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## **Professional Agricultural Teaching, A Tool for an Economic Policy**

The example of “200 hour” work placements

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The analyses and comments developed only commit their authors  
and do not constitute an official position.*

## Summary

### **A legislative and political context**

From the very beginning (1848), agricultural teaching in France was immediately organised around the farm holding and its productive activity and catered for all players in the agricultural sector and the rural world. This teaching for both sexes, which was complemented by the 1960s laws, today caters for almost 330,000 students who are mainly divided into technical teaching and continuing professional education as well as, to a lesser extent, apprenticeships (29,000) and third level education (14,000).

Marked by low productivity and competitiveness rates of farms and a low level of vocational training of farmers, the French agricultural landscape of the 1960s had to adapt to a European context mainly characterised by the signing of the Treaty of Rome instituting a large market of agricultural products and eliminating customs barriers between six Western European countries. In order to do this and in a wilful way, the 1960 law created a set of agricultural policy tools and organised close collaboration between public authorities and the agricultural profession, which at the end of the 1960s led more particularly to the creation of vocational training and agricultural promotion centres (CFPPA) in charge of the large-scale training of young farmers.

### **An original teaching mechanism: the “200 hour” work placements**

From 1974 to 1984, 150,000 young people in France followed a qualifying training course limited to 200 hours (in other terms, eight weeks spread over two years at one to two days per week) intended to allow them to take over a farm and to benefit from the corresponding financial incentive (*Dotation Jeunes Agriculteurs* - young farmer allowance). This availability of nearby training was the French response to the European directive to link the launching of young farmers with an improvement in their professional qualifications and aimed to upgrade France from the 8<sup>th</sup> position that it occupied in terms of farmers' training.

In order to overcome reluctances of every type, particularly those based on rejecting the school-related matters, the creators of this mechanism drew inspiration from pedagogical principles from popular educational movements: self-analysis, formulation of a personal project and realistic objectives to control one's own development and participative assessment were the elements of a curriculum that placed the trainee at the centre of his learning.

### **Some lessons to be learned from experience**

Although somewhat dated, this large-scale training experiment of “200 hour” work placements is a possible source of inspiration to create and develop practices in distinct contexts, on condition that they respect at least six invariants: developing the training as a tool at the service of an agricultural and rural development policy; associating the players in its creation, its implementation and its assessment; placing the trainee at the centre of his training to encourage support and the demand for training; the reciprocal principle (a premium granted for improved abilities); the differentiation of types of training in relation to the audience and types of production; the integration of training centres into the existing training mechanisms to facilitate overall coherence.

# Résumé

## Un contexte législatif et politique

Dès son origine (1848), l'enseignement agricole en France s'est organisé d'emblée à partir de l'exploitation agricole et de son activité productrice et s'est adressé à tous les acteurs du secteur agricole et du monde rural. Complété par les lois des années 60, cet enseignement, qui s'adresse aux deux sexes, scolarise aujourd'hui près de 330 000 élèves qui se répartissent surtout dans l'enseignement technique et dans la formation professionnelle continue ainsi que, dans une moindre mesure, dans l'apprentissage (29 000) et l'enseignement supérieur (14 000).

Marqué par un faible taux de productivité et de compétitivité des exploitations agricoles et un faible niveau de formation professionnelle des exploitants, le paysage agricole français des années soixante devait s'adapter à un contexte européen caractérisé principalement par la signature du traité de Rome instituant un grand marché des produits et supprimant les barrières douanières entre six pays d'Europe occidentale. La loi de 1960 met en place pour ce faire, et de façon volontariste, un ensemble d'outils de politique agricole et organise une étroite collaboration entre pouvoirs publics et profession agricole, qui conduiront notamment, à la fin des années soixante, à la création des centres de formation professionnelle et de promotion agricole (CFPPA) chargés de la formation de masse des jeunes agriculteurs.

## Un dispositif pédagogique original : les stages « 200 heures »

De 1974 à 1984, 150 000 jeunes ont suivi en France une formation qualifiante limitée à 200H (soit huit semaines réparties sur deux ans à raison d'un à deux jours par semaine) destinée à leur permettre de prendre en mains une exploitation agricole et de bénéficier de l'incitation financière correspondante (Dotation Jeunes Agriculteurs). Cette offre de formation de proximité fut la réponse française à la directive européenne de lier installation des jeunes agriculteurs et élévation de leur qualification professionnelle et visait à sortir la France de la huitième place qu'elle occupait alors en matière de formation des agriculteurs.

