Policy learning forum

Professional development of teachers and trainers – a guarantee of quality in VET

Porto Palace Hotel, Thessaloniki (Greece), 21-22 November 2016

Small group discussion - Theme and Methodology

Teachers and trainers in VET have been on the EU education policy agenda for many years. A lot has been accomplished in the Member States and participating countries through EU-funded projects and national initiative to support VET teachers' and in-company trainers' professional development. However, the Riga conclusions called for systematic approaches to and opportunities for initial and continuing professional development (CPD) of VET teachers, trainers and mentors that should ultimately guarantee the relevance and quality of VET, especially in the context of better and more work-based learning. Cooperation and partnerships among stakeholders are seen as a way to support this.

The policy learning forum is a good opportunity to assess what has been achieved so far, discuss challenges, share experiences and examples of practice and contribute to European compendium and knowledge base to support the countries' effort/reforms.

The approach to the work in small groups is based on the Open space technology ideas ([1]).

Our overall/ultimate theme for the discussions is

> **How can we establish a systemic approach to teachers and trainers' professional development and cooperation to support it?**
>
> **How can we make sure it has a concrete impact on teaching practice in a VET context?**

([1]) The Open space is an alternative method of organising meetings which encourages participants to take on roles that they would not normally adopt. It is a highly democratic and self-managing meeting methodology. It is self-organising, where people participate in building the agenda, present the issues they care about, moderate the workshops and report on them. The Open space is a methodological tool that enables self-organizing groups of all sizes to deal with hugely complex issues, such as teachers and trainers professional development is!, in a very short period of time. More information can be found at:
http://www.openspaceworld.com/users_guide.htm

<u>The Methodology</u>

The sessions will be organised in the following steps:

1. <u>'Lightning talks'</u>

Selected participants will present their examples of policy and practice from their countries. These should serve as starting points [small invitations to small group discussion to ask and answer questions, to attract expertise, to figure out how to proceed] for further discussion; all participants can propose other issues for discussion in the following steps.

2. <u>Introducing the theme and the process</u>

On Monday after the lunch break, a Cedefop moderator will introduce the theme and explain the working process.

3. <u>Creating agenda and schedule</u>

After the moderator explains the "rules of the game", he/she will invite participants to propose their issue, burning question or great idea. Proposals will be collected in A4 sheets of paper and will be put on a notice board to create the agenda.

Small groups will be formed depending on the number of proposals received.

4. <u>Selecting small groups/issues</u>

The agenda (issues are fixed on the wall/bulletin board) is set; a space and timeframe are allocated for each issue. The participants are invited to explore it, mill around and decide what to attend, which issues to contribute to, what to learn from. There will be round tables spread around the conference rooms available for small groups to settle around.

5. <u>Discussions in the small groups</u>

In every group, the participant who proposed the issue to be discussed becomes the host, presents it in more detail and takes responsibility to make sure it is debated.(S)he should be assisted by a rapporteur in recording the results (i.e. suggestions, ideas, or questions). At the beginning of their discussion, the participants may establish some communication rules to facilitate a productive exchange of ideas.

6. <u>Displaying results of workshops on a Bulletin Board</u>

Cedefop will provide templates for reporting the outcomes. The results from each group will be placed for public display on a Bulletin Board. This will allow participants to keep track of what is going on in other groups and leave their comments if they wish. If the groups see similarities, they can negotiate and join the discussion with another group.

7. <u>Moving among groups</u>

Participants are free to move to any group. If at any time they feel that they are not learning or contributing, they have the right to move to another one, to have a coffee, to take a break. It is their responsibility to make sure that no time is wasted.

8. <u>Presenting the outcomes of the discussions</u>

At the end of the discussion, the participants will make sure that all their deliverables are on the Bulletin Board. The Cedefop moderator(s) will summarise the outcomes and present them in the plenary, raising the issues to be addressed in the panel discussion. The outcomes will also be published after the forum.