

## Learning and dual training in Higher Education

The European Higher Education Area is outlining very positive policies and technical guidance and specific lines of action which lead to the idea that it is possible to provide a different way of teaching at university. The Bologna process proposes a structural change, a European convergence model, both for the structure of the subjects studied and an easily understood and comparable system of degrees. This also includes mobility as an element of personal growth leading to employability, recognition of qualifications in education and lifetime learning as the promotion of a European system of higher education.

This is a new way of looking at training, which is more suited to our changing society. It goes beyond the student passively absorbing knowledge imparted by others to students being active participators in their learning. This means that new methods of action must be found to promote developing, constructing and experimenting with new models and methodology tools for teaching and learning.

Closer links of training with the labour market, and promoting teaching that is more student-centred generate changes that strongly affect the purpose of training, the methodology and assessment systems.

Against this background, dual training or sandwich courses in Higher Education are seen as an innovative option from among those aimed at renewing methods based on constructing competences.

Professional development for young people is constantly beset by problems of finding work. Industrialised countries are going through a process of rapprochement between universities and business, whose importance to current socio-economic development can be in no doubt. Dual training in Higher Education is by far the best way to promote and profit most from a relationship between universities and business, as their aims agree. Dual training leads to taking a different access route to education and obtaining a university degree.

Dual training is upheld by the principle of dividing training times between the teaching centre and practical work in a business which gives shape to the learner's training and transformation process.

- It enables competences to be developed and allows individuals to face two different cultural situations.
- It enables real-time association of what has been learnt at university and the practical training in a company.

Dual training is gaining ground in Europe in education and society. According to the Green Book "Recognise the value of young people", published in France in July 2009 by a Consultation Committee on Youth Policy, led by Martin Hirsch (a member of the French government), "dual training is the tool that has proved best at placing young people in work". ..... The unemployment rate of the apprentices is two times less than their counterparts following the normal path of training. .... A clear objective must be to guide the proposed reforms: the proportion of young people in dual training must double by 2015. This means that, for each generation, one young person in 7 must attend dual training.

It must be remembered that this training model has been a proven success at a European level and is integrated into the Bologna process. As they are known and nearby, the dual training model practised in Germany and France can be held up as a good example.