*fourth pillar*' of the education system. It is characterised as an area of diversity and competition among institutions, with a wide range of courses and services on offer. Adult education is regulated by the State to a lesser degree than other parts of the education system. The activities of the State are restricted to laying down principles and to issuing regulations relating to organisation and financing. Because of the political structure of Germany, responsibilities are split between the Federal Government and the individual *Länder* (states).

The *Länder* are responsible for:

- ◆ general adult education;
- ◆ adult education leading to school-leaving qualifications;
- ◆ academic adult education at higher education institutions;
- ◆ some areas of political education and continuing vocational training.

In 10 of the 16 *Länder*, study leave and employment release legislation allow employees to attend adult education courses for several working days (usually five) with no loss in salary or wage.

The **Federal Government** is responsible for:

- ◆ adult vocational training outside the school sector;
- ◆ the principles of continuing academic education at higher education institutions;
- ◆ basic regulations for the protection of privately developed distance learning courses.

Regulations for the continuing education sector have been adopted at national level through, in particular, the following legislation:

- ◆ the Employment Promotion Act (*Arbeitsförderungsgesetz*);
- ◆ the Career Advancement Training Promotion Act (*Aufstiegsfortbildungsförderungsgesetz*);
- ◆ the Vocational Training Act (*Berufsbildungsgesetz*);
- ◆ the Handicrafts Code (*Handwerksordnung*);
- ◆ the Framework Act for Higher Education (*Hochschulrahmengesetz*);
- ◆ the Federal Training Assistance Act (*Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz*);
- ◆ the Distance Learning Protection Act (*Fernunterrichtsschutzgesetz*).

Responsibility for the promotion of continuing vocational training under the Federal Government's Employment Promotion Act lies with the *Bundesanstalt für Arbeit* (Federal Employment Agency).



## Funding

The public sector, social groups, adult education institutions, industry, public broadcasting corporations and the students themselves contribute towards the cost of adult education. Public sector funding (local authorities, *Länder*, the Federal Government, the European Union) includes the following areas:

- ◆ institutional sponsorship of recognised adult education institutions by the *Länder* on the basis of adult education legislation;
- ◆ institutional sponsorship of the *Volkshochschulen* (local adult education centres) and sponsorship of activities of cultural adult education by the local authorities;
- ◆ grants for adults seeking to obtain school-leaving qualifications under the *Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz* (Federal Training Assistance Act);
- ◆ continuing education for employees of the Federal Government, *Länder* and local authorities;
- ◆ promotion of further vocational training under the *Aufstiegsfortbildungsförderungsgesetz* (Career Advancement Training Promotion Act).

Further training schemes designed to meet the needs of the labour market, which are targeted especially at the unemployed and those facing the threat of unemployment, are funded under the *Arbeitsförderungsgesetz* (Employment Promotion Act) from the unemployment insurance fund.

Social groups (churches, trade unions, etc.) also bear a proportion of the cost of running their adult education institutions.

Academic adult education at higher education institutions is funded by the fees of course members.

Public broadcasting companies finance their contribution towards adult education, which is one of their statutory obligations, through licence fee revenue.

Industry provides funding for obtaining and improving vocational skills and qualifications, and companies spend substantial funds on adult education for their staff.

Those attending adult education courses also make a contribution toward their cost. This contribution can be subsidised by tax relief and by assistance for low income groups and for special courses. For example, between 30 and 50 per cent of the cost of *Volkshochschulen* courses (especially general adult education) is covered by course fees.

## Institutions and course subjects

The adult education schemes on offer cover a broad spectrum of courses in general and political adult education and vocational training, which are supported by a diverse range of institutions – state and private-sector, non-profit-making and profit-orientated, in-company and public – and of institutions attached to the Protestant and Catholic Churches, the trade unions and other social groups. Radio and television also fulfil responsibilities in the field of adult education.

Vocational training for adults is targeted at groups with the widest possible range of educational qualifications – from unemployed people with no school-leaving or vocational qualifications to executives.

Under the adult education legislation of some *Länder*, it is the task of the *Volkshochschulen*, the local adult education centres, to take care of basic provision of adult education courses in the field of general adult education, in other words to provide a regular and comprehensive range of courses which meets the most diverse social requirements and individual needs.

It is usually possible to acquire school-leaving qualifications later in life at evening classes in the so-called ‘*second-chance-education*’ (*Zweiter Bildungsweg*, *Abendrealschulen*, *Abendgymnasien*, and what are called *Kollegs*).

*Fachschulen* offer courses in vocational training through classroom-based learning.

Distance learning is mostly organised by private organisations. They are required to get state approval by the *Staatliche Zentralstelle für Fernunterricht – ZFU* (Central Office for Distance Learning) under the *Fernunterrichtsschutzgesetz* (Distance Learning Protection Act). *TeleKolleg* is organised by the broadcasting authorities and the Ministries of Education of the *Länder*.

A number of adult residential colleges, funded through the public purse and through social groups (churches; political parties; trade unions), offer a range of general, academic and/or political courses.

Universities and other higher education institutions provide adult education in the academic field within the *Hochschulrahmengesetz* (Framework Act for Higher Education). The *Fernuniversität Hagen* is a distance learning institution of particular note for academic adult education.

The most important adult education sector, however, remains general and political adult education with its broad range of subjects.

### 3. LEARNER SUPPORT

*Learner support* is a generic term which encompasses the many forms of support for learners which may be made available by adult education institutions, whether these be provided:

- ◆ **within and through the learning process** by, for instance, teachers;
- ◆ **as an adjunct to learning** through the role of especially appointed tutors, counsellors and mentors: the French term *accompagnement* – literally, accompaniment to learning – signifies this type of support (see below);
- ◆ **as separate from specific learning programmes**, but available to adults (and probably other) students on a referral or self-referral basis; for instance through college or school counsellors, educational resource centres, the role of ‘*front-desk staff*’ and admissions staff and by those such as the German *Sozialpädagogen* (pedagogical social workers).

Such support may be delivered on a group or individual basis, through face-to-face means, at a distance (through the use of the post, telephone, fax or e-mail), or through a mixture of strategies which involve some form of interaction between the adult learner, instrumental others, material resources and IT.

