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The Training of Trainers First International Online Conference held on 5-6 November 2008

**Organised By
The Network to Support Trainers in Europe**

Conference Proceedings

THE TRAINING OF TRAINERS

**FIRST INTERNATIONAL ONLINE CONFERENCE
HELD ON 5-6 NOVEMBER 2008**

**ORGANISED BY
THE NETWORK TO SUPPORT TRAINERS IN EUROPE**

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Network to Support Trainers in Europe held its first annual online conference on “the Training of Trainers” on 5 and 6 November, 2008. The target group of the conference were all those interested in the training and professional development of training practitioners such as trainers, tutors, mentors, instructors, teachers and other individuals that assume training functions in various contexts. This included practitioners on the one hand, but also researchers, managers, policy makers and other interested stakeholders and individuals.

The conference was widely promoted through the network website, its partners and various online networks. It took place in the Illuminate platform provided by the conference sponsor Evolve. Illuminate is an easy to use and technically powerful environment that allows the exchange and development of ideas through audio, chat and a shared whiteboard.

The conference was organised along four main themes:

Topic 1: The changing role of trainers in learning

With the growing importance of initial and continuing learning in enterprises and the rapid introduction of new technologies, the role of trainers is changing. Research suggests that ever growing numbers of people are assuming responsibilities for training as part of their work to various degrees. At the same time a move towards more authentic work-based learning can be observed in many European countries and also in VET systems that used to be predominantly school-based. This stronger practice orientation is impacting on the role and activities of trainers. A series of studies have talked of a move away from didactic classroom and workshop-based training towards facilitating enquiry-based learning. In addition, the widespread introduction of e-learning also poses new challenges for trainers.

Issues that were explored in this session included:

- Exploration of the target group: Who are the trainers?
- New challenges for the target group: What are the (new) roles of trainers? What are the implications of changing roles for trainers?
- Continuing learning and professional development: What are the implications for the professional development of trainers?

Topic 2: Support for the professional development of trainers

With an increasing recognition of the importance of trainers and training in general, the initial and continuing professional development of trainers is also coming under scrutiny. Research suggests that structures and processes for training trainers are fragmentary and differ widely in different countries, regions and sectors. In most countries mandatory standards or qualifications for trainers do not exist. It may well be that most trainers rely on personal networks and informal learning for their professional development.

Issues that were explored in this session included:

- What are the competency and qualification structures and programmes of the training of trainers in different countries?
- Are there opportunities for the continuing professional development of trainers?
- What role does informal learning and self-directed learning for trainers’ professional development play?
- How can communities of practice facilitate and support trainers’ professional development?

Topic 3: Work-based learning

Studies and reports indicate a move away from classroom and work-based training towards work-based learning. Such learning is seen as being based on practice and thus developing applied work practice knowledge. Work-based learning may also be more authentic and situated than classroom-based training and may be more cost-effective in contributing to production processes.

Issues that were explored in this session included:

- How can the work environment be organised so that it supports work-based learning?
- Which are important pedagogic approaches to work-based learning?
- How can work process knowledge and work-based learning best be linked?

Topic 4: E-learning for trainers

E-Learning is increasingly impacting on training. Larger enterprises are developing in-house e-learning programmes for their employees. The internet is increasingly being used for informal learning. Internet-based tools offer opportunities for accessing learning in the workplace and for communication. E-portfolios can be used to record and reflect on learning. Web 2.0 tools offer opportunities to develop customised multi-media materials to support training.

Issues that were explored in this session included:

- What is the impact of e-learning on training and trainers' work?
- How can we best use e-learning to support trainers?
- How can we encourage and recognise informal internet-based learning?
- What is the potential of e-Portfolios for training?

In addition to the conference presentations organised according to the four conference themes, an online exhibition showcased developments and practice in the training of trainers using different digital forms such as videos, audio, photographs, flyers, web sites, etc. The overall themes for the exhibition were the same as for the conference itself. It took place on a wiki site linked to the main network website. For the exhibition, which was multi-lingual and in the first place targeted at training practitioners, examples of practice in the training and professional development of trainers were particularly encouraged. The following exhibits were featured:

The changing role of trainers

- From teacher-centred to learner-focused – Letting Learners Create
by Cristina Costa (English)
- IT-Based Knowledge Management: New Perspectives for Teachers and Trainers
by Herold Gross (English)
- Changing the training role, to change the training system
by Paco Cerezo (English/Spanish)

Support for the professional development of trainers

- Learning through Online Community of Practices by Cristina Costa
- An overview of VET according to the Austrian experience (focusing on several key-issues)
by Silvia Weiss

Work based leaning

- Learning in the workplace by Olesja Bokova (English/Estonian)
- Control Risk Management – pedagogical patterns by Markku Kuivalahti (English)

E-learning for trainers

- Language teachers learning online and in community by Cristina Costa (English)
- Online Collaboration to Teach and Learn With Each Other by Linda Castañeda (English)
- Prozessorientiert ausbilden by Herold Gross (German)
- Beitrag Ausbilderhandbuch by Herold Gross (German)
- Modern Training Approaches by Herold Gross (English)
- Forum für AusbilderInnen [external Link] by Herold Gross (German) [see poster]
- Good Practices – 1st experiences in training online - by fase.net (English)
- Professional Development in Online Circles of Learning by Carla Arena and Mary Hillis (English)

The exhibition can be accessed at <http://trainersineurope.pbworks.com/>

The full conference can be accessed and replayed at <http://www.trainersineurope.org/activities/conference/recordings/>

2 CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Day 1 - 5 November 2008 | | |
| Morning session: The changing role of trainers in learning | | |
| 10.00 - 10.30 | Introduction to Conference | <i>Simone Kirpal Graham Attwell Cristina Costa</i> |
| 10.30 - 11.00 | <u>Introduction to theme:</u> "Employees supporting the learning, training and development of others while working in groups: examples drawn from aerospace, health and accountancy" | <i>Alan Brown, University of Warwick, UK</i> |
| 11.00 - 11.30 | "Education, training and employment" | <i>George Roberts Oxford Brookes University</i> |
| 11.30 - 12.00 | "Lifelong learning and the role of trainers" | <i>Barry Nyhan Ireland</i> |
| Afternoon session: Support for the professional development of trainers | | |
| 14.30 - 15.00 | <u>Introduction to theme:</u> "Innovations in trainers' training: Documenting and analyzing work processes with digital media and photos" | <i>Seija Mahlamäki- Kultanen & Anita Eskola-Kronqvist, HAMK, Finland</i> |
| 15.00 - 15.30 | "Developing the competences of trainers in Portugal" | <i>Eduardo Figueira Portugal</i> |
| 15.30 - 16.00 | "Training practitioners in Europe. Perspectives on their work, qualification and continuing learning" | <i>Simone Kirpal ITB, University of Bremen, Germany</i> |
| 16.00 - 16.30 | "A framework for the continuing professional development of trainers – Implications for trainers and stakeholders at a national and European level" | <i>Eileen Lübcke ITB, University of Bremen, Germany</i> |
| 16.30 - 16.45 | Summary of Day 1 | <i>Graham Attwell Pontydysgu, UK</i> |

| Day 2 – 6 November 2008 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Morning & afternoon session: Work-based learning and E-learning for trainers | | |
| 10.30 – 11.00 | <u>Introduction to theme:</u> “Using social software tools for supporting the online training of trainers” | <i>Cristina Costa Pontydysgu, UK</i> |
| 11.00 – 11.30 | “E-learning for health care assistants in Germany. A case study from practice” | <i>Doris Beer Germany</i> |
| 12.00 – 12.30 | “The ePortfolio process – supporting the trainer and training” | <i>John Pallister, UK</i> |
| 12.30 – 13.00 | “The professional development of teachers in groups, communities and networks” | <i>Vance Stevens Abu Dhabi</i> |
| <i>BREAK</i> | | |
| 14.30 – 15.00 | “Professional Development in Online Circles of Learning” | <i>Carla Arena & Mary Hillis United States, Brazil, Japan</i> |
| 15.00 – 15.30 | “VITAE – introducing 21 st century skills through mentoring” | <i>Anne Fox Denmark</i> |
| 15.30 – 16.00 | “TrainerGuide – made in Denmark” | <i>Regina Lamscheck Nielsen DEL, Denmark</i> |
| 16.00 – 16.30 | “Online Collaboration to teach and learn with each other –analysing the benefits and advantages” | <i>Linda Castañeda University of Murcia, Spain</i> |
| 16.30 – 16.45 | Summary of Day 2 and conference conclusions | <i>Graham Attwell Pontydysgu, UK</i> |

3 CONTRIBUTIONS DAY 1: CHANGING ROLES AND LEARNING

3.1 Employees supporting the learning of others by Alan Brown

Employees supporting the learning, training and development of other employees while working in groups: examples drawn from aerospace, health and accountancy

Alan Brown

Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick, UK

This contribution discussed how organisations support arrangements where employees learn from each other while working in groups, with some team members explicitly being encouraged to support the learning and development of others. The accountancy case study draws on the Early Career Learning project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP).

1 The development of expertise in knowledge-intensive workplaces in aerospace

A focus on competence in the workplace in the sense of outlining what workers did in the recent past is recognised as an insufficient basis for preparation for future performance. Much learning takes place while people are working, rather than in recognisable education or training settings. In knowledge-intensive work settings, it is important to look beyond current competences as a basis for development, and instead take a developmental view of expertise. Such an approach requires that the development of expertise is itself being viewed as a continuing process.

Thus even if employees are able to produce competent performance in a range of more or less challenging work settings, there has to be a facility within teams or the workforce as a whole to go beyond this. From this perspective, it is interesting that some companies are explicitly using a developmental view of expertise that goes well beyond expecting technical proficiency and a commitment to continuing improvement. Those companies are using competence inventories of their staff in order to differentiate between:

- Those who are technically able to perform a task but have very limited practical experience of actually doing so (e.g. the company could use them in an emergency or, if necessary, for a one-off activity);
- Those who have successfully performed the task on a small number of occasions (e.g. the company could use them if the intention was to develop their expertise further, in a support role or if time is not necessarily a key criterion);
- Those who have performed the task many times and under a variety of conditions (i.e. experienced worker status – completely reliable);
- Those who have substantial experience but are also able to support the learning of others (i.e. they can perform a coaching or mentoring role);
- Those who are able to think through and, if necessary, bring about changes in the ways that tasks are tackled (e.g. could be chosen as a team leader for performance improvement activities).

This approach to professional development recognises the importance of having a capacity to support the learning of others as well as a capacity to change the way things are done. Workplace-based assessment (WPBA) traditionally focused on the first three levels with a clear

focus upon how workers perform the tasks being assessed. If the assessment is broadened to cover aspects of interaction with others, both on task and at other times, it might also be possible to pick up those who are able to support the learning of others, as in Germany where such assessments have long been part of the *Meister* examinations for skilled workers seeking development and the attainment of higher level qualifications.

