

VET teachers and trainers: the forgotten change agents?

CEDEFOP'S TRAINING OF TRAINERS NETWORK – TTNET 9TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE



Vocational Education and Training (VET) teachers and trainers: key players for achieving the education and training 2010 objectives

Thessaloniki, 7 and 8 December 2006

Informing the policy changes affecting the status of trainers

In Helsinki on 5 December 2006 ⁽¹⁾, European Ministers of vocational education and training (VET) said that 'highly qualified teachers and trainers who undertake continuous professional development' are essential to improve the quality of education and training systems.

However, VET teachers and trainers are getting older, their tasks more varied and complex and they receive little support to cope with the changes and new demands made of them.

Immediately after the ministerial meeting, on 7 and 8 December 2006, Cedefop held, in Thessaloniki, the annual conference of its Training of Trainers Network (TTnet) ⁽²⁾. The conference 'VET teachers and trainers: key players for achieving the Education and training 2010 objectives' discussed their essential contribution to achieving the Lisbon ⁽³⁾ Council (2000) aim of making Europe the most competitive economy and knowledge-based society in the world by 2010.

Common trends; greater demands

Examining progress in Member States' implementation of the EU priorities for VET teachers and trainers set in Copenhagen 2002 ⁽⁴⁾, even with the variety of practices and systems, common trends affecting the development of VET professions are emerging, including:

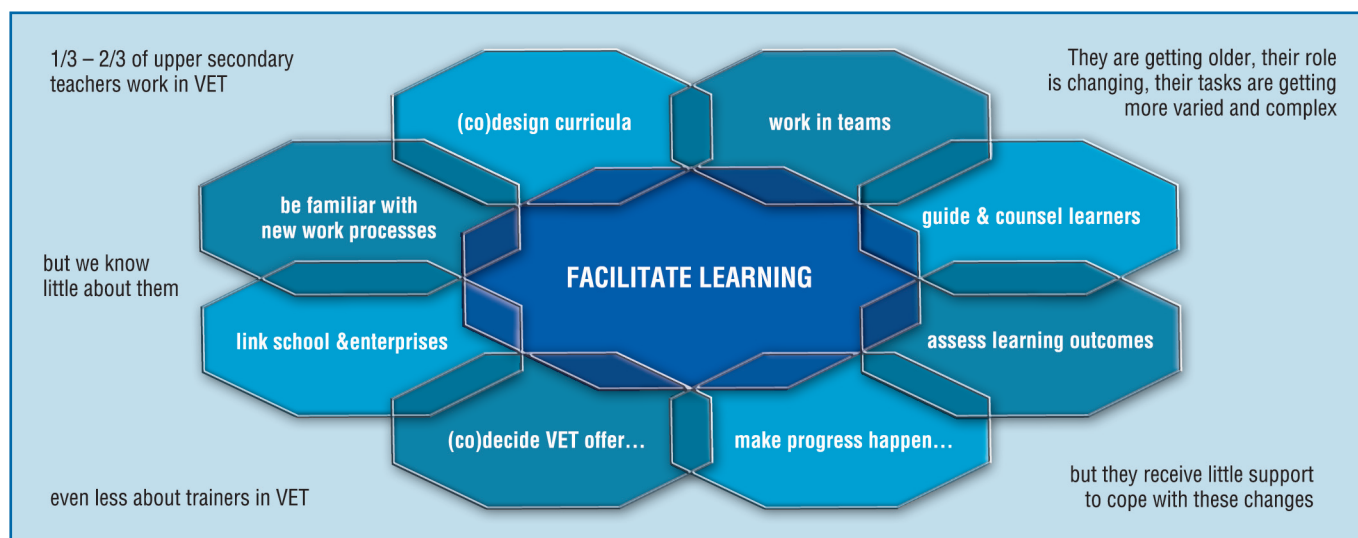
- growing social and labour market needs which are demanding more from VET teachers and trainers. The quality and the quantity of knowledge required at work are constantly increasing and learning capacity has become a key factor affecting the competitiveness of organisations and individual job prospects;
- VET teachers and trainers are extending their role from instructors to learning facilitators and innovators. They are increasingly taking on additional responsibilities such as administrative and managerial tasks, human resource development, counselling and coaching (i.e. helping young people to make career choices), competence assessment and training performance evaluation;

⁽¹⁾ <http://www.minedu.fi/vet2006/communique.html?lang=en>

⁽²⁾ The Training of Trainers Network – TTnet – is a network of national networks set up by Cedefop in 1998 as a Pan-European forum for key players and decision-makers in the training and professional development of vocational teachers and trainers. Through its activities and cross-country thematic projects on commonly agreed VET priorities, TTnet contributes to the implementation of the EU policy framework for VET teachers and trainers. For more information, consult the networks' website at: http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Projects_Networks/TTNet/

⁽³⁾ http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/et_2010_en.html

⁽⁴⁾ http://ec.europa.eu/education/copenhagen/copenhagen_declaration_en.pdf



- bridging training and the world of work, teachers and trainers are increasingly recognised as essential to supporting the lifelong development of workforce skills. As Evangelia Tzampazi, Member of the European Parliament, said at the TTnet conference, ‘Teachers and trainers are called to play a wider social role, for instance in helping people with disabilities, and other groups, to find appropriate training and working solutions’.

A review of training for VET teachers and trainers is needed

The shift towards a new learning paradigm based on learning outcomes requires a review of the initial and continuing training options available to VET teachers and trainers. Improved training opportunities are needed to allow VET teachers and trainers to update their skills and achieve higher standards. Further, greater professional development will generate more trust in the professions involved and between areas and countries. Consequently, the conference debated how, particularly at national level, to:

- build a coherent framework for VET professions based on competences and **implement professional standards for trainers**;
- ensure the continuing professional development of VET teachers and trainers as lifelong learners **by improving access to real training opportunities in all areas – in enterprises, training organisations or by other means.**

TTnet - supporting policy-makers and teachers and trainers

The conference emphasised that TTnet’s role is to identify issues affecting the professional development of VET teachers and trainers and to support policy-makers in providing responses to these challenges and to support the teachers and trainers themselves through knowledge-sharing and mutual learning.

Two lines of action were identified:

- the development of a European framework of competences and qualifications for VET teachers and trainers, in connection with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), is expected to operate as an ‘observatory of VET professions’. It is also expected to promote a better understanding of VET professions, and to foster transparency and mobility;
- examples of national/regional practices in training for VET teachers and trainers should be provided, allowing experiences in one country to advise developments in others. Peer-learning activities on shared objectives should be promoted.

The conference attracted 50 participants from 27 countries, representing governments, social partners, training providers, VET teachers and trainers, universities and VET colleges. The European Commission’s Directorate General for Education and Culture and the European Parliament Committee on Employment and Social Affairs were also represented.