Describing competence in professional occupations
some working concepts and models

Competence is “the ability to do something successfully or efficiently” (OED)

Levels of description

- Generic Field Role Task
  - e.g. liberal professions
  - law

Each level of description is complete in itself

- Single standard for field
- Interpreted into roles, contexts, specialisms
- Concise (c. 5-12pp)
- Clear and precise
- Possible subsets for different levels
- Threshold or progression scale if needed
- Resilient to change (10-15 year lifespan?)

External (what need to do)

- Knowledge
  - Techniques
  - Skills

- Transversal abilities
  - Management abilities
  - Values and virtues

Internal (capacities needed to do it)

Occupational Capacity (or capability)

- ‘berufliche Handlungsfähigkeit’

How bridge between ...

Rich, messy and sometimes contradictory logic of competence descriptions

after Carroll et al (2008)

Performance & Ethical/Societal dimensions

External (what need to do)

- RESOURCING
  - SCOPING
  - RESEARCH
- STRUCTURE
- DETAIL
- CONSULTATION
- TRIALLING

... and periodic review

‘Competition’ in European VET systems

- British ‘functional competence’
- German ‘berufliche Handlungsfähigkeit’
- French ‘savoir, savoir-faire, savoir être’

Expressions

Separate competence standards
- UK, EL, PL
- Integral to training specifications
- DE, AT
- Integral to qualification specifications
- IR

Influences

‘Policy borrowing’ and sometimes poor conceptualisation (EU and national level)
leads to models that lack adequacy.

Field-level description applies common standards across roles and contexts - accreditation, licensing, regulation/good practice.
Continuing/career development applications may need to emphasise differences to help people to move between.

Field-level, ‘centre-outwards’ description

- Single standard for field
- Interpret into roles, contexts, specialisms
- Concise (c. 5-12pp)
- Clear and precise
- Possible subsets for different levels
- Threshold or progression scale if needed
- Resilient to change (10-15 year lifespan?)

Level of work
- e.g. chartered associate technician

Level of proficiency
- e.g. novice to expert

Threshold?

‘Competence’ in 6 EU countries’ VET systems (Feb 2016)
- Methodological guide (May 2017) + resources and developer course
- Project report (June 2017)
- Academic papers – Lester & Religa 2017, Lester forthcoming, Lester, Koniotaki & Religa forthcoming

www.comprocom.eu devmts.org.uk/comprocom.htm

ComProCom is supported by the European Union’s Erasmus+ Programme. The European Commission support for the project does not constitute an endorsement of the contents of this document, which reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

ComProCom partners:
- Die Berater – Austria: Business management for entrepreneurs
- EETAA (ellenic Agency for Local Gov’t and Communities) – Greece: Social entrepreneurship; project manager
- ITIE-PiB (Institute for Sustainable Technologies) – Poland: Innovation management; comparative research
- Irish Institute of Training and Development – Ireland: Training and development; developer course
- SBG-Dresden – Germany: Chemical engineering
- Stan Lester Developments – UK: Methodology, academic output

ComProCom is supported by the European Union’s Erasmus+ Programme. The European Commission support for the project does not constitute an endorsement of the contents of this document, which reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Poster by Stan Lester © ComProCom Partnership 2017