Chapter 5
Success, Well-Being and Social Recognition: An Interactional Perspective on Vocational Training Practices

Stefano A. Losa, Barbara Duc, and Laurent Filliettaz

5.1 Introduction

In Switzerland, vocational education and training programs are the pathways most commonly followed by young people after compulsory education. The majority engages in the dual VET system, which is often considered an efficient way of sustaining the transition from school to work. Nowadays this is a matter of concern in Switzerland and in the canton of Geneva, the context of our study, where high levels of exam failures and dropouts from apprenticeship can be observed (Filliettaz 2010b; Stalder and Nägele 2011). Whereas global theoretical explanations could be used to explain such an issue in terms of the knowledge discrepancy between school and work for instance, a detailed interactional framework is seldom enacted to understand the fine-grained processes of vocational learning. However, as evidenced in recent research conducted by Lamamra and Masdonati (2009), attrition rates rely to a large extent to the quality of workplace interpersonal relations and trainers' support during learning encounters.

From this observation, our aim is to develop a microscopic approach to vocational training participative practices and interactions. By adopting a situated perspective on learning (Brown et al. 1989), we see engagement and participation in activities and social interactions within communities of practice as key contributions to learning, and also to the construction of identities. As shown by Lave and Wenger (1991), learning is deeply connected to becoming a legitimate member of a community of practice. For apprentices, this requires participation in joint activities and being able to "position [themselves] in a complex network of relations

S.A. Losa (✉) • L. Filliettaz
Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, University of Geneva, Uni Pignon, Bd du Pont-d'Arve 40, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland
e-mail: stefano.losa@unige.ch

B. Duc
Swiss Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training, Avenue de Longemalle 1, 1020 Renens, Switzerland

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involving other apprentices, teachers, trainers and co-workers" (Filliettaz 2010a, p. 30). Other scholars like Billett (2001) have also paid attention to contextual and social conditions that may have an impact on learning opportunities. They have specifically focused on the forms and qualities of guidance processes through which experts orient newcomers to workplace production tasks. In this perspective, it becomes relevant to investigate how participants involved in interaction position themselves and how this positioning contributes to the *expansive* or *restrictive* nature of learning environments (Fuller and Unwin 2003).

Our contribution focuses on the relationship between trainers and apprentices within training centers and aims to highlight how interactional processes can lead to a legitimate, recognized and valued social position within learning communities of practice. We consider this 'successful' dimension an important component of learning processes and construction of learning trajectories. Thus, we sought answers to the questions: How do apprentices negotiate forms of participation to communities of practice? How do they actively contribute to their legitimacy? How do vocational trainers shape specific participation formats to apprentices? How do they contribute to bring recognition and legitimacy to these forms of participation?

Drawing on video-recorded data recently collected in a training center involving first year apprentices in industrial trades, social recognition processes were investigated by adopting an interactional and multimodal perspective analyzing verbal and non-verbal behavior in naturally occurring training practices (Filliettaz 2010c; Filliettaz et al. 2010; Kress et al. 2001). Two contrasting case studies focusing on apprentices experiencing distinct learning trajectories will be examined. The first one leads to valued forms of participation, the other one marginalizes the role of the apprentice within the community of practice.

5.2 An Interactional Framework on Social Recognition

5.2.1 *Social Recognition and Contextual Legitimacy*

For decades social recognition has been thoroughly investigated as a research domain. In contemporary sociology for example, social recognition has been defined in terms of social and civil rights and associated with other societal phenomena like multiculturalism, ethnicity, democratic participation and sexuality (Taylor 1994; Fraser 1995, 2000; Honneth 1996). Within social psychology, in particular the seminal work of Mead (1967), social recognition has a long research tradition, conceptualized in terms of basic needs and background motivation sources for the development of one's individual self and explaining individual behavior. According to Jacobsen and Kristiansen (2009, pp. 50–51), social recognition has been either approached as an abstract philosophical issue or referred to the "person's subjective perception of being recognized by his/her surroundings". They argue, however, that "the intermediary realm between self and others

constituted by actual people engaging with each other in actual face to face interaction has been neglected" (2009, p. 51).

By focusing on the trainer/trainees relationship within training centers, we intend to explore the "intermediary realm" of face-to-face recognition processes. To understand recognition as driven by "interactional, situational or interpersonal" factors, Jacobsen and Kristiansen (2009, p. 51) adopt a Goffmanian perspective on social recognition (Goffman 1959, 1963). The authors draw on the distinction between "cognitive recognition" and "social recognition". As defined by Goffman, the former refers to "a process by which one individual 'places' or identifies another, linking the sight of him with a framework of information concerning him", the latter is more concerned with "the process of openly welcoming or at least accepting the initiation of an engagement, as when a greeting or a smile is returned" (as cited in Jacobsen and Kristiansen 2009, p. 58). In this way, social recognition is understood as interactional recognition "constituted by social, ceremonial and indeed interactive rules and norms of engagement with others in actual social interaction" (Jacobsen and Kristiansen 2009, p. 59). The Goffmanian framework on recognition is thus strongly based on the symbolic interplay between participants and the management of their *faces*. Following Goffman's perspective, people in social encounters display a certain valuable image of their self and are permanently working to orient the impression they make on other participants. Indeed, people are able to act as a certain type of person or enact specific roles through verbal and body language especially. However, when acting, people also give off expressions that are mostly involuntary or uncontrolled. Conveying and maintaining the self-image they want to display appears as a complex work, particularly because the recognition of one's face largely depends on others' judgment. Highlighting interactional processes of contextual recognition and legitimacy can thus be described and analyzed as impression management. From this standpoint, Goffman's dramaturgical perspective (Goffman 1959, 1963, 1974) provides analytic tools of particular importance for our analysis. First, the notions of *face* and *face work* highlight how individuals in interaction are bound to the symbolic recognition they will afford one another and to the need to consistently work out their self-impression. Second, the concept of *participation framework* captures the interactional involvement of participants and the ways this involvement may be permanently reframed.

5.2.2 *Interactional Participation in Vocational Training*

As Goffman's analysis of the "interaction order" refers to a wide range of everyday social encounters, his theoretical frame can be applicable to specific interaction settings, including vocational training practices. Focusing on vocational training environments, this paper investigates learning-driven interactions between trainers and apprentices by describing interactional strategies and practices of impression management. That is, what does it mean then to participate (or not) in a legitimate or valuable way within vocational training interactions?

Although vocational training relationships have been extensively studied within educational research, understanding them from an interactional perspective is a relatively recent affair. Central to this field is the pivotal work of Lave and Wenger (1991) on communities of practice, which led a number of scholars to approach vocational learning processes as relational practices and joint accomplishments (Billett 2009; Filliettaz et al. 2008; Kunégel 2005; Mayen 2002 *inter alia*). Such collective and community-based perspectives on learning show among other things that groups and communities are not only carrying "a *shared repertoire* of communal resources" for learning, like "language, routines, sensibilities, artifacts, tools, stories, styles" (Wenger 2000, p. 229). Communities of practice also share among their participants a repertoire of moral and behavioral expectations like norms, beliefs, values, attitudes, individual and role-based engagement. Thus, capacities, competencies, attitudes and recognizable behaviors, legitimate and valuable positions, for example, are somehow contextually defined within communities of practice according to this salient repertoire of moral and behavioral expectations. This is particularly visible in the Lave and Wenger (1991) core concept of "legitimate peripheral participation". This concept,

> provides a way to speak about the relations between newcomers and old-timers, and about activities, identities, artifacts, and communities of knowledge and practice. It concerns the process by which newcomers become part of a community of practice. (Lave and Wenger 1991, p. 29)

Here, legitimacy is about the recognition and the acceptance of the apprentice's novice identity from an old-timer trainer. In other words, trainers expect apprentices to act in a consistent and relevant way according to their ratified learner position that enables them to become full-participants of the community.

