



**University of
Zurich** ^{UZH}

Institute of Secondary and Vocational Education



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11:30 – 12:30

Key note by Prof. Dr. Philipp Gonon

How to become a VET teacher in Switzerland - a look back and forward

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Presentation Pagoste



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SP.*



Overview*

Teachers and schools

Vocational Education in Switzerland

The Rise of VET school Teacher Training - a
genealogical perspective

Training of VET Teachers

Challenges and Future of VET teaching

* This presentation is partly based on the contribution “The Vocational School Teacher (VET Teacher) Training System in Switzerland”, authored by
Lena Freidorfer & Philipp Gonon, which will be published in the context of the PAGOSTE
project



Bildung: Teaching, Learning, Knowledge

Bildung in
a specific
setting:
Self-learner,
elder and
younger
person
in interaction



**Individualized
Learning**





Bildung – Individual and/or Mass-Schooling

Teaching and instructing in schools

“Volksbildung“, primary school
Mainly developed at the
Beginning in 19th
Century.

VET: end of 19th Century,
beginning of 20th Century
VET combines basic/**general**
Teachnig with vocational
orientation



<https://www.freundeskreis-salzmansschule.de/presseartikel-2/440-ein-schulgr%C3%BCnder-und-philanthrop/file.html>



School Infrastructure and Teaching for VET

- Primary Schools and Vocational Education and Training
- **Continuation Schools** in order to deliver more knowledge and repeat learned knowledge
- Switzerland: 1884 Amendement on Vocational Education supporting schools which offer vocational subjects





At the beginning: no specific regulations for VET teachers

- For vocational education, **the first decrees** in Switzerland in the **1880s** did not address vocational schools or teachers, although some learners were already being taught.
- Teachers at general, commercial, or industrial training schools, as they were called at the time, were **trained primary school teachers** or experienced specialists who taught basic or additional knowledge specific to the profession.
- **Civic education**, which was intended to prepare students for their tasks in the military and in society, played a special role and could be taught by the same teachers (Nager, 1914). Incidentally, from 1877 on they were also trained in **drawing lessons**.



Women and teaching, first attempts on VET schools

- Women in particular were also trained early on to become **primary school teachers**.
- They then later on entered the training system for vocational school teachers primarily through **nursing and social professions** or through training to become **household teachers**
- In Switzerland, **drawing schools on Sunday**, drawing schools later **transformed into industrial training schools** and ultimately into vocational schools (Wettstein, 2020).





The urgent needed reform, including VET teaching

- **Gottlieb Hug**, a teacher from Winterthur and author of the prize pamphlet "**Das gewerbliche Bildungswesen**" ("The Industrial Education System"), complained that teacher training and teacher further training were "**inadequate**" in many places.
- He considered the elementary school, as a feeder to vocational training, "insufficient" in terms of general education, as it violated the federal constitution, which **required the cantons to provide "sufficient instruction"** (Hug, 1881, p. 19).



Merchants and Teaching

- For **commerce and trading**, the educational institutions, which were run by **local merchant associations**, were primarily intended to **teach foreign languages**—such as French, English, and other languages—in oral and written form, but also accounting and commercial arithmetic. Even **Latin** was taught in one association, the Bernese Association for Merchants, and advertised as a "general means of education".
- The **situation of the teachers** was described by one expert as "**no special teachers**" for these lessons. Inclination and chance played a role in filling positions and led to teachers of all school levels from elementary school to university teaching these subjects. In many cases, **commercial teaching was a small sideline** for these teachers.