Pour surmonter les réticences de tous ordres, en particulier celles fondées sur le rejet de la chose scolaire, les concepteurs de ce dispositif se sont inspirés des principes pédagogiques issus des mouvements d'éducation populaire : analyse de sa propre situation, formulation d'un projet personnel et d'objectifs réalistes pour maîtriser son propre développement et évaluation participative, sont les éléments d'un cursus qui met le formé au centre de son apprentissage.

## Quelques enseignements d'une expérience

Quoique datée, cette expérience de formation de masse des stages de « 200h » est une source possible d'inspiration pour concevoir et réaliser des pratiques dans des contextes distincts. A condition de respecter au moins six invariants : concevoir la formation comme un outil au service d'une politique agricole et de développement rural ; associer les acteurs à sa conception, sa mise en œuvre et son évaluation ; mettre le formé au centre de sa formation pour susciter l'adhésion et la demande de formation ; principe du donnant/donnant (dotation contre renforcement des capacités) ; différenciation des formations en regard des publics et des types de production ; intégration des centres de formation dans les dispositifs de formation existants pour faciliter la cohérence d'ensemble.

## **Resumo**

### **Um contexto legislativo e político**

Desde a sua criação (1848), o ensino agrícola na França foi organizado em torno da exploração agrícola e da sua actividade de produção, envolvendo todos os actores do sector agrícola e do mundo rural. Completado pelas leis dos anos 60, este ensino, aberto a ambos os sexos, acolhe hoje cerca de 330 000 alunos, repartidos sobretudo no ensino técnico e na formação profissional contínua bem como, embora em grau menor, na aprendizagem (29000) e no ensino superior (14000).

Caracterizada por explorações agrícolas com fraca taxa de produtividade e de competitividade e por agricultores com um baixo nível de formação profissional, a realidade agrícola francesa dos anos sessenta devia se adaptar ao contexto europeu, onde a assinatura do Tratado de Roma criara um grande mercado de produtos e suprimira as barreiras aduaneiras entre seis países da Europa ocidental. A lei de 1960 elabora para este fim, de forma voluntarista, um conjunto de instrumentos de política agrícola e organiza uma colaboração estreita entre autoridades públicas e profissão agrícola, que levarão nomeadamente, no final dos anos sessenta, à criação dos centros de formação profissional e de promoção agrícola (CFPPA) encarregues da formação de massa dos jovens agricultores.

### **Um dispositivo pedagógico original : os estágios « 200 horas »**

De 1974 a 1984, 150 000 jovens na França receberam uma formação qualificante limitada a 200H (a formação é dispensada durante oito semanas repartidas sobre dois anos, um ou dois dias por semana) destinada a lhes dar as capacidades para assumir uma exploração agrícola e beneficiar do incentivo financeiro correspondente (Dotação Jovens Agricultores). Esta oferta de formação de proximidade foi a resposta francesa à directiva europeia que recomendava associar a instalação dos jovens agricultores ao incremento das suas qualificações profissionais, e visava desta forma melhorar a posição da França, que ocupava na altura o oitavo lugar em matéria de formação de agricultores.

Para ultrapassar as mais diversas reticências, nomeadamente o rechaço dos estudos escolares, os inventores do dispositivo inspiraram-se nos princípios pedagógicos oriundos dos movimentos de educação popular : a análise da sua própria situação, a formulação de um projecto pessoal e de objectivos realistas para dominar seu próprio desenvolvimento e a avaliação participativa constituem os elementos de um curso académico que coloca o formando no cerne da sua aprendizagem.

### **Algumas lições de uma experiência**

Embora datada, esta experiência de formação de massa com os estágios « 200h » pode ser uma fonte de inspiração para conceber e aplicar práticas em contextos distintos. Desde que sejam respeitados pelo menos seis elementos invariáveis : conceber a formação como uma ferramenta ao serviço de uma política agrícola e de desenvolvimento rural ; associar os actores à sua concepção, implementação e avaliação ; colocar o formando no cerne da sua formação para suscitar a adesão e a procura de formação; princípio de reciprocidade (dotação em troca de reforço das capacidades); diferenciação das formações em função dos públicos e dos tipos de produção; integração dos centros de formação nos dispositivos de formação existentes para facilitar a coerência global.

