

## Conference

# Being a trainer in today's world: new actors, new spaces, new times

Conferência given at the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences  
of the University of Lisbon, on 4th November, 2005

PIERRE CASPAR

It is a great honour for me to be invited to take part in this debate on the main issues regarding the development of professional training: those which concern the main actors of this development. I am grateful for this opportunity.

I am pleased that this debate, as part of the perspective of lifelong education and training, is being held in Lisbon. This idea, which can be considered the face of the European Union, formalised in its memorandum, was strongly backed in this beautiful city in 2000, as the expression of a larger European ambition: "to make the European Union the most dynamic and most competitive knowledge society in the world". The future of this ambition is being built as we speak.

I am especially pleased for this opportunity to speak in Portugal, this country of enterprise whose influence and expansion has always been closely related to the domain of knowledge and development of the technology of the time. We remind you of a sentence from that remarkable man, Vitorino Magalhães GODINHO, who is one of the world's experts on the history of the discoveries: "With the widening of the market to the planetary scale, a new mentality is born thanks to which man learns to situate himself in the space of visual perception and geometry, in the time of date, measurement and change, guiding himself thanks to the algorithm, object of verification, thus beginning to create the tool that will allow separation of the real from the blanket of fantasy." Although referring to the 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> centuries, this elegant sentence is however a particularly accurate premonition of the lifestyles of today's societies, which are totally built around information and knowledge and the way it is used.

This paper was articulated in this spirit: based on access to knowledge in history and on its modern forms, I will make a connection with some benchmark moments in the professional training of adults, the over-

riding goal of the National Arts and Trades Conservatory (CNAM) from where I come. Finally, after examining some of the new territories opening up to trainers, I will share my personal reflections on the richness and the difficulties involved in being a trainer today.

The background of this paper, guided by the axis of continuous professional training, will not allow the analysis either of other adult training methods, namely informal training and popular education, or the undeniable links between initial training and continuous training, or training considered as a field of research. It's a pity, but how can one discuss everything?

THE ISSUE OF ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE is at the very centre of the learning concept itself, at the heart of the ties between teaching and learning, in the articulation of the *relations between knowledge and power*.

For centuries learning depended, above all, on the ability and the right to access the places of knowledge. These spaces and communities gathered the acquisitions of humanity, which were subsequently stored, maintained, studied, interpreted, reproduced and disseminated. Even jealously concealed, perhaps the knowledge was not revealed to those thought not to be apt to receive it or to use it with discernment. Or perhaps this concealment would lead to the owners being deemed by certain social groups as the chosen possessors and guardians of knowledge that carries true meaning. One can remember the film "The name of the rose" and its secret library, which most of the members of the monastic community ignored even existed. There is no need to protect possible access to something that does not exist.

WHAT WERE THESE PLACES OF KNOWLEDGE? Here are some brief illustrative examples.

Firstly, *monasteries and churches*, places of knowledge revealed, received and retained by clergymen, inscribed and offered by the very architecture of the buildings and its ornaments. Thinking was done, depending on the countries, in Stonehenge, in Angkor, and of course, in our Roman temples and in our gothic cathedrals. They constitute authentic books of stone bearing the teachings for whomever attempted to decipher them, messages offered and at the same time hidden, like in the “Purloined Letter” by Edgar Poe. **Universities**, in all their forms, which were associated, as scientific communities, with places of exchange and research, creation, critical analysis, exegesis and transmission of knowledge, and as institutions charged with tests and examinations to attribute academic degrees.

One can also mention the *great libraries*, such as Alexandria library. Firstly, they are places of collection and conservation of the materialised knowledge of humanity; they constitute places of research, so much so that it is affirmed that knowledge attracts knowledge and provokes questions, that an open spirit opens up spirits further, and that comparison against another’s knowledge contributes to the formation of new knowledge. Was not the encyclopaedia, the greatest work of the century of Enlightenment, at the same time “and inventory and invention”?

