



**Work-family issues, Learning and Training:
A difficult balancing act ?**

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1. Overall objective(s) and background information

In Canada, as well as in most industrialized countries, the Knowledge Economy has brought many to consider that learning and training are important for most sectors of work and for most workers (OECD, 1996ab, 2002, 2003). Concurrently, work-life issues have gained importance over recent years, and employees expect employers to take their demands and aspirations on this issue into account. The increase of the learning demands among the adult population and the growing participation of active population to education and training should logically be changing the balance between work, private life and learning.

Our research addresses these issues that have generally been considered separately, i.e. work-life on the one hand, and learning and training on the other. Only a few qualitative studies done by student associations have addressed the work-life and training/learning issues simultaneously and it thus appears useful to look into this issue in more detail to determine how workers manage these three important dimensions of their life, which however translate into important and competing time constraints for them. The research is all the more important in the context of an ageing population, where the competitive advantage of many companies, and the employment possibilities of individuals rests on the active participation of as many workers as possible, and as many qualified and trained workers as possible. The participation of women and ageing workers is seen as determinant for many nations in the future and work-life issues are determinant in maintaining high activity rates in these two groups (Guillemard, 2003, 2007; Tremblay, 2007).

The article aims at responding the following general questions: How do the offer of learning opportunities and the work-family issue interrelate and influence the participation of various groups of adults in learning activities? Does the presence of children impede participation of some? Is there any indication of an impact of family responsibilities on participation in learning or is it age that determines participation? In other words, the life course perspective will bring us to analyze the data mainly on the basis of gender, age and of family characteristics (presence and number of children, which are variables present in the WES survey). Indeed, the WES survey offers the possibility to analyse participation in training according to age, but also according to the presence or absence of children, which we expected would give us precious indications on the situation of individuals regarding work-life issues. This is of course not the ideal situation, and we will return in conclusion on data limitations, but having had interesting results from WES on working time issues over the life course, it was felt that WES might deliver some indications concerning the challenge of work-family and training/learning challenges, and the research proposed to go forward with this investigation.

Thus, although not ideal, the WES survey nevertheless provides some data to explore the relations between work, private life and training offered by firms over recent years; we analysed the data for 2004, the last year available to researchers. In order to indicate what is known and what is to be found out, we will first present a



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literature review including firstly a few elements on the life course perspective, secondly a review on work-life articulation, on permeability of work and non work activities, and finally some data on participation in training and learning to which the WES results can be confronted.

The life course perspective

The life course perspective is the general context of this research project and the analysis of the issue of work-family and training/learning aims at highlighting how the life course perspective is useful in analyzing this issue. Intuitively, it seems quite appropriate to think that such a subject has to be analyzed in a life course perspective since the latter recognizes the diversity of life course patterns. The life course has developed into an important research paradigm over the recent decade; it is a perspective which aims at studying individual trajectories over time by taking into account the various domains of education, family, work, and also sometimes health issues. It can be analyzed in terms of observed individual patterns, but also in terms of a series of expected or normative life courses.

The lifecourse perspective takes a holistic view at situations, rather than focusing “on isolated specific events, phases or demographic groups as being discrete and fixed but considers the entire life as the basic framework for empirical analysis and policy evaluation. The link between individual trajectories on one hand and historical period, social structures, as well as human agency on the other is also at the core of the life course paradigm.” (Anxo and Boulin, 2006).

To summarize this view, we will present the four elements that are highlighted by Bernard (2007)¹.

1-The life course perspective refers to the fact that life is longitudinal, that is that constraints and opportunities from the past will have an influence on future activities. Applied to the work-life issue, this would mean that training opportunities might be constrained by previous choices regarding family; for example, we could hypothesize that the presence of children and more constraining family situations might diminish the time available to individuals and make it more difficult to participate in training in future years. Family obligations are a variable present in the WES questionnaire and we thought – as did the authors of the questionnaire apparently – that this might come up as an important reason not to participate in training.

2- Life is multifaceted, in the sense that health, work, education and family issues are intertwined and the evolution of these variables has an impact on the others. Concerning work-life and training, this is clearly the implication that we had expected, i.e. that family obligations would limit the possibility for training for some individuals more constrained by these obligations, and these are usually women.

¹ Bernard (2007) refers to Paul Bernard’s summary presentation of the life course perspective at the December 13-14 th PRI workshop.



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3- Lives are linked through family and generational relationships. Family members thus impact on each other's life course. Again, the presence of children is seen as possibly having an impact on those who have children, men or women.

4-Life unfolds in local communities. Daycare, the quality of schools and job or training possibilities of course vary from one region or city to another. The question concerning daycare in WES is somewhat large and the numbers are low, but we tried to have a look at this issue as well, although WES is not the ideal instrument for this and thus, it is more the three first elements that can be looked at with this data set.

We had expected to find in the WES survey some elements to support the life course perspective by using data by gender and by age, as a replacement for actual longitudinal data which are not available on the issues of training and work-family simultaneously. There are no longitudinal data on both these themes that can be used.

Work-life articulation

Over the years, research has indicated that parents who have a job have difficulty in reconciling their family and professional obligations and often feel stressed (Nelson and Quick, 1985; Galinsky *et al.*, 2001; Paquet and Najem, 2005). Indeed, the intensification of work, the diversification of forms of employment (temporary, autonomous, on call, occasional) and of schedules (part time, broken hours, etc.) the transformation within the family as well as the lack of State support for childcare and elderly care increase the difficulties which parents encounter in balancing work and family responsibilities (Fagnani, 2000, 2001).

Some studies have shown that the measures which parents with young children would like to benefit from relate to working time arrangements, amongst which flexible schedules (Lero *et al.*, 1993). On the basis of these works, we looked into the Canadian situation to determine whether such working time arrangements and work-family balancing measures were available to parents in Canada and found that paradoxically, it is often the workers without children who have more access to support for elderly care and childcare. We also found that parents with children tend to want to reduce their working time more than others, although the majority of respondents to the WES survey indicated they were satisfied with their working hours (Tremblay, Paquet, Najem, 2006a,b). This tends to indicate that time constraints are already present and could possibly interfere with other activities such as training.

