

Book Review



**Erzsebet Kazarjan (2013): Higher Level Vocational Training and mobility, or the morals of a research. [Felsőfokú szakkepzés és mobilitás, avagy egy kutatás tanulságai]. Eotvos Publisher [Eotvos Kiado], Budapest.**

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Higher Level Vocational Training and mobility, or the morals of a research. The topic, which was chosen by Erzsebet Kazarjan, deals with important questions.

In the last ten years, numerous studies, articles and national researches have been published in connection with higher level vocational training. Theoretical works focused on the development and continuous change of the training, while empirical studies concentrated on the investigation of students' expectations and motivations as well as on the issue of the labour market in relation to the training. In the last few years, more and more students chose higher level vocational training either as a full-time or as a correspondent student. Beside the number of applicants, we can state as fact that, by now, the higher level vocational training has gone through several changes. In 2011, the new Higher Education Act was finalised and accepted. The changes in the new act also affected the higher level vocational training system. Since September 2013 higher level vocational training programmes have been started in those higher education institutions which provided this type of training in the form of basic or five-year education programmes with possibilities of further education as well as which gained eligibility for starting these training programmes and its specialisation.

The topic of short-cycle higher education (FOSZK), earlier higher vocational education (FSZ-2003-2013) and accredited higher vocational education school system (AIFSZ 1998-2003) is internationally studied. The formation and the development were observed by several studies. Comparative analyses also dealt with the characteristics of European countries (Kirsch et al., 2003; Dobbins-Knill, 2009). In our country, we can divide the researches we have done over the last 20 years into two groups. We observed that the researches were focused on students' composition, socio-cultural background, learning outcomes and motivation, (Hrubos, 2002; Pusztai et al., 2003; Karsai, 2011; Kasso-Farkas, 2012; Szemerszki, 2012.) but on the other hand there are some

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researches in the same field which also studied this involving the acceptance, value and future plans of the labour market (Fehervari-Kocsis, 2009; DUF, 2009; Penzes et al. 2011; Szemerszki, 2006).

In Hungary, the beginning of short cycle higher education was in the mid-1990s, when the pretension and the demand for making a new educational form were strengthened, beside the university sector, which, contrary with post-secondary education, is more suitable for the labour market. Short cycle higher education gained its final place in the training structure when the Bologna system was introduced in 2006.

The researches in the topic chiefly dealt with the students and labour market outcome. We can consider the author's choice of topic as unique because she researches and makes inquisitions on this topic as first. Erzsebet Kazarjan's book summarises the theoretical and empirical parts of her thesis for the doctor's degree in 163 pages range.

The uniqueness and the singularity of the tome are in the special choice of topic. We can divide the structure into 6 big unities. In the theoretical unity, besides the home stories, we find an international glancing out. Readers can be familiar with the British, French, Belgian-Flemish, German-Austrian and the American system.

Besides the characteristics, the legal and institute system of the home system, it gives some useful pieces of information about the frame of the training. From the point of view of the speculation, there are two important topics and concepts, which are outstanding right in the content. These are the Higher Level Vocational Training pedagogy and the mobility pedagogy.

The 2 topics are seen in a brand new approximation. The first summarises the learning and educational strategies, and the concepts, while the mobility pedagogy is walking around the topic of mobility, mentioning the mobility of students studying in advanced studies. The author describes these parts of departure right in the recommendatory.

„Both in psychology and pedagogy blew over an emotive revolution, which aimed the attention to the effective learning is not just reproduce knowledge, and function of cognitive skills, but as an attitude of competence, they come into the spotlight, as well.” (Kazarjan, 2013, 9).

This way, the social environment of the person, the existing skills and motivation, and also the ambitions have an effect on the school performance. The most important message of the theoretical chapters is that life-long learning, and self-regulative learning should act as the part of the so-called old typed school system education.

