Assessment and Accreditation of Non-Formal Management Education and Development Programmes

Lichia Yiu and Raymond Saner

Summary

This chapter provides an overview of the non-formal management education and in-service training and identifies various assessment tools used in Western Europe and Northern America. The chapter ends with an examination of options of safeguarding the value of non-formal management education and management development programmes in the spirit and context of life-long learning.

INTRODUCTION

Impacted by rapidly evolving technology, global competition and instant communications, workers and managers alike are finding it more difficult to keep up with their job requirements. Learning has become a synonym for survival. Acquisition of knowledge and skills through formal management education (initial formal education at MBA schools) is no longer sufficient for future managers to ensure successful careers and adequate performance at the job site for the remaining years of their work life. Continuous education and training is a must. However, satisfactory learning outcome judging from the transferability of learning to the workplace is not necessarily assured. Literature on non-formal management education and training and its overall performance are scarce, especially outside of the North American context.

While the demand for continued management learning has been growing, the supply has also been increased. Many adult education institutions and private service providers sprang forward to fill the need that was too vast to be satisfied by the formal

education institutions. In a little more than a decade ago, continuing education for adult learners has taken a giant step forward to fill the vacuum and has since blossomed into a full industry in its own. One of the most dynamic and thriving sector of adult education no doubt is management studies and management training. Revenue for the adult learning is substantial. In the UK alone, it was estimated that 43 billion Euros are spent on training of adults each year. The market size for leadership development alone for the FT top 500 European companies is estimated to be around 105 million Euros (ECUANET, 2006). Spending for adult training in the US is also high. According to the ASTD estimate, the market turnover reached $280 billion in 2006. Management development and training on-the-job constitute a substantial share of this total amount spend on adult learning.

A variety of the adult learning organisations are dedicated to management education and development programmes. Among them are corporate universities, a hybrid between a 'real' university and 'upgraded' training unit. It was estimated by experts that in the US alone there are more than 2,000 corporate universities (Knight, 2007) while Europe has about 36 corporate universities, with France having the highest number (ECUANET, 2006).

The spread of management education and training was made easy by the integration of internet and related communication technologies at the workplace and the rapidly lowering cost of providing an ICT platform for delivering training and education across geographic divide. Today, access to on-line management education and training is unhindered in most countries, and commercialisation of higher education is gaining momentum driven both by the institutions' need for mobilising social resources and by the consumers' demand for more education and qualification.

In the midst of this development, concerns over credibility of business schools have been voiced leading to broader reflection about the essence of managerial learning and the core mission of the business schools.

Key proponent of calling for change is Mintzberg (2004) who criticised business schools for failing to educate and develop true managers.

While Mintzberg's concern centres on the MBA programmes of formal education institutions like universities and colleges, his criticism does not extend to the growing field of non-formal management education which so far has eluded the critical eye of management scholars and researchers even though the field of informal management training has grown in size without adequate quality assessments and practically without any form of accreditation systems. What follows is an attempt to take a closer look at this under-researched and under-published field of management education and training.

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AND INFORMAL LEARNING

There is a confusion of terminology between informal learning and non-formal learning. It is important to clearly define the meaning of each term used before proceeding with the discussion of assessment and accreditation.

In 2001, the European Commission defined the terminology used in the discussion about training within the EU countries (Bjørnåvold, 2001: 21):

Formal learning is typically provided by education or training institutions, structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support) and leading to certification or an academic degree. This is intentional from the learner's perspective.

Informal learning results from daily life activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not structured (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support). Typically, it does not lead to certification. Informal learning may be intentional. But in most cases it is incidental or at random. It comprises 'all forms of more or less conscious self-learning outside of the formal educational settings, in direct relation to life

Facets of informal learning
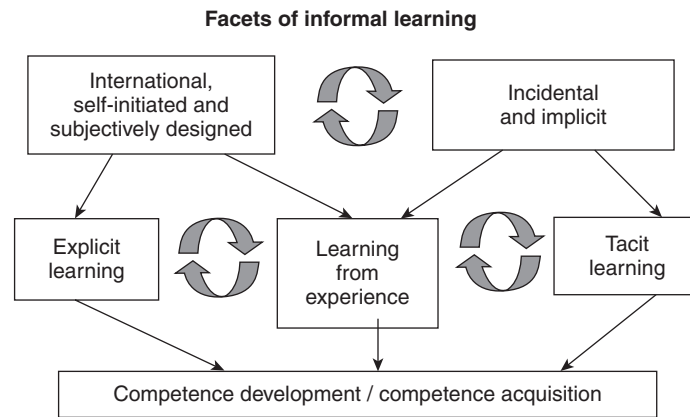
Figure 28.1   Facets of informal learning
Source: (Frank in Wittwer (2003): 177).

and experience – from unconscious, tacit learning on the one hand to conscious, self-organised learning on the other hand' (adopted from Fietz et al., 2006).

Informal learning was conceptualised into three elements (Frank, 2003. see Figure 28.1): explicit learning, learning from experience (reflection) and tacit learning.

Non-formal learning on the other hand, is not provided by an education or training institutions and typically is not leading to certification. However, it is structured, in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support, and intentional from the learner's perspective. It refers to any activity involving the acquisition of understanding, knowledge or skill which occurs outside the curricula of formal educational institutions and without necessarily the presence of an institutionally-authorised instructor.

