CHAPTER 18

TRAINING TELECENTRE MANAGERS, STAFF AND USERS

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INTRODUCTION

Telecentres have been closely associated with training, particularly information and communications technology (ICT) training, since their inception. Many of the early Scandinavian and North American telecentres were essentially ICT training and awareness-raising centres, funded under government training programmes aimed at improving computing and communications skills amongst remote and/or disadvantaged groups. Many telecentres have also offered computer-based training on non-ICT topics to local citizens who lack easy access to such training through more traditional methods.

However, it is not only the telecentre users who need training. Telecentre staff, and particularly telecentre managers, need to develop a range of business, administrative and community support skills. This chapter examines the training schemes that have been established in telecentres across the globe and makes some suggestions for future training initiatives.

TELECENTRES AS TRAINING CENTRES

Training provision is the main focus of many of the surviving telecentres in Scandinavia where the movement originated. Many Danish and Norwegian centres now function as a part of local employment programmes.

Training services are also crucial to the commercial success of many of the more than 200 telecentres in the UK. According to Murray and Cornford (1998), training income increased in importance in 1995 – 1998 and was predicted to become even more important over the following three years. Internet courses in particular were seen as being likely to be in great demand. The UK government recognises the value of the

electorate improving their information technology (IT) skills as means of achieving sustainable economic development and lifelong learning. Initiatives such as IT for All and Learn Direct (*www.ufiltd.co.uk*) are testament to this, and UK telecentres have played an active role in both of these by becoming "IT for All Centres" and "Learn Direct Access Points."

The Australian telecentre networks — the Queensland Open Learning Network, the Tasmanian Online Access Centres, the Gippsland Centres Network, and the Western Australia Telecentre Network (described elsewhere in this book) — were established primarily to provide tertiary-level students in rural and remote communities with the technical and social support vital for successful off-campus study, and to give the community access to and training in ICTs. The Australian Senate Economics References Committee says about their success:

> The greatest value of the [Australian] telecentre program appears to be gradual community learning; a slow and steady acquisition of skills; and awareness of opportunities outside small and often isolated locations…. There are many other positive features of the telecentre network which directly impinge on the working habits of telecentre communities. For example, in Western Australia, telecentres deliver education services to remote families. In-service training for professionals like doctors, nurses and teachers is also delivered via the Telecentre program. (Australian Senate Economics References Committee 1995)

In the USA, the Community Technology Centers' Network (CTCNet) has helped establish hundreds of telecentres in low-income urban and rural areas. A CTCNet (1998) survey revealed that the vast majority of these centres' clients used them to improve their work or find jobs, and most respondents reported that the telecentres had helped them overcome their fears of computers and increase their self-confidence and skills in using them. The training programmes range from the most basic to the more advanced computer skills — often without charge.

The South American pioneers in Brazil sought to open telecentres based on a multipurpose model composed of:

- a public services module,
- a tele-office module,
- a business module, and
- an educational module.

According to Goussal (2000), it was the educational module that would later prove to be the key factor in the successful operation of the Brazilian community telecentres. This module was designed to "promote the application of technology to formal education and training for the workforce and for micro-entrepreneurs, by means of on-the-spot and distance courses on the use of tele-informatics." It had three objectives:

- to give backing to literacy programmes by computer-based training;
- to provide training courses for the workforce through multimedia tools and computer-based training; and
- to sustain training in information technology and communication technology, combating by means of seminars and courses the "computer illiteracy that leads to ignorance and rejection."

Goussal (2000) subsequently found that the Brazilian telecentres were "having a strong impact in [their] role as a support to formal teaching, possibly as a result of inadequate resources or capacity or timetable limitations in the computer infrastructure of colleges and local training centres. Usually, this is not the case in developed countries, where telecentres are less in demand for fulfilling this role."

Such training is applied in widely differing contexts. For example, as shown in the case study in Chapter 9 of this book, the AMIC@s in the Municipality of Asunción in Paraguay were designed to provide basic training and ICT services in support of democratising learning, decentralising public management, and encouraging community participation in some of the poorest areas of the city. At the other end of the scale are the telecentres established in Ecuadorian Amazonia to train men and women in the indigenous communities of Dureno (Cofan), San Pablo (Secoya) and Orahuehaya (Siona) in using electronic communications (Goussal 2000).