From an interactional perspective, actors who are involved in a learning process need to interactively align each other to what is normatively expected according to the social role they take on. This leads us to consider participatory practices in vocational learning settings as relevant candidates for observing how learning processes may be sustained or hindered in specific interactional settings. As shown by Billett (2004), individual engagement and agency are central components of learning within workplace environments. Consequently, being involved in a valued and recognized way may have strong implications in terms of access to knowledge and membership within learning communities of practice. In this sense, individual engagement stands for "participation" since participation "entails a sense of belonging (or a desire to belong), mutual understanding and a 'progression' along a trajectory towards full participation which – indirectly – defines the community which is the target of 'belonging'" (Handley et al. 2006, p. 649).

Learning through collective practices and interaction is seldom settled linearly. Collective learning configurations rather involve heterogeneous and unequal forms of participation and mutual relationships amongst participants. Heterogeneity and complexity among learning communities of practice emerge across several dimensions such as boundary crossing, actors' non-engagement within theirs roles,

multiactivity, etc. When considering trainer/apprentices relationships within vocational training interactions, two main sources of tensions may be identified: a *moral* tension and an *interactional* tension. Moral tensions involve personal-based forms of conflicts. Apprentices may belong to several communities of practice in which different roles and identities are mobilized. Thus, they have to locally negotiate or navigate between these multiple identities. As Handley et al. (2006, p. 648) write:

> An individual's continual negotiation of 'self' within and across multiple communities of practice may, of course, generate intra-personal tensions as well as instabilities within the community. One example of this in the workplace is the scenario where a newcomer experiences a conflict of identity in relation to a role or practice he or she is expected to adopt (...). [The] newcomer may choose to maintain a marginal (Wenger 1998) form of participation in order to avoid compromising his or her sense of self (...).

The possibility to avoid compromising one's self leads Handley et al. (2006, p. 649) to consider that there are "variations in the degree of participation (as felt by individuals or recognized and labeled by others members)" within "peripheral", "full" or "marginal" forms of participation. Moreover, apprentices may not necessarily wish to belong to the community of trainers, as argued by Mottier Lopez (2008) about school contexts: pupils do not seek to become teachers. Regarding the trainers' side, moral tensions could arise from status negotiation. As noted by Lave and Wenger (1991), trainers can feel their authority threatened by apprentices becoming full participants. This later point is reinforced by Billett (2009, p. 90), who explains that experts may cope with such threats by assigning novices to marginal tasks as well as maintaining them in peripheral or even marginal positions:

> Experts' reluctance to guide and provide close interactions will likely weaken the quality of workplace learning. Such reluctance may arise from fears about loss of status or concerns about being displaced by those whom they have guided and supported.

The second form of tension can be referred to as an *interactional tension*. While addressing an interlocutor, speakers are often simultaneously engaged in a plurality of activity frames. As noted by Filliettaz (2002), the complexity of "real" interactions depends on the multiplicity of interactional foci in which each interlocutor can simultaneously be engaged in. Within vocational training settings, for example, apprentices tend to solicit (or be solicited by) the trainer while being observed by their mates or directly communicating with them. Within such complex interactional configurations, endorsing a legitimate role of an apprentice and doing *facework* may involve rather different forms of talk when addressing the trainer or his mates. In other words, the participants' multi-oriented behaviors in interaction involve a multiplicity of frames (Goffman 1974) that can sometimes be at odds and generate tensions.

Without being exhaustive, these two forms of tensions show that any interaction works as a joint action (Clark 1996; Goffman 1959) in which participants must permanently and mutually negotiate their roles, expressions, *faces* and ultimately their legitimacy and recognition. According to this, *interactional participation* could be defined as "a mutual orientation the interactants manifest to each other

and the reciprocal engagement they display toward a joint activity" (Filliettaz et al. 2009, p. 99).

To understand how apprentices and trainers mutually participate in interaction and set the conditions for gaining or losing social recognition, empirical examples will be considered, referring to a specific methodological perspective.

5.3 Analyzing Vocational Training Interactions: Methodology and Data

To investigate social recognition in vocational training interactions, we adopt a linguistic approach to discourse and interaction. Such a framework combines several disciplines and/or analytic frameworks. In addition to Goffman's dramaturgical and interactional perspective mentioned above (Goffman 1959, 1963, 1974), contributions from the ethnography of speaking and interactional sociolinguistics (Gumperz 1982) are also central to our analysis. This later perspective enables us to account for the complex relations linking contextual information with participants' interactional behavior in general and the production of speech in particular. Gumperz shows for instance how individuals engaging conversation locally interpret contextual meaning and achieve a joint understanding of situational features through *contextualization cues*. Moreover, insights coming from pragmatics and interactional linguistics (Filliettaz et al. 2008; Mondada 2004) are called upon to analyze language and speech as situated and sequentially organized realities. Finally, multimodal discourse analysis (Kress et al. 2001; Norris 2004; de Saint-Georges 2008) is also used to take into consideration the wide range of semiotic resources used by participants and which are external and complementary to verbal communication (gestures, gaze, body positions, interactions with objects and the material environment, etc.).

Empirical material used in this paper is part of a larger research project (Filliettaz and et al. 2008, 2009, 2010; Filliettaz 2010a, b, c) that aimed at tracing contrasting trajectories of participation in order to better understand the processes of learning and identity construction in the context of transition from school to work.[1] Data collection was conducted in the form of ethnographic observations of a cohort of 40 apprentices engaged in three different technical trades: car mechanics, automation and electric assembly. Such an ethnographic perspective allowed us to observe and document situations of vocational training in naturally occurring conditions in the Geneva area and in the various sorts of settings involved in the dual training system: vocational schools, private training centers, workplaces. With

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the consent of participants, ordinary training activities were video-recorded by researchers. The recordings took place after a long period of preliminary observation lasting several weeks, during which a relation of mutual recognition and confidence could be progressively established between researchers, apprentices and trainers. The complete data set comprises approximately 150 h of audio-video recordings collected in one vocational school, two private training centers and nine different workplaces. Special attention was paid to training interactions in which apprentices were involved in vocational learning tasks with a variety of experts, ranging from vocational teachers working in vocational schools, dedicated trainers hired by training centers or experienced employees available on the workplace. Apprentices were mainly male adolescents, aged between 15 and 18 years old. They were observed both during their first year and fourth year apprenticeship, namely at the beginning and at the end of their training program. In addition to audio-video and ethnographic observations, other empirical sources of information were collected, consisting primarily in field notes, research interviews and various written documents.

In the following paragraphs, we turn to two contrasting case studies related to two different apprentices observed during our research program. These two apprentices belong to the same cohort of automation apprentices observed during their first year apprenticeship both in a private training center and in various workplaces. For the aim of this article, we focus exclusively on data collected in the private training center. When looking at the ways these two apprentices engage with their trainer and peers, diverse abilities to hold participatory positions in interaction can be identified. A detailed analysis of different excerpts of data will illustrate how participation in interaction may consist in gaining visibility and centrality for some apprentices, or, conversely, in becoming an undesired focus of attention.

5.4 Examples of Valuable Trainee Participation Practices

5.4.1 Gaining "Visibility"

This section draws on empirical data collected in a private training center (CEP) dedicated to initial vocational training in trades related to the machine industry. Apprentices in the trade of automation spend the six first months of their training in this center in order to become familiar with basic technical knowledge and skills in areas like mechanics, electronics and electric wiring. These skills are seen as a necessary introduction before engaging in the more complex sorts of construction and maintenance tasks apprentices will encounter later on in the workplace.

The selected audio-video sequences transcribed below are mainly situations locally labeled by participants as moments of "theory". They relate to periods of instruction in which the trainer stands in a central position facing the group of

apprentices. The role of the trainer is then to display and explain several skills and techniques related to the use of machines or ways of carrying out specific tasks (i.e. assembling an electrical board). Compared to the apprentices, the trainer endorses a position of expert in line with his social role. Those moments of "virtual classroom" regularly occur during a training day at CEP. Observations show that during collective instruction or "theory", apprentices may be more or less active depending on their position in interaction. Accordingly, the trainer addresses apprentices either as a "class" or individually. In both cases, interaction can be considered as a whole in which participants share the same interactional environment and are mutually ratified as legitimate participants.