The first steps for VET teacher regulation (Botschaft 1962)

- The **Vocational Training Act (1930)** introduced **compulsory vocational training for apprentices**.
- This was systematically expanded and, over time, classes at **vocational schools were increasingly organized according to apprenticeship occupations** or, where this was not possible, at least according to occupations with similar training objectives.
- **Federal guidelines for teaching** at industrial and commercial vocational schools and **standard curricula** ensured uniform and **targeted teaching** and, together with other measures, **helped to make the vocational school a specific type of school**

The double task of Dual VET (according Swiss VET law 1962)

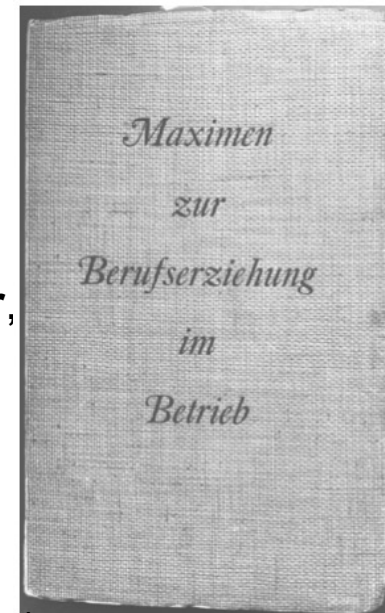
- „In-company training and vocational instruction form equal parts of the apprenticeship, which must **complement each other** in a meaningful way if the apprenticeship is to achieve its goal. A further task of the vocational school is the provision of voluntary courses for apprentices and further training courses in accordance (Article 44)“
- „For a large proportion of apprentices, who are in close contact with their environment through their work in the company, vocational school represents the last training before they enter working life and have to deal with its demands independently. In addition to imparting vocational knowledge, the **vocational school must therefore place even greater emphasis on offering its learners help in life**“





Pedagogisation of VET: the role of the teachers & instructors

- However, in view of the **educational mission** of the vocational school, the task of the teacher for general education subjects has also become more extensive and demanding.
- If teaching is to achieve its goal, **it must be given by teachers with sufficient professional and pedagogical training** (Art. 26)
- “...they should be introduced to the basics of didactics and methods in short-term courses»
- Today's teacher role tends towards the **learning facilitator, coach**



(Jeangros 1959)



Rise of VET Teacher Training

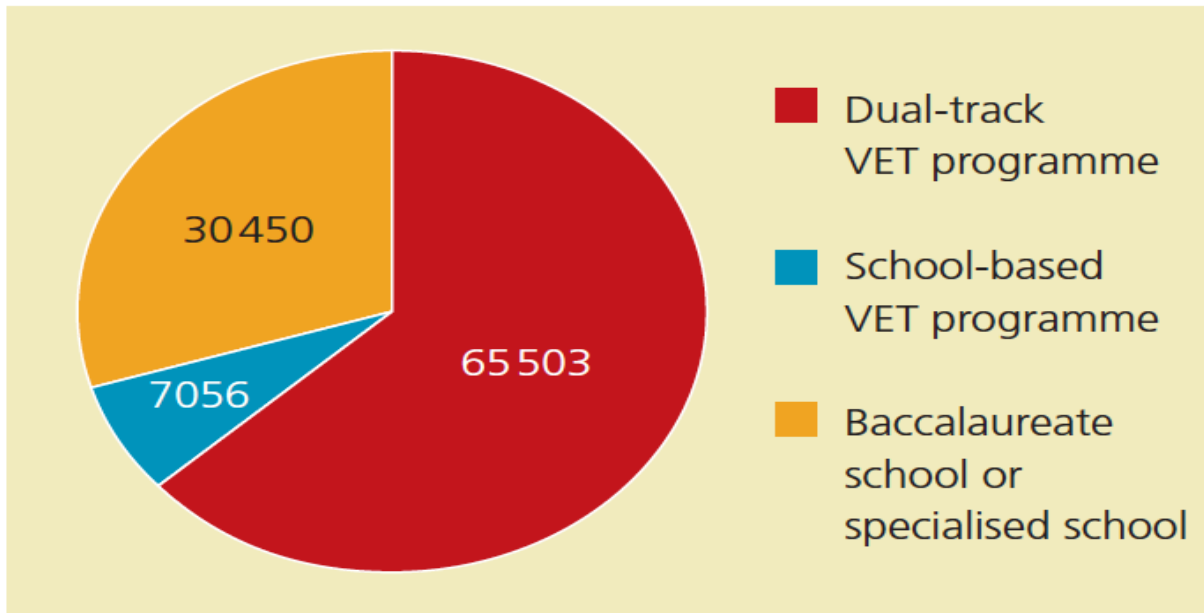
- In 1961, **federal subsidies** were paid to 269 industrial vocational schools, training workshops and technical schools, 98 commercial vocational schools and 45 trade and transport schools.
- The **compulsory nature of vocational education** also meant that the Confederation had to take charge of initial and further training. In 1936, with the cooperation of the cantons and interested professional associations, it ran **26 teacher training courses** with 556 participants
- In 1961, 877 teachers at industrial and commercial schools were given an **introduction or further training** in 38 courses.