2 Early career learning in nursing, engineering and accountancy

Here I will draw on the work of Michael Eraut and colleagues from the TLRP Early Career Learning Project. Newly trained graduates often find that there is a particular challenge in applying what they have learned during training, but that this is not a simple case of transfer of knowledge to a new setting. Rather the development of expertise is often partly built around recognition of the importance of the integration of different kinds of knowledge. Professionals and other highly skilled workers often find that the most important workplace tasks and problems require the integrated use of several different kinds of knowledge. Eraut (2004) argues that this process typically involves five inter-related stages:

- The extraction of potentially relevant knowledge from the context(s) of its acquisition and previous use;
- Understanding the new situation, a process that often depends on informal social learning;
- Recognising what knowledge and skills are relevant;
- Transforming them to fit the new situation;
- Integrating them with other knowledge and skills in order to think / act / communicate in the new situation.

The whole process is much more complicated than just desituating and resituating particular pieces of knowledge, and support from other workers can be critical in how well individuals are able to complete these processes. Interestingly, in the case of accountancy the support from more experienced trainees is built into the very structure of training, with more senior trainees involved in audit teams given explicit responsibility to support the learning and development of more junior (graduate) trainees. Similarly, in both engineering and nursing support from colleagues could be crucial in the learning and development of individuals in the first year or so after they have formally qualified (Eraut *et al.*, 2007).

Allied to this notion that supporting the learning and development of others at work can be built into the structure of training and development is the view that more sophisticated notions of competence that acknowledge that **competence can be viewed as being held collectively** by, for example, a workgroup and that there can be a considerable value in competence development being contextualised for particular work environments (Mills *et al.*, 2000; Sandberg 2001). Such an approach highlights the importance of co-operation and how the competences of a team can be greater than the sum of the competences of the individuals within that team.

3 Collaborative learning in networks in ICT and engineering

In earlier work, I argued how in aerospace and vehicle manufacture supply chain networks a focus on the core problems of practice (and projected performance improvements in quality, cost and delivery) could act as a strong catalyst to galvanise the interest of companies and individuals, but a mechanism was also needed to broaden the interest of companies and

participants in both learning and organisational effectiveness (Brown *et al.*, 2004). The approach to learning through networking could be seen as an example of an active model of learning whereby learners are engaged in processes of self and peer assessment and reflection leading to the creation of 'new contextualised' knowledge, not recipients of a largely passive process of knowledge transmission (compare the processes of organisational knowledge creation outlined by Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995).

This approach makes use of a **social model of knowledge creation and transformation** where for genuine knowledge transformation to occur knowledge has to move from the individual level to wider communities of interaction that cross organisational boundaries. This approach, when it works well, possesses the dynamism continually to create new knowledge, fuelled by processes of reflection, assessment and development. The processes used to power the knowledge development cycle include critical reflection, with a focus on adaptability and forward thinking, and learning portfolios allowing individual and collaborative reflection on learning and knowledge transformation processes. Portfolios can help employees pull employees' learning together; provide supporting evidence for use in company appraisal processes; help learning become more shareable, portable and transferable; and act as a stimulus to innovation and the development of adaptability of the team as a whole, evidenced by the ability to perform effectively in a range of contexts (Brown *et al.*, 2004).

From this perspective processes of formative assessment and critical reflection in the workplace could play a key role in the immediate post-qualifying period by recognising that this is a time in which a great deal of learning takes place and support offered to individuals for their learning and development could have significance for establishing themselves in their career (Williams, 2001). People early in their careers learn a great deal from challenges at work, and provided that they receive support as required to facilitate processes of formative assessment and critical reflection, then a virtuous cycle of confidence, support and challenge can be created (Eraut *et al.*, 2004).

There is also value in building a stronger dialogical element into the assessment of work-related competences, especially where there is a focus of work-related learning upon the 'core problems' of practice (Onstenk and Brown, 2002). Learning from their own experience is important for the newly qualified, but so is learning from the experience of others. Newly qualified staff need opportunities to discuss and practise thinking about complex cases handled by their more experienced colleagues. The approach to seeking to tackle complexity through processes of formative assessment and critical reflection puts interpretation and a shared search for understanding at the heart of "the discursive nature of professional practice" (Webb, 1996, p. 111).

Assessment of workplace learning also needs to help meet the challenge of coping with the demands for flexibility, adaptability and the ability to transfer skills, knowledge and understanding between contexts in the workplace, particularly for those operating in highly skilled or professional concepts. The hallmark of successful occupational practice is the ability to draw on knowledge, abilities, skills and attitudes used in an integrated, holistic way (Gonczi, 1994).

Much learning and development takes place while working. Additionally, it may be that it is social capital, developed through participation in work-related networks, which also plays a role in helping individuals sustain their employability (Brown, 2005). Individuals who regularly work in other workplaces, or changed jobs frequently early in their career, developed strong networks and experienced challenging work in a variety of contexts, a process which honed their skills in a number of respects, including the development of tacit skills. In such circumstances the informal learning of social, technical and networking skills could be very helpful for an individual's skill development at work. In other cases technical and professional workers starting their career had high level qualifications, and what they often needed to become more effective at work was practical experience gained while working rather than

formal skills or knowledge updating through formal training programmes, so again informal learning could be very important.

The informal learning associated with personal networks was often important over a career, from hearing about job opportunities and gaining initial entry to work through to many aspects of continuing career development, including choices about different ways of updating professional skills, knowledge and experience (Brown, 2005). These networks often had a pragmatic and informal nature and the functioning of these informal social networks re-emphasised the point Granovetter (1973) made about the 'strength of weak ties', with the network spreading out to include help of relatives, friends, colleagues or even through spontaneous relationships embedded in other social environments. Progress in work is often supported by spontaneous forms of learning in which informal work-based learning and self-managed competence development converge. Both are often at least partly dependent upon the quality of support from personal networks (Brown, 2005).

The cases outlined above illustrate how in contexts where (technical and professional) work itself is challenging much continuing vocational learning takes place through a mixture of formal and informal learning outside formal training programmes. Additionally, there is a need for employees not only to update their technical skills but also to develop a range of more generic skills, including planning, problem solving, communicating, ICT and management skills, and much skill development in these areas can come through informal learning while working coupled with short periods of explicit formal learning and reflection upon experience.

Another valuable skill to be developed relates to learning to become more self-directed in your approach to learning at work and this can lead to significant work-related learning. Use of personal networks can be an effective way to critically reflect upon work and hence can be an important source of work-related learning. Learning how to support the learning of others (especially for those with management and supervision responsibilities) is vital to improve the likelihood of significant learning while working, but can help in the development of your own skill set as well as those of others. Learning how to organise knowledge effectively and apply it appropriately are vital for technical and professional workers' development and these skills are, par excellence, those that can be developed effectively through informal learning coupled with more formal reflective and deliberative learning.

It is also clear that innovation and learning within and across organisations are essentially social processes and both personal networks and cross-company networks need to pay attention to building relationships to support development as well as focusing upon substantive issues. There is also a need to consider the interaction between formal and informal approaches to learning, skill development and knowledge creation as a particularly effective way forward not only for enhancing personal professional development but also as a means to improve organisational effectiveness.

4 Final thoughts

Informal learning plays a key role in skill development for employees working in learning-rich jobs by 'learning by interacting' – that is learning through interacting within communities and networks is a fundamental way for constantly re-building personal cognitive approaches both to specific issues and re-constructing the sense of the whole work experience. Technical and professional workers were often engaged in a wide range of networks that helped them with different aspects of their work-related learning and development, only some of which were explicitly linked to the organisation for which they worked. On the other hand, in some settings access to a broad set of interactions was restricted to a particular group of technically qualified employees, whose opportunities for learning as part of their everyday work were consequently much richer than those whose work and contacts were more restricted.

It was also noticeable that in work activities allied to collaborative learning individuals were often influenced by a search for knowledge not just an interest in how to do the work in hand. The search could incorporate aspects of technical know-how (how to apply technologies), but also involved know-what (where and when technologies and knowledge could be applied), know-who (not just in relation to customers but also an active search for people who would be valuable as members of a personal network), and know-why (a fuller understanding of phenomena and processes, including in some cases a deeper scientific understanding). This desire for sense-making could be driven by one, or a combination, of an individual search for understanding, be it embedded in occupational identities (thereby influencing attitudes and behaviour) or a function of participation in networks with an explicit learning dimension (Brown, 2005).

While acknowledging the value of informal learning, technical and professional workers also realised that such learning was an insufficient basis for personal professional development. They seemed to be well aware that learning does not just grow 'by doing' (accumulating experience through performing work processes) or 'by using' (particular tools and techniques), but there were also advantages to a more systematic approach to learning and development, whether this utilised some or all of the following: the systematic exploitation of the web, participation in specialist networks, relationships with technologically advanced customers or colleagues, more general participation in innovation activities, or using opportunities for formal education and training. Learning from others with acknowledged expertise is sometimes facilitated through particular activities (e.g. work shadowing), sometimes through explicit knowledge development and sharing activities and at other times is built into the organisation of work activities (e.g. in the construction of project teams).

Collaboration was deemed to be a support in a wide range of situations, a natural environment for informal exchanges of information and knowledge, and a stimulus to enrich personal competencies and knowledge (Brown, 2005). Supporting the learning of others at work can therefore act as a powerful driver of learning and development at work at a number of levels, including 'sense making' (both in relation to technical processes and work process knowledge more generally). That is, developing a 'vision' of how work process knowledge fits in their work activities and those of the company more generally is an important driver of learning. Technical and professional workers often want to make sense of their experience of work as a whole, and in order to achieve this goal they draw upon a range of approaches to learning that comprise both formal and informal learning. The overall approach could be interpreted as representing a desire for learning through working and interacting and self-directed learning, leading to contextual understanding interspersed with periods of more formal learning and development that allow for a more considered reflection, a linking (and integration) of what has been learned by experience and informal means, and more rounded professional and personal development.

Bearing in mind the famous quote by William Gibson that 'the future is already here, it's just unevenly distributed' it is hard not to believe that belief in a developmental view of expertise in the workplace will not become much more prevalent in future. Current obsession with focusing on issues concerned with personal competence, assessment and qualifications as proxies for work-related skill development may come to be recognised as unhelpful and greater impetus given to promoting more collaborative approaches to learning and development.

