

TTnet thematic workshop

Results of the TTnet project on:

“Professionalisation of VET teachers for the future - PROFF”

(May 2002 – May 2003)

Session 3: Approaches to teacher training - transnational trends

Thematic introduction (Pia Cort, TTnet-Denmark)

How the VET teachers are qualified to meet the challenges to their profession is one of the main questions that the Proff project seeks to answer. The case studies provide examples of approaches within 6 European countries, and here some clear transnational trends are detected:

The training activities often comprehend different *target groups* and focus is on (*intra-organisational* learning. Teacher training is not only to develop the individual teacher's competences but also rather to contribute to the development of the organisation as a whole.

Furthermore, there is also a clear trend towards *inter-organisational approaches* i.e. different institutions/organisations and private companies are involved in the same training activities. The aim is to bridge partly the world of work and the world of the school and create a constructive co-operation between different practices, partly to bridge different institutions and staff groups in the VET system that may learn from and about each other.

As to *modes of delivery*, some of the following trends stood out:

- The training activities are very often based on a participatory approach. The participants define their own training needs and are able to colour the training activities accordingly.
- All of the training activities are based on the interaction between theory and practice i.e. between on-the-job and off-the-job learning. The training activities are often closely related to the daily practice of the teachers and take point of departure in the functions of the teachers and the challenges that they meet in their daily work. This interaction between theory and practice is “double” insofar that two different kinds of practices are

represented: the world of work and the world of school. So another common approach found in these case studies is to bridge the world of work and the world of school so that the teachers are able to ensure that the students acquire up-to-date vocational skills in demand at the labour market.

- ICT is used as a tool to support learning and facilitate communication between participants and teacher educators. E-learning is not an activity or a mode of delivery in itself but one of many tools which are taken into use in order to create a motivating and inspiring learning context. So to draw on the vocabulary of e-learning, most of the training activities are based on *blended* approaches.

Finally as to *concepts* or overall *models* for the teacher training, the following transnational approaches can be identified:

- tailor-made training activities – tailor-made at *all levels of the VET system* i.e. to meet the needs arising from changes in VET systems/national legislation, organisational development and individual teacher needs arising from changed practices;
- modularisation of training activities;
- training based on the dual training principle;
- establishing flexible learning pathways. This includes a trend towards establishing VET teacher programmes at university level and hereby make the profession more research based.

These methods are not new or innovative, but they are quite predominant. It is obvious from the cases that the idea of lifelong learning, the focus on different learning contexts, the interaction between these learning contexts, and the introduction of team working have had a huge influence on the way that we perceive training and skills development. The interaction between practice and theory - and bridging the gap between theory and practice - is increasingly in focus.

So the transnational trends are that the training activities are to be close to the practice of the teachers and aim at supporting them in their present – and future – functions, but also at challenging their practice. In this approach, reflection becomes a keyword. It is important to set off the teachers' reflection-on-practice and reflection on how theory and practice might "fertilise" each other. But how is this done in practice? The Danish case *Reform Competence Project* provides a good example of a participatory approach and teacher training close to the daily practice of the vocational colleges.