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The Swan Song of an Ugly Duckling

It was interesting to note at a recent conference in Italy [1] , to which I was invited to speak as President of EFVET, that the recurring theme of all the speakers –and they came from at least ten different countries- was the subject of values. Although the overall theme of the conference was of a far more general nature - “*La Qualita della Formazione nell’Europa del 3 Millennio*” - the speakers chose to point out how, in their sector (university, school, technical education, teachers training etc), the most pressing challenge of all was to help prepare young people for life and not simply for employment.

The fanfare slogan of the last few years in Europe has been *Employability* (not *employment* because we all know that that can no longer be guaranteed). Solving the skills deficit, creating opportunities for life long training, equalising opportunities for young women, etc all of these pursuits are without any doubt crucial issues to be faced, but all of them have been seen almost exclusively in terms of the work place. So often the agenda has been set by the world of work and, to a large extent, by the employers. In my view, the sense of panic we felt at the beginning of the last decade, faced with horrific unemployment figures, especially among young people, distorted our choice of strategies for education and training. It was a criticism levelled by some at the EU Commission’s White Paper “*Towards a Learning Society*” which set the scene for the great debate on education and training which unfortunately never happened. There was too much in the White Paper about young people as future workers and too little about those same young people as future fathers and mothers and citizens in a society which itself was facing

some major challenges.

Fortunately, more recently initiatives have been taken to encourage the teaching of citizenship but even this is too often motivated by the very poor turn out at the European elections and not enough by some of the great social issues that need to be addressed. The drug culture. Teenage pregnancies and one parent families. The consumer society and the environment. The growth in violent crime and hooliganism In fact all those issue that troubled the minds of speakers at the conference in Italy I referred to above.

The conference in Thessaloniki will be the last conference I attend as EFVET president and I am happy that the theme of values will be central among the issues to be discussed. I know of no other of more importance than this in all sectors of education and training. There is perhaps a very special need for our own sector of technical and vocational training to sort out its thinking on the subject and to take a stand on some of the issues relevant the age group we are serving. Thessaloniki will give us that opportunity.

Paddy Carpenter

EFVET President

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From the Treasurer

EFVET is a grassroots organisation created by and for the colleges of TVET in Europe themselves.

It is wholly reliant on membership fees. Each year a budget is send out to all the members and agreed at the Annual General Meeting. This budget is based on income due to the forum against an agreed level of services and activities.

You will appreciate that if members do not pay their membership fee promptly, it becomes impossible for EFVET to achieve the objectives and services demanded by its members.

This in turn has an unfair effect on those who do pay promptly and to your National Body which gets 10 % of the total fee, paid in May, returned for financing National activities.

In this matter I would like to remind you of our agreement at the AGM in Helsinki that payment of the membership fee should be within 30 days of receiving the invoice from the Central Office.

I would like to thank the members who already have paid for the year 2000 for sticking to that agreement.

The co-operation of the members who still have not paid their membership fee for this year in ensuring prompt payment, which would be highly appreciated.

Frans Schneider,

NL Representative and Treasurer

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Autumn in Greece

We look forward to seeing you at the **9th Annual Conference of EFVET** in Thessaloniki, Greece from 25 – 28 October this autumn. The conference will be hosted by CEDEFOP in the Conference Centre at their Thessaloniki headquarters

We see the Conference as an ideal opportunity for VET managers and practitioners to hear from leaders in European thinking on different issues; to network with colleagues from other European countries; to listen to examples of good practice; to find partners for that next project or exchange and to have genuine transnational discussions

This year's theme is *Values and European Citizenship* which we see as challenges to the VET sector with the impact of increasing globalisation. Anyone interested in making a contribution to the conference should contact EFVET Central Office on efvet.central@skynet.be. For registration/accommodation please contact Mr. Adriaan de Vrienten, as.vrienten@baronicollege.nl, Tel.: +31/76.573.3356, Fax: +31/76.573.3382.