Training continues to be a key feature in the other telecentres being set up around the world, particularly in the developing world as the least-advantaged have to fight to avoid becoming even more disadvantaged in the Information Age. As evidenced in the case studies in this book, the training offered through these centres may include:

- formal secondary and tertiary education studies;
- literacy and numeracy skills development;
- language skills;
- instruction for farmers in new agricultural techniques;
- ongoing professional development for remote specialists such as doctors and nurses;
- development of new information industry employment skills (e.g., in Web design and call centre training);
- specialist courses using computer-based training methods; and
- training in ICTs.

Elmer (1999) writes:

> The community-based "telecentre" model under experimentation in a number of developing countries may well represent a new organisational form for delivering quality educational services on a more equitable and cost-effective basis . . . Educational applications could include drill and practice for math and language instruction; reading comprehension programs; simulation programs for science and geography instruction; hyperlinked reference materials; collaborative learning programs; and workforce training modules focusing on content and skills acquisition, as well as professional development…. Despite the lack of empirical evidence . . . the telecentre model appears to be a promising option for reducing knowledge gaps within developing countries and for contributing to "education for all" policies in the emerging Information Age.

Telecentres may provide resources and technical facilities for self- or guided study and for videoconference, e-mail and talk-back TV access to specialist tutors. They may encourage and support users to engage in a number of personal development/training activities within or outside the centres, depending on their experience, motivation, knowledge, skills and technological competence. Such activities include, for example:

- undertaking work-based projects or assignments;
- observing experts or colleagues at work;
- reading books and specialist journals;
- engaging in open or self-managed learning; and
- attending workshops, courses, seminars or conferences.

All of these training strategies can also be used to train policy-makers, managers and staff in the work of leading, managing, operating and evaluating telecentres, and each has particular advantages and disadvantages, as summarized in Table 18.1.

TRAINING THE POLICY-MAKERS

When government departments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and commercial sponsors consider the need for telecentre initiatives, there is often a total lack of appreciation of what such centres can and cannot achieve. Many policy-makers are more concerned with broader economic and political issues and fail to recognise the very important developmental role that training performs in telecentres, telecottages and telework. They often make the mistake of assuming that providing access to ICT resources will automatically lead to local benefits, ignoring the training and support that are needed to help people use these tools to maximum effect. It is therefore extremely important that some form of face-to-face or mediated orientation or training be used to help policy-makers and others in key positions make informed assessments of particular proposals. In March 1999, the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) sponsored such a telecentre workshop in Tunis for delegates from the Arab States. This was developed and run by the authors of this chapter and the materials provided to the delegates (and to attendees at a subsequent workshop in Damascus) are available on the ITU Web site (*www.itu.int/ITU-D-UniversalAccess/seminar/tunis/papers/papers.htm*).

TRAINING THE TELECENTRE MANAGERS AND STAFF

All of the telecentre projects in the regions first experimenting with this new community resource bore testimony to the importance of providing training support and guidance for telecentre managers and staff, enabling them to learn from the experiences of others. As Fuchs (1997) observes:

> It is extremely important that telecentre staff have some involvement in a program of continuing training and that they be associated with institutions that are doing research and development in areas of telecommunications and systems development. Over time, telecentre managers come to be the lead resource in the community for technical leadership. They need to be as knowledgeable as possible to play this role successfully.

The importance of training telecentre staff was also one of the main conclusions of a study into community technology centres in the USA (Cisler et al. 1999). It was observed that the quality of the staff and their skills, attitudes and ability to work with people from a variety of different backgrounds were paramount to the success of such centres:

> All program staff — not just the agency director — should be able to articulate the value of the technology program. And programs need a

Table 18.1: Modes of training and their advantages and disadvantages.