The specific tasks involved in supporting learners can be many and varied, and the following appear in the research and practitioner literature:

- ◆ inducting learners into the course and learning institution, as well as into expected behaviours and attitudes;
- ◆ helping adults learn how to learn and how to learn effectively;
- ◆ motivating and encouraging learners, and helping them to become autonomous learners;
- ◆ facilitating learners’ access to resources and training in their use;
- ◆ advising on how to solve learning and course-related problems;
- ◆ monitoring and marking work, reviewing and feeding back to learners about their progress;
- ◆ providing information, advice and guidance on educational courses and careers;
- ◆ counselling and advising on personal problems which are hindering progress and providing pastoral care;
- ◆ referring the adults to others better able to deal with their problems;
- ◆ negotiating on behalf of the learner.

It is clear that there is considerable variation in the emphasis given to these different tasks in England, France and Germany, and the whole concept of *learner support* is variously understood in the three countries.

## England

The term *learner support* is much used in the UK in both further and adult education, and often appears in texts on practice. As stated above, it is a broad term used to denote the full range of services and provision available to help adult learners and other students. The Further Education Unit (FEU, 1993a) examined the range of Learner Support Services then available in English further education colleges, and felt that a helpful distinction could be made between '*those services which support the learner*' (these might be crèches, personal counsellors, careers advisers and student welfare services), and '*those which support learning*'. In this latter category, FEU included records of achievement; but also included here would be tutoring, study skills support and mentoring.

The paper also noted that the range of support services in 1993 was wide and likely to expand, with 80 per cent of colleges intending to increase their learner support services, despite the financial constraints on them. The reasons for the growing emphasis on supporting learners were said to be the steep increase in student numbers, particularly of adults; the growth of a stronger client-led culture in colleges; and the development of more corporate and centralised policies and decision-making, rather than the previously uncoordinated, departmental responses.

FEU identified four main models of *learner support* which emerged from its survey of colleges, and these are:

- ◆ The **student welfare ethos** and the desire to create a '*caring environment*'; support provision here encompassed counselling and tutoring and other learning support as well as a range of practical services for learners, such as crèches and welfare provision.
- ◆ **Customer or client services approach.** This is based on responding to the views of students and emphasising centralised admissions, information, outreach facilities, and presumably central counselling and related services.
- ◆ **Emphasis on individual learning and learner autonomy.** This approach stresses the enabling and facilitating role of learning support services, with such activities as inducting learners, helping them gain planning and study skills, as well as providing the material resources (including IT) to support learners, who are expected to be able to manage their own

learning programmes. This was felt to be a risky strategy and assumed more learner autonomy than often existed; to be successful it needed to be well organised.

- ◆ **Supporting achievement and success.** This relatively new approach is based on the notion of maximising '*learner gain*' or value added. Particular activities would be initially diagnostic and concerned with identifying starting points and assessing prior learning and then devising learning plans and records of achievement to chart and review progress and guide the learner through to a successful completion and the next transition.

## France

In France, the use of a generic word for *learner support* is not widespread, although the terms *aide à l'apprenant*, *assistance*, *soutien pédagogique*, *accompagnement* or *suivi* are found in the research and policy literature. Each of these has slightly different meanings, as outlined below:

- ◆ ***Aide à l'apprenant*** (nearest translation of *learner support*). This term is not used in legal or everyday language, but mainly by specialised practitioners or researchers in adult self-learning and distance education, where the need to have specific strategies to facilitate and aid learning is particularly strong. In this sense, the term reflects the English model of support, which is concerned with promoting learner autonomy.
- ◆ ***Assistance***. This is a very general term, which is more concerned with providing pastoral care and welfare for students than with learning support specifically.
- ◆ ***Soutien pédagogique*** (pedagogical support). The term is a broad phrase generally used in works referring to the teaching and learning process, for children as well for adults. It insists on the support being linked to the content of the course.
- ◆ ***Accompagnement*** (accompaniment) is also a very general term, but it is now used specifically to characterise all kinds of help for adults – especially disadvantaged ones – to enable them to participate in education and training programmes and so enhance their employability and remediate their disadvantage. It includes financial support. Such support is, of course, outside of the learning process, and is the concern of policy makers and educational managers.



## Germany

The English term *support* has been introduced into the Federal Republic of Germany over the past few years. It is more generally used in connection with supporting further education institutions to become learning organisations, rather than supporting adult learners as such. *Learner support*, in the English sense and French *aide à l'apprenant*, has always been considered as an integral part of teaching. Therefore, a corresponding German term does not exist, but an understanding of the growing importance of learning support, and of a new role of the teacher in adult education, is developing. This is reflected in the following quotation:

*'An urgent and indispensable task of adult education here is to develop the learning ability. This covers support to find and to define objectives, counselling, assistance to choose suitable subjects and to choose the appropriate methods for evaluating the results of learning and teaching and how to use (apply) evaluation instruments by the learners themselves. This is a task of adult education that has only hesitantly and uncertainly been adopted by adult education, and the potential users of such kinds of support are only rarely suited to it'.*

(Knöchel, 1997, p. 28)

When supporting adult learners in Germany, the terms *Lernförderung* or *Lernberatung* – which mean the promotion or the fostering of learning – are generally used. As in the English context, these terms are quite general, and include the counselling and supporting of adult learners and of those with learning difficulties, as well as the external factors which help or hinder the learning process. These also include motivating and encouraging the learner during the learning process.

Some German researchers have sought to conceptualise the area and explored different forms of *Lernförderung*. In a report by the German Institute for Vocational Education (*BIBB*), (Fischer and Hartke, 1987), the authors stressed the importance of discovering methods to build support **within** the learning process, and suggested using the following three integrated orientations or perspectives with which to do this:

- ◆ **Learner orientation**, that uses adult learners' competencies and prior experiences as the starting point for learning, a concept which has much in common with the English approach of initially focusing on their baselines for learning.
- ◆ **Orientation on the problems of the individual**. This would include welfare provision, learning-how-to-learn support and special extra teaching to help remediate particular problems (e.g. literacy, numeracy). This model is largely in line with the English '*welfare model*' of support and the French concept of *assistance*.

- ◆ **Process orientation**, which takes account of group dynamics and institutional characteristics, and recognises the fact that learning is not just a problem of individuals but also of teachers and structures.

These perspectives are also the basis of a comprehensive concept of teacher training for vocational education for adults (Volk-von-Bialy, 1991).

Other authors (Friedrich and Ballstaedt, 1995) speak about an ecological change in learning. They state that '*learning takes place in unique situations, is context-bound and social even if it takes place in individual heads*' (Friedrich and Ballstaedt op. cit., p. 207). They speak about three different positions from which to address *Lernförderung*:

- ◆ **rebuilding the learning surroundings** to meet the learners' needs;
- ◆ **changing the learning process** by re-equipping learners with learning-how-to-learn strategies;
- ◆ **teachers and learners discussing together** what is needed through an interactive strategy.