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6 Discussion

One question emerged around the consequences of the social learning approach for the role of trainers. It was argued that there would still be a significant role for trainers and tutors if more emphasis was put on informal learning. Their role might shift towards providing support and guidance for learners, who might otherwise be overwhelmed by new learning approaches and opportunities. In addition there would still be a need for formal learning opportunities in continuing professional development, the reason being that there is a search for understanding on the part of the learners in the sense that many of them are interested in acquiring more comprehensive knowledge of their professional domain. This ‘importance of sense-making’ suggests that training practitioners will continue to play a role in the integration of formal and informal learning. Finally the issue of how to define competence was discussed. Here it was argued that the difficulty of defining competence in informal learning settings is a challenge that shifts the attention towards other means of assessments because it exceeds the notion of competence in relation to formal qualifications. Instead of formal certificates, payment may be a good indicator of recognised competence, and there may be a shift towards a developmental view of expertise.

3.2 Shortfalls of education in addressing unemployment by George Roberts

The challenges of using education as a means of addressing persistent unemployment

George Roberts

Oxford Brooks University, UK

This contribution presents a study of adult users of community information technology (IT) centres and their IT practices, i.e. the things they do with IT. These IT practices are viewed as an example of asset-based community development (ABCT). The study follows the biographical narrative interpretive method (BNIM). A great strength of biographical methods lies in their ability to connect policy with lived experience. In a target-driven culture such connections are inadmissible to a debate in which only discrete, quantifiable and disconnected evidence is valued. My aim is to admit our lived experience to the policy debate.

I will start with some tentative (and contentious?) thoughts. First, conceptualising community IT centres as places where formal education and 'learning' takes place is *at least* problematic. Second, funding based on simplistic models of education may serve to embed social divisions. Third, community development and local economic development in marginalised sectors is not simply linked to educational attainment. Fourth, assisted or supported voluntarism may be a way forward. This means to provide facilities in a location where multiple agencies and social enterprises operate.

The situation is characterised by gaps of knowledge. The life histories, experiences and voices of the *users* of community IT centres are largely absent from the literature. Users of centres are represented by synthetic descriptions and models of the 'problematic other', often culled from the analysis of research into the experience of centre managers and evaluation reports of various initiatives. In respect of adult community education policy there are gaps in our understanding of the relationship between personal development and community development, the relationship between social capital development and human capital development, the relationship between lifelong learning and continuous retraining, and the relationship between an individual's responsibility for skills acquisition for existing jobs whatever they may be and a social, collective responsibility for economic development in order to create new, worthwhile jobs or other forms of meaningful social and civic participation.

The UK skills sector is a policy context where workforce attachment is the only valid form of social integration. It is associated with a narrowly conceived view of education. Community education is a small backwater in the learning and skills sector. Policies are enacted not from concern for the excluded, except to the extent that they can be reformed, remediated – socially integrated – through training; the primary audience for policy making are voters and employers. The excluded are a social disorder cost to the taxpayer and a supply of compliant workers to an insecure labour market. People may therefore see themselves in the mirror of policy as problems to be solved for and by others, rather than agents of their own world.

How do people who associate themselves with the community IT centre use that association to make positive changes in their lives? Values, positive and negative, are closely linked to individual and identity practices. In this process certain behaviours might be normatively adopted or, conversely, rejected. This is the basis of social identity, the adoption of values and practices in the interaction with the social environment. Whereas personal identity is constituted by idiosyncratic, person-specific attributes, the social identity of a person is constituted by social order attributes that are related to particular groups or categories. The mere fact of being assigned to different groups (based on gender, race, nationality, family, etc.) does not guarantee the individual's social identity. The main components of social identity are feelings of belonging to specific groups or categories, or affinity towards them. As regards the

implications for trainers, the relationship between tutor and student was seen as paramount; responding to the needs of the students was perceived by tutors as the most important factor of all. This relationship superseded all others in shaping the learners' experience and in determining the success of the learning, usually in terms of wider and institutional target-related criteria.

The role of trainers has not changed, only the context. The challenge remains to maximise student-tutor contact (asymmetrical deference relationship), learner-learner contact (symmetrical deference relationship), time on task, active learning, timely feedback, high expectations, and diversity of talents and expectations. Learning relationships are built on reciprocity, authenticity and credibility. Trainers set ground rules, provide alternative and multiple modes of participation, exemplify models of participation, and provide access to their experience. The role and challenge is the same irrespective of the learning medium.

An example is the community IT-centre in Bluefield Lanes, a large 1960s social housing estate on the periphery of a medium sized city in Southern England. The area is characterised by high unemployment and underemployment as well as educational underachievement. Consequently the most significant issue is education, skills and training attainment. The community IT-centre is operated by volunteers and professional trainers. The IT practices in the centre include getting online for browsing and email – especially Facebook has recently become popular – and printing. There is an extensive informal learning support as well as semi-formal awareness raising and skill development courses (e.g. digital photography or video production and editing) and opportunities for introductory of formal qualifications. The centre also provides a substitute for broken equipment at home and is thus a crucial back-up resource. The community learning activities in the centre much more fit the needs of the learners than formal training courses because they have a greater variety. A training concept focusing on employability alone, by contrast, is overly narrow and does not meet the demands for social integration and participation.

Discussion

The discussion concentrated on the background of the trainers and tutors in the community IT-centres. Those volunteers mostly start as IT users and develop into more advanced users who then informally assist other users as tutors, mentors, etc. Their engagement persists when the financial support for their activities ends. Regarding the funding of the centre and the qualification of the staff it was explained that some limited funding for IT courses is still there so that professional trainers can give courses of about one hour per week. However, the centre is mostly run by volunteers.

3.3 Lifelong learning and the role of trainers by Barry Nyhan

Lifelong learning and the role of trainers – promoting learning for ‘mass innovation’ rather than ‘mass qualification’

*Barry Nyhan
Ireland*

With regard to the evolution of the policy approach to learning two conceptions of Lifelong Learning have to be distinguished, which can be termed the ‘qualification’ notion and the ‘innovation’ notion. The former has become the predominant notion in the activities of ministries and government agencies. Lifelong Learning (LLL) has become synonymous with gaining more and more qualifications throughout one’s life with the role of trainers being to ensure that these qualifications are continuously acquired as well as assessed and validated. This has to do with transferability in a global sense, but also in the sense that qualifications are certified and given value. This can be termed a ‘mass qualification’ notion of LLL. However, it is argued that this is an overly academic perspective on LLL. But what is even more important is that it only meets a small percentage of the population and is too costly. The outcome of this approach is the emergence of education businesses that satisfy the needs of educational institutions instead of renewing society’s ability to learn.

The qualification notion of lifelong learning also misses where people actually learn. According to a study by Cedefop on the basis of Eurobarometer data, most people say that they learn outside educational institutes in ‘informal learning’ situations such as ‘getting together with other people’ (63 per cent), ‘leisure activities’ (51 per cent) and ‘learning on the job’ (44 per cent). In contrast, learning ‘at school, college or university’ was mentioned only by 17 per cent of the respondents (Cedefop, Eurobarometer, 2003). This is an interesting result as it indicates that most learning takes place in informal settings and outside the formal qualification system.

The ‘mass innovation’ notion of Lifelong Learning, on the other hand, focuses on facilitating, promoting and enhancing informal learning. This approach deals with ‘de-schooling’ learning and with spreading learning to all parts of society. It is about learning to use everyday experiences as learning experiences about being innovative – in planning for the future and resolving one’s personal and working life problems. This kind of LLL is expansive, situation based and boundary-less. It is as wide as life itself – ‘life-wide’ as the Nordics describe it. The approach can be compared to a health policy that is not so much concerned with the mere supply of medical services and hospital infrastructure, but with enabling people to adopt more healthy lifestyles. In the same way the innovation notion of learning aims at the development of peoples’ ability to learn rather than at the mere accumulation of qualifications.

As one cannot learn on one’s own, the learning has to be supported by creating communities of learning, and this is where the trainers or learning specialists come in. Their role consists in forming and supporting learning communities. The challenge for the modern trainer (in particular the vocational education trainer) is to be a catalyst and moderator in developing communities that can learn to address the issues confronting them in their practical social and work contexts. The point here is how the concept of LLL can be shifted into this community-based type of learning.

The difference between the two concepts of learning can be summarised as follows: the qualification awarding notion of LLL is driven by the kind of knowledge that can be certified, is rational, compartmentalized, modularised and can be universalised (formal knowledge) whereas the innovation notion of LLL is addressing knowledge that is characterised by context, uniqueness, the local and the integration of formal with informal knowledge.

Web-based technologies can be used by trainers to promote both of these types of LLL – the computer is being used widely to address the qualification agenda through assisting the systematisation, administration and assessment of formal learning. However, although it is a powerful tool to promote informal learning through facilitating conversation to share and collaborate in the production of new knowledge, it is grossly underutilised by the general public. The web-based learning technology challenge for trainers is to address this and create much more of a social software approach to learning.

Discussion

The discussion first concentrated on the difference between the two notions of Lifelong Learning and the underpinning distinction between formal and informal learning. According to the author, the ‘mass innovation’ notion and informal knowledge are focusing on practical judgements in the sense of making decisions about the application of the ‘right knowledge’ in a particular context or setting. Formal learning, by contrast, is objective and theoretically anchored instead of context based.

Following this clarification several other issues were discussed. Against the given characterisation of informal learning a critical objection was made that making judgements in a particular context is not the same as applying informal knowledge. There are several contexts, e.g. medical care, where judgements involve the instantiation of formal knowledge such as looking up a particular piece of information in a handbook or dictionary. This type of knowledge might well be considered formal although it is situated outside a formal setting. Regarding the role of web-based technology and computers it was observed that the use of this technology is almost exclusively linked to the aspect of employability. Only little attention is paid to social inclusion and participation. Against the emphasis on informal learning it was argued that formal learning has to be given priority because only this type of learning leads to qualifications and recognised to be financially sustained. Informal learning, on the contrary, is difficult to evaluate. Finally there was the observation that the emerging notion of ‘mass innovation’ instead of qualification corresponds to a recent shift in policy debates by which emphasis is increasingly laid on the development of learning environments.

In his response to the comments Barry Nyhan firstly pointed out that when using the term ‘informal learning’ he wanted to stress the importance of learning that takes place outside formal settings. Concerning the link between informal knowledge and making judgements he clarified that professional practice surely involves the use of formal knowledge as well. However, it has to be observed that making a judgement is not a formalistic process and cannot be reduced to the employment of formal knowledge alone. The reason is that formal knowledge, as stated above, is not related to the context of its current application, but based on prior experience; it is, to use a term, always ‘knowledge of the past’ or ‘yesterday’s knowledge’. Finally it was concluded that an integrative approach like the ‘mass innovation’ notion of LLL might be helpful to overcome the dichotomy between formal and informal learning and to establish a better connection between the two.

