

## **Notes of the Workforce Development Network meeting in Aberdeen on 09/03/07**

### **Topic:**

Options for Training

### **Speakers:**

Ken Dinwoodie, Richmond Fellowship Scotland

Angelika Monteux, Camphill

Grainne Hamilton, Learning Network North

The aim of this network meeting was to look at various different approaches that organisations had taken in order to provide and promote training for registration.

### **Ken Dinwoodie, Richmond Fellowship Scotland**

Richmond is committed to staff learning and development, and recognises the importance of planning to ensure that workers can qualify within three years of registration. The organisation has its own assessment centre, and all assessors are managers, enabling ongoing assessing and observing of candidates. This has also helped ensure that workers doing very part time hours are not neglected when it comes to qualifications.

The new SVQ awards have really improved the process – the paperwork is much more accessible, and the number of candidates struggling to complete has been reduced, making it much more cost effective.

Richmond has developed a system of support and incentives to help candidates through SVQs. Workshops cover key knowledge and understanding points, and help develop core skills such as reflective writing. Assessors find that candidates are then much better prepared when it comes to doing the SVQ. As an incentive and recognition of success, candidates are awarded a bonus of £200 on completing the SVQ, and a further £200 two years later.

Richmond find the SVQs are beneficial to the level of service provided – they help staff think more about what they are actually doing, and there has been a marked change in attitude towards SVQs in general, which is also positive. The majority of candidates enjoy the experience. Getting qualified also has a positive impact on retention rates. The turnover for qualified staff is just 2%, and it tends to be the unqualified workers who leave the organisation quickest.

Ken highlighted the importance of good leadership within an organisation, and encouraging the right attitude. “I haven’t got time” can’t be an acceptable excuse for not encouraging learning and development. It’s also important to remember that its not just candidates who need support through the process – support for managers and assessors is also vital.

### **Angelika Monteux, Camphill**

Angelika talked about the very specific learning and development needs of Camphill communities, which include elements of care, education, psychology, art and creativity. All these elements were included in inhouse training provided by the organisation. To meet the challenge of registering their workforce, Camphill decided to further develop their training and work towards getting the qualification accredited by a university and recognised by the SSSC.

Camphill worked in partnership with Aberdeen University to develop the Certificate, Diploma and Degree in Curative Education. Much of the development involved ensuring that the assessment of practice requirements were in line with the principles of the SSSCs qualification requirements. In 2003 the Diploma and Degree were recognised as qualifications suitable for registration with the SSSC.

The teaching takes place mainly within Camphill itself, with additional support from the university. All candidates currently work within the Camphill community, gaining experience as in parallel with the qualification.

### **Grainne Hamilton, Learning Network North**

Grainne explained that e-learning is any learning facilitated through IT. This can include collaborative environments such as forums or discussion rooms, as well as virtual learning environments such as "moodle". E-learning can facilitate the sharing of video, audio files, text and information files, as well as assessment quizzes and discussion spaces. E-portfolios can be private learner spaces or can be used within a teaching environment.

One e-tool which is particularly growing in popularity at the moment is the Blog. This is an online journal which allows one to talk freely about a subject, and therefore has potential to become a useful learning tool for the sharing of good practice or ideas.

For student support, some colleges and universities are developing online support systems. This can be particularly beneficial to part time students or distant learners who might otherwise feel detached from the learning community. Such systems can also help tutors monitor progress, and enable structured discussion in line with course content, or interactive assessment tools and quizzes.

The Learning Network North is currently developing E-moderating modules which will help develop skills for online discussion and sharing of practice.