## 4. THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

The research literature across the three language areas strongly suggests that *adult education teachers* fulfil the decisive support function for learners, not least because adult learners generally have contact with only one teacher on their course. There also appears to be a common understanding that the role of the teacher in adult education is broader than that in the education of school-age pupils, and is not simply concerned with dispensing knowledge. Adult learners turn to their teachers for help with all those problems and questions which impinge on the learning process, whether these be directly concerned with the learning and the course itself or their more general support and welfare needs. Thus adult education teachers are often confronted with a range of counselling functions, for which they are generally not trained. This is a matter of concern which is now being addressed through the EC funded *ATLASS* project (see p. 3).

In recognition of the broad role played by teachers of adults, English educators now prefer to use the term *tutor* in these contexts, and relatively rarely speak about adult education teachers as such. Similarly, in Germany, *Lehrer* is not used and, depending on the educational setting, the words *Kursleiter*, *Referent* or *Dozent* are in common usage. In France, the terms *enseignant(e)* and *professeur*, which are both nearest translations of teacher, are very widely employed. *Enseignant* may be used in adult education, but, in this case, the most common term is *formateur*. *Tuteur* (tutor) exists, but a *tuteur* does not normally teach. The term is deployed in more specific purposes in relation to the support function (see Section 7).

### England

The dictionary definition of *teacher* in English is:

*'any person who instructs or helps another learn'.*

(Jarvis, 1990)

As stated above, the term is not in common usage by adult education practitioners in England or the rest of the UK. In the UK education system, a long-standing distinction has been made between school-level teachers, who are known as *teacher* and those in adult, further and higher education, who are generally known as *lecturer*, with the term *adult education teacher* being restricted to the research literature. As we have seen, the word

**tutor** is the preferred term in adult education for both **teacher** and **lecturer**. Reflecting the designation of teaching posts in further and adult education as **tutors**, it was not surprising that Sims (1997) found that:

*'It should be noted that adults referred to the teaching staff as tutors. It was clear ... that the tutor played a dual role as teacher and as adviser. Whilst in the former role staff acted as imparters of knowledge, as facilitators of learning and as skills trainers, in the tutor role they provided guidance and support relating to academic, pastoral, financial and career issues or referred students to other college services as necessary.'*

The Further Education Development Agency (FEDA) drew the following conclusion about the role of **tutor**, after its survey of part-time adult learners in FE colleges:

*'Most of the learners in the sample indicated that their course or personal tutor was their major source of support and in most cases, this was likely to be the class teacher. Indeed, for many learners, the class teacher may be the only member of college staff with whom they have any contact'.* (FEDA, 1995)

## France

As stated above, the generic term **enseignant(e)** – a direct translation of the generic term **teacher** – is in common parlance in the whole French educational system and means anyone who teaches. The word **professeur** (colloquially shortened to '**prof**') is also used in the same way. However, '**professeur**' is a status which formerly existed only in secondary education (**professeur certifié** or **professeur agrégé**, according to the level of the degree they obtained), or in higher education (**professeur des universités**). Now it is also used to denote primary school teachers (**professeur des écoles**, previously called **instituteurs**). Except in universities or **Grandes Écoles**, it is not much used in the adult education context, where **formateur(trice)** is more commonly adopted, whether in general education or vocational training. Less frequently, and only in specific contexts, the terms, **animateur** or **éducateur** are also used (see Section 9).

A hundred ways of naming adult teachers (most of them being compound names including **formateur**) have been listed in the literature, but according to Allouche-Benayoun et Pariat (1993), three types of adult education teacher or **formateur** can be distinguished:

- ◆ **Formateur-coordonateurs** or **formateurs de conception**. These are akin to course leaders (see Section 5) and are

responsible for organising the adult education course and undertaking the curriculum development tasks involved in translating the main elements of the course content into detailed schemes of work. They may also teach on the courses themselves, and provide support for students as part of this.

- ◆ *Formateurs-animateurs* or *formateurs-éducateurs* are the main adult education teachers with specialist subject knowledge, and do not have a curriculum development function.
- ◆ *Formateurs-intervenants* teach as subject specialists, but also are able to advise other teachers and teaching institutions on good practice.

The term *conseiller en formation continue* (often abbreviated to 'CFC') is unique to the French adult education system and refers, not to a type of counsellor, but to a teacher who has moved from school-level teaching to adult education. In doing this, they keep their previous status and get a monthly bonus, but generally work more hours a week and have fewer holidays. In adult education, they may teach but also play a variety of roles, depending on the institution; they can, for instance, be in charge of finding new 'clients', organising a new educational service for adults and/or producing technological learning material. They may also work for the Ministry and be in charge of supervising groups of institutions, and so on.

## Germany

The word *Lehrer*, the direct translation of *teacher*, is rarely used in adult education in Germany, as this is strongly associated with school-level students, and the style of teaching encountered there. Teachers in adult education are basically other adults who are on an equal footing with their learners, but just happen to have more knowledge in one or more areas. Communication between teacher and learner, therefore, can be deemed to be symmetrical rather than complementary.

In adult education, above all in the *Volkshochschule* system, the usual terminology for teacher or lecturer is *Kursleiter*, although the words *Referent* and *Dozent* are used in particular contexts, as described below:

- ◆ *Kursleiter*s are usually not employed full-time. They are skilled in both their subject area and in teaching it. They prepare both the didactic and methodological aspects of the courses they give, and as such fulfil some of the functions of the English *course leader* role (see Section 5).



- ◆ In professional organisations, adult residential colleges and trade unions, the German term for lecturer is often *Referent*.
- ◆ The term *Dozent* is used in religious and political academies which offer adult education.

One exception to this is in the schools of the second chance education (*Abendrealschule, Abendgymnasium, Kolleg*, courses for school-leaving qualifications in *Volkshochschulen*). Here, the term *Weiterbildungslehrer* is used because of the school-based character of these institutions, which usually provide education through evening classes following a common curriculum. The term *Lehrer* is preferred because of its school-based character.

