

# Methods, techniques and tools to diagnose competences

Cross Border Seminar  
Warsaw, 14 – 15 May 2013





**National Centre For Supporting Vocational And Continuing Education**

**Methods, techniques  
and tools to diagnose  
competences**

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The Euroguidance network ([www.euroguidance.eu](http://www.euroguidance.eu)) is a network of centres linking together the Careers Guidance systems in Europe. Euroguidance promotes mobility, helping guidance counsellors and individuals to better understand the opportunities available to European citizens throughout Europe.

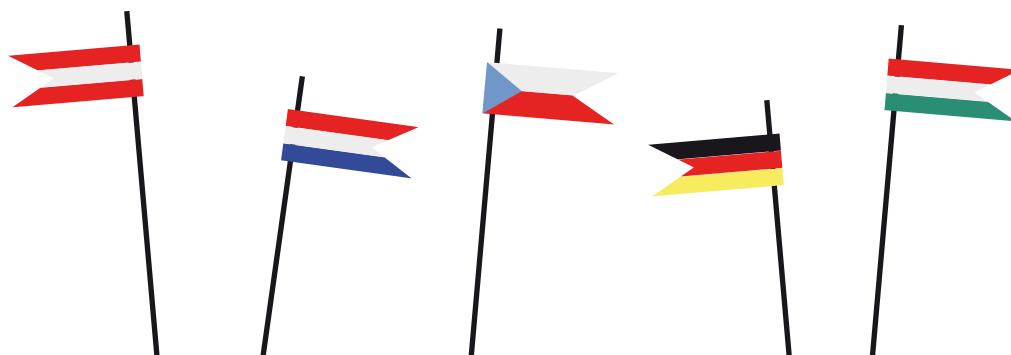
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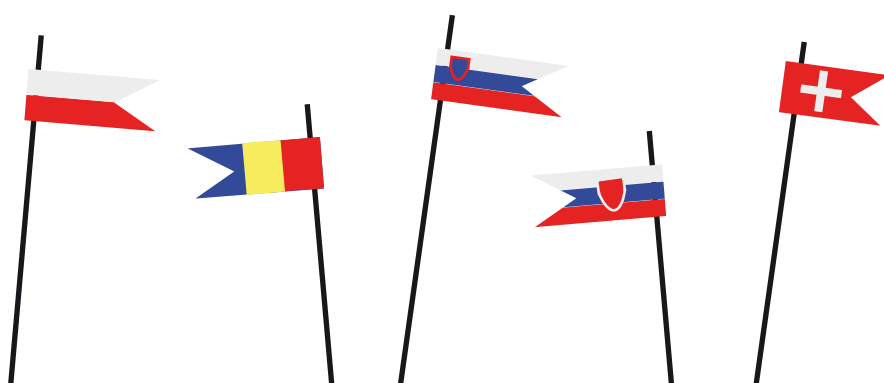
euro | guidance

# Table of Contents

<b>Ö</b>	<b>1. Austria</b> .....	9
	• National survey.....	10
	• Competence Check – a tool for working with educationally disadvantaged women.....	14
<b>ù</b>	<b>2. Croatia</b> .....	21
	• National survey.....	22
	• Analysis of leadership competency models in Croatia.....	26
<b>á</b>	<b>3. Czech Republic</b> .....	31
	• National survey.....	32
	• Experiential career counselling.....	36
<b>U</b>	<b>4. Germany</b> .....	41
	• National survey.....	42
	• Assessment of work related competences in the German Employment Agency.....	46
	• Abi Power Test.....	52
<b>V</b>	<b>5. Hungary</b> .....	59
	• National survey.....	60
	• Good practices in evaluating the career management skills of high school students and young adults.....	64
<b>Ż</b>	<b>6. Poland</b> .....	71
	• National survey.....	72
	• Coaching tools in diagnosing competencies and potential.....	77
	• Creation and use of Situational Judgment Tests to diagnose behavioural competencies.....	84
	• Customer Service Test.....	90



<b>ã</b>	<b>7. Romania</b> .....	93
	• National survey.....	94
	• Using qualitative assessment in employment.....	101
<b>n</b>	<b>8. Slovenia</b> .....	107
	• National survey.....	108
	• The right person for the right job - how could I find it out?.....	112
<b>y</b>	<b>9. Slovakia</b> .....	115
	• National survey.....	116
	• Competences diagnostic or empowerment towards a real competence based career guidance.....	119
	• Creative, expressive techniques in competence diagnostics and enhancement.....	128
<b>Ë</b>	<b>10. Switzerland</b> .....	135
	• National survey.....	136
	• Competences assessment in a highly selective labour market. Diagnosis tools and methods used in Switzerland.....	137



# Foreword

The idea of the Cross Border seminars came into existence in 2005 as an initiative of the Euroguidance centres of three neighboring countries – Austria, Czech Republic and Slovakia. The main objectives were not only joining EG centres and their cooperation in a common activity but also organising meetings and networking possibilities for practitioners and policy makers from the field of guidance from the cooperating countries. To provide the participants of the seminar with broader possible perspective on the chosen topics, all centres were involved in the process of program planning and preparations. This way the seminar could get together national experts and offer presentations of trends and topics actual in all countries. In the years 2005 - 2008 three Cross Border seminars were realised within this cooperation with the following topics: *Psychological methods in career and vocational guidance* in 2005, *Transition from secondary schools to the world of work* in 2006 and *Guidance in institutions of higher education* in 2007. In 2009 three other countries – Germany, Hungary and Slovenia – were involved in the preparation and organisation of the Cross Border seminar with the title *Career guidance without barriers*. This broadening of the cooperation proved to be meaningful as more interesting workshops, speeches and discussions could take place.

Therefore, we continued this cooperation also for the Cross Border seminar 2010 (Slovakia) when another new country – Poland – joined this initiative. The Cross Border seminar this way became an event involving the majority of Central European countries. The participants could profit from exchange of information, experience and good practice that was based on mutual understanding as the situation in the participating countries is quite comparable due to common grounds in guidance and somewhat similar social - historic development. The Cross Border seminar 2010 was dedicated to professional care for counsellors with the subtitle *Who cares for those who care*. More information about this seminar is available at [http://web.saaic.sk/nrcg\\_new/crossborder2010.html](http://web.saaic.sk/nrcg_new/crossborder2010.html).

In 2011 Hungary organised the annual Cross Border Seminar with the title *Innovative tools and methods in career guidance and counselling*. The main topic was the introduction of innovative tools, focusing on the development of psychological and ICT tools. The event provided an opportunity for the 65 participating professionals from seven countries for intensive professional dialogues and international exchange of experience. More information about this seminar is

available at: [www.npk.hu/public/tanacsadoknak/konferencia\\_2011/](http://www.npk.hu/public/tanacsadoknak/konferencia_2011/).

In 2012 Euroguidance Slovenia organised Cross border seminar with the topic *Career Management Skills* and 3 new countries joined Cross border seminar Initiative - Croatia, Romania and Switzerland. More information about this seminar is available at: [http://english.ess.gov.si/vicc\\_ncc/euroguidance\\_slovenia/cross\\_border\\_seminar](http://english.ess.gov.si/vicc_ncc/euroguidance_slovenia/cross_border_seminar).

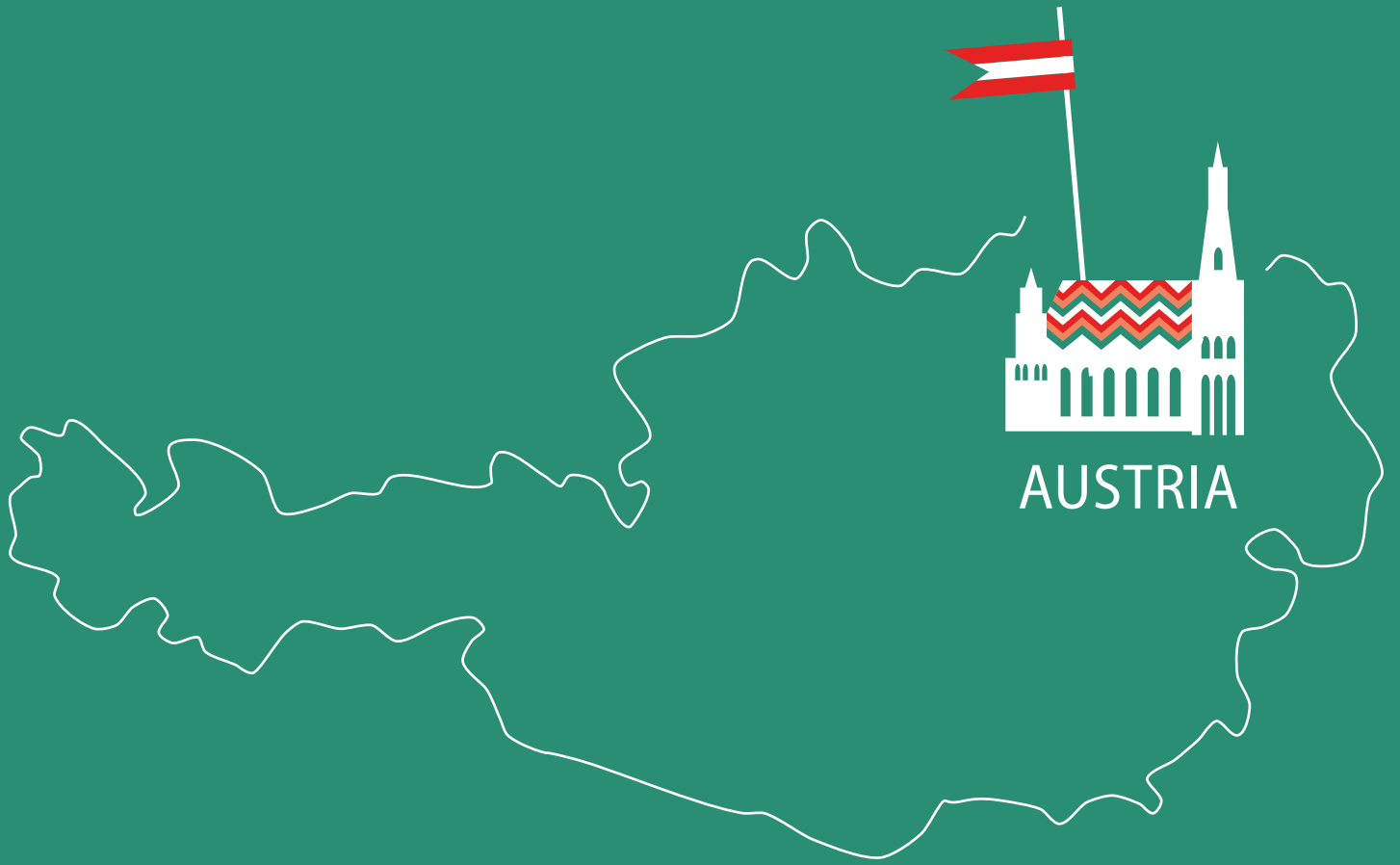
In 2013 Poland organised Cross border seminar with the topic *Methods, Techniques and Tools to Diagnose Competences*. More information about this seminar is available at: <http://www.euroguidance.pl/cbs>.

This publication of national surveys and workshop articles is based on the responses of the national surveys and articles from experts who led workshops relating to the Cross Border Seminar organised in Warsaw, Poland. By collecting the responses received from the Euroguidance centres of the participating countries this document intends to provide readers with an international overview regarding methods, techniques and tools to diagnose competences in participating countries.

It is important to note that the national surveys and experts' articles reflects only upon the views of the respective authors (Euroguidance centres and/or experts involved in the work).







1

## General conditions in Austria

In recent years, awareness of guidance for competence orientation has increased significantly in Austria due to changing conditions in the job market. Connected to this, questioning the visibility and measurability of skills and methods has naturally become more important, and methods of diagnosing competence are being discussed and applied.

The guidance realm is very diversely structured in Austria, and education and counseling are supported by different organizations. This is also reflected in terms of aptitude assessment, because there are a variety of methods applied to diagnose skills in Austria. The growing networking and cooperation between advisory bodies and institutions has recently led to the outcome that concepts are more and more transferable and to some extent further developed (in order to meet the specific needs of target groups). At the same time, work is taking place in some areas on the standardization and wider dissemination of applicable formats. Some Austrian educational and vocational guidance institutions are very well connected to others within the European region, so methods for diagnosing skills are being developed jointly with partners in several European countries.

## Common definitions of skills

There is no uniform definition of competences in the Austrian area of guidance, but there are two definition descriptions that are considered to be particularly significant in discussions.

Weinert describes competencies as the cognitive abilities and skills individuals possess or learn in order to solve certain problems, and the associated motivational, volitional and social readiness and ability to use these solutions successfully and responsibly in various situations (see Zürcher, Reinhard, 2010, pp. 4-3).

A definition from Erpenbeck (see Mosberger, Brigitte; Kasper, Ruth, 2009, p 7) is also very much in use. It describes competence as a proneness to self-organized

action, in which four classes of expertise (key qualifications) can be classified, including: personal competencies (ability for reflection and organized self-development of one's own skills), professional and methodical competence (ability to solve factual-objective problems), social communication skills (ability to communicate, cooperate and group- and relationship-oriented action), implementation-related skills (the ability to act in a self-organized fashion and to align actions to targets).

## Overview of methods for skill diagnosis used in Austria

### Educational sphere

Schools use instruments in career-orientation classes, as well as school counseling and psychology services, to support young people in competence diagnosis.

The **“KL:IBO project: competence learning through individualization and profession-orientation”** is formulated for students between the ages of 16–18. In a two-year process, teachers act as coaches and companions. Students explore their personal competencies and plan their own development. An essential part of KL:IBO is the creation of portfolios and dossiers on school and extracurricular skills, interest profiles and work results. As well as their own assessment, students also receive external assessments from teachers and peers. In addition, there are also discussions between students and teachers (sometimes including parental involvement) in which, among other things, an evaluation of competence assessment can be made. The KL:IBO concept is clearly structured (in terms of both processes for school leaders as well as in relation to the work of teachers with their pupils) and leads students, through active participation, to gradually take over more personal responsibility for their diagnosis.

The didactic concepts of KL:IBO also flow into other formats that are offered within the school context, such as the portfolio folder **“my future”** and formats for the new middle school system. The portfolio folder “my future” is available in schools in two provinces (Upper Austria and Tyrol) through chambers of commerce. The portfolio folder provides clear and appropriate suggestions for teenagers about how to discover and document their strengths, abilities and interests. The portfolio is designed to work in coordination with teachers. The folder's appealing formulation and design also make it a good building block for students' personal work. In addition to student self-assessment, a collection of appraisals from others is also obtained. Folder

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1. Autor: Karin Hirschmüller, EG Austria. Much thanks to: Claudia Bernatz (Verein Projekt Integrationshaus, m.o.v.e. on Jugendcoaching), Sabine Fritz (Pädagogische Hochschule Steiermark), Andrea Haslinger (Berufsförderungsinstitut; Bildungsberatung Österreich), Wolfgang Kellner (Ring österreichischer Bildungswerke), Ursula Königer (WUK; Bildungsberatung Österreich), Ursula Wilhelm (Schulpsychologie), Kathrin Wodraschke (Psychologische Studentenberatung).

work is presented on youtube at: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NS\\_YoWEZhSA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NS_YoWEZhSA)

Elements of newly introduced “**new middle schools**” (10–14 years) are also built on the KL:IBO strengths and career portfolios. The portfolio may be a good basis for regularly scheduled child-parent-teacher meetings which focus on the skills and potential of a student. The produced “differentiated performance report” is additionally transmitted to final grades in new middle school and verbally describes the skills of a student. With this, teachers identify the learning progress of students as well as their extra-curricular skills, such as teamwork, conflict management or special engagement in certain areas. (Source: Fritz, Sabine (2013): Mein Stärkenportfolio – Aktuelle Entwicklungen und Chancen im österreichischen Schulsystem am Beispiel der Neuen Mittelschule. In: Ernst Gesslbauer/Ursula Großruck/Petra Siegele (Hrsg): Schule grenzenlos. Erfahrungen und Herausforderungen im 21. Jahrhundert).

The realm of school psychological counseling (<http://www.schulpsychologie.at/>) is also a relevant place for school educational counseling. Counselors diagnose skills, personal gifts and abilities through performance, interest and personality assessments. These scientifically based and standardized tests are carried out within the framework of individual counseling through school psychology offices. In this vein, the project “**Study Checker**” ([www.studienchecker.at](http://www.studienchecker.at)) is built on the classification system developed by John Holland, which identifies six types (manual/technical, investigative/inquiring, artistic/creative, nurturing/fostering, leader/seller, organizer/administrator). Implementation by trained psychologists and embedding in the consultation process are key elements here. Appropriate proposals are made for students based on scientifically established diagnosis of competences uncovered through psychological counseling for students (<http://www.studentenberatung.at/>).

There are also some tests available on the Internet. They are mainly recommended for use as the initial impetus for further consideration and as an access points for consultation (about: <http://www.schulpsychologie.at/inforat/>).

#### Adults and youth in the labor market

Austrian guidance institutions have in recent years introduced and further developed improved formats for competence diagnosis. They are offered under names such as “skills audit”, “competence profile”, “skill counseling”, “ability portfolio”, etc. All these formats have a qualitative methodological orientation

(formative, biographical, dialogue, etc.) and are very time consuming. They are distinguished mainly by their setting: Priority on individual counseling (coaching, monitoring) or on group work (workshop format). A way to link group work and individual counseling is being offered through the first Austria-wide format “**competence+advice**”, which was developed within the framework of the network “educational counseling Austria” by Ring Österreichischer Bildungswerke together with the Austrian Institute for Research on Vocational Training (öibf), and which is offered by a network of educational counseling institutions in different provinces. The format consists of four phases: “information”, “workshop” (one day or two half days), “personal work” and finally “individual counseling”. This results in a competence protocol and an action plan or catalog of actions. “Competence+advice” offers a comparatively less time consuming framework as competence assessment is limited to the analysis of only one or two areas of competences relevant to participants’ range of activities.

The above-mentioned formats of competence assessment are based to varying degrees on the Swiss CH-Q model and/or the German ProfilPASS. In all formats, participants’ individual and biographical work has a high priority. The focus is on participant self-assessment. External assessments are introduced by other participants in a group setting or through feedback by closely connected people, particularly through dialogue with consultants. In all formats, consultant qualifications are very highly valued. The diversity and openness of method application in these formats places particularly high demands on counselors to manage the participant and situation-based methods used.

It is clear that different organizations also bring different priorities to their formats due to their particular (target group) specializations. For example, Migrare, a counseling center run by and for immigrants, offers competence profiling specifically for people with **immigrant backgrounds**, placing particular focus on skills that have been acquired through migration and by living in multiple cultures (<http://www.migrare.at/cms1/index.php/angebote-kompetenzzentrum/kompetenzprofil>).

In the area of migration, reference can also be made to the European-developed project “Join in a Job” ([http://hafelekar.at/CD\\_JIJ/irl/index\\_irl.html](http://hafelekar.at/CD_JIJ/irl/index_irl.html)). The diagnosis of competences is embedded in an extensive process that begins with clearing and leads on-demand to the “Job Box”, a tool for capturing resources and skills which develop career prospects and promotion strategies.



The **informal learning** and acquisition of skills gained through **volunteering** or honorary posts is regarded as especially noteworthy. The “competence portfolio for volunteers” is aimed at people who want to make their volunteer-acquired skills credible and usable, possibly also within the context of the labor market (<http://www.ring.bildungswerke.at/>). A reverse aim has developed within the framework of the European project “SLIC”, called “How do I find the right volunteer work?” ([www.slic-project.eu](http://www.slic-project.eu)). It is aimed at older people and seeks skills previously used in professional and private life, which could find their way into future volunteer engagement. The SLIC workshop consists of exploring personal skills, learning about volunteer opportunities and engagement and planning how to enter into a new commitment (action plan).

The “volunteer pass”, a format by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, shall be mentioned here as well. A unique feature herewith: the skills are not identified through consultation processes, rather the superiors of volunteers are encouraged to verbally describe the skills of voluntary workers. This, of course, is not the same as a comprehensive competence diagnosis as performed in previously mentioned consultation processes. The easy handling and assistance provided by the “volunteer pass” (e.g. lists of potential skills and examples of formulations) however can increase competence orientation and thus contribute to the perceived value of skills gained in the realm of volunteering (<http://www.freiwil-ligenweb.at/index.php?id=CH0891>).

Qualified competence counsellors have often stated that informally acquired skills should be made visible in a diagnosis, and receive formal recognition. One Austrian province (Upper Austria) has started an initiative that combines the diagnosis of competences with concrete opportunities for educational qualification. The initiative “You are capable” ([www.dukannstwas.at](http://www.dukannstwas.at)) offers a consultation process to identify the informally acquired skills of participants. Subsequently appropriate, supplementary courses can be selected which lead to the completion of corresponding training in occupations such as carpentry, cooking, etc.

Some diagnostic formats are combined with **greater possibilities**: the Center for Recognition of Competences (KOMPAZ) of the Linz community college offers a “skills profile”, which is carried out through both group and individual work. The result of the process is a personal skills profile plus a certificate confirming the capacity for autonomous competence management.

Optionally, the possibility for deeper examination can be connected to group assessments for determining social and communicative skills.

Many of the described diagnostic formats have as a precondition an affinity for verbal expression by participants. This may be a weakness of formats when working with young people or educationally disadvantaged persons. To increase the **accessibility of counseling formats**, some counsellors use tools such as skill cards, a set of cards with graphical representations of competences. (<http://www.neuland.at/cms/files/pdfs/SkillCardsNeuland.pdf>).

Other common types of pictorial representation include career photo sets or memory cards.

There are also formats designed specifically for the educationally disadvantaged. The Austria-wide network “learn forever” (<http://www.learnforever.at/>) operates within the framework of learning arrangements for educationally disadvantaged women, and includes an analysis of potential. Participants become aware of and name their skills and potentials. This requires a clarification of the terms “competence”, “skills” and “activities”. The participants develop strategies to further develop their strengths and utilize their learning abilities. Key elements in the process are the analysis of personality traits, internal and external perceptions and personal success stories, as well as the testing of skills. The “competence check” constitutes a building block for potential analysis, which is used in the final third. Participants complete some stations in a row, at which they undertake specific tasks. After each station a short reflection follows about the skills which were required to solve the task. At the end, a group results analysis takes place; identified competencies are checked/corrected and collected in a treasure chest. Methods for the analysis of potential are available at [www.learnforever-blog.at](http://www.learnforever-blog.at) (module content/potential analysis).

The “competence workshop” was developed by Tyrolian Future Centre and is a format for young people. While assessing their competences the young people also develop concrete project ideas based on their own interests. While implementing the projects, youths learn their own strengths and skills and apply them in relation to their desired career fields. A total reflection of the paths taken through the competence workshop completes the process (<http://www.zukunftszentrum.at/projekte/bildung-wissen/kompetenzwerkstatt.html>). Standardized guidance test sets are distributed to youths, the results of which serve as a starting point for further guidance.

Finally, it should be noted that the area of competence diagnosis has in recent years clearly gained importance in Austria. Numerous institutions and experts deal with appropriate formats for different target groups and counseling challenges.

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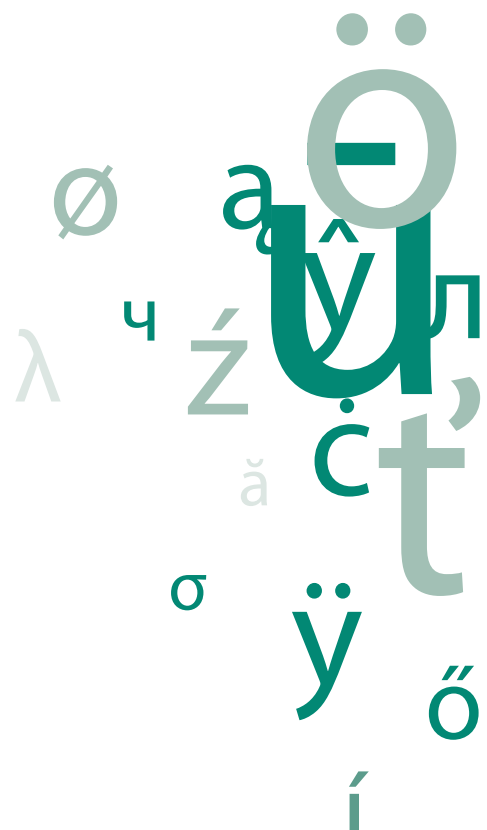
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Ö





# Michaela Freimüller

## Competence Check – a tool for working with educationally disadvantaged women

**M**y name is Michaela Freimüller. I am working for the women foundation Steyr in Austria as a trainer und project manager.

The women foundation is a non profit association linked to the labour office, to provide orientation, counselling and training for women. It provides an advice center for personal and professional orientation and a training center for different types of vocational training. Furthermore the center conceives and realizes women-specific projects within EU-programmes and work on topics like lifelong learning, integration and gender mainstreaming.

Today I'd like to present the competence check – a tool to detect and recheck individual competences of our participants.

First some informations about the project „learn forever“ and the base model where the competence check is embedded:

*Learn forever* is a group of experts consisting of training providers, consultants and gender experts. We have been operating throughout Austria since 2005.

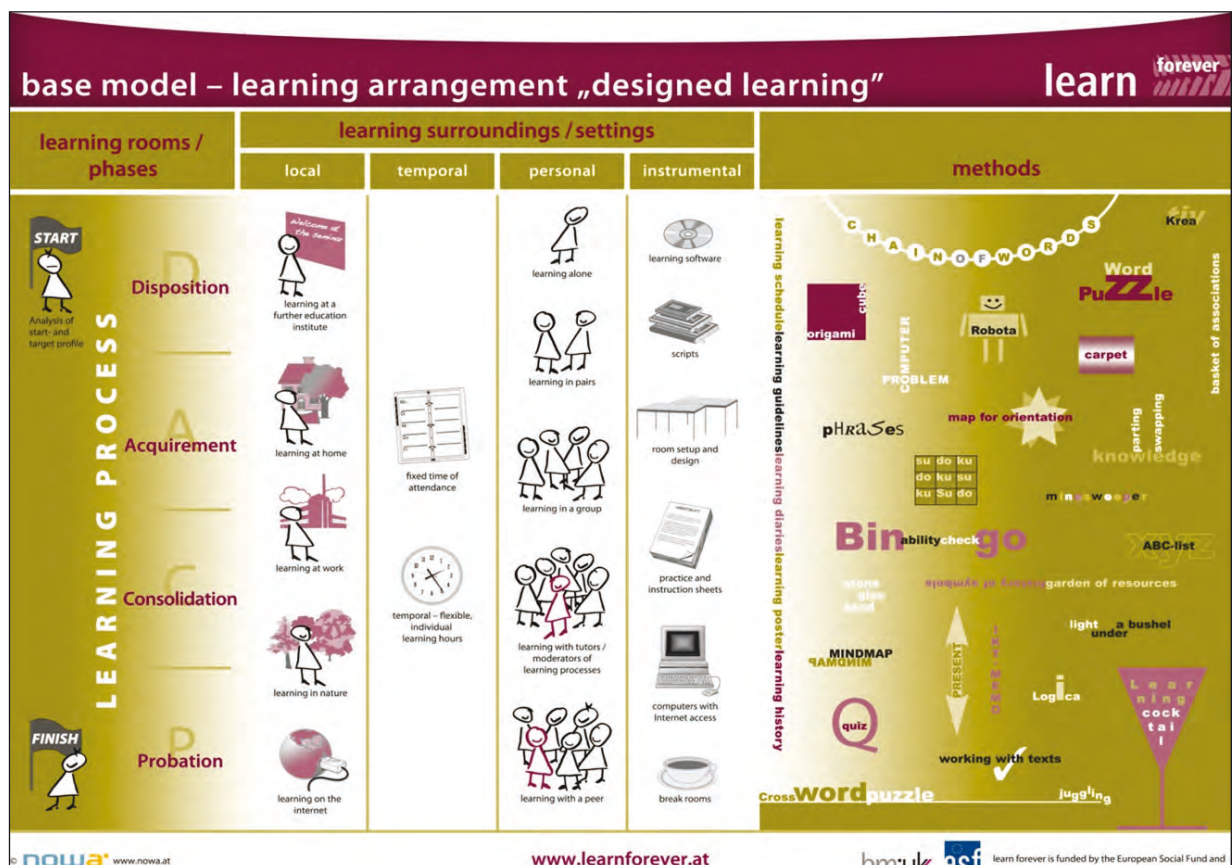
We work with educationally disadvantaged women as well as with adult education training providers. We consider as educationally disadvantaged women:

- o employed and unemployed women without vocational training experiences during the last two years
- o women with a low educational level (apprenticeship training, secondary school, compulsory school)
- o employed and unemployed women without any or with only minor computer skills

Our intentions are:

- o to increase participation rates of women in adequate learning opportunities,
- o to improve individual ICT – skills,
- o to initiate selfdirected learning processes and
- o to show needs of educationally disadvantaged women within learning processes.

Beyond you can find the base model of our learning arrangement.



The competence check is a tool we use for rechecking the results in the treasure box, but it can also be used to recover skills and strengths.

After the first two weeks we start with the ICT training by using various methods our participants tasted during disposition. From this day forward women stay at the education institute for only 10 hours a week. Ten additional hours they are learning at home. To support the learning process at home every woman gets a notebook on loan.

It takes about four to five weeks to get ready for the PC-start-exam. In this period, women change the learning rooms together. But later on, they take more responsibility for their own learning processes and adapt them to their own learning needs.

After the PC-Start-test every woman defines a personal learning goal and tries to reach this on her own (self-directed). Still they spend ten hours at the education institute and ten hours at home but they decide what, how, where, when and with whom they would learn.

This was a short overview of our base model. Our experiences are absolutely excellent. Until now we didn't have a single dropout. For the workshop in Warsaw I prepared four learning stations representing four different competences. The participants had 15 minutes to solve the tasks at their learning station and thereafter another

five minutes to reflect their experiences and write them down before changing to the next learning station.

In the stations four participants worked simultaneously but everyone solved the tasks on her/his own.

## Learning at stations

- o Learning by heart & memory
- o Retentivity
- o Folding the Origami Cube
- o Manual Skills
- o Operating with digits/Sudoku, Divisionspyramide
- o Arithmetic Logic
- o Puzzle Toy/"Verflixt"
- o Spatial Imagination

After the competence check our workshop time was already over. However there were many questions and nice feedback concerning our model and the tool. Especially the fact, that this tool can be used for students as well as for educationally disadvantaged persons only by adapting the minutes for solving the tasks was very impressive for the participants. One woman even asked if our model is transferable – and of course we have already transferred it to several institutes in Austria. Maybe we will soon transfer it to other countries as well?

[www.learnforever.at](http://www.learnforever.at)  
[michaela.freimueller@frauenstiftung.at](mailto:michaela.freimueller@frauenstiftung.at)

Station 1 **Retentivity**

**MEMORY**



Station 3 **Arithmetic Logic**

**OPERATING WITH DIGITS**



Station 2 **Manual Skill**

**FOLDING THE CUBE**



Station 4 **Spatial Imagination**

**PUZZLE TOY**



# Arithmetic Logic „Operating with digits“

o Job definition:

## SUDOKU:

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Within each column, row or box, a digit CANNOT be repeated.

	1	3				2	6	
5	6	2				3	4	8
		7		2		1		
1			5	8	3			6
		4				9		
				7				
7		8				6		5
			7		2			
	4						1	

o Job definition:

## SPECTRA PYRAMIDS:

You can play together or alone!

### Together:

The equilateral triangles are dealt out to the players. These find the answers as quickly as possible and fit them in the right place.



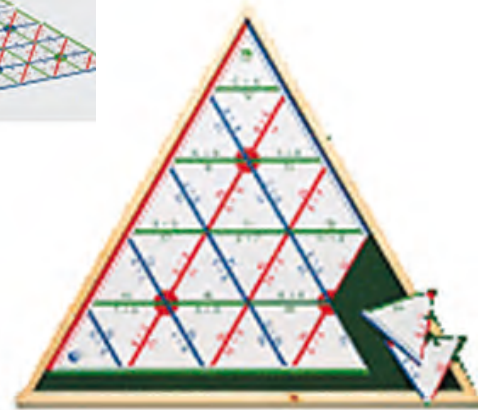
### Alone:

Find the answers as quickly as possible und fit them in the right place.

### Check:

If everything is right you get a big triangle, which the author has called a pyramid.

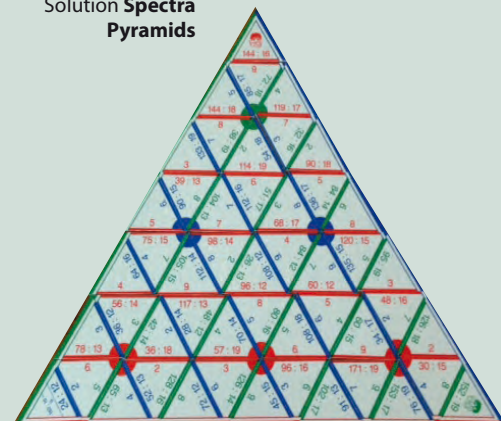
Compare also the colours to find the right place.



Solution **Sudoku**

9	1	3	8	4	5	2	6	7
5	6	2	9	1	7	3	4	8
4	8	7	3	2	6	1	5	9
1	7	9	5	8	3	4	2	6
8	5	4	2	6	1	9	7	3
2	3	6	4	7	9	5	8	1
7	2	8	1	3	4	6	9	5
6	9	1	7	5	2	8	3	4
3	4	5	6	9	8	7	1	2

Solution **Spectra  
Pyramids**





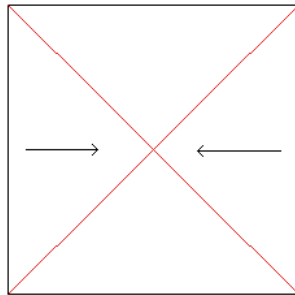
## Manual skill

### o Job definition:

#### Fold the Origami Cube!

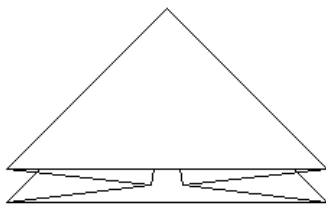
What is the Origami Cube?