TYPE OF TRAINING ACTIVITY	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Undertaking work-based projects or assignments	*For user:* Can be tailored to specific work environments Can relate to work being done *Overall:* Cost-effective	*For user:* Needs great self-discipline to find the time in the workplace Needs support from management and colleagues
Observing experts or colleagues at work	*For user:* Can pick up tricks of the trade Can learn skills which are not easily learned from books or theoretical courses Can be receive ongoing support and mentoring Can go back for more information or to clarify a point	*For user:* Can pick up bad habits if the expert makes mistakes *Overall:* Problem-solving is often a silent process, so it is not always obvious what the expert is doing unless he or she is prepared to explain Experts and colleagues are not always prepared to help; they have their own work to do and helping others slows them down
Reading books and specialist journals	*For user:* Can keep up-to-date with the latest ideas and practice Can learn independently and at own pace Can be selective about what material to use	*For user:* Can be time-consuming Can be difficult finding relevant information amongst a large amount of other material *Overall:* Outside the main cities and centres, can be difficult to give users access to good, up-to-date material Can be expensive if the books and journals have to be purchased Motivating users can be a problem Lack of a National Quality Standard can make identifying "quality" learning material/sources difficult
Engaging in open learning or self-managed learning	*For user:* Can do the work at any time, in any place (within reason), and at own pace	*For user:* Needs motivation and stamina Needs good self-management of time May need certain technical competencies *Overall:* May be difficult for those only accustomed to traditional classroom-based teaching or training Can be costly, particularly where courses are fee-for-service or use "high-tech" facilities
Attending workshops, courses, seminars or conferences	*For user:* Can meet with other people who have similar development needs and interests Can keep up-to-date with the latest ideas and current practice	*For user:* May have to travel some distance *Overall:* May involve the user leaving the workplace or impose additional demands on work time May lack any follow-up or ongoing support Lack of a National Quality Standard can make identifying "quality" events difficult

> "jack of all trades" program director, who combines strong administrative and management skills, broad-based knowledge of computer hardware and software, teaching skills, and proposal writing skills. Finding and training the kinds of staff needed to create successful programs is a challenge, one that we observed in the programs that we studied. People with technical skills are much in demand, and nonprofits compete with industry, where salaries and working conditions are usually more attractive for qualified staff. CTCNet is exploring several approaches to professional development in community technology programs, but the scale of the challenge calls for coordinated effort by nonprofit support organizations.

The idea of co-ordinating effort in this area has also been proposed at various forums of ITU and other international agencies. Many ICT-based projects flounder because of insufficient attention to the training, not only of the users or clients, but of the managers and staff responsible for such projects. This has also been found to be the case with telecentre projects, where it is not the availability of the technology that is crucial, but its acceptability and appropriate application. High-quality ongoing training is crucial to ensure that the providers are familiar with these technical resources, aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and capable of using them to maximum advantage. However, this is not the only requirement.

Raul Roman of Cornell University conducted a survey into training for telecentre managers. His work (Roman 2000) involved a panel of 45 experts from 17 countries — 23 from Africa, Asia and Latin America, and 22 based in Europe and North America. He concluded:

> From the results of the questionnaire, it is clear that business and financial skills are a priority. It is not only the essential ability that was mentioned most often by the panelists, but it is one of the topics massively rated as very important in the survey. It also denotes that most panelists had a business-oriented model of telecenter in mind when they filled in the survey, and thus it gives an idea of the importance given to sustainability. Computer and technical skills was the other most prominent topic.

According to those surveyed, management skills and computer skills were the "necessary prerequisites" to making telecentres work. There was strong support for the idea of structured training for telecentre managers and the great majority of the respondents agreed with the idea that "a general training program for telecenter managers and staff can effectively be adapted to different experiences and cultures." Drawing on the information provided by the panellists, Roman drew up the following list of training modules that would satisfy most of the expressed needs:

- communication and development
- the role of telecentres in development
- the role of the telecentre manager
- basic computer skills
- basic business and financial skills
- information production skills
- needs assessment skills and evaluation (research) methods

- training skills
- participation skills
- human resource management
- marketing and public relations skills

TRAINING SUPPORT NETWORKS FOR TELECENTRES

Ideally, as soon as a telecentre network or system is set up, there should be some form of co-ordinated training provision and infrastructure. As Dr. Lars Engvall (2000), President of the International Association of Community TeleService Centres (CTSC), observes:

> There is no limit to the possibilities which these centres can offer to rural and urban development. There is, however, a need to create an organisation which supports such telecentres with skilled manpower (i.e., training programmes), where dynamic persons from the provinces, districts or communes can be offered to take on this challenging task.