The programme as well as details of costing, accommodation, etc will be available on the EFVET website <http://www.efvet.org/>

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EFVET in the UK

EFVET in the UK is organised into 9 English regions, Wales and Scotland, with a representative from each region on the UK Steering Group which is chaired by Pete Hodgson from Norton Radstock College who is the UK's representative on EFVET's Steering Committee. Each regional representative looks after the interests of members in his or her region, puts on seminars, passes on any interesting information on European matters and provides help and support when it is needed. In total some 185 colleges belong to the UK network. The colleges are mainly represented by middle managers who are known as European Officers who are interested in both the financial aspects of bidding for European money and in the curriculum development of internationalising the curriculum. A termly newsletter is circulated to all members.

A national conference is held each year before Christmas. 1998 it was in Edinburgh, last year in Oxford and this year it is to be held in Manchester from the evening of 6 December to Friday teatime on 8 December. The theme will be Positioning FE Internationally (FE being our VET colleges) and we would welcome any colleagues from the rest of Europe, particularly if they have tales to tell of how they have internationalised their curriculum. Details of the Conference will be available in September from sbartle@fedac.ac.uk

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Some Italian Statistics

Like most European countries Italians are going through a period of educational reform with greater autonomy for colleges/schools being the main theme. Val Davis, EFVET Secretary, recently spent some time in Italy – Brescia and in Benevento – at the invitation of the Italian authorities leading seminars on Reform and Change.

There has been tremendous growth in technical and professional education in the last 25 years. While the number of students following a classical education has seen a very modest growth to 235.332 (+ 12%), technical and professional education has grown to

1.698.804 (+ 49%) Vocational schools and colleges are beginning to have a more influential voice as a result

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EFVET and the Forestry Industry

EFVET have become involved in a project looking at the problems facing forestry and forestry based industries and their education and training provision. Collectively this sector represents 10% of the total manufacturing sector in the EU.

Hein Kremers from the Netherlands, Arne Hanson from Denmark and Eric Turner from Rotheram College in the UK have met with Kevin Gardner from DG Enterprises to address these issues.

An abridged version of a speech given by EFVET President, Paddy Carpenter, at the annual congress of CESES (Centre for School and Society in Europe) in Milan, May 2000.

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Alcune sfide che la formazione iniziale deve affrontare nell'anno 2000

Come amico di lunga data del CESES e in qualità di Presidente di EFVET, European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training, una Associazione europea che si occupa dell'istruzione e della formazione tecnica e professionale, sono lieto di partecipare ai lavori di questo ottavo Congresso Europeo del Ceses su un tema di grande attualità e di capitale importanza che investe la nostra società.

Come conoscitore dello spirito che anima il CESES, esprimo tutta la mia ammirazione per il lavoro che esso ha svolto e svolge nelle scuole d'Italia per far acquisire alle nuove generazioni, fin dalla loro più giovane età, una conoscenza e una coscienza dell'Europa e dei mutamenti politici, sociali ed economici delle realtà in cui essi vivono. Posso dire che il CESES (e EFVET anche) è un eccellente esempio di come la volontà delle persone, della società civile possa sostenere un cambiamento e svolgere un ruolo complementare a quello dei Governi. A mio parere il CESES è tra le associazioni più attive tra quelle che rappresentano la terza voce essenziale nell'attuale dibattito tra la Commissione Europea e le Autorità italiane sulla cooperazione transnazionale in materia di istruzione e di formazione.

Come Presidente di EFVET, ho accolto con vero interesse la decisione del Ceses di includere nei lavori di questo congresso la formazione professionale iniziale. Cercherò di

enunciare alcune sfide che bisogna affrontare in questo settore e, in seguito, parlare brevemente di EFVET. Ciò che dirò si basa sui risultati del recente convegno annuale di EFVET tenutosi nella città di Odense in Danimarca nel mese di novembre scorso.

Mi sia consentito di ricordarvi una fiaba che tutti noi abbiamo ascoltato da bambini. Si tratta della fiaba del Brutto Anatroccolo di Hans Christian Andersen che era nato a Odense dove si è svolto il nostro convegno. Durante tutta la sua fanciullezza, questo piccolo anatroccolo, così pensava di essere, visse nell'impressione di essere brutto. Esso non si sentiva a suo agio con gli altri anatroccoli e questo lo faceva sentire molto infelice. Un giorno decise di lasciare la sua famiglia e cercò di trovare un posto dove fosse ben accolto. Ma tutto fu invano. In nessun posto si trovava a suo agio. Tutti noi ricordiamo come, alla fine, vedendo la sua immagine riflessa nello specchio d'acqua di un laghetto capì di essere un bellissimo cigno e visse felice per sempre.