Many other examples can be evoked. To do mention just two, we can think firstly of the *curiosity cabinets*, which were extremely popular in Europe in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Eminent explorers or travellers and great collectors donated, in a closed environment, trophies, objects of art or worship, minerals, writings, strange animals or scientific instruments that had been collected over years. Places of admiration, places of preservation of hitherto unknown heritage, these cabinets often became museums, these enchanting places that we never tire of visiting. Indeed, I cannot fail to evoke the National Museum of Technology, in Paris, at the heart of the CNAM, which we have labelled the “memory of our imagination”.

In the same epoch of our history, now in the *field of the immaterial*, certain “fairs”, certain castles such as that of Voltaire and the countess of Châtelet, certain royal courts such as those of Frederick of Prussia, Catherine of Sweden or Khan Akbar, in Fatehpur Sikri, in India, played an important role in the circulation and exchange of knowledge. They gathered what were called “beautiful spirits”, concerned with engendering progress and human knowledge by cross referencing the sciences, cultures, poetry, etc. and the pleasure of music and words.

What was the common link between these different places of knowledge? Probably the *functions* that they fulfilled in society. We focus on four.

*Acting as a testament to the origins of knowledge* would be the first of these functions. One can consider this knowledge as revealed, and therefore as one of the spiritual bedrocks of a civilisation; or as the product of research that also arose to seek an answer to the meaning and desire to understand how to act with regard to the problems of the time. In both cases, whether it be the search for the origins and the proof of the authenticity of the knowledge, or whether it be the preservation of the link with the sources, they carry out a vital function.

*Conservation of knowledge* and its material or immaterial holding place and protection against the attacks of time or the madness of man represents one of the most classic functions of these places. This is a function that is far more active than storage and archiving; it is also the constitution and preservation of an authentic heritage which records our contribution to the history of humanity. Even at the time of the French revolution there were people who strived to preserve our national heritage in all its forms. The CNAM contributed to this.

*Structuring, transmitting and helping to acquire knowledge* are aspects of the *key mediation function* that trainers exercise, be they teachers, tutors or monitors... the “masters”. Whatever name we give them, they all have the common functions of education and socialisation, to aid instruction and create successful learning conditions in a favourable environment; they are also responsible for structuring and re-thinking the knowledge of experts or learned scholars in order to make it able to be assimilated, and to make everything that is used to learn make sense. Arousing a thirst and pleasure in learning, and providing confidence in one’s ability to succeed, is at the basis of all instruction.

Indeed, making an effort to learn does not directly lead to comprehension. And even while one can learn to learn, the knowledge is more difficult to assimilate when we get too close to it too fast, or prematurely. One has to know a lot to learn more. Maturity is needed to be ready to develop the intelligence of knowledge in oneself and in others. Finally, it is necessary to understand that having learned is not the end of the road; what is needed is a desire to be able to make use of the knowledge acquired, in the world of action, with pertinence and efficacy. This supposes enrichment of one’s cognitive activities through lucidity and wisdom.

Instructors therefore have a *monitoring function* in the evolution and socialisation of learners. This comprises in particular of helping them to identify, research, and appropriate the technical knowledge and social behaviours required, at a given moment of their life, to

diagnose the origin of the learning difficulties and remedy them, and to use the knowledge discerningly. The medieval world and its institutions did not pursue this purpose. We must do so today.

#### WHERE ARE WE AT TODAY?

I am convinced that the question of access to knowledge remains as essential as ever. However, the knowledge we are talking about is not the same as previously. And while the functions mentioned above remain fully relevant today, their coordination can be brought profoundly into question by new perspectives of the role of trainers, their functions and their areas of intervention. The concept of the adult training is a turbulent field.

