

## **The distributed nature of guidance at work: a learning resource for apprentices?**

Laurent Fillietaz, University of Geneva, Switzerland

This paper aims to contribute to a better understanding of the actual conditions in which guidance is provided to apprentices within Swiss firms. It analyses guidance at work drawing from methodological tools and theoretical notions borrowed from applied linguistics and the ethnography of communication. It reflects critically upon the advantages and limitations of a practice-based VET system that gives much weight to the workplace as a natural learning site for newcomers in the profession. More specifically, the presentation focuses on guidance as a dynamic and collective form of support provided to apprentices in ordinary work situations. Even though apprentices are under the supervision of one main supervisor within the workplace they train in, a number of other colleagues, experts, peers, etc. interact with them as they are engaged in a complex web of collaborative tasks. In that context, we ask: What kinds of guidance do apprentices receive from the various categories of workers they interact with? How do they manage the contradictions that might arise from this distributed nature of guidance at work? In what ways do these distributed forms of guidance constitute support or obstacles for their professional socialization? In this paper, we propose to address these issues, and others, analysing a corpus of video recordings documenting the ways apprentices interact with supervisors or experienced colleagues in various professions contexts (car mechanics, automation). The analysis will consist in two case studies, showing highly contrasted patterns in the way experienced workers provide guidance to apprentices.