## 5. THE ROLE OF COURSE LEADERS

The *course leader* is a first-line managerial position which often involves course planning, ensuring adequate resources are allocated, staffing and staff coordination, curriculum development, as well as organising the delivery of the teaching programmes, and organising the assessment and quality assurance procedures. They usually, but not always, have a teaching function; indeed they may be the only or main teacher on the course, and here have a front-line support role to play with students. An important part of their job is having overall responsibility for the well-being of their students, and this may include devising learning or action plans with students, reviewing and recording achievement, as well as fulfilling a general tutoring role.

### England

Whilst the word *course leader* is commonly applied in the further and adult education systems in the UK, the two near synonyms of *course manager* and *course tutor* exist. It appears to be largely a matter of managerial preference as to which term is used in which institution. However, it is likely that the term *course tutor* would only be used if the person had a teaching function and was responsible for providing some degree of learner support, including tutoring. Jarvis (1990) defined *course tutor* as '*a teacher to a course of study. A part-time tutor to a course of study with the Open University in the United Kingdom.*' However, this is felt to be too narrow a description of the term, which is widely used in non-university education.

Meanwhile, it is more likely that the *course manager* role may exist without a teaching function being part of it. Interestingly, Jarvis (1990) defined *course manager* as '*the administrator who is concerned with the production of a course. This job is especially important in the production of distance education courses.*' Again, this seems to be a description which is too restrictive in scope. It is becoming fashionable in the UK to talk about *managers of learning* as well as managing learning. These terms simply underline the developing role of adult education teachers and tutors as helping students to manage their own learning and facilitating or providing all the necessary learning support.

In England, the terms *programme leader* or *programme manager* co-exist, as above, and denote the next level of managerial responsibility. The term *programme tutor* is not known.

## France

The term *course leader* corresponds most of the time to the French *formateur-coordonateur*, while *programme leader* would be nearer to *responsable de formation*. *Formateur-coordonateur* would be adopted for someone who is responsible for coordinating and managing a number of related courses and, like a *programme leader* in England, a *responsable de formation* will act at a higher level of responsibility. But these two terms can be interchangeable, depending on the kind of organisation considered.

## Germany

In Germany, the first-line managerial tasks of the English *course* or *programme leader* and French *formateur-coordonateur* or *responsable de formation* are taken over by the full-time pedagogical staff member – *Hauptberuflicher Pädagogischer Mitarbeiter (HPM)*. He/she is responsible for the organisation and coordination of a group of educational courses and programmes. He/she is also responsible for adequate resources, staffing and staff coordination, curriculum development and student referral, etc.

Two other German terms – *Kursleiter* or *Nebenberuflicher Pädagogischer Mitarbeiter* (part-time pedagogical staff member) – refer more directly to people who mostly teach, but sometimes act as managers of learning and have certain responsibilities for course development and planning. With the fading function of the *Kursleiter* to dispense knowledge, counselling becomes more and more important for adult education teachers and course leaders. Therefore, a term like *Lernberater* (learning counsellor) would be appropriate.

## 6. GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

The concepts and terms *guidance* and *counselling* are widely understood across the three language areas and are used within the diverse fields of personal, marriage, psychotherapeutic and health counselling, as well as throughout all sectors of education and training, including adult education. Whilst in France and Germany the terms *counselling* and *counsellor* are simply used to cover a wide range of activities, in England the situation is more complex. The terms *guidance* and *counselling* are used together and as separate entities, not necessarily in clearly differentiated contexts, thus leading to some confusion.

Four recognisable categories of *guidance and counselling* exist in adult education across the three countries, and these are:

- ◆ ***Educational guidance and counselling*** – which is concerned with helping adults, before, during and after entry into education to identify and choose appropriate courses and programmes, in the light of their broader career and life goals and circumstances. Such support may be provided within a single adult education institution, solely for its learners and potential learners. It may also be provided by district or local authorities for adults in that vicinity. Such support is nearly always separate from the learning process, although adult education teachers and tutors are likely to play informal roles here.
- ◆ ***Careers guidance and counselling*** – which is specifically focused on helping adults to access information about, and choose, appropriate jobs and careers, map out an action plan and develop the necessary practical skills to pursue their career goals. Again, such specialised support (which is usually delivered by trained professionals) may be provided by single educational institutions or be an external publicly funded service for the local populace. Provision of careers guidance and counselling, being a specialised field, is always quite distinct from individual learning programmes, but again adult education teachers and tutors can play an informal role.
- ◆ ***Counselling to support learning*** – this is more a concept than a widely used term, in all three countries, since it is largely embodied in the role of adult education teacher, tutor and/or course leader. A central thesis of this paper is that learning counselling is of prime importance in helping adult learners to progress and succeed in their learning, and needs to be given focused attention.

- ◆ **Personal counselling** – exists in the English system as a safety net for, and general service to, students in most larger post-school institutions in the three countries. Such counselling, which covers all manner of individual problems, is provided by trained counsellors, and may be accessed on an individual referral or teacher/tutor referral basis. In France and Germany, the provision of such support is usually outside education and training institutions and in their social welfare systems.

## England

In seeking English language definitions of the two terms, there is clearly some overlap in both the conceptual basis for **guidance** and **counselling** and the range of practical tasks which they each represent in adult education. Two particular definitions of **guidance** are given and discussed below.

Brown (1991), as recorded in (Blair *et al.*, 1993), conceives **guidance** in a generic sense and '*posits that the function of guidance is to help adults clarify their options. It does this by carrying out seven activities: informing, advising, counselling, assessing, enabling, advocating, and feeding back. These seven activities should be informed by five values: client-centredness; confidentiality; accessibility; independence; and free availability.*' This notion is in accord with the views of Payne and Edwards (1996), who note that '*impartiality and client-centredness are usually set alongside one another as principles of guidance in an unproblematic way*'. They go on to warn, however, that '*impartial guidance does not necessarily meet the client's needs or interests*'.

Guidance in the more **educational guidance** sense of choosing courses and learning programmes in the light of adults' broader needs and intentions, is defined by Jarvis (1990) as '*the process of providing advice and support to learners, or potential learners, about the suitability of their qualifications, the course that they may wish to study next, and a variety of other matters. Educational guidance has become a very important feature of adult education in recent years as the educational system has become very complex.*'

Such guidance is a process which can take place prior to a given course (often termed **pre-entry guidance**), at the induction stage, throughout the course (termed **on-programme guidance**), and towards the end of or after the course (termed **transition** or **exit guidance**). Guidance can be carried out in groups (normally at the pre-entry stage) and on a one-to-one basis (more usual after the pre-entry stage). According to Tuckett (1997), '*guidance counsellors know their way through the maze of opportunities. They can talk things through, help people to draw up an action plan and point them in the right direction*'.