In what follows, we focus more specifically on the tutorial relationship between the trainer (MON) and one of the apprentices, named Donald (DON). DON is a 16-years-old French-speaking first-year apprentice who can be considered as high performing. He claimed to have had a long-standing interest for electronics and was able to access the automation apprenticeship program immediately after compulsory school. Observations show that DON regularly takes an active stance (i.e. questions, answers, comments) in reaction to MON's solicitations. The position of "centrality" assumed by DON is used here as a privileged frame for understanding the interactional construction of socially recognized forms of participation. In other terms, the asymmetry between MON's and DON's institutional roles allows to highlight the interdependent relationships linking DON, the trainer and the rest of the group.

The first two sequences focus on DON's interactional practices of gaining centrality compared to other apprentices. A third extract will highlight, in turn, the vulnerability of these roles due to the interactional interdependence binding them to each other.

5.4.2 *Negotiating Alignment and Active Participation Practices*

This first sequence refers to a situation of collective instruction (theory moment) in which the trainer (MON) explains how to use the milling machine for edging a metal part according to a specific angle. As shown by the data, DON makes use of numerous interactional opportunities to take on a particularly active role.

1. "because otherwise you wouldn't ask us to come over" (Film No 202, 50′30 – 52′00)[2]

[2] The following transcripts are translated from French. Transcription conventions are listed in the Appendix.

50′30	1. MON:	okay come here everybody/ so\ on this workpiece (.) ((shows the workpiece)) we will have to make (1s) an angle (3s) according to the plan/ ((points at the plan))
	2. DON:	yes ((leans over to look more closely at the plan)) [Fig. 5.2]
	3. MON:	an angle of forty-five degrees\do you think that's the right way\ ((approaches a metal workpiece to the milling machine))
	4. DON:	no\
	5. ??:	no\
	6. MON:	why/
	7. DON:	because otherwise you wouldn't ask us to come over\
	8. ??:	hehehe:
	9. MON:	well do::ne this is ((smiles and rises the index finger)) [Fig. 5.1] another reason/ (2s)
51′15		so a tool like this one/ [Fig. 5.3] it only works for little chamfers or things like that whereas here/ we will have an substantial quantity of material to remove\ we need to cut down to ten millimeters\
	10. DON:	we have I think we have to
	11. MON:	deep yeah
	12. DON:	to rotate this ((comes close to the head of the cutter with his hand and mimics a rotation gesture)) <yeah>
	13. MON:	because this milling machine. is settled at forty-five degrees/ and what will happen with removed material\
	14. DON:	well the removed material will get stuck\
51′38	15. MON:	the removed material/ which is up/ ((points at the precise location on the milling machine)) will tend to slip down and get stuck . in the knives of the machine because it's larger and will get stuck down\
	16. DON:	and then the milling machine will be stuffed\
	17. MON:	and then the milling machine will be stuffed/ and then it will not work/ and then you will force/ and then it will not work at all\

The sequence starts with the trainer (MON) convoking the apprentices (1) who are working individually at their machines, to attend a collective instruction he is about to provide. Apprentices are addressed as a whole group ("*everybody*"). The trainer then anticipates (1–3) the next task apprentices will have to accomplish according to their learning program and explicitly asks the group if they know about the correct method to apply ("*do you think that's the right way*\").

This question affords DON the opportunity to start an impression management work through three interactional practices. First, he answers MON's class solicitation in a totally dispreferred or unexpected way ("*no...because otherwise you wouldn't ask us to come over*"). Such a displaced answer sounds like a misalignment to the trainer's question, which addresses DON as well as other apprentices as a whole. By "displacing" the trainer, such an answer highlights DON within a highly visible position *standing him out* as different from *everybody*. Moreover, from this answer, it is also possible to hypothesize that DON already has a particular position within the group and compared to MON: this position allows his joke to be accepted, or at least not to be sanctioned (MON: "*well do::ne this is ((smiles and raises the index finger)) another reason*", see Fig. 5.1) or even brings him recognition from his mates ("*hehehe:*").

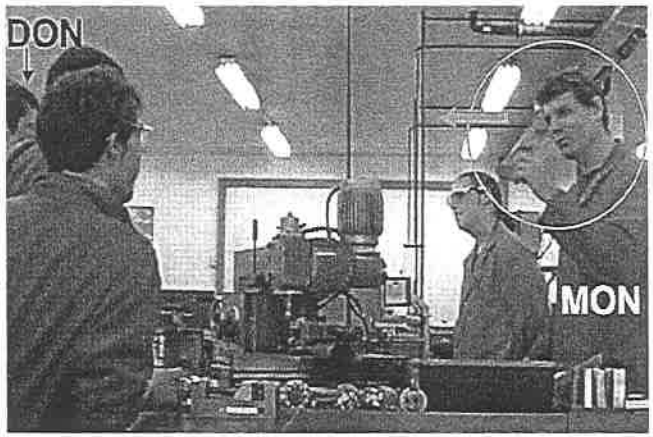

Fig. 5.1 MON laughs and rises his left hand

Second, DON manages his image by answering correctly (10–12) to MON's rephrasing of the problem (9). In contrast with the foregoing joke (7), DON's answer provides an impression of *active and thoughtful participation* showing his capacity to be seriously engaged when necessary. Third, the impression of engagement and participation is also pointed out by a frequent *anticipation* of MON's explanations (14 and 16). It is noticeable that MON seems to ratify DON's anticipations by rephrasing his answers (15 and 17). Consequently, he confers legitimacy to DON in front of the group. Several multimodal resources also support such outstanding participation practices. For instance, DON is the first apprentice to self-select himself as an answerer to MON's question (2). He also bodily highlights such a position by leaning over the plan on which the trainer and the other apprentices are focusing their attention (see Fig. 5.2).

This selected sequence of interaction also reveals the strong interdependencies linking the different participants despite their different status. Indeed, MON indirectly contributes to the interactional work of DON. For example, the "displacing" answer given by DON compels MON to sharpen and reformulate his questioning (9) into a more complex and argued issue, and to support it with multimodal resources (see Fig. 5.3) (*"so a tool like this one/ it only works for little chamfers or things like that whereas here/ we will have a substantial quantity of material to remove\ because we need to cut down to ten millimeters"*).

Similarly, MON has to take into consideration DON's correct answers by assessing them positively in front of the class (12). By doing so, the trainer conveys legitimacy and recognition to DON's position amongst his mates. On the other hand, the very act of assessment or validation confirms the central position of expertise endorsed by the trainer.

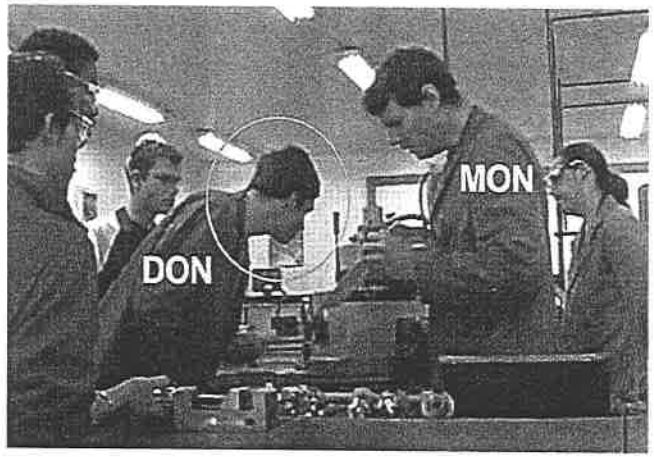

Fig. 5.2 DON leans over the plan

Fig. 5.3 MON points at a tool included in the milling machine

The second sequence refers to a collective classroom-like training dedicated to the use of the punching machine and the correct way to place the work piece on it. In the context in which it was observed, apprentices are manufacturing a sanding block, which contains a thin metallic piece, in which holes have to be pierced on the sides. In order to punch holes in this workpiece, apprentices need to use a press, which they have never used before. The sequence refers to the moment where the trainer (MON) initiates a sequence of so-called "theory" and provides instructions regarding the use of the press. He starts by displaying a rubber part that is needed to eject the piece from the punch. He addresses the whole group, including Donald (DON), Franck (FRA) and Bertrand (BER).