The origami cube is a cube you can fold from a square sheet of paper. Use the instruction manual below!

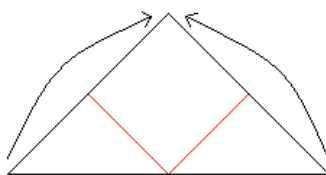


1. Fold a square sheet of paper at the diagonals and unfold it. Put the paper at both arrows together.

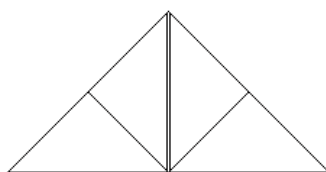
Lay the triangles at the top and at the bottom on top of each other.



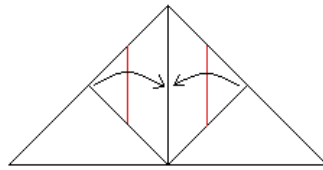
2. The result is a flier triangle, which is known from the swallow or the pigeon.



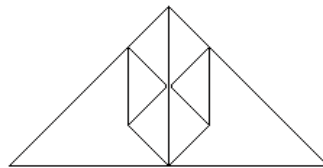
3. Fold upward on the red line on the right and on the left.



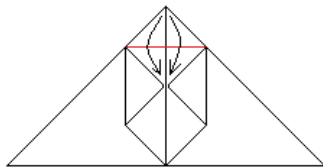
4. Then it must look like this.



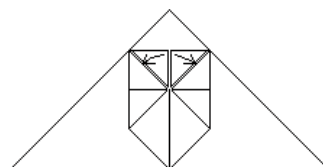
5. Fold on the red lines.



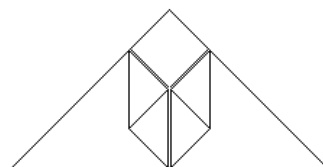
6. Then it must look like this.



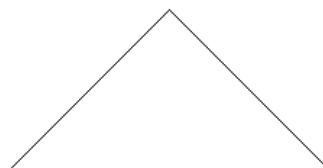
7. Fold the two little triangles on the red lines downward.



8. Put the last made triangles in the two pockets on the right and on the left. This is a little bit fiddly.



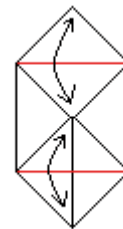
9. Then it must look like this.



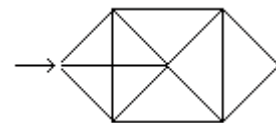
10. Turn the whole triangle and repeat the steps 3,4,5,6,7,8,9.



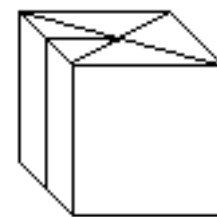
11. Then it must look like this.



12. Fold and unfold on the red lines.



13. Take the folded cube in hand and blow into the hole at the top. Unfold the cube by this.



14. The cube is ready.

Indication of source:  
<http://www.mathematische-basteleien.de/oriwuerfel.htm>



# Retentivity



o Job definition:










Learn the text below by heart :

*Two-legs sat on three-legs, eating one-leg.*

*In came four-legs and snatched one-leg from two-legs.*

*Two-legs grabbed three-legs and hit four-legs.*

**Did it work? Yes? – Congratulation, you already use both of your brain hemispheres. If not, don't worry, you will be successful in at most 2 minutes: try to imagine the story like this:**

„Two-legs		(= man)	set on three-legs		(=stool)
eating one-leg.		(=chicken leg).	In came four-legs		(=dog)
and snatched		from		.	
	grabbed		and hit		“

o Job definition:

„Memory“ » Try to find as many couples as possible. You can play together with your partners.

Make a note of your result and prepare the memory-cards for the following group.

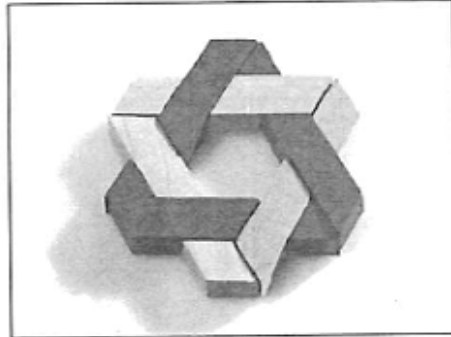
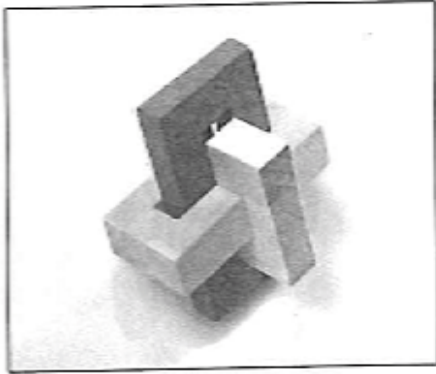
**How many couples did you find: \_\_\_\_\_**



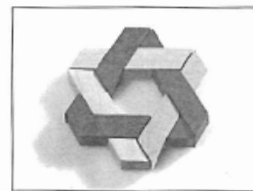
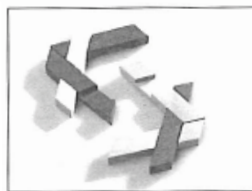
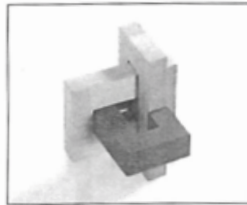
## Spatial Sense

o Job definition:

Try to build the following figures!



Suggested solutions



o Job definition:

Try to find the right place for every piece!



One of many possibilities:







2

## General questions

### How do you define “competences” in your country?

The Law on the Croatian Qualifications Framework (CROQF) defines competences as knowledge and skills and associated autonomy and responsibility. This definition implies optimal, understandable and measurable structure.

Knowledge is in the CROQF defined as set of acquired and connected information and skills as set of application of knowledge and known methods of working in completing working tasks and solving problems. Knowledge can be factual and theoretical, and skills can be cognitive (logical and creative thinking), practical (physical ability, usage of methods, instruments, tools and materials) and social (creating and developing interpersonal relations). Autonomy and responsibility signifies achieved usage of specific knowledge and skills, in line with given standards.

Different career guidance professionals might use similar definitions in their daily practice but definition given in the CROQF is basis for setting learning outcomes and qualifications on national level.

### What kind of competences are diagnosed in your country?

Development of framework for organizing different professional competences is in process. Current proposal created by the Croatian Employment Service (CES) contains nine sets of key professional competences. Each of set contains from 2 up to 16 competences. The sets of competences are: communication in the mother tongue, communication in foreign language, competences in science, technological competence, digital competence, competence in interpersonal relationships, managerial, organizational and entrepreneurship competence, cultural expression and learning to learn.

This classification is based on key competences for lifelong learning suggested by the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF) which are accepted by the CROQF. Key competences for lifelong learning are defined as competences which are imperative for inclusion of every individual in life of local community.

### What are the regulations governing the use of diagnosis tools in your country?

Tools for diagnosis competences are free to use to professionals in vocational and career guidance who mainly come from social and humanities studies.

There are regulations for use of psychological measuring instruments. According to Psychological Activity

Law tools which are classified by the Croatian Psychological Chamber as psychological measuring instruments can be used only by psychologists who gained basic permission for practicing psychological activity. Psychological measuring instruments are used in accordance with standards of psychological testing that are regulated by the Croatian Psychological Chamber.

There are several categories of psychological instruments according to categories of persons who are entitled to use them: Category 0 (psychologists and other experts for the purpose of scientific research or professional observing), Category A (psychologists and other experts (social workers, psychiatrists, speech therapists, pedagogues etc.), Category B (psychologists with no additional education), Category C (psychologists with additional education).

### Who in your country is entitled to make the diagnosis of competences? (profession/required qualifications).

The diagnosis of competences is mostly made by counsellors for vocational and career guidance and career development or human resources specialists in educational system, in CES, in human resource departments of companies or in NGO-s. On the national level diagnosis of competences is conducted by institutions that are entitled to work on creation of the CROQF: Ministry of Labour and Pension System, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education and CES.

Professionals that make diagnosis of competences have university diploma mainly from humanities and social sciences: psychologists, sociologists, pedagogues, economists but also professionals in specific working fields. All counsellors in CES have one year program of internship guided by mentor. After one year of internship psychologists have to take professional exam in the Croatian Psychological Chamber in order to get basic permission to perform psychological activity.



## Specific questions

What tools have been used in your country to diagnose competences?

There are different tools based on self-assessment, observation by professionals, group work or structured interview. These are different tests of cognitive abilities, questionnaires and scales for assessment of behaviors and performance, knowledge tests, questionnaires for assessing professional interests, characteristics or attitudes and also assessment centers. Structured interview is powerful tool to diagnose various skills that come from working experience or education of clients or if conducted with employer give insight in competences of employees.

There is computer program "Moj izbor" ("My Choice) in use which contains professional interest questionnaire and self-assessment questionnaire of different competences. The CES has also designed a workshop that has the specific goal to help unemployed people detect their own competences. The workshop is called "Methods of self-assessment" and is intended for all who need help in defining their work potential, knowledge, skills, characteristics, values, in creating their professional goals. There also some workshops based on self-assessment of competences in the database of Naviguide project which is a database of career guidance methods developed in Leonardo da Vinci project.

Please describe 3 tools that are the most useful (in your opinion). Are they dedicated to pupils and students, academic students or adults?

Computer program "Moj izbor" is dedicated to pupils, students and adults who can use it independently or with the help of vocational guidance counselor. The program has interactive questionnaire of self-assessment of competences (skills) that individuals have developed at home, during the education or through working experience. The result of self-assessment is then connected to the proposed occupations. The program also contains self-assessment of professional interests.

Structured professional interview is broadly used to diagnose competences of adults especially those that are developed through previous or current working experience. With the set of previously prepared questions or assessment scales knowledge and skills can be diagnosed. Structured interview is also used with employers to detect competences of employees.

One of the most common psychological instruments used is Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF). It is used for assessing personality traits in professional selection of candidates and vocational guidance and counseling of adults. It contains 5 general factors of

personality traits (extraversion, anxiety, self-control, independence and non-sentimentalism) and 16 primary factors of personality traits (emotional warmth, reasoning, emotional stability, domination, vividness, consciousness about the rules, social courage, sensibility, precaution, privacy, self-esteem, openness to change, self-sufficiency, perfectionism and tension).

What are the advantages or disadvantages of these tools for the counsellors and for the clients?

The advantage of computer program "Moj izbor" is that it can be a self-service instrument that is installed in the CES, schools and other institutions. But if it is needed it can be used also with a help and guidance of a counselor. On the other hand it requires IT equipment and the number of users at the same time is limited by the number of computers available.

Structured interviews are widely used because they ensure contact with the client in which trained interviewers can facilitate the answers and in this way get more precise answers. Structured interview also implies more open questions which lead to answers or data that wasn't predicted by the instruments and give more detailed insight in competences.

Different questionnaires are useful because they give quick insight in competences and they are economic since they can be used by more users at the same time. General disadvantage of instruments based on self-assessment is that they are based on self-perception of a client and so depends on their self-awareness and honesty.

What kinds of ICT tools (eg. computer programs, software, games etc.) are applied in your country to diagnose competences? How popular are they?

"Moj izbor" (My Choice) is computer program intended for clients from 13 years old onwards to all adults who are thinking about change in their career. Program has interactive questionnaire for self-assessment of professional interests and interactive questionnaire of self-assessment of competences that is skills that a client has developed at home, during the education or through working experience. The answers of a client are then connected to 350 occupations and computer generates those that are most suitable for a client. Using of program is free for all the clients. The program is in use in every regional office of the CES, in elementary and high schools, youth centers, adult education institutions and the number of users is increasing. Every year evaluation of "My choice" is conducted. Satisfaction of users of "Moj izbor" is high: 95% of pupils says that they would recommend the program to their friends and 94% of adults says the same.





Another instrument is in process of development. It is on-line questionnaire for self-assessment of different personality traits relevant for the career guidance. It will be a part of web portal of Centers for Informing and Counseling about the Career.

There are also personality questionnaires, knowledge test and ability test available in both paper version and electronic/internet version. For example: Big Five Questionnaire, Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF), NEO Questionnaire (NEO PI-R), Differential Aptitude Test for Guidance (TAB), test of general awareness. Instruments are accessible through internet by system of credits that allows the user to buy the electronic version or by program that is installed to the user's computer. There is also an option of network testing.

**How are these tools disseminated among guidance practitioners or teachers (via internet, via courses, etc...)?**

Use of the program "My Choice" is protected by the license. The program is created through the adjustment of "Adult Direction" program which is owned by CASCAID Ltd. Organization from the University Loughborough in Great Britain. The institutions that want to use it have to get the right for the license for one year and have to complete one day education about the program in the Croatian Employment Service.

Other instruments that are available in electronic version are accessible to the users by buying the credits. One credit is equivalent to applying the test or questionnaire to one client and for getting the report about the results. The accredited publisher of psychological measuring instruments is entitled for dissemination of electronic versions of the instruments.

**Does the system of diagnosis of adult competences exist in your country? If yes, is it related to the validation process of non-formal and informal learning?**

The development of system of diagnosis adult competences on national level is in process. Two ministries, the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports and the Ministry of Labour and Pension System together with the CES are working on the survey design and questionnaire for employers that will be applied on national level. This survey will be basis for creating the system for evaluation of non-formal and informal learning. This system is one of the specific goals of the CROQF and will be regulated by the Regulations of Recognition and Evaluation of non-formal and informal learning. For now the validation of non-formal learning exists in the Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts on the level of vocational training.

**What are the free online tools to test competences in your country?**

New model of e-counseling is about to be created in Croatia. This model will be accessible online to everyone and will contain information relevant for vocational guidance and career development. It will also have possibilities for self-assessment of competences, professional interest and personality dimensions relevant to professional development. It will be possible for clients to communicate with counselor through e-mail, chat, phone or text messages.

## Research and development

**Who/what organizations or institutions conduct research on competences or develop new tools in the field of diagnosis?**

Various institutions and organizations are engaged in research of competences depending on the purpose and level of research. On national level the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, the Ministry of Labour and Pension System together with the CES and the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education are conducting the research about the competences needed in different sectors as a basis for standards of qualifications in the CROQF.

The CES also develops instruments like "Moj izbor" and plans to develop another on line tool for self-assessment of competences.

There are several other institutions that conduct research on competences and develop new tools like "Naklada Slap" which is profiled publisher of psychological measuring instrument by local authors and various adaptations of foreign test and Center for Psychodiagnostic instruments that is part of the Department of Psychology in Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb. Departments of psychology on other universities in country also conduct research in measuring instruments. Human resource departments in companies as well develop their own specific tools for assessing competences of their employees.

**What fields or topics are researched?**

Research is mainly about constructing new diagnosis tools, checking their metric characteristics or evaluation of the instruments by user themselves. Ministries often conduct research connected to the CROQF, CES both connected to CROQF and vocational guidance and organization like "Naklada Slap" conduct research mostly about specific area of metric characteristic of different diagnostic instruments.



### How is the efficiency of tools measured?

Continuous evaluation of tools like "Moj izbor" or workshops aimed at self-assessment is conducted in CES. Evaluation of "Moj izbor" is conducted every year with pupils, students and adults. Organizations that publish measuring instruments do also the validation of them before the publishing and when new validation is needed.

### Who/what organizations or institutions provide trainings for counsellors on diagnosis of competences?

The CES provides training which is obligatory for the new users of computer program "Moj izbor". The CES also provides training for vocational guidance counselor employed in the CES and sometimes for those that are employed in educational system. Publishers of psychological measuring instruments provide education about the specific instruments and seldom about the process of creating the diagnosis tools. There are also various internal educations conducted by organizations that provide some segments of career guidance or human resource development.



## Introduction:

Different authors and different organizations use different definitions for competencies. The most common definition used in Croatia defines *competencies as a successful appliance of ability, knowledge and skills while performing*. Many organizations use both a set of “core dimensions/competencies” (that apply across a band of jobs or perhaps the entire organization) and “specific dimensions/competencies” (that apply to a specific job). Using both results in a complete description of a specific job’s requirements. Competencies should be behaviour-based and coachable.

Both individuals and organizations have benefits from competency models. Competencies help organization to identify the essential knowledge, skills and attributes needed for exceptional performance. Organizations use competencies for hiring, for development planning to enhance the 360 feedback and to foster and adopt the change. Individuals get a straight forward feedback what kind of behaviour is desirable, they use competencies as a tool which enables development and helps to choose development actions. Competencies help individuals as guidelines for successful career planning.

A specific group of competencies are leadership competencies. The leadership competency model is a way to communicate to individuals what kind of behaviours are expected and appreciated within the leadership role in the organization. The leadership competency model is composed of different competencies described by specific behaviours.

## Results:

For this workshop we analysed different leadership competency models in Croatia. Twelve Croatian companies shared their leadership competency models for the study. Companies varied in size and type of business (from 500 to 4.000 employees).

What became immediately apparent was that leadership competency models are different in different companies and that different models use different language for similar concepts (‘taking charge’ and ‘managerial courage’). The level of details differs as well (short list with no definitions to hierarchically arranged lengthy lists). The language used is unique language to emphasize certain aspects (2/3 of behaviours) and standard language (1/3 of behaviours).


We used George Klemp (2009) study of leadership competencies and classified competency behaviours

in two different types of competencies: **practices** and **attributes**.

**Practice** was defined as what leader does on the job to achieve some results (*make decisions, manage people*) and **attributes** as knowledge, skills and other characteristics that enable people to do some leadership tasks (*proactive, high energy*). The competency models we studied are all a mixture of attributes and practices.

TOP 5 LEADERSHIP PRACTICES ARE:	TOP 5 LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES ARE:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Set Direction</li> <li>○ Develop People</li> <li>○ Focus on the Customer</li> <li>○ Influence the Organization</li> <li>○ Manage Performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Strategic thinking</li> <li>○ Integrity</li> <li>○ Self-confidence</li> <li>○ Drive</li> <li>○ Interpersonal wisdom</li> </ul>

When we classified behaviours we found out that they can be grouped into nine buckets as Klemp suggested. We calculated the percentage of behaviours for each group.

- 
*Strong sense of self, self confident and decisive, allows them to admit when they are wrong (7% of behaviors)*
- 
*Giving direction, focusing on results, manage, control and holds others accountable (9% of behaviors)*
- 
*Influencing others as a counterpart of telling this meta competency is about influencing others, build effective coalitions and terms (11% of behaviors)*
- 
*Making things happen, highly proactive, take risks and shake things up (9% of behaviors)*
- 
*Building relationship on trust and respect at many levels (customers, clients, community, political...) (10% of behaviors)*
- 
*Effective leaders need high general intelligence to handle complexities, strategic thinking, make judgments in ambiguous situation (all model in this research have 15% of behaviors to emphasize this)*

1. Prava formula, Croatia

EQ  
14%

*Able to anticipate the reaction of others, reading people and their unspoken feelings (14% of behaviors)*

Know  
16%

*Knowledge and wisdom to understand the limits of factual knowledge in making sound decisions (16% of behaviors)*

Grow  
9%

*Personal development, eager to take on new situations and learn by doing (9% of behaviors)*

Results can be used in practise to help professionals in selection of leaders. We have to select for attributes and manage and develop our leaders within the organization for practices. Some groups are most difficult to develop such as IQ, EQ and Ego. Through development centres we can assess and develop leaders for competencies grouped as Tell, Sell, Initiate and Relate. We can use all of meta-competencies to identify people ready to move to a higher position.

In the practical part of the workshop participants used self-assessment questionnaire and prepare their own development plan for competencies called 'Motivating others'.

Participants used same assessment questionnaire and assess their boss's competence 'Motivating others'. Based on the same behaviours from that competencies participants prepared in small groups set of selection questions for structure inter interview to assess *Motivating others* through the selection interview. They prepared questions for targeted behavioural interviews for competencies *Motivating others* (using STAR (Situation, Task, Action and Result) model for complete behavioural description).

## Motivating behaviours used for self-assessment:

- I BOUNCE BACK QUICKLY FOLLOWING FAILURES OR DISAPPOINTMENT
- I TAKE REGULAR ACTION TO DEVELOP HIGH MORALE
- I ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO AIM HIGH
- I DEMONSTRATE A 'CAN-DO' ATTITUDE
- I SET REALISTIC TARGETS
- I INVOLVE OTHERS IN DECISIONS WHICH AFFECT THEM
- I CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT WHICH ENCOURAGES OTHERS TO GIVE THEIR BEST
- I PRAISE THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF OTHERS
- I SHOW APPRECIATION WHEN OTHERS PUT IN EXTRA TIME AND EFFORT TO ACHIEVE RESULTS
- I PERSEVERE WITH DIFFICULT SITUATIONS TO ACHIEVE POSITIVE RESULTS
- I INVOLVE OTHERS IN PROBLEM-SOLVING
- I DISPLAY PROGRESS TOWARDS ACHIEVING TEAM GOALS
- I GIVE SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT TO MY TEAM MEMBERS TO HELP THEM ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS
- I CHALLENGE MEDIOCRE PERFORMANCE
- I KEEP MY TEAM MEMBERS INFORMED ABOUT COMPANY PERFORMANCE AND KEY BUSINESS ISSUES
- I INVEST TIME IN IDENTIFYING WHAT MOTIVATES DIFFERENT MEMBERS OF MY TEAM
- I ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO MAINTAIN A POSITIVE MINDSET
- I TREAT TEAM MEMBERS WITH DIFFERENT PREFERENCES DIFFERENTLY



# Meta analysis of leadership competency models in Croatia

1.

**Most wanted in Croatia**  
Meta analysis of leadership competency models in Croatia

2.

**Content**

- What is competency?
- Why organizations and individuals need competency models?
- How to build the leadership competency model?
- Analyses of different leadership competency models in Croatia
- Application and future use

3.

**What is competency?**

- Different authors – different definitions
- Different organizations – different definitions
- Most common in Croatia: *Competency is successful appliance of ability/skills/knowledge while performing*
- Competency should be behavior-based and coachable
- Leadership competency model is a way to communicate to individuals what kind of behaviors are expected and appreciated
- Leadership competency model is composed of different competencies described by specific behaviors

4.

**Why organizations and individuals need competency models?**

Benefits for organization	Benefits for individuals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can help to identify the essential knowledge, skills and attributes needed for exceptional performance</li> <li>• Using the model for hiring</li> <li>• Using the model for development planning</li> <li>• Enhancing the 360 feedback</li> <li>• Adopting the change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Straight forward feedback what kind of behavior is desirable</li> <li>• Tool which enable development and help to choose development actions</li> <li>• Guidelines for successful career planning</li> </ul>

5.

**How to build competency model?**

Phase 1 Why, What, How & What if	Phase 2 Choosing the method	Phase 3 Build customized model
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why organization need leadership competency model (past - present - future)?</li> <li>• What kind of change in leadership behavior on organizational level is needed (success measures)?</li> <li>• How leaders can use the model in the future (career planning and development activities)?</li> <li>• What if there is a need on organizational level to rise awareness for specific leadership behavior?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment through interviews with managers</li> <li>• Assessment through observation of standard and excellent performance</li> <li>• Assessment through analysis of critical incidents</li> <li>• Customization of generic model</li> <li>• System method: focus on competencies that support specific organizational output</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support managers and employees to build customized model through interactive workshop</li> <li>• Brainstorm competencies needed in our organization</li> <li>• Detecting key competencies</li> <li>• Defining each key competency</li> <li>• Brainstorm behavior indicator for each key competency</li> <li>• Quantitative and qualitative validation of the model</li> </ul>

6.

**Analyses of different leadership competency models in Croatia**

- 12 Croatian companies shared their leadership competency models for this study
- Companies varied in size and type of business (from 500 to 4.000 employees)
- Immediately apparent: leadership competency models are different
- Different models use different language for similar concepts ('taking charge' and 'managerial courage')
- Level of details different as well (short list with no definitions to hierarchically arranged lengthy lists)
- Language used is unique language to emphasize certain aspects (2/3 of behaviors) and standard language (1/3 of behaviors)

7.

**Analyses of different leadership competency models in Croatia**

- Based on George Klemp (2009) study of leadership competencies there are two different types of competencies: **practices** and **attributes**
- **Practice** – what leader do on the job to achieve some results (*make decisions, manage people*)
- **Attributes** – knowledge, skills and other characteristics that enable people to carry some leadership tasks (*proactive, high energy*)
- Competency models we studied are all mixture of attributes and practices

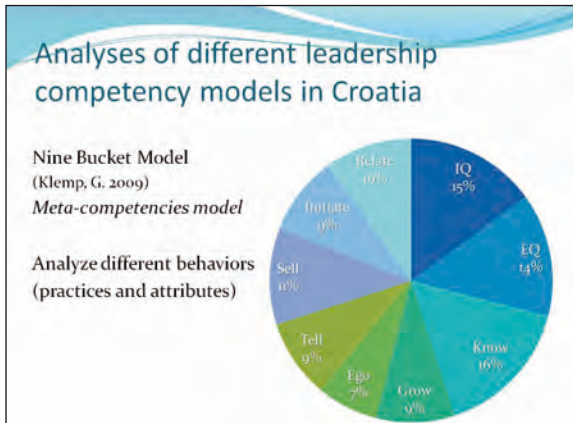
8.

**Analyses of different leadership competency models in Croatia**

Top 5 leadership practices	Top 5 leadership attributes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set Direction</li> <li>• Develop People</li> <li>• Focus on the Customer</li> <li>• Influence the Organization</li> <li>• Manage Performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic thinking</li> <li>• Integrity</li> <li>• Self-confidence</li> <li>• Drive</li> <li>• Interpersonal wisdom</li> </ul>



9.



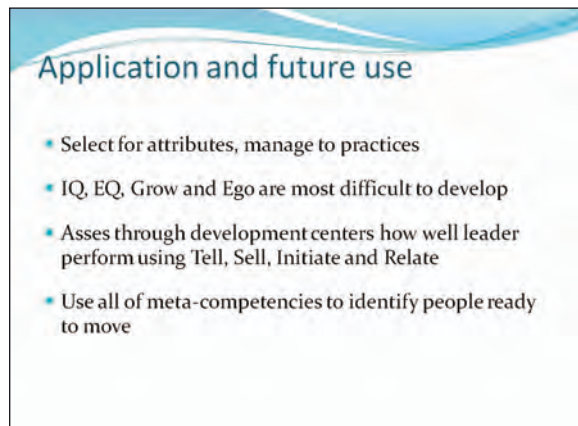
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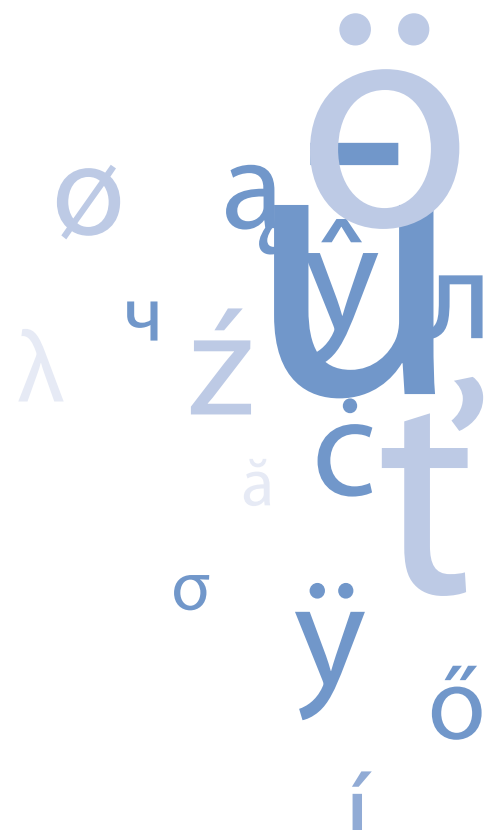
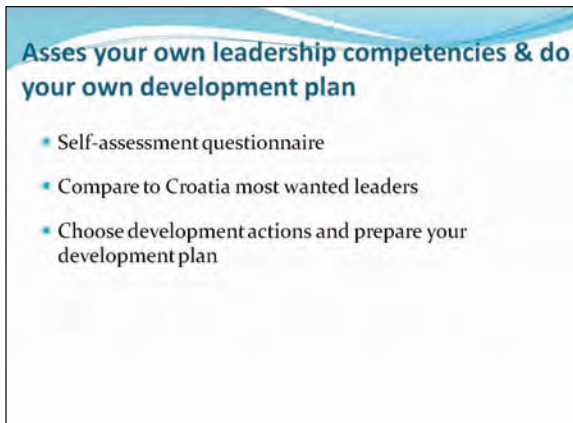
11.



12.



13.







3

## General questions

### How do you define “competences” in your country?

The **Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports** within the **Framework Educational Programme** provides a general description of competencies: “Key competencies represent the system of knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes and values that are important to the individual’s personal development and to the individual’s role in society. The selection and concept of key competencies are based on values that are generally accepted by society and on generally shared ideas as to which competencies of the individual contribute to his or her education, welfare and success in life and to a strengthening of the functions of civil society.”<sup>2</sup>

The **National System of Occupation** run within the project of the **Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs** and co-funded by European Structure Funds uses the following description of the competencies:

Competencies mean the system of knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes which enables one’s employability and individual personal development. They describe conditions for the achievement in a specific complex of activities. According to this definition, the competencies have following characteristics:

- o must be observed;
- o must be measured / evaluated;
- o must be trained / accessible to change and development.

Veteška and Tureckiová (2008)<sup>3</sup> describe several characteristics of competencies:

- o **contextualized** – competency is set in a specific environment or situation;
- o **multidimensional** – competency is composed from different sources (information, knowledge, skills, ideas, attitudes, other particular competencies). Competency includes behaviour and in behaviour is also demonstrated;
- o **defined with a standard** – the estimated level of managing competency is described as well as set of its measures;
- o **has a potential for taking an action and development** – competency is gained and developed during an education and learning process.

### What kinds of competences are diagnosed in your country?

According to different contexts, there are several frameworks for defining competences.

The following competencies are regarded as key competencies at the basic education stage: *learning*

*competencies; problem-solving competencies; communication competencies; social and personal competencies; civil competencies; working competencies.*

The **National System of Occupation** describes soft competencies as a set of requirements for an effective working performance independent on specific specialization but connected with the general personal abilities. The following competencies involve: *effective communication, cooperation, creativity, flexibility, customers’ orientation, efficiency, independence, problem solving, planning and organizing, lifelong learning, proactive approach, stress resiliency (coping strategies), exploring and orientation in information, leadership, and influencing others.* There is also a description of 6 development levels of each competency including its indicators in a sense of a behaviour measures.

Generally, in HR terminology, competencies are more connected with a personal performance in a labour market. It should be mentioned that the existing definitions are not considered as a status quo but they are still undergoing continuous development.

Furthermore, there are different projects related to the competencies funded by the European Social Fund in the Czech Republic, e.g. *Competencies for the Labour Market, Competencies for Life, Keys for Life, etc.*

The project **Keys for life – Developing Key Competences in Leisure-Time and Non-formal Education** (2009-2013) has been run by *The National Institute of Children and Youth (NICY)*. The goal of the project is to create a system that would support sustainable development of leisure-time and non-formal education in order to increase quality, and to extend the range of the leisure-time and non-formal education offer in the Czech Republic.

Description of competencies in the project coming from the definition of *The National System of Occupation*:

Competencies	Soft		General
	Vocational	General vocational (transferable, transversal)	
		Specific vocational	Skills
			Knowledge

Source: *Kompetence v neformálním vzdělávání*, p. 10. (2012)

The project **Competencies for the Labour Market** (2005-2008) has served for a development and verification of methods and tools for evaluation and further development of specific competencies. Moreover, the general



system for the evaluation of the process of development the competencies has been designed, including feedback from employers, educators, employees and other actors involved in the labour market.

Competencies are understood as transferable skills of employees required by their employers. The following have been included in the project: *competency for effective communication, competency for cooperation, competency for entrepreneurship, competency for flexibility, competency for customer orientation, competency for efficiency, competency for independence and decisiveness, competency for solving problems, competency for organizing and planning, competency for lifelong learning, competency for proactive approach, competency for stress resiliency, competency for exploring and orientation in information, and competency for communication in foreign languages.*

The follow-up project **Competencies for Life** has been aimed on the development of six key competencies among the pupils and students, and provided specific methods and tools on how to do it. There is only a small difference between competencies described in the **Framework Educational Programme** and **Competencies for Life**:

Competencies in Framework Educational Programme	Competencies for Life
<i>learning competencies</i>	<i>competency for lifelong learning</i>
<i>problem-solving competencies</i>	<i>competency for solving problems</i>
<i>communication competencies</i>	<i>competency for effective communication and competency for exploring and orientation in information</i>
<i>social and personal competencies</i>	<i>competency for cooperation</i>
<i>working competencies</i>	<i>competency for entrepreneurship</i>
<i>civil competencies</i>	<i>competency for exploring and orientation in information, problem solving, cooperation and effective communication</i>

Source: *Competencies for Life*

Wider approach to the competencies provides the **European reference framework**:

- communication in the mother tongue;
- communication in foreign languages;

- mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology;
- digital competence;
- learning to learn;
- social and civic competences;
- sense of initiative and entrepreneurship;
- cultural awareness and expression.

Within this context a competency is understood as a "combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the context. Key competences are those which all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment"<sup>4</sup>.

On the other hand, there also exist narrower approaches to this term describing a competency as a set of knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes which enable one's employability.

A few years ago, a discussion related to **Career Management Skills** was opened in the Czech Republic. As a source for this discussion the ELGPN Toolkit and frameworks from other countries (Blueprint Canada, Blueprint Australia, etc.) have been used.