Perhaps what has undergone the deepest change today is the status granted to knowledge on our society, which merrily mixes data, information and knowledge. On the one hand, the collection of data about everything and about the whole world has become exponential. Its processing with a view to transforming it into information for either known or non-revealed purposes has transformed into a highly intellectual task, which the 1995 White Paper saw as a “cognitive society”: a society where globalisation, the acceleration of the creation of new knowledge and its assimilation always constituted one of the biggest challenges and one that we have to learn to respond to. The traditional places of knowledge, but also the Internet and its derivatives, the portals and data banks, the resource centres, radio and television and the abundant networks of knowledge exchange, at least in theory, put the entire world’s knowledge an arm’s length away. The priceless contributions of technology and distance learning allow us to live in a whole different time and space. We must now progress to identify the pertinent knowledge at any given moment, for a given person or given group of people, and the real or symbolic costs of connection and access to this knowledge, which are very different depending on the countries or social groups. The dual society starts there.

On the other hand, it is good to know that knowledge is losing its image of absoluteness and markets are progressively attributing value to formal and informal training; but not just that: the bearer of information that makes sense with regard to an intention, a project, an organisation, or at the centre of forced connections between actors, can become a good that is purchased and sold, exchanged and sometimes stolen. The knowledge of some about others and the knowledge that they own is also an asset of commercial development or of power.

The very fact that a commercial value is attributed to knowledge launches the basis of a double economy: one the one hand a service economy, based on the capacity to solve problems that knowledge obtains and on a growing profession of trainers; because from the moment that anybody in this information society can at the same time learn and impart knowledge, doubts arise as to the need and utility of what have become “workers of knowledge”. And, on the other hand, in a market economy where training and learning are the bases for the construction of “human capital”, investment in this area has become indispensable.

This leads to deontological issues in exercising of the preceding functions. It also raises professional questions in the area of management. Hence, spending is not investing, and investing is not enough to obtain results compatible with the authorised efforts. Furthermore, it is necessary to invest at the right moment, in the right place which is the same as saying investing in those for whom the acquisition or modernisation of skills constitute a key factor in solving individual problems (evolution, insertion, conversion, promotion, etc.) or collective problems (evolution of work, technologies, products, markets, etc). Moreover, it is necessary to make these facilities available to ascertain what the return on this investment is and should be. To sum up, we herein are elaborating a major debate for our societies marked by worldwide capitalism: the question of equal distribution of the wealth produced among the various actors that contribute towards creating it.

In this background we cannot consider the four functions mentioned earlier in isolation, or attribute them to different social entities. Because in a globalised economy which is rapidly changing, competitiveness has become the rule; and simultaneously because it is based, not only on knowledge, but also on skills, directly connected to work and employment, and assessed in the light of the results that can be obtained. And because in a society of knowledge, the educational institutions do not own a monopoly of the training activities. Informal training, in and through work, analysis of activities, mutual learning networks, organisations of learning, management of career mobility, consultancy work, auditing practices, or that which we group under the comfortable label of “knowledge management” all contribute equally: we are speaking about the added importance of managers and the development of “human resources”, an idea which fits in perfectly with the meaning of “human capital”.

The training entities and services remain indispensable, especially in exercising their traditional functions. There are, however, new functions that are distanced from the usual acceptance of the word

“training” and which lie within a more institutional and strategic vision.

We are left with *the pedagogical and mediation functions*. These refer to the reality experienced by the people and the organisations. They organise the meeting between the students’ expectations, the demands of the organisations, the skills to be developed and the pedagogical choices. They allow the act of learning through face to face meeting between creators, owners, transmitters of knowledge and students, even if this meeting is virtual. These functions are simultaneously widened. They also have to generate the before, during and after of the learning act. Before is, namely, the informing, listening, orientation, helping and elaboration of a personal and professional project at the heart of which training that is well planned and meaningful individualises paths, and recently also includes the activities of validation of the professional skills acquired. The “during” includes the fourth function that we spoke about earlier. The “after” prolongs the responsibility of training until the assessment of the results, not only of the learning but also in the professional field. It is the same thing to say the creation of favourable environments for *apprenance*, the transfer of knowledge and skills in work situations are henceforth part of these first functions.