An important distinction was also made between informal learning and non-formal learning or education, which is the theme of this chapter. According to UNESCO, non-formal education implies:

> Any organized and sustained educational activities that do not correspond exactly to the definition of formal education. Non-formal education may therefore take place both within and outside educational institutions [and cater to persons of all ages]. Depending on country contexts, it may cover educational programmes to impart adult literacy, basic education for out-of-school children, life-skills, work-skills, and general culture. Non-formal education programmes do not necessarily follow the 'ladder' system, and may have differing duration. (Coombs, Prosser and Ahmed, 1973: 185)

Simkins (1977) compared non-formal education with formal education in terms of purpose, timing, content delivery systems and control, and developed *ideal type models* of formal and non-formal education (see Table 28.1). In short, non-formal education and training are therefore courses or programmes that are not part of a universally recognised programme and involve little or no reliance on pre-determined guidelines for its organisation, delivery or assessment and do not lead to any formal qualification or certification.

Both informal learning (intentional aspect) and non-formal learning have been greatly supported by the availability of information on the internet (informal learning) and have been facilitated by access to educational materials and courseware through the internet (non-formal learning or education). Formal educational institutions, such as MIT, have made available their whole teaching and course material on-line free of charge to aid individuals due to life circumstances who could not afford or attend the formal education programmes. Actions taken by institutions such as MIT in the public interest have

Table 28.1   Simkins (1977) ideal type models of formal and non-formal education

	Formal	Non-formal
Purposes	Long term and general Credential-based	Short term and specific Non-credential based
Timing	Long cycle/preparatory/full time	Short cycle/recurrent/part-time
Content	Standardised/Input centred Academic Entry requirements determine clientele	Individualised/Output centred Practical Clientele determine entry requirements
Delivery System	Institution-based, isolated from environment Rigidly structured, teacher-centred and resource intensive	Environment-based, community related Flexible, learner-centred and resource saving
Control	External/Hierarchical	Self-governing/Democratic

Adopted by Fordham (1993) from Simkins (1977: 12–15).

contributed in providing the field of informal learning possibility also for a more structured and coherent learning in terms of subject matter mastery.

Taking into account the difficulty in discerning the complexity (due to its heterogeneity) and the diversity of non-formal education and training, the question arises as how to strengthen the accountability of this form of learning delivery which has become more relevant and urgent. In the past few years, most developed countries have increasingly emphasised the crucial role of learning that takes place outside formal education: in light of the increasing demands for updating knowledge and upgrading skills of their working population in general and the more mature workers in specific. How to recognise informal and non-formal learning so that adults can continue their more advanced learning in a formal education setting has become a hot topic.

This emphasis of enriching the human capital and re-enrolling large number of working population into systematic learning processes has led to an increasing number of political and practical initiatives in the field of informal and non-formal learning and education; thus gradually shifting the practice of lifelong learning (in other words, providing lifelong learning opportunities) from the stage of experimentation to implementation. For the purpose of improving and ensuring quality of adult training and education, different measures have also been put into action, such as more effective accreditation systems, better monitoring and evaluation, improved statistical systems, better performance evaluation at the institution level, and better monitoring of student outcomes and destinations (OECD, 2003).

ACCREDITATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE OF NON-FORMAL TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Although accreditation services for formal management studies and programmes have matured, the same cannot be said of non-formal education. The United States is one of the few countries providing accreditation specifically for this purpose in a formalised manner and with dedicated accreditation bodies. For example, the Accrediting Council for Continuing Education & Training (ACCET, www.accet.org) is one of such organisations specialised in continuing education. ACCET was founded in 1974 and provides institutional accreditation for organisations whose primary function is for educational purposes and also for organisations offering continuing education as a clearly identified institutional objective within the operational entity, such as in-service corporate training.

ACCET accreditation can include educational institutions that offer programmes at locations other than the main headquarters under specified conditions and controls.

ACCET also accredits non-collegiate continuing education and training organisations throughout the United States and accredits programmes abroad. Institutions that may be eligible for accreditation include: (a) Trade and professional associations; (b) Private career schools; (c) Corporate training departments; (d) Intensive English programmes; (e) Labour union training programmes; (f) Religious organisations and ethical societies; (g) Public affairs and cultural societies; and (h) Social service, volunteer and personal development organisations.

Accreditation of non-formal training and education is an effort to safeguard the public interests and to provide a minimum guarantee of educational and training quality through third party actors. Often these third party actors also seek certification of their own management systems in order to demonstrate their commitment to certain quality standards and in turn strengthen their reputation and credibility. These third party accreditation bodies could be public or private entities. What follows is a short survey of the accreditation of non-formal education by different European countries.

Switzerland

Switzerland has established a special monitoring and certification instrument for adult learning in the 1990s. The Swiss Certification for Institutions of Continuing Education was the entity to offer quality certificate service named EduQua (http://www.eduqua.ch) to the adult continuing education institutions in Switzerland. Its members are 800 schools, institutions, and academies throughout Switzerland. In Geneva, the Foundation for Adult Training (IFAGE) is one of the many eduQua certified non-formal institutions that provides courses either for professionals or beginners in business and finance.

EduQua assesses training and education providers by using the following six criteria, which it considers to be keys to the quality of an institution: (1) the course offer, (2) communication with clients, (3) performance based value, (4) staff – meaning the educators,

(5) learning success, and (6) quality assurance and development. Increasingly, eduQua certification has been put forth as a prerequisite for public funding in different Swiss cantons[1] (EduQua, 2007). There is also talk among educational officials about applying the same quality criteria to the providers in the education sector in all of Switzerland and make national subsidies dependent on a proof of quality.