Dual track VET and others 2019 (SBFI 2020, 11)

- The picture is quite stable (compared to past years)

Enrolment in upper-secondary level in 2019²





Specifics of VET Teacher Training in Switzerland today

- The training of VET teachers in Switzerland runs according to a **"consecutive organizational model"** (Barabasch & Fischer, 2019, p. 6). This means that a **higher vocational education or a university degree is required** to complete the training to become a VET teacher. Accordingly, the **vocational pedagogical training follows initial professional training** (Barabasch & Fischer, 2019; Maurer & Gonon, 2013).



Desired characteristics of VET teachers

- VET teachers are described as persons **who show patience, empathy, assertiveness, or, for example, enthusiasm** (e.g., Gonon, 2019; Schmid-Leupi, 2013).
- They show **pleasure in working with young people** and are able to deal with unexpected situations. Furthermore they are able to cope with apprentices who show a lack of interest or who resist specific learning tasks.
- VET **teachers should see themselves** in a certain way as educators, be aware of their role as **role models**, and enjoy leading a class (Schmid-Leupi, 2013). They should also be interested in learning processes and be willing and able to patiently and persistently **promote individual learning** (Schmid-Leupi, 2013).



The new teaching: assist apprentices' individual learning

- Today, in light of the development of new technologies as well as an increasing flood of information, VET teachers also have to be "**learning facilitators**" (Gonon, 2019, p. 438) in order to accompany learners to an ever greater extent in their individual learning process. This means that VET teachers are capable of assisting apprentices in their acquisition of knowledge and taking an interest in their learning processes (Gonon, 2019). As a result, there is an increasing demand for teachers to engage with apprentices' individual learning and to take on the role of a **learning coach** (Barabasch & Fischer 2022).
- It also seems to be increasingly necessary for VET teachers to **continue and further their education individually** in the interest of their own professionalization (Fischer, 2016).



VET teaching: General education (ABU) and occupation-specific education (BKU)

- There are two main training courses for teachers of VET schools in Switzerland. One is the teaching diploma for general education (ABU) and the other is the teaching diploma for occupation-specific education (BKU).
- This includes the teaching diploma Teaching at Commercial Vocational Schools.
- Training for VET school teachers is regulated in legislative terms by the Federal Vocational and Professional Education and Training Act (BBG, 2002), the Vocational Training Ordinance (Swiss Federal Council, BBV, 2003), and the framework curriculum for VET professionals (SERI, 2015).
- It should be added that the training of teachers of VET schools in Switzerland is carried out at universities of teacher education (PH), the Swiss Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (“Eidgenössische Hochschule für Berufsbildung,” abbreviated: EHB), and at the University of Zurich (UZH)



Teacher Training for General Education (“ABU”)

- Persons who want to become **ABU teachers** must have a teaching **diploma for compulsory schooling** (a teaching diploma recognized by the EDK) **or a university degree** (from a university of applied sciences, a university, or the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology) in a subject close to the ABU subject complex (consisting of the two main areas of society and language). Some examples—a degree in **German studies, history, law studies or even economics**.



