

## **LIFELONG LEARNING AND ONTOLOGICAL SECURITY: BLENDING OF CONCERNS AND THEIR EXPENSE**

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### ***Abstract***

*The aim of this paper is to find out how the content which is supposed to be transmitted within the framework of Lifelong Learning Programme of EU is defined in the conditions of reflexive and risk modernity, where the knowledge has quite an unstable nature. Other questions are: how this learning, the conditions in which it works, and the knowledge that it transmits are reflected at the level of individual everydayness, namely in relation to late modern necessity of individually formulated Self-identity; and what role lifelong learning plays or could play on this level and how it corresponds with the system needs. Some kind of loose discourse analysis of Memorandum on Lifelong Learning 2000 is used*

to answer these questions, therefore the paper works with numerous quotations from this document. Findings in the form of six notes suggest that the narrowest definition of this knowledge, which is possible to obtain from this policy paper and especially its “six messages,” is employability. The system tries to gain control over the individuals through the capturing of resources they use in order to ensure the meaning of the surrounding world and maintain the sense of ontological security, while the aim is to produce an individual that can be used to improve the system’s competitiveness and effectiveness. Nevertheless, an individual achieves ontological security by the very same means and there is a certain interfusion of individual identity and system interests.

**Keywords:** self-narrative, neoliberalism, education, knowledge, late modernity, EU

## Introduction

The most ambitious European educational project of the last decade, Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP), is promoted as one of the major priorities and the necessary condition of improving EU’s economical growth and competitiveness. *Knowledge* has become the primary incantation interwoven throughout all the official documents that deal with the issue resounding over and over; one as the cause of the need to learn, and the other as the intended consequence of learning. This or the other way, knowledge is the word—ubiquitous, ever-changing and reportedly necessary for satisfactory existence in contemporary society. It is therefore difficult not to place the question of what is supposed to be the content of this knowledge, what concretely should be transmitted in the circuits of educational system? Looking at this question through the lens of late modern theory, which claims that knowledge is essentially impenetrable nowadays, there arises an interesting discrepancy between the ambition of the system and currently available facilities of its fulfilment, at least at first glance. The issue becomes even more interesting considering the late modern necessity of self-help formation of identity, a process that, on the one hand, requires the manipulation with currently available and unstable knowledge, and that represents, on the other hand, the foundation of ontological security which is, according to Giddens (1991, 1998), one of the primary conditions of participation in social life—all within the environment of increasing mistrust towards knowledge originators, experts, as Beck (2004) puts it. To track the institutional discursive strategies it is necessary to turn to the documents which justify and promote the need and necessity of lifelong learning. In this paper, *A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning 2000* (from now on *MoLL*) (Commission, 2000)—and especially its “six key messages”—is considered as such a document as it represents a kind of argumentative base of many following similar documents that refer to it retrospectively and thus sketches the blueprint of many subsequent legislations and policies of EU on LLP. The main object of its brief discourse analysis is not to systematically identify and sort all of the possible argumentative lines contained therein, but to capture the *paradigm case*, of how the knowledge is defined, how

people—subjects of LLP and, thus, knowledge “bearers”—are supposed to deal with it and for what purpose. The reason we find this aim remarkable is precisely because these definitions are not part of the document itself, or at least not in graspable form, which is, to say, surprising, considering the frequency of the term “knowledge” in it. In short, we try to find what is unsaid or perhaps concealed in this regard and answer the question whether there are other than economic needs that lifelong learning is trying to fulfil, and what is their relation to the necessity of the self-made narrative of one’s identity. Much criticized is the relation of neo-liberalism and the educational systems, and this is taken into account throughout this paper.