Ebbene, in Odense prendemmo la fiaba di Hans Christian Andersen come metafora per il nostro convegno. Molti nostri giovani si sentono a disagio in una scuola che offre una formazione generale e non percepiscono il loro potenziale poiché la scuola non riesce a soddisfare tutti i differenti bisogni e le domande della popolazione scolastica. La Società premia ancora troppo coloro che riescono a brillare accademicamente. Il giovane, le cui abilità naturali non sono adeguate per un successo accademico, è spesso trattato come una persona di seconda classe. Allora si sente come il brutto anatroccolo e, purtroppo, in molti casi questo sentimento di inferiorità provoca in lui una reazione ostile e anti-sociale. E così il problema si aggrava.

Forse una delle principali sfide per coloro che sono preposti alla formazione professionale consiste nel renderla più attraente per i giovani e per i loro genitori e nella sua generale rivalutazione nella società. Ricordo quando un ex leader socialista durante una elezione in Gran Bretagna, affermò con orgoglio che egli era stato il primo della sua famiglia a frequentare l'università. Bravo! Mi piacerebbe sentire gridare lo stesso orgoglio da un politico che affermi di essere stato un apprendista in una scuola tecnica o professionale.

La seconda grande sfida che la formazione deve affrontare oggi consiste in come gestire il cambiamento. Un cambiamento rapido come non si era mai visto prima, un cambiamento che non ci permette di vedere neanche cosa c'è immediatamente dietro l'angolo. Oppure quali competenze occorreranno nel posto di lavoro quando il giovane apprendista entrerà nel mondo produttivo. E' stato stimato che l'ottanta per cento (80%) delle abilità e delle competenze che saranno necessarie in un posto di lavoro fra cinque anni non esistono oggi. Ma l'ottanta per cento (80 %) della forza-lavoro di oggi sarà ancora in attività fra cinque anni. Questo fatto evidenzia il bisogno di una formazione continua lungo tutto l'arco della vita lavorativa.

Questo fatto fa anche rilevare la necessità di una certa flessibilità. Un ambiente di apprendimento che incoraggi lo studente ad apprendere in modo autonomo dovrebbe sostituire quelle forme tradizionali di formazione che non permettono all'apprendista, a causa del rapido cambiamento, di affrontare la situazione in modo adeguato. Le nuove tecnologie offrono non poche opportunità per operare cambiamenti radicali nel modo

secondo cui i giovani possono accedere alla conoscenza.

Ma tutto questo ha serie conseguenze per gli insegnanti e per la prassi secondo la quale essi vengono formati. Forse, all'insegnante non verrà più richiesto di insegnare nel senso tradizionale del termine. Essi dovranno essere piuttosto degli animatori dell'apprendimento, degli allenatori capaci di fornire stimoli intellettuali, dei consiglieri e dei feedback.

E questo, a sua volta, ha delle ricadute notevoli nell'istituzione in cui avviene la formazione. Forse, il computer è più importante a casa che nel centro di formazione; oppure nella strada, forse al bar; in un ambiente più adatto al comune sentire delle nuove generazioni, piuttosto che a scuola o nel centro di formazione, particolarmente per i brutti anatroccoli che non potrebbero sentirsi a loro agio né in una scuola, né in un centro di formazione

Ultime, ma purtroppo non meno importanti, sono le implicazioni che queste sfide provocano sul piano finanziario. Come può lo Stato continuare a garantire un sistema di formazione continua flessibile e imparziale senza il pieno sostegno del settore privato? La risposta potrebbe essere data dalla creazione di un mercato della formazione, sottraendo ad alcuni sistemi più centralizzati d'Europa il monopolio virtuale dello Stato? E se ciò accadesse, quale controllo potrebbe essere esercitato sulle forze di tale mercato al fine di garantire le loro responsabilità sociali? Probabilmente un cambiamento potrà

verificarsi senza troppe controversie. L'introduzione di qualche forma di *voucher system*, secondo il quale un sostegno finanziario è dato direttamente allo studente piuttosto che all'istituzione, offre una maggiore flessibilità in una società che ha bisogno soprattutto di flessibilità.