Meanwhile, definitions of the word **counselling** within British post-school education are:

1. *'The ability to listen, not be judgmental'.* (FEU, 1993b)
2. *'A generic term which is used to cover a number of processes, such as interviewing, advising, guiding, and even providing therapy in areas of personal problems. There are different techniques, such as non-directive counselling.'* (Jarvis, 1990)
3. *'Listening to clients, allowing them to express in their own words what they feel they need. It means allowing them to say what they perceive their positive and negative points to be in relation to personal limitations, financial restrictions, possible access problems and occupational as well as educational issues. This is the basis on which a negotiated, client-centred programme can become a reality for the customer.'*  
(NIACE, 1989)

From the above definitions, it seems that, although some sources, such as Bückmann and Nekeman (1993), equate **counselling** directly with **guidance**, a certain distinction can be made. **Counselling** is usually perceived to be a more open-ended, facilitative, non-interventionist and client-centred process, which is only delivered on a one-to-one basis. Not surprisingly, however, Hart (1996) notes that *'a lot of role confusion exists...untrained tutors use a smaller range of skills than counsellors, and they tend more towards advice-giving and directive techniques'*. Also, personal and specialised forms of counselling are undertaken by professionally qualified staff and governed by strict codes of practice – the same is not true of guidance activities outside of **careers guidance**, for which **careers counselling** is a synonym. One exception to the trained counsellor rule is found in further and adult education, where teachers/tutors or other college staff who are not especially trained may be appointed as educational counsellors in the institution.

**Guidance** generally has some element of direction and advice-giving involved within it, and may be provided in a group as well as on an individual basis. In the UK, the term **guidance** is nearly always applied in the context of **careers guidance**. In fact, the broader term **careers education and guidance** is now in vogue, since current conceptualisations of the support needed for effective career decision-making by individuals emphasise the importance of the educative role of advisers. Professionals who provide careers education and/or guidance, whether in further, higher and adult institutions or as employees of local careers services, are termed **careers advisers**. The term **careers officer** (which is only ever applied to those employed by local careers services) is now being discontinued.

## France

The corresponding words in French would be *conseil* and *orientation*. *Conseil* covers both guidance and counselling and all forms of this except careers or vocational counselling. In this specific context, the term *orientation* is used.

For a long time, *orientation* has not been a central concern in adult education. It belonged to the school system and was provided by specialists employed on tenure by the Ministry of Education, with a special training and status (*conseillers d'orientation* – career counsellors). For instance, there was nothing about *orientation* in the 1971 law. One can observe recent changes, with the activity of *orientation* taking a greater part in adult education, especially for young adults without qualifications and unemployed people. This function is fulfilled by different groups, depending on the organisation where it takes place: teachers, psychologists, career counsellors.

Many computer programs are now used for *orientation*, whether to inform about the different existing jobs according to degree levels or to help learners to choose according to their personality. However, written materials are still in widespread use. Three stages are generally distinguished in the *orientation* process:

- ◆ *accueil* (reception) involves receiving people one by one, listening to them and leading them to the most suitable place where they may get relevant information;
- ◆ *bilan* (assessment), which helps the person to define a project according to his/her demands and competencies;
- ◆ *conseil* (counselling), which aims to help the person start training or enter the work market at the right place.

Most educational counselling and counselling to support learning in France is provided inside the learning process, and is a generic function which is not filled by specialised people, but by any staff or even other learners. As stated above, personal counselling, also termed *conseil*, is provided outside of educational and training institutions by trained professionals.

## Germany

In the Federal Republic, a distinction is not made between guidance and counselling, and the unified word **Beratung** is used, which, broadly speaking, means advising or counselling. **Beratung** is understood in everyday contexts as giving a piece of advice which one is expected to follow. In the scientific, professional and educational areas, **Beratung** is seen as a situation where the person being advised, and the experience that he or she brings to this situation, are paramount. The counsellor (**Berater/in**) assists the client (or in the present context, the adult learner) to assess the situation in the light of his/her experience. If successful, the client or learner will proceed to make a decision independently of the counsellor; one speaks of *'helping towards self-help'*.

**Beratung** appears in many forms in Germany: in marriage guidance counselling, in pregnancy counselling, in debt counselling, in business counselling, in sexual counselling, and of course in educational counselling.

In adult education, the word '**Bildungsberatung**' is adopted, and counsellors working here are charged with implementing the societal and pedagogical tasks associated with assisting adult learners to find those course offers which *'develop the personality, and simultaneously offer the best chances of career enhancement and improving their standing in society'* (Deutscher Bildungsrat, 1970). This form of counselling is directly akin to educational guidance for adults in the UK (see FEU, 1991). This type of counselling is generally provided quite separately from learning programmes, through institutionally based counsellors, and generally precedes adults' entry into learning; but it is also available to them during learning if they are thinking of dropping or changing courses.

Personal counselling is not provided formally by German adult education institutions; it is seen as being part of the social and welfare provision of the country. In the so-called second-chance adult education at **Volkshochschulen**, personal counselling is sometimes provided by pedagogical social workers.

In Germany, adult education counselling is seen as fulfilling the elementary function of further education in providing a complex, discrete and individualised range of options. Because of the accelerating pace of change in technology and society in general, and the associated changes in the professional areas, choosing the correct course is crucial. Many people need the help of competent



advisers to do this. Adult education counselling is the '*linking point*' between supply and demand, between participants, the challenges of society and institutional providers (Council of Europe, 1981).

Adult education counselling can be divided into the following five tasks in Germany:

- ◆ ***Bildungslaufbahnberatung*** (general educational counselling). This includes advice-giving on the entire range of further education courses and facilities in the region which are open to adult learners. In some German regions, there are special adult education counselling institutions run by the local authorities.
- ◆ ***Kurswahlberatung*** (participant or course counselling) is more restricted and is focused on advising potential learners about the courses and offers available in a particular institution.
- ◆ ***Bildungsmotivation und Bildungswerbung*** (motivational counselling) attempts to reach educationally disadvantaged groups and motivate them to take part in further education. This type of guidance would be known as *outreach* activities in England.
- ◆ ***Systemberatung*** (system or institutional counselling) is concerned with management development and aims to inform institutional managers of the needs which have been identified in counselling sessions. The institutions should thus be enabled to plan and organise courses better tailored to the needs of participants. The term is not really understood in England, although English adult or further education colleges may bring in consultants to advise them on a whole range of management and institutional development issues.
- ◆ ***Lernberatung*** (learning counselling) aims to prevent or alleviate all those difficulties or barriers which arise during, and disrupt, the learning process. A person who delivers such counselling, if not the adult education teacher, could be termed a *Lernberater*, although the term is not widely used in practice (LSW, 1982).