A different approach was taken by experts focusing on quality of training from an ISO perspective. A team of international experts developed the ISO 10015 Standard which is an international standard approved by ISO member states. ISO certification is an internationally recognised quality label which demonstrates an organisation's commitment to quality and a well-functioning quality assurance system.

The ISO 10015 Quality Standard for Training was published in December 1999. The Centre for Socio-Eco-Nomic Development (CSEND) is the first organisation to become a certification body for ISO 10015 related quality assurance work. CSEND received its accreditation from the Swiss Accreditation Agency (SAS) in February 2003 and has since certified training systems in China, India, Bahrain and conducts seminars on the application of ISO 10015 to management training. In contrast to the EduQua, ISO 10015 focuses not only on the four-stage training process, i.e., defining training needs, designing and planning training, providing for training, and evaluating training outcomes; it puts equal emphasis on the alignment of training to the needs of the organisation. By so doing, training is not only focused on the individual acquisition of knowledge and skills, but equally on the application of these acquired knowledge and skills in solving individual performance issues and in enhancing organizational performance (Saner, 2002; Yiu and Saner, 2005) (see Figure 28.2).

Europe

In the rest of Europe, certification of educational institutions is a relatively new concepts.

It is not common in Europe to see accreditation organisations cater specifically for the adult learning and non-formal sector. In Nordic countries and in Austria, accreditation bodies usually have the dual role of accrediting both formal and non-formal training. For example, in Austria, accreditation of non-formal training programmes is given by the Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Arbeit (Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour) according to the Austrian Akkreditierungsgesetz (Accreditation Act).

In other countries, institutions delivering accreditations in the non-formal system concentrate their task primarily on management of the learning environment such as classrooms and educational facilities, but taking little into account the quality of actual training and learning. For example, in the United Kingdom and also recently in Germany, regular inspections by the public authority constitute part of the approval procedure for non-formal training bodies to apply for public financial support. These inspections are targeted mostly at the institutional management systems and do not focus specially on the training programmes themselves. Nevertheless, in the United Kingdom, there is an established practice of adhering to an output-oriented and performance-based model to education and training. This is not the case in Germany, however, where validating informal learning still appears to be rather low (Fietz et al., 2006). On the whole these particular cases reveal the excessive diversity in the monitoring of non-formal training all over Europe. A focus on specific European countries and regions that have different background in non-formal training will show evidence for improving the coherence of training and education monitoring both at a national and at an international level.

United Kindom

In the United Kingdom, there is general acceptance of learning outside formal education and training institutions as a valid and important pathway to competences. Non-formal and informal learning are considered as basic features to increase individual skills and work competences. Recently, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC, www.lsc.gov.uk) has taken a strategic interest in the recognition of non-formal learning for adults. LSC has therefore become an accreditation agency focusing on non-formal training and education. The Adult learning Inspectorate (ALI), now merged with the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted, www.ofsted.gov.uk), is another quality control body for both formal and non-formal education funded by the public funded provisions in the UK.

British Accreditation Council (BAC, www.the-bac.org) is a registered charity (non-profit-making organisation) in the UK which was established in 1984 to act as the national accreditation body for independent further and higher education. Until 2000, BAC accreditation was only available to colleges in the United Kingdom, but there are now accredited colleges in different countries including Switzerland. At present BAC accredits over 200 colleges in the United Kingdom, and nearly 30 overseas. These accredited independent colleges include business and professional education and training.

Scandinavian countries

Adult education and training in the Scandinavian countries is mostly regulated with the same tools and the same institutions involved in the formal educational system. Nevertheless, it is not possible to speak of a 'Nordic model'. Finland, Norway, Denmark and Sweden have chosen different approaches and are working according to different schedules. These differences do not change the fact that 'all four countries have taken practical steps through legislation and institutional initiatives towards strengthening the link between formal education and training and learning taking place outside of schools' (Colardyn and Bjørnåvold, 2004). In fact, these countries have created institutes in charge of evaluating the quality of education and

training both in the formal and informal sector. Documenting and recognising high qualifications acquired through non-formal and informal learning has been emphasised for decades in the Scandinavian countries (Fietz et al., 2006).

In Denmark, for example, the Danish Evaluation Institute (EVA, www.eva.dk) is an independent agency formed under the auspices of the Danish Ministry of Education in 1999 under national legislation (Act on the Danish Institute of Evaluation, Consolidated Act of September 2000). It is responsible for external quality assurance at all levels of education in Denmark, including higher education (public and private subsidised higher education institutions). It initiates and conducts systematic evaluations of higher education programmes. Their activities may include institutional, auditing and other forms of evaluation.

Accreditation of all programmes leading to a professional Bachelor's degree began in 2004. EVA conducts the accreditation/evaluation, and the Ministry of Education makes the accreditation decision. EVA also conducts accreditation of private courses as part of the Ministry of Education procedure determining whether students at private teaching establishments should be eligible for Danish state study grants. Business schools, for example, the Copenhagen Business School (CBS), may go for double accreditations. In the case of CBS, it has the national accreditation from EVA, but also obtained EQUIS accreditation for international recognition.

The Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT, www.nokut.no) was created in 2003 to be responsible for the evaluation and accreditation of all higher education institutions. As from 1 January 2002, an accreditation has become mandatory and universal for all formally recognised higher education in Norway which covers both institutional and programme based accreditations. Non-formal learning is recognised on the individual basis; there is no formal accreditation procedure for non-formal education providers. The Finnish case shows a recent reform process that increasingly takes into account the non-formally and informally acquired competences. The vocational qualification system is widely appreciated and the tendency is that all kinds of skills and competences should get formally validated credits.

