TTnet workshop

'Professionalisation of VET Teachers for the Future'
Helsinki, 5 and 6 April 2001

Synthesis Report

The Helsinki workshop was one of the thematic workshops that have been organised by Cedefop since June 1998. The workshop was entirely devoted to the professionalisation of vocational teachers. This was the first workshop, in which the TTnet addressed teacher training issues instead of trainer training.

1.   Background

Our society has become increasingly turbulent. Major changes have occurred in occupational structures and in our ways of working. We are in transition from a service-based society to an information society. This has increased the amount of information, which in turn has become more and more complex. Permanent employment relationships have been replaced by assignments of fixed duration. In addition to a good knowledge of subject content, other skills to which importance is attached at work include the interaction and teamwork skills of employees as well as their ability to learn new things.

The changes that have occurred in working life are reflected in education and training and in the work of teachers. According to the Finnish OPEPRO[1] study, educational solutions are becoming increasingly flexible and tailored to individual needs. Educational institutions are developing into open learning environments embracing learners of different ages. Educational institutions are networking both with each other and with representatives of working life. Instruction focuses on students' self-direction and the independent acquisition of information. Cooperation between educational institutions and workplaces will increase. Individual learning programmes and multiform study arrangements, together with increasingly heterogeneous student groups, will increase the need for educational guidance. All this will place high demands on the teacher and will change and increase training needs of teachers.

1.1. Workshop Objectives and Themes

The purpose of the workshop was to survey the challenges that teachers meet in their profession and assess the impact of change on the teaching profession in the future.

One of the objectives was to identify areas of common interest in the TTnet member countries and find ways to meet the future challenges facing the teaching profession. Moreover, the workshop aimed at exchanging experiences of what various countries are doing in terms of enhancing the attractiveness of the teaching profession and updating the professional knowledge of VET teachers during their teaching career.

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[1]   Honka, Lampinen & Virtanen, 2000. Towards a new teachership in vocational upper secondary education. Scenarios of change in teachers' work and training needs by the year 2010. Anticipatory project to investigate teachers' initial and continuing training needs (OPEPRO), Report 10. National Board of Education.

The aim of the workshop was not to survey teacher training systems in the Member States, since that information is already available in the TTnet publication 'Teachers and trainers in vocational training' which is now available, in French and English, on our website (http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/ttnet/EN/Publications/main.asp) as well as in the Eurydice database.

The workshop was divided into three sessions with the following themes:
1. Concept of 'professionalisation of teachers': main factors, implications for teachers' competences and qualifications for the future.
2. Meeting the future challenges in the field of 'professionalisation of teachers'.
3. Development of professionalisation during the teaching career.

The report will follow the above structure presenting the key topics and results of the working group sessions. The report will not go into the workshop in detail, since the speakers made their presentation material available during the workshop and are reporting separately to Cedefop. The report will also highlight the proposals made by the network members for the development of TTnet activities in the future.

1.2. Preparatory work for workshop participants

The workshop participants were sent a list of questions in advance as preparatory work for the workshop.

The working document included questions on definitions such as 'VET teacher', 'competences of the VET teacher', and asked participants to describe a typical career of a VET teacher. Participants were also questioned about the greatest challenges in vocational teacher training in their countries and possible initiatives with respect to these challenges. Since the third theme was devoted to professionalisation during the teaching career, one question was aimed at finding out about different systems or mechanisms for continuous VET teacher training. The last question addressed internationalisation and its impact on the work of VET teachers.

2. Concept of 'Professionalisation of Teachers'

The major challenge is how to understand and cope with rapid change in an unpredictably turbulent world. These rapid, unexpected changes are part of our everyday life and therefore learning becomes the central process. Continuous learning becomes the main challenge for individuals and communities. In a learning society, knowledge is produced in diverse sites, which requires networked structures. Since a lot of learning is happening outside of schools, the roles of schools and teachers are also changing.

2.1. Future demands on teacher competences

The introduction by Professor Anneli Eteläpelto (University of Jyväskylä, Finland) illustrated the changed conceptions of learning:
- acquisition metaphor: learning as an individual acquisition/construction of skills and knowledge;
- participation metaphor: learning as participation in communities of practice.

VET teachers are working in the boundaries of VET and working life. The new role of a VET teacher is the one of a broker, who opens new possibilities for meanings and exports and imports knowledge. At present teachers' role as networkers is underestimated.

There are new requirements of teachers' roles and competences. Anneli Eteläpelto presented the following conclusions:
- teachers should become aware of their role as community builders;
- teachers as promoters of collaborative learning processes;
- teachers as team workers, as community builders in relation to other teachers;
- teachers as boundary brokers into working life;
- teachers as experts of human learning and organisational learning;
- teachers as scaffolds of students' formation, learning and development;
- teachers as facilitators of students' participation in working life communities;
- teachers as innovators of learning societies;
- how teachers can promote the construction of knowledge-building communities;
- teachers' new role as builders of future learning communities.