In addition to having counsellors who fulfil the above functions, some further and adult education institutes employ pedagogical social workers who undertake the highly specialised role of dealing with socially marginalised groups. These counsellors, termed *Sozialpädagogen*, provide welfare and pastoral care support for those on courses leading to school-leaving qualifications.

Careers guidance and counselling (*Berufsberatung*) is provided by the local centres, *Arbeitsamt*, of the Federal Employment Agency (*Bundesanstalt für Arbeit*) by trained professionals.

## 7. TUTORING

The terms *tutor* (*tuteur*) and *tutoring* (*tutorat*) are well understood in the post-school systems of France and England, including adult education, but are rarely adopted in Germany, where the word *Mentor* has a similar meaning, but is restricted to higher education. The role of the *tutor* in the British system is conceived in much broader terms than that of *tuteur* in France, or in other European countries, where such individuals are primarily concerned with pedagogical support, learners' acquisition of course content and reviewing and facilitating progress. In Germany, the tutoring function is largely incorporated in the role of adult education teacher.

### England

As seen above, in the UK, *tutor* is a key term in adult education, where it encompasses the role of teacher as well as that of adviser and enabler or facilitator of learning. There are, however, some variations in how the role of *tutor* is conceived, as the definitions given below indicate:

1. *'The [tutor is the] person who assists the learner with the content of the program/course, usually through personal contact by telephone, marking of assignments and providing feedback.'* (Bückmann and Nekeman, 1993)
2. *'The tutor is first and foremost an enabler of learning, and to carry out this role must be vigilant to the issues that block the student's learning or progression.'* (Miller, 1982)
3. *'Tutor: a teacher, one who instructs. Often, tutoring is a much more personalised teaching function, e.g. one-to-one, or one-to-small-group teaching. In some forms of education the tutor is a personal tutor with some type of pastoral responsibility for the student(s).'* (Jarvis, 1990)
4. The tutor's role has also been described as: *'provid[ing] guidance and support relating to academic, pastoral, financial and career issues or to refer students to other college services as necessary'.* (Sims, 1997)
5. *'Academic tutors often are students' first source of help for academic problems and sometimes for financial and personal problems too.'* (Munn et al., 1993)

Whilst in Britain, *tutors* tend to play a dual role, encompassing both of the functions mentioned in definition 5, in other European countries, *tutors* tend to concentrate on the pedagogical dimension. Given that the person who teaches their class '*may be the only member of college staff with whom they have contact*' (Hughes *et al.*, 1995), the *tutor* plays a pivotal role in providing or accessing the necessary level of support. Other sources have noted that the support mechanisms available to adult learners are less established than those provided for other learners. In the light of this, the pastoral aspect of the tutor's role is crucial. In Britain, therefore, the role of *tutor* is defined more broadly than in other European countries and may cover giving personal and welfare advice, as well as teaching.

*Tutor* is a term which can be used in a broad range of learning contexts. It is suitable for use in the full range of continuing education contexts, from full-time and part-time learning to open and distance learning. *Tutoring* is relevant to individual or group situations, either face-to-face, over the telephone or through telematics. *Tutors* have a role at all stages of the learning process: from pre-entry through to offering transition guidance on the completion of courses.

## France

It is interesting to note that *tuteur* in French has three meanings:

1. Somebody who is legally in charge of the interests of a child or of a disabled adult.
2. A stick which is used to hold a young growing plant.
3. Somebody in charge of supporting a learner.

As opposed to the English language, in which this third meaning of *tutor* appears as early as in the 18th century, this acceptance of the word is rather recent in French. It is now more and more used, however, in distance and resource-based learning.

In the French adult education system, the function of tutoring (*tutorat*) is generally implicit in the role of teacher, except in open and distance education, where it is most often provided by especially appointed personnel. However, *tuteurs* are not especially trained, nor do they form an identifiable cadre in the French system, and their status is not settled. They may be teaching staff from the institution who fulfil this additional role, contract staff or even older students.

In universities, the role of *tuteur* has recently been created to help students at the start of their university studies to organise their work and to manage their learning better (it is called *tutorat méthodologique* – methodological tutoring); but the *tuteurs*, who are older students, also help with the content of the studies.

The role of *tuteurs* is, first and foremost, concerned with learning support, in terms of helping the learner with problems and issues relating to content and process, promoting their acquisition, understanding and internalisation of knowledge and reviewing, monitoring and feeding back on progress. Student pastoral care and welfare are not their prime responsibility, although they may often provide this in informal ways. Many words are used to name *tuteurs*, according to the custom of the organisation and to the role they have to play in it.

One can speak about the *tuteur-reférent* (or *formateur-reférent*), who is in charge of guiding a learner throughout his/her training on the best ways of learning and studying. S/he would be the equivalent of the English *facilitator*. A *tuteur-matière*, on the other hand, would help the learner on a particular subject.

In some places, there are even people called *dépanneurs* (troubleshooters) to whom the learners can address urgent questions.

Special mention has to be made about a specific use of the word *tuteur* in companies, where it identifies somebody who belongs to the staff and is in charge of a younger employee on a training course inside or outside the company (see Section 9.2).

## Germany

The German term for tutor, *Tutor/Tutorin*, is not currently used in adult education, and is restricted to the university system, where tutors are generally non-teaching staff. The person fulfilling the functions undertaken by English and French tutors would be the adult education teacher – the *Kursleiter*. Here, the monitoring and review function, which is a central part of tutoring, is described by the word *Lernprozeßreflektion* – reflection on the learning process.

## 8. EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE CENTRES

Whilst the relationship between the adult learner and his or her principal teacher or course leader is generally accepted as being critical, the relationship between the learner and the material resources, or physical tools for learning, is also important; indeed a three-way association, rather than a two-way one can be postulated. The interaction with resources is, of course, particularly crucial for those undertaking flexible, open and distance programmes of study, as well as self-learning. Indeed, the terms *resource-based learning* or *media-supported learning* in English, *formations médiatisées* in French and *Mediengestütztes Lernen* in German are now used to describe learning modes which emphasise the interaction of the learner with media and materials. Adult learners, especially those unused to studying, need help both in accessing and using educational resources – whether they be libraries and databases of information, telematics and the fax, IT-based educational media, or computers and television, which form an important strand of learner support in their own right.