The vast majority of research on work-family balancing measures covers only a limited number of respondents since to our knowledge, no large survey was designed specifically on this issue in any country (France has just done one such survey in 2006, but data is not available). This is why we were interested in some elements of the Workplace and Employment Survey (WES) since this survey contains information (support for childcare, elderly care and working time arrangements) on some measures that are identified in the research as favourable to work-family balancing (Duxbury *et al.*, 1994, Descarries *et al.*, 1995a,b,c; Guérin *et al.*, 1997; Tremblay, 2004), although the



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survey was not designed only for this purpose, but for analysis of workplace change in general.

However, we have not found significant research on work-family-*training* reconciliation, except for very small scale studies done by student federations, which present very limited and non representative data.


1.3. Interactions between work and non work

The work-life issue has been the object of many articles and publications, which cannot all be covered here, and we feel that the issue of work-family-training needs a more specific approach, that is the issue of time constraints and interactions between work and non work, which we go on to present here.

Traditionally work and family are assumed to be separate domains in terms of time, space and roles. Indeed, the industrial revolution concentrated workers in factories, so that work became an independent system, separate from family (Taskin, 2006). Moreover, since men traditionally hold the role of breadwinner and women the role of homemaker; gender specification thus reinforced the partition between work and family. But today ICT and telework are likely to initiate an opposite movement, blurring the traditional borders between work and non work.

Campbell Clark (2000) proposed a work/family border theory, which analyzes the interconnection between these domains of life. According to the social roles theory (Katz and Kahn, 1978), work and family are two domains of life associated with various roles, rules, and behaviours. Campbell Clark (2000) defines borders as lines of demarcation between domains. They mark the point where the rules and behaviours related to one domain start and finish. This definition of borders is very similar to the one proposed by Ashforth, Kreiner and Fugate (2000). According to these authors, a border is the perimeter which delimits a role. They defined role transition as the psychological movement between two roles, characterized by the disengagement from one role and the commitment in another role. Role transition corresponds to the border-crossing between two roles. We are all daily border-crossers. Moreover, Ashforth et al. (2000) postulated that borders are idiosyncratic, which means they are different for every individual. We think that in the context of this research, we might add the role of "learner" which is not often accounted for, although more and more individuals are concerned by this dimension, as we will see in the next section.

According to Campbell Clark (2000), borders between domains of life (they refer to two domains of life, but we can imagine more, including learning-training) are characterized by their permeability. **Permeability** represents the degree to which elements from other domains may enter one given domain. According to Pleck (1977), the permeability between work and family corresponds to the degree to which demands from work interfere with demands from family, and reciprocally. Again, learning could be added as a third dimension in our view.



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Again, according to Campbell Clark (2000), there are three kinds of borders: physical, temporal and psychological. A physical border, such as the wall of a workplace or the walls of a house, defines spaces *where* domain-relevant behaviours take place. A temporal border, such as set work hours, determines *when* work is done and when family activities can take place. Psychological borders are rules created by the individuals that dictate emotions, attitudes and behaviours appropriate for one domain but not the other.

Consequently, we would propose that there are three forms of permeability between work and non work (including training or learning):

- *Spatial* permeability: an individual may have an office at home.
- *Temporal* permeability: an individual can work during weekends, holidays etc...
- *Psychological* permeability: this corresponds to the spillover of satisfaction or dissatisfaction from one domain to the other. The spillover model relies on the idea that individuals carry their emotions and attitudes from work (or other spheres such as learning, might we add) into the home and reciprocally (Caligiuri and Cascio, 1998; Champoux, 1980). Edwards and Rothbard (2000) proposed an enlarged model of **spillover**, which integrates the similarities between rules and behaviours related to work and family. Spillover can be negative or positive. Several researches show that tensions and strain overlap from work to family (Demerouti, Bakker and Schaufeli, 2005; Hetty van Emmerik, Jawahar, 2006). But spillover can also be **positive (theory of enrichment)**, Kirchmeyer, 1992; Rothard, 2001; Greenhaus and Powell, 2006). The theory of mutual enrichment between work and non work is based on the expansion model (Marks, 1977).

Finally, Campbell Clark (2000) postulated that individuals make frequent transitions between work and family domains according to the permeability of borders. The results of Kasper, Meyer and Schmitd (2005) tend to confirm this theory.

The theory of permeable borders between work and non work is linked to the concepts of integration and segmentation. **The concept of segmentation** corresponds to voluntary separation between work and non work, so that a domain does not affect the other. Initially, the model of segmentation emerged from the spatial and temporal separation between work and home (Edwards et al., 2000). However, the concept has evolved with contemporary ways of life. Today the majority of authors consider segmentation as an active process aiming to maintain an impermeable border between work and non work (Edwards et al., 2000; Tietze, Musson, 2002; Rothbard, Philips, Dumas, 2005).

Contrary to segmentation, **integration** is a strategy which aims at integrating work and non work activities, so that roles and times associated to each domain frequently overlap (Tietze et al., 2002; Rothbard et al., 2005).

Integration and segmentation stand on a same continuum (Campbell Clark, 2000; Ashforth et al., 2000; Rothbard, et al., 2005), and in fact, perfect cases of integration



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or segmentation are practically non-existent. Those concepts are to a certain extent ideals or extremes. Thus, an individual can be more or less of an integrator or a separator. Rothbard et al. (2005) indicated that it is important to distinguish between effective segmentation or integration and the desire for segmentation or integration, expressed by individuals.

Ashforth et al. (2000) associated the model of segmentation with impermeable borders between work and non work. Reciprocally they associated the model of integration with permeable borders. Finally, a strong permeability between work and non work should reflect a strategy of integration whereas impermeable borders should reveal a strategy of segmentation.

The results of several researches converge on the fact that borders between work and non work are asymmetrically permeable (Pleck, 1977; Duxbury, Higgins, 1991; Eagle, Miles and Icenogle, 1997; Kasper et al., 2005). Most of them conclude that the borders of personal life are relatively permeable to work. Thus, we might consider that they could also be permeable to learning/training, since it is often associated with work, and could also result in spillovers or border-crossings. On the contrary, the borders of professional life are less permeable to personal life. These researches underline an asymmetry in the degrees of permeability between work and non work. This conclusion highlights the fact that there are two forms of permeability between work and non work:

- The permeability of work on non work, or the introduction of the work sphere in the non work sphere;
- The permeability of non work on work, that is the introduction of the non work sphere in the work sphere.