## 1. Six Key Messages of A Memorandum on *Lifelong Learning 2000* as the base of Lifelong Learning

Considering MoLL, the terms *Knowledge-based society*, *knowledge-based economy* or even *Knowledge Age* are found in this policy paper concerning lifelong learning on virtually<sup>1</sup> every page. This “new reality of the 21<sup>st</sup> century” that has brought “changes on a scale comparable with that of the Industrial Revolution,” asks for new strategies and, “above all, education and training systems must adapt” (MoLL, p. 6).<sup>2</sup> Knowledge represents simultaneously both the nature of current social change and the instrument of facing this change:

Europe has moved towards a knowledge-based society and economy. More than ever before, access to up-to-date information and knowledge, together with the motivation and skills to use these resources intelligently on behalf of oneself and the community as a whole, are becoming the key to strengthening Europe’s competitiveness and improving the employability and adaptability of the workforce. (p. 5)

According to the European Commission, LL, defined as all learning activity “from the cradle to the grave” for “gaining and renewing the skills needed for sustained participation in the knowledge society,” should be an answer to the whole set of modern challenges—from the spread of new technologies and increasing international competition to the ageing of population and interculturalism. Moreover, learning allegedly does not only help to maintain economic competitiveness and employability, but is also the best way to overcome social exclusion and promote active citizenship. “Two equally important aims for lifelong learning: promoting active citizenship and promoting employability” are defined as the two main reasons why “putting lifelong learning into practice is” a “top priority for the European Union” (p. 4-7).

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<sup>1</sup> The word “knowledge” appears 36 times in 36 pages of the memorandum. The highest density of occurrence is just among the paragraphs concerning “six key messages” which are the subject of interest in this paper.

<sup>2</sup> Further from here only pages will be mentioned when quoting the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning 2000, due to the length of the source name, unless otherwise stated.

“Six key messages”<sup>3</sup> of MoLL claim that the aim of LL is to (1) guarantee universal and continuing access to learning for gaining and renewing the skills needed for sustained participation in the knowledge society; (2) visibly raise levels of investment in human resources in order to place priority on Europe’s most important asset—its people; (3) develop effective teaching and learning methods and contexts for the continuum of lifelong and life-wide learning; (4) significantly improve the ways in which learning participation and outcomes are understood and appreciated, particularly non-formal and informal learning; (5) ensure that everyone can easily access good quality information and advice; and (6) provide lifelong learning opportunities as close to learners as possible, in their own communities and supported by ICT-based facilities wherever appropriate.

The object is to spend high amount of resources to ensure access to education for the widest possible group of citizens at any time during their lives. Educational opportunities should be directly accessible in the locations where they are needed and should enable that everyone can, to some extent, formulate her/his own educational program according to personal needs in the area of residence. Ideally, the effect is the widespread ability to work with the new technology, especially communication technology, at the basic level at least, and, above all, the highest possible employment. It is therefore a permanent education in many forms and by means of these, on the one hand, every citizen should adopt the widest possible range of knowledge and skills that would enable her/him to fully participate in all spheres of life in this new knowledge-based society and, on the other hand, Europe should become the “most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world” (e.g. (European, 2000: 12). Nevertheless, before getting more closely examining particular passages and their content, conceptualization of the so often mentioned knowledge based society should be discussed.

## 2. Nature and content of knowledge in *knowledge society*

While the basic constitutive element of modern society is physical capital, the amount of human labour and industry (hence the name, *industrial* or *capitalist* society), we are currently witnessing a transformation of society in which the production of knowledge becomes a key factor and which results in the fundamental change of all social institutions (Veselý, 2004). Evers (2000) in this context refers to the role of globalization which does not only bring a large increase in what we know, but also brings great growth of ignorance, i.e. knowledge about what we do not know. “If we are, on the one hand, actually heading towards a knowledge society, we are, on the other hand, becoming more and more ignorant as well” (p. 82, translation by authors). According to Hargreaves (2003), knowledge society has three dimensions, (1) it com-

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<sup>3</sup> Titles of these messages are as follows: 1) New basic skills for all; 2) More investment in human resources; 3) Innovation in teaching and learning; 4) Valuing learning; 5) Rethinking guidance and counselling; and 6) Bringing learning closer to home.

prises of an expanded scientific, technical, and educational sphere, (2) it involves complex ways of processing and circulating knowledge and information in a service-based economy, and (3) it entails basic changes in how corporate organizations function so that they can enhance continuous innovation in products and services by creating systems, teams, and cultures that maximize the opportunities for mutual and spontaneous learning.

