ComProCom: Communicating Professional Competence

Dr Stan Lester

UK partner and scientific co-ordinator
ComProCom

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Aim “to improve the way that professional competence is described and represented, particularly in relation to complex work in higher-level occupations where outcome-based conceptions of competence have proved most challenging”.

Partly informed by research with UK professions on competence frameworks and practising standards – Lester 2014a,b,c.

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

Die Berater – Austria
*Business management for start-ups*

Agency for Local Gov’t and Communities – Greece
*Social entrepreneurship; management of the project*

Institute for Sustainable Technologies – Poland
*Innovation management; comparative research*

Institute of Training and Development – Ireland
*Training and development; developer course*

SBG-Dresden – Germany
*Chemical engineering (Meister level)*

Stan Lester Developments – UK
*Methodology, academic output*
Comparative research

Occupational competence standards
- Former comprehensive mandatory system
- Aim to be mandatory and comprehensive
- Advisory and partial

Integrated in VET standards
- Programme-based
- Qualification-based

UK
- Independent professional standards

GREECE

POLAND

GERMANY

AUSTRIA

IRELAND

Report: Religa & Lester 2016
Article: Lester & Religa 2017, Education + Training
‘Competence’

‘The ability to do something successfully or efficiently’ (OED)

How bridge between ...

- Simplified ‘representational’ logic of competence descriptions
- Rich, messy and sometimes contradictory logic of practice

after Carroll et al (2008)

External
(what need to do)

Internal
(capacities needed to do it)

Knowledge
- Techniques
- Skills
- Transversal abilities
- Management abilities
- Values and virtues

after Winch (2014), from German Berufsbild

Occupational
Action
Competence
‘berufliche Handlungsfähigkeit’

Performative & Ethical/Societal dimensions

Professional judgement

practising standards

capacities
Levels of description of competence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task level</th>
<th>Role level</th>
<th>Field level</th>
<th>Global</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work tasks</td>
<td>Work roles and functions</td>
<td>Whole professions and occupational fields</td>
<td>Professional work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.g. ‘Registering title’</td>
<td>‘Commercial conveyancer’</td>
<td>‘Law’</td>
<td>‘Liberal professions’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*More detail in table 1.5 of methodological guide*

- Each level of description is complete in itself and can be interpreted directly into the relevant contexts.
Role-based and field-based perspectives

Site Agent Quantity Surveyor

Common standards in area of overlap

Hard role boundaries

Architect

Layers of core capability

Surveyor

Engineer

Centre-outwards

Bounded-occupation

Different perspectives on areas of overlap

Horizons not boundaries
Field-based, ‘centre-outwards’ description

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

Assessment
- investigation, assessment, analysis, diagnosis

Decide
- Decision-making
  - problem-solving, planning, design, negotiating courses of action

Do
- Implementation
  - implementing plans and taking action

Review
- Evaluation
  - monitoring, reviewing and evaluating actions and their effects

Transversal activities
- Managing work and processes
- Managing relationships
- Ongoing development
  - (self, others, field)

Ethics, professionalism and judgement
Detail and language

• 3 levels of depth enough
  – *Main headings*
  – *Key activities*
  – *Critical points/explanations*
• 3rd level can be indicative (‘this can involve...’) or explanatory
• No long lists of criteria
• Clear, active language
• Address reader directly (as if ‘you should be able to...’)
• Precise but not restrictive

2. Plan to develop the enterprise

2.1. Develop a business plan and associated policies, plans and strategies.

Policies, plans and strategies may include, according to the nature and context of the enterprise, a human resource policy and plan; a quality and internal evaluation system; a health and safety policy; a communication strategy; and a marketing strategy, among other things. You will probably need to draw on other people with relevant expertise to develop the detail of the plans.

*This area includes:*
  • Developing a business plan for the enterprise that defines activities, resources, economic objectives and social objectives
  • Developing associated policies, plans and strategies that support the business plan and provide a sustainable framework for the management and development of the enterprise.
  • Developing proposals for employment and deployment that meet the needs of the enterprise, make effective use of people’s capacities, and provide opportunities for unemployed members.
  • Ensuring that policies and plans are mutually supportive and complementary to each other.
Knowledge?

• Not directly part of practising standards – and not sufficient just to tag knowledge on to key activities.

• Fields have a ‘knowledge structure’ that includes underlying principles, epistemological positions and theories-in-use at the level of the whole field...
  ... as well as propositional knowledge and know-how relating to key activities and specific areas of practice.

• Practitioners’ knowledge-in-use is partly transdisciplinary and situational.
Level of proficiency?

• Not fully addressed in project.

• Dreyfus ‘Novice to Expert’ model useful –
  – sign-off typically at ‘competent’ or ‘proficient’ levels.

• Allows for progression to ‘expert/mastery’ level within
  the same set of standards.

• Not the same as different levels of work, e.g. technician/incorporated/chartered engineer...

... but membership grades can be based on both or on characteristics of each.
### Uses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Direct</strong></th>
<th><strong>Contributing</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communicate what the profession does</td>
<td>Curricula, courses, training programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General practising standards</td>
<td>Course approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign-off for independent practice</td>
<td>Sign-off as ready to practise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(with assessment guidance)</td>
<td>Continuing development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claims of incompetence.</td>
<td>Claims of malpractice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Development process

RESOURCING
SCOPING
RESEARCH
STRUCTURE
DETAIL
CONSULTATION
TRIALLING
... and periodic review

Steering
Project management
Expert input
Field research
Editing
Key project documents available from www.comprocom.eu and devmts.org.uk/comprocom.htm

Project reports and resources

Models and uses of ‘competence’ in six countries’ VET systems: cross-partner report on the reviews of the current situation. February 2016.


Academic papers


Some additional references