# PROFESSIONAL AGRICULTURAL TEACHING, A TOOL FOR AN ECONOMIC POLICY

## THE EXAMPLE OF “200 HOUR” WORK PLACEMENTS

From 1974 to 1984, 150,000 young people in France followed a qualifying training of 200 hours to enable them to take over a farm and to benefit from a financial incentive when they established themselves as farmers. Alain Maragnani<sup>1</sup> retraces here an experience of large-scale training in a rural environment, by restoring it to its legislative and political context of the time, by describing its pedagogical originality and by highlighting some invariants that could represent elements of reflection for players in charge of post-primary training in rural environments.

Jean Bosco Bouyer<sup>2</sup>

### French agricultural teaching and its history

In France, agricultural teaching has a long history with two key dates:

- **1848: the creation of agricultural teaching** with a law in October 1848 through which it was placed under the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture
- **1960: a reform of all agricultural teaching** with the law of 2 August 1960 by linking it to the National Education training programmes in order to improve the qualifications of people working in agriculture and the agro-industry and to enable them to work in other economic sectors.

*“Agriculture should become a profitable profession like all the others, but decentralised openings are needed to receive young people from rural backgrounds. As we have often said, although agricultural exodus is a need, rural exodus is a calamity.”<sup>3</sup>*

### The specificities of French agricultural teaching

From the beginning, agricultural teaching was organised around the farm and its productive activity and not in conflict with the economic and social world. Training was carried out within the “farm-school environment,” i.e. school was not established within the business, but truly within “the training business.” For more than a century it kept its originality, with establishments set up on farms, programmes adapted to regional realities, specific diplomas and teaching staff that included engineers who played a crucial role of linking up with the professional world.

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<sup>2</sup> Bureau of educational policies and professional integration DGCID / DPDEV, French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs.

<sup>3</sup> Michel DEBRÉ, presentation of the agricultural orientation law on 26 April 1960 at the French National Assembly. Quoted by Jean-François CHAUSSON. « *Les générations du développement rural* » (“The rural development generations”). LGDJ. 1990.

Other specificities of French agricultural teaching:

- **it caters for all players in the agricultural sector**, farmers and their children, but also all players in the rural environment,
- **it is a key element in an agricultural policy**, that is why it was placed under the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture,
- **it covers all levels of training**: technical and third-level education, apprenticeships, continuing professional education, etc.,
- the public service of agricultural teaching has both public and private establishments.

### The 1960 law on agricultural teaching

Law no. 60-791 of 2 August 1960 on professional agricultural training and education stated that they catered for *“teenagers of both sexes and their objective [was]:*

- *to give students a vocational training combined with a general training beyond the observation/pre-specialisation stage, either in a permanent manner or based on an appropriate rhythm,*
- *to ensure a qualification and specialisation-based vocational training for future farmers, agricultural technicians and executives, as well as training for agricultural instructors and counsellors,*
- *to prepare related professions and agricultural administration, highly qualified farmers, senior executives, researchers, economists, engineers, teachers and veterinarians for the agricultural profession.”*

Given the low number of establishments, a draft bill setting the credit necessary to build a set of teaching and professional agricultural training establishments was to be submitted to the Parliament before the end of 1961. **The objective was to ensure in each French department within ten years the existence of agricultural secondary schools and professional agricultural training centres in order to fulfil the needs of the agricultural industry and families’ and professional organisations’ demands.**

Today, there are 848 establishments, either public<sup>4</sup> (217) or private (631). Private, contract-based teaching represents a little over half the total number of students (55% of the total, more in the lower-qualification levels, less in higher qualification training). Agricultural teaching caters for 174,000 students in technical education (36% in the production sector, 39% in services to rural areas, 20% in redevelopment and 5% in transformation), 14,000 students in higher education (agronomy and veterinary studies), 29,000 apprentices and 112,000 trainees in continuing professional education (about 17 million hours/trainee).

