

TTnet thematic workshop

Results of the TTnet project on:

“Professionalisation of VET teachers for the future - PROFF”

(May 2002 – May 2003)

Session 1: Updating teachers' qualifications and competences

An example of innovative practice: Vocational Pedagogic in Enterprises, Norway

Background

There are no legislative requirements to the in-company trainers. There are no legislative requirements as to the use of educational plans, but there are requirements for quality systems also as to competence building processes in the companies.

The training companies are now a part of upper secondary education, and as such they have the same responsibilities and obligations for the training as the upper secondary schools. The schools and the training companies have the same basic curriculum. To be recognised as a training company, the company has to fulfil certain requirements.

The programme also has participants from "non-apprenticeship companies". These are persons who have responsibility for different kind of in-company training and competence building. These companies have negotiated agreements for competence-building processes as part of for instance ISO certification. Part of this agreement is to analyse needs for competence development, to design plans for implementation of competence development on different levels, as well as systems for documentation of competence development and learning experiences.

Background for selecting the cases is based in the following background documents: Implementation of Reform 94. (Ref: White paper, St.m 37 (1990-91), "Management and Organisation Higher Education and White paper, St.m 33(1991-92), "Knowledge and Competence).

The idea in the programme is also based also in other Norwegian Policy documents:

- Official Norwegian Report :-NOU 1997-25 : "New Competence", White paper, St.m.nr 42, 1997-98: "The Competence Reform", White Paper, St.m 1988-89), "Lifelong learning";
- "Evaluation of reform94".

Key concepts in Norway as to VET:

- integration of theory/practice:
- "vocationalisation" of theoretical subjects - meaning that theoretical subject shall be more linked to practical and professional tasks and aspects in the learning process;
- development of the working place as a learning arena;
- recognition of prior learning (non-formal competence);
- lifelong learning;
- professionalisation of vocational teachers and trainers through an ever more practice-based education;
- Reform 94 - the comprehensive reform in upper secondary education - including also all initial vocational training in Norway. After implementation of the reform, the main track for vocational education and training in Norway is two years in school and two years in companies.

The programme is founded on adult education principles:

- experiential learning, theory/practice integration, participant's orientation, collaborative learning as well as individually designed study processes. These principles underlies the official guidelines;
- for Reform 94 and National Curriculum for Vocational Teacher Education and reflect the holistic competence Norway require of VET teachers trainers;

the focus is to:

- build on the experience and insight of the student;
- connect learning activities directly to the participants' work in their own enterprises;

theory and methods are learned as a part of, or parallel to, practical tasks.

A holistic approach

Here it is amongst others stated that one major challenge is to improve /develop further the links, networking and co-operation between the vocational training in schools and enterprises.

Both the vocational schools and apprenticeship enterprises have to learn from each others- both with regards to professional subjects, to professional and organisational language or "code" and culture.

A formalised educational programme as described, organised by an University College, which also offers formalised educational programmes for vocational teachers - must be seen as an effort to both develop working organisations, to improve vocational training and to give a pedagogical training programme based on the language and culture of working life.

The programme is based on a principle of life long learning for all and to developing working organisations to learning organisations. This includes amongst others to develop the specific working life context as a learning arena -and to develop the students/ worker`s potential to be a change agent or problem solver in her own working organisation.

This programme has been under continuous evaluation by the participants, but the college has not documented a systematic evaluation of the programme - it may though seem that the increasing participant interest is a sign of success.

Goals

The target group for the programme are persons with training/teaching and tutoring functions in enterprises and companies. The programme has no formal educational applicant's requirements. There is a heterogeneous group of participants from several companies and sectors of society. It is also delivered to specific target groups or enterprises/companies.

The background for the initiative was a felt need for strengthening the pedagogical competence in the enterprises. The companies have more formalised responsibilities and obligations for the training of upper secondary education including all initial vocational training for the last two years of the training. This includes that vocational training in school and enterprises have the same basic curriculum -also including to organise the learning process according to the same modern pedagogical basic principles (theory/practice integration, experiential learning, responsibility for own learning, co-operative learning, project-based learning, amongst others).

Competencies developed

The programme is founded on adult education principles: experiential learning, theory/practice integration, participant's orientation, collaborative learning as well as individually designed study processes.

Focus is to build on the experience and insight of the student. Learning activities are connected directly to the participant's work in their own enterprises. Theory and methods are learned as a part of, or parallel to, practical tasks. The approach is a holistic one.

"Vocationalisation" of theoretical subjects means that theoretical subject shall be more linked to practical and professional tasks and aspects in the learning process. Working place is considered to be as a learning arena. Professionalisation of vocational teachers and trainers through a even more practice based education.

Prior learning and non-formal competence should be recognized.

Modes of delivery

Collaborative learning: the students work together during the organised programme and in project in the periods between the learning sessions. They work in groups and in pairs, in order to perform tasks and solve problems. They also coach each other in developing their work-and personal competence. To develop understanding of oneself as an agent for

competence development and learning is a central theme during the program. When more than one participant come from one company, they work together in project groups with actual tasks in their own working place.

ICT is used as part of the program. This has developed over the year. Now the students use the "Classfrontier" platform as a meeting place. Over the years the students have communicated with each other and the teacher by e-mail. Written tasks have been delivered and commented by mail.

There is a blended approach in use. Participants get together in workshops and continue their studies at own workplaces with specific tasks related to the functions in the companies / enterprises / practical work.

Accreditation

The incentives of the trainers to participate: personal interest, better background for job performance, formal competence.

Incentives for companies: competence building is regarded as a productivity- and quality-enhancing factor.

The participants receive a certificate from Akershus University College after completing the course. This certificate is a documentation of fulfilment of 15 ECT. The certificate has no special name - it is a paper documenting fulfilment of the course. The certificate gives access to further education in our college. The access to further education in general depends on the applicant`s background and interest.