France

In several respects, France can be characterised as one of the most advanced European countries in the area of identification, assessment and recognition of non-formal learning (OECD, 2003). Concerning the 'opening up' of the national vocational education and training system including management related training for competences acquired outside formal institutions, nowadays there are several different forms of recognition for competences acquired outside formal courses of study. The bilan de competences and the Validation des Acquis Professionnels (VAP) legally regulate the recognition of vocationally acquired competences in order to undertake certain courses of study in the formal educational system. Since 1992, vocational certificates like the Certificat d'aptitude professionelle can be obtained (to various degrees) on the basis of assessments of non-formal and prior learning. Another important initiative was taken by the French Chambers of Commerce and Industry where the aim was to set up procedures and standards to assess independently the informal education and training system (OECD, 2003). Concerning the competences strictly in management and business, there has been an initiative in 1999 of the French employers' association MEDEF (Mouvement des Entreprises de France) under the title of 'Objectif Compétence' that aims to anchor this competence aspect more strongly especially in small and medium-sized enterprises.

Mediterranean countries

In the Mediterranean countries, despite the fact that informal training and education are very spread, there is still a lack of

monitoring and evaluating. Nevertheless, some countries in the South of Europe have taken important initiatives. In Spain, institutional level work led to the creation of a system for assessment, recognition and accreditation of vocational skills acquired through non-formal and informal channels ('The Law on Qualifications and Vocational training of June 2002'). An important further step could be marked with the set up of the ERA program – 'Evaluación, Reconocimiento y Acreditatión de las competencias profesionales'(Fietz et al., 2006). Recently, Portugal has undertaken a programme for Certification of Training Institutions named QUALFOR that can be compared to the EduQua certification in Switzerland. Many firms and financial institutions deliver learning programmes for their employees. Some of them aim to set up corporate universities to deliver specific training in management and leadership. This informal scope of management development is generally not aligned to standardisation or accreditation because their education and training are strictly focused on their employees. As a result, the quality of the teachings and the training mostly depends on the quality and the success of the firm in its fields. Nevertheless, some major firms or banks have voluntarily asked for accreditation of their training units and programmes. EFMD through its CLIP (Corporate Learning Improvement Process) programme provides accreditation of corporate learning function. So far 12 leading Corporate Learning Organisations from across Europe have been awarded the Corporate Learning Improvement Process.

A summary list of the accrediting institutions and quality assurance systems of non-formal management training is presented in Table 28.2.

According to Business Podium Boards (BPB, www.business-podium.com), there are more than 100 *unrecognised* accreditation associations of higher learning in the US, UK and Europe (see Table 28.3). Some of the accreditation associations listed by BPB are discipline or professional specific. A large number of them are dealing with the general

topic of higher learning. It is obvious that knowledge production and related services, including accreditation and recognition of non-traditional learning, have become one of the major drivers of Western economy. This sector, i.e., accreditation, could warrant greater regulatory control.

SHOULD NON-FORMAL MANAGEMENT TRAINING INSTITUTIONS BE ACCREDITED OR SUBJECT TO QUALITY CERTIFICATION SCHEMES?

The proliferation of the 'private' accreditation bodies reflects the reality of the increasingly deregulated education market worldwide, making it easier to provide non-formal management training and course work. This proliferation has also created challenges and difficulties in recognition of learning attainments, making it more of an increasing concern regarding the compatibility of diplomas, certifications and qualifications by the employers.

Seeing it from the providers' point of view, organisations which manage training programmes would like to differentiate their products by acquiring quality certification through an accreditation procedure offered by an independent entity. Accreditation could help screen-out sub-standard or unqualified management education and development programme suppliers. Yet, it does not necessarily address the question of learning outcome or that of an active instrument in protecting the public and private interests of achieving quality non-formal management education or learning. It is also questionable whether the self-regulated accreditation bodies abide by stringent standard of good governance imposed by international organisations such as the International Organisation for Standardisation and affiliated international metal organisations or government bodies. Unless verification mechanisms exist to monitor and regulate these non-state 'soft' regulators, accreditation of the non-formal training and

Table 28.2 Examples of accrediting institutions and quality assurance systems of non-formal management training in Western Europe and North America

Organisation	Scope of work	Methods of regulation	Accreditation procedure	Validity	Level of recognition	Accreditation of informal education/training	Territory and size of the users	External quality assurances measures	Oversight	Type of programme	Status of recognition	Organisational status
Accrediting council for continuing education & training (ACCET)	ACCET accredits non-collegiate continuing education and training organisations throughout the United States and accredits programmes abroad	Independent peer-review and evaluation	1. Inquiry 2. Application 3. Accreditation and evaluation workshop 4. Analytic self-evaluation report (ASER) 5. Examination team 6. On-site examination 7. Team report 8. Accrediting commission action 9. Time schedule	3 to 5 years	Recognised by the U.S. Department of education. Certified as an ISO 9001-quality management system	Specifically informal schools & programmes	USA 248	No	–	All sorts of private career schools corporate training departments For our interest: Trade and Professional - Associations Labour union training-Public affairs and cultural societies	Private initiative	Private accrediting agency
Eduqua	Eduqua is the first Swiss accreditation/ label for adult education	Voluntary	1. Subscription within a certification organisation 2. Adult education type of programme 3. Work on the type of programme 4. Sending off the final work	3 years	Secrétariat d'Etat à l'Economie (SECO)	Schools & programmes of all sorts	Switzerland 49 business & management schools for 800 institutions of all sorts	No	Proformation SQS SGS ProCert IQB-FHS SCEF	All sorts of	Label	–
Qualifications and curriculum authority (QCA)	QCA develops criteria which awarding bodies and their qualifications must meet, and processes they must go through. Examinations and qualifications	Voluntary	A two-stage process must be completed: the recognition process; the application for accredited qualifications	Variable	Sponsored by the department for education and skills (DfES)	Specifically informal: Schools programmes Personals: accreditating for example ILM dedicated to advancing the capability of managers and leaders	UK	No	–	All sorts of programmes in Business and administration	QCA is a non-departmental public body	It is governed by a board whose members are appointed by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, and managed on a day-to-day basis by an executive team