To be trained as an ABU-teacher

- The training to become an ABU teacher takes **between two and four years**. This depends on whether the course of study is completed full time or part time, or whether the qualification as a teacher is sought in the main or secondary profession. The teaching degree in the major **includes a total of 1,800 learning hours**, equivalent to **60 ECTS**.
- The training in the **minor subject** comprises 300 learning hours and corresponds to **10 ECTS** (Swiss Federal Council, BBV, 2003).
- **Learning hours** include attendance times, independent learning and development phases, personal as well as group work, further events in the course of the training, learning checks, or also the practice and testing of what has been learned (e.g., in the course of internships at vocational schools) (Swiss Federal Council, BBV, 2003).



Part- and Full-time ABU

- After completing their training, **ABU teachers usually work in full- or part-time positions at VET schools or teach in various adult education institutions** (Wettstein et al 2014; Barabasch & Fischer, 2019).



Teacher Training for Occupation-Specific Education («BKU»)

- This usually requires a **degree from a higher vocational education** (e.g., completion of a vocational examination or a higher technical examination) or a university degree (e.g., degree from a university of applied sciences or university) **in the area to be taught**.
- In BKU teaching, and thus also in teacher training, there is a strong **focus on the connection between theory and practice**, so that particular **emphasis** is also placed on a **good practical knowledge** of the prospective teachers (SERI, 2015).



Specialist knowledge for BK teachers

- Depending on the institution providing the training, further professional expertise or knowledge in a particular area to be taught is required. **As a rule, practical experience at a company (six months), teaching experience at a VET school**, or, for example, a letter of recommendation from the VET school where one last taught are also specified as additional requirements by the training institutions
- BKU students are often lateral entrants (Schmid-Leupi, 2013). They **are often proven specialists with comprehensive job-related competencies who held management positions or were active as project managers before starting their education**. As a result, they are not infrequently also used to working in teams, planning work processes, or organizing and leading group work and ultimately know working life very well (Schmid-Leupi, 2013).



Professional examination of VET teachers

- The **professional examination ("BP")** is the first form of professional specialization after completion of basic vocational training. The BP is part of higher vocational education and training, which in the Swiss education system is **located at the tertiary level (B) alongside universities (tertiary A)**. Upon passing the examination, students are awarded a federal certificate of proficiency (Wettstein et al., 2014).



Broad range of topics for ABU teachers

- The **content** for the training to become an ABU teacher is divided into the following two learning areas:
- The first is **society**, comprehensively the following eight thematic areas: **ethics, identity and socialization, culture, ecology, politics, law, technology, and economy**. The individual topics are not considered in complete isolation from one another but rather in an interdisciplinary manner (Uhr et al., 2022).
- The second is **language and communication** (communicative language skills and their use in personal, professional, and social contexts).
- It should also be noted that these **two learning areas** are equally important in the training of ABU teachers



BKU content and VET schools

- The training to become a BKU teacher is completed with a **federally recognized diploma for teaching at VET schools in the professional field.**
- After completing their training, **BKU teachers usually work at VET schools or in the further education sector.** Many teachers only work part time at a school and also work at a company or run their own business (Schmid-Leupi, 2013; Wettstein & Gonon, 2009).
- BKU teachers also have access to a wide range of **continuing education and training opportunities.** These are offered, as in the case of ABU teachers, at teacher training colleges or other training institutions



VET teacher as career changer



A well developed VET teacher training is important in order to offer rewarding career opportunities

The typical vocational school teacher, however, is still **often a career changer**, whether after completing a university degree outside of school or after several years of professional activity in a school or non-school setting. The motives for entering a vocational school range **from the desire to reorient oneself to dissatisfaction with one's previous work and professional position** and the opportunity associated with entering teaching to accomplish a type of advancement and retraining (Novak, 2018).



