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# Sentenced to study

Whether learning a foreign language, familiarising oneself with the functions of a computer or increasing knowledge of one's own professional field, further education is playing an increasingly important role in our society. Over 40 percent of the Swiss population are currently in further education.

The reasons for this thirst for knowledge vary enormously. Courses are visited due to personal interest or because they are required for work. Over the past few years it has become increasingly clear that what we learned at school is not enough for a professional career. So is our society slowly but surely being sentenced to lifelong learning? Although half the adult Swiss population is attending further training courses, there is another side to the coin:



Dario Ballanti

## "Further education is playing an increasingly important role"

the other half of the population refuses to undergo further training. Experts are aiming to change this attitude and motivate more people to go back to school.

The main goal is to encourage young people who have completed an apprenticeship to continue their education rather than accept that their formal education is at an end, with no thought of further training which might enhance their job opportunities. A number of studies show that the inclination to let books gather dust on the shelf is particularly high among young people. Added to this is the fact that, despite the unemployment level among young people, it is difficult to find enough skilled staff for certain types of job. This is particularly true of the information technology sector, where young people above all have a major chance of finding work.

Further training in new technologies could truly work wonders and offer many young people the possibility of retraining, thereby increasing their chances on the job market. With this sector developing at an unprecedented rate, it is even more important to be flexible and continually acquire new knowledge. In other words: learning is purely a matter of routine and we must exercise it to the full.

It is not up to the individual alone to seize the day. The government also needs to act, as shown by the recently published report on "Education in Switzerland: Situation and Recommendations" which states that further education courses are primarily offered by private companies and associations. The government and cantons are aware of the importance of further education. But they are not yet doing enough to promote it.

Dario Ballanti



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Further education is popularly regarded as the key to the 21st century. Yet not everyone is willing to go back to school. People with a modest basic education are particularly in need of additional qualifications.

(Cover: MARTIN MÖLL)

## SWISS REVIEW

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