

The efficiency of communication training in the service industry: some answers from a critical ethnography perspective

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In this paper, I will analyze some communication training programs provided in the service industry in Switzerland from an ethnographical perspective. I will address three central questions related to the form and content of these programs : a) how is communication training conceived, by whom and for what purposes? b) What language conceptions are generated in these training programs? c) How is communication training linked – or not – to actual communication and language practices at stake in the workplace? These three questions are strongly linked to the broader issue addressed in the panel, that is to the way ethnographic research can provide elements of answer to the efficiency of vocational training. Through this critical inquiry into the interrelation – or in some cases lack of interrelation - between effective practices and communication training programs, I shall highlight the importance of the ethnographical perspective in order to understand what count as efficiency for both the institution and the social actors engaged in the construction of the training programs and those who receive the training.