Nonetheless, even more important than infrastructure and the speed of which knowledge spreads or sphere in which knowledge is used most, is the very nature of current knowledge i.e. its inherent attributes of inconstancy and incomprehensibility—qualities to which Lyotard (1979) refers when he talks about incredulity as the postmodern condition, characterized as increasing scepticism toward the totalizing nature of metanarratives and their reliance on some form of “transcendent and universal truth.” On the basis of Lyotard’s assumptions, Giddens (1998) later partially founded his notion of reflexivity as “defining characteristic of every human action” (p. 36)—with no exception of learning and education (or rather precisely with regard to them). For now, it is enough to say that reflexivity means that “thought and action are constantly refracted back upon one another” (p. 38), thus knowledge is unstable, it represents only the current version of the theoretically infinite range of options, which sooner or later succumbs to the destruction of its own verification, and has only temporary validity, which produces uncertainty and the need (or rather necessity) to continually re-create new meanings. This cycle, on the one hand, keeps a certain form of provisional stability, but, on the other hand, it reinforces the reflexive nature of the social environment. With regard to reflexivity, Beck (1992) talks about public distrust in experts, or more generally to expert systems, which in the sphere of education, among other things, mean that institutionalized education can no longer claim a monopoly over knowledge production and assessment (Edwards and Usher, 2001), and “in this situation, experiential, informal, and community-based learning all become legitimate sources, settings, and forms of learning, including those engaged in through the consumer market.” (ibid., p. 280). MoLL sets formal, non-formal, and informal education at the same level of importance at least (p. 10), adding that “Informal contexts provide an enormous learning reservoir and could be an important source of innovation for teaching and learning methods” (p. 8). Learning outside the “old-school institutions” (without experts) evokes that the lay knowledge is getting to the same level as the expert one, or rather that a much wider group of people can aspire to a certain expert status. Within this context, the questions which arise are what is supposed to be the content of this knowledge, what concretely should be transmitted through the education system—in other words, how this knowledge is formulated, if referring to its specific content (which is inherently unstable in general) can barely be done.

According to MoLL, LL should transmit **basic skills** “broadly defined areas of knowledge and competence, all of which are interdisciplinary (...) General, vocational and social skills,” which “increasingly overlap in content and function”<sup>4</sup> (p. 10). As is

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<sup>4</sup> “(...) learning foreign languages, for example, involves acquiring technical, cultural and aesthetic capacities for communication, performance and appreciation” (p. 10).

evident, the content of LL represents more skills than knowledge, but what is much more fundamental—these *broadly defined areas* are *overlapping*, namely **social** and **vocational** skills. It can be therefore stated that to have social skill is to a large extent the same as to have vocational skill, at least in terms of their content; and given the fact that one of the two main reasons why “putting lifelong learning into practice [is] a top priority for the European Union” is “improving [of] the employability and adaptability of the workforce” (p. 5)<sup>5</sup>, it cannot but be considered that **to be employed represents social skill** and that employability is inherently linked with **adaptability**, which refers to the general nature of “Knowledge Age”—permanent change.

Nevertheless, employability, defined as “the capacity to secure and keep employment” (p. 5), is not only overlapping with social skills but is also “a **core dimension of active citizenship**” and “a decisive condition for reaching full employment and for improving European competitiveness and prosperity in the ‘new economy’” (Ibid). Although promoting active citizenship and promoting employability are “two equally important aims for lifelong learning” (ibid.), the latter is a core dimension of the former not vice versa and thus there is also active citizenship beside the social skills under the umbrella of **employability**. However, there is one more item under this umbrella forasmuch as basic skills (i.e. primarily employability as we could see) “are those required for active participation in (...) the labor market (...) and in a democracy, and as a person with a **coherent sense of identity** and direction in life.” (p. 11). To sum it up, employability, coherent identity, participation in the (knowledge) society, and social skills are all achievable through the same set of knowledge/skills—some kind of universal knowledge (or perhaps rather know-how) that is supposed to provide both public and individual well-being (personal fulfilment and world’s most competitive economy).

