

# ENOP Newsletter

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Due to various unforeseen circumstances there was a considerable lapse of time between the last and this issue of the Newsletter. We apologize to those who have submitted some materials - some of which is now a bit dated and need not be reported anymore, and some of which we feel is still so timely that we like to include it even now.

B.W.

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▶ "New Technologies and the Impact of Human Error"

This workshop is scheduled to take place in Bad Homburg (Germany), February 13-15, 1984 on the premises of the Werner Reimers Foundation (WRS) and the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme. It is part of the five-year of the International Study Group "New Technologies and Work". Altogether 20 participants are envisioned who have already distributed their written contributions to participants. The program was developed by Jacques Leplat in collaboration with a Danish (Rasmussen) and British (Duncan) colleague.

▶ DIRECTORY OF EUROPEAN ORGANIZATIONAL AND WORK PSYCHOLOGISTS

The Directory, decided upon at the 3rd ENOP-Symposium, is now compiled and is presently in the process of being printed. It will be made available to ENOP members and all other interested parties.

▶ ENOP EXCHANGE PROGRAM

More exchange activities seem to have been stimulated by ENOP than it was originally anticipated:

- Claude Levy-Leboyer will take on the Franky Chair at the State University Gent during February-April 1984.
- A researcher (Dylan Jones) of the group around Don Wallis (University of Wales) spent some time at the Institute of Claude Levy-Leboyer in Paris with the assistance of the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme.
- A doctoral student of Pol Coetsier's (van den Broeb) spends some time in the research group of Sylvia Shimmin.
- Jacques Leplat's Institute hosted a young researcher from Berlin (Marion Wittrock) during November-December 1984.

▶ GROWING INTEREST OF US-COLLEAGUES IN ENOP

Division 14 ("Industrial Psychology") of the American Psychological Association as well as members of the US "Summit Group" (somewhat the US homologue to ENOP) have expressed their interest in collaboration. During the 4th ENOP-Symposium might be a chance to receive some US-guests and to discuss possibilities of cooperation.

▶ ENOP COORDINATING COMMITTEE (Co.-Co.)

The Co. Co. met in Paris on December 16, 1983 and discussed ENOP affairs. Present were: Coetsier, Dachler, Levy-Leboyer, Shimmin, Wilpert, de Wolff and (part of the time, as guest) Prof. Usha Kumar (India). Main items of discussion were:

- ENOP Symposium '84 (see above)
- Workshops:

It was felt that workshops should form a major ENOP-activity. The following rules should be abided:

. Always one or two ENOP members should play the roles of "god fathers" for the planning and execution of workshops.

. Participation should be on the basis of invitation.

. Advance distribution of papers should be insured.  
. An internationally balanced group of participants should be insured.

. A written report should be obligatory.  
If advance paper distribution and internationally balanced participation is not possible one should either postpone or cancel the workshop.

► NEWSLETTER

The responsibility to compile ENOP Newsletter issues should be rotated among ENOP members on a periodic (e.g. annual) basis. The responsible editor ought to be always a member of Co. Co.

► ENOP MEMBERSHIP

The Business Meeting '84 will have to make a decision on a moderate expansion of national representations. Charles de Wolff will prepare a detailed proposal as to criteria and procedures.

Notes on the First Plenary Discussion : Unemployment crisis

The Thursday morning session was set aside for a presentation by Professor Peter Warr on "Unemployment Research - the State of the Art". As background material, he distributed advance copies to those present of his chapter on Work and Unemployment which is to be published in the forthcoming "Handbook of Work and Organisation Psychology".

Peter Warr classified the material he reviewed into "what we know" about unemployment and "what we do not know, and need to know". The former was summarised in 11 categorical statements, for which there is now compelling evidence from research carried out during the recent decade since unemployment rates began their spectacular and unremitting rise in Western Europe and elsewhere. Peter also listed 15 points under the other heading. It was clear from his review that although we are beginning to understand what the psychological impact of unemployment is under modern circumstances (... which are not the same as when the 'classic' researches of the late 1930s took place), there is a long way to go before we can appreciate the finer details of how individual and social differences moderate the effects. We need to know more of these if we are to help with the mitigation of adverse psychological effects.

Peter Warr's two lists are appended here. They formed the basis of a lively ensuing discussion. All members present participated in this, offering additional information about unemployment in their own countries and commenting on the need for further psychological research to tackle problems which they say as the most demanding.