Of course, depending on the object of learning or training, it can be seen as work (training in fields such as IT, software, management courses for example), or on the contrary it can be associated with leisure and non work (courses in arts, sports, cooking, yoga, etc.).

Much research has dealt with the psychological spillover between work and non work (Caligiuri et al., 1998; Champoux, 1980; Edwards et al., 2000; Rothbard, 2001; Demerouti et al., 2005; Hetty van Emmerik et al., 2006; Kirchmeyer, 1992; Greenhaus et al., 2006). However, there are fewer studies on the spatial and temporal permeability between these domains of life, so it can be interesting to see if there is a temporal permeability between work, learning and non work.

We hypothesize that training might be more difficult for individuals who live a strong permeability between work and non work and we will see if the data from the WES (Workplace and Employee Survey) make it possible to identify some impacts of work-life balance difficulties, or of the presence of children on participation in training activities. The WES data unfortunately cannot give us indications on the behaviour of individuals in terms of separation or integration of activities, but only the result from the arbitrage individuals can do between work, family and training, recognizing also the fact that firms are also often a determinant of the offer of training.

1.4. Participation in training and learning

The third element of the literature review has to do with participation in training. Participation in learning and training has increased over recent years and the number of adult learners often surpasses quite significantly the number of youth in basic education. Over one in two adults in Sweden, one in three in the USA, one in four in Canada and one in five in Québec participate each year in structured training (Bélanger and Valdivielso, 1997). In Canada, Statistics Canada and HRDC (2001) indicate that the number of adult students is five times higher than the number of full time students. The total number of hours is equal in both cases (Statistics Canada and HRDC, 2001, cited in Doray et al., 2004)

Participation obviously depends on a certain number of factors. Amongst the factors which have been seen to influence participation, let us mention the level of education, which is one of the most determinant factors in all studies (Doray et al., 2004), as well as personal attitudes or dispositional barriers (Cross, 1981). Finally, individual situations also influence participation, and while level of income and work situation have been analysed, work-family issues have generally not been analysed in much detail, although Cross (1981) referred to situational barriers.

On the side of firms, it has been shown that firms that introduce technological changes do more training (Tremblay and De Sève, 2006, Baldwin, 1999), as well as firms who have more formal human resources management systems (Tremblay and De Sève, 2006, Jacobs, Lukens and Useem, 1996; Dubar, 1986). Other research has shown the positive impact of unionization in the increase of training offer within firms (Livingstone and Raykov, 2005), although other research has shown a indeterminate or negative effect of unionization on training (Knoke and Kalleberg, 1994), a surprising observation which is explained tentatively by the fact that traditional industrial relations do not favour participation in training when promotions are based on seniority (Doray et al., 2004)

Doray et al., (2004) also summarize the main factors of participation observed in other research (Crompton, 1994; Doray, 1997 et 1999; Jennings, 1996; Kapsalis, 1996a et 1996b; Statistique Canada et DRHC, 1997 et 2001). They highlight the fact that women apparently have less access to employer support for training because they often occupy part time jobs. On the contrary, participation is increased in the 25-44 age group, in manager and professional categories, in full time jobs, as well as in large firms, and in certain sectors such as public service, finance, insurance, as the following tables indicate. (Labonté et al., 2004) Let us mention that OECD data also indicate that being in a small firm and being a woman generally contribute to a lower incidence of training, and lack of time is most often given as the reason for not participating in training activities. (cited in Tremblay, 2007a).

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Table 1. Participation in firm training and autonomous training activities, by gender, 1997 (percentage)

Provinces	Formation en entreprise			Formation autonome		
	Hommes	Femmes	Total	Hommes	Femmes	Total
Atlantique	15,8	14,1	15,0***	10,9*	13,8*	12,4***
Québec	11,1**	9,1**	10,1***	10,9***	14,5***	12,7***
Ontario	21,0***	17,9***	19,4***	11,9***	17,9***	15,0***
Prairies	21,8***	18,3***	20,0***	10,5***	17,7***	14,2***
Colombie-Britannique	18,1	18,0	18,1***	15,9***	21,5***	18,7***
Canada (n = 31 896)	17,9***	15,5***	16,7***	11,9***	17,2***	14,6***

Source : Statistique Canada, *Enquête sur l'éducation et la formation des adultes*, cédérom, 1998.

Note : À l'exclusion des étudiants de moins de 25 ans à plein temps sans soutien d'un employeur.

*** = $p < 0,001$; ** = $p < 0,01$; * = $p < 0,05$.

Tiré de : Labonté, A. et al (2004). *Une analyse comparative Québec-Canada de la participation à la formation des adultes* : 43.

Table 2 Participation in firm training and autonomous training, according to level of schooling, 1997 (percentage)

Provinces	Primaire ou secondaire incomplet	Études secondaires terminées ou postsecondaires non terminées	Certificat ou diplôme d'études postsecondaires	Diplôme universitaire ¹	Total
Formation en entreprise					
Atlantique	3,4***	14,3***	20,0***	36,5***	15,0***
Québec	2,9***	8,8***	12,9***	22,3***	10,1***
Ontario	5,0***	18,7***	24,3***	32,5***	19,4***
Prairies	7,0***	19,1***	25,2***	34,2***	20,0***
Colombie-Britannique	4,6***	15,0***	22,4***	32,3***	18,1***
Canada	4,5***	15,9***	20,9***	30,6***	16,7***
Formation autonome					
Atlantique	4,4***	15,3***	14,5***	24,1***	12,4***
Québec	6,8***	11,3***	15,1***	23,2***	12,7***
Ontario	7,4***	13,0***	18,0***	23,9***	15,0***
Prairies	5,0***	15,5***	17,9***	19,8***	14,2***
Colombie-Britannique	9,7***	17,1***	18,9***	32,4***	18,7***
Canada (n= 31 896)	6,8***	13,9***	17,1***	24,3***	14,6***

Source : Statistique Canada, *Enquête sur l'éducation et la formation des adultes*, cédérom, 1998.

