

Emmanuel Fourcade

Laboratoire interuniversitaire de recherche en éducation scientifique et technologique, Cachan

Constructing Adult Training: A Case Study in the GTM Construction Company

How does one go about constructing training support adapted to adult students and employable by temporary trainers? This is the central question to be addressed in this paper.

Observing the existing practices in the GTM construction company (Building—Public Works) has led us to envisage the internal training process in its totality: the different persons involved, organization, steps and methods, etc. But consideration has, above all, been given to the participation in the writing of two courses designed for the company's personnel working on site. One aspect of these courses is that they must be transmittable: written by a small work group, they are intended for use as is, by the temporary trainers, charged with assuring the diffusion of knowledge. This is why they are called "training references." The first one is concerned with crane drivers and takes as its theme the safe handling of a crane. The second is concerned with concrete and is addressed to supervisors.

Two subjects, two student profiles. Many different kinds of problems have arisen while the references were being written. One permanent preoccupation was the adaptation of the content for the every day needs of students in a work environment. But most of the obstacles are more educational, being linked to the diffusion of knowledge since many of them experience difficulties vis-à-vis written expression. Thus, hands-on work was instituted just as soon as the contents to be transmitted permitted it (models, construction, etc.). Participation methods favoring a dialogue within the group were given the greatest importance along with the use of pictures, drawings and schematics among other visual aids (transparencies, documents of synthesis, etc.). The solutions adopted at the moment still leave some questions to be answered.

Thanks to a comparative analysis, several currents of thought have emerged regarding: contents (their choice, the manner in which they are explained, etc.); diffusion of knowledge (methods, visual aids and all the aspects linked to both oral and written communication which these imply); and the evaluation process (that of the students but also that of the trainers).

Although based on a particular mechanism, this analysis reveals the general problems relative to any attempt at adult training.