2. "*very clever indeed*" (Film No 208, 4′52 – 5′50)

04′52	1. MON:	so here we have rubber parts/ why do we use these/ it is because once we have punched the piece the punch remains stuck in the hole ((establishes eye contact with DON)) [Fig. 5.5]
	2.	so this part is elastic/
	3. FRA:	this will help XX
	4. MON:	and/
	5. DON:	this eject the piece\
	6. MON:	this will eject the piece/ .
	7.	this fits in here I will show you\ ((MON leans over the press and installs the rubber part under the punch))
	8.	but we will not use it now and I will tell you why in a moment\
	9. FRA:	we won't use this/
05′15	10. MON:	no we won't\
	11. DON:	yeah because because
	12. BER:	it's because we punch a very thin piece\
	13. DON:	no that's not the reason\ it's because we punch on the sides of the piece and not in the middle\ ((points at the metal piece located on the press))
05′24	14. MON:	very clever indeed\. yes exactly\ [Fig. 5.4]
	15. FRA:	why/
	16. MON:	simply because
	17. DON:	because because we won't make holes in the centre of the piece but only here on the sides you see/ ((points at the locations where holes will be made in the piece)) [Fig. 5.6]
	18. MON:	so what happens if you punch only half of the piece/ the rubber part will exert pressure and-
	19. DON:	it will stick/
	20. MON:	it will straighten the piece\

This sequence highlights practices through which DON actively participates to the learning interaction and seems to position himself as an apprentice of a certain kind. These participation practices are based on a wide range of multimodal and interactional resources. In relation to this, it is important to note that DON is not maintaining himself in a ratified recipient position but is constantly self-selecting himself as a speaker. His turns are not explicitly elicited by the trainer but are spontaneously provided to the audience. For instance, DON's anticipation work is detectable in (5). DON's utterance "*this ejects the piece*" anticipates MON's purpose and fits into MON's ongoing explanation ("*and/*") and continues it. Similarly, in (19), DON's comment ("*it will stick*") interrupts and continues the trainer's talk ("*the rubber part will exert pressure and-*"). MON ratifies and approves such "intrusions" by retelling the same sentence into his own explanation ("*this will rejects the piece/*"). Thus, recurrently, DON anticipates MON's discourse. Here, it is worth noting that because MON ratifies these anticipations in front of the group of apprentices, he affords contextual legitimacy and even consideration to DON. These anticipations do not only consist in fine-grained alignments to the trainers' instructions but also function as outstanding interactional positioning devices.

In various occasions, DON "stands out" compared to his mates. He demarcates himself through active forms of participation and specific ways to enact agency.

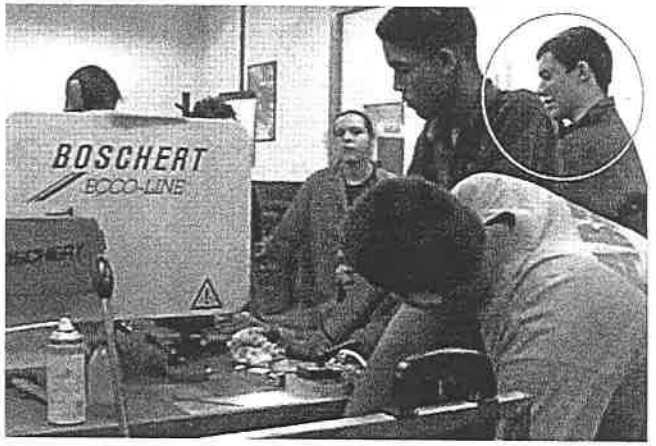

Fig. 5.4 DON expresses facial satisfaction after MON's approval

Similar to what happened in excerpt 1, such demarcation practices are observable, for example, when DON attempts an answer (11–13) to an implicit question raised by MON ("*but we will not use it now and I will tell you why in a moment*"). In other words, DON does not align to MON's declared intention to provide an answer at a later stage but delivers it to the group (13). The audacity of DON's contribution seems to be highlighted by MON's exclamation ("*very clever indeed*"). Thus, MON is somehow constrained to ratify and positively assess DON's answer (".. *yes exactly*"). He thereby rewards him in front of the whole group (see Fig. 5.4).

This sequence shows how far DON goes in terms of participative agency. For example, when FRA asks about the use of the rubber part in the present context ("*we won't use this/*", 9), DON elaborates MON's answer ("*no we won't*", 10) and attempts to provide an explanation ("*yeah because because*", 11), overlapped by BER's own hypothesis ("*it's because we punch a very thin piece*", 12). But BER's attempt to explain why the rubber part should not be used here is again immediately, spontaneously and explicitly rejected by DON ("*no that's not the reason*", 13), who proposes an alternative answer ("*it's because we punch on the sides of the piece and not in the middle*", 13). DON's last contribution (13) seems not to be understood by all members of the group, as attested by FRA's request for additional explanation ("*why/*", 15). When MON starts his explanation ("*simply because*"), DON overlaps him (17) and, without any permission, again relays him on the explanation addressed to his mate. In other words, one could consider that DON temporarily takes a form of trainer's position. Such an "excommunication" (or misalignment) could be potentially face threatening for the trainer, especially because of the presence of other apprentices. But instead of a conflictual role replacement, MON once again ratifies DON's behavior and simply retakes his trainer's position by pursuing the instruction sequence (17 to end). According to this, MON even affords numerous opportunities for the apprentice to establish a form of visibility and centrality within the group. For instance, early on the "theory"

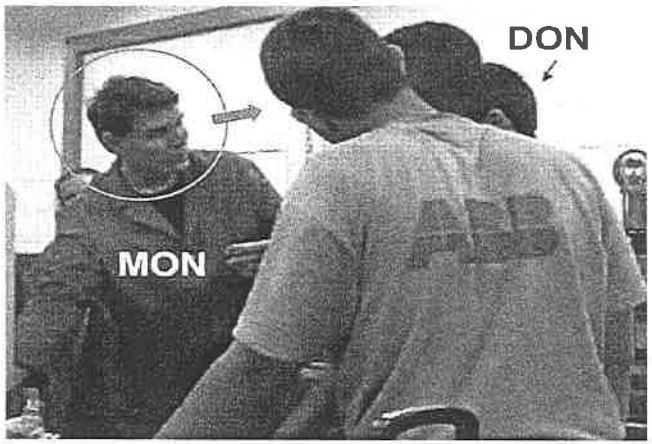

Fig. 5.5 MON establishing eye contact with DON

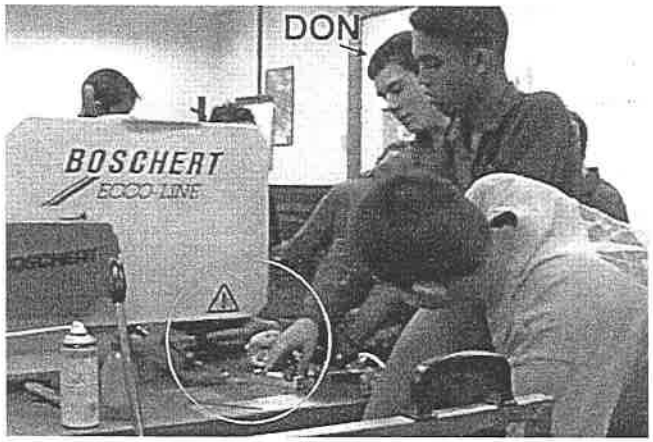

Fig. 5.6 DON points at the positions where holes will be made in the work piece

sequence, MON establishes eye contact with DON and visually selects him as an addressed recipient (see Fig. 5.5).

It is worth mentioning that DON's recurrent demarcation practices do not rely on talk exclusively. They also involve a specific relation to space and to the material arrangement shaping the physical setting in which instruction takes place. When DON "stands out" and provides answers to questions implicitly or explicitly raised by the trainer or other apprentices, he comes close to the press and performs indexical gestures pointing at specific locations of the piece (see Fig. 5.6). In doing so, he enters a physical space whose access is limited to the trainer, and from which the other apprentices gathered as a group remain distant.

These two short examples illustrate the complex and constant interactional work an apprentice may accomplish to make a socially relevant impression of himself. It is thus throughout interactional practices (i.e. standing out, promptly and correctly answering, anticipating, etc.) that local centrality, visibility, legitimacy and value may be gained step by step in front of the instructor and the rest of the group as well. Above all, the analysis highlights the fact that gaining social recognition is mostly a collective accomplishment that occurs locally by the negotiation of each other's interactional positions and places. In other words, these forms of visibility and centrality are also afforded by the trainer as opportunities offered to DON to "stand out" and endorse a form of dominant position within the group. Thus, social recognition can be seen as locally and collectively accomplished. This is made particularly visible in the next example below.