Philipp Grollmann (ITB Bremen, Germany) had carried out a comparative study on international research concerning the issue of vocational teachers' professionalisation. According to his findings, there are not many international studies available on the VET teaching profession and the ones existing are out-of-date. Only two of the studies (1964, 1977) made recommendations on international standards and those were rather minimal in their scope. Past experience shows that finding common standards is a difficult task. It might be easier to develop common prospective objectives than common standards. The new directions in theories and research on teachers' professionalisation are focusing on pedagogical content knowledge and case studies as well as the merger between the perspective of teacher education and training and school development

2.2. Results of Working Groups on 'Challenges for the Professionalisation of Teachers'

The groups reviewed common challenges at individual, pedagogical and organisational level.

On the **individual level** the challenges identified were:
How to define future teacher expertise and what are the vehicles and means of growing in the expertise which will be required in the future? Future VET teachers will need both management and leadership skills in managing learning, in organising the work, and in functioning with different organisations as brokers in the networks. Simultaneously, one needs to be aware of the well-being of the individual teacher and to provide sufficient support. Is the teacher as an individual the only one responsible for all challenges he or she faces in the future? How much responsibility does the organisation have when faced with external challenges on education? Today, when we see on one hand increased collective responsibility and on the other more autonomy in the teaching profession, should the organisation also share responsibility? One way of doing this is to provide support and enhance collaboration in schools. Thus the teacher needs skills in networking and in creating networks with the various stakeholders.

On the **pedagogical level**, the challenges are tied to the changed conception of learning as the focus changes from the teacher to the learner and from teaching to learning. Now the teacher's role is one of a creator of a new learning culture. This means redefining working practices and changing the conception of learning. This challenges especially teachers who

have been long in the teaching profession and have not had access to the new learning culture. Simultaneously, student groups are becoming more heterogeneous. Overall, there is an increasing need and desire to tailor (individualise) learning to individual needs. This adds new challenges and complexity, e.g. in the form of multiple lesson plans and in designing for different learning styles. Learning takes place combined with working life, too. The alternatives for open and flexible solutions and sandwich structures are increasing and are more and more in demand. Changing occupational structures combined with conflicting learning outcome expectations of working life and the other stakeholders require new approaches to, for example, how change and various expectations can be included in curricula and their implementation.

Educational **organisations** are faced with a lack of teachers. Teacher demand increases as many teachers retire and opt for early retirement. The lack of attractiveness and appreciation for the VET teacher's profession do not alleviate this problem. Here one should look for solutions on several levels of development. The whole life span of the teacher teams should be considered in the new and more co-operative environment. Teachers need skills in building and starting teams, working in teams, and dissolving teams. School leaders need more vision and leadership skills. In this context one could also question whether models of leadership should be adopted only from the business world. One must acknowledge that there are various administrative and organisational barriers inhibiting development.

A **macro-level** challenge in most European countries, but luckily not in all of them, is the lack of appreciation for the teacher's profession. Compared with earlier times, teaching is no longer the career of first choice. There is a need for a professional identity to attract talented people into the profession. The appreciation gap between school, society, and the labour market needs to be closed.

It is important to consider the **timeframe** for solving these challenges. Market-led needs, which are often of a technical nature, can be responded to rapidly. But there are challenges that address deeper issues in educational development. Thus they have implications for initial teacher training. These challenges relate to certain attitudes and skills, which need to be addressed in entry selection. Can school be a source of innovation also for working life? This is an important question to answer. We see brokering in cooperation with stakeholders as an opportunity and we believe that school has something to offer to working life in innovation and in new approaches.

Also the VET teacher needs on-going training after he or she knows the 'ground rules' of the trade. Continuing training can solve some development issues faster, but on some issues the identification of needs takes time. Also, changes in government policy are required. We must also question how long a good practice remains relevant and how to develop them over a longer timeframe.

2.3. 'e-Teachers' – Impact of ICT on teachers competences

Jarmo Viteli´s (Hybermedia lab, Interactive Network Services, University of Tampere, Finland) presentation addressed the impact of information and communication technology on teachers competences. The dilemma in using ICT in education is that first engineers create new technical solutions and then educators come only long after in order to implement the innovations in education. The process should be the other way around. Moreover, nowhere in the world, have educators claimed that e-learning produces better results.

The Finnish studies show that there is still a lot to do as regards the knowledge and skills of teachers. Only one in four teachers feel confident with their present ICT skills and their pedagogical competence to use ICT. Two out of three teachers would like more training and more support in ICT and in ICT-based teaching and learning. Teachers that are close to retirement age would not like to learn more ICT skills. Altogether, it is a big number of teachers whose ICT skills are not at sufficient level. Often also the skills gap between teachers and students is great.