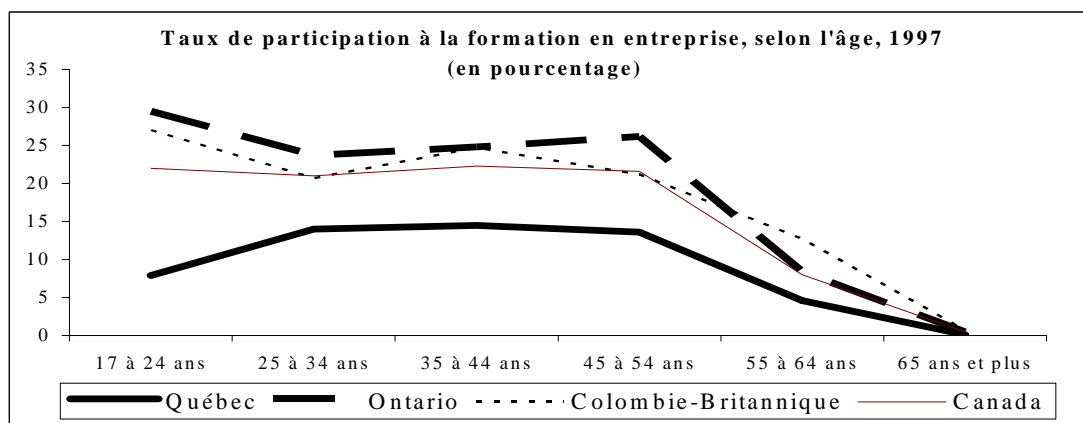
Note : À l'exclusion des étudiants de moins de 25 ans à plein temps sans soutien d'un employeur.

*** = $p < 0,001$; ** = $p < 0,01$; * = $p < 0,05$.

Tiré de : Labonté, A. et al (2004). *Une analyse comparative Québec-Canada de la participation à la formation des adultes* : 47.

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Figure 1



Source : Statistique Canada, *Enquête sur l'éducation et la formation des adultes*, cédérom, 1998.

Tiré de : Labonté, A. et al (2004). *Une analyse comparative Québec-Canada de la participation à la formation des adultes* : 45.

Surprisingly, we found that in this data (table 3), the presence of children from 0 to 5 years of age translates into higher levels of training than in parents without children of that age group. Parents of only one child of this age group are those who participate the most, followed by those with at least two children and finally those without children. The situation is the same in all of Canada. Can this be explained by the stronger desire of parents to progress and get promoted at work ? Or maybe this is simply correlated with the age group, the beginning of a career, when one is more prone to be in training. Only hypotheses can be presented here. Also, the data is not analyzed by gender and presence of children, and this is why the WES data were analyzed, since it can be hypothesized that women with children would participate less, while it might be different for men, usually less constrained in time by the presence of children.

Table 3 -Participation in training according to the number of preschool children, 1997 (percentage)

Provinces	Aucun enfant de 0 à 5 ans	Un enfant	Deux enfants ou plus	Total
Atlantique	14,0**	21,5**	19,6**	15,0***
Québec	9,1***	17,3***	13,9***	10,1***
Ontario	18,7***	23,1***	22,7***	19,4***
Prairies	19,5*	23,3*	22,9*	20,0***
Colombie-Britannique	17,7	21,5	18,3	18,1***
Canada (n= 31 896)	15,9***	21,4***	19,9***	16,7***

Source : Statistique Canada, *Enquête sur l'éducation et la formation des adultes*, cédérom, 1998.

Note : À l'exclusion des étudiants de moins de 25 ans à plein temps sans soutien d'un employeur.

*** = $p < 0,001$; ** = $p < 0,01$; * = $p < 0,05$.

Tiré de : Labonté, A. et al (2004). *Une analyse comparative Québec-Canada de la participation à la formation des adultes* : 48.



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We found that Doray et al. (2007)'s work has also permitted a few general observations on the issue of participation in training, as can be observed in table 4.

- Gender (females are the reference category): it appears that the probability for men to participate is not significantly different from that of women.
- Age (35-44 are the reference group): the probability of participating is higher before 35 years and lower after 54. This may also explain why parents participate more; they may simply be in the age group where there is more participation.
- Province (Ontario is the reference group) : Québec and Newfoundland have lowest probabilities of participation and British Columbia, the highest.
- Family situation (Singles are the reference group) : no significant difference between persons living alone and those living in couple. The presence of children seems to increase slightly the probability of participation.



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Table 4- Determinants of participation in firm training, employed population, Canada, 1997

		RAPPORT DE COTE
Genre	Femmes	ref
	Hommes	1,0
Âge	17-24 ans	1,8***
	25-34 ans	1,0*
	35-44 ans	ref
	45-54 ans	1,0*
	55 ans et plus	0,6***
Province	Terre-Neuve	0,6**
	Île-du-Prince-Édouard	0,9
	Nouvelle-Écosse	1,2
	Nouveau-Brunswick	0,8
	Québec	0,5***
	Ontario	ref
	Manitoba	0,9
	Saskatchewan	1,1
	Alberta	1,1
Colombie-Britannique	1,1**	
Situation familiale	Seul	ref
	Avec conjoint	1,1
Enfants	Nombre	1,1***
Occupation	Dir. et admin.	ref
	Prof. des sciences	1,4***
	Prof. des sciences sociales	1,8***
	Enseignants	0,6***
	Prof. de la santé	0,9
	Employés de bureau	0,6***
	Trav. des services	0,5***
	Cols bleus	0,5***
Régime d'emploi	Temps partiel	ref
	Plein temps	1,1*
Taille de l'entreprise	Moins de 20 employés	ref
	20 à 99	1,4***
	100 à 199	1,8***
	200 à 499	2,3***
	500 et plus	2,2***
Syndicalisation	Non	ref
	Oui	0,9**
Multiétablissement	Non	ref
	Oui	1,3***
Secteurs d'activité	Primaire	ref
	Fabrication	0,8*
	Construction	0,9
	Services publics et transport	1,3**
	Commerce	0,7***
	Finances	1,5***
	Éducation et santé	1,4***
	Services personnels et aux entreprises	0,7***
	Adm. publique	1,9***
	Responsabilité de supervision	Sans supervision (salariés)
Avec supervision (salariés)		1,8***
Travailleur autonome sans supervision		0,9
Travailleur autonome avec supervision		1,6***
Constante		(-1,6) 0,2***
-2 loglikelihood		19 113,9

*** = $p < 0,001$; ** = $p < 0,01$; * = $p < 0,05$.

Ref : catégorie de référence.