Among the points raised were some fundamental issues about relevance and methodology. Marian Debrzynski pointed out that in Algeria, as in Yugoslavia, unemployment was not regarded at all as a psychological problem. In a country like Algeria where as many as 70% in rural areas were not employed, this was a strictly economic matter. Boris Petz had doubts about the utility of retaining the lofty ideas which psychologists sometimes had about the psychological imperatives of desirable job and employment characteristics. Gert Graveson thought that structural unemployment problems were more pressing than psychological ones; we should not neglect the fact that more people were actually at work now than two decades ago, despite severe and growing unemployment.

In the context of discussion on some methodological issues, it was noted that nearly all our research to date was based on questionnaire and interview data. Although there were some informative reports of behavioural changes following unemployment, independent direct observation of such changes was extremely difficult to obtain. Other members pointed to the need for longitudinal, individual, case-histories; and for easier access by research workers to official data banks on unemployment.

Discussion then turned towards remedial measures in which psychologists were, or could be, involved. The beneficial outcomes from special training programmes for school-leavers and other unemployed young people were questioned in the light of job shortages. Several members emphasised the need for educational influences to be brought to bear upon such matters as the future work motivation of young people in a world of

continuing high unemployment, and the attitudes of people to voluntary, unpaid, work. Pol Coetsier mentioned that counselling for non-employed people was now available on a wide scale in Belgium. It was agreed that such counselling services by psychologists should be more generally established.

The group concluded that unemployment ought to be a continuing, indeed growing, area of study by work psychologists. But it was not enough for us to be publishing research and exchanging ideas. We should also be talking to policy makers and labour agencies about the contributions which psychologists can make towards remedial action.

### Unemployment Research: The State of the Art

Peter Warr, MRC/SSRC SAPU, University of Sheffield, United Kingdom

#### WHAT WE KNOW

1. Unemployment rates have risen from around 3% to 10%-15% in the past ten years. They are above 20% for certain groups and in certain regions. Long-term unemployment is now common. Levels will remain high for the foreseeable future. "True" unemployment is higher than official statistics indicate.
2. Some earlier research is now out-of-date, because of changes in welfare benefits, levels of nutrition etc.
3. Unemployment causes financial hardship.
4. Unemployment impairs mental health. For four reasons: (a) Loss of benefits of paid work (money, activity, variety, time structure, social contacts and status, personal identity), (b) Need to adapt to an undesired new role, (c) Changes in non-occupational role activities, (d) Need to deal with new and threatening questions about oneself and one's future.
5. The effects of unemployment differ between people. Greater psychological distress occurs for those (a) with high employment commitment, (b) who are middle-aged, (c) who are long-term unemployed, (d) who are members of the working class, (e) who have least money, (f) who have lowest activity levels.
6. Sex differences in the impact of unemployment are not present in the case of principal wage-earners. However, mothers of young children who have paid jobs do not exhibit better mental health than those mothers without jobs, unless they have high non-occupational adversity (which is greater among working-class women).
7. Unemployment causes family strain.
8. Unemployment causes impaired physical health for people with pre-existing chronic disorders.

9. A small proportion of unemployed people report improved physical and psychological health after job loss.
10. Potential unemployment increases psychological distress among people still in jobs.
11. High rates of unemployment alter the tasks of careers guidance and placement staff.
12. (Other points to be raised by Symposium members).

#### WHAT WE DO NOT KNOW, AND NEED TO KNOW

1. Whether unemployment impairs physical health for those without pre-existing chronic disorders.
2. Whether unemployment causes a rise in (a) demands on health service facilities, (b) death rates, (c) divorce, (d) crime.
3. Whether there are differences between countries in the impact of unemployment, associated with differences in welfare benefits, free medical facilities, etc.
4. What in detail are the processes whereby unemployment impairs mental health. For example, financial strain or loss of a socially valued role. Is there a sequence of phases?
5. Whether the impact of unemployment differs significantly between one-parent and two-parent families.
6. Whether continuing unemployment after leaving school causes young people to "become unemployable" or "fail to acquire essential work skills and attitudes".
7. What behaviours change after loss of a job (e.g. quantity and quality of social interaction).
8. Whether prolonged unemployment causes a substantial loss of (a) job skills, (b) ability to acquire new skills. And whether such a loss (if it occurs) is reversible.
9. What are the problems of re-entry into paid work after unemployment.
10. What forms of counselling/advice/social centres can best aid different groups of unemployed people.
11. What basic skills and values/motives are needed by unemployed people starting their own business. And how people can acquire these skills and values quickly.

12. How to expand job-sharing, part-time work, reduced-weeks or reduced-hours jobs, without excessive financial cost.
13. Which psychological factors influence (a) company or national productivity, (b) consumer demand, to the degree that unemployment is increased or reduced.
14. Whether the introduction of new technology increases or reduces job availability, and how far new technology increases or reduces skill requirements for different groups of workers.
15. How to obtain research funds to investigate more of these topics, especially through longitudinal studies.
16. (Other points to be raised by Symposium members).

