



# Reading the Text: constructed subjects and dominant discourses

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1. 10-step approach to reading the text (3 pre-text, 5 text & 2 post-text)
  2. Context of EU education policy-making
  3. Reading the EU text of lifelong learning



# 1. Pre-text stages

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1. Understanding the general context
  - what is known before reading the text
2. Identifying the text/s
3. Locating the text/s

# 5-step approach to reading the text

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4. Initial impression
  - what, and how much, is in the text
5. Content analysis
  - identify & count key words / phrases
6. Metaphor imagery
  - identify, categorize, question
7. Subjects
  - identify subjects & their activities
  - identify & consider relations between them
  - what does this begin to tell you
8. Discourse
  - identify relationship/s between subjects
  - what argument is constructed about the subjects
  - what view of the world, or social structure is constructed through the text
  - who benefits or loses through this construction**
  - how does this analysis relate to your analysis of other texts, either contemporary, chronologically or geographically**

# Post-text stages

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9. Moving beyond the text – thinking more about the discourse
10. Theorising (including drawing on existing knowledges/literatures)



# Pre-text:

## 1. EU education policies

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- EU policy-making:
  - Council, Parliament & Commission
  - Open Method of Coordination
- multi-level governance
- competencies & powers
  - Vocational education
  - Higher education
  - European dimension
  - Lifelong learning
- framing & funding

# The EU project and its dominant discourses

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- Political stability
  - Social cohesion
  - Social exclusion
- Economic growth & global competitiveness
  - human resources
  - information & communication technology
  - flexibility, transferability & mobility



# Pre-Text: steps 2 & 3: Identifying & locating the text

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Memorandum 2000

Communication 2001

Council Resolution 2002

Proposal to Council/Parliament for a Decision on LLL  
Programme 2004

Call for proposals for LLL Programme 2006

# Reading the text: step 4

## Initial impression

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The image shows the cover of a document titled "The European Charter for Researchers" and "The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers". The cover features the European Commission logo and the text "Community research". It includes a photograph of a researcher working on a laptop. The text is written in a serif font. At the bottom, there is a URL: [www.europa.eu.int/eracareers/europeancharter](http://www.europa.eu.int/eracareers/europeancharter). The bottom section of the cover features a photograph of two researchers in a lab, one looking through a microscope. The text "ELR 21 020" is written vertically on the left side of the bottom section. The bottom right corner features the logo for "EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA" and the text "HUMAN RESOURCES AND MOBILITY".

EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
Community research

*The European Charter for Researchers*

*The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers*

[www.europa.eu.int/eracareers/europeancharter](http://www.europa.eu.int/eracareers/europeancharter)

ELR 21 020

EUROPEAN RESEARCH AREA  
HUMAN RESOURCES AND MOBILITY

# Reading the text: step 4

## Initial impression

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COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 30.10.2000  
SEC(2000) 1832

COMMISSION STAFF WORKING PAPER

**A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning**

people's knowledge and skills match the changing demands of jobs and occupations, workplace organisation and working methods; and

- to encourage and equip people to participate more actively once more in all spheres of modern public life, especially in social and political life at all levels of the community, including at European level.

The key to success will be to build on a sense of shared responsibility for lifelong learning among all the key actors – the Member States, the European institutions, the Social Partners and the world of enterprise; regional and local authorities, those who work in education and training of all kinds, civil society organisations, associations and groupings; and, last but not least, individual citizens themselves. Our shared aim is to build a Europe in which everyone has the opportunity to develop their potential to the full, to feel that they can contribute and that they belong.

## 2. LIFELONG LEARNING – TIME TO TAKE ACTION

Why is this debate so urgent? Why is putting lifelong learning into practice a top priority for the European Union? There are two equally important reasons:

- 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;
- today's Europeans live in a complex social and political world. 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. **Education, in its broadest sense, is the key to learning and understanding how to meet these challenges.**

These two features of contemporary social and economic change are interrelated. They underlie two equally important aims for lifelong learning: **promoting active citizenship and promoting employability.** Active citizenship focuses on whether and how people participate in all spheres of social and economic life, the chances and risks they face in trying to do so, and the extent to which they therefore feel that they belong to and have a fair say in the society in which they live. 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. Employability – the capacity to secure and keep employment – is not only a core dimension of active citizenship, but it is equally a decisive condition for reaching full employment and for improving European competitiveness and prosperity in the 'new economy'. Both employability and active citizenship are dependent upon having adequate and up-to-date knowledge and skills to take part in and make a contribution to economic and social life.

**Change can only come about in and through the impetus of the Member States,** with Community-level support and facilitation where appropriate. It is the Member States who, in the first instance, are responsible for their education and training systems – each according to their institutional circumstances. In practice, the achievements of these systems are dependent upon the input and commitment of a wide range of actors from all walks of social and economic life, including the Social Partners – and not least upon the efforts of individuals themselves, who, in the last instance, are responsible for pursuing their own learning.