3.4 Developing competence for trainers in Portugal by Eduardo Figueira

Eduardo Figueira

University of Evora, Portugal

The focus of this contribution is the development of a framework for the continuing professional development (CPD) of trainers in Portugal. This initiative responds to the situation that trainers in Portugal need to be accredited and that the initial qualification provided is not enough to become a proficient trainer. Therefore trainers are challenged to develop a 'guiding philosophy' for their development into becoming a motivated and committed training professional. The basic idea of a framework of CPD is not the application of a set of strict rules, but the creation of a flexible structure that can support individual learning. Ultimately, it is geared towards the provision of better and more targeted opportunities for trainers' continuing professional development and their enhanced mobility within Europe.

That continuing professional development is important for human resource development in general is one of the key arguments supporting the development of a framework that can foster trainers' competences development. The existing training system for trainers has, for large parts, not incorporated requirements that address the newly emerging roles of trainers. These are much more complex than just being confined to the mere delivery of training. Trainers also facilitate the learning of others and in this sense many people turn into trainers or assume some kinds of training functions. Against this trend lifelong skills acquisition of individuals needs to be taken into consideration when competence requirements for trainers are being defined. Another important influence reshaping trainers' roles is the application of new training methods like e-learning.

A CPD framework is equally targeted at public and private organisations. This means that the features of the framework imply the same implementing approach for public as well as for private organisations. However, there may be a need to introduce the framework in different ways for the two types of organisations, because public organisations more strongly rely on regulatory norms due to their more formalised hierarchical structures. In private companies, on the other hand, it is more important that managers become aware that trainers' professional development is vital for the enhanced competitiveness of the organisation. To date, small and medium-size enterprises in Portugal tend to ignore this important impact of training on their competitiveness.

Whilst it would be too ambitious to expect a perfect or complete framework of CPD, the gaps and shortfalls of any kind of framework can only be detected in the process of its implementation. In any case, the CPD framework is in the first place a **guiding tool**, geared towards guiding the learning of individuals and helping them to identify their strengths and weaknesses. As a guiding tool the framework avoids providing a detailed list and description of competences and skill. However, the inclusion of clusters of essential competences and skills could be relevant in some contexts.

In Portugal, the establishment of a framework for the continuing professional development of trainers is supported by several organisations, which are interested in this approach. These include the associations of trainers, the Association of Human Resource Managers, the trade unions and the Institute for Employment and Training. It is yet too early to clearly say what the main obstacles may be that need to be overcome in order to implement the framework successfully. At this point we can probably expect that some managers of SMEs may not accept the perspective that trainers' competence development is crucial for the organisation's competitiveness. On the side of the public institutions it may well be that some people responsible for public organisations pose difficulties for their staff to develop themselves into trainers or learning facilitators.

As basic principles for the development and implementation of a framework for the continuing professional development for trainers we can stress that a flexible structure is needed and that the guiding function should be emphasised rather than providing fixed directives. The framework should also be accessible for everyone. Criteria for assessing the implementation and effectiveness of the framework should be developed. In addition, the framework should be designed to make reference to commendable practice in the field and to enhance the mobility of trainers. Training companies should be accredited and trainers need to be certified. A European pilot project could be a way forward to further explore the possibilities for the practical implementation of such a framework.

Discussion

The discussion concentrated on the question as to how the competences of a 'good' trainer could be defined. It was argued that a list of competences would not pay enough attention to the context and may thus be restrictive to learning. It was therefore suggested that the definition of meta-competences may be more useful instead. The speaker agreed that it needs to be defined what a 'good' trainer is in relation to their particular work context.

Another issue that was raised referred to the potential contradiction between the idea of a 'checklist' of competences and the more informal definition of a 'good' trainer. In this context it would be necessary to identify good trainers in practice, i.e. in their role of facilitating learning. It was further argued that a good trainer is not necessarily the person who is best qualified in terms of technical knowledge, but the one who inspires and stimulates the learners. It was agreed that this can in fact be considered as a particular type of competence or an example of learning facilitation. The trainer has to make people reflective. There is no need for a list of competences, but for a list of qualities that trainers should have.

It was further observed that it is not possible to be a good trainer just in virtue of communication skills. Most successful training practitioners are people with quite ordinary communication styles. Accordingly, it was argued that minimum skill requirements for trainers should be formulated as well.

The fact that many training practitioners do not identify themselves as 'trainers' but simply take on a role in the training process as part of their work was another issue raised. This perspective leads to the challenge of how to support these training practitioners in their work practice, because formal learning opportunities are unlikely to reach them. The support for this group then should depart from the work context. It was argued that the notion of trainer should be redefined so as to emphasise the role of the learning facilitator. With regard to the question as to whether these trainers can be considered experts in the traditional sense it was proposed to distinguish between training professionals who take over responsibility for formal training sessions and learning facilitators. The latter role could be assumed by a broad range of people with different levels of expertise.

3.5 VET practitioners in Europe: Findings of a survey by Simone Kirpal

Training practitioners in Europe. Perspectives on their work, qualification and continuing learning

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1 Background and methods

In 2008 the Network to Support Trainers in Europe conducted a Europe-wide survey with training practitioners to generate new data and information on the situation and qualification of VET trainers in Europe. The survey was undertaken applying a standardized questionnaire, which was developed by the Network partners. Overall, the questionnaire consisted of preliminary questions on the respondent's position and background; 20 numbered questions on the work environment, job tasks, respondents' competences and their engagement in continuing learning; and an extra sheet on which contact details could be provided on a voluntary basis if participants wished to receive further information on the survey results and network activities. These contact details were separated from the other sections before starting the data analysis.

In order to effectively reach the target group of practitioners the questionnaire was made available in 18 European languages. In these 18 different language versions the questionnaire was distributed by the network partners within their local networks. It was disseminated in paper version and was made available online via the SurveyMonkey tool (www.surveymonkey.com).

Apart from some exceptions all questions offered the opportunity for multiple answers. In most cases respondents were asked to choose from a range of answer categories that could not be ranked in any possible way. This means that the data generated consists of dichotomised variables with a nominal measurement level. For the presentation of results multiple answers imply that the percentages of cases tend to add up to more than 100 per cent. For the sake of clarity the presentation of results concentrate on the percentages of *responses* instead of cases, except for those cases where multiple answers were not possible.

For producing the first evaluation data collection was closed on 27 October 2008. 738 filled questionnaires from 28 European countries were considered for the data analysis. While Spain generated over 100 responses most countries secured between 20 and 60 responses. Since in some countries the number of respondents was even lower than twenty, the analysis was mainly conducted at the European level, i.e. not differentiating between results obtained for individual countries. Also, the nature of the data suggests restricting the analysis to calculation of frequencies and descriptive statistics rather than undertaking a complex statistical analysis. In addition, the selective sampling strongly limits how wider conclusions and implications can be drawn from the survey results. As the methodology did not follow random sampling the sample is not representative. Especially the approach of an online survey where the opportunity to fill in a questionnaire was merely announced to the target group is inherently in favour of respondents with a more active response attitude. Thus, the survey data must in the first place be considered explorative in nature and the results can only tentatively indicate certain trends. However, despite these limitations the survey produced some interesting findings that can feed into further considerations, debates and policy developments that may support VET trainers in the future.

2 Presentation of initial results

As regards the employment status or affiliation of respondents the biggest proportion of respondents (37.6 per cent) worked in a public institution such as vocational schools or colleges. Another 32.5 per cent were employees in a private company and 13.6 per cent worked for private training providers. Most of the respondents worked in the fields of initial vocational training (22.5 per cent of responses), continuing vocational training (23.2 per cent) and adult education (19.9 per cent). The figures for those occupied with the training of trainers (13.0 per cent) and counselling and guidance (13.4 per cent) are considerably lower, and 18.9 per cent are involved in other training-related domains.

The first topic addressed in the survey was the tasks and working conditions of the respondents. When trainers were asked about the most typical training related tasks they perform as part of their work, they were offered ten answer categories of which the delivery of training (16.9 per cent) and the organisation and design of training activities (14.0 per cent) together with the evaluation of training results and the assessment of trainees and employees were most frequently mentioned. Taken together, these four categories add up to almost 56 per cent and may indicate a relatively traditional work profile centered around the core delivery of training and assessing of skills and trainees. A similar picture of a relatively traditional work profile was conveyed by the results on the training methods trainers applied. The methods most frequently mentioned were classroom-based teaching (17.8 per cent of responses), work-based learning (16.0 per cent), demonstration and imitation (13.3 per cent) and textbooks and working sheets (12.4 per cent). The results on the application of more experimental or e-based methods, by contrast, yielded considerably lower results.

The respondents were also asked a number of questions related to their work environment and the conditions of their work. Concerning patterns of cooperation, the respondents showed a strong orientation towards their own institutions. Trainers mostly cooperated with colleagues from their own institutions (39.7 per cent of responses), but also with teachers in general or vocational schools (21.0 per cent) and people from external institutions (32.1 per cent).

The vast majority of respondents declared that their training and their performance as trainers was subject to evaluation. The proportion of those whose work was evaluated on a regular basis was 54.1 per cent while another 30.0 per cent declared that their work was evaluated, but not regularly. Most frequently evaluation was carried out by the employer (37.3 per cent of responses) as well as by the learners (40.5 per cent).

The qualifications and the continuing professional development of training practitioners were other areas the survey addressed. The majority of respondents (74.8 per cent) had a formal qualification as a trainer. The proportion of those with an IVET qualification at the level of skilled workers was equally high (74.9 per cent). Altogether respondents felt that their skills and competences were broadly in line with their training tasks: 67.2 per cent declared that their skills and competences were 'well matched' to their work tasks. This is little surprising given the fact that the training practitioners in the sample also had a fairly positive attitude towards continuing professional development. 87.4 per cent of the participants stated that they regularly update their knowledge and skills related to their job as a trainer.

Trainers mostly relied on individual self-study as a source of learning (20.2 per cent of responses), but the participation in conferences and other events (18.5 per cent) and work experience (16.9 per cent) are also quite important. Formal training courses, by contrast, only ranked number four (15.8 per cent). This indicates that the majority of training practitioners seems to engage in non-formal and self-organised forms of learning that require a considerable degree of self-initiative rather than in formal course programmes.

The continuing learning trainers engaged in concentrated mainly on technical or subject-specific competences (21.0 per cent of responses) as well as pedagogical competences

(17.1 per cent). However, management-related competences such as communication, interaction and leadership (16.8 per cent) or skills related to the organisation of training (14.1 per cent) were also quite important.