## ▶ APPENDIX:

Report on the workshop on  
"LEARNING TO LEARN THROUGH THE ACQUISITION OF WORK SKILLS"

General Theme

Most people in Western Societies leave school without educational or vocational qualifications. The position is worse still in developing countries where illiteracy rates are high. For these people, getting a job depends on their ability to learn simple but unfamiliar industrial and commercial skills. Their chance of retaining employment depends on being able to learn fresh and perhaps more complex skills throughout their working lives.

The Workshop was planned around this theme. Its objective was to display the fruits of research into instructional methods which attempt to clarify and alleviate the underlying training problem. That problem is how to train people for particular vocational skills in such a way as also to increase their skill at learning itself. Participants were encouraged to present accounts or critiques of recent and on-going work which bears directly on this issue. The related matters of training for maximal versatility and transferability of skills were raised during discussions.

Sylvia Downs and Pat Perry involved all participants in working through examples, and watching video-recorded demonstrations, of the exercise material they have devised throughout the past two years of research with young people and their instructors within the U.K. Youth Training Scheme. A major objective of their project is to improve the ability to learn any new task through a novel approach to the learning of specific skills. Their presentation illustrated empirical methods for analysing learning activities into 'memorising', 'understanding', and 'doing', components. It showed how they have identified weaknesses in the learning techniques characteristically used in industrial settings, and went on to reveal some of the methods they have developed to overcome such weaknesses. These novel methods are different from (though complementary to) the 'experiential' or 'discovery' approaches practised in some industrial training contexts. Nor are they the same as techniques based on recognition of different learning styles. Handouts distributed by Sylvia



Downs gave to everyone a clear appreciation of how training instructors are using the new learning techniques. She agreed to send research data and research reports to anyone who wished for more detailed information.

Charles Mercer introduced and demonstrated a new approach to education about population issues. It uses a United Nations population database stored in an Apple 2E microcomputer. The programs are all designed to demonstrate the effect of changing birth and death-rates on populations as they move through time. Unlike the situation with most computer-assisted learning, the user is not given a set of questions or procedures to work through with the objective of achieving some kind of 'correct' behaviours. Instead he is allowed to interrogate the database in a wide variety of ways in order to explore outcomes of both actual and possible population changes in countries all over the world. It was evident that this system has potentialities for more general research aims associated with finding better strategies for learning. The user/trainee can be provided with a structured learning environment in which to experiment. Observation of such interactions may throw light on whether 'generic' learning skills are being used or are evolving through the experience of learning about the particular subject of population dynamics.

Two of Claude Levy-Leboyer's research colleagues, Alain Bentolila & Léon Gany, presented an account of problems they have encountered in countries like Haiti, Ecuador, and the Seychelles, where illiteracy is very widespread and formal education may be in a language which is not indigenous. In Haiti, for example, with an 80% rate of illiteracy, the native tongue is Creole, yet education was in the French language. However, early work revealed that these were not necessarily the real educational barriers. Instead, the general content found in text-books was often irrelevant or misplaced. The researchers found, however, that political and social circumstances in countries like Haiti and Ecuador were complicating the issue even further. Even when realistic and culturally-relevant material was provided for rural communities wishing to educate themselves, this proved to be highly unpopular. Not only was it thought to be socially and materially advantageous to learn in a 'foreign' language, but to learn about everyday pragmatic matters relevant to one's own village community aroused no enthusiasm whatsoever. Discussion of these projects brought out clearly that we have to distinguish the possession of 'literacy' (i.e. just being able to read and write) from that of 'post-literacy', which is being able fully to understand the language in use. In developing countries, the problem of functional illiteracy (not being able to use the language

practically, even when you can read or write in it) is evidently as critical as that of basic illiteracy itself.

Tuesday's session opened with an illustrated account by Michael Banks of another research project which (like Sylvia Downs' work) aims to maximise the effectiveness of Britain's new national Youth and Adult Training Schemes. In these schemes there are elements of a) skills learning through work experience or in training workshops, b) 'competence' learning through inclusion of basic skills such as numeracy and interpersonal effectiveness, and c) learning about the world of work. Michael Banks and his team at Sheffield have concentrated on the 'competence learning' aspect, and in particular upon the need for a straightforward job analysis technique with which practitioners can extract information on job requirements that vocational training has to meet. He described how a new instrument - the Job Components Inventory - was specially designed for this purpose. Its categories cover use of tools and equipment; physical, perceptual, and mathematical requirements, communications and interpersonal needs, decision-making, and responsibility. The way the J.C.I. is used was described in some detail, with examples of its application to practical problems in careers guidance and curriculum design as well as in youth training. Initial studies have established the J.C.I. as having high reliability and discriminant validity.