Interplay of school and practising a profession

- The VET school is the **one of the three learning** venues where teachers teach theoretical training components to apprentices. Training at the VET school consists of vocational and general education (SERI, 2022; Wettstein & Gonon, 2009). "By teaching the theoretical foundations for practising a profession and through general education," **learners are promoted here by the VET teachers in "professional, methodological, and social competencies"** (SERI, 2022, p. 10). At this learning site, teachers not only impart theoretical knowledge but also reflect with the learners on their experiences from company practice. Gonon (2019) also describes VET schools as "**competence centres**" with regard to their increasing tasks and requirements in the areas of education and continuing education (Gonon, 2019, p. 438).



Teaching and the varieties of learners

- Teachers at VET schools also take into account—and this is another educational mandate of VET schools—the **different learning prerequisites and talents of learners** and encourage them accordingly. Moreover, they consider the different needs of apprentices (e.g., learners with learning difficulties or with special abilities). They also ensure the equality of male and female learners and strive for the elimination of disadvantages, for example with regard to apprentices with disabilities (Wettstein & Gonon, 2009).
- A particular challenge for VET teachers can be the different learning performance as well as the **different prior knowledge of the learners** (depending on their basic vocational training).



Challenges and the future of VET Teacher Training in Switzerland

- Vocational schools are **currently undergoing a transformation process** from traditional schools to "competence centres" that have to perform a variety of tasks related to education and training, which will sooner or later also have an impact on the training of vocational school teachers (Grollmann, 2005, p. 9).
- In addition to the special focus on other places of learning and the inclusion of cooperation between places of learning, it is in particular the requirement to be a learning guide that suggests a modified self-image of the teachers (Hartmann, 2012, p. 98).



„Virtuoso of adaption“

- On the basis of the work situation, which today requires largely individualized and permanent adaptation processes, the new vocational school teacher is also characterized as a "**virtuoso of adaptation**" (Münk, 2001, p. 230), an attitude that—in view of unfavourable institutional conditions—is sometimes presented as a constraint () or, conversely, as a **heroic disposition** (see Gassmann, 2015, p. 13).
- Accordingly, the (new) professionalization should be geared towards acquiring specific competencies (transversal competencies such as critical thinking and problem solving) and indispensable attitudes situationally by testing possible alternatives for action. In this context, **research-based learning** is important (Schaffenrath, 2008, p. 367).



VET teaching as providing independent learning

- Overall, the position of the vocational school teacher has also changed since the early days of the VET system. They are no longer **regarded** merely as adjuncts in a secondary role to in-company training but rather as **professionals** providing independent learning support (or coaching).
- Vocational teachers in the 21st century are **expected to be learners themselves** and even more, enthusiastic learners. In addition to that they should also be creative, digitally professional, flexible and able to **react quickly to changes**, i.e. deal with new didactic requirements (Rauseo et al., 2021; Zhou et al., 2022; Zogolowek, 2018).



Digitization

”

We don't innovate simply for the sake of innovation or because that's how it's done today or because it's simply part of our good reputation, but we put the learners at the center. We are very much concerned with pedagogy, with 'what makes sense' and 'what could be optimized today'. What is also fun? How can we make learning sustainable?"

Head of a VET school
Schmitz et al. 2023

07.11.2023

Quantitative surveys on the status of digital transformation throughout Switzerland
225 school leaders, 2248 teachers, 8915 learners)
Qualitative case studies of innovative schools
Currently: 10 school portraits, surveys of school leaders



How to cope with digitization

- The domestic convention was particularly dominant since school leaders stressed the added pedagogical value of digital technologies **for a more individualized and self-directed learning and teaching**. Industrial justification was also prominent, as school leaders emphasized students` acquisition **of digital competencies in a knowledge society**. Furthermore the potential of digital technologies to facilitate administrative work and the correction of students` assignments was **an argument for digital transformation**.



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Thank you for your attention!

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“Like a Swiss watch” - (Vocational) Education System (Upper Secondary & Tertiary Level)