At present, ICT is used in education in the following ways:
- word-processing in preparing study reports and research reports;
- web-browsing for information search;
- e-mail for communication with peers;
- graphics;
- learning about ICT.

In other words, teachers very seldom use ICT in actual classroom situations.

Future teachers will:
- choose meaningful contexts for the learning;
- choose the learning activities ahead of the content;
- choose open-ended and loosely structured tasks;
- make resources plentiful;
- provide supports for learning;
- use authentic assessment activities.

The above illustrates that teachers should go beyond showing things to doing things. ICT is a new learning industry instead of books and publishing houses and teachers should become active producers of new contents. Students, who need support in traditional education, also need support in use of ICT. Teachers are still needed.

The **working group** assumed that pedagogical skills and learning process management skills are self-evident competences of the VET teacher and especially those aspiring to be eTeachers. But the eTeacher needs competences in two new areas. The new areas to master are technical skills in the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and innovation skills. By innovation skills we mean the creative and imaginative use of the tool. Teachers also require what was described by Prof. Eteläpelto as the 'participation metaphor'. However, being an eTeacher does not mean a lack of face-to-face interaction in the learning process. The new tools or e-tools are tools, not substitutes.

Becoming an eTeacher requires starting as an eLearner. One needs to have experience on the difficulties involved and of what is required before starting as an eTeacher. Teachers are very much faced with the fact that the developments in the field of eLearning have been directed by technology. What we need now is a balance between the pedagogical side and the technical side. All in all, the teacher's voice in development is needed!

Technical skills in the use of ICT can be mastered quickly when time, training, and support close to the teacher is given. Teachers need easy access to support and this is especially crucial when starting with the use of ICT. Changes in ways of working take longer. Currently

we are faced with a society that is not an information society but an information overload society.

eLearning has to be a value added to the learning process and to learning content. It should never be an end by itself. Discussion is needed on the role of eLearning, its scope and dimensions in the learning process. What is the role of eLearning in open and distance learning vs virtual learning? It forms only an element in the learning culture. A challenge, and a question to be answered in the future, is, should ICT be integrated in all disciplines? And could one thus benefit from the transfer of skills. We lack standards in this area despite it being a part of teacher education. A major advantage with the use of ICT in education is that it crosses borders nationally and internationally in a very natural way.

3.   Meeting Future Challenges

Olli Luukkainen (Further Teacher Training Unit, National Board of Education, Finland) presented some of the results of the Opepro project (anticipatory project to investigate teachers' initial and continuing training needs). The project consisted of three sub-projects: a survey of the present situation of teachers, scenarios of the future of teaching work until 2010, and procedures to anticipate teacher training needs once the project has run its course.

Flexibility, tolerance of change, initiative, self-direction, interaction skills, tolerance of diversity, combination of theoretical and practical skills – all these are skills that teachers need more and more in their work. Traditional teacher roles are no longer suitable in Finland. One of the key questions in all of this is collegiality. Teachers feel that social skills are the most important skills to be learnt. As regards quantitative development needs, the key question is how to ensure that there will be enough teachers. Ageing and early retirement of teachers will result in the need to train more teachers. There have been similar problems also in Germany regarding teacher recruitment. The Opepro project has had an immediate impact on government policies. As a result the number of student places in vocational teacher training has been raised by 30-40% and there is a new guideline from the Ministry of Education on teacher training.

The workshop demonstrated that it is fairly easy to identify transnational challenges in 'professionalsiation of teachers'. However, in order to find solutions and to identify good practices to meet these challenges, more dialogue and research are needed.

4.   Development of Professionalisation during Teaching Career

The workshop addressed, or rather just scraped the surface of, the topic: the development of professionalisation during the teaching career. The topic was examined at national/regional and individual/organisational levels. Also a European study on teachers was introduced.

Matti Kyrö (Head of the Eurydice Unit – Finland, National Board of Education) presented the recently launched Eurydice 'Study on teachers: attractiveness, profile and occupational content of the teaching profession'. The Eurydice network covers 30 countries. As teaching is a broad subject, the scope of the study had to be limited to full-time secondary level teachers. The aspects to be covered are teaching skills, teacher supply, and conditions of service. The study should give a good framework for comparison when it is completed next year. The

workshop participants wished to have case studies and descriptions of teacher profiles included in future studies, which at this stage might be difficult to introduce in the ongoing study. Nevertheless, the Eurydice study could help to identify issues for close-up studies.

Italy is developing a new scenario (1998-2001) for the professional development of teachers. Dr Mario G. Dutto (General Directorate for Lombardia Ministry of Education) presented the new vision, policy and models for continuing teacher training.