3. *"theory! right?"* (Film No 209, 32′27 – 34′37)

32′27	1. MON:	yeah that's very good\ (2) ((MON examines a workpiece machined by DON)) very very good\ so now you just have to file your piece\
	2. DON:	well but when do we have to make the small groove\ how\
32′45	3. MON:	yeah right the groove/ with the milling machine\ but all the milling machines are occupied\
	4. DON:	then I'll do later after- but once I finish to file what should I do\ I'll take out the pieces of the tour machine/
	5. MON:	XXX you don't file now\ mhm
	6. DON:	I'll make the pieces now
	7. MON:	you can make the groove because he is doing the X ((MON points at another apprentice working with the milling machine))
33′06	8. DON:	well you can make the groove by showing to him/ at the same time that will be the theory as well/
	9. MON:	let me THINK\ ok yes let's do that\
	10. MON>DON:	I need the wrench over there/ ((points at the milling machine))
	11. DON:	it should be there/
33′33	12. MON:	allen key and then we will do a theory\
	13. DON:	sir actually there is no need for an allen key/ some milling machines already have the right profile\ like this ((shows a workpiece))
	14. MON:	no no no
	15. DON:	why not/ we would like to use those with already the right profile\
33′47	16. MON:	because we have to make the groove inside\
	17. DON:	yeah
	18. MON:	we don't have a milling machine with the right profile ((producing a V with his hands))
	19. DON:	like a V/
	20. MON:	you see the middle part of the milling machine is not gonna machine\ yes it's a V\
	21. DON:	yes but there are milling machines with a V profile over there ((indicates a direction))\
	22. MON:	yes but they have a flat bottom\
	23. DON:	oh okay yes
	24. MON:	because the tip\ . does not machine XXXX
	25. DON:	yeah yeah it's okay now I see\ yes I see
	26. MON:	you cannot remove material so it does not work\

(continued)

(continued)

	27. DON:	yes yes it's okay now I see
34′10	28. MON:	so is that milling machine XX
	29. DON>MON:	THEORY/ is that right/ [Fig. 5.7]
	30. MON:	yeah . if it makes you happy\
	31. DON:	theory can I shout/
	32. MON:	go ahead then\
	33. DON:	THEORY/ ((shouts to his mates)) ((laughs))
	34. MON:	((turns to the camera and smiles))
	35. DON:	theory yeah theory ((whispers))
	36. ??:	X just a last time X
	37. DON:	theory
	38. MON>??:	come here to express yourself to the micro\
	39. DON>??:	come here to say what you don't like\
34′35	40. MON:	THEORY ((shouts to inform the other apprentices)) [Fig. 5.8]
	41. DON:	yeah/ seriously\ ((says to his mates around the workplace))
	42. MON > DON:	go ahead then and tool me up the milling machine\

This sequence highlights the interactional processes through which the trainer (MON) and apprentices (in particular DON) reciprocally negotiate their position. In the first part of the sequence, DON shows a machined workpiece for MON's assessment, a necessary step before moving to the next learning assignment. This opens a section in which DON appears particularly active by strongly soliciting MON's attention. He displays centrality by acting as an expert who reminds the trainer of a number of aspects ("*well but when do we have to make the small groove\ how*", 2; "*then I'll do later after- but once I finish to file what should I do\ I'll take out the pieces of the tour machine/*", 4), compelling him to react ("*yeah right the groove/ (...)*", 3) and negotiating the issue (4–9). Moreover, DON smartly suggests a change within the scheduled learning program ("*well you can make the groove by showing to him/ at the same time that will be the theory as well/*", 8) pushing MON to adapt the ongoing activity to his work in progress ("*let me THINK\ ok yes let's do that*", 9). A little later, DON's growing expert position is also made visible when he argues against MON's suggestion to use an allen key to accomplish the task ("*mister actually there is no need for an allen key/ some milling machines already have the right profile\ like this*", 13). He opens another confrontation in which MON's expert position is challenged. MON responds by explaining step by step the reasons why an allen key is needed in the present case (14–22). Thus, he replaces DON in a non-expert position. DON seems to hardly accept such a replacement and displays forms of resistance to endorse the position, as illustrated by his prompt ratification and reassuring stances ("*yeah yeah it's okay now I see\ yes I see*", 25; "*yes yes it's okay now I see*", 27).

This first part of the sequence shows the constant interactional work an apprentice needs to accomplish in different learning situations in order to step forward from a peripheral to a more central position within the learning community of practice. At the same time, the sequence also highlights the negotiation and repositioning work such a behavior induces in the involved counterpart, here the trainer. This reciprocity or interdependency is particularly visible in the second part of the sequence (29–42).

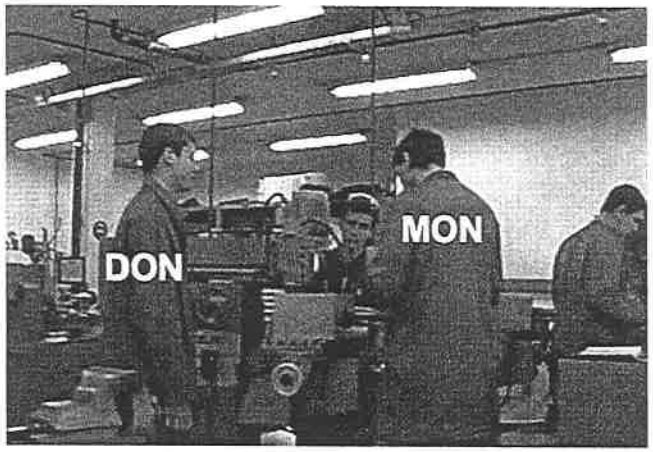

Fig. 5.7 DON asks to MON the authorization to convoke a "theory" moment

Indeed, DON seems to achieve centrality and recognition by inducing a collaborative work. Firstly, he explicitly involves his mates in order to have public "audience" in front of which to display a valuable image of himself. He thus asks MON the authorization (29 et 31) to call up his mates, who are working at their desks, for a "theory" moment. This is what he does ("*THEORY/*", 33) after MON's approval (30 et 32). In such a way, DON seems to take on MON's trainer/leader role in deciding the moment for theory. He is thus enacting authority compared to his mates. It is noticeable that such a standing out position is somehow unexpected for DON and for the mates as well. In fact, signs of discomfort or unease are manifest in DON's behaviors: laughs (33), reiteration (35 and 37) or confirmation ("*yeah/ seriously\ ((says to his mates around the workplace))*", 41). Similarly, other apprentices seem to check DON's calling by waiting for MON's confirmation (40). With respect to this, the sequence shows how far DON is dependant on MON to get visibility and centrality. Indeed, MON affords DON the opportunity to present himself in a favorable light in two ways. First, he allows him to call up a "theory" and, by doing so, he lets him temporarily endorse the trainer's role (see Fig. 5.7).

Although DON's request highlights the dominant position of MON as a trainer, dependency is not one-sided. By recognizing authority to MON, DON automatically brings back legitimacy to MON and confirms his trainer's position.

Secondly, DON also needs MON's direct intervention within the interaction between his mates and himself. In other words, MON's confirmation (40) indirectly affords legitimacy to DON's authority claim (see Fig. 5.8).

This form of interdependency between the apprentice and the trainer is also obvious from a multimodal point of view. As visible in Fig. 5.8, MON and DON are geographically constituting a form of alliance conveying reciprocal legitimacy in front of the group of apprentices.