All this is easy to say, but far from easy to undertake. The “training public” has also changed greatly. Firstly in number, which interferes directly with the concept of continuous training at universities and the students/adults management binomial. Also in nature. Much better informed than in the past thanks to IT and the proliferation of Internet *sites*, enabling comparisons to be made between entities, the trainees have become much more demanding as they have less time to train. Certain publics have even lost confidence or eye training with suspicion, which translates into short attention spans, poor concentration, *zapping* or early drop-out. If training is viewed, in relation to other projects, as over-investment, it may quickly lead to de-investment. And how can it not be understood that mobility, flexibility, employability, are indispensable assets; that competitiveness demands that we do better with less; that precariousness transforms into a threat given increased job uncertainty, linked to decisions made in another time-space; all of which call the utility of a training course into question, above all if it is long and qualifying? How can we be surprised that, in France, the obtaining of a degree has become so pressing?

Having said that, the complexity of the “apprenance” sector has led to new responsibilities that have

acquired, little by little, a growing foothold. We can regroup them around four terms frequently used in the literature: politics, technology, commercial and counselling.

In a world where the tertiary sector and immaterial operations invade all the other sectors, in which grey matter has become the main resource, *training can become a strategic facet*. In distancing one from the ideas of content, supply and programmes, one can find outside the self a growing proportion of one’s reasons for being, one’s goals, one’s constraints; in the same way that one finds outside the self the scientific contributions that allow one to understand oneself better, to think and guide oneself in a different way than using simple experience and common sense.

Therefore, the problems facing trainers are often formulated right at the beginning in terms of the evolution of the material, efficacy and performances, in terms of organisation of work and production, development of sales, budget optimisation and financial management; or also in terms of setting up and running of projects, management, merging of companies and cultural exchanges.

New actors arise exercising power over the decision-making, funding and the act of training without being professionals. The trainers, and above all the training managers, must analyse these requests or orders, and separate the projects that involve changes in skills from those which depend on transformations or decisions of another nature.

At the moment the production of skills becomes a strategic facet and at which the appeal for training is no longer formed in terms of knowledge acquired but of problems to be solved, the trainers, and above all the training supervisors, have first to check whether the training option is a pertinent option and not a decoy that characterises the absence of prior decisions at other hierarchical levels or in other services.

Based on strategic monitoring, they must come up with future propositions and negotiate the aims and methods of training, designed from an analysis of the people and groups they are aimed at. Finally, they must be precise in understanding the indicators of results from which they shall be assessed, assembling the suitable devices of training and building the teams and the partnerships needed. And because healthy budgeting guarantees a good quality and sound completion of the operation, the project should be carried out and assessed.

These different management responsibilities are often grouped together and called “*political*” or “*strategic functions*”. The management functions, support from experts, financial or legal, for example, cannot be dissociated from these tasks.

The complexity of the tasks and the games of actors, the new potential opened by the multiple technologies for processing information and transmission of texts, images and sounds confer crucial importance to the *so-called technical functions*. We outline examples.

First, the analysis by experts of the use and maintenance of the technology itself. Many of the pedagogical advances came about with the appearance of new programmes or new material. Many of the training transparencies were not fully developed because of the absence of effective hot-lines. And hence this function is indispensable. It is directly linked to the training facilities, an active function that increases the potential and degree of the professionalism of its actors; it is exactly the opposite of instrumentation. We find here simultaneously the conception and employment of processes based on the use of simulators, international multimedia devices, new techniques inspired by computer games and the construction of virtual realities, or even the management of networks of resources on a planetary scale.

The technical functions also include monitoring of the different forms of engineering mentioned above which aim to conceive, construct, employ, monitor and assess actions, devices, even training systems on a big scale.

