

Motivation, identity and competence development

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When analysing apprentices' motivation and the development of their occupational identities, one tends to look at these concepts as individual inputs into the process of acquiring competences in a development from novice to expert. But as developing competences is intrinsically linked to acquiring a professional identity as a member of a community of practice, such an identity is an aim of vocational education as well. Apprentices' motivation, too, is not a static factor, but changing during the apprenticeship in terms of extent as well as in terms of the normative sources of motivation – 'abstract' work in itself, the organisation or the profession.

These changes, then, can be empirically analysed according to organisation of learning processes at the company and/or at school as well as in their relation to the development of vocational competences.

In a recent study (Rauner/Haasler/Heinemann/Grollmann forthcoming), we developed a new model of competence measurement that was tested at 300 apprentices in the German Land Hesse. Here, we were able to relate competence development, organisation of work and learning and motivation and identity of apprentices in electronics.

Moreover, we conducted a study of 1.500 apprentices in the town of Bremerhaven, where we looked for relations between vocational identity, motivation and the organisation of work and learning (Heinemann/Rauner, forthcoming) in more than 50 professions.

The paper will present the main findings and point at further roads of investigation.