Increasingly, post-school institutions are bringing together the educational resources needed by learners into unified and managed *resource* or *self-learning centres*. These are generally open throughout the day and evenings, and have staff on hand to provide technical assistance on the use of, particularly, the IT-based resources and to provide more general advice and assistance to learners.

Such centres play a variable role within adult education in England, France and Germany, being much more common in the English and French systems.

### England

*Educational resource centres* are now well established in many further education colleges and other locations (i.e. community and training centres) that seek to meet the needs of adult learners. They are becoming increasingly sophisticated enterprises, and may bring together a wide range of physical and staff resources. For example, they may be the locations for educational and careers advisers and personal counsellors, as well as for learning resources. They may have a number of small tutorial and teaching rooms and banks of computers for learners' use. The teaching departments of colleges may be networked to their main educational resource centre.

## France

*Centres de ressources* (resource centres), where learners can have access to all sorts of printed material and to technological tools (TV, video-recorders, computers and corresponding programs), are increasingly prevalent in France. Some of these are just a new version of the old *bibliothèques* (libraries) or *médiathèques*, which used to be in every large learning centre. Some of them, where the learners find *formateurs* and *tuteurs*, and where the learning process takes place through assisted self-learning, correspond to a new way of teaching and learning which we previously defined as *formations ouvertes* (open or flexible learning).

## Germany

In the 1970s, a number of towns in Germany started self-learning centres, *Selbstlernzentren*, which were meant to help the learner to organise his or her progress by providing advice, materials and more general support. These were never an important part of post-school education in Germany and have now largely disappeared. The main reasons for this were partly financial and partly because they were not felt to provide the types of learning support which adult students needed. However, in the last few years, more and more reports of media-supported learning are to be found.

Some *Bibliotheken* (libraries) and adult education centres have established *Mediatheken*, where learners can have access to all sorts of printed materials and IT-based educational media, just as in England and France. *Selbstlernzentren* have been established above all in large companies where self-learning is provided in connection with learning-on-the-job.

## 9. LESSER-USED TERMS AND CONCEPTS

A range of terms and phrases for actors and support functions is used in the three systems, but less commonly than those given above. They generally have a meaning in one or two languages, but rarely in all three of the language systems described.

### 9.1 Facilitator

This is a term particularly used in open and flexible learning and resource-based learning situations, and implies a non-didactic, assisting role for teachers and tutors. Three **English** definitions of *facilitator* are as follows:

1. *'A teacher who assists in the learning process without being the provider of information or the demonstrator of skills.'*  
(Jarvis, 1990)
2. *'A leader who is skilled in helping a learner or group of learners to specify its/their own learning objectives and to select the strategies by which to reach them.'*  
(Bückmann and Nekeman, 1993)
3. *'Resource-based learning [is a] form of teaching and learning in which learners are given direct access to knowledge that is stored, while teachers act as facilitators.'* (Jarvis, 1990)

The term *facilitator* is one for which there are a number of linked, though distinct, meanings. It may be used generically to describe one aspect of the role of the adult education teacher or tutor, i.e. making the work accessible to students, and supporting and encouraging the development of their learning. It can also be used to describe the specific role of the tutor/teacher engaged on a resource-based learning course, or supporting the learning of a number of individual students. Definition 2 above adds another dimension to the meaning of the term, suggesting a counselling role in helping learners to identify for themselves the learning modes which best suit them. It is worth noting that in recent years, teaching staff have increasingly become learning facilitators in response to the growth in self-directed, flexible and resource-based learning. Rather than teaching in a formal, didactic mode where students learn in a passive way, staff guide and support students in an active learning process and enable them to take greater responsibility for their own learning.

In **France**, the equivalent word *facilitateur* exists. It only means somebody who facilitates any kind of action. It is sometimes used in

an educational context, but not often. The nearest French translation of *facilitator* would be *tuteur*, or sometimes *tuteur-référent* (see Section 7), or also *animateur* (see Section 9.3).

The term is largely unknown in the **German** adult education system, although some of the tasks involved would be covered by the role of *Lernberater* or *Lernförderer*, or learning adviser and motivator.

## 9.2 Mentor

Like *facilitator*, the term *mentor* does not generally imply a specific actor, but rather a type of role or function. It is a relatively new term and concept in adult and vocational education, and is often used in the workplace. A simple, and widely understood, definition is ‘*being a wise, trusted adviser or guide*’, and this arises from the role played by the original *Mentor* of classical fame (Collins, 1991).

In **England**, the term is often used to denote the informal, non-supervisory support provided for young employees by older and more experienced workers. Some of the mentor’s unwritten tasks are to balance the needs of the individual with the needs of the enterprise, to motivate and encourage the employee and to enculturate him or her into the organisation. It has a more formalised role to play in vocational and work-based training – for instance in initial teacher training, where a senior teacher is appointed as mentor to the trainee for the duration of his/her school-based training. In adult education, mentoring is freer of ‘vested interests’ and has a role in developing the learner on an ongoing basis. *Mentoring* can begin at the start of a course, and continue for its duration. Due to the more personal nature of mentoring, in comparison with other forms of guidance or learner support, the relationship with a mentor may continue beyond the life of the course. Jarvis (1990) provides the following more precise definition:

*‘One who advises. In adult education this is not normally the official teacher, but one who advises on how skills should be performed in the workplace. In the UK, mentorship has been suggested for the training of adult educators as the person who advises on and supervises teaching practice. Often the mentor is assumed to be the advocate as well.’*

In **France**, the same term – *mentor* – exists, but is not used in educational organisations; only in enterprises to denote the support given for work-based training. Three other terms have more or less similar meanings: *maître de stage*, *parrain* and *tuteur* (see Section 7 above).

In **Germany**, the term is understood and used in a similar way to that in English, but in much more restricted and less frequent circumstances. *Mentor* refers to someone whose role is, above all else, to be an



adviser, prompter and, particularly in the scientific domain, to be a fatherly friend. In the universities, including the *Fernuniversität* (German Open University), the *Mentor* is an experienced teacher or scientist who advises students during their studies and practical experience.

### 9.3 Animateur

This term, which is used in the **French** and **German** systems, has no real equivalent in **English**, but the closest term here is *facilitator* (see Section 9.1). An *animateur* is someone who works with groups of adult students as well as with other groups in education, training or employment. The task of the *animateur* is to lead and energise the group and facilitate group activities and the achievement of the group's objectives. In **German**, as well as in **French**, the term *animateur* is frequently used in leisure centres or holiday club centres. The *animateur* organises and proposes leisure activities, and animates people to join in.