In intertwining sciences, engineering and architecture, the training engineers owe a lot today to the theoretical and methodological work deriving from ergonomics, professional didactics and the analysis of the activity, which have updated the traditional analysis of the needs. To sum up, a new form of engineering seems to promise much: it is called engineering of environments. Based on the analysis of interactions between the learning phenomena and the environment in which it takes place, this engineering works essentially on the evolution of the economic, social and cultural environments to engender favourable conditions for learning.

We spoke earlier about the entrance of adult training in a double economy, of services and the market. The moment the knowledge acquires commercial value, training also has to outline its costs and profits. This does not necessarily make the humanist values that incorporate the training disappear; but it will lose its hitherto untouchable monopoly and status, turning into an activity like any other, subject to the rules of productivity, profitability, competition and return on capital investment. The private sector has already anticipated this evolution. The public sector is quickly moving forward in this direction, including universities and their ongoing training services. It is an authentic cultural change, inasmuch as the terms and arguments of the market economy break free from the language of

training, bringing with them a certain number of values and knowledge, encompassed into the current management ideologies.

In this third ground new activities have emerged, which nobody dared evoke two decades ago, namely the *commercial and marketing functions*. They all involve the actors of training. More linked to the strategic functions, given that they contribute towards the definition of the future activities, the “marketing” functions and homework can seek support from prospective studies on the different sectors of activity, including the activities of education and training. They call for an acknowledged profession, which does not mean however that it should not be monitored. The continuity and development of the services or the training entities depend on it. The commercial responsibilities are increasingly attributed to the trainers themselves, who, as we know, are not always at ease in seeking potential customers or concerned about breeding loyalty in their current ones. The communication managers play a role here of presenting the training on offer in intelligible terms in their district, and of designing attractive Internet sites to present the activities in an interactive way. It is necessary to remember that everything is linked to the request for supplies, namely European, from references to presentation of satisfaction dossiers which are more and more demanding, in a background of increasingly fierce competition. The purchasing services and institutions or companies have become progressively indispensable aspects.

To sum up, in a knowledge society, the training decisions are often decentralised, closer to the operations and the actors they are dealing with. In other words, the trainers and training managers must increasingly exercise the functions of a consultant. We have not time enough to discuss these as fully as they merit. We say, simply, that the professional “posture” that they imply, in a field where their simple presence may be enough to bring about change, with actors that may feel tempted to include them in their own strategies, results in more from the “clinic” than from the infallibility of the expert and the blending of the traditional functions and new responsibilities often leading to cultural collisions, or even conflicts in values.

#### NEW AREAS FOR TRAINING

Training is often compared to classical tragedy that gathers actors for an action that takes place in a single place and in the same period of time. But it is true that training in the form of residential training using tutors has an important part to play in the professional training of adults.

Having said that, in the complex process that is now labelled “*apprenance*”, an idea dear to Philippe CARRÉ, those who through convenience we continue to call “trainers” now move in fields that previously were foreign to them. Managers question the right they have to be there, because they have not yet understood that successful training needs to use more wide-ranging methods than in the past.

Training that produces skills is more directly inserted into the workplace. Not only because the virtues of this training are being rediscovered, or because an attempt to renovate the old pedagogy is taking place by “bringing training into life and life into training”. But also because there is a twin awareness of the unsolvable relations among work, employment and training and the compulsory notion of the evolution of professional training determined by the technical, economic, social and cultural transformations or ruptures that are a feature of our societies. Hence the need evoked earlier, to monitor the “major trends”, the major changes taking place, as well as paying attention to the smallest signs that may change into “facts bearing the future” to cite the expression of Gaston Berger, creator of the prospective.

Secondly, the development of the Information Society at a pace unparalleled in the history of Humanity has led to non-formal methods of learning which often dispense in an effective manner with trainers altogether: self-training, coaching, knowledge exchange, networks of experiences, pushing back the frontiers and the format of traditional training. The report on life-long education and training made it legitimate to distinguish between formal, non-formal and informal training. Their coexistence is not conflicting, but rather complementary. One can even fill a void left by another, when dropping out of or failing at school and rejection by educational institutions lead to whole generations learning in their workplace, which happens, for example, in several developing countries.