#### What are the regulations governing the use of diagnosis tools in your country?

The usage of standardized psycho-diagnostic methods and tools is limited only for people with specific training and education provided by the test publishers or authorized specialists.<sup>5</sup>

1. The Czech language does not differentiate terms competency and competence as well as different plural forms of this noun competencies vs. competences. There is only one term competence used in a Czech terminology that is used as an umbrella term for both competence and competency.
2. The Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports (2007): Framework Educational Programme for Basic Education, pp 12. Available from: <http://www.msmt.cz/areas-of-work/basic-education> [15. 4. 2013].
3. Veteška J., Tureckiová M. (2008): Vzdělávání a rozvoj podle kompetencí. Kompetence v andragogice, pedagogice a řízení. Univerzita Jana Amose Komenského, Praha, p.25. Available from: <http://www.google.cz/url?q=http://sociologie1.wz.cz/download/Rizeni%2520lidських%2520zdroju/kompetence%2520-%2520skripta.doc&sa=U&ei=o1tuU-ZmaLWXtQah54DoDQ&ved=0CBgQFjAA&usg=AFQjCNEUYEgL-IP5rvznx8GTNwkvRBEH2A> [15. 4. 2013].
4. European Communities (2007): Key Competences for Lifelong Learning – A European Framework, p. 3. Available from: [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education\\_culture/publ/pdf/ll-learning/keycomp\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/pdf/ll-learning/keycomp_en.pdf) [15. 4. 2013].
5. Source: Czech Association of Work and Organizational Psychologists.



### Who in your country is entitled to make the diagnosis of competences? (profession/required qualifications)

The diagnosis of competencies is made by employees of The Czech Labour Office, Recruitment Agencies, employers, psychologists, as well as, people involved in specific projects related to competencies, adult educators, etc.

There is no regulation for particular professions to be entitled for a diagnosis of competencies. However, as mentioned above, specific diagnostic tools and methods can be used only by trained professionals.

## Specific questions

What tools have been used in your country to diagnose competences? What are the advantages or disadvantages of these tools for the counsellors and for the clients?

- **COMDI** (COMputer Diagnostics) is a tool composed of different diagnostic methods, particularly focused on vocational life. COMDI has been developed and tested between 1998 and 2001. Nowadays, it is used for career counseling for various target groups: pupils, students, unemployed, as well as, in HR processes. COMDI is available online and can be flexibly used by the clients according to their needs.

- **Bilan de Competences** has been used in the Czech Republic since 2001, mostly at the labour offices as a part of counseling process for unemployed people. In 2013, the association of providers of *bilan de competence* has been started to establish.

- Technique **Colors of Life – Color-word associations** is combined projective technique helping the clients to explore their competencies, as well as, patterns of individual and common thinking, understanding the self-realization behaviour, own emotions, etc. Nowadays, there is a controversy among the group of methodologists and providers of the method whether *Colors of Life* can be considered as a diagnostic tool or not.

There are specific methods for diagnosis competencies used traditionally in Human Resources departments of private companies. However, their usage is spreading behind the borders of HR; usage of these tools is starting to be applied also in NGOs, education sector, and labour offices. The following methods and tools should be mentioned in this context:

- **Assessment Centre / Development Centre;**
- **Behavioural-Event Interview** (BEI);
- **STAR method** (SITUATION – TASKS – ACTIONS – RESULTS);
- **Competency Based Interview** (CBS);
- **Power Hiring.**

During past years, several new methods have been presented to the Czech counselors and presently, they are passing further development. In 2010, the **CH-Q method** was presented in the Czech Republic for the first time. Since that, about 50 counselors have participated at the first level training of this method. In 2012, the [Centre of Competencies](#) has been established to disseminate the method in the Czech environment. After further development of experiential pedagogy, **experiential techniques and methods** have become used in career counseling as well; e.g. the approach of Thomas Diener is becoming very popular among Czech counselors.

What kinds of ICT tools (eg. computer programs, software, games etc.) are applied in your country to diagnose competences?

COMDI, as well as, *Colors of Life* diagnosis methods are available online, for charge. Products of different projects are mostly available online for free, e.g. one of the products of the project *Keys for Life - Personal competency portfolio*.

Through the EUROPASS network, the European [Dictionary of Skills and Competences](#) (DISCO) is promoted. DISCO is an online thesaurus that currently covers more than 104,000 skills and competence terms and approximately 36,000 of example phrases. Available in eleven European languages, DISCO is one of the largest collections of its kind in the education and labour market.

How are these tools disseminated among guidance practitioners or teachers (via internet, via courses, etc...)?

Dissemination is realized mostly via internet, seminars, conferences, etc.

Does the system of diagnosis of adult competences exist in your country? If yes, is it related to the validation process of non-formal and informal learning?

The system of diagnosis of adult competencies in the Czech Republic is presently being built. Qualification standards for partial qualifications are being developed and connected to the *National System of Occupations* as a [National Register of Vocational Qualifications](#). According to the present law, the register can be used as a tool for supporting recognition and validation of non-formal learning.

The products of the project *Keys for Life* or the *CH-Q method* can be used during the process of diagnosis competencies.

## Research and development

Who/what organizations or institutions conduct research on competences or develop new tools in the field of diagnosis?

Particular projects are run by relevant ministries (Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs) and their directly controlled institutions (e.g. National Institute of Education, National Institute of Children and Youth, Fund of Further Education, etc.), as well as, independent or private organizations (e.g. National Training Fund), and other research (e.g. universities) and educational institutions.

What fields or topics are researched?

The research run by the *National Institute of Education* is aimed on the competencies in a school curriculum and a process of evaluation of informal learning. Furthermore, the Institute is investigating competencies required at the labour market. Also, a publication on demands of employers is issued every year. Among other topics, it includes a real description of competencies among graduated students. Detailed information about this topic is available at the website <http://www.infoabsolvent.cz/>.

The *National Institute of Children and Youth* realized in-depth research connecting with the competencies gained through non-formal education (*Keys for Life*).

The *National Training Fund* makes a research about the competencies in relation to the labour market; an important project of this institution is aimed on *the bilan de competence*.

Moreover, some topics related to the competencies are investigated in various projects funded by ESF.

Who/what organizations or institutions provide trainings for counsellors on diagnosis of competences?

Specific training and education provided by the test publishers or authorized specialists.

## Resources and Literature:

Veteška J., Tureckiová M. (2008): *Vzdělávání a rozvoj podle kompetencí. Kompetence v andragogice, pedagogice a řízení*. Univerzita Jana Amose Komenského, Praha. Available from: <http://www.google.cz/url?q=http://sociologie1.wz.cz/download/Rizeni%2520lidських%2520zdroju/kompetence%2520-%2520skripta.doc&sa=U&ei=o1tuUZmaLIWxtQah54DoDQ&ved=0CBgQFJA&usg=AFQjCNEUyEgL-IP5rvznx8GTNWkVrBEH2A> [15. 4. 2013].

Havlíčková D., Žárská K. (2012): *Kompetence v neformálním vzdělávání*. NIDM, Praha. Available from: <http://www.msmt.cz/file/23217> [15. 4. 2013].

European Communities (2007): *Key Competences for Lifelong Learning – A European Framework*. Available from: [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education\\_culture/publ/pdf/ll-learning/keycomp\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/pdf/ll-learning/keycomp_en.pdf) [15. 4. 2013].

Economia: *Human Resources Management*. 2/2013. *Competencies for the Labour Market*: <http://www.mamenato.cz/www/index.php>; <http://kompetence.rza.cz/www/index.php?id=8>

*Competencies for Life*: <http://www.kompetenceprozivot.cz/competencies-for-life/>

*Keys for Life*: <http://www.nidm.cz/projekty/realizace-projektu/klice-pro-zivot/klice-pro-zivot-2009/project-keys-for-life-2009>

*National System of Occupation*: <http://www.nsp.cz/>

*National Register of Vocational Qualifications*: <http://www.narodni-kvalifikace.cz/qualificationStandards.aspx>

*Dictionary of Skills and Competences*: [http://disco-tools.eu/disco2\\_portal/index.php](http://disco-tools.eu/disco2_portal/index.php)



The workshop held during the Crossborder seminar in Warsaw was mainly based on practical experiences of experiential education, which I have been actively involved in since 2006 through the Velký vůz (Big Dipper) Civil Association for personality development. After starting to devote myself to career counselling, I discovered that many of the activities and techniques used in the typical Czech approach to experience learning can also be applied to that field. This particularly applies to seeking out values, strengths, satisfaction, lifetime goals, building up ideas about one's career or finding one's vocation. I have gradually incorporated these practical experiences into a theory I now use to prepare group seminars in career counselling, including those for the ČVUT (Czech Technical University) Career Centre.

### The Beginnings of Czech Experiential Education

The Czech concept of experiential learning has its roots in the Lipnice holiday school, which was established in the 1970s. At that time, a group of psychologists, teachers and sports instructors began to organise courses that focused on the holistic development of the individual, based on the Greek ideal of "kalokaghatia", which emphasises the "internal" and "development" development of individuals. They were also greatly inspired by the ideas of E. T. Seaton, Baden-Powell and the educational philosopher, Kurt Hahn, which are applied worldwide in the Outward Bound organisation, working with people through games and outdoor activities. In our Czech environment, we also draw on that giant of education, Jan Amos Comenius, which was already emphasising links between theory and practice, learning interconnections and support for independent learning, problem solving and self-interested motivation.<sup>1</sup> Paradoxically, thanks to totalitarianism and isolation, a self-contained system of education emerged, aimed at personal growth and individual success. Today its focus has moved on to issues of cooperation and communication. However, the personal development of the individual still remains in the spotlight, as the cornerstone needed to build our own independence, which is needed to move to interdependence.<sup>2</sup> Experiential education enables us, retrospectively, to search for characteristics, strengths, motives, aspirations, values and attitudes by creating a space where everyone can reach the deeper layers of their personality through their own experiences. The main concepts of experiential learning are the experiential learning cycle, the comfort zone and the FLOW state. Important aspects include working with group dynamics, dramaturgy, motivation and play.

### The Experiential Learning Cycle

The experiential learning cycles was introduced by Kurt Lewin in the 1950s and developed by David A. Kolb<sup>3</sup> in the 1970s. The cycle has four phases: experience, reflective observation, generalisation and planning, as shown in Figure 1.

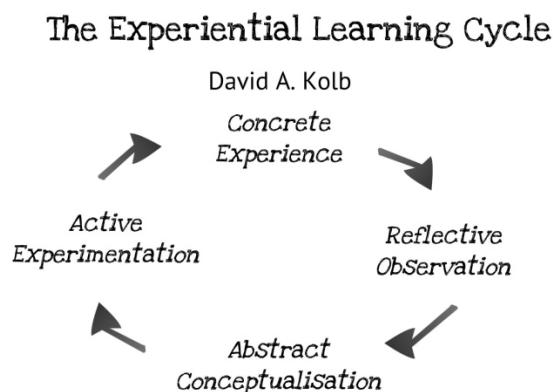


Fig. 1 The Experiential Learning Cycle

The concrete experience is complex, subjective, non-transferable and unique to each individual and their particular situation. Ideally, during the experience itself, the individual is fully present and focussed on it, as they were part of the story, in a state of FLOW, as described by Csikszentmihalyi<sup>4</sup>. We will look at this state later. The more senses and imagination the participant can involve, the better.

Looking back, or reflective observation is used to ensure that the individual is aware of what has happened, has cognitively accepted the experience, and taken stock of their behaviour, thoughts, feelings and emotions. It may also serve as a basis of comparison between their perceptions of reality and the perceptions of by others. During this phase, verbalisation or other forms of externalising thoughts, feelings and emotions is important, as well as the internal focusing of attention and awareness of what has happened without its communication. It depends whether we want to continue working with the experience. This externalisation can be achieved not only by the spoken word, but also through various forms of art, writing or drama.

During the conceptualisation phase, the experience is transformed into a transferable concept because it has been included into our abstract imagination. A nice parallel would be refining our internal maps<sup>5</sup> in relation to individual concepts or relationships, in other words to how we see the world in general, and which also create our attitudes and self-image.



The final planning phase represents the culmination of a single learning cycle. During it we create a plan of how to behave in future similar situations. This allows us to prepare “instructions” for how we will behave ahead of time, which increases our chances of acting in the way that we want in future situations. Alternatively we can confirm the functionality of the actions we intend to repeat, enabling us to build up a habit or to acquire a certain competence.

## The Four Stages of Competence

We can well imagine the gradual learning of any new skill using the stages<sup>6</sup> show in Figure 2.

### The Four Stages of Competence

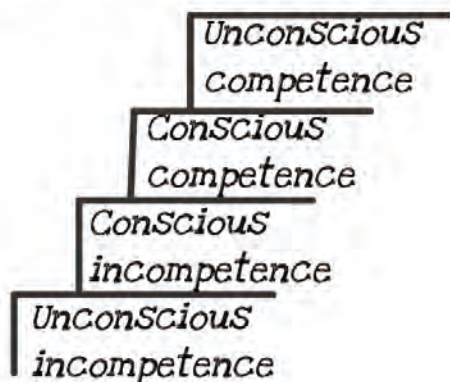


Fig. 2: The four stages of competence

We begin from unconscious incompetence, when we do not realise that we are lacking in a certain skill, we do not understand its usefulness or meaning. The moment we realise that we need or want to learn something, we start to work toward it and arrive at the stage of conscious incompetence. At this stage we realise that something is not working. Making mistakes is a natural part of this phase. By targeted practice or repeated training we arrive at the stage of conscious competence, where we have the necessary knowledge and are able to use the given skill, provided we pay adequate attention to it. At this stage it may be useful to break this skill or technique down into phases, in order to focus more on its component parts. The last stage is unconscious competence, when we are able to use the given skill automatically and simultaneously with another task. A good example is driving a car when, as children we do not know that we need a driver's licence for a car (unconscious incompetence), as teenagers we know that, but we also know that we cannot drive a car (conscious incompetence). After leaving the driving

school we know how to drive but it requires our full attention (conscious competence) and after a couple of years driving, we are able to drive automatically, while at the same time contemplate other things, discuss or follow a GPS system (unconscious competence). We can look at, for example, our ability to present ourselves, to visualise or to plan in a similar way.

## Comfort Zone and Stress

The comfort zone represents the area of behaviour, actions, feelings or attitudes that are known to us. It does not necessarily mean that we feel good in our comfort zone. But it is an internal or external space we know and where we know what to expect. The further we are from our comfort zone, the more stressful it is for us. However, on the border between the comfort zone and the stress area is an important learning zone, where we learn new behaviours, skills or attitudes<sup>1</sup>. The comfort, learning and stress zones are shown in Figure 3.

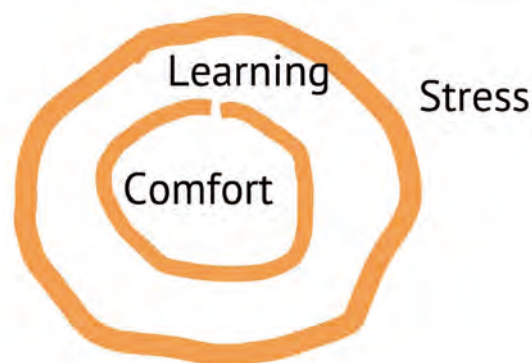


Fig. 3: Comfort zone, learning and stress

Put simply, the further we move out of our comfort zone, the more we learn. At the same time however, there is an increasing risk of our failing to handle a given situation and creating a trauma that will shrink our comfort zone and prevent our developing further in that area. It is like when we blow up a balloon – the more we blow it up, the more we can learn. But at the same time we never know at what point the balloon will

1. Franc Daniel, Martin Andy, Zounková Daniela (2007). Učení zážitkem a hrou (Experiential learning and play). Computer Press, CZ: ISBN: 978-80-251-1701-9.
2. Covey Stephen, R (2011). 7 návyků skutečně efektivních lidí (7 habits of highly effective people). Management Press, CZ. ISBN 978-80-7261-241-3
3. Kolb, David (1984). Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. ISBN 0-13-295261-0.

burst. A traumatic experience may lead to an overestimation of our abilities and a negative perception of our surroundings. An example of a trauma would be when someone has received a bad mark for drawing at primary school and subsequently prefers not to draw at all. It is challenging to leave our comfort zone because we have to create a safe environment, where clients will feel at ease.

### A Safe Environment

A safe environment is one in which the client/clients feel safe. This is helped by introducing the consultant/trainer and all those participating, knowledge of the programme structure, opportunities for everyone to express themselves – for example during the introductions and when discovering their expectations, a confidentiality rule – that everything said during the activity will remain with the participants and will not be transmitted further, or establishing other communication rules, such as respecting others opinions, returning to oneself, speaking for oneself, etc. The main point is that it is a voluntary programme and the clients are responsible for their own psychological safety and for setting their boundaries, because the experiential concept of counselling may work with fundamental topics, such as the search for important events and turning points in people’s lives, the search for values and models or work with the concept of the finitude of life. Past traumas may rise to the surface and the counsellor/trainer should, when running psychologically demanding programmes, be aware of the principles of crisis intervention. Equally important is the possibility of the participants becoming involved and, primarily, their interest and motivation, or balancing their expectations and what is offered/the results.

### FLOW

The state of flow – FLOW, as described by Csikszentmihalyi<sup>4</sup> is, on the one hand, the target state into which we want to place the participant during the activities, and, on the other, an important indicator of which activities satisfy the client and where possible clues can be found as to their strengths and, subsequently, to a choice of work, career or vocation. The FLOW state is characterised by intensive concentration and focus, full mental presence during the given activity, a sense of controlling the situation, a feeling of fulfilment from the activity itself, an altered perception of time and limited reflective self-awareness. Our ability to achieve the FLOW state is dependent on our activity, the clarity and meaningfulness of our goals, immediate feedback, and an optimal

balance between the difficulty of the task and our skills, as shown in Figure 4.

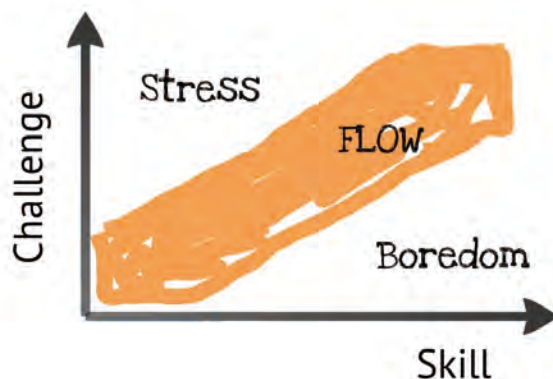


Fig. 4: FLOW state

### Group Dynamics

Group dynamics described the phase of group development each group goes through, in other words even a group of clients attending a counselling meeting, both one-off and repeated. The initial phase – Forming, represents the creation of the group, the setting or testing of boundaries, relationships and standards of behaviour. It defines the role of the formal group leader – in this case the counsellor/trainer, or the role of the informal leader, and the role of the other group members. It creates expectations. During the Storming phase there is turmoil, clarification and definition of roles within the group. The need to be visible, to succeed, to define one’s own boundaries, to gain status and the recognition of others manifests itself. The group energy and attention is concentrated on group processes. The next phase is called Norming, when relationships and roles are constituted, individuals occupy the team role that most complements them in the given constellation. Processes and communication standards are set. In the Performing phase, the group provides the most output, individuals and roles flexibly adapt to the needs of the group, the group energy is used to the maximum to perform its tasks and is multiplied by the synergies resulting from a combination of the strengths and appropriate roles adopted by group members. The length of these individual phases depends on the overall length of the group’s existence and its development depends on whether the needs accompanying a particular phase are given room to occur naturally and to be satisfied. For example, the storming phase may take place quite peacefully, provided everyone is given the opportunity to express themselves. The more the group focuses on performing the common task, the stronger the impact of the group dynamics, while the more its attention is

focused on individuality and the personal development of individuals, the weaker this is. The strength of these dynamics and other group processes is also dependent on the size of the group.

## Dramaturgy

The programme dramaturgy is the method of connecting activities so that the later activities follow on coherently from the previous ones. It is important that the aim and purpose of the activity are carefully thought out, that the assignment is clearly formulated to obtain the outputs expected, which can then be worked on further. The time allocated and spatial arrangement should be chosen accordingly. It should be decided whether it will be an individual activity, group activity or work on smaller groups. Given the clients' active interest in the outcome, we need experience in order to assess and tone and outcome of the activity. The mood and atmosphere of the individuals and the group should be appraised to ensure that the programme flows smoothly and is consistent. The dramaturgy can be compared to rum in batter. It cannot be separated from the other ingredients, but when it is missing the cake is not as good.

## Motivation

I see motivational activities as an important part of experiential activities. The aim is to attune clients to the activity, to cut them off from everyday problems, to create a space for reflection and to focus their attention on important issues. The more senses there are involved in motivation or the activity itself, the better we will be able to draw our clients into the story and the better the results we can achieve. Motivation can be produced by a motivational scene, an interesting text or video, a change of location, unusual décor or styling, imagination, reflection, the choice of pictures. The aim is to get clients involved in the activity, for them to enjoy it or to understand the meaning and usefulness of the activity. Sometimes we can also deliberately use motivation to create certain expectations that we then fail to meet. In this case it is important to know why we acted in this way and to achieve a clear understanding on subsequent reflection. One example might be the seemingly pointless activity where a small group creates a "device" from odds and ends, which can subsequently be used to illustrate our behaviour models in certain situations – e.g. that someone needs to know the meaning and aim of the activity and if he does not the activity has no

interest for him. While someone else enjoys it because they are part of a good team, and the meaning and aim are of secondary importance.

## Conclusion

The uniqueness of the experiential approach is that activities create a space where clients can map out their strengths, values, aspirations, resources and attitudes. They can help them to look for opportunities, to expand their horizons, to build up their self-esteem and self-confidence, to improve their self-presentation, their preparedness to take decisions, to advance themselves or to find motivation, courage and resilience. They can then build their career goals and plans on these foundations. It is important to create a safe environment, to provide space for the development of group dynamics, and to make full allowance for individual expectations and the client's situation.

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4. Csíkszentmihályi Mihaly (1996), O štěstí a smyslu života (On happiness and the meaning of life). Lidové Noviny. ČJ. ISBN 80-7106-139-5.
  5. Rock David (2009), Leadership s klidnou myslí (Leadership with peace of mind). Pragma. ČJ. ISBN: 978-80-7349-206-9.
  6. <http://www.gordontraining.com/free-workplace-articles/learning-a-new-skill-is-easier-said-than-done/>







4

## General questions

### How do you define “competences” in your country?

The notion of competence is very comprehensive. Both in everyday language as well as in technical language it covers several aspects and in some cases more than one meaning. First, you need to define the concept of competence in more detail. A first definition, the manual named “skills” gives, therefore skills are: abilities, qualities or attitudes that enable you to cope in complex situations successfully and efficiently” are (Maurer / Garzeler 2005).

Skills and their measurement [edit] While under the competence latent capacity of a person is understood to perform a particular task to be able to (for example, to speak Spanish), it is understood the actual performance of this task (eg, someone welcome in Spanish). It follows that a competence can be diagnosed never directly, but always indirectly through their performance and assessed (Schott and Azizi Ghanbari, 2008).

### What kind of competences are diagnosed in your country?

four areas of competence differentiated:

- o Material or expertise,
- o Methodological skills,
- o Social skills,
- o Self-competence.

### What are the regulations governing the use of diagnosis tools in your country?

There is no specific regulation.

### Who in your country is entitled to make the diagnosis of competences? (profession/required qualifications)

teachers, education institutions, Federal Employment Services, government bodies, psychologists, several institutes etc.

## Specific questions

### What tools have been used in your country to diagnose competences?

In practice, a variety of methods are in use, some even those, the test criteria of objectivity Reliability and validity of prohibited or restricted satisfying as self-assessments, external assessments without standardization of the request situation, nonstandard work samples or portfolios. Cognitive knowledge tests, as the paper-pencil tests or

on the PC, possibly in the form of adaptive testing can be used, are usually well suitable forms of knowledge (declarative and procedural) to grasp. Computer-based tests, in which work processes are simulated and standardized Work samples are also suitable, the application capability to capture the knowledge

These are popular testing tools but it wouldn't be possible to list all because of the huge variety

<https://powertest.abi.de/app/intro?execution=e1s1>  
[http://www.arbeitsagentur.de/nn\\_26236/Navigation/zentral/Buerger/Behinderungen/Beratung/Psychologisch/Psychologisch-Nav.html](http://www.arbeitsagentur.de/nn_26236/Navigation/zentral/Buerger/Behinderungen/Beratung/Psychologisch/Psychologisch-Nav.html)  
<http://www.saphir-kompetenz.de/?id=85>  
<http://www.assess-online.de/>  
<http://www.ion-international.net/de/startseite/aktuelles/neues-diagnostik-tool-zur-analyse-von-wirkungs-und-wahrnehmungskompetenzen.html>

### Please describe 3 tools that are the most useful (in your opinion). Are they dedicated to pupils and students, academic students or adults?

unfortunately I don't know many of these tools. We will present 2 different tools which are useful and got good marks from the clients and from experts.

One is dedicated to pupils and students and one is open to anyone.

### What are the advantages or disadvantages of these tools for the counsellors and for the clients?

What kinds of ICT tools (eg, computer programs, software, games etc.) are applied in your country to diagnose competences? How popular are they?

See answer to question no 1 It becomes more and more popular to use such tools.

### How are this tools disseminated among guidance practitioners or teachers (via internet, via courses, etc...)?

Internet, newsletters, seminars.

Communications and information system on vocational education: <http://www.kibb.de/wlk26604.htm>

### Does the system of diagnosis of adult competences exist in your country? If yes, is it related to the validation process of non-formal and informal learning?

Yes there are several tools for adult diagnosis but the validation process of non formal and informal learning is still in development progress and not practically at work.

### What are the free online tools to test competences in your country?

Abi Powertest and Kodiak (tools of the Federal Employment Services) are free. Other tools might be charged (especially if provided by commercial companies)

## Research and development

### Who/what organizations or institutions conduct research on competences or develop new tools in the field of diagnosis?

The following list shows the most common/popular organizations and institutes but it is certainly not complete as there are many universities and other private institutes, companies and foundations working on that field:

The Ministry of Education and research

<http://www.bmbf.de/>

Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training:

<http://www.bibb.de/>

German Institute for international pedagogical research: <http://www.dipf.de/de/themen/kompetenzmodelle-und-kompetenzdiagnostik>

German Institute for Adult education:

<http://www.die-bonn.de/>

German National Guidance Forum in Education, Career and Employment:

<http://www.forum-beratung.de/>

GAB Munich - Association for Research and Development in Vocational Training and Occupations: <http://www.gab-muenchen.de/>

Institute for media and competencies research: <http://www.mmb-institut.de/start/about.html>

House of competencies at Karlsruhe Institute of technology: <http://www.hoc.kit.edu/2063.php>

### What fields or topics are researched?

As there are uncountable actors and research projects in Germany I list some of the findings here:

Establishing collaborative research on skills development and effective forms of learning. Networking in the humanities and social science research projects with the technical and natural sciences through interdisciplinary Integration and networking of research. Tasks and topics. Basic research on competence development in institutional and non-institutional settings in the context of the transformation of education ideas. Basic research on cognitive skills by moving in adolescence and young adulthood. Empirical research on dimensions of competence in multiple fields of action. Investigation of the importance of personal fitness for the learning and development process at universities

Study of individual learning and support programs (coaching) with methods of research and tools of a body movement monitoring system. Development and provision of individualized learning companion (e-Coach)

Here are some examples:

Vocational skills and competencies made visible - The ASCOT research initiative

[http://www.ascot-vet.net/media/ascot\\_MASTER\\_Broschuere\\_Projekte\\_EN\\_V06.pdf](http://www.ascot-vet.net/media/ascot_MASTER_Broschuere_Projekte_EN_V06.pdf)

Research from BiBB (Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training):

<http://www.bibb.de/veroeffentlichungen/en/publication/show/id/6167>

The articles that are the special focus of this issue of BWP outline important models and methods for measuring vocational skills and competences in vocational education and training and examine them in light of the particular context in which they developed and with an eye to their objectives. With this special focus, the latest issue of BWP aims to inject greater transparency into what is a complex field and to point out interfaces with various fields of application. In his editorial, BIBB's President Manfred Kremer stresses that taking skill- and competence-orientedness seriously as a guiding concept in vocational education and training requires the development of reliable instruments for measuring skills and competences. He points to the proposal developed by recognised experts regarding a research programme that revolves around "competence diagnostics in vocational education and training". The text of this proposal is enclosed as a supplement to this issue of BWP. In the BWP interview, the new parliamentary state secretary at the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Dr Helge Braun, explains the education policy goals that the current government laid down for the next four years in its coalition agreement. The new column "Vocational training in numbers" uses current VET statistics to show that the majority of new vocational training contracts are signed for just a handful of occupations and that girls and young women focus on an even narrower spectrum than their male counterparts do.

<http://www.bibb.de/veroeffentlichungen/en/publication/show/id/6764>

The range of methods used to ascertain performance in the vocational training field has become more diversified in the wake of a greater orientation towards learning outcomes and the 'upgrading' of qualifications that are acquired not only in the formal education system. An overview of this is provided in the latest issue of BWP. This development revolves primarily around the two

questions: How can vocational skills and competences be made visible and documented using competence assessment methods, certificates and examinations, and how can access within and to the education system and employment system be opened up?

In his editorial in this issue of BWP, BIBB's president Professor Dr Friedrich Hubert Esser calls for bringing to a successful conclusion the development of a German qualifications framework which will give the education system prospects for reform at both national and international level. He urges all stakeholders to reach agreement on the remaining points of contention.

The competency debate in German VET research: implications for learning processes based on vocationalism  
*Silke Hellwig, Assistant Lecturer at the University of Konstanz, Germany,*

*Department of Economics*

<http://www.google.de/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=research+on+competencies+germany&source=web&cd=6&cad=rja&ved=0CFwQFjAF&url=http%3A%2F%2Favetra.org.au%2Fdocuments%2FPA015Hellwig.PDF&ei=Z7hLUfG4G47FswajyIHQAQ&usq=AFQjCNG9Y9CFSWLa1yO9t6bH4FFAiIR4BQ>

**How is the efficiency of tools measured?**

**Who/what organizations or institutions provide trainings for counsellors on diagnosis of competences?**

Various organizations and institutions provide trainings for example:

<http://kompetenzmodelle.dipf.de/en/projects/modelling-the-counselling-competencies-of-teachers-with-a-specific-consideration-of-diagnostic-competence>

This proposed project aims at developing a hierarchical competence model for the counselling competence of teachers. This will take into account cognitive as well as action-related areas of competence. The counselling is directed towards self-regulated learning abilities of students. A particular focus lies on the diagnostic competence of teachers as a possible condition to successful counselling. Previous studies have elicited five dimensions of counselling competence (reflection, willingness to cooperate, accomplished methods, orientation towards a goal/solution, keeping a personal distance). These dimensions constitute the basis for modelling. The project will provide the framework for assessing additive and multiplicative coherencies of the competence dimensions. We postulate three levels of expertise regarding counselling competence which we will consider for modelling. They can be distinguished according to the relevance of the competence dimensions for the counselling service. Our assumptions on

the model will be validated within the project framework. Findings from the proposed project will provide teachers and teacher trainees with comprehensive and differentiated feedback regarding their profiles of competence dimensions (horizontal feedback) as well as assigning them to a level of expertise (vertical feedback). This procedure allows for a target-oriented, focussed promotion of teachers and trainees.

## State of work 2011

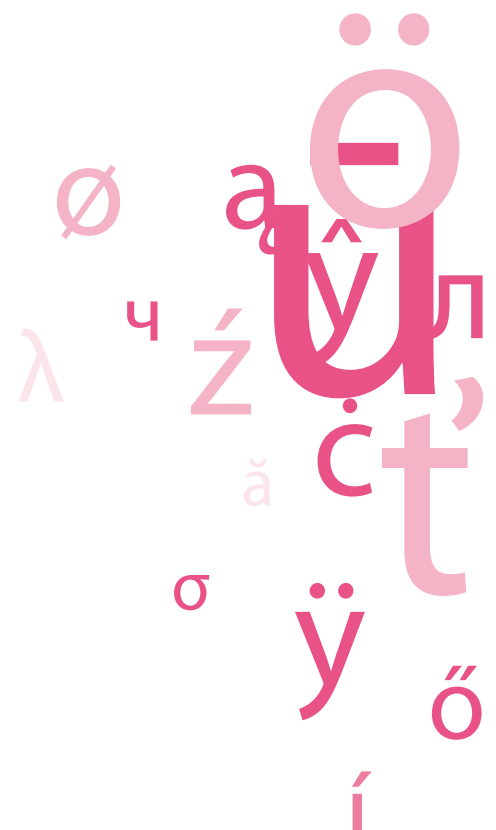
Besides instructing, educating and assessing students, counselling the parents and their children is one of the core teacher tasks (KMK 2004). The importance of this subject is further emphasized by its integration into contemporary models of professional teacher competence (Baumert & Kunter, 2006). Diagnostic competence constitutes another crucial competence of teachers in both literature and standards on teacher education (KMK, 2004). Theoretical contributions particularly focus on individual diagnostics and promotion (Kretschmann, 2009) so that diagnostic competence does not merely serve its own purpose (Fend, 2006; Horstkemper, 2004; Winter, 2006).

In the second funding phase, a case scenario, i.e. a Situational Judgment Test (SJT) was added to the assessment design developed in the first funding phase to assess counselling competence, and subsequently tested. Furthermore, a comprehensive sample of teacher trainees, teachers in advanced practical training and experienced teachers was used to analyze in how far the three groups differed in their experts judgement and if reflected experience, knowledge or support by others contribute to prediction. The (modified) case scenario developed in the funding phase was used, as well as a short version of the SJT developed in the second funding period. Results from both studies show that reflected experience and knowledge contribute significantly to the development of counselling competence. Furthermore, results from the first study indicate that the SJT is apt for measuring counselling competence, even if the Items are on the whole easy or of medium difficulty. Results of the second study on assessing the expert levels demonstrated for the case scenario that the dimension of counselling skills is the most difficult, next to the dimension of coping. Findings from the MANOVAs moreover show that no differences can be found between experienced teachers and teachers in practical training regarding both total scores and the dimensions of counselling skills and diagnosing/ pedagogical knowledge, but these two

groups differ significantly from teacher trainees. Findings from the training study on counselling competence of psychology students in the model “counselling skills” disclose that counselling competencies can be trained well. Findings on differences in the group where training videos were used as opposed to the group of students who did not receive video training demonstrate a trend effect.