Tiré de : Doray, P. et al., (2004). *Les facteurs de variation de la participation des adultes à la formation au Canada en 1997* : 47-49.



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Having presented some elements of data on what is known to date on participation, we will go on to analyse the data from the WES survey, which was the objective of this project.

2. Methodological approach

Two types of sources are available to analyse training issues, that is surveys done with individuals, and surveys addressed to firms. The first gives indications on the participation of individuals in proportion of the general population, while the second tend to focus on the proportion of firms offering training opportunities and the participation of workers in these activities. (Doray, et al., 2004).

The WES has the advantage of including two questionnaires, one addressed to firms and the other to individuals in these firms, both of which we used for the present research. The WES covers a representative sample of the Canadian labour market but excludes the federal, provincial and municipal public services. The data were collected for over 6 000 firms and some 23 000 workers of these same firms (Statistique Canada, 2004). The data are however not longitudinal, since the worker and employer samples are modified after a few years. The data thus can only be an approximation to the life course perspective, but since there are no data sources which combine all the variables of interest here, the WES nevertheless gives a representative picture of participation in training according to gender and family obligations for the Canadian labour market, excluding public services. The data used are those of the 1999 and 2004 version of the WES, 2003 for a few elements which were no longer available in the 2004 version.

In the employee part of the WES survey, we center the analysis on the sections 3 and 4, on training and development, and career –related training respectively. Question 26a includes a question on motives of non participation and one of the possible answers is family obligations or too much work. We thought this question would be particularly interesting for the issue of work-family-training balance, and will be analysed according to gender, age and presence of children. We will also look at other questions concerning work organization, for example whether people can work at home or not and motives for this (work requirements, family obligations, etc.). We will also look at the sections on learning computer applications, since training is often more frequent when technologies are introduced, and we will analyse these according to gender, age and presence of children.

In the employer survey, we will mainly look at section C, on classroom structured training as well as on the job training (Questions 14-16) and determine to whom these training offers are addressed in terms of gender, age and presence of children. We will also look at organizational change (Q 20) and work organization (Q 18) and innovation issues (Q 40-42) as possible concurrent explanations for participation in training, i.e. possible higher frequency of training offer depending on innovation, organizational change and work organization. We would then try to see if working parents are under or overrepresented in the most innovative organizations.



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3. Results of our analysis of the WES survey

We will first analyse the data according to demographic variables, and will then present data according to firm size, industrial sector and occupational category, since the analysis based on the demographic variables led us to think that these elements might be more important and finally a few elements related to working time and work organization.

3.1. Participation in training according to age, gender, presence of children

We note an increase in on the job training over the life course or with age (as is shown in the following table), whether it be classroom on the job training or regular on the job training. There appears to be an increase with age, the under 25 having less access to classroom on the job training particularly and the training increasing to the 35—44 and 45-54 groups, but declining after 55 however. Although the decline is not massive, it holds for 1999 and 2004 data.

According to the WES data, there does not seem to be an important impact of the presence of children on the participation in classroom on the job training or general on the job training, as is shown in the table below, although this is contrary to what was indicated by Doray et al., individuals without children participating somewhat more, as well as those with 3 children and over.

Table 6 indicates that men with children participate a little more than men without children in 2004, while the situation is mixed for women in the same year. In 1999, women without children participated more. The differences are however not major and this cannot lead to a clear conclusion concerning the impact of the presence of children.

Also, individuals do not tend to put family responsibilities as the main motive for not participating in training (table 7). They rather indicate that they were too busy with duties to be performed on the job, and the fact that courses are not suitable comes next. As many respondents indicate that the question does not apply to their situation, the percentages other than these two motives are very low, under 1 %.

The data were also analysed by gender and age, as well as by gender and presence of children, and the following two tables (8 and 9) present the results of these analyses. Here we can see some differences according to age, over the lifecourse. The motive of being too busy with duties on the job tends to hold till 55 + , except for women in 2004, where it increases still for the 55 + .



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Table 5.
On the job training (Q14a – Q16c, employer) by gender and age (2004)


Employer 2004	Sex (%)		Age (%)					Number of children (en %)			
	Men (1)	Women (0)	- 25 ans (1)	25 -34 ans (2)	35-44 ans (3)	45-54 ans (4)	55 et + (5)	0	1	2	3 et +
Classroom on the job training (Q14a)	70.0	67.1	57.6	68.4	70.9	71.6	69.1	65.8	71.5	73.0	67.2
On the job training (Q16c)	77.4	78.4	76.0	77.1	80.1	78.1	75.6	77.7	76.7	79.9	76.7

On the job training (Q14a – Q16c, employer) by gender and age (1999)

Employer 1999	Sex (%)		Age (%)					Number of children (%)			
	Men (1)	Women (0)	- 25 ans (1)	25 - 34 ans (2)	35-44 ans (3)	45-54 ans (4)	55 et + (5)	0	1	2	3 et +
Classroom on the job training (Q14a)	66.0	67.0	56.0	64.4	67.5	68.7	67.0	66.4	65.3	68.5	64.7
On the job training (Q16c)	75.8	74.4	76.7	76.7	74.2	75.4	73.6	74.9	76.5	75.6	72.4

Table 6.
On the job training (Q14a – Q16c, employer) by gender and presence of children (2004)

2004		Men (%)		Women (%)	
		Without children (1)	With children (0)	Without children (1)	With children (0)
On the job training (Q14a – Q16c Employer) TRNG	Classroom on the job training (Q14a)	66.2	73.8	65.5	69.2
	On the job training (Q16c)	75.6	79.3	79.4	77.2