In addition, for both public and private agricultural education, there exists a set of establishments in charge of basic training and continuing education for the staff of the establishments.

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<sup>4</sup> In public agricultural teaching, an establishment generally consists of four “constituent centres”: an agricultural upper secondary school, a vocational training and agricultural promotion centre, an apprentice training centre, a farm holding and sometimes a technological workshop. The setup can sometimes be very different from one establishment to another. If it combines at least three constituent centres including an upper secondary school, the centre can have several CFPPAs (vocational training and agricultural promotion centres) or CFAs (agricultural training centres), situated in different geographical sites.

## The 1960 laws in context

The specificities of French agricultural teaching need to be examined in relation to the particular economic and historic context of the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s:

- the signing of the Treaty of Rome in 1957, instituting a large market of agricultural products and eliminating customs barriers between six Western European countries (Germany, Belgium, Italy, France, Luxembourg and the Netherlands), all of which had suffered a serious crisis with WWII, in particular with situations of food shortages (1940/1950),
- **a structural deficit in the French trade balance of agricultural and food products** (which only became positive in 1974),
- a country with strong economic growth (+5% of GDP/year) with a huge need for manpower in the other sectors of activity (industry but also services),
- a government establishing wilful development and national independence policies as part of the “burning obligation of the Plan” (French economic development plan) with State backing,
- a strong mobilisation on economic policies from agricultural groups (trade unions, professional organisations, etc.) that were highly committed to the modernisation of agriculture and the increase of productivity,
- but, although all the rural population had at least received five years of primary education, **only 3% of farmers had received professional agricultural training!**

The agricultural development model that was emphasized at the time, **both by agricultural professionals and the government**, was that of the Netherlands, a small country as regards land surface, but a large exporter of agricultural and food products with high productivity of factors of production. *“The list of accomplishments achieved in the field of teaching under the Second Plan showed that France was severely lagging behind in relation to other Western European countries. Indeed, if one compares the situation in France with that of the Netherlands or Denmark for example, one notices that the proportion of French farmers having received normal vocational training is still very low.”*<sup>5</sup>

## A wilful agricultural policy: the laws of 1960 ...

*“Article 1 - The objective of the framework law on French agriculture, as part of the economic and social policy, is to establish parity between agriculture and other economic activities:*

1. *by increasing the contribution of the agricultural industry to the development of France's economy and to national social activity, by rebalancing the country's overall agricultural trade balance, taking into account the evolution of needs, the country's natural vocations, its place in the Community and in the European Economic Community and the aid to be given to under-developed countries,*
2. *by making the agricultural sector participate equitably in this expansion by eliminating the causes of disparity existing between the income of people carrying out an agricultural activity and that of people working in other sectors, in order especially to bring the social situation of farmers and agricultural workers up to the same level as that of workers in other professional categories,*
3. *by placing agriculture, and more particularly family-run farms, in a position to compensate the natural and economic disadvantages it is subjected to compared to other sectors of the economy.”*<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Extract of the Third Modernisation and Equipment Plan (1958-1961). *Journal Officiel* of 22 March 1959.

<sup>6</sup> Framework Law no. 60-808 of 5 August 1960 on agriculture. *Journal Officiel* of 7 August 1960.

**In order to reach its objectives, this law implemented a set of agricultural policy tools, which were complementary and inter-linked, by organising close collaboration between public authorities and the agricultural profession:**

- the status of tenant farming,
- land improvement with the creation of ‘Sociétés d’Aménagement Foncier et d’Etablissement Rural’ – (limited companies offering a public service of buying land and redeveloping it for young farmers establishing themselves),
- the organisation of production and markets, with the creation of a regularisation and orientation fund for agricultural markets and products, the regularisation and control of imports,
- the adaptation of the status of agricultural cooperatives (SICA), etc.

These different tools were completed by:

- the implementation of subsidised investment loans (at reduced rates, the State subsidising the difference with the market rate),
- the renewal and development of agricultural teaching.<sup>7</sup>

**...and of 1962.**

The 1962 complementary framework law on agriculture defined three guiding principles for the training of young farmers:

- the training channels were co-managed with professional agricultural organisations,
- the training times had to be adapted to the working conditions of the farmers,
- the training was based on the family farm model; it would lead to qualification through a certificate of vocational aptitude to ensure parity with the industrial sector.