As regards diagnostic competence, instruments were to be developed regarding the learning behavior of students and the model of diagnostic competence developed in the first funding phase was assessed for the development of competence, using a comprehensive random sample of teacher trainees, trainees in practice and experienced teachers. Furthermore, the correlation of diagnostic and counselling competencies was described. We further wished to assess whether it is principally possible to train diagnostic competence. Findings of the structure modelling show that the developed three-dimensional process model of diagnostic competence was appropriate. As in the case of counselling competence, no difference could be found between the younger and the more experienced teachers, while both groups differed from the teacher trainees. The fact that the teachers who had just begun to practise and the more experienced ones were equal regarding their counselling and diagnostic competencies might be due to the recent improvements made to advanced teacher training courses. Hence, teachers who have not already benefited from these trainings should be offered retraining opportunities. Findings on Professional identity, knowledge on diagnostics and treatment of the topic in training teachers show that these are important for (further) developing competencies. Reflected experience did not turn out to be a significant predictor. Findings on the correlation of diagnostic and counselling competence were now comparatively calculated showing that teachers who were better at diagnosing were also better at counselling and vice versa. Correlations were rather small, but this seems plausible because these are different competencies with a shared part. Multi-group comparisons demonstrate that the correlation between the competences only develops along with a growing professional experience. Findings on the study of trainings in diagnostic competence reveal that it can be improved by administering trainings with practical value, particularly regarding the pre-action and action phase of diagnostic processes. The standardized diagnostic diary proved to be a useful instrument for measuring the trained diagnostic strategies in daily school life, even if

the diary can only deliver an added intervention effect on the training for action related content in the variance analytic assessments. The consistently positive trends and significant intervention analytical results still indicate the usefulness of the diary, not only for measuring but also for promoting transfer to daily school routines. In the third project phase, both competencies will be assessed regarding generalizability to other school forms and the instruments’ sensitivity to change, induced by promotional measures.



Hella Klemmert <sup>1</sup>

## Assessment of work related competences in the German Employment Agency: different methods for different competences

4

Germany

Assessment of work related competences in the German Employment Agency

Successful job placement not only depends on the technical skills of a candidate. Soft skills can be equally or even more important to gain a long-term employment. Unfortunately it is not easy to decide whether a candidate comes with the necessary soft skills. Part of the problem is the ambiguous terminology. A number of terms are used to name the skills and their interpretation can be quite different in different contexts.

The German Federal Employment Agency [Bundesagentur für Arbeit, BA] applies a competence model with 20 work-related competences divided into the four groups “methodological competence”, “social and communication skills”, “personal skills” and “ability to take action and execute”. Each competence is provided with a short explanation, e.g. “I can readily understand and process new things” as explanation for intellectual aptitude, one of the methodological competences.

Several problems arise if clients are asked to indicate their strongest competences or to rate all their competences on a given scale. Idiosyncratic interpretations of the competence descriptions, tendencies to give social desirable answers and self-serving bias are ubiquitous. Besides, faking is easy if someone is not willing to answer honestly. All these factors reduce validity of the client’s informations.

In order to circumvent or at least to minimize these threats to validity the Psychological Service of the BA developed and offers four services for the assessment of competences:

- K 1 – Self-assessment questionnaire on behavior in the working environment
- K 2 – Testing intellectual aptitude
- K 3 – Achievement motivation
- K 4 – Assessment center for social and communication skills for selected occupations

The assessment methods differ widely and are tailored to the characteristics of the assessed competences and the intended applications of the service. All services

provide support for the labour market integration of adult clients. They can help placement officers to identify client’s strengths which is particularly important if certificates of educational attainment or occupational experiences are missing or outdated. Clients participate on a voluntary basis.

### K 1: Self-assessment questionnaire on behaviour in the working environment

K 1 provides the placement officer with the client’s self-assessments on most of the competences of the BA competence model except methodological competences. The cognitive abilities in this category are not amenable for valid self assessment. K 1 is most suitable at the beginning of the integration process. The assessment helps clients to clarify their self-perception and the standardized report can facilitate a discussion of the clients’s personal strengths.

Development of the questionnaire followed scientific standards. A larger pool of items was tested with about 6000 members of the target group. Item analysis revealed 11 interpretable scales, some of them comprising two competences of the BA competence model. The data allow comparison of the client’s self-assessment with average self-assessments in the target group. The largest subgroup of scales seems closely related to consciousness which is one of the established Big Five personality dimensions and known to be the best predictor of job success among the Big Five (Barrick & Mount, 1991).

### K 2: Testing intellectual aptitude

K 2 is most suitable before the client starts a training course. The placement officer receives support in the selection of a suitable training level. This helps to avoid over- or underchallenging training courses.

K 2-clients are asked to complete psychometric tests of cognitive abilities. Such tests are widely recognized as best predictors of performance in vocational trainings and on the workplace (Schmidt & Hunter, 2004). Psychometric tests of cognitive abilities are among the standard instruments of the Psychological Service. Supplementary data indicate which level of intellectual abilities is adequate for selected vocational trainings.

1. Hella Klemmert PhD holds diploma in Mathematics and Psychology and a PhD in Psychological Methods from Technical University Berlin. She is working as Research Manager at the Psychological Service of the German Federal Employment Agency [Bundesagentur für Arbeit, BA]. She is responsible for projects in the area of cognitive ability testing, e.g. development of language tests, assessment of math and reading competences and development of one of the BA-services for competence assessment. Of particular interest in all projects is the interpretation of test results with regard to vocational requirements.



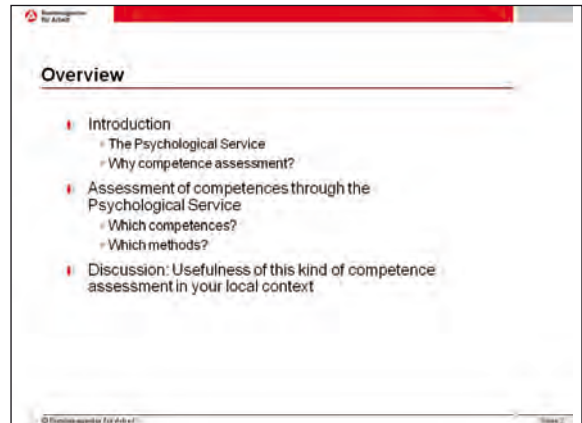


# Assessment of work-related competences in the German Employment Agency

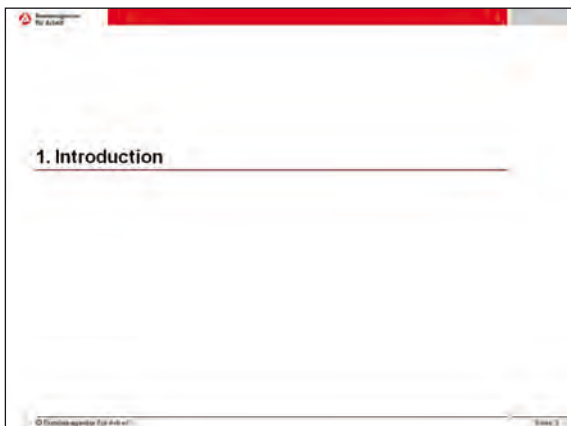
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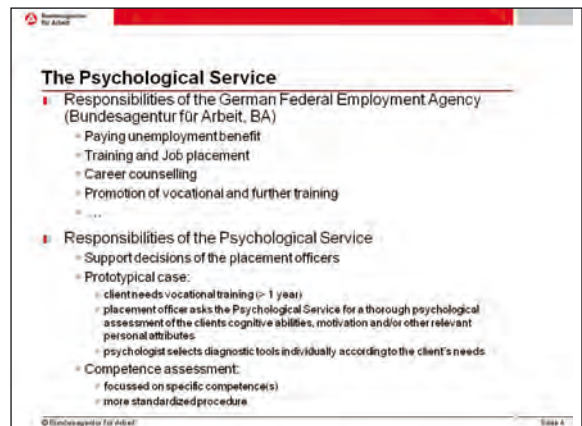
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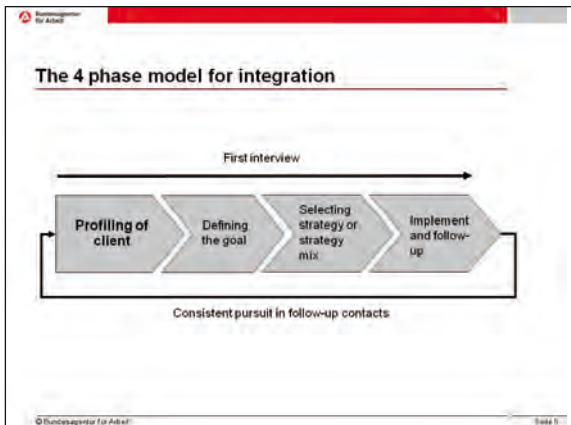
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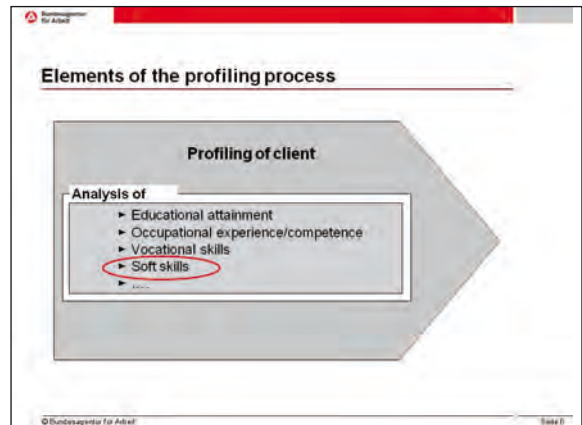
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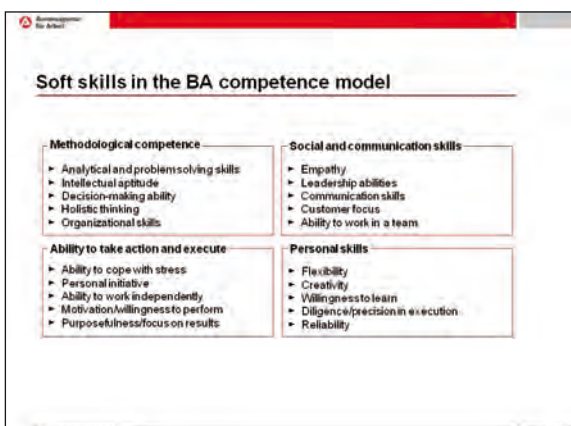
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6.



7.



8.





9.

## 2. BA services for competence assessment

10.

## Overview of BA services for competence assessment

- Four services to assess the different areas of competence:
- Content of services:
  - Self-assessment questionnaire on behaviour in the working environment (K 1)
  - Testing intellectual aptitude (K 2)
  - Achievement motivation (K 3)
  - Assessment center for social and communication skills for selected occupations (K 4)
- Placement officer recommends one of the services (K1, K2, K1+K2, K3 or K4) to the adult client
- Clients participate on a voluntary basis

11.

## Issues during the development process

12.

## 3. K 1: Self-assessment questionnaire on behaviour in the working environment

13.

## K 1: analysis of the following 11 skills/competences

Methodological competence	<b>Analytical and problem solving skills</b> An aptitude of recognizing given things that need to be done and/or organizing my activities for completing and assessing information and their connection with solutions	<b>Empathy</b> I'm easy for me to put myself into the position of another person	Social and communication skills
	<b>Intellectual aptitude</b> I can easily understand and process new things	<b>Leadership abilities</b> I can lead, motivate, coach a group of people (based on values, tasks and the people involved)	
Ability to take action and execute	<b>Decision-making ability</b> I can make decisions after carefully assessing all relevant facts	<b>Customer service skills</b> I can handle my thoughts, feelings and understand the needs of my clients	Personal skills
	<b>Reliable handling</b> I meet my responsibilities and duties and can responsibly consider their consequences for other areas	<b>Customer focus</b> I can identify a customer's problems and always try my best to solve them	
	<b>Work discipline</b> I can work in a team	<b>Ability to work in a team</b> I can integrate into a group and contribute to it in order to work for a common goal	
	<b>Flexibility</b> I can cope well with pressure in difficult situations at work	<b>Flexibility</b> I can quickly adapt to new working conditions and equipment	
	<b>Emotional stability</b> I can come up with proposals and solutions independently	<b>Curiosity</b> I am interested and can come up with new ideas	
	<b>Ability to work independently</b> I can complete my tasks without further professional support on my own responsibility	<b>Willingness to learn</b> I like to learn new things	
	<b>Motivation, willingness to perform</b> I can always give my best	<b>Diligence/probation</b> I can work accurately and always take care of my work	
	<b>Organizational, time, and quality</b> I can consistently pursue the goals I defined and do not get side-tracked	<b>Reliability</b> I can fulfill my commitments on time	

14.

## K 1: Method

- Development of 146 behaviour-oriented statements from the domain of work meant to comprise 12 competences (including organizational competence)
- 5 graded response options: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree
- Tested with about 6000 members of the target group
- Item selection according to scientific standards
- Result: 11 scales (organizational competence dropped) with 8-10 items each
- Scales can be grouped according to well-known personal traits:
  - N = Emotional Stability
  - C = Conscientiousness
  - A = Agreeableness

15.

## K 1: General conditions (1)

Applications:

- To analyze the client's strengths to validate the profiling.
- Clarifying the client's self-perception
- Most suitable at the beginning of the integration process

For the client:

- Standardized, PC-assisted questionnaire, administered by psychological assistants
- 101 behaviour-oriented statements from the domain of work
- Duration 15 - 20 minutes
- No interview with a psychologist

16.

## K 1: General conditions (2)

For the placement officer:

- Instant information on the client's self-assessment
- Receives standardized psychological report as basis for the discussion
- Contents of the report:
  - client's self-assessment of 11 competences
  - elaboration of the competences
  - characterization whether each self-assessment is above/on/below average compared with the target group



17.

**4. K 2: Testing intellectual aptitude**

18.

**K 2: analysis of the following skills/competences**

Methodological competence	<b>Analytical and problem solving skills</b> I am capable of recognizing new things that need to be done and of organizing my activities by consulting and exchanging information and then coming up with solutions.	<b>Flexibility</b> It is easy for me to put myself into the position of another person.	Social and communication skills
	<b>Intellectual aptitude</b> I can handle abstract and complex things.	<b>Leadership abilities</b> In an (small) group, I lead a group of people focused on certain tasks and the people involved.	
Ability to take action and execute	<b>Decision-making ability</b> I can make decisions after objectively assessing all relevant criteria.	<b>Communication skills</b> I can express my thoughts clearly and understandably and in an organized manner.	Personal skills
	<b>Religious thinking</b> In my communication and plans I can adequately consider the consequences for other areas.	<b>Customer focus</b> I am open to a customer's problems and always try to help to solve them.	
K 2:	<b>Organizing skills</b> I can plan and organize processes.	<b>Ability to work in a team</b> I can integrate into a group and contribute to it in order to work for a common goal.	Personal skills
	<b>Ability to cope with stress</b> I can cope well with pressure in difficult situations at work.	<b>Flexibility</b> I can adapt to new working conditions/requirements.	
K 2:	<b>Personal initiative</b> I can come up with proposals/solutions independently.	<b>Cooperativeness</b> I am respectful and can come up with new ideas.	Personal skills
	<b>Ability to work independently</b> I can complete my tasks without further instructions and on my own responsibility.	<b>Willingness to learn</b> I like to learn new things.	
K 2:	<b>Motivation, willingness to perform</b> I can always give my best.	<b>Diligence/persistence</b> I can work accurately and always double-check my work.	Personal skills
	<b>Organization skills</b> I can consistently pursue the goals I define and do not get side-tracked.	<b>Reliability</b> I can honour the commitments I make.	

19.

**K 2: Method**

Standard instruments of the Psychological Service:

- Psychometric tests of intellectual abilities
- Knowledge which level of intellectual abilities is suitable for vocational trainings for adolescents
- + K2: Transfer to vocational trainings relevant in the target group (adults)
- Sets of arithmetic problems
- + K2: Development of some new sets of arithmetic problems as additional service if the client's arithmetic skills are of interest

20.

**K 2: General conditions (1)**

For the client:

- Standardized, PC-assisted test, administered by psychological assistants
- Intellectual abilities
  - Duration approx. 60 minutes
  - Approx. 80 items requiring abstract problem solving/reasoning
- Arithmetic skills
  - Duration approx. 60 minutes
  - 43 arithmetic problems (+, -, ·, /, %, decimals, fractions, geometry, measurement units)
- No interview with a psychologist

21.

**K 2: General conditions (2)**

For the placement officer:

- Receives standardized psychological report which helps to determine a suitable training level
- Suitability of a specific training can be evaluated in the report

Applications:

- Assessing the intellectual aptitude and the arithmetic skills for a training course
- To identify the strengths of low-skills clients and of clients with career breaks
- Can be used at any time during the integration process

22.

**5. K 3: Achievement motivation**

23.

**K 3: analysis of the following skills/competences**

Methodological competence	<b>Analytical and problem solving skills</b> I am capable of recognizing new things that need to be done and of organizing my activities by consulting and exchanging information and then coming up with solutions.	<b>Flexibility</b> It is easy for me to put myself into the position of another person.	Social and communication skills
	<b>Intellectual aptitude</b> I can handle abstract and complex things.	<b>Leadership abilities</b> In an (small) group, I lead a group of people focused on certain tasks and the people involved.	
Ability to take action and execute	<b>Decision-making ability</b> I can make decisions after objectively assessing all relevant criteria.	<b>Communication skills</b> I can express my thoughts clearly and understandably and in an organized manner.	Personal skills
	<b>Religious thinking</b> In my communication and plans I can adequately consider the consequences for other areas.	<b>Customer focus</b> I am open to a customer's problems and always try to help to solve them.	
K 3:	<b>Organizing skills</b> I can plan and organize processes.	<b>Ability to work in a team</b> I can integrate into a group and contribute to it in order to work for a common goal.	Personal skills
	<b>Ability to cope with stress</b> I can cope well with pressure in difficult situations at work.	<b>Flexibility</b> I can adapt to new working conditions/requirements.	
K 3:	<b>Personal initiative</b> I can come up with proposals/solutions independently.	<b>Cooperativeness</b> I am respectful and can come up with new ideas.	Personal skills
	<b>Ability to work independently</b> I can complete my tasks without further instructions and on my own responsibility.	<b>Willingness to learn</b> I like to learn new things.	
K 3:	<b>Motivation, willingness to perform</b> I can always give my best.	<b>Diligence/persistence</b> I can work accurately and always double-check my work.	Personal skills
	<b>Organization skills</b> I can consistently pursue the goals I define and do not get side-tracked.	<b>Reliability</b> I can honour the commitments I make.	

24.

**K 3: Method**

- Psychological interview using situational judgment items
- Reduce faking tendencies because concrete situations are given and answers have to be elaborated
- Example item:
 

Question: Imagine you have applied for a job and receive confirmation this afternoon that you can start straight away tomorrow morning. What would you do in view of this unexpected news?

Aspects that indicate a high level of performance	Desire to take the opportunity	+ / ++
Motivation	Well thought-out organization of relevant steps	
Intention of discipline	Organization of assistance	0
Focus on external assistance	Great! I'll have to get ready now. I'll ask my mother about the best way to do it.	
Understanding the problem without constructive approach to finding a solution	Well, I wanted this training place, so I'll have to do it whether I like it or not.	-
Reactance	I really can't think of anything. You'll have to tell me. Would be nice, but in such a short time I can't manage to start the job tomorrow.	- -
Resignation		- -

25.

**K 3: General conditions**

For the client:

- Client is interviewed by a psychologist
- Assessment of different aspects of achievement motivation as required for training/activation
- Duration approx. 45 minutes

For the placement officer:

- Receives non-standardized psychological report on certain aspects of the willingness to perform related to the questions asked by the placement officer

Applications:

- To assess
  - the prospects for successful placement in the desired occupation or
  - successful attendance of a training course or
  - the general compliance of the client's participation in the integration process or
  - the client's willingness to change the personal integration plan

26.

**6. K 4: Assessment center for social and communication skills for selected occupations**

27.


**K 4: analysis of the following skills/competences**

Methodological competence	<b>Analytical and problem solving skills</b> I am capable of recognizing other things that need to be done and of organizing my activities in order to understand and assessing information and then coming up with solutions	<b>Empathy</b> I can bring others to see things from the position of another person	Social and communication skills
	<b>Decision making ability</b> I can make decisions after objectively assessing all relevant options	<b>Leadership abilities</b> I can coordinate with a group of people focused on certain tasks and the people involved	
Ability to take action and execute	<b>Interdisciplinary thinking</b> In my conversations and plans I can adequately consider the consequences for other areas	<b>Customer focus skills</b> I can serve the thoughts, ideas and considerations of my customers and can argue convincingly	Personal skills
	<b>Organizing skills</b> I can plan and organize my work	<b>Customer focus</b> I am open to a customer's concerns and ideas by my side to solve them	
	<b>Ability to work with stress</b> I can cope with pressure in difficult situations at work	<b>Ability to work in a team</b> I can integrate into a group and contribute to its goals to work for a common goal	
	<b>Flexibility</b> I am open to new ideas and ready to change my plans	<b>Flexibility</b> I am open to new ideas and ready to change my plans	
	<b>Personal initiative</b> I can come up with ideas and suggestions independently	<b>Flexibility</b> I am open to new ideas and ready to change my plans	
	<b>Ability to work independently</b> I can complete my tasks without further professional support and on my own responsibility	<b>Willingness to learn</b> I am open to new ideas and ready to change my plans	
	<b>Motivation, willingness to perform</b> I am always up and ready	<b>Reliability</b> I can rely on myself and always fulfill my obligations	
	<b>Empathy</b> I can understand the needs of others and help them if they need it	<b>Reliability</b> I can rely on myself and always fulfill my obligations	

28.

**K 4: Method**

- Assessment center (AC) for clients interested in the following occupations:
  - social work-related occupations
  - occupations related to sales, marketing
  - industrial/technical occupations involving customer contacts
  - business start-ups
  - university graduates
- Tasks:
  - Presentations
  - Role play
  - Psychological interview using critical incident items
- Tasks and assessed competences depend on the occupation of interest



29.

**K 4: General conditions**

For the client:

- Client is interviewed by a psychologist and conducts AC-tasks
- Assessment of social and communication skills for occupations with a customer focus
- Duration approx. 3 hrs.

For the placement officer:

- Receives non-standardized psychological report and graphic rendering of results

Applications:

- For clients with work experience aiming at jobs with demanding customer contacts
- If placement officers need to know how strong the client's social and communication skills are

Methodological competence					
Ability to take action and execute			X		
Personal skills					X
				X	

30.

**7. Questions and Discussion**

31.

**Thank you.**

Contact:  
Heila Klemmert@Arbeitsagentur.de



## Objectives/Target Groups

The abi>>powertest is a scientific knowledge based test developed mainly for future high-school graduates as a first orientation for their career and study choices. It is an online tool to diagnose interests and competences for profession orientation. The abi>>powertest is an instrument for self-assessment and a decision support system for students future career choices. The test is, in particular, suited for the preparation and follow up of counselling interviews at the career guidance services in the German Employment Agency.

## Overview – abi>>powertest

### Characteristics

The abi>>powertest is a scientific knowledge based, cost-free online-test for profession orientation with a duration time of 75 to 90 minutes.

It consists of two parts:

1. Interests test
2. Strengths/Competences test

There is the possibility to have a break during the performance of the test.

At the end of the abi>>powertest, all test results of part 1 and 2 are summarised in a „Certificate“ (pdf-print).

## Start-up

There are two possibilities to start-up the abi>>powertest. Either over the start-up phase [www.abi.de](http://www.abi.de) or directly over the link [www.powertest.abi.de](http://www.powertest.abi.de)

First the user log's in with his nickname and e-mail-address. He must decide whether the results of higher education or vocational training or both should be listed in the abi>>powertest certificate. After this the user receives a password to start the test.

## Part 1 – Interests test

The test starts with questionnaires which request personal interests. The user must provide answers to the statements on a scale from 1 (absolutely not applicable) to 5 (fully applicable). There is no time-limit.

After completing part 1 – interests, the user can decide whether he wants to see the intermediate test results or directly to proceed to part 2 – strengths test. The user can make a break after part 1.

## Part 2 - Strengths test

Part 2 - strengths is classified into a performance test and questionnaires.

In these two parts the aptitude of the user related to special professional areas as well as the strength of various competences is tested. First the user has to do the performance test. Every assignment has to be completed within a limited time.

After the user has completed the performance test, the test continues with the questionnaires, for example social and personal competences will be questioned.

The user has to provide answers to the questions on a scale from 1 (absolutely not applicable) to 5 (fully applicable). There is no time limit.

After having completed the strengths test (performance test and questionnaires) the user has two possibilities:

- to see his intermediary results of part 2 – strengths
- to see the complete test results of part 1 – interests and part 2 – strengths

## Certificate

At the end of the abi>>powertest, all test results of part 1 and 2 are summarised in a „Certificate“ (pdf-print).

## Information on „Certificate“:

### 1. Areas

The „Certificate“ defines 3 areas of personal interests and 3 areas of personal aptitudes. In addition 7 strongest personal competences are included.

### 2. Professions

Furthermore the „Certificate“ defines 3 professions qualifying to personal interests and 3 professions related to personal strengths. In addition 7 professions coherent to personal interests and strengths are

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1. Magdalena Singh has a degree in Business Administration with a focus on human resources management and German Taxation (Dipl. Betriebswirtin). She is employed at the German Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit) and works in the Agency in Osnabrück, Lower Saxony. She is an experienced career guidance counsellor for academic professions for many years and gives mainly advice to students in higher secondary schools and universities including parents and teachers.

included. The number of professions double-up, if the user has indicated in the start-up of the test for „both“, the Higher Education and Vocational Training.

## Peculiarities of the abi>>powertest

### 1. Proposals for interests and competences

In this abi>>powertest the interests and strengths/competences of the user are individually tested. Under this consideration professions are suggested to the user with conditions as below:

- passing user's personal interests
- relating to the user's strengths
- qualifying user's interests and strengths

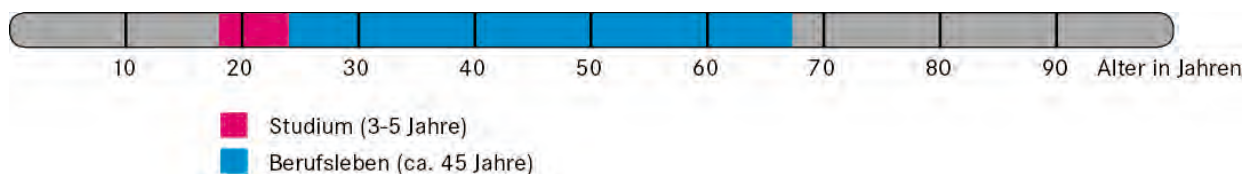
### 2. Transparency

The advantage of the abi>>powertest is, that the proposed professions are inter-related to user's interests and strengths. With this criteria the user can easily follow-up and understand the listed professions, therefore it is transparent.

### 3. Focus on Profession

In Germany, various other tests are only focusing on profession orientation coherent to scholastic aptitude or qualification for vocational training.

The abi>>powertest is unique with it's directives towards profession choice, provided to the user with a life course perspective.



## Multiple Links

Professions are interlinked with information platforms of the German Employment Agency for further details:

Description of professions: BERUFENET

<http://berufenet.arbeitsagentur.de>

Academic Education Search Machine:

[www.Studienwahl.de](http://www.Studienwahl.de)

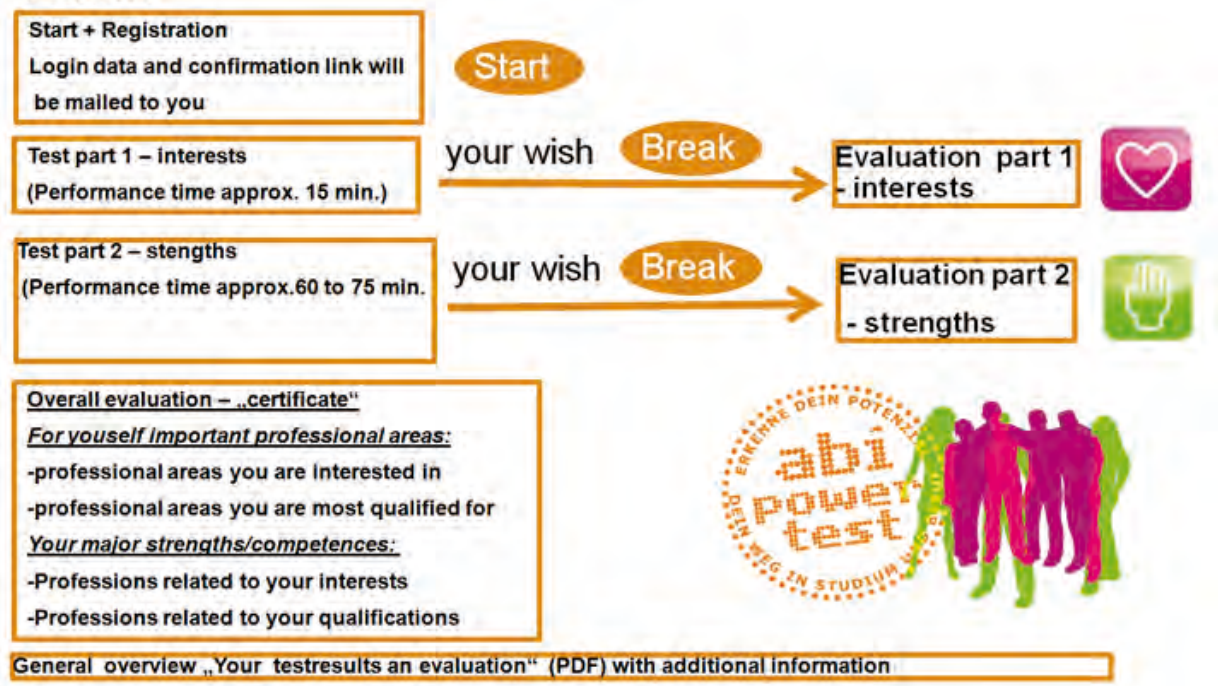
Complementary professions: BIZ-Info Catalogues

abi-Reports: [www.abi.de](http://www.abi.de)

## Supportive Tool in the Process of Profession Orientation

The abi>>powertest is an instrument to support the process of profession orientation for students in their career planning. Furthermore, the abi>>powertest prepares the user for advisory meetings with German Employment Agency counsellor and for discussions with family members.

## Overview – abi>>powertest scheme



## A directive tool for profession orientation

1.

A directive tool for profession orientation

Presentation: Magdalena Singh

abi>> powertest

Bundesagentur für Arbeit

2.

Content

Overview

- > 1. Germany's School System
- > 2. Overview Applied and Higher Education
- > 3. Objectives/Target Groups abi>>powertest
- > 4. Overview - abi>>powertest
- > 5. Peculiarities of the abi>>powertest
- > 6. Trial - abi>>powertest

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Seite 2

3.

Germany's School System

GRADE	AGE
13	19
12	18
11	17
10	16
9	15
8	14
7	13
6	12
5	11
4	10
3	9
2	8
1	7
	6
	5
	4
	3

Kindergarten

Grundschule  
Elementary School

Primary School (Haupt-/Grundschule)

Secondary School (Realschule)

University of Applied Sciences (Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften)

University (Universität)

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Seite 3

4.

Overview Applied and Higher Education

University

University of Applied Sciences

Colleges of Music and Art

Distances learning University

All-day vocational schools

High School Certificate „Abitur“

Dual vocational training system


Seite 4

5.

**Content**

**Overview**

- 1. Germany's School System
- 2. Overview Applied and Higher Education
- 3. Objectives/Target Groups  
**abi>>powertest**
- 4. Overview - abi>>powertest
- 5. Peculiarities of the abi>>powertest
- 6. Trial - abi>>powertest



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6.

**Objectives/Target Groups**

- A directive tool to diagnose interests and competences for profession orientation
- Major target groups are students of secondary school phase II




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7.

**Content**

**Overview**

- 1. Germany's School System
- 2. Overview Applied and Higher Education
- 3. Objectives/Target Groups  
abi>>powertest
- 4. Overview - abi>>powertest
- 5. Peculiarities of the abi>>powertest
- 6. Trial - abi>>powertest




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8.

**Overview - abi>>powertest**

**Characteristics abi>>powertest**

- A scientific knowledge based test
- Cost-free online-test for profession orientation
- Duration time: 75 to 90 minutes
- Consists of two parts:
  - Interests test
  - Strengths/Competences test
- Possibility to have a break
- Evaluation notified on a certificate



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9.

**Overview – abi>>powertest**

**Scheme**


Start + Registration  
Login data and confirmation link will be mailed to you

Test part 1 – interests (Performance time approx. 15 min.) → your wish → Break → Evaluation part 1 - interests

Test part 2 – strengths (Performance time approx. 60 to 75 min.) → your wish → Break → Evaluation part 2 - strengths

Overall evaluation – „certificate“  
For yourself important professional areas:  
- professional areas you are interested in  
- professional areas you are most qualified for  
**Your major strengths/competences:**  
- Professions related to your interests  
- Professions related to your qualifications

General overview „Your test results an evaluation“ (PDF) with additional information



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10.

**Overview – abi>>powertest**

**Start-up**

There are two possibilities to start-up the abi>>powertest.

Either over the start-up phase [www.abi.de](http://www.abi.de) or directly over the link [www.powertest.abi.de](http://www.powertest.abi.de)

First the user log's in with his nickname and e-mail-address.

He must decide whether the results of higher education or vocational training or both should be listed in the abi>>powertest certificate.

After this the user receives a password to start the test.



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11.

**Overview – abi>>powertest**

**Part 1 - Interests**

The test starts with questionnaires which request personal interests.

- The user must provide answers to the statements on a scale from 1 (absolutely not applicable) to 5 (fully applicable). There is no time limit.
- The top column illustrates the number of answered questions by the user related to part 1.