The main aim of the research showed in the book is to examine what conditions play important role in the self-regulatory learning of students in practice-oriented training, besides it shows what does the independent educational discipline mean. In the theoretical chapters of the book, in tertiary vocational education deals with the

pedagogical aspects of higher education vocational education and training, which takes different education strategies in terms of educational science into account. On the other hand, it explains the importance of life-long learning; it discusses questions on of youth sociology and adds psychological questions to pedagogical questions.

The questionnaires and focus teamed inquisitions taken at Schola Europa Vocational Academy, which has examined students of Leonardo programme among 2006 and 2011, concentrated on self-regulation, planning, schedule making, and even communication skills as well.

„Which skills do a youngster need to set off? What do they learn in these field trips? Who learns the most? What other moveable sources do they have? How do they rate the road correlate to their own skills and the difficulties of the tasks?” (Kazarjan, 2013, 9).

The book makes an attempt to which differences students went through, who took part in scholarship programmes of Higher Level Vocational Training schools, especially focused on the improvement of self-regulation and communication skills.

Erzsebet Kazarjan has been working on the use of a variety of test methods with the involvement of a control group and a controlled study. The students who participated in the Leonardo program were examined each year during a research period (2006-2011) before leaving and returning home. The self-regulation, planning, scheduling and communication skills on paper-pencil based questionnaires were filled by self-confession. In the research, the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>-grade students, who did not participate in the mobility programme at the Schola Europa Vocational Academy completed the same questionnaires as a control group. The questionnaire for the results of the experimental group also included a metaphorical questionnaire, analysing the diversity of source metaphors by analysing content analysis. Besides the given methods, the researcher has made a general survey among students, in which he examined their motivation, further educational goals and employment opportunities in order to get more familiar with the background of students who study in vocational training. In the 2010/2011 academic year, students participating in the mobility programme took part in a focus group interview during the research, where the purpose of researching was to release the experiences gained during the research.

The result of the research verifies that among students, who had weaker skills at the beginning, than the average, can improve the most, so the programme is the most effective for them.

The author of the book built his research on 5 basic theses. On one hand, he supposed that the mobility students show development in planning, scheduling and self-regulation, and this development is not a spontaneous process, it is due to participation in the mobility program. For the third thesis, the researcher assumed that those, who are participating in foreign studies inside the programme before giving answers to the

examined questions (planning, scheduling and self-regulation) didn't have more advanced skills compared to their 13<sup>th</sup>-grade counterparts. In thesis number 4, Kazarjan has made progress in the field of communication skills among the participants in the mobility programme, as students are so-called forced to enforce their own interests. As for the improvement and effectiveness of the study, it was assumed that the results of students, who are learning abroad significantly improved in grade 14 compared to their 13th grade, which is clearly due to the mobility program.

Some parts of the author's preliminary hypotheses proved that the skills of students attending the Leonardo programme developed greatly, and even with the expansion of professional knowledge, studying abroad has also increased motivation and self-efficacy, which, - as the researcher says - a prerequisite of lifelong learning. According to the author, the research carried out among students of vocational education can contribute to the development of the pedagogical-methodological culture of vocational education, the utilization of its knowledge of higher education, and the research of the triple unit of higher education - mobility - self-regulating learning can contribute to the efficient operation of a new type of training model. By finding the correct teaching methods or by strengthening, it would be possible to strengthen a practically oriented short-cycle training form in a domestic education system.

In view of the book's style, - though the frame is well structured and methodically divided - it's readable. Sometimes it differs from the title of the chapter. It makes it more readable, then again it makes the posterior understanding more difficult.

It's worth to mention the representation of the richly used graphs and charts, which demonstrates the current elements in every main junction. For example in the part of the international glancing out, we can see the education system of the given countries, the model of the pedagogy's basic relationship, or the dimensions of learning.

In the analytic part of the research, the author uses the charts with excellent sense and system approach, which makes the general understanding easier.

The book gives a great opportunity to see into the system of Higher Level Vocational Trainings and be more familiar with the chances of mobility programmes. At the same time with the book's publishing, it's not just the name, which has changed, but there were some changes in the content as well, so it would be deserving to continue the work also in the renamed system.