The most significant feature of this universal knowledge, however, is that it is defined not by its content, but by its desirable effect—which is, to a large extent, employability. LL is defined “**within the European Employment Strategy**, as all purposeful learning activity, undertaken on an ongoing basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence” (p. 3), so it should not be surprising that employability has emerged as a central theme, although it is fairly well incorporated into the tangle of lofty and very vague sentences about the general benefits of education and the need of its transformation, into the ever-accessible source of ever-changing information so much needed in this new era. What is more interesting is the fact that employability represents the narrowest definition of the content of LL, which can be fathomed in this policy paper. Despite the proclamation that “employability is obviously a key outcome of successful learning, but social inclusion rests on more than having paid work” (p. 9), there is no explanation of that more than having paid work, only the statement that “learning opens the door to building a satisfying and productive life, quite apart from a person’s employment status and prospects.” (Ibid.) and therethrough the loop

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<sup>5</sup> The second reason for putting LL into practice is that “more than ever before, individuals want to plan their own lives, are expected to contribute actively to society, and must learn to live positively with cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity.” (Ibid.)—see further below.



is closed: the key outcome of LL is employability—but there is more than to be employed—this is more achievable by LL—the key outcome of which is employability. The following quotation explains the nature of this loop quite explicitly: “For much of most people’s lives, having paid work underpins independence, self-respect and well-being, and is therefore a key to people’s overall quality of life” (p. 5) (compare with footnote no. 4 above). MoLL thus does not almost work with specific content of the so invoked lifelong learning, but it solely defines what should be the consequence of that learning.

Emphasis transferred from the content on consequences of acquiring certain knowledge appears as a strategy to justify necessity of learning without having to define what exactly is to be learned. In other words, this transfer of emphasis appears as the mechanism of legislative discourse adaptation to the conditions of reflexivity. Nevertheless, this discourse adaptation is not purposeless, but it can be defined as an effort to establish new commonplace both in terms of nature of (*new*) reality and the actions that this reality requests.

### 3. Lifelong learning as a neoliberal reason of state and its effect on nature of education

In many ways MoLL shows signs of what Bourdieu and Wacquant call Neoliberal newspeak, vocabulary “which seems to have sprung out of nowhere” with its typical items like *flexibility*, *employability*, *exclusion*, *new economy* etc. (2001). The spread of this “new planetary vulgate,” according to them, results from the new types of imperialism, promoted by “partisans of neoliberal revolution” who under the cover of modernization intend to remake the world by sweeping away the social and economic conquests of a century of social struggles. This new imperialism represents a certain form of symbolic violence that relies on the relationship of concealed communication which particularity consists in universalizing the particularisms bound up with a singular historical experience by making them misrecognized as such and recognized as universal. Bourdieu and Wacquant (2001) refer to neoliberalism as ideology which through certain discourse practices strives to enforce itself as a matter-of-fact definition of the current social situation while concealing its own particularity. As Apple (2007) argues, the language of privatization, marketization, and constant evaluation has increasingly saturated public discourse and in many ways, it has become commonsense. Similarly to Bourdieu and Wacquant (2001), Apple (2007) points out the coordinated and determined efforts “not only to reconstruct a ‘liberal’ market economy, but a ‘liberal’ market society and culture” (Apple, 2007, p. 6). In the effect, the system totally colonizes the life-world, to be said with Habermas, specifically by means of imprinting the neoliberal concepts to the core state institutions as educational or healthcare system. The result of this life-world colonization and saturation of public discourse by the neoliberal newspeak is change in the subject position, change from *homo economicus*, who behaves out of self-interest and is relatively detached from the

state, to *manipulatable man*, who is created by the state and is continually encouraged to be perpetually responsive as neo-liberalism requires the constant production of evidence that one is doing things *efficiently* (Apple, 2007: 7).