The survey finally investigated the attitudes of training practitioners towards professional development and the training profession in general. The participants were asked why they engaged in continuing learning or not and what they saw as the benefits for doing so. Those who did not update their skills and competences on a regular basis were mainly prevented from doing so by the lack of incentives in terms of remuneration, status and career and lack of adequate training opportunities. This means that those who rely on formal training opportunities rather than self-organised types of learning and who are motivated predominantly by economic benefits are altogether less active in continuing professional development than those who are driven by intrinsic motivation and self-initiative.

Conversely, those training practitioners who engaged in continuing learning mostly mentioned intrinsic values such as becoming a better trainer (31.1 per cent of responses) or personal development aspects (30.7 per cent) as the major benefits, whereas career opportunities (13.7 per cent) or salary (7.9 per cent) was less important to them. They also indicated that their participation in continuing learning was mainly self-initiated (59.4 per cent of responses) instead of being employer-directed or due to statutory requirements. This suggests that the professional development of training practitioners is predominantly driven by personal interest and intrinsic motivation rather than economic incentives.

On the whole the training practitioners in the sample demonstrated a fairly positive attitude towards their profession. The vast majority of respondents thought that working as a trainer is 'very attractive' (40.6 per cent) or 'attractive' (44.8 per cent). This corresponds to the fact that the decision to become a trainer in the first place was also predominantly motivated by personal interest (33.4 per cent of responses) rather than by external incentives such as higher professional status or better pay (11.0 per cent).

3 References

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4 Discussion

Some brief comments were made to the survey approach and its methodology. It was observed that the Greek respondents are mostly teachers from vocational schools. The results of the survey seem to confirm that the respondents see themselves as trainers and not as learning facilitators. Since most questions in the survey allowed for multiple answers some more detailed profiling would be very useful. It might well be the case that there are training practitioners who use all kinds of training methods.

3.6 A framework for trainers' professional development by Eileen Lübcke

Eileen Lübcke

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This contribution gives an overview of the *Leonardo da Vinci* project TTPlus, which was conducted between October 2006 and October 2008. It involved seven European partners that sought to develop a framework for the continuing professional development of trainers.

The main tasks of the project have been to analyse the professional situation of trainers; to identify important learning experiences as instances of change; to explore European and national policies; and to outline a common framework to support the professional development of trainers. A framework was considered helpful for several reasons. One is that the number of trainers has increased. Another one is the diffusion of training processes so that increasing numbers of people are responsible for some form of training. A third reason is that not all trainers have access to professional development. The problem addressed in the project was how a framework could be inclusive enough to accommodate all types of trainers, become an instrument to improve the practice of training, and become a process to increase and improve the access to training opportunities for all.

The TTPlus framework consists of a set of principles, a set of standards, an infrastructure as well as processes and mechanisms for applying them. There are tools and materials to help those engaged in the process, and exemplars of evidence.

The **set of principles** includes the recognition of the importance of support to learning and the role of learning for individual competence and organisational development. The framework recognises the role different groups and individuals play in training and learning. It promotes the integration of pedagogic and technical, subject-specific knowledge and skills and foresees the development of a broad range of competencies. The framework foresees the recognition of the role of formal qualification as well as the role of reflection and learning in practice. The importance of opportunities to practice for learning plus the importance of networking and partnerships are also strengthened. The framework further foresees the importance of opportunities for initial and continuing professional development.

The **set of standards** features core standards across all countries. These standards can be used as a benchmark for accreditation. They can be adapted to specific contexts. The standards are expressed as voluntary 'commitments' at different stakeholder levels, namely, at the levels of individual trainers, teams, employers and trade unions, intermediary bodies, and governmental bodies.

For the **individual trainer** the commitments are the following:

- To recognise the importance of their own continuing learning and professional development;
- To set their own goals for professional development and to review those goals on a regular basis;
- To contribute to the continuing professional development of colleagues;
- To undertake activities to support reflection on personal practice through, for example, the development of e-portfolios or interaction with other trainers;
- To evaluate and review training practice in order to improve that practice;
- To identify opportunities for personal learning and development;
- To review – formally or informally – their own competences and consider what further competences they wish or need to develop;
- To support and promote the 'framework for professional development of trainers'.

These different commitments are exemplified by actions of trainers in the case studies conducted in the TTPlus project. One example is the learning approach of a UK based HRD trainer who tries to conduct her courses / classes always together with a colleague. Afterwards they review extensively the work of each other. This enables the trainer to reflect on her own practices, to identify the weaknesses and strength of her training practice and to develop areas of professional development. Another example is a hotline in the UK. Existing training is often very much school-based with no relation to work practice. Much effort is put on teaching concepts, underlying assumptions or to teach detailed aspects of a particular topic. An IT training company in the UK now offers a free telephone support hotline, where people can call when they encounter problems in their day-to-day work. This support hotline is also a good instrument for monitoring and evaluation, because if the hotline is used frequently something might be wrong with the course. By this means the trainer of the course is getting a direct feedback on how he/she is performing.

At the level of **the team** the following commitments were defined:

- To contribute to the continuing learning and professional development of each team member;
- To recognise the key role of continuing learning and professional development for the team as a whole;
- To produce common goals for the professional development at the team level and to review those goals on a regular basis;
- To undertake activities that support reflection on team practice;
- To evaluate and review the training practice that is established within the team;
- To review the team level competences and define the competences that the team shall further develop;
- To support the dialogue between the trainers and the organisation;
- To support and promote the framework for professional development of trainers.

An example of these commitments from the project's field study is the informal learning from colleagues in a company in the Netherlands. The culture of the company focuses on informal learning. Also trainers' learning is mainly informal. For example trainers are coached by senior trainers, who join the training sessions of their colleagues (not as a participant but as a prospective trainer) and provide feedback to each other. In addition, the training is evaluated internally by other training colleagues. This supports the professional development of employees. They evaluate the training materials (Did it fit? Was it good?), the responses of the participants and the trainers own perceptions and expectations. Every trainer of the team works at least one day per week at the office in order to exchange and develop knowledge collaboratively. Another example, also from the Netherlands, is a training company that systematically supports learning in teams. One day in a month all team members meet to discuss issues of professional development related to current topics. One department starts these meetings with a so-called 'flag-parade'. Each team member expresses with a flag (red, orange or green) how he/she is doing. If someone shows a red flag, the team collaboratively searches for solutions. The idea behind this is that a safe environment is a precondition for good development.

At the level of **employers and trade unions** the project defined the following commitments:

- To recognise the importance of training and learning and the role of trainers in facilitating training and learning;
- To provide opportunities for the professional development of trainers;

- To provide opportunities for trainers to practice their tasks in order to develop their professional competence;
- To support reflection on practice through, for example, the development of e-portfolios;
- To support and promote dialogue with trainers and other interested parties on the improvement of training practice;
- To examine training activities and adopt actions for the professional development of trainers;
- To consider the different competences required of trainers and examine opportunities for building these competences;
- To review progress in implementing the framework on a regular basis;
- To support and promote the framework for professional development of trainers.

These commitments are exemplified by the case of a facilitator or training coordinator. In one of the cases in the UK the position of a facilitator was specifically created to liaise between the organization and the pool of trainers. From the site of the organisation the facilitator evaluates the work of the trainers applying a quality insurance framework that looks at various competence facets of the trainers (responds in a timely way, understands the wider context, understands teambuilding etc.). She also conducts interviews with each trainer and observes how the trainers work in their action-learning setting. All this material feeds into an annual written report about each trainer, which is being considered for the further professional development of that trainer. For example, some issues will be taken up during the 4 days development workshop that each trainer is entitled to.

Similar approaches were found in Germany and Portugal in form of the ‘area coordinator’ or ‘training coordinator’, who also worked as facilitators between trainers and the organization, or between the trainers and training manager. Interestingly, in Germany this position developed from an apparent need. In company X that provides ICT-related services the function of training manager was not formally established in the organisation. Instead, the position emerged out off the need to coordinate and support the training and learning activities in different production and service teams. Here, however, trainers’ professional development was not an aspect of the training manager’s role. Since trainers derive greater benefits from a training coordinator or manager that is also in charge of their professional development (like in the UK example) we suggest that this position should be linked to the assessment of developmental needs of the trainers and developing learning strategies together.

Some of the commitments for the **intermediary bodies** are the following:

- To recognise the importance of training and learning and the role of trainers in facilitating training and learning processes;
- To support the social partners in providing opportunities for the professional development of trainers considering their different competence requirements;
- To support the social partners in providing opportunities for trainers to practice in order to develop their professional competences;
- To support the social partners in facilitating reflection on practice through, for example, the development of e-portfolios;
- To support the social partners in promoting the dialogue with trainers and other interested parties on the improvement of training practice;
- To support and promote the framework for professional development of trainers and review the implementation progress.

An example from the TTPlus research is the introduction of new training models for in-company training specialists in Germany. Some regional chambers (supported by the social partners and by some regional universities) have launched pilot projects to develop chamber-led curricula for training specialists at the academic level (IHK-Berufspädagoge). These models try to take into account the needs of training professionals as learners. They also try to develop learning concepts that are closely linked to knowledge utilisation.

Finally, the commitments for **governmental bodies** include:

- To support and promote the framework to employers, trade unions, intermediary bodies and all those with an interest in learning and training;
- To promote an understanding of the importance of training for competence development and lifelong learning;
- To support the development of tools and learning materials for trainers;
- To promote opportunities for professional development for trainers;
- To promote flexible access to qualifications for trainers and promote the recognition of those qualifications;
- To support activities by intermediary bodies that foster the professional development of trainers;
- To examine employment structures and how these structures effect learning and training;
- To support the dissemination of examples of good and effective practice in learning and training and the professional development of trainers.

Examples from our research are processes of reorganising the certificates for acquiring the formal status of a trainer in Germany and Wales. In Germany, the Federal Government had suspended the regulation that requires in-company trainers to obtain a formal qualification. This temporary suspension was decided for the years 2003-2008. It has now being reinstalled, but has lead to a broad discussion about its usefulness and weaknesses and a thorough evaluation of the AEVO. It is now back in place but in modified form. However, there has been less discussion about how the renewal of the AEVO certificate can enhance the quality of training and the up-grading of trainers' competences.

For the UK a new certificate for teachers in FE colleges has been introduced. This certificate requires that the teacher dedicates a certain amount of time per year to his / her professional development. It is unclear to what extent this will become applicable to trainers in enterprises, but the similarity with the Germany debate is obvious. The British reform seeks to ensure the quality of teaching by legally stipulating the professional development of teachers.

References

<http://www.ttplus.org>

4 CONTRIBUTIONS DAY 2: E-LEARNING

4.1 Using social software for the online training of trainers by Cristina Costa

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When analysing the two themes chosen, namely social software and online training, I found that these two concepts do not really match. Therefore, this contribution presents a process of reflection and discussion to this possible contradiction.