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On the job training (Q14a – Q16c, employer) by gender and presence of children (1999)

1999		Men (%)		Women (%)	
		Without children (1)	With children (0)	Without children (1)	With children (0)
On the job training (Q14a – Q16c Employer) TRNG	Classroom on the job training (Q14a)	65.7	66.4	67.0	66.9
	On the job training (Q16c)	74.7	76.9	75.1	73.6

Table 7.
Reasons for not participating in training activities (Q26a) by gender, age and number of children (2004)

Employee survey (Q26a) 2004	Sex (%)		Age (%)					Number of children (%)			
	Men (1)	Women (0)	- 25 (1)	25 - 34 (2)	35- 44 (3)	45- 54 (4)	55 et + (5)	0	1	2	3 et +
Does not apply (-3)	90.2	88.4	95.5	89.0	88.5	87.7	88.2	90.4	89.3	87.0	87.4
Too busy with duties on the job (1)	4.4	4.9	1.4	4.6	5.7	5.6	3.7	4.2	3.7	6.3	5.7
Courses not suitable (2)	2.9	2.9	1.1	2.3	3.3	3.6	3.4	2.5	3.8	3.2	3.0
Course too difficult (3)	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0
Health reasons (4)	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0
Family responsibilities (5)	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0
Too old, too late in career (6)	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	1.6	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0
Other (7)	1.8	2.9	1.7	3.4	1.8	2.3	3.0	2.2	2.2	2.8	3.0

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Reasons for not participating in training activities (Q26a) by gender, age and number of children (1999)

Employee survey (Q26a) 1999	Sex (%)		Age (%)					Number of children (%)			
	Men (1)	Women (0)	- 25 (1)	25 - 34 (2)	35- 44 (3)	45- 54 (4)	55 et + (5)	0	1	2	3 et +
Does not apply (- 3)	89.6	90.6	96.0	91.7	90.3	87.9	89.8	91.0	89.7	88.7	89.1
Too busy with duties on the job (1)	4.8	4.2	< 1.0	3.4	4.9	5.7	4.4	4.1	3.9	5.7	5.2
Courses not suitable (2)	3.1	2.4	< 1.0	2.5	2.7	3.5	2.2	2.3	3.4	2.7	3.8
Course too difficult (3)	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0
Health reasons (4)	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0
Family responsibilities (5)	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0
Too old, too late in career (6)	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0
Other (7)	1.9	1.8	2.5	1.8	1.2	2.0	2.3	1.9	2.1	1.7	1.3

Table 8. Reasons for not participating in training activities (Q26a), by gender and age, 2004

2004		Men (%)					Women (%)				
		- 25 ans (1)	25 - 34 ans (2)	35- 44 ans (3)	45- 54 ans (4)	55 et + (5)	- 25 ans (1)	25 - 34 ans (2)	35- 44 ans (3)	45- 54 ans (4)	55 et + (5)
Reasons for not participating in training activities (Q26a Employee) RSNCRS	Does not apply (-3)	95.9	90.1	89.6	88.7	89.7	95.1	87.9	87.5	86.9	86.7
	Too busy with duties on the job (1)	1.2	4.2	5.9	4.9	3.0	1.5	5.1	5.5	6.3	4.3
	Courses not suitable (2)	1.2	3.2	2.4	3.5	3.9	1.1	1.5	4.0	3.7	2.9
	Course too difficult (3)	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0
	Health reasons (4)	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0
	Family responsibilities (5)	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0
	Too old, too late in career (6)	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	2.4
	Other (7)	1.7	2.2	1.3	1.8	2.5	1.8	4.6	2.2	2.8	3.4



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Reasons for not participating in training activities (Q26a), by gender and age, 1999

1999		Men (%)					Women (%)				
		- 25 ans (1)	25 - 34 ans (2)	35- 44 ans (3)	45- 54 ans (4)	55 et + (5)	- 25 ans (1)	25 - 34 ans (2)	35- 44 ans (3)	45- 54 ans (4)	55 et + (5)
Reasons for not participating in training activities (Q26a Employee) RSNCRS	<i>Does not apply (-3)</i>	95.2	92.0	89.2	86.6	91.2	96.5	91.4	91.3	89.0	88.3
	Too busy with duties on the job (1)	< 1.0	3.2	5.5	6.7	3.4	< 1.0	3.6	4.2	4.7	5.5
	<i>Courses not suitable (2)</i>	< 1.0	1.9	3.3	4.5	2.2	< 1.0	3.1	2.3	2.6	2.2
	<i>Course too difficult (3)</i>	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0
	<i>Health reasons (4)</i>	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0
	Family responsibilities (5)	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0
	<i>Too old, too late in career (6)</i>	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	1.1	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0
	<i>Other (7)</i>	3.6	2.6	1.3	1.6	2.0	1.8	1.2	1.1	2.4	2.6

The presence of children does not appear to bring about important differences in terms of reasons for not participating in training, although family responsibilities do appear somewhat higher for those with children. If we take only those to whom the question applies, ie who did not participate in some training, about half indicate they were too busy with their job, and the presence of children brings about a slight increase here, as it does also for family responsibilities, although the latter come far behind duties on the job as a motive for non participation.