In the context of this need of evidence production, science and educational system in general play an important role because as public schools were infected by neoliberalism, namely social sciences shifted from the role of potential social reformist to the role of policy advisors (Griffin, 2006). In other words, the value rationality of science and education is absorbed by the instrumental rationality of policy-making and thus science finds itself in the position of supporter of ideological and social practices of business society, which represents major shift in power/knowledge relation. Regarding lifelong learning, the effect is that this main education project of the last decades was almost universally adopted as policy without social transformative potential (*ibid.*)—the desired element of “radical adult education” in Evans’s (1987) terms. Modernist educational project of progress and emancipation is reconstructed in terms of economic modernization and empowerment and lifelong learning becomes the means of attaining and maintaining the flexibility that is considered necessary in response to the technological and socioeconomic change required and thus the educational task becomes one of producing the knowledge specifically needed (Edwards, Usher 2001). The neo-liberal notion of effectiveness and flexibility became the core idea of education: “learning is the condition of flexibility, and flexibility is seen as the condition of learning.” LL therefore represents specific technology which makes labour force subject to a new form of flexible rationalization, model of governing individuals in their relation to the collective and as such it constitutes neoliberal governmentality (Olssen, 2006). LL thus *forms neo-liberal reason of state* (*Ibid.*). In other words, LL is medium through which the neo-liberal newspeak saturates the public discourse and crowds out other definitions of effectiveness and democracy, converted into the practice. Such instrumentality, lack of transformative element of (adult) education and caducity of knowledge to be learned, is closely linked with what Liessmann (2008) calls *miseducation* (*Unbildung*).

In this situation, there is no place for the ideal of humanistic education, which consists in the acquirement of world, developing of comprehension and creation of personal autonomy. This ideal has even got into the conflict with neoliberal capitalism. As Liessmann (2008, according to Hausser, 2011) states in his *Society of Miseducation* at a time of rapidly changing market needs the resignation on education has become virtue—it gives individuals the flexibility and ease of adaptability to immediate market requirements. Educatedness is the ability to see the wider context and to ask unpleasant questions breaking stereotypes. But who wants to be successful in neoliberal environment, should stop asking and be flexible—even better when one does not even wonder that s/he might ask. Miseducation is the way to success and education became an obstacle. Miseducation seems to be the social norm, something obvious and in this context Liessmann even talks about the *confident miseducation* (Hausser, 2011).

To summarize, lifelong learning became primarily lifelong learning policy and it is represented by the instrumental effort to identify and ensure the transmission of



knowledge currently needed by neoliberal market. Subject of this learning/policy is manipulatable and actually uneducated man flexibly working while having the sense of relative autonomy and freedom.

#### 4. Lifelong learning as a possible base of Self-narrative

Beck (2004) ascribes the attribute *risk* to modernity by which he means primarily the risks of institutional nature, externalities of industrialization and expert systems in general, that became the object of experts' interest in the same way as technology itself. Just as experts are increasingly concerned about unintended consequences of technological colonization of the world and the rational organization of society, every each individual deals with issues of potential unintended consequences of her/his decisions—becoming an expert on the construction of own identity (Beck, 2004). Decline of *traditional authority* of knowledge/truth—formulaic truths in Giddens' terms (Giddens in Beck, Giddens, Lash, 1994)—brings the possibility or rather the necessity to form one's own identity. However, the necessity of choice in reflexive risk society brings permanent doubts: formerly, the present was formulated by past traditions, but currently, the presence is an area of expanding future in the form of necessity of decision making and its consequences.

