

Barabasch, A., & Keller, A. (2020). Innovative learning cultures in VET – ‘I generate my own projects.’ *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, 72(4), 536-554.

Abstract

The learning of apprentices is always embedded within the overall learning culture of an enterprise. The structures for learning, as well as the attitudes, values and beliefs of the members of the organisation in respect to training, influence the ways in which apprentices are socialised and prepared for the labour market. This qualitative case study focuses on the experience of apprentices within a large communications enterprise in Switzerland. It provides insights into an innovative learning culture and reflects on attitudes, values and practices of apprentices, work advisors, coaches and vocational education and training (VET) managers that support and encourage independent learning, benefitting both the organisation and the individual apprentice. The study shows which factors contribute to a positive learning experience for apprentices and how these support the development of competences that are essential in the modern workplace. They include taking initiative, acting autonomously, communicating challenges and seeking advice, critical thinking, selfmanagement, ability to work in different teams and the apprentices' management of their own learning processes. In addition, a number of innovative structural practices that shape the learning culture of the enterprise and serve as framing conditions within the socialisation process of the apprentices have been identified.