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Table 9. Reasons for not participating in training activities (Q26a), by gender and presence of children, 2004

2004		Men (%)		Women (%)	
		<i>Without children (1)</i>	<i>With children (0)</i>	<i>Without children (1)</i>	<i>With children (0)</i>
Reasons for not participating in training activities (Q26a Employee) RSNCRS	<i>Does not apply (-3)</i>	91.5	88.9	89.5	86.9
	<i>Too busy with duties on the job (1)</i>	3.6	5.2	4.7	5.3
	<i>Courses not suitable (2)</i>	2.6	3.2	2.4	3.6
	<i>Course too difficult (3)</i>	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0
	<i>Health reasons (4)</i>	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0
	<i>Family responsibilities (5)</i>	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0
	<i>Too old, too late in career (6)</i>	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0
	<i>Other (7)</i>	1.7	1.9	2.6	3.3

Reasons for not participating in training activities (Q26a), by gender and presence of children, 1999

1999		Men (%)		Women (%)	
		<i>Without children (1)</i>	<i>With children (0)</i>	<i>Without children (1)</i>	<i>With children (0)</i>
Reasons for not participating in training activities (Q26a Employee) RSNCRS	<i>Does not apply (-3)</i>	91.1	88.1	90.9	90.1
	<i>Too busy with duties on the job (1)</i>	3.9	5.7	4.2	4.3
	<i>Courses not suitable (2)</i>	2.2	4.0	2.4	2.3
	<i>Course too difficult (3)</i>	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0
	<i>Health reasons (4)</i>	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0
	<i>Family responsibilities (5)</i>	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0
	<i>Too old, too late in career (6)</i>	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0	< 1.0
	<i>Other (7)</i>	2.2	1.6	1.7	1.9

In order to analyse a specific form of training which has become quite common in work environments, we analysed the question on “Learning a computer application”. The data indicate that a strong majority of individuals did have this form of training, women somewhat more than men, and the 25 to 54 participated somewhat more, the presence of children apparently not having any clear impact here. Both men and

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women do self-learning, in quite high percentages (33 and 31 %), while employer-paid formal training is more frequent for women (probably in secretarial and administrative tasks). On the job training is quite common, and more so for women (37,4 %) than men (27 %). Self paid formal training is rare (around 3 %) while university and college training is 6,2 % for men and 7,8 for women. Again the number or children does not seem to have an impact for on the job training, a little however for university and college training, which decrease with number of children. Learning of all forms is higher in the 25-54 age group except for university and college training, which is higher for the 25-34 group, as would be expected, while employer-paid formal training is higher in the 25-44 group.

Table 10. Learning a computer application (Q22F) by gender, age and number of children

Employee 2004	Sex (%)		Age (%)					Number of children (%)			
	Men (1)	Women (0)	- 25 (1)	25 - 34 (2)	35- 44 (3)	45- 54 (4)	55 + (5)	0	1	2	3 et +
<i>Does not apply (-3)</i>	37.7	23.8	58.9	27.7	27.2	28.4	41.7	35.4	28.1	25.3	30.5
<i>Self-learning (AP1LRN-1)</i>	33.4	31.8	13.4	33.9	36.4	33.5	28.0	29.5	33.6	37.2	37.1
<i>Employer-paid formal training (AP1LRN-2)</i>	13.8	20.9	7.4	13.1	18.6	20.3	15.7	15.2	19.1	19.6	16.4
<i>Self-paid formal training (AP1LRN-3)</i>	2.8	3.6	1.2	3.6	3.3	3.5	2.6	3.2	3.2	3.3	2.8
<i>On-the-job training (AP1LRN-4)</i>	27.0	37.4	19.7	32.3	32.6	34.0	28.3	30.5	33.1	33.5	31.0
<i>University-college training (AP1LRN-5)</i>	6.2	7.8	5.8	13.4	6.5	5.0	3.3	7.1	7.7	6.4	5.6
<i>Other(AP1LRN-6)</i>	0.2	0.8	0.7	0.5	0.4	0.6	0.4	0.6	0.3	0.5	0.2

The under 25 seem to have learned less than the other groups (higher percentage does not apply) and they also seem to be less numerous to engage in self-learning. Employer paid formal learning seems to be higher for women in the 35-54 age groups, much higher than is the case for men, but this is probably administrative or secretarial softwares that are concerned here. Also, on the job training is more frequent for women from 25 to 54, somewhat less for men from 25 to 54, but there does seem to be a slight reduction after 55. University-college training is more frequent in the 25-34 years, so there does seem to be a change in the type of training over the lifecourse (see Table 11).

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Table 11. Learning a computer application (Q22F) by gender and age

2004		Men (%)					Women (%)				
		- 25 (1)	25 - 34 (2)	35- 44 (3)	45- 54 (4)	55 et + (5)	- 25 (1)	25 - 34 (2)	35- 44 (3)	45- 54 (4)	55 et + (5)
Learning a computer application (Q22F)	<i>Does not apply (-3)</i>	64.9	33.1	33.3	35.4	48.0	52.9	21.3	20.3	19.9	32.6
	<i>Self- learning (AP1LRN- 1)</i>	12.4	34.4	37.6	34.6	28.0	14.3	33.4	35.1	32.2	27.9
	<i>Employer- paid formal training (AP1LRN- 2)</i>	5.7	10.7	14.8	16.4	13.2	9.1	15.9	23.1	25.0	19.2
	<i>Self-paid formal training (AP1LRN- 3)</i>	1.4	3.3	3.2	2.8	2.1	1.0	3.9	3.3	4.4	3.3
	<i>On-the-job training (AP1LRN- 4)</i>	16.7	28.5	27.8	28.8	23.3	22.6	36.8	38.2	40.4	35.6
	<i>University- college training (AP1LRN- 5)</i>	4.3	13.4	6.3	3.7	2.3	7.4	13.3	6.8	6.7	4.7

The presence of children seems to increase the frequency of self-learning, especially with men, while employer-paid formal training appears to be more frequent for men with children and less for women with children. The same goes for on-the-job training and university-college training. It thus seems that the presence of children reduces slightly women's participation in training, while it would increase it for men. Here, there seems to be a different impact of pressure of children and work-family obligations on men and women.