Starting by analysing the notion of online training I would like to ask the participants to add their thoughts and comments on this term. – The participants suggested the following ideas:

- Social network collaboration rather than online learning;
- Distance learning via the Internet;
- Training conducted by using resources available online;
- Training yourself online;
- Training provided in the world-wide web;
- Learning tools;
- Passing on information and knowledge to trainees using social programmes.

A Google search suggests the following: everything associated with online training is about the impersonalized electronic delivery of content. Examples would be “unlimited access to our full online course library”, “the option to print courses to study offline” or “learn at your convenience”. What seems to be missing here, however, is the social aspect. Another definition I found was “online training is a generic term used to describe the various methods of receiving/publishing training materials on the web” (Wikipedia). Here the focus is again on the delivery of content.

It should first be clarified what is meant by social software and what is its role. What can we do with it and how can it help us? The ideas suggested by the participants are: connect people; share ideas; help people connect in communities; facilitate the building of relationships; connect knowledge; keep learners busy and active. I totally agree and I think that social software is more than just plugged-in technology. According to one definition I found on social software it is understood as “software, running on an individual’s computer or on a website, with which users can create personal profiles, form groups and exchange messages. They can also ‘rate’ each other and so build reputations”. With this definition the dimension of activity and creativity comes into play. It is about individuals and not about materials. Moreover, social software is only meaningful if it is used together with others. The point is that it enables people to collaborate, to construct and to engage in conversational activities.

Examples of social software are blogs, wiki, YouTube and podcasts. Blogs are tools that allow users to create and update a personal website. This is a way of sharing personal experiences. A wiki is an instrument for collaborating in the co-creation of a resource like a website. Here the focus is on a shared learning process. YouTube allows users to publish their own videos online and to share projects. This is a way of sharing user-made content. Podcasts allow users to publish audio messages online and to share projects. Like YouTube, podcasts are also a way of sharing user-made contents. Other examples are social network sites (SNS), social bookmarking, pictures online (e.g. flickr.com), micro-blogging, RSS and web telephony.

However, the question about online training and social software remain: Do they go together? If training is connected to instruction and receptive modes of knowledge acquisition I think it would be useful to shift the wording a bit. Basically the focus should not be on online *training*, but on *learning online*. While the two approaches may have different meanings, the purpose should be the same, namely, to enable individuals to learn independently and at the same time in groups, which are now often called networks or communities. This approach makes it possible to really focus on the learners and their activities rather than on the structure of education or training programmes. Notably, this basic idea works quite well for self-directed learners, but we need to keep in mind that there are still many learners in institutions like schools or enterprises where establishing learning networks may be a more difficult process. In those contexts the help of trainers as mentors may be required to set up learning networks and to support learners who wish to expand their knowledge.

Discussion

The final part of the contribution gave way to an open discussion of some topics addressed in the presentation. Participants argued that in some cases learners are reluctant to accept new forms or methods of learning so that the development of online learning communities may not always be easy. Moreover there was the observation that the successful implementation of online learning requires a more fundamental shift in the general view of education and learning, the reason being that the fundamental idea about learning is heavily influenced by the existing education systems and often school-centred. The response to these remarks was that software has no meaning of its own that could be detached from the activities of the learners. Therefore the focus ought to be on the learners and their activities instead of school-oriented teaching contents.

It was also argued that the attitudes of learners also must be taken into consideration. Learners need to be motivated and have to learn how to evaluate information in the sense of being able to detect which content is important and which is not. Often learners expect to be instructed by trainers or tutors in a relatively traditional format. Thus, the shift towards online learning must be a process by which learners are supported and enabled to engage in self-directed learning. Ultimately online learning is not a matter of hardware or software, but of “humanware”.

4.2 E-learning for medical healthcare assistants in Germany by Doris Beer

Doris Beer

Lohberger Unternehmerinnenzentrum e.V., Germany

This contribution considered how training is being provided for assistants working in small healthcare facilities in Germany. It is based on a project that was carried out by Lohberger Unternehmerinnenzentrum e.V. in 2007. This project was a pilot project on e-learning in the healthcare sector. The outcomes, however, are more critical so that the overall view on the perspectives of the applied learning method is less optimistic than the contribution by Cristina Costa. It can be said that the method of e-learning is relatively new and uncommon for the target group.

First, I would like to characterise briefly the target group that the project sought to address. The organisations participating in this pilot project were small facilities with one up to five doctors and one up to ten assistants. This is how the majority of medical doctors in Germany work. The assistants receive low wages and many of them work part-time. It is a predominantly female sector with no “breadwinner” jobs and no career prospects. The assistants’ participation in training is low, and there are only few opportunities for professional training. The sector is characterised by several changes and also chances. There is a trend towards larger facilities that provide a broader range of services and more intensive use of information and communication technology. The expectations of the patients are also changing. Accordingly assistants face the need for higher ICT proficiency, greater IT security and communication and marketing skills.

There are some barriers that need to be overcome in order to meet these qualification demands. Healthcare assistants often do not have enough time for training and they also lack the money and support to go for high-quality training. In addition, they are often little motivated to engage in training due to the lack of career prospects. A possible solution would be to utilise existing resources for training purposes, e.g. by enabling assistants to learn in the workplace, during their lunch break or at home. The personal computer is to be used as a universal tool. What is also helpful is the fact that there is already a high supply of medical learning resources on the internet. Accordingly a blended learning approach was developed for healthcare assistants.

A curriculum was developed, which included ICT proficiency, internet security, quality management, marketing and communication with colleagues, patients and doctors. Basically it was a quite traditional curriculum with clearly defined learning objectives and a total scope of 120 learning hours to be completed with a final test. The blended learning approach was implemented at a vocational school in Krefeld between August 2006 and February 2007. For the teachers in this school blended learning was new. It was agreed with the school that 50 per cent of the curriculum should be taught in the school and the other 50 per cent on a learning platform. The learning platform chosen was Moodle because this technology enables teachers and learners to upload contents quite easily. The participants in the course were 16 assistants from facilities with different medical specialisations such as ear/nose/throat, radiology, dermatology, urology. The facilities were offered an “all inclusive” model where they had to pay a one-off sum and were then given the opportunity to have all their staff participate in the course. The doctors themselves also had the opportunity to take part in the development and implementation of the training, but only in the online sessions.

As the concept of blended learning was new to the teachers and trainers they had to be introduced into the new learning approach first. We used the European norm PAS 1032-1:2004, which describes quality standards for training, specifying what is required to develop a good training and also to implement a good e-learning scheme. Admittedly, this approach leads to completely standardised courses and somehow limits the creativity of trainers, but it is appropriate for settings where trainers have little or no experience with e-learning and need

to develop some more basic knowledge first. Access to the platform was given not only to the trainers and learners, but also to the doctors. The activities of the learners on the platform were observed by a tutor. Each trainer developed training material for the platform.

As stated at the beginning of my presentation, the experience with the actual implementation of the blended learning programme was rather mixed. The participation rate was lower than expected, and the dropout rate was high. Only eight participants out of 16 beginners ultimately completed the course. What we also experienced was that the doctors, contrary to the expectations, did not use the platform. There was a high diversity of the IT skills of participants. While some of them were quite experienced in working with online applications, there were others for whom this technology was entirely new. The workload for the participants was quite high and enlarged especially by ability tests. As regards the benefits for the learners, some of those who completed the course experienced an enlargement of their work tasks and responsibilities and also an improvement of their reputation among their colleagues and of their self-esteem. In one case there was also an increase in the salary when a participant of the course was assigned a new responsibility to edit her employer's website. Another experience was that the learning motivation was generally higher among the older participants, i.e. those aged over 30, even though the younger participants were typically more experienced with computers.

As regards the ways in which the trainers and learners used the ICT resources one can say that participants typically downloaded scripts in order to "be sure". The self-service was quite attractive for learners with an academic background and for those used to ICT. Learning took place only at home and not at the workplace. The use by teachers was quite different, ranging from textbooks only to a variety of textbooks and exercises, homework and feedback. There was some difficulty to give differentiated and motivating feedback in written form. There was also an efficient supervision of learners' activities on the platform, especially with regard to the identification of high performance learners.

Some lessons were learned for learners and trainers. As regards the perspective of the learners we identified that an orientation of the trainer to be able to assess the needs and abilities of the individual learner. An assessment of the learners' preconditions is necessary. In addition, some motivating features are needed in order to encourage the learners to keep pace on the platform. Concerning the trainers one can say that they need to develop their skills and knowledge on internet resources for learning. They need the ability to manage the classroom situation, to sequence the learning content and to use the dynamics of co-operation in the classroom.

Discussion

Regarding the relatively standardised approach of the curriculum and the limits to trainers' creativity the question was raised whether it would be possible to render the content of the blended learning programme more flexible and to leave some room for creativity by including opportunities for different learning contents. In this example, however, courses needed to be standardised because the providers were accountable to the employers for the contents. Since the courses were partly paid by the participants' employers, it was necessary to explain in detail what their employees were supposed to learn.

Another issue raised addressed the distinction between learning in the workplace or during working hours and learning during one's own private time. Here it was argued that this sharp dichotomy ought to be overcome by arrangements that give employees the opportunity to dedicate some of their working time to their own learning at work. However, the experience of the project showed that the learners preferred to learn at home due to the social control in the workplace. Learners who engage in learning activities at the workplace during working hours often encounter some form of disapproval on the part of their colleagues.

4.3 ePortfolio processes: supporting training and the trainer by John Pallister

John Pallister

Wolsingham School, UK

I would like to start with considering the setting we are in concerning the training of trainers, that is to say, the background. There is an increasing demand for training to equip employees for a competitive and rapidly changing world. This includes the need to harness new and emerging technologies, the changing demands of 'jobs' and the need to retrain people for a more 'fluid' employment market in which people are likely to have many different jobs in their lifetime. There is also an increasing demand for evidence that shows that employments 'can do', i.e. for generic skills and competencies like functional skills, employability skills, citizenship skill etc. Finally there is a demand for access to 'anytime, anywhere' training.

The increasing demand for skills means that employees need to be able to 'do' something to be able to function. The pace of developments often requires skills and competencies to be evidenced faster than new qualifications can develop. For instance, in the case of people working with new technologies, Web 2.0 and the like there is a need to work in different ways, a need to train people to work in this ways, and a need for 'evidence' that shows that employees 'can' work in this ways.