Fig. 5.8 MON addresses the group of apprentices and confirms for them the "theory" moment

The examples analyzed so far can be seen as privileged empirical evidence to the important interactional work participants to vocational training practices have to accomplish in order to position themselves in specific communities of practice. The first two sequences highlight interactional practices of agency an apprentice may display in order to gain visibility and centrality within the learning community of practice and, thus, to achieve legitimacy and value on his way to less peripheral positions. With the third sequence, a particular stress is put on the collective accomplishment for symbolic recognition. If impression management practices are of course an essential resource, our analysis also highlights that the path from periphery to center requires a certain contribution and complicity from the trainer in the tutorial guidance he offers to apprentices. To display a legitimate or valuable impression, one needs others' approval. This approval has to be negotiated in interactions through relational positioning and placement. As stressed in the analysis above, these forms of visibility and centrality do not only rely on the apprentice's specific ways to engage in interaction. They are also afforded by the trainer as opportunities for the apprentice to "stand out" and endorse a form of dominant position within the group.

With respect to this network of interactional interdependency among actors involved in training practices, an interactional analysis sheds light on the "vulnerability" of apprentices' position in search of centrality, recognition and legitimacy. This is also true as regards the role of the trainer. Despite his position of authority, the trainer also relies on apprentices for establishing his own legitimate status. Indeed, as mentioned above, the trainer must frequently negotiate with the trainee (DON) to maintain his position of expert and his authority. In this sense, forms of social recognition can be seen as locally and collectively accomplished.

5.5 Examples of Unvalued Forms of Participation

5.5.1 Becoming Peripheral

In this section we contrast the situations analyzed above with a range of other examples that concern Rodrigo (ROD), another apprentice belonging to the same group. These examples take place in the same setting as the one referred to previously. However, ROD experiences a totally different trajectory of learning than the one we have just illustrated above and faces forms of social recognition that differ from the ones applicable to DON's case. This is what we want to show in the following paragraphs through the analysis of another sequence of interaction.

ROD is also a first year apprentice in automation, but has a different cultural background from the one belonging to DON. Rodrigo emigrated from the former Portuguese colony of Cape Verde and is not a native French-speaker. He experienced a non-linear transition from compulsory school to the VET system. Because of his poor achievements in both numeracy and literacy, he attended a 1-year preapprenticeship program[3] before entering the vocational education system. After having failed the admission test for an electrician apprenticeship program, he decided to enroll as an automation specialist apprentice, passed the test and finally signed an apprenticeship contract with a company after several unsuccessful attempts. He finally started his apprenticeship at the age of 18 and began with a 6 months period within the training center we are interested in.

In order to illustrate ROD's specific social position within his class in the training center, we analyze a sequence of interaction that occurs approximately 3 months after the examples presented above, at the end of the 6-month training period. The sequence relates to a period of training specifically dedicated to the learning of electric wiring. The activity setting underlying this sequence is different from a "theory" gathering. It can be described as an individual practical exercise consisting of producing a basic electric command system named "motor controller" according to explicit technical specifications. This kind of exercise anticipates rather central and typical tasks automation specialists are expected to carry out in the workplace. It unfolds in the following steps. First, the trainer delivers general instructions to the group of apprentices. He gives a list of technical specifications apprentices will have to implement with the motor controller device they are to produce. These instructions can be summarised as follows: "I want the motor to be set in motion and an indicator to light up when I press the button Start. I want the motor to stop and the indicator to go out when I press the button Stop. I want the motor to stop automatically and an indicator to light up when the motor overheats." (Field notes, 26th January 2006). Then, apprentices have to write down the instructions on their notebook, to draw the circuit diagram following these instructions, and finally to

[3] This is a program, offered by the department of public instruction of Geneva, that aimed to prepare young people to enter VET system.

assemble the electric components according to the diagram. Apprentices are working individually. They are dispatched on separate workbenches located in the same workshop and are expected to progress through the various steps of the exercise. The trainer regularly moves from one apprentice to the other and makes sure that apprentices are not making any mistakes in producing their motor controlling system.

The selected sequence of interaction documents ROD's engagement in this exercise, and specifically in its first step, naming the task of giving a written form to the trainer's instructions. We take this sequence as characteristic of the interactions occurring between ROD and MON while the apprentice is engaged in this exercise. In our analysis, we pay attention to the attitudes displayed towards ROD by the trainer and other apprentices sharing the same training context. We also aim to describe the ways ROD is socially categorized by the trainer and his peers and how these categories result from specific forms of engagement in interaction. The portrait that will result from our analysis will be substantially remote from the previous one referring to DON, not only in terms of social recognition but also in terms of engagement and positioning.

5.5.2 *Losing Control over the Activity: A Regressive Positioning in Interaction*

When the selected sequence of interaction starts, ROD is behind in comparison with the rest of the group. He is just beginning the exercise of the "motor controller" whereas most of the other apprentices have nearly finished it. ROD is facing difficulties in understanding what is required in the first step of the exercise and does not make any progress in writing down the trainer's instructions. MON observes this, approaches ROD and initiates a verbal exchange with him, while other apprentices like Donald (DON), Frank (FRA), Samuel (SAM) and Kevin (KEV) keep on working individually in the same area.

4. "I'm going to start at the beginning" (Film No 216, 02′16–05′24)

02′16	1. ROD:	((is sitting at his workbench, a pen in his hand and a notebook in front of him)) [Fig. 5.9] the diagram yes but: XX
	2. MON:	((is leaning upon a cupboard on the left of ROD's desk)) [Fig. 5.9] no but the function of the device what kind of device is it it is what I want you to write\
	3. ROD:	it is a device when I press the button stop\
	4. MON:	I gave you the title motor's controller\ now er . KEV told you what he wanted now I'd like that . what he explained to you/ you write it down\ clearly simply and clearly\ . a motor's controller/ I press the button bladibladibla . er the motor er: starts/ . I press the button X what happens to the motor bladibladibla you write it in two sentences/ . if there is a problem with the motor what happens etcetera\ finished\ . . . two or three sentences\ the instructions according to the device\ .. you know what you have to do now\ . have you understood/ . what do you have to do\

(continued)

(continued)

	5. DON:	((is working on his workbench located in front of ROD)) he doesn't know/
03′03	6. ROD:	yes but the drawing er of the
	7. MON:	no but I'm asking you-
	8. ROD:	of the new components I will use I don't know XX
	9. MON:	yes but it's- it's not what I'm asking you I'm asking you if you have understood what you have to do
	10. ROD:	yes XX
	11. MON:	so what do you have to do\
	12. ROD:	I'm going to write that: . I'm going to start at the beginning\ I mean er
	13. MON:	yes no but . I'm asking you the motor's function ((laughs))
	14.	((the other apprentices laugh))
	15. ROD:	((laughs and looks at SAM who is behind him)) [Fig. 5.10] X when I press the button/ X the button START/
	16. SAM:	((is working is working on his workbench located behind ROD)) XX you're not going to begin at the end/
	17. ROD:	I press the button START the the motor sets in motion/ then I press the button on . it stops/
	18. DON:	it's like in video games\
	19. MON:	you press what/
	20. SAM:	you say s1 s2\ you have the relay you have the relay X
	21. ROD:	yeah when I press a button
	22. MON:	yeah/
	23. ROD:	XX
	24. MON:	yeah ok/
	25. ROD:	it starts:
	26. FRA:	((is sitting on the right of ROD's bench)) that's playstation button start you press the button select it stops\
	27. ROD:	((looks at FRA and smiles)) [Fig. 5.10]
	28. MON:	yeah/
	29. ROD:	((turns his head toward MON)) that that er it makes the motor turn/ then when I press the button on it:
[. . .]		
04′41	57. MON:	you have forgotten everything haven't you/ (4 sec.) isn't it you who told me that you had to eat a lot not to forget\
	58. ROD:	eating a lot not to forget/ ((laughs))
	59. MON:	you haven't eaten a lot today have you/
	60. ROD:	((laughs))
	61. MON:	((stares at ROD)) so\ . if the motor overheats/
	62. ROD:	but I didn't know that XX
	63. MON:	er there must be an indicator that lights up on the control board/ ok/ and then . the motor has to stop\ so I'd like first that you write it down/ in two or three lines/ clearly\ .. ok/ . and when you have done it we'll see the next step\
	64. ROD:	what is the name er: . of the device there/ ((mimics the form of the device with his hands))
	65. MON:	motor controller\ ((moves away))
05′24	66. ROD:	motor controller/

Fig. 5.9 ROD and MON establish visual contact

At the beginning of this excerpt, ROD displays difficulties in understanding the instructions and in identifying the correct sequences of tasks required by the procedure. He mentions the drawing of the circuit diagram ("*the diagram yes but:*", 1) in a context where he has not finished writing down the various functions and specifications related to the device to be produced.