### **The vocational training of young farmers**

*“This programme addresses the following concerns:*

- *training, at a higher education level, those professionals who are likely to contribute to the improvement of production techniques, to their evolution and their diffusion to the agricultural sector,*
- *training, at a secondary level, informed technicians needed by the agricultural sector, such as farm managers, agricultural advisors, facilitators of professional organisations, farm specialists in mechanisation or other related activities,*
- *creating among young generations of farmers, on a large-scale teaching level<sup>8</sup>, an environment favourable to understanding and the implementation of production techniques that agricultural advisory offices are in charge of diffusing<sup>9</sup>.”*

It was not in fact until 1966 that the structure in charge of the “**large-scale teaching**” of young generations of farmers was established, with the creation of vocational training and agricultural promotion centres (CFPPA).

The circular letters preceding the establishment of CFPPA centres specified a certain number of elements:

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<sup>7</sup> Law no. 60-791 of 2 August 1960 on professional agricultural training and education. *Journal Officiel* of 4 August 1960.

<sup>8</sup> Highlighted by the writer.

<sup>9</sup> Extract of the Third Modernisation and Equipment Plan (1958-1961). *Journal Officiel* of 22 March 1959.

- the centres would be administratively attached to agricultural secondary schools and geographically situated close to them, in order to avoid the creation of new establishments,
- the centres would be in charge of training during working times, leading to qualification through a certificate of vocational aptitude to ensure parity with the industrial sector. In this way, the training times would have to be adapted to the working conditions of farmers or of other professions,
- the vocational training policy would be co-managed with professional agricultural organisations and at a local level the centres would be managed by a joint executive board, presided by a representative from the profession.

### The context of the late 1960s and early 1970s

The “Mansholt” Plan (1969) from the European Commissioner for Agriculture of the same name set the objectives of farmers having a professional qualification equivalent to that of other industry workers, **so that farmers could assume their role of farm manager**. In order to reach this objective, the EEC wanted to link the establishment of young farmers with a higher professional qualification.

Concerning these guidelines, France appeared as the bad pupil in the EEC as it was still in 8th position regarding the vocational training level of farmers!

In 1973 the DJA (young farmer premium) was created for farmers in mountainous areas (about 40 French departments, i.e. a little under half of all departments) with a compulsory training of 200 hours. The DJA was extended to the entire country in 1974.

### The DJA – young farmer premium

In 1974, any young farmer could receive a premium of 25,000 to 45,000 FRF<sup>10</sup> depending on the region (45,000 FRF in mountainous areas, 35,000 FRF in so-called disadvantaged areas and 25,000 FRF in the rest of the country) if:

- he established himself as farm manager within the year or over the following five years,
- his farm holding was larger than the minimum settlement area (SMI), the size of which varied according to the region,
- he presented a development project for his farm, over 5 years, with a minimum investment of 60,000 FRF,<sup>11</sup>
- he agreed to carry out management accounting for five years,
- he was subjected to VAT for five years,
- **he could justify having “professional abilities” acquired during a training course of at least 200 hours.**

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<sup>10</sup> i.e. the equivalent of approximately €20,000 and €8,000 in 2006.

<sup>11</sup> i.e. the equivalent of approximately €45,000 in 2006.

## Professional abilities

**Remarkably enough, regulation concerning the acquisition of professional abilities was limited to the bare minimum.** Professional abilities would be acquired at the end of a training period:

- of a minimum duration of 200 hours (the equivalent of 30 days of training),
- 50% of the time would be devoted to economics.

The trainees, who were considered as professionals in continuing education, were paid for the duration of the 200 hour training period.

**A certificate of regular attendance was issued at the end of the training period and it sufficed for young farmers to receive their premium (DJA).** Nevertheless, a certificate was also issued at the end of the work placement according to examination results.

## Rhythm and location of training

The average duration of the training placements was between 200 and 240 hours, generally spread over 2 successive winters with 120 hours each winter (120 + 80 or 120 + 120). The training was discontinuous with 1 to 2 days training per week.