La conclusione, quindi, del nostro convegno di Odense, è stata che è giusto, è molto positivo preparare i giovani al lavoro. Cosa che in se stessa è una grande sfida. Ma altrettanto importante e per molti anche più importante, è come li prepariamo per la vita come adulti responsabili e consapevoli. Come continuare nella formazione professionale il lavoro iniziato con l'istruzione generale al fine di formare futuri cittadini con un ruolo attivo e consapevole nella società? Nella formazione professionale quale posto occuperà l'educazione sessuale, l'informazione sulla vita matrimoniale, come fronteggiare la cultura della droga? Come si potrà incoraggiare il lavoro di gruppo tanto richiesto e apprezzato dai datori di lavoro e tanto importante al fine di difendersi da una società indifferente che respinge i suoi anziani e fallisce quando deve farsi carico dello svantaggio fisico e sociale di alcuni suoi membri? Come si può insegnare la democrazia e quale forma dovrebbe assumere una educazione politica capace di far capire e prendere coscienza ai giovani, nel periodo elettorale, per chi e per che cosa essi sono chiamati a votare? E questo, in particolare, per quanto riguarda le elezioni del Parlamento Europeo, questione che pone un serio e complicato problema.

Questo era lo stato d'animo espresso al nostro convegno di Odense, tanto che abbiamo deciso di porre, come tema di riflessione centrale del nostro prossimo incontro annuale che si terrà quest'anno a Salonicco, in Grecia, (25-28 ottobre 2000), la questione dei valori attinenti alla

formazione professionale dei giovani.

Mi avvio alla conclusione, aggiungendo poche parole su EFVET.

Come spiega il titolo, questa Associazione rappresenta un forum per tutte le istituzioni o organismi pubblici e privati che svolgono attività di formazione professionale iniziale nelle varie regioni d'Europa e oltre Europa. Infatti, EFVET conta membri in quasi tutti gli Stati dell'Unione Europea, degli Stati Uniti d'America e perfino della Cina. Purtroppo, abbiamo pochi membri italiani anche se speriamo di averne di più in un prossimo futuro. Oltre alla sua conferenza annuale, EFVET pubblica periodicamente un bollettino di informazioni e in ogni Paese organizza manifestazioni per i propri soci e per quanti sono interessati ai differenti temi di studio che sono all'ordine del giorno dell'incontro. Come il CESES, anche EFVET rappresenta una terza voce a livello Europeo e nell'ambito degli organismi che si occupano della formazione professionale. A volte dobbiamo anche difendere con determinazione gli interessi degli istituti e delle scuole professionali nella competizione con il settore universitario. Noi difendiamo la causa dei brutti anatroccoli poiché noi sappiamo che essi sono bellissimi cigni che hanno bisogno di scoprire se stessi e riconoscere il loro posto nel mondo.

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VET in Denmark 2000

At the 8th EFVET Conference in Odense, November 1999, the pamphlet « *New Structure of the Danish Vocational Education and Training System* » was distributed.

The pamphlet describes the basic ideas, the superior principles and contents of the VET reform. It appears from this description that in future there will be 7 access routes. These 7 access channels make up the total route to all Danish vocational education, counting app. 90 various professions. (The 7 access routes can be seen on page 17).

The vocational education institutions in Denmark broadly include 5 different institution types:

Technical colleges:	app. 55
Business colleges:	app. 50
Adult Vocational Training Centres (AMU) :	app.25

Production schools: app. 100

Health Care Schools: app. 30

Similar to many other institutions in Europe, Danish institutions merge at present.

Business combinations or a close binding collaboration are directly caused actions which are essential for the implementation of the VET reform at the schools.

Since August 1999 a number of schools have carried out pilot projects in order to acquire experiences before the reform becomes effective as from January 2001.

The main challenges of the reform are:

1. The programming of the 7 access routes. The duration of the so-called basic programme may vary from 20 to 60 weeks.

2. The individual curriculum for each student.
3. An extended tutor/contact teacher arrangement. Each student has his own contact teacher through the whole education course.
4. The opportunity for the « weak » students, and extended competences for the « strong » students as competence for further education.

