

# **Network to Support Trainers in Europe**

## **First International on-line conference on 5-6 November 2008**

### ***About the Network to Support Trainers in Europe***

The European Commission funded *Network to Support Trainers in Europe* is examining different aspects of practice and policy related to training. This includes trainers' work, skills, status, professional profile, the recognition of their work and trainers' continuing professional development. The main objective of the network is to establish an on-line platform that can link the different studies and support a structured exchange between stakeholders. The platform will provide access to research results and recent developments in policy and practice as well as practical tools for practitioners and the training of trainers. The platform will provide a communication forum for practitioners, researchers, managers and policy makers.

The network, which includes partners in 32 European countries, is coordinated by the ITB, University of Bremen.

As part of its activities, the network is launching an annual on-line conference on "the Training of Trainer".

### ***Who is the conference for?***

The conference is for all those interested in the training and professional development of teachers and trainers. This includes teachers, trainers, tutors, researchers, managers, policy makers and other interested individuals.

### ***About the conference***

The conference will take place on through the internet. We hope this will not only reduce the carbon footprint of our activities, but will allow wide participation by those who might not be able to travel. The conference will utilise simple web-based tools and will be accessible by anyone with an internet connection and a web browser.

For those of you not used to presenting on the internet, we will provide full technical support and a short pre-conference training course.

### ***Conference themes***

The conference will be organised around four themes.

#### **Theme 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 responsible for training as part of their work.

At the same time the move towards more authentic work-based learning is changing 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.

The widespread introduction of e-learning also poses new challenges for trainers.

Issues to be explored in this session include:

- Who are the trainers?
- What are the (new) roles of trainers?
- What are the implications of changing roles for trainers?
- What are the implications for the professional development of trainers?

### **Theme 2: E-learning for trainers**

E-Learning is increasingly impacting on training. Larger enterprises are developing in-house e-learning programmes for 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 to be explored in this session include:

- 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?

### **Theme 3: Work-based learning**

Studies and reports have documented 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 to be explored in this session include:

- Organising the work environment to support work-based learning
- Pedagogic approaches to work-based learning
- Work process knowledge and work-based learning
- Curriculum organisation and work-based learning

### **Theme 4: Support for the professional development of trainers**

With an increasing recognition of the importance of trainers and training and changing roles for trainers, 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 there are not mandatory standards or qualifications for trainers. It may be that most trainers rely on personal networks and informal learning for their professional development.

Issues to be explored in this session include:

- Competency and qualification structures and programmes of the training of trainers
- Opportunities for the continuing professional development of trainers
- Informal learning and self-directed learning for professional development
- Communities of practice and professional development

### **Conference Structure**

The conference will take place over two days. On each day there will be two formal sessions, one for each of the themes. It is anticipated that each session will last for two hours, allowing four presentations of 15 minutes each, with 15 minutes of discussion.

The live sessions will utilise on-line e-conferencing software, allowing video and audio presentations and feedback from participants. Sessions will be recorded and made available for later viewing. Papers will be made available to participants in advance and the conference will also provide opportunities for asynchronous text-based discussion.

There will also be a parallel on-line exhibition. Details of this will be the subject of a later call.

### **Call for papers**

We invite the submission of abstracts for papers for the conference. Paper proposals should address one or more of the conference themes. Abstracts should be of up to **400 words** and full papers of between 1600 and 2500 words.

### **Timetable**

July 15 – Deadline for submission of abstracts

July 30 – notification of results of review

September 30 – submission of full papers for those accepted

### **More information**

If you would like more information you can access the Network's web site at [www.trainersineurope.org](http://www.trainersineurope.org)

You can also email the project coordinator Simone Kirpal – [kirpal@uni-bremen.de](mailto:kirpal@uni-bremen.de) or the conference organiser Graham Attwell – [graham10@mac.com](mailto:graham10@mac.com).