The training environments are characterised by rapidly evolving practice with regard to the use of information and communication technologies. We can observe the development of online environments with tools, spaces and communities. Trainers work with individuals and groups in venues and environments including training rooms, the workplace, hotels and online settings. They fulfil a broad range of functions such as facilitating, supporting, mentoring, coaching, teaching and many more. Their role is constantly changing and evolving. But, regardless of the situation, trainers always need to find out first what the learner already knows or can do, then engage and support the learner. Our trainees increasingly work in environments that require them to use ICT in all aspects of their work. They carry phones with video cameras, music playback, audio recording etc. They want to communicate via blogs, chat rooms, text messaging, voice over internet, MSN etc., and they have 'digital identities' and ICT-based, social networks via MySpace etc. In a word, they are living and learning in a rapidly changing world.

There are many definitions of an ePortfolio, but it is possible to identify some common elements. One of them is that an ePortfolio involves digital evidence owned by a learner. This evidence is structured and stored in some way that enables it to be found, presented or shared by others, e.g. teachers, parents, peers, potential employers, HE and training providers. The evidence being stored is likely to include evidence of skills and competences, plans and aspirations, achievements, learning experiences, and reflection and thinking.

What is important is the process that the learners have to go through when they used the ePortfolio. It is a process of formative assessment and a process that encourages the learners to become reflective. The learners first need to recognise that they have to learn something. They plan what they need to do and often they check and share their plans with others. Then they do what they have planned and record evidence of what they have been doing. They need to review and reflect on what they have done and select and link the evidence they want to share with others. Finally they share and present the evidence. The learners need to store the evidence in a digital format.

When we ask the question, What is in it for the learner?, one answer is that the ePortfolio provides a good basis for new teaching and learning. It helps the trainer understand what the learner can do or has done. Learners are encouraged to take an active part in their own learning, i.e. reflecting, planning and communicating about learning are encouraged. The learner is placed at the centre of the learning process, and personalised learning is supported. The use of ePortfolios can motivate and engage the learner, raise the learners' self-esteem,

support progression and provide opportunities for learners to develop a 'presentational' or self-marketing portfolio. The advantage of an ePortfolio is that it can provide the opportunity for learners somewhere to store evidence that can support assessment procedures. It can be hosted online to enable both the trainee and the trainer to access the content at a distance, supporting dialogue and formative assessment.

The focus, however, has to be on the learning process and not on the tools. The tools and the technology will change, and lifelong, life-wide hosting, interoperability and 'anywhere – anytime' access are important challenges. But if the ePortfolio process has value there is no reason not to use it now, harnessing the available technologies.

Finally, the ePortfolio process supports the professional development of trainers as well. It gives evidence of trainer competence including new training techniques. It supports professional development when the trainer, as a learner, is supported in their reflective practice. An advantage with regard to career progression would be that the ePortfolio process supports reviews and job applications. Moreover, the trainer becomes better able to support learners who themselves are using ePortfolios.

Discussion

The brief discussion concentrated on some practical implications of the ePortfolio process. When asked about his experience concerning the integration of the ideas presented with Pallister's own work as a schoolteacher, he said that some practical experience has been gained over the past five or six years. One important lesson learned is that the introduction of the ePortfolio approach in an organisation is something that has to be planned. He also pointed out that the ePortfolio process is a good method for preparing an organisation for the use of social software and to make people familiar with online techniques. However, it has to be admitted that ePortfolios are difficult to handle in an environment with large numbers of students or trainees as the regular update and review of the content is time-consuming.

4.4 Teacher professional development in groups, communities and networks by Vance Stevens

Vance Stevens

Petroleum Institute, Abu Dhabi

At the second Webheads in Action Online Conference, Etienne Wenger (2007) gave one of our keynotes and I asked him if his ideas on communities of practice had changed at all as a result of his interactions with Webheads. Surprisingly, he said that they had, especially regarding the nature of space occupied by the community. He said that we knew who we were in terms of domain and practice but we had freed ourselves from constraints on space in spanning so many available spaces in distributing ourselves. To him this was a revelation in that we are clearly a community of practice, but with very loosely defined boundaries.

At that same online conference, Stephen Downes (2007) spoke about the distinction between groups, communities and networks. A YahooGroup characterizes that first level of interaction, where a group forms to disseminate information, but might not necessarily be a community. A community implies greater interaction where members are impacting on one another, and a community of practice suggests that this interaction is directed towards the professional development of all concerned. For some time Webheads have considered themselves a community of practice but with so many more opportunities for connectivist knowledge to be disseminated across many groups and communities (Siemens, 2004), Downes's notion of individuals interacting as nodes in a complex and interlaced distributed learning network is the one that I think best fits Webheads in its current configuration. I think this is what Etienne was getting at when he said that Webheads had freed themselves from constraints on spaces in which to meet, and thus his notion of what characterizes a community of practice might be merging with the connectivist network model (Stevens, 2007).

In Downes's view, the expert system of knowing is flawed because knowledge is not derived from algorithmic processes, and it is not linearly derived in a series of if/then junctions. Instead, knowledge is connectionist, pattern driven as embodied in networks, and resides at nodes which online comprise distributed learning networks. In order to become knowledgeable one develops competencies for accessing those nodes and systematizes the information available there. To Cartesian-logical minds, network solutions appear counter-intuitive until experienced. For example, how can Wikipedia work unregulated and 'bottom up' to create an encyclopedia that is in many ways superior to the traditional 'top down' authoritatively published ones? Benefit to learning, says Downes, is beyond articulation or description, but is rather, *ineffable*.

Regarding the role of modelling for the professional development of teachers, anecdotal evidence suggests that teachers who do not model appropriate uses of technology predispose their students to avoid technology. Teachers who use technology in classes positively influence students to experiment with technology in applying skills as autonomous learners and problem-solvers. The implication is that teachers who explore and exploit opportunities for interaction with peers in online environments are more likely to adapt techniques they use themselves for professional development in their own classes. Thereby they *model* these practices for their students. As Downes notes, to teach is to model and demonstrate, and to learn is to practice and reflect.

The following conclusion can be drawn: teachers who practice autonomy in their own professional development formulate heuristics for harvesting knowledge within their personal learning spaces, and they inculcate desired behaviours in their students, thus increasing the likelihood of producing potentially autonomous and lifelong learners. In order to teach (to model and demonstrate) one must constantly learn and re-learn, which means to practice the

behaviours one models (how else model them?) and to reflect on the ramifications of those behaviours.

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From Webheads online conference keynotes, WiAOC 2007 <http://wiaoc.org>

Our conversation with Etienne Wenger was recorded here: <http://streamarchives.net/node/56>

Stephen Downes spoke on Personal Learning the Web 2.0 Way:

Slides: <http://www.slideshare.net/Downes/personallearning-the-web-20-way>

Audio Part 1: <http://streamarchives.net/node/84>

Audio Part 2: <http://streamarchives.net/node/83>

Discussion

In the following discussion the speaker first observed that his contribution might as well have been placed at the beginning of the session, discussing some more general issues of knowledge and learning in online environments. He argued that it would not be possible to be a good employee just by developing one's initially acquired skills. Instead one has to learn something new all the time. A productive way of facilitating this incremental learning is to bring people into communities of learning where they can be involved in conversation with other people and broader reflection processes.

This idea was taken up by other participants, who argued that in an environment as competitive as contemporary societies people in principle have the responsibility to constantly develop their skills and to engage in learning. This requires a high degree of self-initiative on the part of the learners. Against this view the objection was raised that this would merely reinforce the paradigm of employability, with any social or economic disadvantage being attributed to individual failure and underperformance. However, this employability view is nevertheless empirically correct – the existing social environment indeed necessitates autonomous skill development and self-initiative.

The discussion further addressed the roles of informal and formal learning. An example was given to show that contents might well be learned faster in an informal setting like the EVAL sessions than in formal courses, and it was argued that the two approaches should coexist. This is relevant because learning ultimately needs to be ascertained in some way. It was suggested that this could be a business model while contents could be provided online for free. As an example the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) was mentioned where people have to take part in a test. This was observed to come close to the recognition of prior learning, an approach that so far has never really "taken off" in the European countries.

4.5 VITAE – introducing 21st century skills through mentoring by Anne Fox

Anne Fox
CV2, Denmark

Is it a good idea to include mentor training in a Web 2.0 pedagogy course? The VITAE project is piloting this approach in order to overcome the problem that VET practitioners lack the confidence to start using these tools on their own. Preliminary results of the project are being presented.

The original idea behind the VITAE project was to develop two courses: one on using Web 2.0 tools, and one on their pedagogical utilisation for disseminating knowledge. It was only at a later stage that these two approaches were merged into one concept. The overall approach of the VITAE project is a training the trainers model with the trainer course resting on several 'layers' of pedagogical and technical resources. The top layer is a trainer course with four components ("Mentoring colleagues", "Develop your PLE", "Getting management support", "Skill swap"). The second layer is constituted of experience-based learning as pedagogical basis and ubiquitous and cheap ICT tools as the technological basis. The third layer is the practice of knowledge sharing in virtual communities of practice. The activities and measures to ensure that project outcomes can be shared among the users include a hotline and helpdesk, virtual and face-to-face conferences, a resource bank (del.icio.us and pbwiki) and a wiki handbook.

The VITAE project is a two-year project implemented by partners from Denmark, Germany, Lithuania Norway and the UK. The project follows the idea of an intercultural journey involving "digital immigrants" on the one hand and "digital natives" on the other. When looking for the most effective description of the course concept in order to sell it, the partners had to distinguish between an instructor-centric and a learner-centric description. The learner-centric description was perceived to be the most effective one, and a profile was drawn up to define the target group of the course. This profile was intended to make it easy for people to decide whether or not it would be beneficial for them to participate in the course.

According to the profile of the target group the VITAE course is open to people who are able to work with major word processing and presentation programmes; regularly use the Internet as a source for their teaching; need to implement e-portfolios in their classes; seek to develop more differentiation in the classroom; and are willing to teach and learn from colleagues in their own or another institution. The rationale behind this profile was especially to attract people who are willing to try out online solutions on the basis of their reasonable IT skills and who are interested in learning from colleagues. The most important learning objective of the course was to enable teachers to increase differentiation in their teaching so as to support personalised learning. The course also aims at enabling the participants to:

- Help students to think about and document their learning through e-portfolios;
- Help their students to learn from and help others through digital tools;
- Help their students to take advantage from digital material that is already available or can be made available through personal digital communication;
- Experiment with a digitalized training session; and
- Help colleagues in their digital experiments.

The course has a blended learning structure with two weeks of online learning, two days face to face and another five weeks online, culminating in an online conference meeting. This structure was dictated by the fact that the participants were dispersed all over the country. A virtual community of practice was set up using the Ning platform.

Examples of participant activities are a blog about health law and a teacher's podcast. The experience with the implementation of the course shows that there are certain barriers that are often not taken into consideration. One barrier, which is exemplified by the Lithuanian course, is the language issue. Many contents are available only in English and not in the national languages. Another barrier is the informality of the communication, which is a point of concern for teachers, who often wish to be more confident with the use of online tools before they start sharing with colleagues. A related problem is spam, which could be irritating for unexperienced users.