These sessions took place in different locations, close to the public. But they did not simply concern being close to the public, the training had to take place in “value-added” locations such as places where farmers usually go (farm coops for example), but also places that were well equipped to organise training in good material conditions.

Finally, to dissipate the fears of trainees on the theoretical, abstract aspect, far from the realities of the field, of the training, a large number of interveners were professionals from the agricultural sector (other farmers, technicians and agricultural advisers, etc.).

## The profile of the trainees

During the first year (1974), 5,900 trainees were registered in 200 hour training courses. In 1975, 11,600 were registered and this number increased to 21,000 in 1978 and the following years until this type of course ended in 1984. **Therefore approximately 150,000 young farmers were trained in this way in 10 years!**

Two-thirds of the trainees were farm operators and one third was associated farm workers, in other terms, young people working on their parents' farm and expected to take over this farm later. 46% of participants were under 25, 48% were between 25 and 35, but yet 6% were over 35. Only 7% were women.

Finally, 33% of the trainees had no diploma, not even the primary studies certificate even though they had attended the five years of compulsory primary school. 53% of them had no professional agricultural training, i.e. they had learned the profession through their family.

**The “typical trainee” therefore, was a young man, 26¼ years old with a relatively low professional qualification, having just recently settled on a farm holding.**

### The characteristics of the trainees

The least one can say is that the target public of the DJA was not seeking training, quite the opposite:

- a little motivated or totally unmotivated public “*in a hurry to finish...a feeling of being harassed in relation to one’s professional abilities...hostility from the family...a feeling of wasting time...*”<sup>12</sup> were the stereotypical answers that arose most often in a survey carried out on farmers,
- for 93% of the 11,600 trainees of 1974, the training was imposed on them in order to obtain the DJA as they had no qualifying diploma,
- the trainees did not want an “academic” training,” “*I had disconnected from that a long time ago...It’s hard to start that again...*”<sup>13</sup>

The younger ones often had bad memories of school, the older ones referred to primary education that was often very “scholastic.” Most of them generally thought that “school” had nothing to teach them...**reality was in the field and not in the classroom!**

### The burning obligation of adapted teaching methods

In the face of such an unmotivated and uninterested public, there was obviously no question of carrying out in-class lectures! The managers of the centres and the vocational trainers had to be innovative, **by basing themselves in particular on the experience of popular education movements**, with teaching:

- **based on the ability of farmers to analyse their own situation, to clarify their project and its objectives to control their development,**
- in which the “instructor” was more like the trainees’ partner in reflection than someone bringing them knowledge or information,
- that used varied pedagogical situations, suitable for the audience, but also suitable each time for the objectives and contents of the training course (conferences, presentation/debates, case studies, visits, films, group work, round table discussions, exhibitions, etc.).

### The pedagogical principles of the 200 hour training courses

In a situation where the audience had to be “conquered,” a certain number of principles were used to enable the assimilation of the knowledge necessary to pilot the project, while at the same time promoting the diversity and autonomy of the groups being trained:

- **using experience as a starting point without becoming confined to it:** using the concrete experience of the adults in training, using “problem situations” and not starting from pre-determined topics, to develop frameworks of analysis,
- **adapting one’s language to the audience:** as the instructor was at the service of a social group that had to progress under him, he had to avoid using language that was unfamiliar to the social group he was accompanying. On the contrary he had to use several images that were often references for the farming public,
- **taking into consideration the characteristics of the audience** (age, origin, type of farm production, etc.): farmers have a strong and complex relationship with the different types of agricultural production, but also perceptions of social positions to which the instructor had to adapt,

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<sup>12</sup> Annie CIPRA. « *Les obstacles psychosociologiques à la formation en milieu rural* ». (Psychological obstacles to training in rural areas) document INPSA. Quoted by Jean-François CHOSSON in « *Les générations du développement rural* ». (The rural development generations) LGDJ. 1990.

<sup>13</sup> Quoted by Jean-François CHOSSON in « *Les générations du développement rural* » (The rural development generations). LGDJ. 1990.