It would, however, appear that while telecentres are used around the world as bases for training those in the community, there has been relatively little effort put into training the staff responsible for promoting and providing or facilitating that training. Community-based telecentres are often poorly funded and heavily reliant on voluntary effort from within their communities. Such is the effort needed to get the centres built and equipped that there is little left in the way of time and resources to ensure that the managers, staff and volunteers are adequately prepared for the work. Some individual projects address this issue, but they are often doing so in isolation and "re-inventing the wheel." Projects are much more likely to thrive and perform well if they can receive some training support through such international agencies as ITU, UNESCO or the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), and national and professional organisations, as described below.

Scandinavia

The Association of Nordic Telecottages (FILIN) was the world's first telecentre association, established in 1986. FILIN launched the newsletter *FILINFO*, conducted the first survey of telecentres (Qvortrup 1987), and established a "network of competence" designed to help individuals exchange experiences and co-ordinate qualifications. This association was instrumental in the successes of the early telecentre movement in Scandinavia and provides an exemplar for other countries.

United States

The CTCNet (Community Technology Centre Network) in the U.S. is a national association comprising nearly 300 community technology programmes/telecentres. As Cisler et al. describe it (*www.idrc.ca/pan/telecentres.html*):

> CTCNet provides technical assistance (through its staff and affiliates), peer support (through on-line communications, national and regional meetings, and print communications) and examples of best practices

(through its Web site and other publications, and through a new program called the Community Technology Leadership Institute).

Access to CTCNet resources helps community technology centre staff in the U.S. to:

- find appropriate hardware and software for a variety of audiences and purposes;
- set up local area networks;
- identify funding sources;
- design evaluation instruments;
- deal with the challenge of preventing inappropriate use of computer equipment;
- train staff and volunteers;
- develop partnerships with other community institutions;
- customise curricula and materials for use by particular age, language and other groups; and
- schedule the use of computers and other facilities.

The excellent *Center Startup Manual* published by CTCNet contains a detailed blueprint for community organisations setting up telecentres. It covers community needs assessment, site preparation, budgeting, staffing and other components.

United Kingdom

The UK Telework, Telecottage and Telecentre Association (TCA), established in 1993, has been instrumental in supporting the development of the telecentre movement in the UK and helping many of the early telecentres find initial funding. The TCA provides members with a range of services, including an award-winning newsletter, seminars/conferences, offers on teleworking products and services, an advisory service, access to the TCA online electronic forum (*www.tca.org.uk*), information about job opportunities, political lobbying and reports/surveys on telecentre activities (Murray and Cornford 1998).

The TCA was also the key initial organisation behind the development of the UK National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) in Teleworking, which assembled the key skills of a teleworker and teleworker manager into a single training programme and qualification. The TCA has also supported the development and promotion of training materials for these courses (described in more detail below) and was the certifying body for these awards until recently, when the certificate was formally adopted by the UK Information Technology National Training Organisation (ITNTO).

Australia

A number of national conferences have been held in Australia to promote and share experience in telecentre management and operation. The WA Telecentre Network, described in Chapter 2 of this book, organises annual conferences and provides training for its 76 local telecentre management committees and telecentre co-ordinators. All of these events are organised through the central Support Unit. This Support Unit also provides Regional Co-ordinators whose role it is to provide guidelines, information materials and advice for communities starting up new centres and ongoing training for the management committees and telecentre staff on a regional and individual as-needed basis. As the channel through which most funding is sought and obtained, the Support

Unit is in a strong position to require and support on-the-job training for all of those who must: survey the community needs and business opportunities; draw up the business plans, documents of incorporation, constitutions, Memorandums of Understanding and resource and performance agreements; compose the annual reports; and provide the ever-widening range of services.