### 9.4 Moderator

The term *moderator* in **English** has two related definitions, depending on the context. Firstly, it is '*an individual who introduces and guides discussion and audience participation during a panel, colloquy or forum*' (Jarvis, 1990). Secondly, it is a formal title used in vocational education and training (for both adults and young people) to designate a person appointed by the institution or by a national or regional qualifications or examining body to act as an external assessor or verifier for internally assessed courses or programmes of study. In essence, the *moderator* plays an external quality assurance role and ensures that comparable standards and procedures of assessment are applied across institutions.

In **French**, a *modérateur* is somebody in charge of moderating a debate, corresponding to the first (Jarvis) definition. The word is not used in adult education.

In **German** adult education, the term, *Moderator* is used according to the Jarvis definition. However, the *Moderator* also guides the discussion in adult learning groups, especially in groups dealing with personal problems or critical live events. The term *moderator* is also linked with a special adult education method, *moderation*, a '*method of organising discussions in all kinds of groups*', in the sense of Jarvis's definition.

In a recently published interview, it was stated that those people teaching in adult education should become more and more learning moderators – *Lernmoderatoren*. The *Lernmoderatoren* do not

necessarily know anything about the subject matter, but they must know all about the process of learning . Their task should be to support those who want to learn something and to moderate the learning process. By doing this, they help develop adults' ability to engage successfully in self-directed study. They don't ask anymore, *'I know what suits you and you have to learn that; now they react more to what customers demand'*. (*Zeitschrift für Erwachsenenbildung*, 1997, p. 21).

## 9.5 Correcteur

*Correcteur* is a **French** term for someone who literally marks or corrects an adult learner's work and feeds back the result, generally with comments and suggestions for improvement. It is mainly used in distance education and in the school system for exam marking. As such, there is a clear element of support incorporated into this task. In **German**, the word *Korrektor* is applied within the *Fernuniversität*. In both **France** and **Germany**, persons may be appointed from outside the institution to fulfil this specific task. The equivalent terms, *corrector* or *homework marker*, are unknown in **British** adult education, where the function is embedded in that of *teacher* or *tutor*.

## 9.6 Navigator

In some **German** learning areas, especially when multimedia systems are used, the new term *Lernnavigator* comes up. In such systems, networks of knowledge and of learning possibilities are created, for instance, in and between libraries, adult education institutions, companies, chambers of commerce and self-learning centres. In applying these modern approaches, the basic question is: *'Who is actually able to provide a certain knowledge to whom, and at what time?'* The *Navigator* then tries to find those places where the required knowledge is available and is especially qualified for this task (*Zeitschrift für Erwachsenenbildung*, 1997, p. 19). This role and term are unknown in the **French** and **English** systems.

## 9.7 Personne-ressource

This is a **French** term. A *personne-ressource* represents any kind of person, in or outside the educational organisation, who can be of some help for the learners by giving them information which they need, both on the subject of their studies and from a methodological point of view, either because they know about it personally, or because of their job. In the same way, a *lieu-ressource* is a place where learners can find any type of information linked to their studies. No equivalents for these terms have been found in **English** or **German**.

## 10. CONCLUSIONS

This paper set out to provide a comparison of the key terms and concepts which describe the actors, roles and functions involved in supporting adult learners in England, France and Germany. The exercise of achieving a good comparison and clarification of terms has proved to be challenging, not least because the actors involved often play more than one role and these are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Secondly, words and phrases which appear similar in construction or sound in two or three languages can describe roles which are quite distinct or are of varying scope in the different countries. The terms *tutor*, *tuteur* and *Tutorin* are prime examples of this problem. Nevertheless, it has been possible to make considerable progress in identifying, differentiating and understanding the key components and principles of learner and learning support, and the key players involved, in the English, French and German adult education systems

A second observation is that the full meaning of terms and concepts in this area can only be defined and understood by reference to the organisational setting for learning, the level of learning, the learning mode and how learning support roles relate to the central teaching functions. Such knowledge enables educators to comprehend how the different components of the same role interrelate and allows them to explore the working relationships between different professionals in the learning and learner support processes. It thus allows possible gaps in support provision and inadequate linkages between professionals in different settings and countries to be identified, ideas shared and developments made.

Another key issue is that the definitions of roles are not fixed, but are modified in response to changes in curriculum policy and content, learning objectives, teaching and learning strategies and the application of technology to the learning process. For example, the trend towards more self-directed, flexible and resource-based learning, where adults learn at a time and place and in a mode that suits their needs and circumstances, has important implications for the work of adult educators. Hence, a language needs to be developed which describes these new demands and, as part of this, descriptions of function and job title need to change and adapt in order to reflect the new circumstances.

Increasingly, adult education teachers are expected to play multiple roles in facilitating and supporting learning instead of the more traditional one of teaching facts in a formal, didactic way. This leads to questions being raised about the most efficacious division of duties between teachers, tutors, course leaders, counsellors and others who interact with the learner. It also highlights issues concerned with teachers' and other providers' skills to fulfil these wider functions, and has implications for their initial and in-service training. In turn, the extent to which providers are equipped to deal with the needs of adult learners impinges on the quality of the support which is provided. It is evident from the work thus far that much learner support is provided in an unplanned, uncoordinated way and is often centred on the role and skills of the main or only teacher on an adult programme. There would appear to be an obvious need for more strategy, planning and quality assurance being brought into adult education support processes, with a first step being to gain better clarity and understanding of learners' needs and the roles and professional skills required to respond to these.

During the last 20 years, major social, economic and industrial transformations, including the increase in the number of career changes undergone in a lifetime and the need for people to renew their skills on a regular basis, have helped to create a demand for lifelong learning as adults seek to improve their prospects. Not only do adults make up the majority of students in post-school institutions, but more of them are working towards qualifications in the workplace and through open and distance learning in their own time. Ensuring that they realise their full potential presents great challenges and opportunities which are more likely to be fulfilled if European countries share experience, good practice and innovation in meeting adults' learning needs and supporting them in the learning process.

The area of learner and learning support is very underdeveloped on a transnational basis. In order to facilitate more effective international cooperation and the greater exchange of ideas and strategies, a better and more unified conceptual language and cross-national terminology needs to be developed. This paper seeks to make an initial contribution to this process.

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