(continued)

Table 28.2 Continued

Organisation	Scope of work	Methods of regulation	Accreditation procedure	Validity	Level of recognition	Accreditation of informal education/training	Territory and size of the users	External quality assurances measures	Oversight	Type of programme	Status of recognition	Organisational status
EFMD-CLIP-Corporate learning improvement process	A quality improvement tool for the corporate learning function	Independent peer-review and evaluation	1. Application 2. On-site briefing and initiation of the process 3. Eligibility 4. Guided self-assessment 5. On-site peer review 6. Awarding of the quality label 7. Follow-up: Quality improvement and institutional development	Accredited: 3 years reaccredited 5 years	Supported by a broad international body of academics and professionals. ENQA	EQUIS is not primarily focused on the MBA or any other specific programme. Its scope covers all programmes offered by an institution	Worldwide 11	Granting of the EQUIS award is made by an independent EQUIS accreditation awarding board	EFMD	Banks and firms	An international not-for-profit association	A voluntary affiliation of organisations
International organisation for standardisation, (ISO 10015)	ISO 10015 is a quality assurance tool for the in-service training system and custom-tailored training programmes	Voluntary	Third party audit on annual basis for certification purpose	Certified and registered for 3 year cycle	Recognised by national standard setting authorities and international mutual recognition system	Applicable for all training functions	Worldwide	Yes. National authority accredits ISO certification bodies. National authority is also subject to international peer review in order to sustain good governance	IAF (International accreditation forum) and respective national authority responsible for standardisation	All	International recognition	International NGO, governed by a Board and Swiss laws

Table 28.3   Unrecognised accreditation associations of higher learning according to BPB Survey as of 30 September 2007

- Accrediting Commission International (ACI) (in Beebe, Arkansas) (aka International Accrediting Commission)
- Accrediting Council for Colleges and Schools (ACCS)
- Accreditation Governing Commission of the United States of America
- Alternative Institution Accrediting Association (AIAA)
- American Accrediting Association of Theological Institutions (AATI) (in Rocky Mount, North Carolina)
- American Association of Bible Colleges
- American Association of Drugless Practitioners Commission on Accreditation (AADPCA)
- American Association of Independent Collegiate Schools of Business
- American Association of International Medical Graduates (AAIMG)
- American Association of Non-traditional Colleges and Universities (AANCU)
- American Association of Schools (AAS)
- American Council of Private Colleges and Universities (ACPCU) (connected to the operator of Hamilton University, now called Richardson University)
- American Federation of Colleges and Schools (AFCS)
- American Federation of Colleges and Seminaries (AmFed)(AFCS) (in Lakeland, Florida)
- American Naturopathic Certification Board (ANCB)
- American Naturopathic Medical Certification and Accreditation Board (ANMCAB or ANMAB)
- American Naturopathic Medicine Association (ANMA)
- American Universities Admission Program (AUAP)
- Arizona Commission of Non-Traditional Private Postsecondary Education
- Asia Theological Association (ATA)
- Association for Distance Learning (ADLP) (aka National Academy of Higher Education and Association of Distance Learning Programmes)
- Association for Online Academic Excellence (AOAE) (in Wales)
- Association of Christian Colleges and Theological Schools (in Louisiana)
- Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) (in Colorado Springs, Colorado)
- Association of Distance Learning Programs (ADLP) (aka Association for Distance Learning and National Academy of Higher Education)
- Association of International Education Assessors
- Association of Reformed Theological Seminaries
- Board of Online Universities Accreditation (BOUA)
- Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College (BTESS)
- British Learning Association (BLA)
- Central States Consortium of Colleges & Schools (CSCCS) (connected to the operator of Breyer State University)
- Centre of Academic Excellence UK (CAEUK)
- Central States Council on Distance Education (CSCDE)
- Christian Accrediting Association (CAA)
- Commission on Medical Denturitry Accreditation (COMDA)
- Council for Distance Education Accreditation (CDEA; connected to Association of International Education Assessors)
- Council for International Education Accreditation (CIEA)
- Council of Online Higher Education (COHE)
- Council on Medical Denturitry Education (COMDE)
- Distance Education Council (DEC) (connected to the operator of Saint Regis University) (not to be confused with the legitimate Distance Education Council recognised by the Indian Department of Education)
- Distance Graduation Accrediting Association
- Distance Learning Council of Europe (DLCE) (connected to University Degree Programme)
- European Committee for Home and Online Education (ECHOE) (connected to University Degree Programme)
- European Council for Distance and Open Learning (ECDOE) (connected to University Degree Programme)
- Examining Board of Natural Medicine Practitioners (EBNMP)
- Global Accreditation Commission (GAC)
- Higher Education Accreditation Commission (HEAC)
- Higher Education Services Association (HESA) (connected to University Degree Programme)
- Integra Accreditation Association (IAA)
- Inter-Collegiate Joint Committee on Academic Standards (ICJCAS)