The new vision:
- personalised professional development plan;
- careers as cycles of learning experiences;
- teachers as reflective professionals;
- professional well-being;
- teacher professional development and student learning;
- teacher knowledge and research;
- professional development as investment;
- standards for an advanced profession.

A new policy:
- from administrative structures towards a policy arena;
- from national and provincial plans towards convergent actions under a common vision;
- from training courses towards learning environments;
- from a hierarchical offer system towards an adaptive learning framework;
- from financing supply towards supporting demand.

New models:
- teacher networks;
- master programs;
- research grants;
- counselling and professional assistance;
- cooperative research projects;
- professional learning on-line;
- satellite TV programs;
- teacher *stages* (a couple of weeks outside of school);
- short courses (20 hours);
- methodological workshops at the school level.

In Italy professional development is seen as the main area for teachers' professionalisation. The general direction of change is from formal courses to on-the-job learning. The aims are to make learning visible and to find ways to recognise non-formal learning.

Ingolf Andreassen (Danish Union of Technical School College Teachers) underlined that teachers must be offered further education in a long-term qualifying process. The union wants to lengthen teacher studies in Denmark. The present rather short-term initial teacher training is based on an assumption that professional knowledge is being updated continuously. Moreover, teachers must have the right to a choice of training and they need tailor-made training. New competences acquired during the teaching career should also be reflected in the salary system.

In the United Kingdom recent developments in further education of teachers will introduce compulsory training and develop standards. Jocelyn Robson (University of Greenwich, UK) summarised the interests of various stakeholders in vocational education and training. States and governments want to establish their authority. Policy, financing and legislation are their main interests. Practising professionals struggle for status. They form a closed circle, because they want to protect their ranks and professional knowledge. Universities want to enlarge the knowledge base and dissemination. And finally, users or client organisations are interested in vocational education and training, because nowadays they often fund the training.

Seija Mahlamäki-Kultanen (Principal of Karkku College of Home Economics and Social Services, Finland) approached professionalisation from the point of view of professional pride and the use of power. Teachers do have some power in their work. This power is not only visible, it has also been granted to them legally. The power that teachers possess is in gathering, using and disseminating information. Power play between the school principal and the teacher exists despite the fact that the role of the principal is to provide support and encouragement in professional growth, which should go hand in hand with career development.

5. Identification of transversal issues for Community level

The purpose of this session was to identify opportunities for increased uses of the TTnet community of practice for practical development work by strengthening the networks through the Internet. Each group was given a task to come up with at least one practical proposal for further cooperative activities. Needless to say, numerous proposals resulted from the subgroup discussions.

The proposals from the working groups addressed the following areas.

First, the participants wanted to network in the area of practical TTnet guidelines and activities by learning from each other in **horizontal exchange and by benchmarking practices**: how do the other national networks and coordinators carry out certain tasks e.g. related to the funding of the activities? What are the national activities, and how does one motivate network members to contribute? Also ideas for enhanced use of the existing means for information exchange and communication (e.g. the training village and other web forums) need to be exchanged. In addition, TTnet could network with other networks like ENTEP (http://tntee.umu.se/index.html) on educational policies.

Second, the focus was on **content** to be created and discussed in the network. Many groups suggested comparative studies and analyses on various topics. The study topics suggested included: qualification structures for teachers, which would enable different ways of accreditation; accrediting non-formal learning; invisible competences; VET teacher profiles, and overcoming resistance to change. Content creation could include collecting best practice cases on these study topics for dissemination.

A third suggestion was to create a **European level Master's Programme for the VET teachers** or a Euro-VET Teacher Diploma as a continuing education programme. In the summary discussion, the recommendation from the coordinator was to build on the experiences of a Leonardo da Vinci project, where preliminary work has already been carried

out. The limiting and enabling conditions for such a diploma could be studied from this project's experiences.

Fourth, participants wanted to continue to work on the themes previously brought into discussion in the workshops. The aim is to address the issues on a deeper level and to find more common answers and structure to the questions brought up in the discussions. Horizontal exchange needs to be continued in **theme-based working groups** such as how VET teachers structure and conceptualise their work. Also individualisation of teacher training could enhance the attractiveness of the profession and should thus be discussed.

Fifth, **intercultural issues** need to be mentioned as a future action area.

The proposals from the coordinator of TTnet focused on the current year's theme of eLearning and this theme could be continued with separate groups for trainers and VET teachers. A transnational expert group was proposed on the eLearning theme and national networks could set up subgroups to address the topic. Cedefop will contact national nets after Easter to ask for e-learning experts in the countries.

Cedefop also supports continuation of work on the themes on which work has already been started as well as the idea of smaller transnational thematic groups. In 2002, one focus of TTnet activities will be teacher training.

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