The general theme of 'learning to learn' was taken up again by Pol Coetsier in his presentation of how problems of retraining unskilled and poorly qualified people are being tackled in Belgium. Unemployed and unskilled workers were not only likely to be less 'intelligent', educationally advanced, and well-motivated, than employees in skilled jobs; they were also handicapped by social and emotional deficiencies. Pol Coetsier's own theoretical position regarding 'learning to learn' rests upon a cognitive and information-processing, rather than a behaviouristic, view of the process. He used his own research to illustrate how unskilled workers tend to be episodic and anecdotal in their recollections of job-related events, whilst their memorising is dominated by sensory and perceptual associations. Hence it was necessary in training them to take account of their particular capabilities and 'learning styles'. Training methods which were experiential appeared to be best for all groups of trainees, and they were relatively better still for unskilled than for skilled people.

The final discussion was lively and could profitably have gone on much longer. There was agreement that the topic of 'learning to learn more effectively' must be pursued vigorously. In all our countries there is convincing evidence that the educational system has signally failed to encourage, let alone to inculcate, the basic skills of learning among people in the lower ranges of ability. We have established that some basic knowledge and understanding of learning skills is available. Perhaps there are more directly-relevant European research data on learning how to learn than those of us present are aware of. But the group were convinced that much more needs to be researched, and quickly.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS For Future Action

- i. A first requirement was to enquire into the scope of whatever other relevant studies are going on in Europe. (In this context it is unfortunate to have to report that one organisation which might be expected to show interest failed even to acknowledge an invitation to be represented at the Workshop. This was CEDEFOP - the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training.) Any information which members of ENOP may have about research or practical training programmes which are focussed upon generalisable learning skill will be most welcome.
- ii. The group suggested having another meeting in a year or so, hopefully with an enlarged membership.
- iii. In the meantime it was recommended that those who attended maintain corresponding links with each other and exchange research reports and papers.
- iv. Any possibilities of exchange visits among research staff working in the area should be followed up.

Don WALLIS

ATTENDANCE (\* ENOP members)

Dr. Michael Banks	MRC/SSRC Social and Applied Psychology Unit, University of Sheffield, U.K.
Dr. Alain Bentolila	Institut de Psychologie, Université René Descartes, Paris, France.
* Professor Pol Coetsier	Laboratory of Applied Psychology, University of Ghent, Belgium.
Mrs. Sylvia Downs	Occupational Research Unit, UWIST, Cardiff, U.K.
Professor Keith Duncan	Department of Applied Psychology, UWIST, Cardiff, U.K.
Ms. Elizabeth Dunne	Department of Applied Psychology, University College Cork, Ireland.
Dr. Léon Gany	Institut de Psychologie, Université René Descartes, Paris, France.
* Professor Claude Levy-Leboyer	Institut de Psychologie, Université René Descartes, Paris, France.
Mr. Charles Mercer	Department of Applied Psychology, UWIST, Cardiff, U.K.
* Dr. Jacques Le Plat	Laboratoire de Psychologie du Travail, École Pratique des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris, France.
Ms. Pat Perry	Occupational Research Unit, UWIST, Cardiff, U.K.
* Professor Boris Petz	Department of Psychology, University of Zagreb, Yugoslavia.
* Professor Don Wallis	Department of Applied Psychology, UWIST, Cardiff, U.K.

ENOP WORKSHOP : ON LEARNING TO LEARN THROUGH

THE ACQUISITION OF WORK SKILLS

Monday, 17th October, 1983

09.30	Introduction to Workshop	Don Wallis
10.00 - 1.00	Developing Learning Skills	Sylvia Downs and Pat Perry Occupational Research Unit, UWIST, Cardiff.
	L U N C H	
14.15 - 15.45	A Computer-assisted approach to Population Education	Charles Mercer Department of Applied Psychology, UWIST, Cardiff.
16.15 - 18.00	Learning and Training Problems in Developing Countries where Illiteracy is an added factor	Claude Levy-Leboyer, Alain Bentolila and Léon Gany Institut de Psychologie, Universite' Rene' Descartes.

Tuesday, 18th October, 1983

09.00 - 10.30	Approaches to Youth Training - a research base	Michael H. Banks, MRC/SSRC Social and Applied Psychology Research Unit, University of Sheffield.
11.00 - 12.30	Learning to learn, for Unskilled Workers	Pol Coetsier, Laboratory of Applied Psychology, University of Ghent.
12.30 - 1.30	Open Forum/Final Discussion	

L U N C H