(continued)

Table 28.3 Continued

- Interfaith Education Ministries (IEM)
- International Academic Accrediting Commission (IAAC)
- International Accreditation Agency for Online Universities (IAAOU) (connected to operators of Ashwood University, Belford University, and Rochville University)
- International Accreditation Association (IAA)
- International Accreditation for Universities, Colleges and Institutes (IAUCI)
- International Accreditation and Recognition Council (IARC)
- International Accrediting Association for Colleges and Universities (IAACU)
- International Accrediting Commission (IAC) (aka Accrediting Commission International)
- International Accrediting Commission for Postsecondary Institutions (IACPI)
- International Association of Educators for World Peace (There are different groups by the same name though none are authorized accreditors.)
- International Association of Universities and Schools (IAUS)
- International Commission for Higher Education (ICHE)
- International Commission of Open Post Secondary Education (ICOPSE)
- International Council for Accrediting Alternate and Theological Studies (Kerala, India)
- International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICODE)
- International Distance Learning Accrediting Association (IDLAA)
- International Interfaith Accreditation Association (IIAA) (closed down operations at the end of May 2007)
- International University Accrediting Association (IUAA) (in California)
- Kingdom Fellowship of Christian Schools and Colleges
- Middle States Accrediting Board (MSAB)
- Midwestern States Accreditation Agency (MSAA)
- National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE) (aka Association for Distance Learning)
- National Accreditation Association (NAA)
- National Association for Private Post-Secondary Education (NAPSE)
- National Association of Alternative Schools and Colleges (NAASC)
- National Association of Open Campus Colleges (NAOCC)
- National Association of Private Nontraditional Schools and Colleges (NAPNSC; Grand Junction, Colorado)
- National College Accreditation Council (NCAC)
- National Council of Schools and Colleges (NCSC)
- National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE)
- National Distance Learning Accreditation Council (NDLAC) (Glenndale University and Suffield University claim NDLAC accreditation)
- National Learning Online Council (NLOC)
- Naturopathic National Council (NNC)
- Non-Traditional Course Accreditation Body (NTCAB)
- Online Christ Centered Ministries
- Pacific Association of Schools and Colleges (PASC)
- Regional Education Accreditation Commission
- Southern Accrediting Association of Bible Institutes and Colleges (SAABIC) [6]
- The Association for Online Distance Learning (TAODL)
- Transworld Accrediting Commission International (TWACI)
- United Congress of Colleges (UCC) (Ireland, UK)
- US-DETC – Nevada (not to be confused with the legitimate DETC, based in Washington DC.)
- Universal Council for Online Education Accreditation (UCOEA)
- Virtual University Accrediting Association (VUAA)
- West European Accrediting Society (WEAS)
- Western Association of Private Alternative Schools (WAPAS)
- Western Council on Non-Traditional Private Post Secondary Education (WCNPPSE)
- Virtual University Accrediting Association (in California) (VUAA)
- World Association of Universities and Colleges (WAUC) (in Nevada; operated by Maxine Asher)
- World Online Education Accrediting Commission (WOEAC)
- World-wide Accreditation Commission of Christian Educational Institutions (WACCEI)

education might not fulfil its mandate in assuring quality of learning experience and outcomes.

For instance, accreditation of corporate university is no guarantee either in ensuring that an enterprise's training inputs will actually result in the attainment of strategic objectives of the corporation or productivity improvement of the manager. It is the view of the authors that accreditation has not yet fulfilled the expectation of ensuring a return on training investment. There is a need to strengthen both the outcome assessment and the quality assurance of the learning process. While the outcome assessment is complex and not fully reliable, in-process quality control and assurance become all the more important and urgent.

The analysis of the individual countries relating to the goal of ensuring quality of non-formal learning/education in continuing education and higher education shows that further development is required, even in those countries that have already implemented national systems for validating informal and non-formal learning. In contrast to the fragmented approach that can be observed in many countries, a holistic approach encompassing both non-formal and informal learning as well as general education, vocational education and enterprise training – requires coordination at a national level.

Approaches used in Scandinavian countries could serve as model for this combination of accreditation and recognition of formal and informal leaning and the corresponding service providers. Moreover, developing a coordinated approach at an international level between the different actors involved in non-formal learning process could be a preliminary step toward standardisation of professional qualification in different fields of management studies. Based on a transnational model, public and private agencies that provide certification and accreditation in tertiary education and management studies need to agree upon a professional qualification standard for various branches of management studies in order to benchmark different offers and to provide guidance for curricula development.

Initiatives to create an international common professional competence standard, such as certification of project management managers (PMM), has gained credence. Similar trends could be predicated for other management applications.

No amount of accreditation, however, would be able to guarantee minimum standards of non-formal management training or outstanding learning outcome of in-service management education. The former is influenced less by the subject matter expertise yet more by the ability of the faculty to communicate his material in a motivating manner and connected to the actual practices and issues of the business.

Many young management teachers started their career without proper training in pedagogy or with little experience in actual practice as managers. Their teaching remains theoretical and to some extent, hearsay. Situation in the non-formal management training programmes are similar, even though these programmes tend to have a greater mix of academicians and practitioners. Experienced managers or practitioners are often asked to conduct these courses because of their personal reputation or because of the firms that they represent. Often their teaching is rich in anecdotes but poor in reflection and short in generalisable conceptualisation. This shortcoming does not seem to matter, since non-formal management education and development programmes are designed with a commercial purpose where entertainment value is supreme.