To address these difficulties, the trainer shapes an interactional space in which ROD and himself establish visual contact and select themselves as ratified participants (see Fig. 5.9).

Within this interactional space, the trainer's response to ROD's difficulties consists, at the beginning of the interaction, in helping him to progress in the first step of the exercise. He guides him through the realization of the current task, that is the writing (and first the verbalization) of the instructions related to the "motor controller". His guidance (Billett 2001) takes the form of a scaffolding dialogue (Wood et al. 1976) that supports the apprentice, through verbal and non-verbal resources, towards the mastering of a task that he is unable to grasp. This scaffolding dialogue can be seen as fulfilling various functions in the course of the interaction. First, the trainer tries to maintain ROD's orientation towards the current task (the writing of the instructions), because ROD is anticipating the next step of the exercise (the drawing of the diagram, 1). It is manifest in the way MON retells ROD what he has to do. The trainer insists on one hand on the writing task itself: "*now er . KEV*[4] *told you what he wanted now I'd like that . what he explained to you/you write it down\ clearly simply and clearly*" (4). On the other hand he insists on the content of the instructions he has to write down: "*no but the function of the device what kind of device is it it is what I want you to write*" (2). Because of ROD's persistence to anticipate the next step ("*yes but the drawing er of the of the new components I will use I don't know XX*", 6, 8) and his difficulties to verbalize precisely what he has to write ("*I'm going to write that: . I'm going to start at the beginning\ I mean er*", 12), the trainer has to retell it several times. Interestingly, MON enacts specific discursive formats for delivering his instructions. In numerous

[4] The trainer refers to the instructions that he gave to the group of apprentices and that have been retold to ROD by KEV.

occasions, he asks questions to ROD and invites him to give a verbal account of the task ("*what kind of device is it it is what I want you to write*", 2; "*what do you have to do*", 4). He also initiates exchanges in which he wants to establish ROD's understanding of the task ("*have you understood/*", 4; "*I'm asking you if you have understood what you have to do*", 9). In this perspective, his scaffolding fulfils another function that concerns the recruitment of the apprentice in the task and his encouragement (Wood et al. 1976). Indeed, the trainer lets ROD formulate the instructions by himself, ratifies his first attempts and encourages him to continue ("*yeah/*", 22; "*yeah ok/*", 24; "*yeah/*", 28).

However, ROD engages neither easily nor efficiently in these scaffolding sequences of interaction. For instance, he does not take his turns immediately after highly visible transition points, as attested by the growing number of pauses in 4, obliging MON to keep on talking and rephrasing his requests for confirmation addressed to the apprentice ("*two or three sentences\ the instructions according to the device\ .. you know what you have to do now\ . have you understood/ . what do you have to do*"). ROD also fails to fulfil expectations regarding the level of understanding of the task. He does not succeed in producing valid verbal accounts of the work procedure and attempts a succession of answers that are regarded by other participants as inadequate. If the trainer manifests patience at first, he puts a stop to the questioning dialogue after a while and expresses a negative evaluation of ROD's state of knowledge: "*you have forgotten everything haven't you/*" (57). To that negative evaluation he adds an ironical comment concerning the reason of his forgetfulness: "*isn't it you who told me that you had to eat a lot not to forget*" (57); "*you haven't eaten a lot today have you/*" (59). With this mocking remark, that represents a threat to ROD's face, the trainer breaks off the scaffolding guidance he has been offering to him so far. Indeed, from this moment, the trainer does not try to help ROD verbalize the instructions any more, but he rather retells himself the missing part of it: "*er there must be an indicator that lights up on the control board/ ok/and then . the motor has to stop*" (63).

Regarding the evolution of the trainer's guidance, we can first note that MON's efforts to support ROD do not lead the apprentice to a successful accomplishment of the task at hand. The trainer's scaffolding attempts end in a collective but unbalanced accomplishment in which it is finally the trainer who verbalizes most of the instructions ROD has to write down. Consequently, MON's participation in the task is growing whereas ROD's participation is reciprocally characterized by a form of regression. The data also show that if the trainer's initial reaction was to help ROD in the accomplishment of the task, ROD is negatively evaluated and mocked by the trainer at the end of the sequence.

The second aspect that deserves particular attention is the presence and participation of the other apprentices. This participation is first related to the specific way space is designed and experienced in this excerpt: interaction between MON and ROD takes place in an open space where other apprentices are working as well and can overhear any interaction occurring around. This participation is also related to the fact that MON's support to ROD involves oral and thus public forms of actions such as rephrasing a written task that are supposed to be accomplished individually

and in private. Thus, if other apprentices take on the roles of mere listeners or "overhearers" in Goffmanian terms at first, they soon participate more actively as "unaddressed recipients" in the interaction between MON and ROD. As we will see, their interventions contribute to the building of a negative image of ROD. DON is the first one who intervenes. Whereas MON asks ROD to retell what he has to do (see above, 4), DON affirms in a loud voice that ROD does not know (5). It is then the group of apprentices who laughs at ROD's verbalized intention to start at the beginning (see above, 15) and SAM who adds a mocking remark: "*you're not going to begin at the end!*" (16). Next, DON and FRA compare ROD's explanation concerning the "motor controller" (15, 17) to a video game: "*it's like in video games*" (18); "*that's playstation button start you press the button select it stops*" (26). This comparison that associates ROD's explanation to a playful activity that is external to the world of work denigrates it. Finally, SAM spontaneously intervenes in order to correct ROD concerning the terms he is using and prompts him to the appropriate ones: "*you say s1 s2\ you have the relay you have the relay X*" (20). Thus, ROD's regressive participation is not only shaped by MON's growing part in undertaking the task. It is also reinforced by the numerous interventions of the rest of the group of apprentices and their progressive tendency to autoselect themselves as ratified and legitimate participants in the context of interaction. These spontaneous interventions do not bring any form of support to ROD. Except SAM's last intervention in (20), they are very poor in terms of knowledge contents and lead to depreciate ROD with regard to the group. Even SAM's last intervention, though reestablishing a correct terminology, can be seen as face threatening to ROD in the sense that it categorizes him as an apprentice who knows less than his peers.

If we now turn to ROD's forms of engagement into this sequence of training, a first element we can point out is the difficulties he displays in progressing in the task at hand in spite of MON's guidance. ROD's difficulties to progress can be illustrated by his last question addressed to MON. Indeed, at the end of the interaction and after the trainer's various attempts to help him, ROD asks the name of the device, the "motor controller", that is the central subject of the exercise: "*what is the name er: . of the device there!*" (64). This question reveals his difficulty to understand what is at stake in the exercise and his lack of progression in such understanding. Second, it is interesting to observe how ROD reacts to interventions initiated by MON and other apprentices. First, it is noticeable that ROD engages in the interaction with the trainer and accepts MON's guidance. At the same time, he strongly insists on elements of the task he does not know in order to emphasize his difficulties (6, 8, 62). However, it is precisely these confessions of ignorance that are negatively evaluated by MON. Then, it is also interesting to note how ROD either ignores deprecating comments uttered by MON or other apprentices (he ignores DON's comment on his ignorance, see above, 5) or laughs at them (he laughs at MON's mocking remark, 58, 60; he joins in the other apprentices' laughter, 15, and smiles to the comparison of his explanation to a video game, 27, see Fig. 5.10).

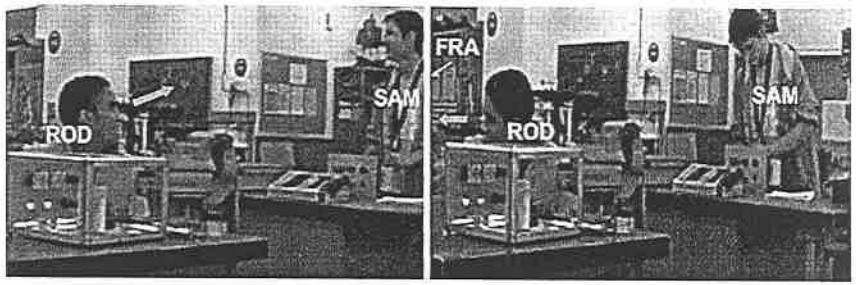

Fig. 5.10 ROD laughs with the other apprentices

These attitudes are well identified strategies by which ROD attempts to counterbalance the rather uncomfortable position he is placed in and to convey a positive image of himself (Goffman 1959).