During August 2000 all the technical colleges and the business colleges intend to make pilot projects before the definite start by January 2001.

As part of the testing there will be produced international information material about the new Danish VET structure.

The material will be an interactive CD-ROM with Internet connection, and we expect to introduce it at the annual EFVET conference in Greece.

Apart from the reform work concerning young people (16 years upwards) the focus is on adult vocational training because of the decline in number of young people.

The labour market's need for skilled labour and consequently the employees' need for education has brought the enterprises' education programming in focus. Job rotation and vocational education in interaction with employees and unemployed is an important instrument in the qualifying of the labour force. Furthermore, it creates an opportunity to make the unemployed closer connected with the labour market.

Denmark urgently needs international projects related to exchange of experiences in many of the above mentioned new initiatives.

As earlier mentioned all education institutions are private foundations.

The economics of the vocational education system is based on a taximeter grant per active student from the Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Labour – (according to the principle of « the money follows the student »).

Furthermore, the schools « sell » education and courses as self-financing activities to private enterprises, regional job centres, municipals, etc.

Do you need further information or would you like to have the pamphlet: « New Structure of the Danish Vocational Education and Training System », please contact :

Paul Andy

EFVET DK

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Vocational Education and Training in Ireland

Vocational education and training in Ireland is primarily the responsibility of **the Department of Education and Science** and **the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment**. The Departments of **Agriculture and Food, Tourism, Sport and Recreation, Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Health and Children** and the **Marine and Natural Resources** are responsible for vocational training in their sectors.

The Department of Education and Science

The Department of Education and Science is responsible for educational activity in Ireland. Vocational education and training is carried out under its remit in second-level schools, in technological colleges and universities, and in a range of centres, for example those catering for early school leavers, Travellers and unemployed adults.

The Department is responsible for the approval of syllabi and curricula prepared by **the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCEA)**, for monitoring standards for programme delivery, and for assessment and certification of achievement by participants. Different bodies are involved in implementing policy, including the **National Council for Vocational Awards (NCVA)**, **the National Council for Education Awards (NCEA)** and the Department's own Examinations Branch. **TEASTAS**, the Irish National Certification

Authority, has been established to develop and direct a unified certification framework for all vocational education and training in Ireland outside of the universities. A number of bodies provide technical support to activities under the Department's remit, such as guidance, transnational co-operation and teacher training. **Vocational Education Committees** (VECs) have a particular remit for vocational education.

The Department also co-operates with **FÁS – The Training and Employment Authority** in a range of activities, including apprenticeship and YOUTHREACH and with **CERT – The State Tourism Training Agency** to resource and provide training programmes for the hotel, catering and tourism industry. In addition, it also has responsibility for youth work.

1. **Second – Level Schools**

There are three kinds of second-level schools in Ireland, secondary, community/comprehensive and vocational. A common programme is provided to those in compulsory education. A range of vocationally oriented programmes is offered after the Junior Cycle (which currently marks the end of compulsory education), including the Transition Year, the Leaving Certificate Applied Programme and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme.

2. Further Education

The White Paper Charting Our Education Future (1995) introduced the term 'further education' to encompass a range of post-compulsory education and training options provided in the education sector, largely by VECs, such as Post-Leaving Certificate courses (PLCs).

3. The Role of Vocational Education Committees (VECs)

Vocational Education Committees were established under the 1930 Vocational Education Act. They have played a central role in the development of Vocational Education in Ireland. There is a Vocational Education Committee for each county and county borough. Each VEC represents a cross-section of educational, cultural, industrial and commercial interests.

VECs administer vocational schools and community colleges, which provide ordinary junior and senior cycle courses, as well as more specialised vocationally oriented options.

VECs are centrally involved in adult education, often in partnership with the voluntary sector. They appoint Adult Education Organisers, and establish Adult Education Boards to draw up and administer adult education programmes in their areas.

VECs play a major role in out-of-school activities with both early school leavers and older unemployed people. They deliver YOUTHREACH and the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) on behalf of the Department of Education and Science. They also disburse funds for youth work.