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12.

**Overview – abi>>powertest**

**Part 1 - Interests**

After completing part 1 – interests, the user can decide whether he wants to see the intermediate test results or directly to proceed to part 2 – strengths.

Note:  
The user can make a break after part 1.



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13.

**Overview – abi>>powertest**


**Part 2 - Strengths**

Part 2 - strengths is classified into a performance test and questionnaires.

In these two parts the aptitude of the user for special professional areas as well as the strength of various competences is tested.

First the user has to do the **performance test**. Every assignment has to be completed within a limited time.

On top of the page the graphical bar indicates the number of assignments completed in the time period.



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14.


**Overview – abi>>powertest**

**Part 2 - Strengths**

After the user has completed the **performance test**, the test continues with the **questionnaires**, for example social and personal competences will be questioned.

The user has to provide answers to the questions on a scale from 1 (absolutely not applicable) to 5 (fully applicable).

There is no time limit.



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15.

**Overview – abi>>powertest**

**Part 2 - Strengths**

After having completed the strengths test (performance test and questionnaires) the user has two possibilities:

- to see his intermediary results of part 2 – strengths
- or
- to see the complete test results of part 1 – interests and part 2 - strengths



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16.

**Overview – abi>>powertest**

**Certificate**


At the end of the abi>>powertest, all test results of part 1 and 2 are summarised in a „Certificate“ (pdf-print).

**Information on „Certificate“:**

**1. Areas**

The „Certificate“ defines 3 areas of personal interests and 3 areas of personal aptitudes.

In addition 7 strongest personal competences are included.



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17.

**Overview – abi>>powertest**

**Certificate**

**2. Professions**

Furthermore the „Certificate“ defines 3 professions qualifying to personal interests and 3 professions related to personal strengths.

In addition 7 professions coherent to personal interests and strengths are included.

The number of professions double-up, if the user has indicated in the start-up of the test for „Both“, the Higher Education an Vocational Training.




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18.

**Content**

**Overview**

- 1. Germany's School System
- 2. Overview Applied and Higher Education
- 3. Objectives/Target Groups abi>>powertest
- 4. Overview - abi>>powertest
- 5. Peculiarities of the abi>>powertest
- 6. Trial - abi>>powertest



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19.


**Peculiarities of the abi>>powertest**

**Proposals for interests and competences**

In this abi>>powertest the interests and strengths/competences of the user are individually tested.

Under this consideration professions are suggested to the user with conditions as below:

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- relating to the user's strengths
- qualifying user's interests and strengths



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20.

**Peculiarities of the abi>>powertest**

**Transparency**

The advantage of the abi>>powertest is, that the proposed professions are inter-related to user's interests and strengths.

With this criterion the user can easily follow-up and understand the listed professions, therefore it is transparent.



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21.

**Peculiarities of the abi>>powertest**

**Fokus on Profession**

In Germany, various other tests are only focussing on profession orientation coherent to scholastic aptitude or qualification for vocational training.

The abi>>powertest is unique with its directives towards profession choice provided to the user for an active profession life of 45 years.

e.g. An engineer can work as: engineer in industry, teacher, professor, technical sales, director, consultant, ministry, company owner CEO, United Nations, charity missions etc.

Thema: 0. Monat 2010, © Bundesagentur für Arbeit Seite 21

22.

**Peculiarities of the abi>>powertest**

**Multiple Links**

Professions are interlinked with information platforms of the German Employment Exchange Service for further details.

Links:

- > Description of professions: BERUFENET
- > Academic Education Search Machine: [www.Studienwahl.de](http://www.Studienwahl.de)
- > Complementary professions: BIZ-Info Catalogues
- > abi-Reports: [www.abi.de](http://www.abi.de)

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23.

**Peculiarities of the abi>>powertest**

**Supportive Tool in the Process of Profession Orientation**

The abi>>powertest is an instrument to support the process of profession orientation for students in their career planning.

Furthermore, the abi>>powertest prepares the user for advisory meetings with German Employment Exchange Consultant and family members.

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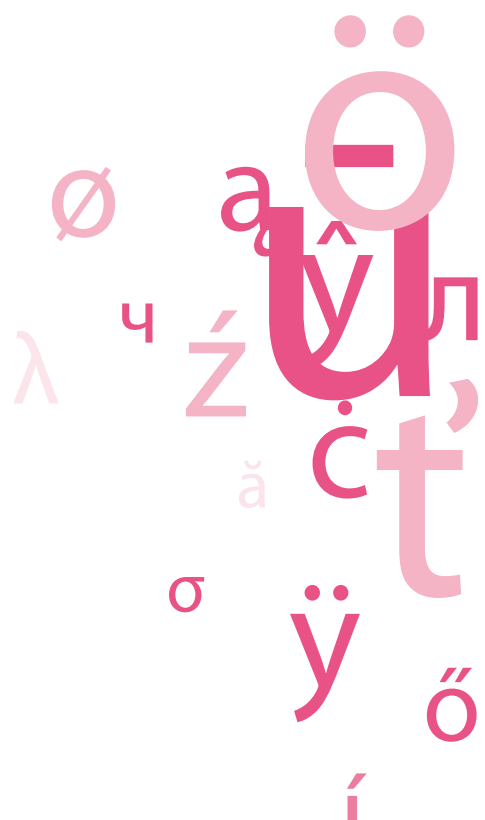
24.

**Content**

**Overview**

- > 1. Germany's School System
- > 2. Overview Applied and Higher Education
- > 3. Objectives/Target Groups abi>>powertest
- > 4. Overview - abi>>powertest
- > 5. Peculiarities of the abi>>powertest
- > 6. Trial - abi>>powertest

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5

## General questions

### How do you define “competences” in your country?

Competence has slightly different definitions in distinct scientific disciplines (e.g. psychology, pedagogy, andragogy, etc.) but these definitions also have common content. In the field of career guidance competence is regarded as a motivation- and knowledge (including: routines, skills, habits, abilities and knowledge) system. The competence system is subdivided into personal, social, cognitive and special competences. Personal, social and cognitive competences are general and overlapping competences of the personality, whilst special competences form the basis of enabling a person to learn what is needed to perform activities related to jobs. Special competences also function to serve the functions of other competences.

Another view that is widespread among career counselors is based on ELGPN's definitions of career management skills. 'CMS refer to a range of competences which provide structured ways for individuals and groups to gather, analyse, synthesise and organize self, educational and occupational information, as well as the skills to make and implement decisions and transitions.'<sup>1</sup>

### What kind of competences are diagnosed in your country?

Different subtypes (personal, cognitive, social and special) of competences are diagnosed in Hungary. In the following sessions we will briefly summarize some good practices stating competences measured in them. (For further information on CMS please visit last year's National Survey written by István Kiss PhD, senior lecturer at ELTE.<sup>2</sup>)

The Hungarian Core Curriculum (NAT) lists key competences that have to be developed across subjects in PES, these are in accordance with the recommendations of The European Parliament and the Council of the European Union. The key competences are the following:

- communication skills (in Hungarian)
- communication skills (in second language)
- mathematical competence
- scientific competence
- digital competence
- efficient and independent learning
- social and civic competence
- initiative and entrepreneurship
- esthetical and artistic self-awareness.

There is national research carried out measuring reading and mathematical literacy of all Hungarian Grade 6,

Grade 8 and Grade 10 students every year.<sup>3</sup> Hungary also participates in the Programme for International Students Assessment organized by OECD<sup>3</sup>.

**The Ferenc Méri Institute of Education and Career Counseling** in cooperation with **Óbuda University** have been conducting research on *learning styles, attitudes* towards learning, spatial and thinking skills and career orientation skills of grade 9 and grade 10 students since 2007.<sup>5</sup> The Institute has been offering career guidance services for students in PES and their parents and teachers since 1912.

There are a number of self-assessment tools used by career counselors to diagnose career-related skills of clients. The skills measured are the following: verbal aptitude, numerical aptitude, spatial thinking skills, physical capacity, interpersonal skills (e.g. the ability to contact to other people easily), manual skills, fluency of ideas (or creativity), general learning capacity, etc. (e.g. eye-hands coordination, perception of geometrical forms, troubleshooting in written material, finger dexterity).<sup>6</sup>

There are other programs focusing on measuring competences. The main purpose of these tools in many cases is not career guidance solely, nevertheless the results can be used to help subjects to plan their career paths. Mostly these programs cover diagnosing the competences of public education students (grade 1-12).

The University of Szeged has two programs measuring competences. Its “eDia” (SROP-3.1.9-11/1-2012-0001) project targets grade 1 – grade 6 students measuring their writing skills, ICT skills, problem solving, motivation, civic competences, musical competences, social competences and visual competence.<sup>7</sup>

Their other project ‘Hungarian Educational Longitudinal Program’ aims to determine the reasons why students drop out of the school system and to find ways of interventions to help students to stay on track. This is a longitudinal study measuring reading literacy, mathematical competence, scientific knowledge, cognitive skills, complex problem solving, foreign language fluency and ICT skills.<sup>9</sup>

Social competences are also being measured in Hungary. On the one hand there are numerous psychological inventories (e.g. to measure conflict-resolving, interpersonal skills, etc.) psychologically trained counselors can use; on the other hand there is also a tradition in pedagogy of measuring these competences. Furthermore non-questionnaire tools (e.g. workshop methods, check-lists) are also available to career experts.

Conflict-resolving as well as problem-solving techniques are being taught at the Szent István University for career counselor BA students. Future counselors will be able to lead group counseling sessions on these social competences. Furthermore they also study techniques to plan group counseling session in career values and job-seeking skills. Academic students have personal experience in all of these thematic group sessions embodied in their curriculum before they study the methods and become entitled to supply these services.

**The Psychology Department of Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE)** in cooperation with the **Hungarian Association for Counselling in Higher Education** is holding workshops for academic students to improve their *intercultural competences*. Their aim is to facilitate mobility and the understanding of different cultural setting in order to be able to effectively work in today's diverse work settings.<sup>9</sup>

**What are the regulations governing the use of diagnosis tools in your country?**

Questionnaires for diagnosing competences can only be used by professionals who have the required qualification. If the setting of using a tool in PES is a group, special arrangements can be made (for example the teacher supervises the filling-out of questionnaires or test but the feedback is given by the counselor or psychologist).

**Who in your country is entitled to make the diagnosis of competences? (profession/required qualifications)**

Career counselors with various qualifications (e.g. andragogy- career consultant minor BA, school counselor- post-graduate training program, etc.) are entitled to use questionnaires and self-assessment tools. Psychological tests and questionnaires that aim to measure deeper levels of the personality can only be used by psychologists.

## Specific questions

**What tools have been used in your country to diagnose competences?**

A wide range of tools is being used in Hungary to detect competences. These include *questionnaires, check-lists, tests and workshop methods*.

Please describe 3 tools that are the most useful (in your opinion). Are they dedicated to pupils and students, academic students or adults?

**HAMET-2 test** is a tool designed for underprivileged and disabled students (but also could be used in the same target groups for adults). Completing the HAMET-2 tests takes 12 hours altogether in Hungary (the tool is used in other EU countries as well). The HAMET program is based on carrying out specific but easy work tasks while also gathering information about one's personality (creativity, punctuality and persistence) and social skills. The tests are followed by a counselling session with the student and the parents focusing on career opportunities and on forming a personalized plan to develop one's assets.<sup>10</sup>

There is a **group of self-assessment tools** developed for career counselors available to measure certain **career-related skills** of students, adults and under-educated adults. The measured skills are listed above in the answer for generic question 2.<sup>11</sup>

The Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) has been organizing **career management trainings, job-seeking group sessions** for higher education students since 2008. The program has been given a special award in 2012 by the Tempus Foundation in a contest called 'What would the employer reward?'. There are 3-4 seminars held each semester with a maximum group number of 20 students to serve the needs of all ELTE students.

1. Lifelong Guidance Policy Development: A European Resource Kit, ELGPN, 2012, p 18
2. [http://english.ess.gov.si/\\_files/3994/NATIONAL\\_SURVEIS.pd](http://english.ess.gov.si/_files/3994/NATIONAL_SURVEIS.pd)
3. [http://www.iaea.info/documents/paper\\_1162a1d92d.pdf](http://www.iaea.info/documents/paper_1162a1d92d.pdf)
4. <http://ourtimes.wordpress.com/2008/04/10/oecd-education-rankings/>
5. [http://www.budapestedu.hu/meres-ertekeles/szakmai\\_meres/szakmai\\_meres2008.html](http://www.budapestedu.hu/meres-ertekeles/szakmai_meres/szakmai_meres2008.html)
6. Source: Klára Szilágyi (2008): Methodology handbook for career counselors to use in individual counseling. Kollégium Tanácsadó Szolgáltató Kft, Budapest. [www.afsz.hu/resource.aspx?ResourceID=afsz\\_tamop222\\_szakanyag\\_szakmai\\_protokoll.pdf](http://www.afsz.hu/resource.aspx?ResourceID=afsz_tamop222_szakanyag_szakmai_protokoll.pdf)
7. <http://edu.u-szeged.hu/kkcs/en/node/63>
8. <http://edu.u-szeged.hu/kkcs/hu/longitudinalis>
9. <http://www.feta.hu/english>
10. owner of the test: <http://www.bkmobaja.bplaced.net/>
11. Klára Szilágyi (2008): Methodology handbook for career counselors to use in individual counseling. Kollégium Tanácsadó Szolgáltató Kft, Budapest. [www.afsz.hu/resource.aspx?ResourceID=afsz\\_tamop222\\_szakanyag\\_szakmai\\_protokoll.pdf](http://www.afsz.hu/resource.aspx?ResourceID=afsz_tamop222_szakanyag_szakmai_protokoll.pdf)



### What are the advantages or disadvantages of these tools for the counsellors and for the clients?

The HAMET-2 program helps to decrease dropping out of school because its results suggest that this tool can be a great help in finding the right career solutions for students with special needs.

Self-assessment tools are easy to use, easy to understand for clients and they only have positively worded items. Clients know what competences (skills) will be measured before filling in the forms. There are different tools for different target groups (age- and knowledge appropriate ones). One hindrance stems from the nature of the tool: if one's self-knowledge is poor then these tools can be of little help since the results will be undifferentiated or biased. That is one of the reasons why in practice counselors mainly use them in their individual counseling sessions (where they help clients interpret their results, as well as to link skills to other personality variables and job opportunities). Another issue is that these tools were adapted a while ago so their psychometrical validity cannot be taken for granted.

The career management training had excellent feedback from group members. As a tool it is effective in increasing communication and social skills, as well as cognitive competences.

The only 'disadvantage' of it is that not all of the university students participate in the program. It would be better if the scope of intervention could be widened.

What kinds of ICT tools (eg. computer programs, software, games etc.) are applied in your country to diagnose competences? How popular are they?

There are computer programs, softwares and games available in Hungary. Their popularity is moderate due to the fact that most of these tools have either to be purchased or can be used in an institute or school.

### How are these tools disseminated among guidance practitioners or teachers (via internet, via courses, etc...)?

Tools are disseminated both via courses and via internet. Self-assessment tools form a part of the curricula for career counselors BA. Questionnaires and links for tools can be found on Hungary's biggest guidance site (developed in SROP-2.2.2 project) the National Career Guidance Portal ([www.eletpalya.munka.hu](http://www.eletpalya.munka.hu)). Furthermore there are trainings, workshops and seminars being organized to disseminate these tools. The SROP-2.2.2-12/1 project 'The substantive and methodological development of career orientation/ Renewal of

the content and methods of life-long guidance' is currently organizing a 30-hour training for approximately 4000 counselors (mainly from PES). The trainings will include methodology workshop focusing on interest, competence and other career related personality characteristics.

Does the system of diagnosis of adult competences exist in your country? If yes, is it related to the validation process of non-formal and informal learning?

There are only separate tools available to measure adults' competences (mainly skills) at present. In the SROP-2.2.2-12/1 project, research is currently carried out to form such a diagnosis system for adults.

### What are the free online tools to test competences in your country?

Free online questionnaires can be found on the National Career Guidance Portal ([www.eletpalya.munka.hu](http://www.eletpalya.munka.hu)). These tools measure skills and competences of students, academic students and adults. Their theoretical background is laid in the recommendations of The European Parliament and the Council of the European Union and in Amundson's competence theory.

## Research and development

### Who/what organizations or institutions conduct research on competences or develop new tools in the field of diagnosis?

The University of Szeged is the center of research on competences in the academic world. Their emphasis is on developing tools that can be used in PES to develop student's competences. In the SROP-2.2.2-12/1 project 'The substantive and methodological development of career orientation/ Renewal of the content and methods of life-long guidance' several pieces of research are currently designed to focus on competences. According to future plans in 2014/2015 several questionnaires will be formed based on the results of preliminary research to help the career orientation process of students, as well as adults.

### What fields or topics are researched?

Cognitive, as well as social competences are being researched at the University of Szeged in both cross-sectional and longitudinal settings. CMS are researched at the Eötvös Loránd University of Science. In the SROP-2.2.2-12/1 project experts are designing research to measure students' and adults' career related personal, social, cognitive and special skills and also to measure expected level of competences in different jobs.

### How is the efficiency of tools measured?

Research on efficacy has not been conducted yet on these tools to our knowledge. These types of studies will be carried out in the future, mainly (on newly developed tools) joint to SROP-programs. Effect studies, despite all their advantages, are sometimes expensive and time-consuming, these may be some of the reasons why they were neglected in the past. Reliability and validity of tools are proven.

### Who/what organizations or institutions provide trainings for counsellors on diagnosis of competences?

Universities with BA, MA majors and post-graduate programs that result in a professional degree that entitles their holders to function as counselors, train their students in competences and diagnosing them. These Universities are the following (with majors or programs):

Szent István University, Gödöllő  
career counselor BA, human resources counselor MA,  
career orientation teacher  
– post-graduate training program

Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest  
psychology MA career counseling psychologist- 4-semester long, specialized post-graduate training program school consultant – 4-semester long post-graduate program for teachers

University of Debrecen  
post-graduate program for teachers

The SROP-2.2.2-12/1 project also trains counselors to diagnose competences, using its own methodology (tools that have been developed in the program and are available online).



### Introduction

The workshop had three main aims:

1. to discuss what the term 'competence' stands for in Hungarian guidance context.
2. to give an overview of what methods are currently being used to evaluate subjects' competences and what are future directions in developing assessment tools for the area.
3. to introduce group counseling methods in evaluating career related competences (e.g. psychodrama elements, values clarification technique).

In the general introduction I will briefly summarize the current view on assessing competences in Hungary<sup>2</sup>. In the further sections of this article some important elements of the psychodrama technique will be emphasized. These techniques can help clients to determine their competences on an experience base. Values clarification technique (Raths et al., 1966; Kirschenbaum, 2013) can give guidance practitioners a concrete and action-oriented method to help the determination of clients' values related to work and thus to help them form a clearer self-definition which is a key element of forming a career path.

### Career competences and career management skills

Competences have slightly different meanings in distinct fields of science (e.g. pedagogy, psychology, andragogy) in Hungary. The two most frequently used definitions are however shared among these areas and that of career guidance. The concept of 'competence' based on a pedagogical point of view (Nagy, 2000) is regarded as a motivation- and knowledge system. Knowledge is a higher level category that embraces routines, skills, habits, abilities and knowledge as well. The competence system is subdivided into personal, social, cognitive and special competences. Personal, social and cognitive competences are general and overlapping competences of the personality, whilst special competences form the basis of enabling a person to learn what is needed to perform activities related to jobs. Special competences also assist the functioning of other competences.

Another widespread notion of competences in career guidance is ELGPN's definition of career management skills: 'CMS refer to a range of competences which provide structured ways for individuals and groups to gather, analyse, synthesise and organize self, educational and occupational information, as well as the skills to make and implement decisions and transitions' (Life-long Guidance Policy Development: A European Resource Kit, ELGPN, 2012, p 18).

Competences and career management skills are measured through different means (e.g. questionnaires, self-assessment tools, tests, checklists and group-session methods). Until recently mostly skills have been diagnosed mainly based on paper-pencil instruments, however there are new trends emerging on the field as online assessment tools will be developed based on Nagy's (2000) definition of competence resulting in a richer profile.

Methods of group sessions can also serve as a tool for evaluating competences and career management skills. In the following sessions I would like to give some examples of this for practitioners.

### Psychodrama techniques in assessing 'core' competences

Psychodrama is a method developed on the bases of role theory and group dynamics by Jacob Levy Moreno. It is an action-oriented method that enables us to experience past, present and future life events and gain insight of them. Its effectiveness stems from the spontaneity and creativity one has to find in himself to be able to enact on issues in his life. Psychodrama is usually used as a group technique though it is possible to apply this action method to individuals, families and couples, as well.

With the help of psychodrama one can work on individual issues. When a given member is in the spotlight (working on her/his personal growth) a director or a leader, and group members are also needed. The protagonist chooses group members who will participate in the psychodramatic play as significant others. At the end of each session group members share their similar experiences with the protagonist; what they learnt from that particular session and how they personally relate to the issue.

Psychodrama among its many possible applications can be used to access career related issues, even to assess competences. One way of doing this is to ask group members (high school students or adults) of their most important heritage: a skill or an attitude that they feel they have, because of their original family 'passed it down' to them through the way they have been living

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1. Fruzsina Lukács Ph.D., National Employment Office, Hungary. Correspondence according to this article should be sent to Ms. Fruzsina Lukács: LukacsFruzsina@lab.hu  
2. For further details please read the National Survey of Hungary.

or lived their life and through the way they socialized them. The group leader (counselor) should emphasize that this particular choice of 'strength' should be something they feel that helps them in reaching their goals, be it personal or professional. These skills should also be quite typical of them.

First of all every group member should name their choice of heritage for themselves (for high school students it is helpful if we make them write it down on a piece of paper). If everyone is ready with this, the counselor asks them to think of an object that could symbolize the strength that they picked. It is important to state that any solution would be appropriate if they can see the object as a symbol of their core quality (skill or attitude). This object can be any size, can be something they possess or want to possess and also can be something based on their imagination. High school students may need some examples to be able to put their fingers on how they should do this. It is always best to give an example that the counselor feels is authentic. An example would be that one's heritage is the constant need to learn new things. A symbol for this could be a notebook that one can make notes, do scratches or draw in.

When everyone picked an object symbolizing their strength the counselor asks them to imagine an event when a member of their family would give them this object as a present. As psychodrama puts emphasis on the setting up of a scene they should think of a particular place, time of day, etc.

Then the counselor asks group members if they would like to engage in a role play where this gift would be given to them by another member of the group playing the family member they had chosen. It is important that the role play is carried out on a voluntary basis, but to my experience adolescents and adults engage in this type of exercise quite easily and happily.

The counselor helps in the directing of the scene. First of all he asks the protagonist to choose her/ his family member from the group then they set up the scene (where are we?, what time of the year/day is it?, etc.). Some simple props (chairs, tables, scarfs, etc.) can be used to mark space. Then the counselor asks the person to reverse roles with his/her family member and asks some basic question about the person in an interview (e.g. what their relations are?, how old is he/ she?, etc.). This process can give deeper insight into important family ties that can function as a support system in building up one's career path and also helps fellow group member to better understand the role (and how it should be carried out) he/ she has to play as a significant other. A short message might also be formulated in reverse role that accompanies the present giving 'ceremony'.

One member of a career orientation group said that he 'inherited' persistence from his family as they have never given up on a goal that was important to them no matter the adversities they had to face and always encouraged him to do the same. His object to symbolize this was a big rock from the bank of the Danube that his mother gave him as a present. In his scene where one of his fellow classmates played his mother he was studying in his room for exams as his mother came in and gave him this rock as a present. Her basic message was that she is sure his son could reach his goals to become an engineer and that she will do whatever she can to support him in the process.

Another group member, a young girl said that creativity was the strength that runs in her family. She, herself wanted to be an artist and choose his uncle (who is a sculptor) to present her gift that was a small statue made by him. He reassured her that she has what it takes to become a good artist.

Experiencing other group members' stories adolescents and adults can gain a much deeper insight on competences then they would by simply stating them or by filling out a questionnaire. Group members stated in their feedback that this particular exercise helped them a lot in accessing their strength and it was also quite visible that they relied a lot in their career action plan on this particular quality.

## How to use values clarification technique in career group sessions

Values clarification technique (Raths et al., 1966) is a method that helps clients to determine, to cherish and to act upon their personal and work values. From early on the technique has been used in counseling, psychotherapy and career guidance, as well (Kirschenbaum, 2013).

The importance of having a clear value system has been stressed by many (e.g. Super, 1959) and value driven behavior has clearly much better outcomes than the acts we carry out lacking values important to us. Kirschenbaum (2013) states that through value clarification one can 'reach' purposefulness, consistency, enthusiasm and that going through this process will result in better decision-making.

The technique itself has seven steps. There can be entire sessions dedicated to each step or if we have limited time we can do the whole process in 3 sessions (1. session: stage 1-2, 2. session: stage 3-5, 3. session: stage 6-7).

The stages are the following:

#### Prizing and cherishing

1. Prized, cherished
2. Publicly affirmed

#### Choosing

3. Chosen from alternatives
4. Chosen after considering consequences
5. Chosen freely

#### Acting

6. Acted upon
7. Acted upon consistently

Each stage can be worked on from a career perspective. In the final session usually a career plan is made by participants (Szilágyi, 2007), that states what needs to be done by them and at what point of the process to reach their goal.

Value clarification technique has been used by practitioners in Hungary for some 20 years. It is even a part of curricula for career counselors at Szent István University. In the following sessions I will give some examples of using this technique in group sessions for young adults.<sup>3</sup>

### Stage 4 - chosen after considering the consequences

After prizing and cherishing values and choosing them from alternatives one has to learn to choose a behavior after considering consequences. A useful tool to facilitate this process is called 'Climbing up the ladder'. The worksheet supporting this exercise can be seen at figure 1. This technique deals with stories that are accompanied by strong emotions on the part of the participants. Usually it is best to work with stories that can be linked to 'ambivalent' feelings (e.g. happiness and sadness at the same time) as in these types of stories controversial values can be found most of the time and thus give a great opportunity to discussion and to consider consequences.

We start by explaining that we will work with stories and tell each participant that they should think of one that has been arousing strong emotion in them lately. The consultant can give an example of this (but has to be aware that giving examples can prime the topic or emotional tone of stories that follow). One example

could be a piece of news that stirred some discussions at the time either at an international or at national level (e.g. an international news: (In 2008) Joshua Bell, a world famous violinist played six Bach pieces at a metro station in Washington D.C. for 45 minutes. During that time he collected 32 \$ and 6 people stopped to listen to him playing. When he finished playing no one noticed, there were no applause. Two days before this 'experiment' all tickets at an average prize of 100 \$ were sold out to his concert in Boston.; a national one: Zsolt Eröss a professional mountaineer, who due to a prior accident had an artificial leg went on a expedition to Kangchenjunga (8586 m). He had a 24 years old partner with him. They reached the peak although other climbers gave up the quest as they felt there would be a great danger of not being able to return since they didn't start the day from the camp base, but from a bit further down on the mountain and it was already late in the day. After successfully reaching the peak Eröss and his partner disappeared. Their bodies haven't been found yet.)

The purpose of the telling of the stories is to be able to form a group discussion afterwards. With each story being told the counselor asks the 'owner' of the story to give a title or a keyword to the story, that is written on a card and put on a board or on the wall where it is clearly visible to everyone. For example the stories stated as examples could be called 'metro station' or 'defeated ears' and 'audacity'. It is easier to work with less stories (about 7-8) but if every participant tells one we may decide to work on all of them. The time needed for this exercise is circa 50-70 minutes (depending on the number of stories, as well).

Before the group discussion each participant has to make his own hierarchy of the stories on the worksheet based on the intensity of feelings they associate with consequences. On the highest rung of the ladder (see figure 1) the keyword of the story that had most impact on them and the accompanying feelings should be written down. The next rung represent the next story in one's rank, etc.

After successfully completing this task group discussion follows with the consultant as mediator. As the discussion's aim is to form a shared hierarchy among group members, it should be focused on feelings of participants about consequences of the stories. This also gives a great opportunity to practice previous levels' achievements (such as publicly affirming one's values). The counselor should ensure that discussion stays on track and that group members communicate in a violence-free way with each other, accepting controversial views equal to their own. Discussion can sometimes be quite 'heated' (from emotions) especially concerning higher rank stories. For example the above mention

3. For further information on the technique read: Kirschenbaum, H. (2013) Values Clarification in Counseling and Psychotherapy: Practical Strategies for Individual and Group Settings. Oxford University Press, 2013 ISBN0199972184, 9780199972180



climbing accident stirred up a lot of questions in group members along the line of values (as Eröss had two little children some people argued family should always come first, while others thought one should always follow one’s dreams and that climbing was his true ‘profession,’ etc.). After having agreed on the hierarchy it should be visualized (e.g. putting card on the ladder of the group) and values of the stories could be linked to work values (e.g. Super’s). Group members can share what they experienced throughout the exercise and what they have learnt from it. One of the core ideas they should be able to become aware of that values have effect on our actions and that consequences (on our own life and on that of others, as well) should always be taught of in the process.

## Stage 7 – acted upon consistently

On the last level of values clarification technique one has to realize that it is not enough to cherish or act upon one’s values occasionally, but this should be done whenever it is possible. In career orientation groups it is crucial to argue this about one’s choice of occupation. To foster this notion a grid can be filled out where one can mark according to each given activity on a workday the following:

1. How often do I engage in this activity? (daily / monthly / seldom)
2. Is this activity carried out of habit / because I am made to do it e.g. compulsory / based on a free will and choice?
3. Do I cherish the value of this activity?

Once the grid is filled out we can go through it with each group member asking them to state what alteration they will make in the future on this activities to better mirror their values and thus resulting in better choices and purposefulness. They can also make a career plan after this summary to state each step with the time they intend to do them, to ensure that the group sessions will have real impact on their future.

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 Raths Louis E. et al. (1966) Values and teaching: working with values in the classroom. C.E. Merrill Books, Columbus, Ohio.  
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Figure 1: Worksheet to stage 4  
(chosen after considering the consequences)





# Good practices in evaluating the career management skills of high school students and young adults

1.

**Good practices in evaluating career management skills of high school students and young adults**

Cross Border Seminar, Warsaw  
 Fruzsin Lukács PhD  
 National Employment Office  
 SROP-2.2.2 – 12  
 Leader of Methodology Development  
 fruzsinalukacs@lab.hu

2.

- Career Management Skills?
- Knowledge measured in National Competence Surveys?
- Social competences?
- Cognitive competences?
- Personal competences?
- Special competences?
- All the above mentioned

**How do we define competences?**

3.

- » Knowledge
- » Abilities
- » Skills
- » Motivation

**Competencies in high school**

4.

- » Information gathering
- » Self-awareness
- » Knowledge of the educational system
- » Self-knowledge
- » Ability to set goals
- » Flexibility
- » Decision-making
- » Social competences

**Career Management Skills**

5.

- ❖ Individual counseling
- ❖ Assessment
- ❖ Group counseling
- ❖ „Reach out” programs
- ❖ Web based guidance

**What can we do?**

6.

- » Tests
- » Questionnaires
- » Self-assessment tools
- » Check-lists
- » Web-based

**Assessment**

7.

- Problem-solving skills
- Conflict-resolving skills
- Career values
- Job-seeking skills
- Intercultural competences
- Career orientation

**Group counseling**

8.

- ? Group size
- ? Mixed/ non-mixed groups
- ? Compulsory/ voluntary
- ? How many sessions

**Things to consider...**

9.



A presentation slide for a "Career orientation group". On the left, there is a collage of photos of people with the text "Nyelvtudás Félelem és bizakodás". On the right, there is a photograph of a table covered with various papers, markers, and sticky notes, suggesting a workshop or brainstorming session.

**Career orientation group**

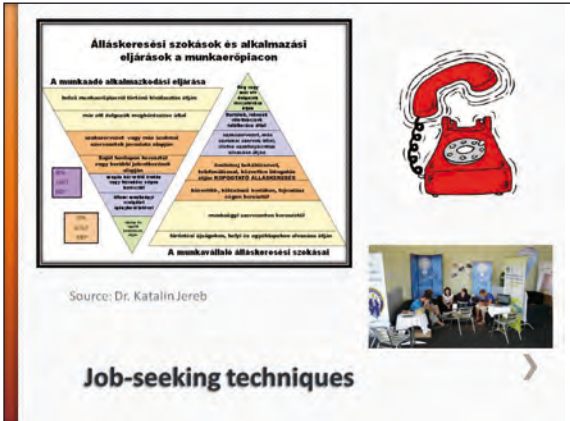
10.



A presentation slide titled "Psychodramatic elements (Moreno)". It features a circular diagram with three orange arrows forming a clockwise loop, labeled "Creativity", "Action", and "Spontaneity". To the right, there are two images: a close-up of a key and a group of people cheering with their hands raised.

**Psychodramatic elements (Moreno)**

11.



A presentation slide titled "Job-seeking techniques". It features a large diagram with a pyramid structure and a red rotary telephone illustration. The diagram contains text in Hungarian, including "Álláskeresési szokások és alkalmazási eljárások a munkaerőpiacon" and "A munkaadó alkalmazkodási eljárása". Below the diagram, it says "Source: Dr. Katalin Jereb".

**Job-seeking techniques**

12.



A presentation slide titled "Climbing up the ladder". It features a photograph of a red ladder extending upwards into a cloudy sky.

**Climbing up the ladder**

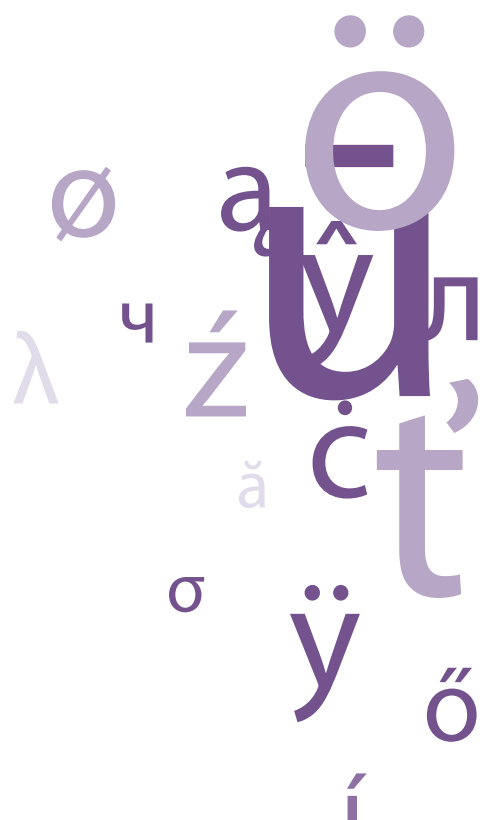
13.