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Table 12. Learning a computer application (Q22F) by gender and presence of children

2004		Men (%)		Women (%)	
		Without children (1)	With children (0)	Without children (1)	With children (0)
Learning a computer application (Q22F Employé)	Does not apply (-3)	43.7	26.9	26.3	33.0
	Self-learning (AP1LRN-1)	28.7	34.1	30.4	33.4
	Employer-paid formal training (AP1LRN-2)	11.8	18.9	19.0	16.4
	Self-paid formal training (AP1LRN-3)	2.8	3.3	3.6	3.1
	On-the-job training (AP1LRN-4)	25.3	34.1	36.4	30.2
	University-college training (AP1LRN-5)	6.5	7.1	7.8	6.7
	Other (AP1LRN-6)	0.3	0.5	0.8	0.4

3.2. Work schedules and other data related to work organization

Finally, we will present some data on working schedules, since they can have an impact on training possibilities. There are important differences in terms of variable schedules, women using variable schedules much more when they have children, while this is not the case for men. As concerns the compressed workweek, women with children also use it more than those without, while it is the opposite for men, but this is rather rare. Working from home is also more frequent for men and women with children, and the gap is more important on the side of women. The percentage of paid telework is about the same in all groups, that is one third of those who do work from home are doing hours for which they are specifically paid for, while in the case of the others, it is probably work spillover from the office, which is indicated in the motives as the main motive for working at home for one third of the respondents who do work from home. As can be seen, family obligations are not as important, barely over 5 % in the case of men and women with children. Various other reasons account for about one third.

As concerns the desire to reduce or increase hours, we can see that there is a higher percentage of individuals who want to increase their hours, some 19 % of men without children and 17 % in the other groups. Some 8 % would like to reduce their hours, and here it is mainly to increase leisure, but also importantly for family reasons for those who have children. One can imagine that in this context, individuals would not be inclined to add training hours to their schedule.



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As concerns the offer of family support programs, we can see that general family support is the most frequent, followed by childcare and finally help for the elderly. The differences are not important in general and of course this does not mean that the individuals are using the programs, just that the employer offers these programs.

While this last table was not to be the center of the analysis, since it does not deal with training, it is one of those who most supports the interest for a life course perspective. Indeed, work-family balance issues related to the presence of children seems to have a clear impact on work aspirations (desire to reduce for family reasons) and work organisation (working from home for family obligations), while the impact on training seems much less clear.


Table 13. Work schedules for men and women, with and without children (2004)

Employee 2004	Men (%)		Women (%)	
	Without children (1)	With children (0)	Without children (1)	With children (0)
<i>Compressed schedule</i>	9.7	7.2	6.0	8.5
<i>Variable schedule</i>	33.2	33.1	29.0	34.4
Working from home	25.3	29.0	22.3	29.8
-Paid work from home (% of above)	35.2	34.4	34.7	34.5
-Work from home for work obligations	65.9	66.2	65.8	66.3
-Work from home for family obligations	1.4	5.7	1.9	5.4
-Work from home for other reasons	32.6	28.0	32.3	28.4
Want to reduce hours	7.5	8.7	7.9	8.5
-Want to reduce hours for family reasons	20.8	54.3	26.9	52.0
-Want to reduce hours because of stress	19.6	22.2	23.8	21.0
-Want to reduce hours for health reasons	14.0	9.6	11.3	10.5
-Want to reduce hours for more leisure	72.6	54.2	65.9	56.4
-Want to reduce hours for other reasons	9.5	8.1	13.8	6.9
Want to increase hours	19.1	17.2	17.6	17.7
<i>Employer offers family support program</i>	38.9	42.9	40.8	42.2
<i>Employer offers childcare support</i>	21.3	17.7	18.8	18.5
<i>Employer offers support for the elderly</i>	11.6	13.6	15.6	12.4

Discussion

In this section, we wanted to comment on the life course perspective and the extent to which our data support the use of this approach. While the WES data are not longitudinal data, we thought they would offer some elements of interest and invite to a more complex analysis of the issue of work-family-training balance or articulation. We will thus comment on the importance of this analysis for the life course perspective, and also on policy relevance. We will also develop on data limitations.

To start, let us mention again that unfortunately, there are no longitudinal data on both the themes we wanted to address, i.e. training and work-family balance issues.



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However, while there is unfortunately no longitudinal data to support the analysis of work-family issues and training simultaneously, we had hoped to find in the analysis of the WES a confirmation of the interest of the life course perspective. The analysis of the WES survey data on training, organizational change and various forms of change which could lead to learning for individual workers was aimed at highlighting elements which could confirm the interest of a life course perspective on this subject.


The data thus could only be an approximation to the life course perspective, but since there are no data sources which combine all the variables of interest here, the WES nevertheless gives a representative picture of participation in training according to gender and family obligations for the Canadian labour market, excluding public services.

We had expected to find major differences between genders and ages with this data, but have to recognize that more appropriate data would definitely be needed to prove the interest of analyzing these themes from a life course perspective. While previous analysis of WES data on working time and working from home had highlighted interesting differences (Tremblay, Paquet et Najem, 2006a,b; 2005), the data on training proved somewhat less striking.

Also the life course perspective is based on the idea that not only individual factors but also social structures shape the life course of individuals and of course; the WES survey has little information on these elements. Policy issues such as daycare and parental leave, which are important in shaping the lives of individual workers, particularly women, are unfortunately not well covered by this survey and it would surely be useful for Canadian surveys of work and training issues to add some elements related to these elements and their impacts on individual behaviour over the lifecourse.

There is a little information on daycare support, but the question is quite general and covers not only daycare per se, but information on daycare, thus leading to difficult interpretation of the data. The data on this was therefore not useful in confirming the usefulness of the life course approach. To conclude, we can only hope for a survey which would cover the work-family issue and the training issue simultaneously, and with longitudinal data. Our attempt to use the WES survey to support this perspective did not prove as fruitful as expected and it can only be hoped that better data become available in the future.

To conclude, we saw in the last table that work-family balance issues related to the presence of children seem to have a clear impact on work aspirations (desire to reduce for family reasons) and work organisation (working from home for family obligations), while the impact on training seems much less clear. The training issue therefore appears more related to the job one has integrated than to family responsibilities. In this sense, if there is any form of discrimination, it would be more related to the access to jobs where training is more frequent, and to the general segregation of work between men and women in the labour market. Thus, it appears difficult to support the lifecourse perspective in the analysis of the training issue, but much more so on the basis of the analysis of the working time issue (Tremblay, Paquet and Najem, 2005, 2006a,b).



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As we had expected, the access to a given job or occupational group appears to be the main determinant of the differences in access to training, as well as size of firm, as we saw in other analyses, not included here for lack of space. Age also has some impact, but the presence of children (or work-family issue) seems to have less of an impact than we had expected, or at least the WES data cannot support the hypothesis of differentiation here.


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