- **alternating the intervention methods** in the training course in order to adapt to objectives, training contents, and the audience, while preserving an overall coherence of the training, a clearly identifiable guideline known to the audience,
- **practising “controlled involvement”**: the instructor in fact had to understand the attitudes and behaviour of the group being trained but at the same time he had a different social position or role, that of guiding the trainee in the development of his project.

### Formative assessment

The objective of the 200 hour training course was **to improve the farmer’s ability to analyse his own situation and to clarify his projects to control his own development**. The assessment therefore had to be carried out in reference to this objective. It concerned assessing the trainee’s establishment project during or at the end of the training period, but above all this assessment had to be “formative” for the trainee himself. The trainee did not in fact need an assessment at the end of his training period as a simple certificate of regular attendance sufficed to receive the young farmer premium. It was therefore preferable that the assessment was itself part of the formative process. It had to allow the trainee to build his own personal development plan.

This assessment took place during a discussion with a jury composed not of instructors, but of the farmer’s peers or people with whom he had regular contact, such as another farmer and an agricultural technician.

During this assessment, the trainee presented the project he had developed during his training with the help of his instructors, followed by a discussion on the dependability and technical and economic viability of the project.

### Some lessons to be learned for today...

Although the example of the 200 hour training placements must be put into a particular context, that of 1970s France, an examination of how they were carried out, their results and the methods used nevertheless allow us to identify the “invariants” common to different practices, by drawing on the experiment carried out in an inevitably particular context to make it a *possible source of inspiration* to develop practices in different contexts.<sup>14</sup>

- **Professional agricultural and rural training is a tool in agricultural and rural development policies**, among others (land policy, market policy, pricing policy, settlement policy, credit policy, etc.) but which should be coherent with these other tools.
- Professional agricultural and rural training is not just a tool in an economic policy, or an issue of “organising frames of reference for professions and training” even if it is also that, but it is first and foremost **a progressive social construction between the different players of rural development**.
- **Among an unmotivated audience, it is the training objective centred on the professional project that helps to create the need and leads, if not to an initial request, at least to acceptance of the training and not the opposite...**Due to their lack of sufficient analytical elements, the relatively unmotivated and unqualified audience often has an institutionalised discourse, reproducing predefined outlines that are rarely conducive to the implementation of training courses. This type of audience often develops a negative representation of the training following a previously difficult educational experience whereas they favour, on the other hand, practical on-the-ground experience. Proposing objectives that are closely linked to the

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<sup>14</sup> Guy LE BOTERF. « *Les défis posés à l’ingénierie de formation et à la production des expertises collectives. Quelles évolutions prendre en compte ? Quelles conséquences pratiques ?* » (*The challenges of training course design and collective expertise production. What developments need to be taken into account? What are the practical consequences?*). Study days in training course design at international level. Montpellier. 2000. [http://www.agropolis.fr/formation/biblio/Le\\_Boterf.pdf](http://www.agropolis.fr/formation/biblio/Le_Boterf.pdf)

professional situations of the audience should allow for negotiation of alternatives and active intervention of the audience in the training.

- The implementation of large-scale training is therefore not the design of a training response to the request of the farmers, **it is a training offered within a flexible framework, on a reciprocal basis** (a premium offered for improving abilities to build a viable project) leading to a "win-win" situation for both parties (the community on the one hand benefits from the development of human resources and production capacities of the sector, and farmers on the other hand benefit not only from economic aid but also from improved abilities to add value to the investment made). This means that the national approach corresponding to political choices and democratic choices in the medium and long-term can be reconciled with the approach of family farmers who have a good knowledge of local realities and potential.
- **Answers to particular individual requests of farmers can be prepared within the framework of a pedagogical guidance mechanism for drafting their farm development project**, which nonetheless requires instructors prepared for this type of activity, working closely with professionals from the sector, who guide more than teach without however neglecting the acquisition and control of fundamental knowledge.
- **Professional agricultural training centres are part of the existing training mechanisms**, which allows for the development of synergies, bridges, the reduction of costs and the involvement of different types of instructors/teachers, etc.

*Alain MARAGNANI, January 2006.*

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<sup>15</sup> [http://www.agridoc.com/resdoc/revuethem/revue\\_3.htm](http://www.agridoc.com/resdoc/revuethem/revue_3.htm)

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.agropolis.fr/formation/biblio/2003-Marshall.pdf>