

TTNET WORKSHOP:
**‘Open and distance learning
and enhancing the professional skills and qualifications of trainers’**
Rome, 18 and 19 November 1999

INTRODUCTORY DOCUMENT

1. The TTnet network

Cedefop launched the TTnet network in 1998. The network is defined as a Community forum for communication, cooperation and expertise in the field of the training of trainers and teachers of vocational training. The forum is geared towards innovation and aims to meet real needs from a ‘market’ point of view.

The forum is based on the creation and activation of national networks of which the TTnet is meant to constitute the ‘network of networks’. It is also based on the organisation of common activities (thematic workshops, research) intended to encourage exchanges of experience and information and to promote cooperation.

The training of teachers and trainers of vocational training is the network’s common point of departure. However, the various aspects of this issue are approached through activities that tackle specific themes and aim both to review the current situation and to find a common reference point for analysis and action.

The three specific themes explored by the network are:

1. innovation in training, which seeks to find a working definition of innovation that could facilitate the transfer of innovative practices within the Community;
2. the role of tutor, which looks at a role found at the heart of developments in the relationship between training and work;
3. changes in the competences of trainers, which studies the changes in training linked to the new information and communication technologies.

The workshop being organised in Rome - ‘Open and distance learning and enhancing the skills and qualifications of trainers’ - is directly related to the last theme.

2. The issues tackled by the workshop

All Member States are experiencing a rapid growth in the number of training schemes that use educational technologies to meet the needs of individuals, enterprises and organisations.

Such schemes – ‘open and distance learning’ – have several characteristic features:

- they take place at various venues, outside formal settings, which are more in keeping with actual needs;
- they take place at various times, as close as possible to real situations;
- they are flexible, which makes for a better link between work situations and training situations and improves the interaction between the individual and collective aspects of learning.

However, there is one preliminary question that must still be considered: that of trainers. When the units of time, place and action that constitute a traditional training situation go out the window, what becomes of the trainer? What changes take place in his role as a conveyor of knowledge, as an organiser, as a designer and instigator of the training process?

Do the emerging new competences tie in with the emerging new occupations? How should trainers be prepared for this? How do training systems equip themselves to anticipate and keep pace with these changes?

The workshop thus brings together experts and practitioners to consider two issues:

- In what way does the use of educational technologies in training throw the trainer’s roles into confusion:
 - by creating new occupational roles?
 - by requiring new skills?
- How does the use of educational technologies for the training of trainers change methods and outcomes by facilitating the development of new competences? Does the open and distance training of trainers help to create a up-to-date model for the enhancement of the skills and qualifications of those involved in training?

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