# Reading the text: step 5: Content analysis - top 10

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lifelong learning  
education  
employment  
knowledge  
guidance  
indicators  
citizens  
opportunities  
youth  
Lisbon

# Reading the text: step 6

## metaphor & imagery

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change, adjustment & adaptability

'time to take action' – urgency

European leadership

Gateways

Labour markets 'thrown out of  
balance'

'holistic' style of provision



## Pre-Lisbon: 1993-1999

### Identifying problems, defining solutions

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- global competitiveness
- 'dual' society, social exclusion, rising unemployment
- technological revolution
- enlargement
  
- knowledge economy
- constructing the lifelong learners
  - lifelong learning
  - individualisation
  - employability

## binary classification of learners

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There is a risk of a rift in society between those that can interpret and those who can only use; and those who are pushed out of mainstream society and rely upon social support: in other words *between those who know and those who do not know.*

CEC 1995 White Paper Education and Training: 9.  
(emphasis added)

## The Lisbon Strategy - 2000

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The Union must become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.

(CEC 2000: 3)



## Reading the text: step 7 - identifying the subjects

### i. the high knowledge-skilled learner

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- graduates
- post-graduates
  
- first degree has limited 'shelf-life' – updating and changing
- trans-European networks
- APL for non/in-formal learning
- EU CV of qualifications & competencies
  
- other learning needs are not identified

# Reading the text: step 7 - identifying the subjects

## ii. the low knowledge-skilled learner

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- post-compulsory sector
  - people on low incomes
  - disabled people
  - ethnic minorities and immigrants
  - early school leavers
  - lone parents
  - unemployed people
  - parents returning to the labour market
  - senior citizens (including older workers)
  - ex-offenders
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- basic skills, basic IT
  - Entrepreneurship
  - social skills
  - recognition of life-*wide* learning
  - guidance and counselling

## Reading the text: step 8 – identifying the discourse i. the lifelong learner of the knowledge economy

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high knowledge skilled learner/worker for KE  
discourse of change, opportunity and individual  
choice

- related to Bologna and neo-liberal discourse of GATS
- modular system linked to ECTS
- European Research Area: science/technology
- HE provision for specific business/industry needs
- research & training in field of lifelong learning
- flexibility, transferability, mobility

## Reading the text: step 8: identifying the discourse

### ii. the lifelong learner of the knowledge society

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- low knowledge-skilled learner of the knowledge society
- discourse of concern, of threat/fear risk and uncertainty
- related to European Employment Strategy
- unemployment and employability
- individualised and pathologised
- recognition & transfer of VET qualifications



## Post text: step 9: more about the discourse i. the knowledge economy

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- EU must compete in global market
- EU at cutting edge of technology
- EU needs high-level knowledge skills
- speed of technological change requires continual updating
- individual's responsibility to update
- the lifelong (grad/postgrad) learner in HE



## Post text: step 9: more about the discourse ii. the knowledge society

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- EU has expanded .. EU/25
- high unemployment and social exclusion
- fear of 'dual' society
- low-knowledge skills to be improved
- lifelong learning / cyclical training
- individual responsibility
- pathologised – failure
- basic skills & VET

# Post-text: step 10

## Theorising .... Or, so what?

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We live in a society in which the formation, circulation, and consumption of knowledge are something fundamental. If the accumulation of capital was one of the fundamental traits of our society, the same is true of the accumulation of knowledge. Furthermore, the exercise, production, and accumulation of knowledge cannot be dissociated from the power mechanisms with which they maintain complex relations that must be analysed.

Foucault, M. (1994) interview 1978, in J.D. Faubion (ed) *Essential works of Foucault 1954-1984, vol.3: power* (London: Penguin): p291.



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Knowledge no longer *educates* the individual and society, rather it becomes a tool for *positioning* individuals on (or excluding them from) the labour market.

Magalhães AM and Stoer SR (2003) Performance, citizenship and the knowledge society: a new mandate for European education policy, *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 1: 41-66



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The binary classification of learner into high and low knowledge-skilled is classed and raced; and then it is gendered. Further gendered analyses of the EU discourses of lifelong learning and the knowledge economy/society can only be understood through an engagement with the finer *crossed* analyses of social class, poverty, age and race. Beneath a cloak of 'inherent goodness', lifelong learning is a discourse of competition, of personal striving, of constant becoming, of inclusion and exclusion, of stratification that continues to (re)construct educational and labour market power relations based on gender, class and race, and on disability, age and migrant/citizen status also.

Brine, J. 2006, Lifelong learning and the knowledge economy, *British Educational Research Journal*, 32:5 p663



**Raising Expectations:  
staying in education  
and training  
post-16**



department for  
education and skills