

THEMATIC SESSION 3: Thursday, 26th March 2009, 11:00 – 12:30 (room: aula)

Informative contributions to VET research from sociological perspectives

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Sociological thinking can contribute considerably to better understand VET structure and processes. However Sociology has not played a major role in the emerging Swiss VET research programmes so far. Both its potential and usefulness within VET related scientific knowledge production seem to be underestimated. The symposium highlights how sociological research can contribute to comprehend the emergence and contexts of VET structures and the social effects they exert on VET actors (including students) – the latter considered as a crucial variety of VET 'effectiveness'. It intends to show that we need to consider VET actors as socially embedded if we want to analyse the 'efficiency' or the functionalities of VET systems. Four current research projects showing the interplay between social VET actors and structures in Switzerland shall be presented and the different educational relevance of their findings – its implications for learning contexts and teaching – will be discussed. The presented four research projects will focus school to VET transition, the socio-historical construction of commercial training, the role of productive work in VET, as well as apprenticeship and dropout.