Active construction of identity in terms of reflexive modern society is diachronic and it happens through the interpretation of one's own biography as a narrative (Gergen and Gergen, 1997: 162). It is a strategy of creating identity as a meaningful whole connecting the particular life events which individual tries to see as unified under a certain system. Nevertheless, this conduct is not private but always implicitly a social act as the meaningfulness of the story can be confirmed only by its acceptance within the interaction among social actors (Gergen and Gergen, 1997). Although individuals provide interpretations of their lives and role in society in a “self-help” way, they are never isolated entities. To the contrary they are to a large extent dependent on their environment as identities are based on negotiations, dialogue (ibid.; Fairclough, 1993). Therefore, there is also a need of a certain **shared knowledge**.

Despite the limited validity of knowledge attainable in modern society, Giddens argues that “to be a human being is *to know*, virtually all of the time, in terms of some description or another, both what one is doing and why one is doing it” (1991: 35, *italics added*); but at the same time, the basic feature of risk/reflexive/post-traditional society is mistrust in “classical” expert system (rational, scientific knowledge), so there is duality of scepticism and the need of trust. All human beings are continuously observing the circumstances of their actions and incorporating their transformation continuously into the framework of their conduct. Such behaviour has the discursive dimension—it allows an individual, if asked, to give the interpretation of her/his own conduct in order to justify its meaningfulness and thus the reality of one's identity despite the changing conditions on which its constitution is based (Giddens, 1991). In the continuous justifying of current form of identity, we can see an example of what Luckmann (1996) calls

subjective ethic of motivation. It is a situation where the meaning is ascribed to what appears to be useful—through adequate use of currently available or preferred meanings. It is not so much about finding the “true meaning of the things”—such ambition would be foolish in the environment of volatility of meanings—but to instil the meaning to the conduct which appears to be useful. To operate with inconstant knowledge in inconstant conditions in order to ensure constant meaning of both self and society has a specific purpose of maintaining the sense of **ontological security** which is, according to Giddens (1991), the basic prerequisite of engagement in social life. It carries individual through transitions, crises and circumstances of high risk. There are moments when the individual must launch out into something new, knowing that a decision made, or a specific course of action followed, has an irreversible duality (Giddens, 1991: 38, 114). According to Mitzen (2006: 345), such uncertainties can make it difficult to act, frustrate the action-identity dynamic and make it difficult to sustain a self-concept. Ontological insecurity then refers to the deep, incapacitating state of not knowing which dangers to confront and which to ignore.

In this context, it is interesting that MoLL states that “(...) we all need information and advice on ‘what to do next’ at several times in our lives, and perhaps quite unpredictably. This is an integral part of planning and carrying through a life project as an ongoing process” (p. 16), or elsewhere that “basic skills are those needed for (...) coherent sense of identity” (p. 11). These passages can be interpreted in the way that in the background of the MoLL, there is some notion of this individual need of constant ensuring of meaning of one’s actions, which is conceived considerably paternalistically, i.e. in the form of effort to offer to individual some kind of advice or stable base.

It is argued in this paper that LL—as described in MoLL, namely in its „six key messages“—could have some kind of soothing effect and serve as certain counterweight of the above described environment of doubtfulness and instability—especially through promoting neoliberal ideology as a matter-of-fact description of reality which is combined with a set of instructions for being/living together with promises of a bright future in case individuals will follow these instructions. It could even be argued, with a certain degree of exaggeration, that there is a kind of effort to establish a new form of formulaic truth. The way in which MoLL presents these instructions is indeed intellectually somehow unfathomable and their proclaimed validity is derived precisely and only from its foisted naturalness or obviousness; moreover, through the involvement of all population in the same system of learning, a sort of *shared knowledge* base could arise. This potential effect of LL can be explained by the following six examples which can be seen as slightly exaggerated counterpoise “six key messages” of MoLL.