A presentation slide titled "Thank you for participating!". It features a colorful graphic of interlocking puzzle pieces. At the bottom, there is contact information: "fruzsinalukacs@lab.hu" and logos for "SZÉCHENYI TERV", the European Union, and another organization.

**Thank you for participating!**

fruzsinalukacs@lab.hu







6



## General questions

### How do you define “competences” in your country?

According to Polish Qualification Framework (PQF), similar to EQF - the term - “**competence**” we can define as learning outcomes which are divided into 3 following areas:

- o knowledge,
- o skills and
- o social competence.

Certificated by diploma ability to use knowledge and skills we call qualifications.

Currently being modernization of the qualifications system in Poland, as an instrument the public policy for life-long learning. In Poland, the qualifications are awarded in the education and higher education systems as well as outside of these systems within various structures, institutions and organizations.

### What kind of competences are diagnosed in your country?

It is assumed that the Polish qualifications system will distinguish between “full” and the narrower in scope “partial” qualifications (always assigned to a specific level). Obtaining full qualification will enable a person to begin the process of achieving full qualifications at higher level. Acquiring “partial” qualifications at a given level will not provide the basis for beginning the process of full qualifications at a higher level, but will mean that a portion of the requirements required for a particular full qualification have been fulfilled (and these may be accredited to the same qualification as in the area where the partial qualification was achieved, or to a higher or lower level). Full qualifications are assigned only by educational and tertiary institutions.

### What are the regulations governing the use of diagnosis tools in your country?

There are various tests and questionnaires. Psychological tests could be used only by psychologists. Other questionnaires could be used by career counsellors (without psychological education).

#### Labour sector

The Ordinance of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy of 14 September 2010 on *standards and conditions for provision of labour market services* (Dz. U. of 2010 No 177, item 1193) specify among others things the use of the vocational counsellors diagnosis `tools and methods.

### Who in your country is entitled to make the diagnosis of competences? (profession/required qualifications)

#### Educational sector

Psychologist, career/vocational counselor, teacher, pedagogue. It depends on tool. Sometimes it's required psychological education (minimum MA in Psychology) or courses which allow to use specific tool.

#### Labour sector

Vocational counselors providing services in the field vocational counseling in the labour offices based on available methods, techniques and tolls are diagnosed vocational competences. The use of special diagnosis tools must be preceded by appropriate training.

In Poland there are many private institutions that have different tools and methods to test competences, there are also private training institutions that provide trainings for those who want to use of different tools to testing competences.

## Specific questions

### What tools have been used in your country to diagnose competences?

Most often used:

- o Individual conversation, career interviewing
- o Questionnaires and surveys,
- o Tests

There are also used:

- o Assessment and Development Centers, checklists, vivid techniques, Q-sort, SWOT analysis, work on metaphors.



Please describe 3 tools that are the most useful (in your opinion). Are they dedicated to pupils and students, academic students or adults?

Tool/method	Describe	Who?
<b>Individual conversation, career interviewing</b>	Individual face-to-face meeting, which focuses on helping to choose the educational and career paths. It's a perfect field to explore client's abilities, interests and so on. During meeting contract is concluded, determined to cooperate. Providing the conversation, it is important to take care of the place, time. Effectiveness depends on the counsellor's skills: ability to build relationships, to make safety atmosphere etc.	Everyone
<b>Tests and questionnaires</b>	Tool uses to exploring different kinds of skills and abilities by answering for a set of questions and do other tasks. A properly designed test should be accurate and reliable	It depends on age (generally older children and adults)
<b>Art projection techniques</b>	Multitask tool which uses different art techniques like – collage, painting, drawing, drama etc. It required individual or work group. It's ideal tool to search unconscious talents, interpersonal and communication abilities etc.	Everyone

What are the advantages or disadvantages of these tools for the counsellors and for the clients?

	<b>Individual conversation/ career interviewing</b>	<b>Tests and questionnaires</b>	<b>Art projection techniques</b>
+	Possibility to diagnose a lot of aspects in the same time; It could be used with everyone; Focus on client's needs	A lot of people could be tested in the same time. Simply to use, versatility; possibility to get fast results; basis to provide career consultation, simplify the process of diagnosis	Good method to open the client, activate his creativity; interesting. Different techniques could be used (for ex. Art). plenty of rope - creativity
-	Necessity of calm and comfortable place; multiplicity of interpretations; time – consuming; demand huge experience, trained counsellors	Diagnose of selected competences, the risk of wrong formulation of the question. Versatility. Sometimes it's demanded some special permission to use it (certificates, courses, psychological background); results could be cheated/ manipulated; wrong interpretation could make harm, client could feel fear and distrust	Unreliable; multiplicity of interpretations; difficulties in the interpretation



What kinds of ICT tools (eg. computer programs, software, games etc.) are applied in your country to diagnose competences? How popular are they?

Some psychological tests are available online or as a computer programs ex. WKP (Multidimensional questionnaire of preferences), which is more and more popular. There are also exist various questionnaires for self-examination (based on J. Holland theories).

#### **Max – Career**

Sometimes teachers uses Facebook game “Max Career” in school. It was made by ECORYS.

The game has been designed as a new approach to edutainment and web fun. The idea was to tell young generation about possible future paths that can be chosen in their adult life.

[https://apps.facebook.com/maxcareergame/?fb\\_source=search&ref=ts&fref=ts](https://apps.facebook.com/maxcareergame/?fb_source=search&ref=ts&fref=ts)

#### **Career to the max**

Counselor’s toolkit containing scripts which could use game Max Career; media guides; tests online as: “Am I creative?”; “Am I assertive?”

<http://www.progra.pl/kariera-na-maksa/>

#### **Talent game**

Project co-funded by EU. TalentGame concerns vocational guidance and vocational aptitude tests. Game is designed for children in different groups of age (7 +, 12 +, 16 +) as a very modern, attractive tool for them. It is an innovative project that have no counterpart in Europe.

<http://www.talentgame.pl/>

#### **Career Compass**

Popular online test for youth and students. The questionnaire prepared by Career Office of Silesian School of Economics. It consists 100 short questions (half of them concerns the character traits, half - skills).

<http://www.edulandia.pl/studia/0,131670.html>

#### **General Competence Test**

This new tool is designed to test the competences of person aged over 50. The tool has been developed to study personal, social, managerial and business competences.

The test prepared by PBS Sp.zoo in Sopot.

#### **Social Competence Questionnaire**

SCQ is a measure of social competence skills understood as conditioning the effectiveness of human

functioning in various social situations. In addition to the overall index questionnaire also provides three specific indicators, defining the level of competence of disclosure in social exposure situations, situations requiring assertiveness and interpersonal situations of close contact.

The questionnaire consists of 90 items, which are infinitive identify the various activities. The test evaluates the effectiveness of a four on the scale at which it is carried out. 60 of these (and only these are included in the key) is a function denoting deal in all kinds of social situations that may be considered difficult situations. There is also a computer version of the SCQ and a program to calculate the results (PSI-TEST).

The questionnaire prepared by Polish Psychological Testing Lab.

#### **Man at Work Questionnaire**

Man at Work Questionnaire is designed to measure the locus of control relating to the work. The questionnaire consists of 60 items in the form of statements claiming respondent replies to the four-level scale. Results of the questionnaire consists of two main scales: Control Scale and Locus of control Scale. Performance in MWQC also differentiates professional groups whose job duties are characterized by different levels of autonomy and independence (for example, people in leadership positions vs. subordinates).

The questionnaire prepared by Polish Psychological Testing Lab.

How are this tools disseminated among guidance practitioners or teachers (via internet, via courses, etc...)?

Via internet, courses, seminars, message boards.

Tests for diagnosis competences prepared by Polish Psychological Testing Lab can be purchased by labour offices for the purposes conducting of vocational counseling.

Does the system of diagnosis of adult competences exist in your country? If yes, is it related to the validation process of non-formal and informal learning?

In Poland, there is no a coherent system for diagnosing adult competence. Competences confirmed by a body authorized for this purpose called “qualifications”. Currently being modernization of the qualifications system in Poland, as an instrument the public policy for lifelong learning. A key element of the qualifications system is the Polish Qualification Framework (PQF), which will describe the mutual relations among qualifications and integrate various national qualifications subsystems in Poland. The PQF will also establish the hierarchy of qualifications levels. Eight levels will be distinguished in

PQF, with each level assigned to its equivalent in European Qualifications Framework.

Systematising the qualifications within the PQF will provide greater transparency, access and quality of the qualifications that learners will be able to achieve through various learning paths, including formal and non-formal and informal learning. Work is under-way to the development of the National Qualifications System and the National Qualifications Register. In the proposed approach, “formal education” is professionally organized and implemented cycles (programmes) of education intended to lead directly to the learner’s achievement of qualifications included in the national qualifications register. “Non –formal education” is also professionally organized and enables a learner to acquire new competences, but it does not lead directly to the award of qualifications that are included in the national qualifications register. “Informal learning” is not organized at all (by a professional entity) and obviously also does not lead directly to the achievement of qualifications found in the national register.

What are free online tools to test competences in your country?

#### **Diaprezamus**

Diagnostic package - methodical process of career guidance to support children and young people. The main objective of the project “Diaprezamus” is to create a standardized diagnostic tools enable the study of interests of young people.

It consists of:

- o diagnostic Tools
- o Methodological and information materials for the student and his parents
- o Methodological materials for teachers

<http://www.diaprezamus.us.edu.pl/node/6>

#### **Recognition abilities and interests**

Tests examine abilities and interests of students. There are three kinds of tests- for children in primary school, secondary school, and high school

<http://predyspozycje.interium.com.pl/>

#### **Methodological support the process of recognition of aptitude**

Tests for self- examine. It could be used also by teachers and career counselors. There are 4 tests: two tests are directed into children from primary school (age 9 and 13), for children from secondary school and high school

<http://rozpoznawanie-predyspozycji.uni.lodz.pl/narzedzia/gimnazjum/>

#### **MłokoZZ**

MŁOKOZZ is intended for use in counseling for children and young people.

The results inform the intensity of preferences

<http://zasobyip2.ore.edu.pl/pl/publications/search?keyword=m%C5%82okozz>

Teaching materials to support the process to recognize professional abilities and interests of students

Questionnaires for children and youth. It includes: creative attitudes and intra-/ interpersonal attitudes

[www.wybieramzawod.pl/testy-i-materialy](http://www.wybieramzawod.pl/testy-i-materialy)

#### **Jobfitter, personal headhunter**

The website provides recruitment services. These are free of charge to the public tests of competences: cognitive, personal, social, managerial, commercial and Test values of the work.

[www.jobfitter.pl](http://www.jobfitter.pl)

## Research and development

Who/what organizations or institutions conduct research on competences or develop new tools in the field of diagnosis?

In the years 2010-2014 carried out in Poland project “Study of Human Capital in Poland (BKL)”. It is a labour market monitoring project that is unique in Poland and Europe. By 2014, the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (Polska Agencja Rozwoju Przedsiębiorczości, PARP) in collaboration with the Jagiellonian University will trace – in five rounds of research – how the structure of competences is changing in the labour market. This extensive research project seeks the answers to the key questions about the future asked by schoolchildren, students, employees, employers, and public institutions responsible for the shaping of policy related to human capital at both national and regional level. One of the reports generated in 2012 by the project is titled “Competencies as the key to the development of Poland”.

Some research is done by organizations as - PTP (Psychological Test Laboratory of the Polish Psychological Association), IBE (Institute of Educational Research).

In 2008, the Ministry of Education announced the Competition no 4/POKL/3.4.3/08 “Development of diagnostic tools and teaching materials support the process of recognition of professional abilities and interests of students” to develop projects co-financed by the European Social Fund under the Human Capital Operational Programme 2007 - 2013, Priority III “High quality education system”, Measure 3.4, Sub-measure 3.4.3 - Promoting



learning lifelong Human Capital Operational Programme 2007-2013. The aim of the competition was to create tools and teaching materials for use in the planning of educational paths and career students. According to this project, there was created "Diaprezamus".

In 2012 Ministry of Labour and Social Policy initiated project co-financed by the European Social Fund under the Human Capital Operational Programme 2007 – 2013 Priority I "Employment and Social Inclusion" in which to be established the tool for testing the competences. Project will be realized in 2012-2014.

#### What fields or topics are researched?

Educational and labour field – interests, abilities, strengths and weaknesses, social skills, communication skills, coping with stress, etc.

#### How is the efficiency of tools measured?

Properly designed test should be standardized, valid, reliable, objective, norm-referenced and adapted to the culture. Most of tests, which were mentioned above fulfill the requirements of a psychological test.

#### Who/what organizations or institutions provide trainings for counsellors on diagnosis of competences?

Psychological Test Laboratory of the Polish Psychological Association - PTP (<http://www.practest.com.pl/>)  
National Centre For Supporting Vocational And Continuing Education (NCSVCE) - KOWEZIU ([www.koweziu.edu.pl](http://www.koweziu.edu.pl))

In Poland there are many private institutions which provide commercial trainings concerning different tools testing competencies.



## What is coaching and how it works

There are different definitions of coaching, as there are different models, methods and tools used by coaches coming from different schools and coaching organizations. In my coaching practice I usually refer to two fundamental sources: ICF (International Coach Federation), the largest international organization for coaches, and CoachWise™ (one of internationally recognized coaching models and methodology). One of the definitions of coaching is presented by ICF, in its [Code of Ethics](#): 'Coaching is partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential'. Another definition, taught in Coaching Center – one of the oldest and biggest coaching schools in Poland, based on CoachWise™ methodology, is my personal favorite: 'Coaching is the process of helping people achieve what they want, without telling them what to do nor doing it for them'. The essence of coaching is imprinted in the above definitions, underlying what is the nature of coaching process and coaching relationship, and what are the responsibilities of the coach and the client in that relationship and during the coaching process.

For the coaching to happen and be successful, bringing the results and effects for the client, there are certain conditions and rules to be met.

**1. TRUST** – as a coach you need to trust your clients and in order to do so, you need to have a set of beliefs that will make you believe in them. You need to believe that your client is:

- o Good – client has good intentions and willingness to create good things and positive results for him, his environment and for the world. You cannot be judgmental in any way. Your role is not to teach your client about right and wrong. It is not about leading him according to your values, but rather about letting him discover and act based on his values. If you are not able to believe that your client is good, it is better for you not to coach him.
- o Wise – client is the master of his life, in his matters and goals. He has all the answers in himself, as a coach you only need to help him get to those answers. He knows what is important and what you both need to concentrate in during coaching process. His wisdom results from connecting his knowledge (self-knowledge

and knowledge about the world) and experience with skills and intuition. If you don't believe that your client is wise, your questions will be limited and you will allow yourself to be skeptical or critical towards your client.

- o Creative – client is creative, able to create new reality, at recreating the client himself and his life. This belief supports you as a coach in not taking over the responsibility of the client to create solutions and achieve goals. Otherwise you may start giving your client advises.

- o Capable – client is capable to achieve what he wants or needs, he is strong, courageous and has all the resources required to do so. As a coach you are not stronger or wiser than your client, you just have coaching skills and experience, that are giving you the mandate to coach others. If you do not believe that your clients is capable to achieve his goals, you may want to try to achieve them for him.

Based on trust, the client is steering the coaching process and moving towards achieving the results. You may add your own beliefs to the ones mentioned above, that will help you build trust to your clients. Think about any beliefs that will support you in that.

**2. CREATIVITY** - coaching is a creative process, aimed at creating new reality for the client, his life and environment, at re-creating the client himself, connected with accountability for what is created. For that purpose it is important for the client to focus on creating vision(s) and not on solving problems, on creating new competences rather than judging current ones. It is important for the client to realize what he wants to create, what is important for him, and only then connecting it to other parts of his environment, relationships in which he is, etc. Your role as a coach is to make sure that the process is focused on creation.

**3. PRESENCE** – is one of the most important assets that the coach brings into the coaching process and relationship. The whole attention of the coach is directed at the client, who is placed in the center of the coaching process. When you are fully present, you're being observant, careful, calm, focused, you have good perception of things (words, moves, emotions, ect.) you are very self-aware, knowing exactly how you impact your client with every question, with your voice, body language, your emotions and moods. Having all that knowledge, you are not only able to give your client the highest possible value, being supportive in the process and creating proper environment, but also by being true mirror to your client, in which he can see himself, both in details and from meta-view.

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1. Certified Coach CoachWise™, member of ICF Poland, [eliza@inspiration-partners.com](mailto:eliza@inspiration-partners.com)



**4. PARTNERSHIP** – in a coaching relationship there is no master and student, both coach and the client contribute to the process, focusing on and engaging fully on the goals and the way to achieve them. This relationship has to be built on trust, mutual respect, honest and open communication whenever required. Building partnership starts at the beginning of coaching process with determining all the details of cooperation and agreeing on rules, and it never ends – it is continuous work to maintain the partnership until the coaching process ends.

**5. YES, AND** – contrary to the construction ‘Yes, but...’, ‘Yes, and’ is an expression of acceptance both verbal as in attitude. In communication it transforms the relationships, making it possible to really hear each other out, to show respect and to focus on what is important for both parties instead of arguing and trying to convince each other. In attitude towards life, it gives the acceptance for what happens, which builds the foundation for any change, increases our flexibility to respond in new ways and expands our ability to improvise, which is important both for the client and for the coach. It allows you to create what you want, based on what you already have.

**6. COMMITMENT** – allows coaching relationship to become deep and meaningful, allows client to risk, to be brave, to try new things and new ways. When the coach is committed to the client and his goals, the client wants to achieve more, feels motivated and has higher aspirations. Commitment and engagement mean doing the best you can, doing whatever is in your power. For the coach it means that he is dedicated to the process and to the goal and matter of the client, that he will remain with the client even in difficult situation and not knowing what to do next. Without commitment of the client, coaching process will not work and most likely will bring no results.

Accountability for creating the right environment, shaping relationship with the client and making sure that all the rules are followed, lies on the side of the coach. During coaching process coach applies four skills, that are absolutely fundamental:

**1. ASKING QUESTIONS** – questions that are open and opening, starting with ‘who’, ‘when’, ‘where’, ‘how’, ‘what’, etc. Questions that are short and without content, brave, deep, and letting the client discover something new, something that he was not aware of or he didn’t know about. Those questions should also be adequate, related to the situation, stage of coaching process and to

what client said moment ago. Notice also the way you ask questions – it is as important as the question itself. Ask your questions with real curiosity but no inquisitiveness. Avoid asking ‘why’ – it usually initiates defensiveness, response to judgment or guilt. Avoid asking long questions, they will usually suggest answer or include your own beliefs, directions, possibilities, opinions. Be prepared that your question may be missed.

**2. LISTENING** – with your ears, eyes, mind and heart. Listen to everything, all words and their meaning but also emotions, feelings, thoughts hidden between the lines, what is being said and what is not. Open all channels through which you can receive everything that comes from the client. For that kind of listening you need to trust your client, you need to accept him and whatever comes from him, without judging it. You need to be focused, placed in here and now and very observant.

**3. REFLECTING** – you are the mirror to your client. You reflect everything so that the client can see himself in you. It means you need to reflect the words (paraphrase), indicate the change in body language, mark noticed emotions. Do not imitate, but use the same words, terminology, metaphors the client used, who and how the client is or seems to be. Do not attach to your perception, if the client doesn’t agree – let him.

**4. SUPPORTING** – is just an addition to asking questions, listening and reflecting. Giving support should not exceed 5-10% of the time spent in the coaching interaction between the client and the coach. You can support your client by being enthusiastic about his goals and what he already accomplished, by encouraging him to take risks, motivating to do something new, brainstorming with the client, giving knowledge or advising more beneficial belief. While giving the client support, trust your client and believe in his capability, creativity and wisdom. Your support will be then much more beneficial to the client than if you thought he needed you to teach him.

For more information about coaching skills you may also refer to [ICF Core Competences](#), which describe what can be expected from ICF accredited coaches.

Coaching process is usually built from four to six phases including: goal setting, creating vision, reality check, planning, actions and review.





It is crucial for the coaching process to start with goal setting and describing the purpose / exploring vision, and then checking the reality. In this way creative tension is being created and it gives the client power, energy and motivation to achieve the goal. Planning phase is most of all about exploring different options, looking at the consequences of each of them, and finally choosing the way which is the most suitable for the client. Most suitable may mean different things to different people. For one client it may be the shortest way, for the other one the fastest way, and for someone else it may be the way through some important point. The phase in which the client implements his actions, is the one in which coach does not participate, but then again there is another session, which should start from the review of what happened and what are the conclusions taken out of the experience by the client. This sequence of phases may apply to the whole coaching process, to the work on one goal or to one session, depending on the needs of the client, then number of goals and the pace in which the client moves forward in the process. In all phases of the coaching process, and especially during creating vision and checking reality, it is important to explore with client the field in which he wants to be or the one in which he is right now. The field comprises from all available resources, that are accessible to the client in his current reality, but also the resources that he needs to acquire in order to achieve his goals. The resources may be physical (objects, places, things, money, time, etc. – all things that are countable), intellectual (knowledge, experience, skills, know-how, licenses, computer programs, ideas, etc.), emotional (feelings, emotions, characteristics, emotional intelligence, self-awareness, etc.) and social (contacts, networks, employees, coworkers, partners, family, suppliers, heroes, mentors, teachers, etc.) and it is important to explore all kinds of them. Both clients and coaches usually have tendencies to focus on one or two kinds of resources, and in such cases it is the role of the coach to expand the perception of the client. In some cases resources require structures or domains to become accessible to

us, i.e. money in our bank account is our resource, but we can only access it through the structure of debit card or online access to bank account, which in turn is accessible to us through the domain of banking system as such. In the coaching process it is important to look for and name the structures and domains that can enable access to new resources or increase the awareness of available resources.

## Coaching tools

During coaching process the coach uses variety of tools, exercises, tasks for the client to complete. What is most important, all those tools are designed to explore new areas for the client, expand his self-awareness and make him create and practice new behaviors, new beliefs, new attitudes and new ways of handling things in his life, to support his aware decision making and realizing what are the consequences of all his choices. **In this way it is strictly determined, that tools used in the coaching process are not aimed at diagnosing, but at building self-awareness and letting the client widely explore himself, his life and his environment, which you can call self-diagnosis.** It is very important not to include any evaluation and judgment into coaching process, because if it becomes part of the coaching process, it has negative influence on the essence of coaching, which in turn leads to transforming coaching into something else (counseling, consulting, mentoring, etc.) and may interfere with achieving goals set at the beginning of the process. In case it is absolutely necessary, and as coach you are convinced it will be good for your client (that is always the first priority) and you will use diagnosis in your process, you are obliged to inform your client that this is not coaching.

On the other hand, if you are not in the coaching process (and it is clearly stated and communicated to the client), you may use different tools used by coaches in coaching processes, as far as your profession allows it. You may use it in the same form, you may also adapt them, depending on the goal you want to achieve with your client. You may not only help your client build his self-awareness, let him self-diagnose himself in a way, but also use those tools to diagnose his competences, motivations, values and potential. Some of the coaching tools will let you explore the skills, competences and talents, or the reality of the client and his situation (professional or personal), some other will go deeper, letting you and your client determine motivations, natural drives, visions, values or ideal self, which the client is internally willing to grow to. That in turn may show the natural direction in which the client would like to develop himself, the one that is consistent with



him and that will give him at the end most satisfaction and happiness.

There are some methods and tools that are very commonly used in all kinds of coaching or even in other supporting services like therapy, consulting, counseling, mentoring, training, etc. Other can be more specific and applicable to certain kinds of coaching, or can relate to specific coaching models or schools. Below you will find short, exemplary list of tools and methods used in coaching, with some short descriptions. You may know some of them from your counseling practice, business running practice or other areas. The two exercises presented during workshop are described in the presentation that is also attached to this article.

**1. VISUALIZATION** – graphic method of creation, usually used to invent or create picture of the future, in a very plastic form, that can be seen, touched, smelled, etc. Visualization can be an internal process (imagine and describe), it can also be performed, painted, sketched, collaged, etc. Technique that you use is your choice and depends only on your inventions and preferences of your clients.

**2. VISIONING** – is one of the steps in the goal-setting process, allowing to identify exactly what we want and how we want our reality to look like in the future. It is also used to create motivation to reach the set goal, which usually requires lot of energy to make decisions and perform actions.

**3. IDENTIFYING AND PRIORITIZING VALUES** – there are different ways to identify and prioritize values, identifying can be achieved through a checklist, prioritizing through comparing every pair of values and choosing more important one. You can also perform funny and engaging exercise like 9 lives which was presented during the workshop. You will find description of that exercise in the presentation attached to this article.

**4. PICTURING OR VISUALIZING IDEAL SELF** – exercise using the visualization technique, allowing to identify the ideal self, picture of who we want to be in the perfect circumstances, in the future.

**5. THE WHEEL OF LIFE, OF WORK, OF PERSONAL LIFE, ETC.** (depending on the area on which the coaching process focuses) – simple exercise that allows identifying most important parts (which can be translated into values) of specific area, seeing interdependencies and evaluating current and required level of satisfaction from each part. This exercise is very often used to set goals at the beginning of the process.

In variation related to job and professional area, it can be a basis to determine what competences, characteristics and drives the job requires, which of them the person already has, and on which of them he or she needs to work.

**6. SWOT ANALYSIS** (of the client, of specific situation, of different scenarios before decision making) – this tool is not specific to coaching, it is used in many different situations in private life and in business. It helps to evaluate current status of the situation, it can also help to evaluate and compare ideas, solutions, scenarios, before decision taking.

**7. SCENARIOS BUILDING** – creating different scenarios for the future prepares the person for different things that may happen, including the best ones and the worst ones. In that way, whatever happens, the person may behave much calmer and in a stable way, having in advance knowledge of what to do, what are the possibilities and the consequences of potential decisions. Since scenarios are built before the situation arises, they are usually separated from the emotions caused by the situation, they make it easier to take decisions.

**8. EISENHOWER'S MATRIX** – simple matrix allowing to order and prioritize tasks and responsibilities, by putting them in one of the categories: urgent & important, urgent & not important, not urgent & important, not urgent & not important. This exercise gives clarity of what is really important and has influence, what the person should focus on, and it shows where the energy is being put currently and what are the things that take us away from what is important.

**9. PRO'S AND CON'S LISTS** – simple list allowing to clearly see all positive and negative sides of the situation, decision, job, etc. It helps to see the things more objectively, for what they are, and to take decisions, especially when you connect it with the list of prioritized values.

**10. ACTIVITY OR EMOTION LOGS** – writing down what you do or feel every day, few times a day or at specific events, for a specific period of time, may help you realize where you put most of effort and energy, which activities bring you most results, how much time you need to perform specific tasks, how you usually feel and what are the dominant emotions in your life, what situations cause which emotions. At the end it increases self-awareness and ability to name your

feelings and emotions, it also increases the effectiveness of self-management.

**11. JOURNALING ON REGULAR / DAILY BASIS** – you may write down everything that happened, what you did, what you thought about different things, etc. Journaling may also be specific for an area or sphere of your personal or professional life (i.e. activity log, emotion log, etc.). It increases self-awareness, allows to see the things in a more objective way, identify the things that require changing.

**12. VISUAL THINKING AND MIND MAPPING** – technique used to make notes, plans, develop ideas, present or communicate plans and ideas to others. Based on the saying that 'one picture is worth more than a thousand words' it allows to include lot of content into small visual form – usually one piece of paper. It also supports creativity, since it is activating right part of our mind.

**13. BODY ENGAGING ACTIVITIES** – all activities that engage the body to participate actively in the process. It can be as simple as identifying in which exact part of the body specific emotions, states like happiness or sadness, etc. are located. It can include coaching while being active – roller skating, biking, hiking, walking, etc. It can also refer to performing arts like drama or dancing. It is very powerful, because it makes it easier to engage in the process both parts of our brain. Our body also always tells the truth – knowledge and awareness coming from the body is free of analytical thinking of our mind, therefore much more objective.

**14. ARTISTIC ACTIVITIES** – similarly to body engaging activities, artistic activities also help to engage left and right side of our brain. This technique can be used also to make it easier for the client to open up or realize some difficult facts about himself or his reality. Sometimes it easier to draw or act something or someone, than say it directly.

**15. ROLE PLAYING AND SWITCHING ROLES** - performing a role or acting someone else, may make it easier for the person to break own limitations or expand the perspective and broaden the view on the situation and possible solutions. Acting for a while as another person that the client is in any relationship with, can also be used as an exercise in potential conflict situation to realize what are the views and perspectives of the other side of that conflict.

**16. SHADOWING** – accompanying someone for few hours or a day, may bring a lot of information and feedback in regard to current behavior, relationships,

characteristics and motivations, which then can be discussed, broken down into pieces and used to draw conclusions, realized need for change or build self-awareness.

**17. IMPROVISATION GAMES** – technique coming from drama and performing arts. It can be used to teach someone how to not get attached to things, situations, people and circumstances, creating space for flexibility, openness, ability to let go and accept things as they come and go.

**18. SPRING CLEAN** (in life, in one area of life, at home, in the office, etc.) – an exercise based on the assumption, that when you clean your 'surrounding', it will make it easier for you to think, see what is important for you, you will get more clarity and peace internally. Usually the things that we are ought to do, that are not done, require much more energy and our mind's attention, than simply just doing them.

**19. CELEBRATING SUCCESSES** – in many situations we notice our failures, and we tend to remember about them and consider and reconsider them all over again, spending a lot of time and energy to give them our attention. But when it comes to successes, we tend to treat them as something normal, passing over them quickly and going to other things we should do. In the coaching process we very often stop with the client to celebrate what he already achieved, encouraging to enjoy the effort and its results.

**20. TELLING STORIES** – easy and disobliging way for the client to discover something about himself, usually values, characteristics, strengths and weaknesses, motivations, details of relationships, etc. Description of that exercise is attached in the presentation from the workshop, you may also make variations, depending on the goal of the exercise.

The above mentioned exercises are just examples of those methods, techniques and ways used in coaching. Inspirations for creating and using new exercises can be found everywhere. Each and every exercise, method, model, system, tool, etc. used in any other area (business, therapy, sciences, and any other area) can be an inspiration to create or adapt a coaching tool that will fit the needs of the client and will make him reach his goals. As stated before, it is important to be aware when the tool is used in coaching purposes and when the aim is not coaching-related. The client must always be aware and has to agree to being coached. You need to use those tools in a way that complies with that rule.



# Coaching tools in diagnosing competencies and potential

1.

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Coaching & Development

ELIZA JARMOŁOWICZ-ZALEWSKA  
CERTIFIED COACH COACHWISE™, MEMBER OF ICF

**COACHING TOOLS IN DIAGNOSING COMPETENCIES AND POTENTIAL**

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2.

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**COACHING TOOLS IN DIAGNOSING COMPETENCIES AND POTENTIAL**

- **WHAT IS COACHING**
  - COACHING RULES
  - COACH'S SKILLS
  - COACHING PROCESS AND THE FIELD
- **HOW TO USE COACHING IN DIAGNOSING COMPETENCIES AND POTENTIAL**
  - 9 LIVES – EXPLORING POTENTIAL THROUGH IDEAL SELF
  - TELLING STORIES – HOW MUCH CAN YOU HEAR IN A STORY

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**COACHING TOOLS IN DIAGNOSING COMPETENCIES AND POTENTIAL**

- **COACHING RULES**
  - TRUST
  - CREATIVITY
  - PRESENCE
  - PARTNERSHIP
  - YES, AND
  - COMMITMENT

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- **COACH'S SKILLS**
  - QUESTIONING
  - LISTENING
  - REFLECTING
  - SUPPORTING

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**COACHING PROCESS**

**FIELD:**

- RESOURCES (PIES)
- STRUCTURES
- DOMAINS

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**9 LIVES**

IMAGINE THERE ARE NO BOUNDRIES, NO LIMITATIONS:

- FINANCIAL
- PHYSICAL
- IN TIME + SPACE, ETC.

YOU HAVE 9 LIVES AND YOU MAY USE THEM IN ANY POSSIBLE WAY, TO BE ONE THING OR ONE PERSON OR ONE ANYTHING IN EACH LIFE. DRAW SYMBOLS FOR EACH LIFE ON A PIECE OF PAPER.

NOW, IN PAIRS, ASK EACH OTHER ABOUT EACH LIFE, ONE BY ONE. BE AS CURIOUS AS POSSIBLE.

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FOR EACH LIFE, IMAGINE + FEEL FOR A MOMENT THAT YOU ARE WHAT YOU HAVE CHOSEN:

- HOW IS IT TO BE ...?
- HOW DOES IT FEEL?
- HOW YOUR LIFE LOOKS LIKE?
- WHAT SURROUNDS YOU?
- WHAT HAS THE BIGGEST IMPACT ON YOU IN THIS LIFE?
- HOW WOULD OTHERS DESCRIBE YOU?
- WHAT DO YOU SHARE WITH OTHERS / WITH THE WORLD. WHAT DO YOU GIVE TO OTHERS?
- WHAT DO YOU RECEIVE FOR YOURSELF IN THIS LIFE?
- WHAT DO YOU LIKE THE MOST IN THIS LIFE?
- WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT FOR YOU IN THIS LIFE?

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**COACHING TOOLS IN DIAGNOSING COMPETENCIES AND POTENTIAL**

**9 LIVES – SUMMARY**

- WHAT DID YOU NOTICE?
- WHAT TALENTS, POTENTIALS, COMPETENCIES DID YOU OBSERVE IN THE LIVES OF THE OTHER PERSON?
- WHAT BECAME CLEAR FOR YOU ABOUT YOUR OWN TALENTS, POTENTIALS, COMPETENCIES?
- WHAT DO YOU TAKE WITH YOU FROM THIS EXERCISE?
- HOW ELSE CAN YOU USE THIS EXERCISE IN YOUR WORK?