Discussion

The first issue raised was the question as to how the combination, in one of the courses, of using online tools for teaching and using them for learning from others can be successfully implemented given the fact that these two activities are distinct and might require different pedagogical approaches. It was explained that the course does not follow a radical approach, but proceeds step by step. Although learning and teaching are different things, the reflection on the links between the two can be encouraged. The tools should be used first.

Another question was how the above-mentioned attitude of teachers, i.e. their wish to be fully confident in the use of the online tools before they start sharing, should be dealt with. It was observed that this attitude is quite common among teachers and that they often wish to be "perfect" and to master everything before sharing their knowledge. The question was raised as to whether instead of encouraging *teachers* and teach them to share there should be a community of practice of *learners*. Against this perspective it was argued that there is some optimism in motivating educators to fully engage in collaborative learning. There is a perceived need on the part of the teachers for this type of training, which means that at least to some degree they are open for this concept.

4.6 TrainerGuide – a digital handbook for trainers in companies by Regina Lamscheck-Nielsen

Regina Lamscheck-Nielsen
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The *Leonardo da Vinci* Transfer of Innovation project aims at the internationalisation of the Danish TrainerGuide, a tool to support trainers who work in a company. The target group of this guide are especially skilled workers who fulfil training functions additionally to their regular tasks in the company rather than the professional, certified trainers or those who have a Master's degree.

The TrainerGuide was first developed in Denmark between 2006 and 2007. It is not an e-learning tool, but a digital handbook which provides easy to access information on training methods, concepts, practice, legal regulations and so on. Given that such a handbook is interesting for stakeholders in other countries with dual or alternating training it was decided to set up a European project to internationalise the guide. The project consortium includes partners from Denmark (Multidisciplinary University College of Copenhagen), Finland (HAMK University of Applied Sciences), Germany (DIHK), the Netherlands (Kenteq), Slovenia (CPI) and Turkey (Mugla University) as well as silent partners from Croatia and the UK.

The content of the TrainerGuide is basically derived from the role of trainers in the training process. This role includes the alternation between instructing, observing, correcting, being imitated, asking apprentices for independent solutions, and making presentations for groups of apprentices. The trainer plays a role for the apprentice that goes beyond professional expertise – he/she is often a role model and mentor at the same time. Moreover, trainers need to practice their role, e.g. imparting skills in an appropriate way, at the right moment, and adapted to the abilities of the individual apprentice.

A survey has shown that trainers in Denmark use the guide mainly during breaks or at home. The feature most commonly used is the opportunity to download material, e.g. sample course material or documentation of training quality standards. Altogether there are approximately 50 tools available for downloading.

The aim and expected output of the project is transferring the experiences and model of the Danish TrainerGuide to other countries and at the same time improve the original product in Denmark. The transfer involves the translation of the guide into English, which, however, is not enough. Instead, a generic model for a European TrainerGuide is needed to facilitate application of the guide in different countries. The guide follows a 'plug & play' approach that makes contents easily accessible for the users. At the end of the project the partners aim to have developed six National TrainerGuides in the respective national languages and adapted to the countries' conditions and standards. These final products will support in-company trainers in the training of apprentices / trainees, sharing knowledge with others but also further develop in their own learning through acquisition of new vocational knowledge, which so far has been only scarcely accessible for this target group. Through the facilitation of the trainers' personal and professional development and their wish for competence development the TrainerGuide is a direct support tool that fosters the continuing professional development of the trainers. The overarching product – the European TrainerGuide in English – also aims to increase the mutual understanding and exchange. A competence network with several types of stakeholders will be established for the exchange of good practice.

The project is currently in the stage of testing the first draft of the generic model, which has been developed on the basis of the English translation of the original Danish guide. Subsequent to the trial runs and the preparation of the national guides, the final version of the generic model of the European TrainerGuide is planned to be launched in towards the end of 2009.

Discussion

The observation was made that the crucial issue for e-learning was not technology, but the pedagogical approach so that the question would be how to deal with the pedagogical challenge. The reply stressed that the TrainerGuide was not a tool for e-learning, but an accumulation of knowledge, experience and data. It responds to a specific need, namely, to train the trainers in companies, who often have no particular basis. The guide can motivate trainers to learn by making them curious about new knowledge, but it cannot teach them by itself.

The question arose as to whether there could be a cooperation between the TrainerGuide project and the Network of Trainers in Europe. It was concluded that it would indeed be interesting to share the results of the TrainerGuide project within the Network. One tentative result of the project that might be interesting for the Network is the observation that there is a strong overlap of the TrainerGuide contents between the countries. The countries have approximately 90 per cent of the contents in common. These commonalities could be a firm basis for mobility and exchange of in-company trainers between the different countries.

Concerning overlaps and differences it was asked in what areas the biggest divergences were found. The answer was that the most striking differences were related to the structure, form and organisation of education and training in the different countries. It was concluded that in general there is a difference in the organisational structure of education and training, but relatively high levels of correspondence with regards to the learning methods.

The attitude of trainers towards the digital format of the guide was also discussed as was the question whether it would make sense to produce an additional print version of the guide. Evidence is available so far only from Denmark and Germany, which indicates that a paper version would not be useful as many trainers are not interested in reading voluminous texts. The most frequently used part of the guide is the downloading of particular features, which is not really appropriate for a paper format. Trainers select and print only those materials that can be adapted to their needs.

5 CONFERENCE CONCLUSIONS

By Graham Attwell
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The task for the summary of the first day, which has seen an interesting range of presentations, should be to look for some common themes among the various topics. One key issue that has been discussed is lifelong learning, which is strange enough as this topic has been talked about endlessly in the various countries of the European Union over the past ten years. The major observation has been that learning itself becomes more embedded, particularly in the work process, and turns into a day-by-day activity that is no longer confined to a particular domain called education and special places called schools. It might be questioned whether there is a de-schooling or re-schooling of society.

If it is agreed that learning is moving to ever wider fields, the question arises, What is the contextual nature of learning taking place? A problem that must be observed here is the fact that qualifications do not arise from contexts of learning and the environment where learning takes place, but from the activities of the learners. Finally it can be asked, What is the role of formal learning when informal learning comes into play? Alan Brown, in his contribution, has moved one step further by suggesting that competence might be recognised by pay structures instead of qualification structures.

The discussion then moved on to two other themes. One was the role of technology and how we widen out technology, which then turned into the focus of the second day. The other one is the training of trainers and how that might happen. There was general agreement about the changing roles of trainers. The contributions of Eduardo Figueiras and Eileen Lübcke somehow closed the circle back to the topics raised by Alan Brown by pointing out that instead of a qualification structure based on an external competence framework there might be a series of commitments made by the different stakeholders who have something to do with this context of learning. It might well be up to the learners, i.e. the trainers themselves, to start recognising the learning which is taking place, and to articulate and reflect how this learning meets the objective of competence development and might be assessed in a peer group context.

Another major point has been raised by George Roberts, namely, the role of trainers and education in society. This is not just a technical question, but also a social and political question. A similar topic has been discussed by Barry Nyhan when introducing the distinction of mass qualification and mass innovation. Those perspectives lead to the problem of defining and discussing the social value of learning.

Instead of trying to summarise second day of the conference I would like to point out some issues that were important for the conference as a whole. One major point is surely the significance of the event itself. It can be considered a success that it was possible to set up an online conference like this, to make use of the technology and to bring together a range of training practitioners and researchers.

Over the two days there has been a series of ideas and a good deal of reflection. A particular focus has been on lifelong learning and work-based learning. I expected that the more radical views on these issues would be held by the e-learning specialists and the more conservative ones by those involved in the training of trainers in work-based learning. But that has not been the case. Instead, there is a discourse going through, and that's the discourse about the move away from teachers being in control of our knowledge to learners taking control of their own knowledge with teachers supporting them in their learning journey.

There is still some confusion about the role of qualifications and about the role that formal learning should have. There were also interesting ideas about transitional pedagogics, one example being John Pallister's thoughts on the e-portfolio as a tool for transition and encouragement.

A lot of discussion has been devoted to communities of practice and self-directed learning and to the question where we are now and where we want to go, especially as regards the role of teachers. Some more radical views were presented when George Roberts and Barry Nyhan drew attention to the perspective of the education system and the society as a whole, discussing the role of teachers and trainers in society and the political implications of education and learning.

Network to Support Trainers in Europe

This Network is by 75 per cent funded by the European Commission through its Lifelong Learning Programme under the network strand of the Leonardo da Vinci programme. The Network is for all those interested in training and the support of trainers. This includes researchers, policy makers, managers and practitioners. Its aim is to bring together and share research and ideas and develop a pool of resources and expertise to inform policies and practice at different levels. The Network provides:

- Access to people and ideas about research and training practice;
- Practical materials and tools to support the professional development of trainers;
- A website packed with information and a communication platform for exchanging ideas.

What exactly will the Network do?

- Provide an opportunity for exchanging experiences and knowledge through an easy to use web portal.
- Enable policy makers, managers and practitioners to access ideas, materials and opportunities for professional development.
- Undertake a small scale survey of the work of trainers and their professional support.
- Provide access to research and ideas through the organisation of workshops and online conferences.
- Enhance the quality of support for trainers by sharing effective practice.
- Stimulate new approaches to the training of trainers related to the concept of lifelong learning, knowledge sharing and peer learning.
- Bring together research and practice from different projects and initiatives throughout Europe. This also includes further results of the EUROTRAINER study, which can be accessed through the new platform.

How can I learn more about the network?

Go to www.trainersineurope.org. If you would like to become a member of the network you can register and set up your profile.

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Community News

The e-learning Show Tue 19 May 2009
After 'The Sounds of the Bazaar' and 'The Dragons Den' it is time to branch out and make other types of programmes as well. JISC has commissioned a pilot of a new programme, 'The e-Learning show'. The pilot programme will be broadcast this upcoming Thursday, 21 May at 1800 UK Summer Time, 1900 Central European Summer [...]

ORT09 Session #2 - Careers and the internet Tue 10 Feb 2009
The "Online Round Table 2009" are a joint project of the EduCamp and EVOLVE network (funded by JISC). These are pre-events of the third German EduCamp in April, 17th-19th 2009 in Ilmenau. This open session will take place in Elluminate in February, 16 at 6pm GMT / 7 pm CET (check your time zone here) More info [...]

Open Learning - Get involved! Thu 15 Jan 2009
This is the motto for 2009 as far as EVOLVE is Concerned. It is also the year we will try to

EVENTS

First International on-line conference was on the 5-6 of November 2008:
Here you get to the exhibition!

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