Hungary

An extremely proactive approach is being planned in Hungary, where the Hungarian Telecottage Association (HTA) (*www.telehaz.hu*) is developing a competency-based telecentre management training qualification loosely based on the UK Teleworking NVQ. The President of the HTA, Matyas Gáspár, is working closely with telecentre specialists in the UK to develop this programme. He says, in a recent e-mail to the authors:

> The rapid increase in the number of telecottages (by the end of year 2000, nearly 200 telecottages will have been established in the last two to three years), as well as the increase in the number of people working in the field (currently approximately 400 people) has caused an intensification of interest beyond the non-profit sector. Along with increasingly intense interest in utilisation of the network by state agencies, local governments and the private sphere, these factors heighten the importance of quality services, high quality level, reliability, and stability of the network. The answer to this challenge is based on one essential element: the training of telecottage leaders and employees, which currently takes place in an eclectic manner, alongside everyday tasks and responsibilities and in conjunction with certain grants.

Argentina

The Argentinian telecentre movement does not yet have a well-developed training system for telecentre staff. The sketchy government guidelines for selecting such staff from the local communities suggest that at least one member of staff in each centre should have technical knowledge and experience of computers and LANs and at least one other should have a teaching background in formal or vocational education or in-company training, and preferably have skills in educational applications of ICT. The guidelines also suggest that all staff should demonstrate an "open, flexible, receptive, social-oriented profile" suitable for working with the public and maintaining strong links with the communities they serve. However, Dario Goussal, Professor of the Department of Electronics Universidad Nacional del Nordeste at Resistencia, Argentina, observes that such requirements are "loosely accomplished" in most communities. In an e-mail to the authors he says:

> Initial training of the local leaders was undertaken by means of a 40-hour course, almost entirely devoted to basic technical matters which, for different reasons, was poorly designed and organised. It was clear that the contents and the design of such training was rather imposed by their respective providers (e.g., Microsoft and a national university, at the time largely engaged in TV courses about Microsoft applications)…. Consequently, I suppose that local leaders should have almost no training on the main subject we had suggested for training (how to run a community telecentre).

Egypt

Dr. Sherif Hashem, Assistant Professor of Engineering Mathematics at the Faculty of Engineering, Cairo University, Egypt, recently appointed to the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology to launch a national telecentres programme, is interested in the idea of a national training programme for telecentre staff. In an e-mail to the authors he said:

> Currently, there are no special training programs prepared for telecentre staff. At the Ministry… where we are running a project to establish 120 computer training centres [telecentres], we are setting up minimum requirements for basic training of trainers program, in addition to setting the minimum qualification requirements for each staff position. Similar requirements were set before in the case of Kid's telecentres or Kid's Clubs, which is another national telecentre program.

South Africa

South Africa is heavily promoting telecentres. Polly Gaster of CIUEM, Mozambique, and Mike Jensen, a South African telecentre consultant (both contributors to this book) reported to the authors in e-mails that UNESCO was in the process of developing a telecentre start-up and operating manual for the country's community telecentres. Polly Gaster also reports that in Mozambique:

> We have two [telecentre] pilots, we organised special courses for the total of four staff in computer skills, basic administration and finance and promotion/marketing, and followed up with on-the-job support of one kind or another…. Of course everything is in Portuguese.

Mike Jensen mentions that the South African Universal Service Agency (USA) has run a number of ad hoc courses for telecentre operators, details of which may be found at *www.usa.org.za*. Peter Benjamin of the University of the Witswatersrand, South Africa (contributor of Chapter 7 of this book), ran a five-week basic management training course for 50 telecentre managers in South Africa in late 1997 and in February 2000, implemented the Vodacom-Link training project on computer literacy for telecentre managers in Johannesburg.

Portugal

In Portugal, the National Telecottage Association, TC-Portugal, was instrumental in setting up 20 rural telecottages in 1992 – 1993 to revitalise rural areas. The training programme for the Telecottage Managers was closely based on the original City and Guilds VQ Level 3 for Telecottage Managers and Supervisors developed by a European-funded partnership involving the UK TCA in 1993.

