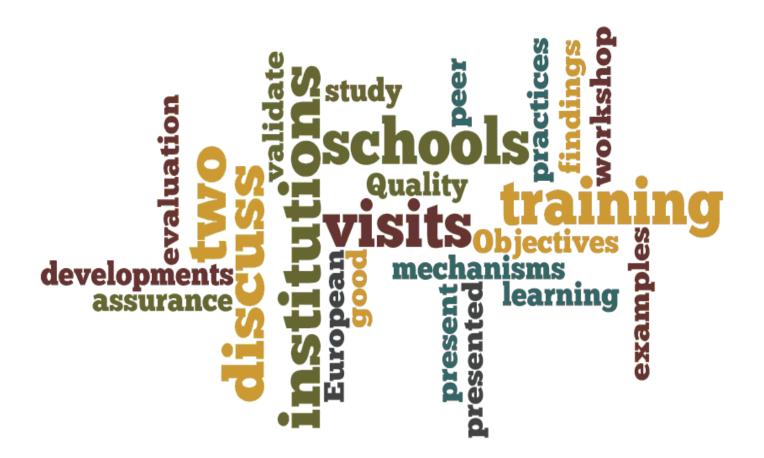Study visits workshop on
Enhancing quality in schools and VET institutions
17-18 February 2011, Bonn

Guidelines for the working session
2.30 & 5 PM on Thursday 17 February 2011

Working Sessions methodology

The working sessions will try to break the usual barriers imposed by traditional meetings and use the participants' creativity in order to stimulate discussions and increase their interaction. An alternative method[1] of organising meetings will be used which encourages participants to present and discuss issues they care about, moderate the workshops and report on them. The essential steps are the following:

1. Participants split in three tables forming **three groups** of equal size.

2. In each table a specific **Topic,** a "**Host**" and a "**Reporter**" are assigned.

3. Participants **discuss for 50 minutes** their ideas and experiences on the topic assigned to their table before they move to another table to discuss a different topic.

4. There will be **three discussion rounds of 50 minutes each**. After each round all participants except for the Host and the Reporter, may move to another table.

5. Participants should **mix as much as possible** with other participants when changing tables.

6. Participants are free to move to a different table/topic or stay in the one they are most interested in. If at any time they feel they are not contributing or are tired they are free to take a break.

7. The key findings of each discussion should be **recorded on the flipchart paper** that is allocated in each table.

I. THE ROLE OF THE HOSTS

The Host does not move from the table. He/she stays at the table and has the following tasks:

➢ welcomes the participants to the table;

➢ presents the main discussion points and a brief synthesis of the main ideas of the previous session;

➢ facilitates the discussion;

➢ connects the ideas and insights generated by participants in order to allow common knowledge to grow or a big picture to build up;

➢ helps the Reporter to prepare the key messages for the next morning;

➢ produces with the Reporter a short summary of the discussions (maximum of 2 pages) to be sent to Cedefop after the workshop.

---

[1] This method is based on the World Cafe approach http://www.theworldcafe.com , adopted by Cedefop for the purpose of this workshop

II. THE ROLE OF THE REPORTERS

The Reporter does not move from the table. He/she stays at the table and has the following tasks:

> ➢ takes note of the main points and findings;
>
> ➢ participates in the discussion;
>
> ➢ supports the host in holding a lively and open discussion;
>
> ➢ presents the key messages at the plenary session on Friday morning;
>
> ➢ produces with the host a short summary of the discussions (maximum of 2 pages) to be sent to Cedefop after the workshop.

The **key messages** to be presented at the plenary session on the following morning may be formulated and **addressed to** different stakeholders and levels: **policy makers** in ministries or regional and local authorities, **directors** of schools and VET institutions, **teachers and trainers** etc.

II. THE ROLE OF TRAVELER EXPERTS

1. Traveler experts move <u>every 50 minutes</u> from table to table carrying out the following tasks:

> ➢ bring in each table their expertise and experience on each topic and become engaged in open dialogue and sharing ideas. **Country examples should be mentioned to enrich the dialogue with evidence.**
>
> ➢ each time traveler experts move to a new table, they are bringing with them the threads of the last round and discuss them with those brought by other travelers. As the rounds progresses the conversation moves to deeper levels.

2. At the plenary session on Friday morning, traveler experts complement and comment the reporting of the key messages drawn from each table and presented by the Reporters.

Time: **You have 50 minutes for each discussion round**

Topics for the Working Sessions

Working sessions I: How to avoid red tape in external evaluation

Host: Mr Knutsen Rune (NO)
Reporter: Ms Raupach Jeannette (DE)

Participants in this working session will focus on external evaluation carried out by a body appointed by the state/government to examine (validate) the effectiveness of programmes, processes, activities, results and outputs in schools and VET institutions. The aim of external evaluation is to support quality improvement for better students' achievement.   During the study visit in Lithuania it was said that the vision of the National Agency for School Evaluation in Vilnius is to:

"change the culture of evaluation from fear to attitude, from compliance to improvement, instruction to agreement opinions to evidence and from control to reflection".

Participants in the working session are invited to discuss this vision and compare it with the situation in their own countries. They should use their experience as a reference and bring examples from their work to enrich their dialogue with evidence. They may address issues such as the role of different actors involved in external evaluation, the on-going relations between schools and the state, the transparency and clarity of evaluation criteria, the training of external evaluators, the changing role of inspectors etc.

Working sessions II: How to build a culture of internal evaluation in schools and VET institutions

Host: Mr Cannon Max (IE);
Reporter: Ms Asta Rinkeviciene (LT)

Internal evaluation as seen during the two study visits is a systematic and regular review of systems, programmes, processes, activities, results and outputs that facilitates the identification of strengths and weaknesses in schools and VET institutions. This contributes to continuous improvement of a school with the ultimate goal of better student achievements.
In most European countries internal assessment undergoes a process of reform. Study visits findings show that in some countries it has become mandatory, some countries focus on processes and activities while some others focus on outcomes. Moreover it is a common belief that quality assurance in education and vocational training requires a bottom up approach, it is primarily the responsibility of the school and VET institution and requires the involvement of the whole school community. Many schools though lack

the expertise and resources to set up and carry out internal evaluation and they need support in order to develop a continuous process of school improvement. Participants in this working session are invited to reflect on

"How to build a culture of internal evaluation in schools and VET institutions"

They should use their experience as a reference and bring examples from their work to enrich their dialogue with evidence. They may address issues such as the support offered to schools by the state, the involvement of the whole school community, the key role of the school director, the practice of peer observation and tutoring, the existence of national frameworks for internal evaluation etc.

Working sessions III: Internal and external evaluation: towards a continuum

Host: Mr Dijkhuis Anton (NL)
Reporter: Mrs Paraschiva Gabriela Alina (RO)

Findings of the two study visits showed the growing relationship between internal and external evaluation and recognised the need for them to be complementary. They both aim at better students' results in terms of academic achievement as well as social and personal development. Arguments were presented during the study visits for internal evaluation being customised to the needs and culture of schools and VET institutions and being independent to external evaluation. In other cases participants underlined the contribution of external evaluation to providing guidance and advice to internal evaluation processes. All participants agreed that following up on the results of both internal and external evaluation is essential and should be impeded in the evaluation culture of schools and VET institutions.

Participants in the working session on "Internal and external evaluation: towards a continuum" may discuss the relationship between internal and external evaluation, their complementary role into a quality improvement process, how the one can benefit from the other, the question of aligning or not criteria between the two etc.