A twofold issue therefore arises: the role of the teachers and trainers that should move “from the platform to the factory” and change their posture in relation to learners if they want to remain useful, without attempting to master the activities that function better the further away they are, by definition, from the goals of the educational system. And the certification of knowledge acquired through alternative means such as these. This leads to the validation and certification of skills acquired through experience (RVC). Marked especially in France by a logic of certification, this process is presented as a route to full access to qualifications and diplomas which allows one to partially or completely dispense with prior teaching or education. This matter is well-known and especially in this

University. I will say nothing, therefore, regarding its technical aspects.

Three points must be mentioned to complete this third part.

First, at least in my country, the legislative legitimacy of this initiative is an integral part of the activities and responsibilities of teachers and trainers, above all if they are involved in certifying training. One cannot, however, neglect the essential aspect of *identity construction* in this process grounded on the concept of **recognition** of the history and skills of the applicant. This implies that institutions acknowledge, with the same dignity, the knowledge acquired in a formal, non-formal and informal manner and the diplomas that certify it. The Law outlines this clearly. The scientific debates on this matter and the corresponding confrontations of values are not yet concluded.

Secondly, RVC has revealed itself, in its usage, as a *real analysis tool* of habits, ways of thinking and functioning of people and training institutions, in the way the new process is integrated or rejected in the normal activity of the institutions involved, in the relations that are established among professionals which detain a vision of the skills that do not necessarily coincide with the vision of the teachers and trainers, and in the capacity to move from a logic of discipline and programme to a logic of skills and validation, based on references and new processes: the validation and certification tests.

Finally, we must not neglect the main field of *apprenance* which are the learners themselves. To train oneself, to want to transform oneself, is, above all, a path, an inner journey. Training oneself is acquiring, refreshing or developing knowledge and know-how, skills, abilities, development of skills that combine a range of behaviours and knowledge in relation to problems to be solved in specific situations. To train oneself is to operate a transformation, wanted, expected or imposed, giving at the same time life to a connection that shapes knowledge, a desire for progress, a motivation that has to feed, comfort and at times restore its own identity.

To train oneself is to choose training among other possible avenues, to achieve a goal, to carry out a project that surpasses the training, whether personal, family, professional, associative or political; it is also to involve oneself, i.e. to create a favourable situation for the desired and lasting development.

Having said that, the choice of the “training tool” is far from a neutral one. By working on one’s own skills and postures, one writes a biography, a relational universe, a life history. As such, immersing oneself in training is also acting on one’s collective appropriations, on one’s own singularity and on one’s interaction. This approach to training adults assumes another dimension.

Resuming a theme dear to Claude DUBAR, it is not only the product of a history and of games of balance and imbalances in the productive and social systems. It also appears as a complex transaction between the subject and others, a confrontation between the image that one has of oneself and that attributed to us by others, between a professional project and the search for social recognition.

Therefore, this very particular road that trainers and trainees decide to travel down together acquires meaning not only because of the alteration of skills that feed it, but also because of the symbolic and imaginary perspectives that it unveils.

#### BEING A TRAINER TODAY...?

We have stated that the trainer is a thinker of the future. A beautiful expression. We also know the complexity of his/her relations with the decision makers and financers which are, just like the trainees, the people they deal with. It is an undeniable, complex and floating coexistence, given that ways of living, values and ways of working are different. Max Weber, in his time, showed it so in the relations between the wise man and the politician.

Just like the caricature, the decision maker lives in a universe of quick decisions made. He is judged by the results of the year, the month, at times even by the Stock Market prices on a given day. He has to decide under pressure, focussing on his priorities and therefore renounce the other choices possible. His credibility is based partly on outlining his convictions, his capacity to arouse interest and his determination to maintain his positions; at least during a sufficient period of time to compare the results. He is expected to clarify the future.