Other countries

In a recent e-mail to Gaston Zongo of the IDRC, Gilles Cliché of the IDRC/CRDI indicated that he was not aware of much training activity in telecentre management but that there had been some programmes on ICT, both for trainers and trainees:

> Among them are the Unganisha project at IDRC and its ITrain component with a modular approach and a multicultural and gender sensitivity (*unganisha.idrc.ca/itrain/*); the CLACSO Buenos-Aires Distance Training on Internet and Teleworking with material in Spanish (*www.clacso.org/rdr97.html*) . . . an initiative of the Latin American Network of Networks; and a proposal to infoDev from the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) for an Online ICT Resource Centre for the Global Development Community…. [These] may not be directly or specifically targeting telecentres, but they can certainly serve their training needs, at least in part, and they make use of the technology itself in the delivery and production of training material.

Roman (2000) also includes interesting examples of telecentre training cited at a September 1999 meeting in Quebec on telecentre evaluation. These were in regard to the Colombian Neighbourhood Information Units (NUI), Peruvian franchised Red Cientifica Peruana (RCP), Uganda Acacia National Programme (in association with the National Foundation for Research and Development), and the Paraguayan, Ghanaian and Benin community learning centres in the LearnLink Project.

TRAINING COURSES AND MATERIALS

A wide range of courses and materials (some free) exists on the topics/modules identified by the Cornell survey (Roman 2000). Nationally and internationally recognised qualifications have also been established for computer professionals, computer users, telecommunications specialists, accountants and bookkeepers, human resource personnel, professional, marketing and sales staff, managers, trainers and community development specialists. But these are all general. What is lacking are specific courses and materials for telecentre managers and staff which contextualise these topics in telecentre or telecottage environments.

Arguably the best provision is in the area of teleworking. The European Commission has supported a considerable number of projects in this area. Under its ADAPT, EMPLOY and ICT programmes, it has helped to promote a number of national telework training schemes, including the UK Teleworking NVQ scheme (*www.itnto.org.uk*), and has supported transitional initiatives such as the European Computer Driving Licence certificate (*www.ecdl.com*) and LocalNet, the European Telework Manager Training Project (*www.bealtaine.ie*).

ADAPT is the European Social Fund's Human Resource Community Initiative designed to help employers and workers anticipate industrial change and deal with its effects. It has a specific priority, called ADAPT-BIS (Building the Information Society), linked to new information and communication technologies and human resources. *Telework: Some 100 Examples from ADAPT* states:

> ADAPT deals particularly with the impact of industrial change on workers and employers in small firms. Projects encourage attitudes and mechanisms which help workers, managers, service providers and policy-makers to prepare themselves for future evolution and change. ADAPT's telework projects are, therefore, concerned with the impact of technology on people — human resources — not specifically with the technology itself.

About 20 projects concerned with training teleworkers (including telecentre staff and users) have been supported under the ADAPT initiative. Most of these concern the introduction of teleworking or the training of teleworkers. Some are concerned with new types of telework in electronic commerce such as call centre agents and dispatchers, telemarketers, and help desk officers. Others focus on jobs in virtual banking on the Internet and clinical information systems, including online medical consultation. These projects have developed and tested a range of telework training programmes and a considerable amount of training material, much of it using multimedia and Internet technologies.

As indicated by the Cornell survey, teleworking covers a diverse range of skills and there has never been a single qualification covering all these. This problem was recognised by the TCA in 1993 and, through a European Commission-funded project (operating under the EUROFROM initiative) was addressed through the teleworking New Vocational Qualification (*www.itnto.org.uk*). This award was validated by both the UK City and Guilds Awarding Body and the TCA. Launched in early 1994, this programme, which comprises 20 units covering ICT, business administration and personal development skills, has gained in popularity and now more than 80 centres are registered to run this award scheme.

A partnership involving the Scottish Qualification Authority, ITNTO (Information Technology National Training Organisation) and European Commission's Leonardo-funded LocalNet project through the TCA, enabled a Teleworking NVQ to be developed as successor to the original Teleworker NVQ. The UK Qualification and Curriculum Authority formally approved this new award in June 1999 and it is now offered at both NVQ Level 2 (Using IT for Teleworking) and Level 3 (Managing IT for Teleworking).