First, the need of certain stability of knowledge is substituted by its antithesis: permanent flow of meaning, notion of latest information need. “Both employability and active citizenship are dependent upon having adequate and up-to-date knowledge” (p. 5). This can be described through a simple metaphor. While formulaic truth represented a sealed vessel, the content of which was stable in substance and the only thing subjected to revision was its interpretation evolving with alternating genera-

tions, reflexive knowledge then represented the old vessel, the content of which was constantly changing and thus could not be regarded as truth (inconstant new content incompatible with the old form which is supposed to contain truth). Universal knowledge defined by its effect which LL is trying to mediate then constitutes a new vessel, however, without stable content—it is a pipe through which knowledge is constantly flowing and truth is achieved simply by individual's contact with the pipe, i.e. continuous process of learning. Thus, inconsistency is institutionalized and encapsulated in the notion of effectiveness—notion of employability, promise of knowledge's usability for improving one's life in the future.

Second, the content of learning is user-defined—"a major shift towards user-oriented learning systems with permeable boundaries across sectors and levels [and] system [must place] users' needs and demands at the centre of concern." Only that the repertoire of choices is predefined by market and thus the usefulness of knowledge/skill is guaranteed by market's needs. Therefore, meaning is implanted in every action seen as useful, which precisely corresponds with *subjective ethic of motivation* (Luckmann, 1996). This brings the effect of "right decision"—actually a chain of such decisions—as LL is a never-ending process. This could provide the sense of linking the life acts in a meaningful way. Important circumstance, however, lies in the fact that motivation is not that of subject, but is instilled by the system.

Third, LL constitutes certain new type of expert system—a wide group of *advisors* who operate with a different kind of "universal knowledge" and act as advocates through some kind of therapeutic dialogue within which this knowledge is transferred and explained in terms of truth/effect. "(...) we all need information and advice on 'what to do next'. Weighing the options and making decisions certainly demands relevant and accurate information, but professional advice can frequently help to clarify one's mind" (p. 16). The notion of unintended effect of decision is replaced by the universal intended effect—employment, and possibility of reaching false autonomy. If someone is not sure, s/he can come and a professional will advise her/him what to do. In the context of *user-defined* content of learning it means either advice of what to choose (if one does not know what to learn, but already knows that s/he should learn) or justify what was chosen—so there is virtually no possibility of wrong choice, everything is justifiable and one thus can enjoy a sense of stability and meaningful progress.

Fourth, mistrust towards experts is replaced by the possibility of becoming one of them, especially in the process of informal learning ("provide an enormous learning reservoir and could be an important source of innovation for teaching and learning methods" [p. 8]). Involvement of an individual in the process of universal knowledge transfer implies her/his conversion from lay into expert role and thus potentially also her/his transposition to the side of LL advocates. "*Accreditation of Prior and Experiential Learning* (APEL) systems evaluate and recognize individuals' existing knowledge, skills and experience. The methods used can uncover skills and competencies that individuals themselves may not have realized they possess and can offer to employers" (p.15). This approach is not dissimilar to the previous one, which deals with clarifying

one's mind. The aim is to involve individuals in the system and provide the sense of usefulness and personal fulfilment (however, this usefulness is used within neoliberal system and constitutes a foisted false illusion concealing alienating nature of work).

Fifth, permanent involvement in the process of working (either working itself or preparation for it in the form of learning)—“learning throughout life, either continuously or periodically” (p. 8)—has a soothing effect which works in the synergy with mis-education and illusion of autonomy and which precludes the possibility of critical approach or awareness of one's own position and role within the broader system. This is closely linked with mechanism of sequestration, tendency to displace, or at least to keep behind the edge of attention, an unpleasant experience or findings in order to maintain continuity of the currently experienced version of reality (Gorer, 1967; Giddens, 1992). This means that once individual is engaged in the system, s/he tends to ignore the contradictions arising from it, and thus in some implicit way contribute to its legitimization. The system is also trying to create an impression that circumstances have not changed, soothe individuals and create the sense of calm, in which it is easier to concentrate on building one's *new usefulness*: “(...) systems should adapt to individual needs and demands rather than the other way round” (p. 8).