Accreditation of non-formal management education and development programmes is only half of a measure, necessary but not sufficient. It is time also to look at the other end of the pipe: What competencies are actually acquired by graduates of the non-formal management education and development programmes? What difference would this type of learning make to the persons, to their work organisations, and to the economic development of their society? The institutional arrangements and basic infrastructure for quality assurance for this sector are yet to be completed. The emergence
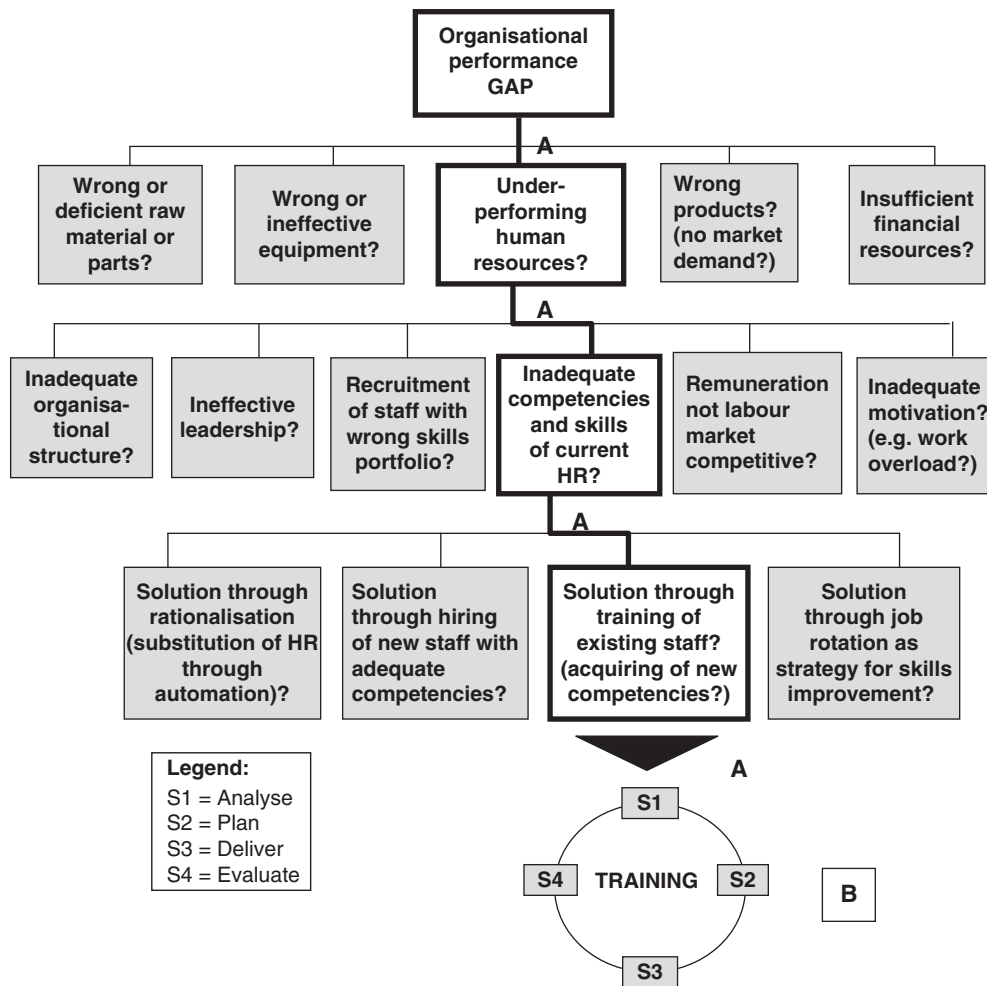
Figure 28.2   ISO 10015 based training management process
Source: ©Centre for Socio-Economic development, 2003.

of ISO 10015 quality standard could fill part of the gap (see Figure 28.2).

Conclusions

Non-formal education and training became part of the international discourse on education policy in the late 1960s and 1970s in the context of recurrent and lifelong learning. The 21st century, with its changing international economic conditions, has not only revived this policy discussion but also heightened the demand for continued education, especially in the management field.

Countries with knowledge based economies have come to rely on education production as one of the major engines of their economic performance and well-being. Individuals from the emerging markets wanting to benefit from the economic opportunities are also eager customers for these management training programmes and education. In this context, short-term, focused non-formal education is also thriving.

Proliferation of service providers formed a diverse landscape in terms of management training and education, with formal business schools offering short courses or executive

programmes at one end of the spectrum to private operators at the other end. In between, corporate universities occupy the space in providing their own brand of management education and training. Proliferation caused difficulty in consumer choice and recognition of qualification, certificates and diploma. As a result, both business schools and non-business school-based management education and development programmes have been seeking accreditation in order to boost its credibility and competitiveness in the marketplace.

Does accreditation post an entry barrier for the unqualified service providers? Does accreditation guarantee effective use of education and training resources? Does accreditation assure quality of management education and relevance of learning outcome? Does accreditation strengthen the quality of non-formal management education and protect the public and consumer interests? These are questions that beg further inquiry and answers. A review of accreditation and quality assurance measures in the formal education sector could generate new insights which could also benefit the non-formal training and education sector.