The elements developed above stress a strong contrast between ROD's lack of progression in the task and the ways others apprentices increasingly participate in an interactional space they are not supposed to be part of. Indeed, the participation of the other apprentices gradually affects ROD's own interactional participatory practices. As interaction unfolds, ROD becomes the undesired centre of a public arena, in which he progressively loses his owns rights to speak. As other apprentices enter the floor, ROD's turns are almost systematically overlapped (15, 21, 23). They are also intertwined with responses addressed not exclusively to the trainer, but to other apprentices as well. For instance, in line 15, ROD turns towards SAM when elaborating his answer ("*when I press the button/X the button START!*"). As evidenced by ROD's constant changing body orientations (see Fig. 5.10), this more complex participation framework raises new challenges for ROD's participation. It introduces a form of multiactivity in which ROD is expected at the same time to follow the teacher's scaffolding strategy and to respond to the teasing initiated by his mates. From what can be observed in the data, ROD's repertoire for responding to these challenges appears to be limited. It mainly consists of ignoring the deprecating comments or laughing as an ultimate attempt to preserve a positive image of himself within the public arena.

At a social level, our analysis underlines the way ROD is progressively depreciated, mocked and recognized as a weak apprentice by the trainer and his peers. In this perspective, it highlights how the public dimension of the interaction between ROD and MON contributes to ROD's progressive and collective categorization as a weak apprentice: the public nature of his difficulties and his need for guidance influence the way other apprentices recognize ROD and reinforce negative and mocking remarks addressed to him. It is noticeable that the trainer does not verbally react to the other apprentices' spontaneous interventions that threaten ROD's face. ROD struggles alone to give a positive image of himself. His efforts are finally unsuccessful and he seems to lose control not only on the task he his carrying out but also on taking a valued and legitimate position in the interaction.

The phenomena highlighted in this sequence are reduplicated and even amplified in following interactions between MON and ROD concerning further steps of the exercise. Without going into a detailed description, similar sorts of interaction patterns can be illustrated with reference to two sequences of interaction we propose to briefly summarize. In the first sequence (216, 55′03′–01′01′53), MON offers to explain to ROD how to proceed in drawing the circuit diagram. In order to do so, he takes him along to the blackboard and guides him in the drawing. However, ROD displays many difficulties, both in representing the electric components and in understanding the concepts that lay behind. If MON displays patience and makes efforts to guide ROD in the drawing and in the understanding of the related notions at the beginning, the interaction ends with MON losing patience, making fun of the apprentice and recognizing him as a weak apprentice ("*you're a real case/I'm sorry but*\" 216, 01′01′40). Again, this interaction happens in front of the rest of the group. Moreover, the central position of the blackboard in the room makes it more public and highlights the "judging arena" (Dodier 1993) that represents the group of apprentices. In this context, apprentices are very active in interaction. They make fun of ROD and ratify MON's negative evaluations. In this way, ROD's collective categorization as a weak apprentice goes on. This categorization results progressively in a form of marginalization that can be further illustrated with a second example. This second interaction (217, 12′33–16′21) takes place between the apprentices and the trainer. It concerns the difference between automation specialists (high-skilled workers who have a diploma and are in charge of the tasks of conception) and electric assemblers (low-skilled workers who have no diploma and only assemble electric components without understanding what they are doing). In this context where two categories of professions are distinguished, ROD is soon identified as an assembler in opposition to other apprentices who see themselves as automation specialists.

5. "Cape Verde, he's just assembling"

14′13	1. FRA:	Cape Verde he's just assembling X\
	2. DON:	but he's a looser X\
	3. MON:	((is leaning upon DON's desk)) yeah but he is assembling according to what/
14′20	4. FRA:	according to our plans\

In the excerpt transcribed above, ROD is categorized as a useless person (2), and his Cape Verdian origin is stigmatized in the form of a nickname (1). Most importantly, this categorization is not only driven by the apprentices but also ratified and reinforced by the trainer (3), who elaborates on depreciative comments made by FRA and DON.

5.6 Concluding Remarks

Participating and becoming full members of a learning community of practice is not just a personal or individual affair. Neither is it exclusively a matter of willingness. On the basis of some examples, the analyses presented in this paper reveal that apprentices need to actively work out their participation during training interactions. Within the complexity of interactional exchanges, they actually have to struggle to gain legitimacy and social recognition in relation with other actors involved. By adopting a Goffmanian perspective on social recognition, we shed light on real practices where valuable images are displayed and locally managed. The case of DON highlights a concern for positioning through particularly recurrent and insistent practices of visibility and centrality. By contrast, the case of ROD shows how participation needs to be legitimate, that is conform to what is expected from a first year apprentice, before being considered as valuable. In ROD's case, the challenges set towards a full recognition of a legitimate participation lead him to progressively lose control not only on the activity but also on the negotiation of his position.

At a theoretical level, the two contrasting cases analyzed here provide a detailed understanding of the strong interdependence linking the different actors involved in an interactional setting. Managing impression and gaining social recognition is largely a collective work in which each part needs the other to make his position and place approved and recognized. In that perspective, participation is less a matter of access to specific practices than a negotiation of interactional positions. Our analyses suggest that social roles and interactional positions are somehow vulnerable, due to the interactional processes and the reciprocal dependency between the interlocutors. As illustrated above, the apprentices' struggle to become full community members also constrains the trainer to permanently display or prove his expert position and his authority and consequently his legitimacy.

In turn, this brings us to consider the great importance of tutorial guidance in vocational training interactions. Tutorial guidance, either in training centers or at the workplace, has effects not only on the learning dimension but also on the issue of identity construction. As showed in our analysis, the trainer plays a central role in enhancing and consolidating trainees' social recognition. Through an interactional and multimodal perspective on vocational training interactions, we have attempted to reveal the interactional micro-mechanisms through which identities tend to sediment and become more and more fixed. We consider this perspective of primary importance to understand how one apprentice's path from the periphery of a learning community to its center is reflected in the interactional processes that can engender more or less "successful" trajectories of learning.

To go beyond an exploratory investigation, it will be interesting to pursue our analysis in two main directions: a contrastive perspective and a longitudinal one. A contrastive perspective would allow to develop the comparison we have started to investigate in this issue and to put to the fore different forms of engagement and social recognition. A longitudinal perspective following several apprentices along their learning trajectory and in different training contexts would enable us to work on

their evolution in terms of learning, identity construction, engagement and recognition. Both perspectives would help us to deepen our reflection on the factors that may contribute to the construction of successful or unsuccessful trajectories of learning.

Beyond data description and analytical understanding, what then are the responses a researcher could propose in order to bring his own resources and changes in the realities he investigates? One particularly promising avenue currently being explored by our team is to use the empirical material collected during our research in the context of training programs addressed to vocational trainers. As shown by the case studies presented in this paper, vocational trainers play an active role in the transition process experienced by apprentices. In consonance with Billett's work (Billett 2001), research results presented here show an urgent need to increase the level of pedagogical qualification and awareness of trainers in the field of vocational education to enhance the overall quality of the guidance provided in training centres and workplaces. Applying an interactional perspective to empirical data certainly does not solve the complex issue of attrition in apprenticeship programs. However, it can make visible the sorts of difficulties faced by apprentices when joining training programs and it can also help trainers and experienced workers to become more reflexive about their role in assisting these apprentices to accomplish consistent transitions into working lives.

Appendix: Transcription Conventions

or ..	pause
5s	longer pause
a:	vowel lengthening
-	interrupted segment
/	rising tone
\	falling tone
CAPitals	accentuated segment
((action, movement or gesture))	non-verbal behavior
(uncertain)	segments whose transcription is uncertain
MON > ROD	selection of addressed recipient
XX	unintelligible segment
??	unidentifiable speaker
underlined segment	overlapping

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