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IN DIAGNOSING COMPETENCIES AND POTENTIAL

### TELLING STORIES

WELCOME ON STAGE VOLUNTEER. WHO WILL TELL US A SHORT STORY.

LISTEN CAREFULLY TO ALL THE THINGS THAT MAY INDICATE POTENTIAL, COMPETENCIES, TALENTS, ETC. KEEP IT RELEVANT TO YOUR JOB AND WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO HEAR.

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10.

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IN DIAGNOSING COMPETENCIES AND POTENTIAL

### TELLING STORIES – SUMMARY

- WHAT DID YOU TRY TO LISTEN TO THE MOST?
- WHAT DID YOU HEAR?
- WHAT DO YOU TAKE WITH YOU FROM THIS EXERCISE?
- HOW ELSE CAN YOU USE THIS EXERCISE IN YOUR WORK?

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COACHING TOOLS  
IN DIAGNOSING COMPETENCIES AND POTENTIAL


MINISTERSTWO  
EDUKACJI  
I NAUKI

Województwo  
Śląskie

KOŁO WEZIU

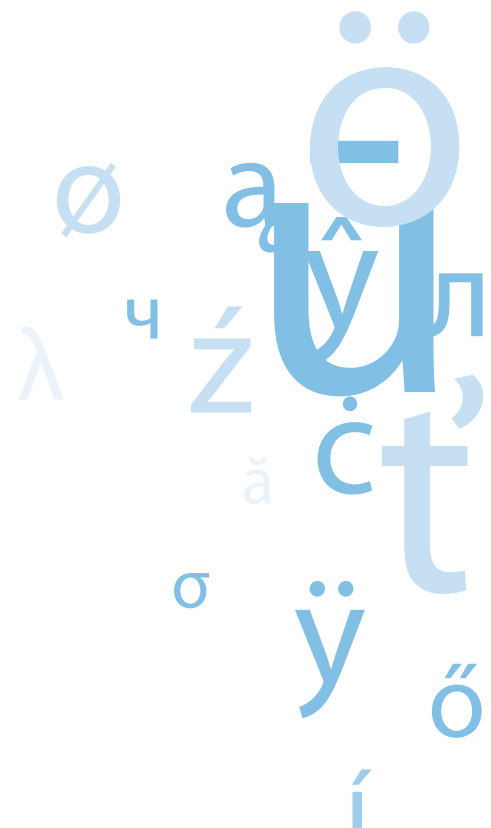
Erasmus+  
Lifelong Learning  
Programme

THANK YOU



ELIZA JARMÓŁOWICZ-ZALEWSKA  
ELIZA@INSPIRATION-PARTNERS.COM  
+48 508 761 320

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## Introduction

The purpose of this article is to present the methodology of Situational Judgement Test (SJT) - a method for measuring competencies. Theoretical background for SJT - in the context of the diagnosis of employees - is Competent Performance Model. The most important aspect of this model is behaviours that promote people's effectiveness at work. In addition, one of the key components of the model is practical knowledge, which is measured by SJT. The article also includes a variety of approaches to creating this type of tests, and identifies the main areas of the application of Situational Judgement Tests in practice.

## Various approaches to understanding competency tests

There are several types of tests used in competency assessment. The first group of tests are ability tests and personality questionnaires. Tests of this type are used for the assessment of competencies when competencies are defined in terms of individual differences. However, in the case of behavioural approach to competency, these methods measure the potential rather than performance. The second group of tests are self-report questionnaires. Self-descriptive questionnaires have serious and well-known limitation - the results obtained by test-takers are based on declarations and self-knowledge. For this reason, questionnaires are not resistant

to manipulation by people who fill out the tests. Finally, the third group of tests are situational tests. They consist of descriptions of situations and questions in the form of tasks to be performed in those situations. This method helps diagnose some people's characteristics (e.g. practical knowledge) in order to predict future performance.

## Competent Performance Model

The theoretical background for the use of Situational Judgement Tests to diagnose behavioural competencies is Competent Performance Model. The basic assumption of this model is that the professional competencies are manifested in behaviours leading to the expected results. These behaviours are conditioned by several factors. First, as a necessary condition that the person acted in an appropriate way, he or she must know how to do something. Secondly, it is necessary that he or she has the skills to do it. Third, the person must want to do it. These three components (knowledge, skills and will) are essential for a competent action. In addition, the behaviour depends on personal attributes such as ability and personality. In some cases it is also certain expertise, for example, on procedures, equipment or products. Finally, the situational context cannot be ignored. To behave in the correct way an opportunity to demonstrate a competence is needed. For example, when we want to show how well we

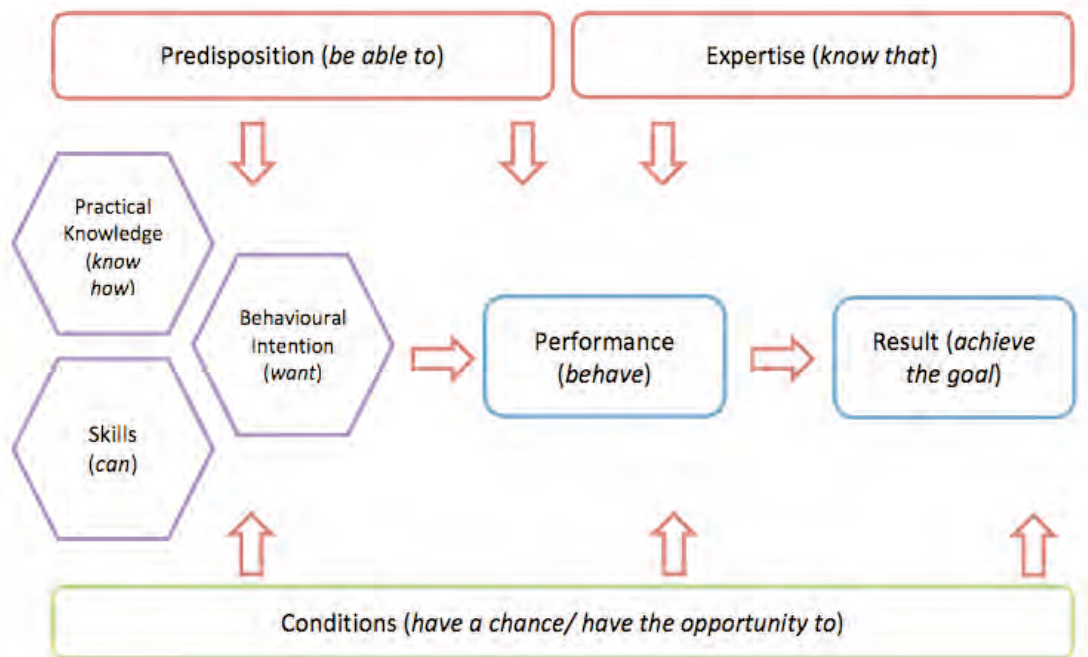


Figure 1. Competent Performance Model.

1. PhD, Institute of Psychology, University of Gdansk  
IE-TC

communicate, we need an opportunity to talk with others. When we want to show how well we sell, we need to be in a situation where we sell something.

Figure 1 presents a relationship between all elements of the model.

From the perspective of Situational Judgment Tests, the most interesting component of a competent action is practical knowledge, also called tacit knowledge.

### Tacit knowledge

Tacit knowledge is a concept that was first introduced by Michael Polanyi and later popularized by Robert Sternberg, e.g. in the book titled "Practical Intelligence in Everyday Life" (Sternberg et al, 2000). According to the authors, tacit knowledge is the knowledge that is learned through personal experience, is procedural in nature, it is focused on understanding how to do things, and finally, it is used in everyday life, in many work situations, and not only. People hold units of tacit knowledge in their memory in the form of scripts. It looks like this: "if - and here is the description of some situation, **and** - here is more information about this situation, **and** - here is more information about this situation (following conditions), **then** - here is the description of the best or proper behaviour, **because** - here is a reason for this behaviour". It can be illustrated with a following example:

"If you're with the boss for a formal meeting with the client **and** your boss makes a mistake during the presentation **and** your boss does not ask you to comment **then** don't correct your boss **because** this will allow you to avoid undermining his authority and ... keep your position". There are thousands of such patterns. This type of knowledge is examined by Situational Judgment Tests.

Knowledge of this type is an integral component of competence, because it is necessary for a behaviour that ensures effective performance of tasks. The questionnaires to measure practical knowledge were developed by R. Sternberg, in the context of research on career success criteria for army officers. Working on the tool was very time-consuming, and included reading literature on the subject (such as manuals, training materials, procedures), and conducting interviews with professionals and officers earning success in their field. As a result of these actions dozens of descriptions of situations were created with a unit of procedural knowledge in the form "If X, then Y, because Z..." Then tacit knowledge units obtained were examined for validity with the participation of experts in the field, in order to make sure that the described pattern of behaviour is appropriate. The last step in creating the test was the

construction of questions. Each question contained a description of a situation, "If X..." along with many options "... then Y1," "... then Y2" "... then Y3, etc. Persons taking the test were designed to assess (on a scale from 1 to 9), the extent to which each of the options is a good solution to the problem described earlier.

### Situational Judgment Test

STJ is a test, which presents a test-taker with hypothetical scenarios and asks the individual to choose the most appropriate response or to assess the possible responses in terms of their effectiveness.

An example of a competence test constructed in accordance with the above rules is the Managerial Competency Test. Among others competencies it allows examining 'communication'. A response scale is called "min / max". This scale is simpler compared to that used in the tools developed by Sternberg et al. Each question consists of a description of a situation and three possible solutions (behaviours). The person's task is to evaluate which option is the best and which is the worst in a given situation.

Table 1. The competency test question.

Question number	Your assessment of possible answers		Question
	min	max	Answers
1.			Your co-worker shows you a detailed idea for a solution of a problem you are dealing with. After just a few sentences you think that this solution has no chance of success, because you tested something similar before. What do you do in this situation?
			You allow a colleague to finish, and then you share your experiences on the proposed solution.
			You allow a colleague to finish and then you ask a few questions about the solution in order to assess how similar his solution is to the one that previously did not work.
			You interrupt your colleague and tell him that you know the solutions proposed by him and explain why they do not apply to the problem you are dealing with.





Source: Own elaboration.

Another example of SJT is the Basic Competence Test Set (Jurek, 2011), which consists of four tests diagnosing twelve competencies: Influence, Cooperation, Communication skills (Social Competency Test), Analytical Thinking, Conceptual Thinking, Innovation (Cognitive Competency Test), Adapting to Change, Focusing on the Task, Coping (Personal Competency Test), Planning, Organizing, Controlling (Organizational Competency Test). Each question examining a particular competency is composed of a description of a problem, a situation, a task or an interpersonal situation together with three possible behaviours or reactions. A person completing the test is to assess each of the three possible options according to a 5-point scale (1 - strongly inefficient behaviour; 5 - very efficient behaviour). Answers provided by subjects are compared with the pattern established in the standardization studies. The result of the competence test is the sum of points computed for a 5-point scale for competence development (a competency level).

The third example of the STJ is Tacit Knowledge Inventory for Managers (TKIM) developed by Sternberg and Wagner at Yale University (sample questions in a frame below). The questionnaire presents nine basic managerial problems and asks respondents to evaluate different options for each of the problems. This questionnaire was extensively validated in the 1990s by its authors so its psychometric properties are detailed in the many books and articles.

Interpretation of the TKIM results is based on the level of agreement between expert opinions (e.g. the best managers in the organization) and answers given by the test-taker. Average responses from top executives in the organization determine the results of the test and equal to the maximum number of points. Results are calculated using the following formula:  $z = \frac{\text{the result of the person being tested} - \text{the average expert rating}}{\text{standard deviation of experts' evaluation}}$

## Application of the SJT

Competence tests are used in situations where information is needed about a competency of many people in a limited time (e.g. in the situation of pre-selecting candidates). With the test results, fast information is obtained on the level of knowledge about the expected behaviour from the area of the competence. Results of the test can then be used as a negative selection screen - applicants who have not received the expected minimum do not go to the next stage of recruitment.

**Example question:** An employee who reports to one of your subordinates has asked to talk with you about waste, poor management practices, and possible violations of both company policy and the law on the part of your subordinate. You have been in your present position only a year, but in that time you have had no indications of trouble about the subordinate in question (...).

Rate the quality of the following things you would consider doing in this situation on a 1- to 7-point scale:

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 -----  
----- 6 ----- 7

extremely bad  
extremely good

neither good nor bad

- Refuse to meet with the employee unless the individual first discusses the matter with your subordinate.
- Meet with the employee but only with your subordinate present.
- Schedule a meeting with the employee and then with your subordinate to get both sides of the story.
- (...)

The advantage of this method is that testing does not require a large commitment of persons carrying out the diagnosis.

Another area of application of Situational Judgement Tests is diagnosing development needs. For example, testing all employees of a business unit is a source of information on gaps in the employees' knowledge about the expected behaviour. An average score in the test determines the form of development activities. In the case of low test results there are recommended actions designed to develop knowledge, to present information about the expected patterns of behaviour, etc. Due to the fact that Situational Judgement Tests relate to the measurement of knowledge, they can also be used in assessing the effectiveness of training. Each participant of the training solves the test twice and both results are analysed in order to tell whether as a result of the training a significant change occurred.

Stages of Situational Judgment Tests construction

The process of creating SJT includes activities associated with collection of behavioural material, creating test units and test standardization (including verification of psychometric parameters). In short, these activities can be summarized in the following steps:

- Creating descriptions of hypothetical situations that require the tested competency
- Creating possible responses to the situation. The first and second step requires conducting interviews with people doing the work, which demands competencies to be assessed.
- Choosing a method for assessing possible responses (rating scale). The examples have been discussed previously in the article: min / max, 5-point scale, and 7-point scales.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of possible responses.
- Examining the reliability and validity of the test. This step requires studies involving several thousand people, and the use, of external evaluation of competency (e.g., other tests, interviews, Assessment Center).

In conclusion, constructing SJT requires a lot of effort, but it might bring many benefits. In contrast to self-report questionnaires, SJT examine the practical knowledge that is necessary for a competent action. Readers interested in details on SJT will find a lot of scientific papers devoted to methodology, psychometric properties and applications of such tools. Keywords for this topic: practical knowledge, tacit knowledge tests, competency tests, and situational tests.

## References

Sternberg, R. J., Forsythe, G. B., Hedlund, J., Horvath, J. A., Wagner, R. K., Williams, W. M., Snook, S. A., Grigorenko, E. (2000). *Practical Intelligence in Everyday Life*. Cambridge University Press.

Jurek, P. (2011). Konstrukcja i zastosowanie testów kompetencyjnych na przykładzie Zestawu Testów Kompetencji Podstawowych. *Zeszyty Naukowe Wyższej Szkoły Bankowej w Poznaniu*, Nr 34/2011, 281-293.

## Creating and use of Situational Judgment Tests (SJT) to diagnose behavioral competencies – workshop presentation

1.

Creating and use of Situational Judgment Tests (SJT) to diagnose behavioural competencies

Paweł Jurek, PhD  
Institute of Psychology, University of Gdansk  
IE-TC

Cross Border Seminar 2013  
METHODS, TECHNIQUES AND TOOLS TO DIAGNOSE COMPETENCES

2.

Aims of the workshop

- presenting participants with knowledge about the design and use of Situational Judgment Tests (SJT)
- presenting participants with examples of this kind of test
- practicing some steps of creating this type of competency tests

Creating and use of Situational Judgment Tests... 2

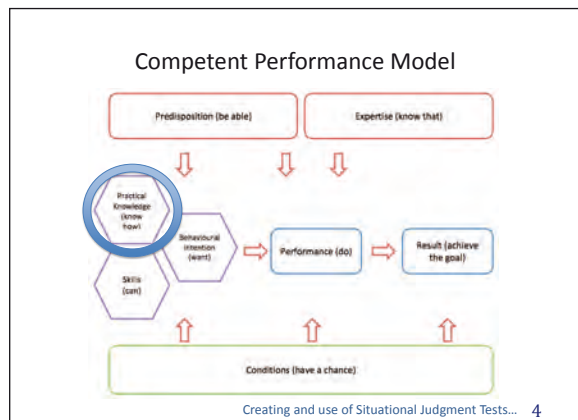
3.

Different understanding of the competency tests

- ability tests and personality questionnaires (when competencies are defined in terms of individual differences)
- self-report questionnaires
- practical knowledge tests, tacit knowledge tests (Situational Judgment Tests)

Creating and use of Situational Judgment Tests... 3

4.



5.

### Situational Judgment Test (SJT)

as an example of a competency test

Test, which presents the test-taker with hypothetical scenarios and asks the individual to choose the most appropriate response or to assess the possible responses in terms of their effectiveness.

description of the hypothetical situation that can happen to a person at work

Question number	Your assessment of possible answers		Question
	MIN	MAX	
1.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	You allow a colleague to finish the statement, then you share your experiences on the proposed solution.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	You allow a colleague to complete the statement and then ask a few questions about the solutions to be able to assess how the solution which it refers to the one that previously has not worked.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	After stating colleague, telling him that you understood the solutions proposed by him and explains why these solutions do not apply in the problem to which you are engaged.

possible reactions (descriptions of behaviour) in this situation

Creating and use of Situational Judgment Tests... 5

6.

### Tacit knowledge

A concept that was first introduced into philosophy by Michael Polanyi and later popularized by Robert Sternberg\*

- learned through **personal experience**
- focused on understanding **how to do things**
- **practically useful** for personal success

**An example:**  
 If << you're with the boss for a formal meeting with the client >>  
 and << your boss makes a mistake during the presentation >>  
 and << your boss does not ask you to comment >>  
 then << do not correct your boss >>  
 because << this will allow you to avoid undermining his authority and ... keep your position >>

\* Robert Sternberg et al. 2000. Practical Intelligence in Everyday Life. Cambridge University Press

Creating and use of Situational Judgment Tests... 6

7.

### JOBFITTER Competencies Tests Set

part of the Internet recruitment service

- 6 tests of practical knowledge examining a total of 23 competencies
- individual points on a 5-point scale efficiency of possible actions to take in a given situation
- obtained results are taken into account in the recruitment process
- more information: [www.jobfitter.pl](http://www.jobfitter.pl) (in Polish)

Creating and use of Situational Judgment Tests... 7

8.

### JOBFITTER Competencies Tests Set - results

$$WO = \left[ 1 - \frac{R}{\max R} \right] \times 10$$

- WO - the number of points awarded for a question
- R - difference between responses of individuals, and the correct response scheme (the pattern established by a group of experts)
- maxR - the maximum possible difference between the responses on the question and the correct response scheme

Result for competency = total score of answers to all the questions, calculated (using the standard table) to result in a 5-point scale: 1 - low level; 5 - outstanding level

Creating and use of Situational Judgment Tests... 8

9.

### General Competency Test

a tool for diagnosis of competence potential of workers aged 50+

- test with one correct answer
- measured five competencies identified by Confirmatory Factor Analysis: Working with Others, Team Management, Organizing, Optimizing, Business Orientation
- Level of competence is determined according to the IRT algorithm

Creating and use of Situational Judgment Tests... 9

10.

### Tacit Knowledge Inventory for Managers\*

(R.K. Wagner & R.J. Stenberg © 1989)

An employee who reports to one of your subordinates has asked to talk with you about waste, poor management practices, and possible violations of both company policy and the law on the part of your subordinate. You have been in your present position only a year, but in that time you have had no indications of trouble about the subordinate in question. Neither ...

Rate the quality of the following things you would considering doing in this situation on a 1- to 7-point scale:

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7  
 extremely bad                      neither good nor bad                      extremely good

- Refuse to meet with the employee unless the individual first discusses the matter with your subordinate.
- Meet with the employee but only with your subordinate present.
- Schedule a meeting with the employee and then with your subordinate to get both sides of the story.
- ...

\* Robert Sternberg et al. 2000. Practical Intelligence in Everyday Life. Cambridge University Press

Creating and use of Situational Judgment Tests... 10

11.

### Tacit Knowledge Inventory for Managers - results

Analysis of the TKIM results based on the level of agreement between expert opinions (e.g. the best managers in the organization) and answers given by the test-taker:

- average responses from top executives in the organization determine the results of the test equal to the maximum number of points
- results are calculated using the following formula:  
 $z = \frac{\text{the result of the person being tested} - \text{the average expert rating}}{\text{standard deviation of experts' evaluation}}$

Creating and use of Situational Judgment Tests... 11

12.

### Stages of Situational Judgment Tests construction

- creating descriptions of hypothetical situations that require the tested competency
- creating possible responses to the situation
- choice of method for assessing possible responses (rating scale)
- evaluate the effectiveness of possible responses - determining the correct response pattern
- examine the reliability and validity of the test

Creating and use of Situational Judgment Tests... 12

### Behavioral Anchored Rating Scale - Communicating\*

No	Indicator behaviour	1 - Low level	2 - Basic level	3 - Average level	4 - Advanced Level	5 - Expert level
1	<b>Clarity and conciseness of expression</b>	He or she speaks vaguely - usually you cannot understand what he or she wants to say.	He or she often has problems with the formulation of clear and concise expression, even in typical situations.	In standard situations and in the case of simple questions, he or she clearly and succinctly sets out his or her statements.	He or she expresses very clear and precise, even in the case of complex issues and difficult circumstances.	He or she sets out to understand speech, even for specialized topics. Shares with others his methods to formulate a clear message.
2	<b>Making sure that the message was understood by the others</b>	He or she is not interested in what he or she said was understood by others.	He or she rarely makes sure his or her statements were understood by others. Even if he or she is doing it often does so inefficiently.	He or she makes sure that his or her speeches are understood by others, but mostly in situations where he or she has enough time.	He or she makes sure that is well understood by others, even when working under pressure.	He or she uses a variety of ways to make sure that is well understood. Draws the attention of other colleagues on this issue.
3	<b>Making sure the understanding of the others</b>	He or she does not ask additional questions when he or she does not understand something.	In individual cases, he or she is questioning other people about the content of their expression, but only if he or she receives clear signals from the others.	He or she makes sure that understands the people with whom he or she speaks. But mostly in situations where he or she has serious problems with understanding or if this statement is crucial for him.	Even in a situation of pressure and in contact with a difficult caller, he or she paraphrases his statement and communicates to him, as he understood them.	He advises workers on how to make sure that actually understand what others have to say.

\*Jurek, P. (2011). Reliability and Validity of Transferable Competencies Measurement Performed with a Use of Selected Tools and Methods. In S. Konarski, D. Turck (Eds.), *Transferable competencies. Diagnosis. Development. Management* (pp. 113-132). Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza SGH

### Introduction

Here are five test questions, each of which is a description of a work situation. Your task is to choose among three possible behaviours the one that is in your opinion the worst (mark X for the answer in the column labelled min) and the one that you think is the best in this situation (mark X on the selected answer in the column labelled max).

### Question

Question number	Your assessment of possible answers		Question
			Answers
	min	max	
1.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	You allow your client to finish the statement, and then you share your experiences on the proposed solution.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	You allow your client to complete the statement and then ask a few questions about the solutions to be able to assess how the solution, which it refers, is the one that previously has not worked.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	You abort statement client, telling him that you understand the solutions proposed by him and explains why these solutions do not apply in the problem to which he is engaged.

Question number	Your assessment of possible answers		Question
			Answers
	min	max	
2.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	You politely inform your client that due to restrictive terms you cannot prepare for tomorrow the additional statement. If it is necessary, you will need to move the meeting to another date.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	You refuse, saying that the statement had already been made in accordance with previous findings. You declare that you send no more than the source data from which the client himself will be able to make an additional statement.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	You agree to prepare the additional statement, but persuade the client that you are doing it exceptionally, with a view to further cooperation.



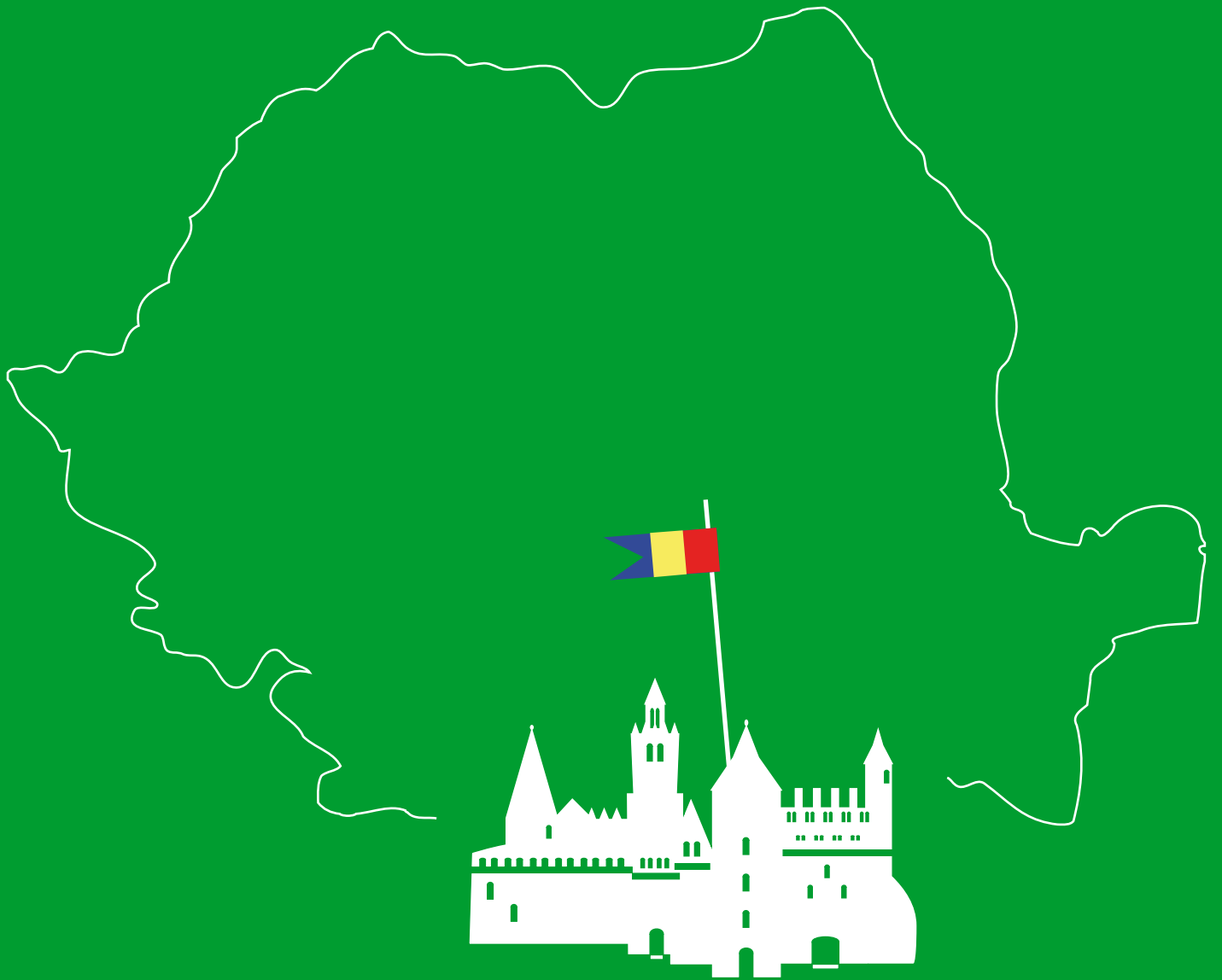


Question number	Your assessment of possible answers		Question
			Answers
min	max		
3.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	You persuade the client that this is a bad choice for him and that he should choose the option that you think is best.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	You ask the client what convinced him to this particular version of the service, and then you persuade him that it is actually a very good choice.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	You accept customer's decision and proceed to complete the formalities. You tell the client that if he changed his mind he should let you know.

Question number	Your assessment of possible answers		Question
			Answers
min	max		
4.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	You write down all the questions that you cannot answer and consult with a colleague who is an expert in the field. After a few minutes, you give the customer the information that you were able to collect.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	You politely explain that you do not have such expertise on these services and tell him that all necessary information can be found in this leaflet, you give him.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	You answer all the questions as if you know the answer. If you do not know something, you give the most likely response, or refer to the description in the brochure.

Question number	Your assessment of possible answers		Question
			Answers
min	max		
5.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Your client asks for a solution that can help him solve his problem. You listen carefully to his needs, and then present him an ideal solution. In response, the client says that the idea you're talking about does not meet his expectations but you are convinced that there is no better proposal. What do you do in this situation?
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	You are asking what exactly does not meet his expectations and suggest other solutions, even though you think they are not as great as the previous one.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	You persuade your client that the solution provided by you is perfect and you explain why.





ROMANIA

7

### How do you define “competences” in your country?

In the education sector, the definition of the *competence* is the one offered by the National Educational Law (1/2011): “the proved capacity to select, combine and utilize in appropriate manner knowledge, skills and other acquisitions like values and attitudes for successfully solving specific work or learning related situations, or for personal/professional development, in an efficient and effective way”.

The same regulation act defines also other types of competences. For example, the *professional competence* is “a unitary and dynamic set of knowledge and skills. The knowledge can be described by the following set of descriptors: knowing, understanding and using the specific terminology, explain and interpret. Abilities are expressed by the following descriptors: application, transfer, problem solving, critical and constructive reflection, creativity and innovation” while the *transversal competencies* are “values and attitudes which break the border of a specific domain/study program and can be expressed by the following descriptors: autonomy, responsibility, social interaction, personal and professional development”.

Recently (April 2013) the competence based curriculum for Grades 0, 1 and 2 has been approved<sup>1</sup>. Within the curriculum, a common definition of the “*competence*” was agreed: competences are “structured sets of knowledge, skills and attitudes developed through learning, which allow solving problems of a specific domain or solving general problems in specific contexts” For the labour sector there are other definitions of the competence, explicitly focused on the performance in a specific occupation. For example, in relation to the Technical and Vocational Education and Training<sup>2</sup>, it is mentioned that “in a professional context this [*competence*] means a person’s ability to use and combine theoretical knowledge, practical skills and specific attitudes, in order to carry out work activities of the quality required in the workplace”, while in relation to the Adult Educational and Professional Training area<sup>3</sup>, the *professional competence* means: „the capacity to perform

the activities required at the workplace, according to the qualitative requirements of the occupational standard”. *The occupational standard* is the document which „defines the competences needed in an occupation” while *the professional training standard* is the document which “defines the professional competencies required in a qualification”.

### What kind of competences are diagnosed in your country?

According to the different frameworks and contexts, competencies included in the broad definition of the competence can vary.

The National Education Law 1/2011 underlines the fact that the National Curriculum should be based on the development of 8 competence domains in primary education and gymnasium (article 68.1.), according to the 8 key-competences established at European level<sup>4</sup>:

- Communication in Romanian language and in mother tongue
- Communication in foreign languages
- Mathematical competence and competences in science and technology
- Digital competence
- Social and civic competences
- Entrepreneurial competences
- Cultural awareness and expression
- Learning to learn

The recently approved curriculum for grades 0, 1 and 2 specify that each discipline should establish *general competences* (developed during an entire cycle of education) and *specific competences* (developed during one school year). For example, the discipline Personal Development aims to develop children’s competences in the following fields: *personal development, social interactions (communication, management of emotions), learning and career management skills* (8 specific competences for each grade).

The same 8 key-competencies are also established as “*common competences for different occupations*” and for them are not required occupational standards when elaborating training programs for adults<sup>5</sup>.

In the Technical and Vocational Education and Training, the curriculum comprises *competencies units* for each grade.

Different tools developed in international projects diagnose different set of competences. More information about the specific list of competencies can be found on the web pages of the mentioned projects:

The Back to Work project (<http://www.backwork.eu/>) deals with identification of the competences used in *social activities, family life, hobbies, voluntary sector and work*.

1. The Curriculum for the grades 0, 1 and 2 available on <http://programe.ise.ro>
2. „A glossary of technical terms used in technical and vocational education and training in Romania” available on <http://www.tvet.ro/Anexe/x/Glossary%20Eng-Rom.pdf>
3. Regulation 76/2004, available on [http://www.anc.gov.ro/uploads/Autorizare/OG\\_76-2004.pdf](http://www.anc.gov.ro/uploads/Autorizare/OG_76-2004.pdf)
4. Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18th December 2006 of the key competences for lifelong learning <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:394:0010:0018:EN:PDF>
5. CNFPA regulation 86/2008 available at <http://www.anc.gov.ro/index.php?page=lista-competentelor-comune-mai-multor-ocupatii>

Family Portfolio project ([www.famcompass.eu](http://www.famcompass.eu)) proposed tools and methodologies for identifying competences acquired in *family life*;

The IMPROVE project ([www.improveguidance.eu](http://www.improveguidance.eu)) proposed tools for validations counsellors' competences for: *performing career guidance interviews*;

The VINEPAC project ([www.vinepac.eu](http://www.vinepac.eu)) proposed methodologies for validation of *nonformal and informal psycho-pedagogical competencies of adult educators*;

ICOVET project ([www.icovet.eu](http://www.icovet.eu)) propose instruments for validation the *social skills and competences, organizational skills and competences, technical skills and competences, computer skills and competences, artistic skills and competences, other skills and competences*.

### What are the regulations governing the use of diagnosis tools in your country?

Psychological diagnosis tools are allowed to be used by psychologists. According to the law<sup>6</sup>, psychologists "elaborate and apply tests for measuring intelligence, skills, aptitudes and other personality traits" as well as "psychological testing " and are responsible for the "interpretation of the results".

Different private organizations are offering certification for the use of different tests either to psychologists, or to persons following a specific training course (eg.: D&D Research (<http://www.ddresearch.ro>), TestCentral (<http://romania.testcentral.ro/ro>), COGNITROM (<http://www.cognitrom.ro>).