NOTE

1 In the Swiss political system, cantons enjoy the autonomy in managing most of its public affairs. A canton is similar to a province in France or state in the United States. Education is considered to be a cantonal competence and its policy and management are decided by the canton authority.

REFERENCES

ACCET (Accrediting Council for Continuing Education & Training): http://www.accet.org/index2.cfm, accessed 30/08/07.

Accredited qualification databases, UK. *Awarding Body Directory*. Retrieved from accredited qualifications web site, on June 12, 2007, http://www.accredited qualifications.org.uk/AwardingBodyDirectory.aspx#

Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP). Accreditation. Retrieved from ACBSP web site on June 6, 2007, http://www.acbsp.org/index. php?module=sthtml&op=load&sid=s1_020acc

Bjørnåvold, J. (2001) Cited in Fietz and Junge (2006) 'The changing institutional and political role of non-formal learning: European trends', in P. Descy, M. Tessaring (eds), *Training in Europe*. Second Report on vocational training in Europe 2000. Background report (CEDEFOP Reference series): Luxembourg: Office of Official Publications of European Communities.

Coombs, P.H. with Prosser, C. and Ahmed, M. (1973) *New Paths to Learning for Rural Children and Youth*, West Haven, CT: International Council for Educational Development Publications.

Colardyn, D. and Bjornavöld, J. (2004) 'Validation of formal, non-formal and informal learning: Policy and practices in EU member states'. *European Journal of Education*, 39 (1): 69–89.

Danish Evaluation Institute (EVA) 'Adult education and continuing training'. Retrieved June 6, 2007, from EVA web site: www.eva.dk/Methods/Adult_ Education_and_Continuing_Training.aspx

Department for Education, Lifelong Learning, and Skills (DELLS) 'Learning and qualifications'. Retrieved June 17, 2007, from DELLS web site: http://new.wales. gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/learning_and_ qualifications/?lang=en

ECUANET (2006) 'An overview of corporate university'. Accessible at p://www.google.ch/search?q=How+ many+corporate+universities+in+the+world& hl=de&start=20&sa=N.5.

EduQua (2007) Good grades for good school, EDUQUA at http://www.eduqua.ch/002alc_0101_en.htm, accessed on 30/09/07.

European Quality Link (EQUAL), European MBA guidelines. http://www.fibaa.de/ger/downlo/european mbaguidelines.pdf

Fietz, G., Junge, A., Nicholls, B. and Reglin, Th. (2006) 'Promoting visibility of competences – the Exemplo toolkit for SMEs'. EU Leonardo da Vinci Programme, pilot project. *Impuls*, 25. Retrieved July 4, 2007, from Exemplo web site: http://www.exemplo.de/exemplo/ Website_Produkte/impuls25_screenpdf.pdf

Fordham, P.E. (1993) 'Informal, non-formal and formal education programmes', in YMCA George Williams College *ICE301 Lifelong Learning Unit 2*, London: YMCA George Williams College.

Frank, I. (2003) 'Erfassung und Anerkennung informell erworbener Kompetenzen – Entwicklung und Perspektiven in ausgewählten europäischen Ländern', in W. Wittwer and S. Kirchhof (eds), Informelles Lernen und Weiterbildung. Neue Wege zur Kompetenzentwicklung. München/Unterschleißheim. pp. 168–209.

Knight, R. (2007) 'Corporate universities: Move to a collaborative effort', *Financial Times*. March 19.

Mintzberg, H. (2004) *Managers not MBAs: A Hard Look at the Soft Practice of Managing and Management Development*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers Inc.

OECD (2003) 'Thematic review on adult learning: Germany'. Country Note. Retrieved June 12, 2007, from OECD web site: http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/44/5/36341143.pdf

OECD (2003) 'Thematic review on adult learning: UK'. Background report. Retrieved June 12, 2007, from OECD web site: www.oecd.org/dataoecd/49/49/2471965.pdf

OECD (2003) 'Thematic review on adult learning: USA'. Country Note. Retrieved June 12, 2007, from OECD web site: www.oecd.org/dataoecd/60/23/35406014.pdf

OCDE (2003) 'The role of national qualifications systems in promoting lifelong learning: Australia'. Retrieved June 12, 2007, from OECD web site: www.oecd.org/dataoecd/13/45/34327618.pdf

OCDE (2003) 'Les rôles des systèmes nationaux de certification pour promouvoir l'apprentissage tout au long de la vie: Rapport de base de la France'. Téléchargé le 13 Juin 2007 sur le site de l'OCDE: http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/13/44/34327758.pdf

OCDE (2003) 'Les rôles des systèmes nationaux de certification pour promouvoir l'apprentissage tout au long de la vie: Rapport de base de la Suisse'. Téléchargé le 13 Juin 2007 sur le site de l'OCDE: www.oecd.org/dataoecd/53/10/33874774.pdf

Saner, R. (2002) 'Quality management in training: Generic or sector-specific?' *ISO Management Systems*, July–August. pp. 53–7.

Saner, R. and Fasel, S. (2003) 'Negotiating trade in educational services within the WTO/GATS context', Aussenwirtschaft. pp. 275–308.

Simkins, T. (1977) *Non-Formal Education and Development. Some Critical Issues*. Manchester: University of Manchester.

The Austrian Accreditation Council: http://www.akkreditierungsrat.at/

The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA): http://www.ccea.org.uk/

Yiu, L. and Saner, R. (2005) 'Does it pay to train?' ISO 10015 assures the quality and return on investment of training, *ISO Focus: Education – Foundation for the Future*, April: 7–10.