The trainer, often in the role of the consultant, is the guarantee of the immaterial investments; his horizons go further. He should have a widened vision in space and time, thinking of alternatives, and not eliminating other possibilities too quickly. Used to cultivating doubt and the critical spirit, he should reason globally including the individual and collective changes required that derive from the transformations. Naturally, there is mistrust of irreversible choices and apparent immediate certainties. And the fact that he makes no more than a mere contribution to reach players of another scale above and beyond his own makes him prudent in view of the risk that his analyses can result in unwanted results for the managers of these games.

At cruise control or through slow evolution, all have time to talk, to listen and to experiment with the right to

make mistakes. In a regime of uncertainty, turbulence, controversy, thoughts and actions differ much more. In view of the uncertainties and the fears that are often associated with them, the former has no other choice but to be satisfied with incomplete information and to decide quickly, even without feeling ready to do so. Because he is judged on the most immediate results. Bearer of humanist values, the latter maybe has more need to ensure the rigour of his analyses and to assess before acting. He knows that he may be poorly viewed, because it is considered that he took too much time before acting — or too little in the event of failure. Or even because he wanted to play his role honestly, focussing on what he advocates instead of believing that he has the answer to all the problems put to him. He must always make people understand that any change can be understood as a threat by those who he affects, and that it necessarily takes a long time to understand and learn. In periods of instability he is not a lofty spokesman dictating with impunity.

To be a trainer in these conditions may lead one to live and work under two compromises, in two different times. On the one hand, it is necessary to articulate with the everyday reality of the problems, to be an actor like the others at the heart of the productive processes and the creation of wealth, financially and in terms of contribution for enrichment of the immaterial heritage of people and the organisation. On the other hand, pertinence must be exercised to safeguard from impertinence, always being “reasonably irreverent”. This implies being different: to ensure that no spontaneous appeal is made for the successes of the past. To remind ourselves that harmonious solutions cannot be found to economic and financial problems by neglecting people and their development. To be bold in proposing breaks from ways of thinking, in ways of reading and dealing with the situations found, to open windows in the present to other possible futures and to futures that make sense.

The functions of ties of knowledge change. The responsibilities and the fields of exercising of the trainers also change. This can only modify access and the relation of knowledge, and this on the scale of the European Union. It is a political act in the most profound sense of the term. It allows or prevents socialisation and insertion; it allows or prevents one to position oneself in society; it makes it easier, to a greater or lesser extent, to reveal talents, to develop capacities of innovation, autonomy and responsibility. It enables progress of rights and ability to access knowledge throughout life and the fairest redistribution of the cultural heritage of generations past;

it also paves the way for openness towards material and immaterial heritage created by progress in the arts and trades, by the advances in science and technology. To sum up, to improve the relations of each one of us with knowledge, is to enrich individual and collective entities and as such, the very exercising of citizenship.

What does it mean to be a trainer today? It is exercising a difficult, passionate and long-lasting profession. An extract from a poem by René Char<sup>a</sup> provides an exemplification clearer than any speech: “if the storm constantly burns my back, my wave in the offing is deep, complex, prestigious. I expect nothing definitively, I accept to scull between two unequal dimensions. However, my signallers are made of lead and not cork, my trail is of salt and not smoke”.

## ENDNOTES

1. *Les matinaux* — Gallimard — coll. Poésie — 1967.

*Lisbon, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences of the University of Lisbon, on 4th November, 2005.*

PIERRE CASPAR

Professor emeritus — C.N.A.M.

Translated by Thomas Kundert

Caspar, Pierre (2007). Being a trainer in today's world — New actors, new spaces, new times. Conference given at the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences of the University of Lisbon, on 4th November, 2005 *Sísifo. Educational Sciences Journal*, 2, pp. 87-94

Retrieved [month, year] from <http://sisifo.fpce.ul.pt>