Sixth, socially shared knowledge base as the prerequisite of both integration of Self-narrative in the wider social framework and constitution of the sense of ontological security is represented by sharing the aforementioned truth of universal knowledge and shared responsibility (more on this Field, 2000) for its maintaining. It means that everybody is (or should be) involved in the same system of knowledge and thus have the same aim labelled by various occupations, “knowledge,” and ideas of autonomy: “People have the freedom to adopt varied lifestyles, but equally the responsibility to shape their own lives” (p. 7). Various ways of transferring market risks to employees/learners and constant increasing of a sense of threat, allow the system to require more flexibility, humility and submission. In order to have enough customers/learners, system artfully creates, maintains and accurately doses uncertainty that it needs for its operation.

## CONCLUSION

This paper describes how MoLL deals with the definition of knowledge that is to be transmitted within the system of lifelong learning in the conditions of reflexive, risk society. It concludes that the narrowest definition of this knowledge which is possible to obtain from this policy paper and especially its “six messages” is *employability*. The knowledge thus is not defined by its content but by the desirable effect of its use or gaining. Employability is closely related to the notions of effectiveness and adaptability—terms typical of neoliberal newspeak. As it has been said many times, lifelong learning represents certain instrument through which the population is converted into liquid workforce, providing effect not so much to itself, but rather to the system for which population work in alienating jobs. Nevertheless, the particular interest here is to outline the possible effect of Lifelong Learning on the level of individual every-

dayness. The argument is formulated in the form of six brief notes that are conceptualized as initial contribution to a wider debate. Summing them up, system tries to gain control over the individuals through the capturing of resources they use in order to ensure the meaning of the surrounding world and maintain the sense of ontological security. The aim of the system is to produce an individual usable to improve its competitiveness and effectiveness; nonetheless as individual is achieving ontological security by the very same means there is a certain interfusion of individual identity and system interests.

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## MOKYMASIS VISĄ GYVENIMĄ IR ONTOLOGINIS SAUGUMAS: INTERESŲ DERINIMAS IR JO KAINA

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### **Santrauka**

*Straipsnio tikslas yra atskleisti, kaip refleksyviojoje ir rizikos modernybėje, kurioje žinioms būdingas kintamumas, apibūdinamas mokymosi visą gyvenimą turinys, perduodamas per ES Mokymosi visą gyvenimą programą. Kiti straipsnyje keliami klausimai yra: kaip mokymasis, sąlygos, kuriomis jis veikia, ir žinios, kurios yra perteikiamos, atsispindi individualios kasdienybės lygmeniu, kokį vaidmenį mokymasis visą gyvenimą atlieka arba galėtų atlikti šiuo lygmeniu ir kaip tai atitinka sistemos poreikius.*

*Siekiant atsakyti į šiuos klausimus, pasitelkiami tam tikri Mokymosi visą gyvenimą memorandumo 2000 diskurso laisvosios analizės metodai, todėl straipsnyje gausu šio dokumento citatų. Išvados iš šešių pagrindinių teiginių rodo, kad siauriausias apibrėžimas žinojimo, kurį būtų galima gauti iš šio politikos dokumento, ir ypač iš jo „šešių teiginių“, yra tai, kad mokymasis visą gyvenimą siejamas su įsidarbinimo galimybėmis. Tokiu būdu žinios apibrėžiamos ne per jų turinį, bet per jų naudojimo ar įgijimo pageidaujamą poveikį. Sistema siekia kontroliuoti individus per išteklius, kuriuos jie*



*naudoja suteikdami prasmes aplinkiniam pasauliui ir siekdami palaikyti ontologinio saugumo jausmą. To tikslas yra formuoti individą, tinkamą sistemos konkurencingumo ir veiksmingumo sustiprinimui. Nepaisant to, kad tomis pačiomis priemonėmis individas pasiekia ontologinį saugumą, atsiranda tam tikras individo tapatumo ir sistemos interesų susiliejimas.*

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** pasakojimas, neoliberalizmas, švietimas, žinios, vėlyvoji modernybė, Europos Sąjunga (ES).