4. Institutes of Technology

Institutes of Technology train for trade and industry over a broad spectrum of occupations and levels, in business studies, engineering and technology, and science and paramedical programmes. Courses lead to National Certificates, National Diplomas and in a limited number of areas, to Degree qualifications awarded by the NCEA. They also offer apprenticeship and other training courses.

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VET in Sweden

Upper Secondary School

All municipalities in Sweden are required by law to offer upper secondary schooling to all students who have completed their compulsory basic schooling. In principle, students have the right to have their primary option fulfilled. Upper secondary schooling is free of charge and voluntary.

The right to start upper secondary school education applies up to and including the calendar year in which the pupil is 20, after which there is the opportunity to take part in adult upper secondary education.

Upper secondary school in Sweden provides basic skills both for working life and life in the community.

Regulations

A new curriculum for upper secondary school and for other non-compulsory types of

school (komvux, upper secondary school for mentally handicapped and adult education for mentally handicapped) came into force on 1 July 1994. The Education Act defines the schools basic role in achieving its overriding objectives. This curriculum presents the basic values of upper secondary schooling, together with its basic goals and guidelines. Documents which specify tuition requirements are programme syllabuses and grade criteria. Each municipality has to decide on a school plan.

National Programmes

There are 16 national programmes, all of which are three years in length. They provide a broad-based general education and provide qualifications for further study at university or college.

The national programmes are guaranteed to cover 2,150 hours for the natural and social science programmes and 2,370 hours for the remainder. There is a set value for the number of hours which the programmes provide for the various subjects. Time may be divided between subjects. All national programmes comprise eight core subjects + English, Art, Physical and Health Education, Mathematics, Natural Science, Civics, Swedish (or Swedish as a Second Language) and Religious Education.

Each programme obtains its emphasis from its specialist subjects. Fourteen of the programmes include vocational subjects and must include at least fifteen weeks at a

workplace outside the school. The other two, the Natural Science and Social Science programmes, focus more on university entrance, although it is also possible within the programmes to organise parts of the education in the workplace, in addition to the subject-related work experience which may form part of the programmes. The national programmes also include special project work.

Most of the programmes are arranged into various branches during the second and third years. Students have the right to follow a programme of study in a municipality other than that in which they live. In order to satisfy local needs, a municipality may determine local branches.

More information is to be found at the homepage of the central school authorities in Sweden **<http://www.skolverket.se/english/system/index.shtml>** for those who want more and always updated information.

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Link2Learning – Codes International

Link2Learning, the on-line training and education system from IMS Publishing, has been successfully used internationally for the first time by one of the UK's leading FE colleges. Park Lane College in Leeds, which has been using Link2Learning to deliver its Learning Line training course on IT subjects to small businesses in Leeds and across Yorkshire, has now successfully completed a trial with a partner organisation in Southern Spain.

Park Lane's Learning Line courses for small and medium sized businesses are supported by the European Union's ADAPT programme. The College's European partners on the EU project in Spain, Italy and France were very interested to hear about the success of the Learning Line providing IT training for small firms.

The Spanish partner organisation, a local authority training provider (Fundación Municipal para la Promoción Económica y Empleo) in Alcázar de San Juan, a city south of Madrid, has been the first to try out Learning Line courses delivered from Leeds providing IT training for small firms.

The trial, involving two employees on two of the Learning Line Quick Skills modules, has

been deemed such a success that the Spaniards now want to offer it to local business associations in their region and the other partner organisations in Europe also want to use the system.

Even with little English and little knowledge of telematics, the Spanish found Learning Line easy to download from the Internet and very user friendly. They were able to follow and complete course modules without reference to tutors back in Leeds.

Celia Escobar and Diego Vaquero were the two colleagues involved and Celia commented: « Learning Line proves that geographic, language and technological barriers can be overcome. » And Diego said: « It is a flexible training system and most important is that the newly acquired skills can be used quickly on my daily work. »

Lisa Morris, International Project Manager at Park Lane College said: « We are delighted that Learning Line has been used transnationally so easily. It proves how robust the IMS Link2Learning delivery system is and how easy the course is to use. We are now hoping for uptake by our other partners overseas and will be looking at the potential for delivering other distance learning programmes internationally. »

[1] Eighth Congress of CESES (Centre for the European Dimension in Education). Milan, 4-6 May 2000.

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