Level 2 is targeted at teleworkers and telecentre users. Level 3 is aimed at managers and supervisors of telecentres and teleworkers in business and government organisations. As of July 2000, the Level 2 and Level 3 NVQs are being offered by the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA), City and Guilds Awarding Body and the OCR (Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations) bodies. The development of this qualification has also been supported by the LocalNet project, which is also developing a set of training materials for the qualification (see *www.bealtine.co.uk* and *www.smallworldconnections.com*). Some of the units are based on existing NVQs offered by, for example, the Small Firms Lead Body, Management Charter Initiative, and Employment National Training Organisation. Candidates are required to complete nine units — five mandatory and four from a group of 16 optional units.

The titles of the mandatory units are as follows:

- Ensure Your Own Actions Reduce Risks to Health and Safety
- Develop Your Own Effectiveness and Professionalism
- Manage the Effectiveness of a Teleworking Environment
- Maintain Information Technology Used for Teleworking
- Manage the Use of Electronic Communication in a Teleworking Environment

The optional units offer the trainees opportunities to:

- Design and produce documents using word processing software
- Design and produce spreadsheets
- Design and use databases

- Design and produce documents using graphics
- Design and produce presentations using information technology
- Assess the potential of the proposed business
- Investigate the requirements of any legislation to be complied with in setting up and running the business
- Establish how to finance a business start-up and keep track of money once the business is operating
- Develop a strategy for marketing and sales
- Contribute to the selection of personnel for activities
- Contribute to the development of teams and individuals
- Lead the work of teams and individuals to achieve their objectives
- Respond to poor performance in a team

These NVQs provide a radically new approach to training and certification in that the qualification requirements relate directly to the skills and knowledge needed in the workplace. In other words, the awards are competence based and not examination based. The assessment is flexible and related to the actual work done, but not done in a way that compromises the assessment's quality and reliability.

Any telecentres or telecentre networks looking for an effective framework for provding training to telecentre managers, staff and users should consider most carefully this list of topics and those identified by the Cornell survey and CTCNet (set out earlier in this chapter). Table 18.1 could act as a checklist for determining the most appropriate strategies for developing knowledge and skills in these critical areas.

CONCLUSIONS

The telecentre movement is barely a decade old, and in many countries it is still in its infancy. There is enormous and urgent need to train policy-makers and planners, telecentre managers and operatives, as well as the users of these centres. These needs must be considered and addressed at the very earliest stage, and systemically.

A number of international and national agencies, countries and networks have taken significant initiatives in this area and models of best practice and exemplars can be identified. There is now need for a greater sharing of expertise and resources to enable training to be accelerated and applied universally. There is need for more training of trainers and more training resources for this purpose. It is highly desirable that the telecentres should themselves make greater use of distance education techniques, training their own personnel through a mix of online, resource-based, face-to-face, and hands-on learning. It is important that such courses and materials exemplify the best principles of instructional design for individual or group learning. Much of this material already exists around the world, awaiting adoption or adaptation, and collaborative action is needed to share the expertise and the costs.

It is also important for the individuals managing telecentre systems to recognise that while training interventions are important, performance in real-work situations is also influenced by the organisational reward systems, inter-personal and power relationships, and values, norms and focus of the communities served. These challenges must also be addressed by those who lead such systems.

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New UK Teleworking NVQs

The New NVQ Standards assembled by ITNTO (Information Technology National Training Organisation; *www.itnto.org.uk*) were formally approved in June 1999. The new awards are:

Using IT for Teleworking — Level 2
Managing IT for Teleworking — Level 3

Copies of the new standards for these awards can be obtained from ITNTO at 16–18 Berners Street, London W1P 3DD (Tel: 0171 580 5577). Cost is £8 each.

To date, the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), the City and Guilds Awarding Body and the OCR bodies (Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examinations) are offering the award. For further information about the award in Scotland and centres offering the award, telephone the SQA Helpdesk at 0141 242 2214. For information on the award and centres offering the award in other parts of the UK, telephone City and Guilds Customer Services at 0171 294 3333 or OCR at 024 764 70033.