Who in your country is entitled to make the diagnosis of competences? (profession/required qualifications)

The ANC - National Authority for Qualifications ([www.anc.gov.ro](http://www.anc.gov.ro)) is a recently established organization<sup>7</sup>, born from the merge of former organizations with responsibility in the adult education and training/qualification area. ANC authorizes the Centres for evaluation of the professional competences, it accredits the Evaluation bodies and certifies the Evaluators. Interested bodies/individuals are to pass a specific procedure in order to become authorized centres/evaluators for evaluation of the professional competence. The entire methodology is available on the ANC website. At present, only one centre is authorized to offer evaluation services for the Career guidance practitioner occupation (COGNITROM) and two centres - for the vocational counsellor

occupation. Evaluation done within these centres leads to a certification in the respective occupation.

There are also private initiatives offering assessments of professional and transversal competences within "assessment centres" (eg.: D&D Research), at the requests of companies/employers, with the view to support the development of the organization.

Diagnostic and evaluation of the competences is done also when individuals are seeking accreditation/supervision. For example, psychologists in order to obtain licence have to pass interviews and practical tests in order to demonstrate their competence at the Colegiul Psihologilor din România ([www.copsi.ro](http://www.copsi.ro)).

Within the framework of international project, different organizations have developed evaluation methodologies (especially in the field of validation of informal and nonformal learning): Institute of Education Sciences (ISE), Romanian Institute for Adult Education (IREA), Observatory for the Development of Lifelong Learning (ODIP).

The reform in education and the new competence-based school curriculum (which is currently under progress), entitle teachers to evaluate the children's competence developed in a specific discipline.

## Specific Questions

### What tools have been used in your country to diagnose competences?

The evaluators working in the Evaluation centres (authorized by the ANC - National Authority for Qualifications) are using a specific evaluation methodology, customized for each profession under which an individual is seeking validation. Tools usually include: presentation of case studies, demonstrating practice competences, interviews with the evaluator(s)<sup>7</sup>.

The Education Law 1/2011 introduced the Educational Portfolio as a tool to make visible and evaluate the children competences. More efforts should be made in order to implement this instrument at a national scale.

Consortium of national and international partners in different international projects developed and piloted methodologies and tools for evaluation of competences, especially in the field of validation of nonformal and informal learning. For example, within the IMPROVE project the Performance Focused interview (PFI) was used in order to validate the career counsellors competences. In the VINEPAC project different methods are proposed: mind mapping, guided reflections on their own biography, structured professional discussions, essays, case analysis or tests, building up of a portfolio of learning outcomes. The ICOVET project proposes an

6. Law 213/2004 article 5 available at [http://www.copsi.ro/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=751:leg-ea-nr-2132004-privind-exercitarea-profesiei-de-psiolog-cu-drept-de-libera-practica-infintarea-organizarea-si-functionarea-colegiului-psihiologilor-din-romania&catid=62:legi&Itemid=200039](http://www.copsi.ro/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=751:leg-ea-nr-2132004-privind-exercitarea-profesiei-de-psiolog-cu-drept-de-libera-practica-infintarea-organizarea-si-functionarea-colegiului-psihiologilor-din-romania&catid=62:legi&Itemid=200039)

7. ANC was established by the Education Law 1/2011 and it functions according to 556/2011 regulation.



interview which requires identification of prior experience/activities and reflections on abilities required.

The psychological tools recommended by private organizations (eg. TestCentral <http://romania.testcentral.ro/ro/>) are:

- General Ability Measures for Adults (GAMA ) and Multidimensional Aptitude Battery II (MAB II) - for evaluating the cognitive aptitudes.
- Poppleton-Allen Sales Aptitude Test (PASAT) – for evaluating the sales aptitudes.
- Barron Welsh Art Scale (BWAS) – for evaluating creativity and openness to experience.

The same NGO provides access to the Fleishman Job Analysis Survey (FJAS) which can be used in Assessment Centres. It is based on the Fleishman taxonomy on aptitudes and it helps employers/organizations to describe the work tasks in terms of aptitudes, skills and knowledge.

Please describe 3 tools that are the most useful (in your opinion). Are they dedicated to pupils and students, academic students or adults?

**a. ICOVET project** developed a **validation methodology in order to make visible competencies that have been acquired by young people in various areas of activities outside formal learning.** This validation methodology is focused on the interview process between the interviewer (facilitator) and the young person trying to clarify how specific activities and experiences of the young person relate to competencies or abilities. Activities and competencies will be recorded in a document that will be owned by the young person and can be used at her/his will. In addition, the interviewer and young person will cooperate to translate these competencies into the terminology of the EuroPASS. With the EuroPASS the young person will own a document that has been specifically designed for effective presentation of one's competencies and experiences to prospective employers and institutions of education and training and has found wide acceptance in many European countries.

*Example* Interests, hobbies, sports, socializing: Things that you do in your “Down time”

Starting questions may be:

- What are your interests, hobbies, sports you engage in?
- How much time do you spend doing it/them?
- How important is this in your life?
- What else do you do in your free time?
- Do you do this alone or with other people?

The facilitator will want to find out: What exactly does the young person do? How much time does she/he spend on this activity? What skills/abilities does she/he need to do the things she/he does? At what level of competence does she/he engage in activities? What kind of responsibility does she/her bear for tasks and persons?

Activity What are you doing?	Areas of Competence Which abilities do you need in doing so? What did you learn?	EuroPASS Skills/Abilities
I have been a dancer in a break dance group for a half year. We are 8 dancers, 6 boys and 2 girls. We train for three hours once a week and I take part very regularly. At home I practice the figures and positions by myself. I have come up with ideas for our choreography and I have created my own solo part. Last month we performed at two neighborhood events and these were great successes.	I have learned how to control my body. I am able to contribute to shaping our performance. I have learned to be a reliable and considerate member of our group. After having had two public performances I manage a lot better my nervousness in similar situations.	<u>Social skills</u> Organizational skills Technical skills Computer skills <u>Artistic skills</u> Others skills

**b. IMPROVE project** developed and tested a guide for the **validation of competences acquired by career guidance practitioners through non-formal learning**. The methodology used was based on the Professional Check-up (PC) and the instrument used was the Performance Focused Interview (PFI). The goal of the PC was to assess current performance in work

(career guidance) and therefore 3 main tasks were defined then further divided into subtasks (assessed elements).

**c. FamCompass project –Family Competencies Portfolio** developed tools to identify the **competencies acquired informally by adults from everyday life**.

*Example* The main task identified for the Career Guidance occupation were:

- I. Deliver information related to career guidance as a separate activity
- II. Perform career guidance interviews
- III. Carry out career guidance activities in small groups

For main tasks II and III the following sub-tasks were defined:

1. Use appropriate interview techniques to manage the interview
2. Use appropriate group facilitation techniques to manage small groups
3. Assist adult clients to identify their professional goals
4. Assist young clients in their educational and training choices
5. Assist clients to determine and implement action plans related to work or learning
6. Assist adult clients in their job search
7. Working relationships of the Candidate with practitioner belonging to external organizations
8. Deliver updated and reliable career guidance information
9. Develop clients' career skills
10. Develop and apply ethical practice
11. Continuously improve own knowledge and skills and the service

The questions used to collect evidence about element 11. Continuously improve own knowledge and skills and the service are the following:

Questions (PFI)	Criteria to be considered under the cut off
1. Could you please list resources / tools you can use to improve your own skills and knowledge related to Career Guidance?	For question 1: Candidate doesn't know most of The resources listed in the document Informative for Candidates.
2. What have you done in the last year to improve your knowledge and skills? 3. What will you do in the next 12 months?	For questions 2, 3: In the last 12 months Candidate has not carried out any activity to improve knowledge or skills (read books, articles, web sites, specialized mailing lists, attended conferences, shared cases with colleagues, etc.) or has no plans for the future.
4. What have you done in the last year to improve the service where you work? 5. What will you do in the next 12 months?	For questions 4,5: In the last 12 months Candidate has not carried out nor planned any activity except in case this depends by strict procedures and not space given to suggestions of employees.

To be successfully validated in the PC the Candidate must give answers above the cut off levels for all the questions within all elements, that is to say that if in one question of one element the response is under the cut off point, then the validation of the related main task is considered unsuccessful.

The first step is to self-evaluate the own competences acquired during family life (using a check-list), according to the following scale: 0-The competence seems relevant to me, but I am not familiar with it; 4-The competence is an integrated part of myself, I used it readily also in unpredictable situations and I reflect on how to improve it.

The second step is to reflect upon and to discuss in detail about the strengths and weaknesses identified in the first step.

All instruments supports clients in mapping their competences, empower them, facilitate self knowledge.

The results of the diagnose can be use in a variety of contexts, from self-development to employment.

The results obtained in authorized evaluation centres leads to certifications and thus the connexion with the labour market and employment is very strong.

The role given to guidance and counselling is very important, as a necessary preparatory step before going to an authorized validation centre (for validating

*Example:* Strengths-weaknesses analysis in relation as to Relationship with education and care of children

Please review the competences listed in the check list. And discuss in your own words what you think you already do well and in what respect do you want to grow. Be concrete and give examples of what do you think about.

Choose at least 2 competences from the competences from the check-list

Relationship with, education of and care of children

Elaborate on them by giving a clear example of a situation that shows how you applied each competence. Feel free to assess more competences and extend the number of competences you describe using examples. In discussing them, please describe:

1. the starting point when you needed the competence;
2. the task you had in the given situation;
3. which action you took;
4. the result;
5. your evaluation of the way you dealt with the situation and your evaluation of the result;
6. your reflection about what you are already capable of and in which respect you eventually want to grow.

Competence ... level ...

Description

- When was this competence useful? What happened at that time? Describe the situation.
- What problem did you have to solve, what was your task ?
- What did you feel at that time
- What actions did you take
- What was the result and how do you evaluate the result
- What do you think now about the way you dealt with the situation? Is there anything you would do in another way
- Is there anything you would like to learn
- Where else could you use this competence? For instance in your job or volunteer work

What are the advantages or disadvantages of these tools for the counsellors and for the clients?

When we are talking about the tools developed through European projects related to validation of the results of the nonformal and informal learning, we can draw the following pros and cons:

Advantages:

The methodologies developed in Romania are divers, they were developed either under the positivist umbrella (eg. psychological tests) or under the constructivist framework, so that clients and counsellors can choose according to their interest and needs the most suitable instruments.

competences in a specific occupation) or before choosing an educational path.

Disadvantages:

The initiatives developed through European project were not generalised at national level, they remained somehow isolated, very much related to the expertise and funding of the initial developer.

The lack of legislation related to the necessity of specific training for counsellors for using such instruments with their clients.

Even if during the project lifetime the services were free of charge, after the end of the project those

interested in validating their competences had to pay for the services.

The week connexion of the results of the diagnostic process with the educational diplomas/formal education. Usually school counsellors are overwhelmed by a lot of tasks (educational, psychological and career counselling – very much related with the formal learning), so the task of validation of nonformal/informal learning should be carried on by a different category of counsellors, especially trained for working with the specific instruments (eg. those working in Centres for facilitating the lifelong learning – this initiative is currently under progress in Romania).

**What kinds of ICT tools (eg. computer programs, software, games etc.) are applied in your country to diagnose competences? How popular are they?**

Within some projects self-evaluation instruments (check-lists) have been developed (eg. MEVOC project <http://www.mevoc.net/EN/htm/fs.htm> - self assessment tools for career guidance counsellors – Internet connexion required, available free of charge)

Holland interest survey is available in Romania as a computer programme. Practitioners can have access to it by buying a licence (training required).

Cognitrom offers, under a certain fee, access to an online platform for evaluating the interest, skills, values and occupational profile ([http://www.cognitrom.ro/prezentare\\_ccp.html](http://www.cognitrom.ro/prezentare_ccp.html))

We can mention also sites like [www.go.ise.ro](http://www.go.ise.ro) (for pupils and teenagers), <http://www.clubcarriere.odip.ro/> (people looking for a job), <http://portal.mvp-educational.ro/> (life skills) which are offering support in finding out more about ones interests, skills and abilities, as well a large variety of activities helping individuals in developing these skills or matching them with occupational profiles.

The tools are quite popular among career guidance practitioners and teachers, but they are not using them on a daily basis (usually tools are used within the project framework in which they were developed/piloted). The tools which require a fee are used according to particular interest of each practitioner.

**How are this tools disseminated among guidance practitioners or teachers (via internet, via courses, etc...)?**

The tools are disseminated among guidance practitioners/teachers community via conferences, seminars and workshops. If they were developed through international projects, visibility and dissemination is assured also by the project web page. Euroguidance Romania offers information about the latest tools and

innovations through its web page ([www.euroguidance.ise.ro](http://www.euroguidance.ise.ro)) and Facebook page.

**Does the system of diagnosis of adult competences exist in your country? If yes, is it related to the validation process of non-formal and informal learning?**

Yes, there is a well established system for validation of non-formal and informal learning for adults. It is managed by national Authority for Qualification which authorizes both centres for validation, as well as the evaluators. The entire list of occupations and authorized Evaluation centres are available on: <http://www.anc.gov.ro/uploads/RN%20a1%20Ocupatiilor/Registru-Ocupatii.pdf>. The list of authorized evaluators is available on: [http://www.anc.gov.ro/uploads/Lista\\_evaluatori\\_2012/Lista%20evaluatorilor\\_2012.pdf](http://www.anc.gov.ro/uploads/Lista_evaluatori_2012/Lista%20evaluatorilor_2012.pdf)

**What are the free online tools to test competences in your country?**

All tools mentioned at specific question 3 (except Holland and the tools offered by Cognitrom) are free of charge and available in online format.

## Research And Development

**Who/what organizations or institutions conduct research on competences or develop new tools in the field of diagnosis?**

The Institute of Education Sciences was involved in different projects related to the development of tools and methodologies related to educational area, recently especially in the validation of nonformal and informal learning, as well as in the development of the National Competence-based School Curriculum.

The National Authority for Qualifications and the National Agency for Employment ran different European Social Found Projects with the aim of developing/improving tools and methodologies.

Private organizations were also very active (IREA, ODIP etc.), as well as the county school counselling centres.

There are specialized organizations in developing and/or adapting psychological instruments used in diagnosis of competences, skills, aptitudes (D&D Research, TestCentral, Cognitrom).

**What fields or topics are researched?**

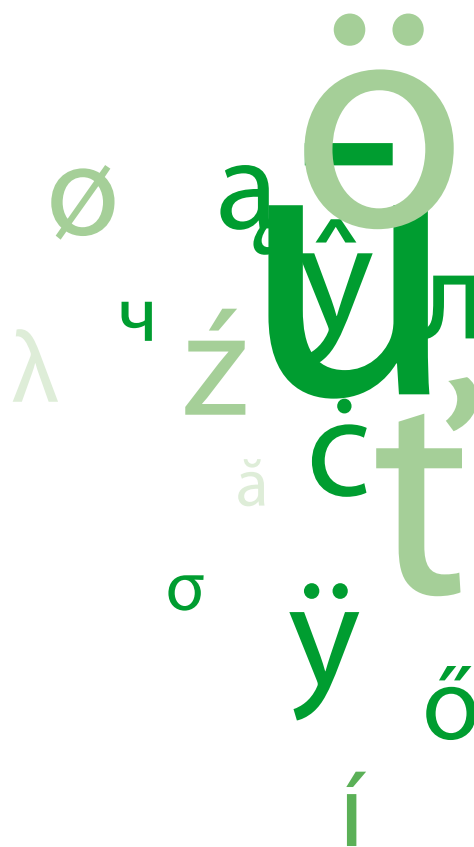
The topics researched are related to competence, career management skills, validation of informal and non-formal learning, quality assurance etc.

**How is the efficiency of tools measured?**

The efficiency of the tools is usually measured by piloting them in a real life-context. For example,

the IMPROVE methodology has been tested in 6 countries (the IMPROVE project consortium<sup>8</sup>) on over 100 beneficiaries. Conclusions of the study show that the instrument was highly appreciated by both the evaluators and clients being tested and its efficiency was proved towards the formulated hypothesis. Some private organizations (like for example Cognitrom) are using a quality management system (issued under an audit certification) which offers credibility to potential users.

Who/what organizations or institutions provide trainings for counsellors on diagnosis of competences?  
There is no specific institution dealing with this topic. Usually, the state or private institutions developing/ adapting one instrument are also concerned with training the practitioners in using that specific instrument.



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8. [www.improveguidance.eu](http://www.improveguidance.eu)



## Introduction

Since the genesis of career guidance and counselling, career assessment has played an important role, being of highly importance and relevance for the accuracy and the value of the counselling process' results. The aim of career counselling assessment is “to help clients gather and interpret information relevant to career decision making” (Forrest & Brooks, 1993, p. 233). Employment counselling should always start with the stage of client personal analysis in order to facilitate self-discovering and self-understanding, in the way of making choosing the best career path and making the career decisions that best fits to their needs.

### Quantitative or qualitative assessment?

Traditionally, since the early beginning of career guidance and counselling, emphasis has been given to quantitative assessment. Only recently, career counsellors make increasing use of qualitative assessment with the post-modern shift from objectivity to subjectivity or from scores to stories (Savickas, 1993).

Qualitative career assessment has been variously described as “informal forms of assessment” (Okocha,

1998, pp. 151–152), and as “methods that are flexible, open-ended, holistic, and nonstatistical” (Goldman, 1992, p. 616). Common forms of qualitative career assessment include card sorts, timelines, and genograms, all of which demand a proactive role for clients in the assessment process.

While quantitative assessment mostly focus on counsellors' work efficiency, qualitative assessment Mostly focus on clients' satisfaction. Both of assessment types are providing important information about the counselling process with the final aim of improving the results of the employment counselling process. It doesn't „sabotage“ each other.

### What is important to assess during employment counselling?

During the time, the role of employment counselling assessment has proven its efficiency and was often analysed by counselling researchers. Counsellors from public or private employment services usually assess various sequences of client's personal and professional life, using different tools to measure each item. A very useful tool in career exploration, complete and easy to use, is „The Career Decision Wheel“, created by Norman Amundson & Gray Poehnell which illustrates the 8 main factors that influence career decisions: interests, values, skills, personal style, career opportunities, significant others, work & life experiences, learning experiences. The best choices with respect to career are made by taking all 8 factors from the wheel into consideration.

Today, more than ever, skills matter. Europe 2020 focuses on the key areas where action is needed: knowledge and innovation, a more sustainable economy, high employment and social inclusion. Having an overview, upgrading individuals' skills will contribute to all of these areas.

The crisis has speeded up the pace of change in our economies and societies. Employers are more and more concerned about workers knowledge and ability to apply it, their understanding and most of all their willingness to engage rather than focusing on formal qualifications. Additionally, there is a growing understanding of the importance of transversal skills and social competences, such as communication skills, the ability to learn, positive attitude and sense of initiative.

This is why, in agreement with this trend, employment counsellors within public employment services (PES) should focus not only on the technical skills and competences needed for the jobs (vacancies), but especially on building client's positive attitude in job searching

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1. Luminita Danes is an expert in employment guidance and counselling with over 12 years experience in career development area. She graduated psychology, has a master degree in career guidance and she is currently pursuing a doctoral degree at Bucharest University, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences. Her research focuses on quality assurance in providing guidance and counselling. Her PhD thesis (currently in progress) approaches the Quality standards in providing career guidance and counselling. Her professional experience includes: developing and coordination of 42 career counselling centres national network within Romanian public employment services (PES); developing and coordination of 20 special counselling centres for persons with disabilities; designing and attracting European funds for counselling projects development; project management (financed by PHARE, World Bank, European Social Funds, Swedish Government, etc); training of career counsellors from different public and private organisations; running assessment centres/development centres for multinational companies; providing project management services for ESF projects. She has been involved in developing learning resources and methodological framework at national level (the national career guidance and counselling curricula for employment counsellors from PES network; national standards and procedures for providing counselling and support for kids in need), or in European projects. She managed over 8 years the Department of Career Guidance and Counselling within National Agency for Employment which is the national authority for all the public and private counselling providers.



process in order to better manage the job search techniques, job interview and enhance clients' employability skills. Some employment services complement their existing occupational classifications with skills lists.

This shared focus on skills provides an opportunity to bridge the traditional communication gap between the 2 key sectors: education and employment. It will help to increase the relevance and responsiveness of education and training provision and to improve the matching of supply and demand on labour markets.

#### Attitude is the secret...

*"Attitude is a secret power working 24 hours a day,  
for good or bad."  
~ Tom Blandi ~*

Researchers that studied attitude considered that attitudes were learned in a fixed sequence, consisting first of the formation of beliefs (cognitions) regarding an attitude object, followed by some evaluation of that object (affect), and then some action (behaviour).

Current theories indicate that there are many important factors to consider when helping people in the job search process. Perhaps the most important among these are the individual's attitudes about unemployment and the job search process.

Our workshop approached the following issues: the role of employment counselling assessment, factors needed to be assessed during counselling, quantitative and qualitative assessment, what makes an assessment qualitative, attitude as an essential factor of success, example of assessment tools.

*„Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference“  
~ Winston Churchill ~*

During the workshop, the participants were given 2 qualitative assessment tools, with a wide use in career counselling, for analyse, exercise and than discuss about it.

#### Job Search Attitude Inventory (JSAI)

– author John Liptack

JSAI is a tool which provides a quick assessment of how motivated an individual is likely to be in seeking employment. The JSAI is particularly useful in identifying those individuals are who are more likely to get a job in less time than others as well as those persons whose will likely need a higher degree of extended attention in their job search. As a result, the JSAI can be used to guide the allocation of program resources and clarify

the need and type of intervention that each job seeker requires. The JSAI is also well-suited as a program outcome measure when it is administered as a pre-test and post-test.

JSAI is a brief, 32-item inventory designed to make job seekers more aware of their self-directed and other-directed attitudes about their search for employment. The purpose of JSAI is to provide individuals with an overall picture of their attitudes in relation to the job search process. The attitudes covered in the Inventory are crucial to an effective job search campaign. They were identified after a thorough review of the literature, case studies, and interviews with unemployed adults.

Liptak suggested that there are two types of people in the world: victors and victims. Victors are more aware of their own strengths and weaknesses than victims are. Victors are eager to learn more about their passions and their potential contributions to society. Victors are realistic about the time and effort needed to achieve their goals. You are a victor when what you do, feel, and think are fairly consistent. Positive self-awareness is realizing and understanding that we are all blessed with the ability to fulfil our own potential in life. It is realizing that such things as intelligence, financial status, religious beliefs, birthplace, sex, or colour of our skin do not measure our worthiness.

After mentioning the assessment tools used by Romanian employment counsellors, JSAI has been thoroughly described and discussed and the participants were challenged to share opinions about the possible use of it in their own working environment, for their clients.

**The Leadership Architect Competency Sort Cards - created by Michael M. Lombardo and Robert W. Eichinger** Card sorts (Gysbers et al., 1998; Knowdell, 1995, 1998; Stevens, 1997, 1998; Michael M. Lombardo and Robert W. Eichinger, 2004) are possibly the most common form of qualitative assessment available to career counsellors. Most card sorts focus on a particular topic, for example occupations, work values, or motivation. The process of the card sort may bring out life themes, values, beliefs and attitudes.

This card sorting method was chosen and present with the aim to examine the utility of a qualitative 'card sort' research tool help you identify the skills and behaviours needed to succeed. For many organizations, this affordable and easy-to-use card deck marks the beginning of a commitment to competency-based human resource

processes. Building critical development skills The tool is made up of single cards devoted to each of 67 competencies and 19 Career Stallers and Stoppers and 7 International Focus Areas. The Competencies and Stallers and Stoppers are further grouped into 26 Clusters and 8 research-based Factors which are noted on each card. On the front side of each card is the competency definition (the “skilled” picture); on the back of each card are the “unskilled” and the “overused skill” (using a skill too much) definitions. The tool consist of 67 Competencies, 19 Career Stallers and Stoppers, and 7 Global Focus Areas. Each card includes the skilled, unskilled, and over-used skill definitions. The cards could be useful for: HR experts, career counsellors, supervisors and managers, Coaches, mentors and feedback givers, individual learners working on their own development. It could be used in various settings, such as:

- Assessment centre/Development centre - for recruitment aims or staff reappraisal (staff promotion or reduction)
- Competency modelling
- Conducting performance appraisals and initiating performance improvement programs
- Gap analysis
- 360° evaluation and team evaluation
- Assessing interview candidates and matching people to job requirements

Participants (splinted in 2 groups) had the task to create the counsellor’s job profile, as they think it should look like, using the competencies described in this Card sorting tool. Both groups of participants that exercise the method found this tool useful and interesting.

## Conclusion

It is widely accepted that the place of assessment in career counselling is and will remain deeply rooted. There are voices in career counselling settings that promote both quantitative and qualitative assessment, although neither promotes one form of assessment at the expense of the other.

The multitude of significant changes occurred in the world of work affected both the peoples’ career development routes and the career counsellors’ traditional methodology and approaches (implicitly). This new professional challenges led to the need for reviewing the specific context of counsellors’ practice to ensure the relevance of the profession in the 21st century. New conceptualisations of vocational identity are needed to conduct career development work with individuals, taking into consideration the greater diversity of users accessing career development services. (Savickas, 2011)

It is of critical importance that career counsellors of the future to be able to use a broader range of assessment devices including those of both a quantitative and a qualitative nature, being already shown that both form of assessment brings important benefits that complete each other.

*It is also of critical importance for both counsellors and counselee to review and adjust their attitude, for personal and professional improvements.*

„A happy person is not a person in a certain set of circumstances, but rather a person with a certain set of attitudes.“  
~ Hugh Downs ~

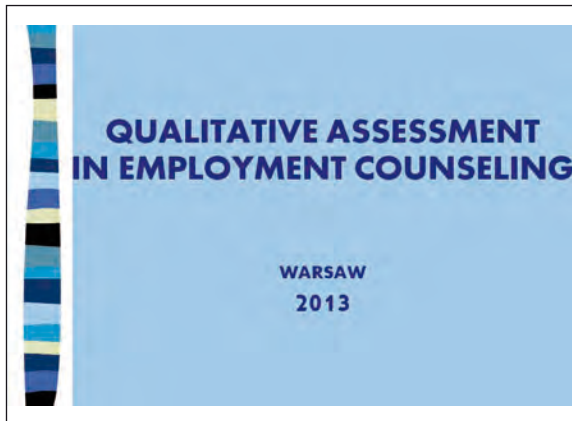
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# Using qualitative assessment in employment counseling

## – workshop presentation

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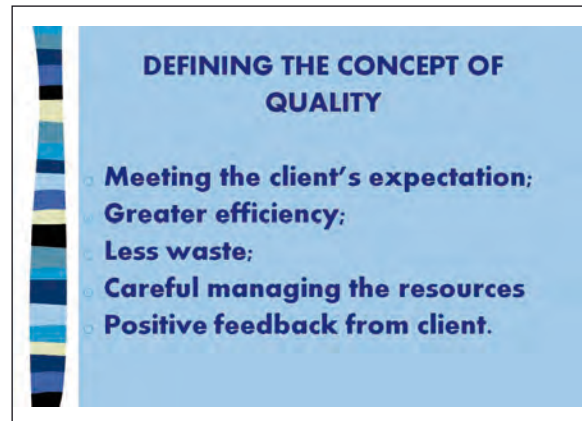
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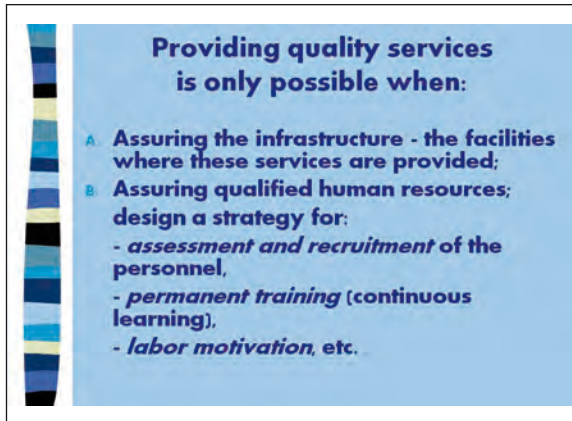
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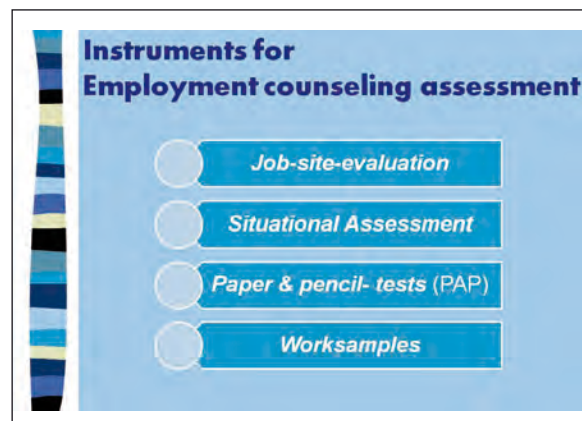
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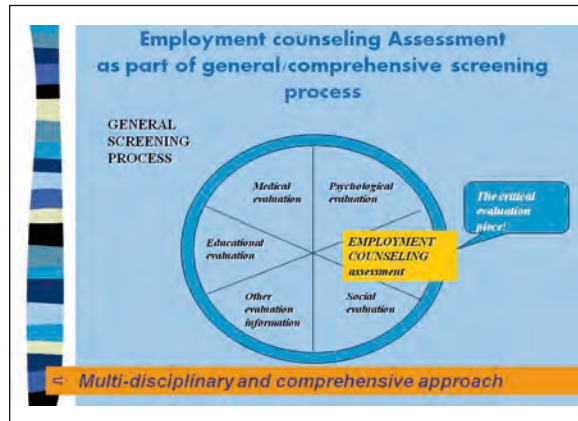




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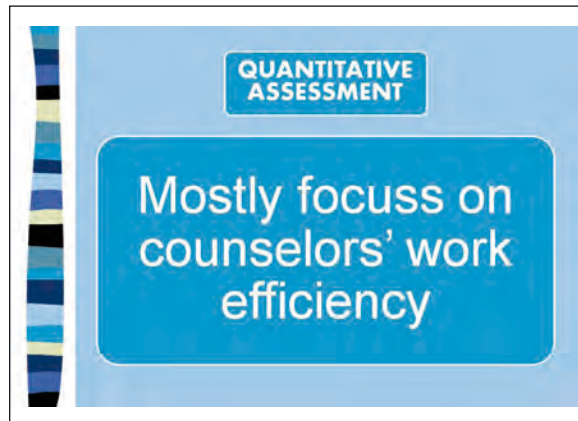
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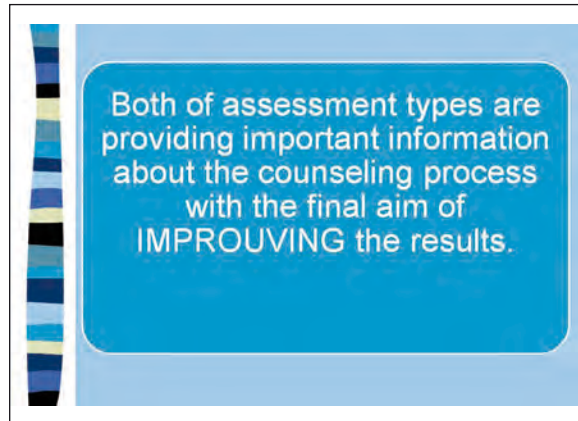
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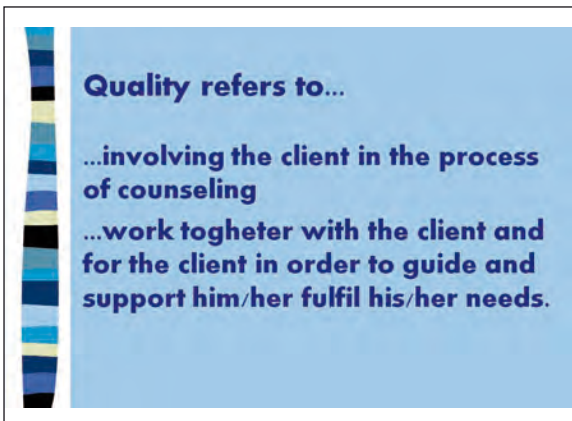
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SLOVENIA

8

### General questions

#### How do you define “competences” in your country?

Along the OECD definition also in Slovenia competences are treated more than just knowledge and skill that individuals possess. When we look at the area of competences we talk about: knowledge on the professional field, skills that can be applied at work and experiences gained in history within this field. Transfers of competencies are generally meant mainly for more general ones, like uses of computer, fluent speaking on foreign languages etc.

#### What kind of competences are diagnosed in your country?

There are general competencies like reading, writing, counting, mobility, use of foreign language, ability for learning, enterprise etc. and specific ones which can be gained by specialization in formal or informal education and / or through praxis on specific area of work.

Slovenian institute of adult education (SIAE) is implementing a major project, financed by European social fund and Slovenian Ministry of education, science, culture and sport, devoted to development work in the area of literacy and validation of non-formal learning in adult education – *Literacy development and assessment and recognition of non-formal learning 2011 – 2014*.

The project focuses on validation (and the development of validation tools) of key competences. 15 organizations have been selected (by means of a public tender of the Ministry of education, science, culture and sport) to participate in the pilot testing of the developed procedures, methods and tools for validating key competences. However, those organizations will, if required by their social partners (companies for example), also validate occupational competences.

#### What are the regulations governing the use of diagnosis tools in your country?

There are no specific regulations in our country yet. In public institutions diagnosis of competences are usually run by professionals in sector for human resources and could be implemented for newcomers in the institution or for further education of staff.

#### Who in your country is entitled to make the diagnosis of competences? (profession/required qualifications)

Depend of institution those entitled to make such diagnosis are: psychologists, educators, pedagogues in adult education and others who gained at least university degree and proper education on the competences.

The requirements for professionals who validate competences in organizations selected by a public tender of the Ministry of education, science, culture and sport to participate in our project (*Literacy development and assessment and recognition of non-formal learning 2011 – 2014*) are:

- university education,
- work experience in the adult education field
- completed basic (3 X 8 hours) and continuous further training.

For the duration of the project (2012-2014), professional support is provided by the Slovenian institute of adult education.

### Specific questions

#### What tools have been used in your country to diagnose competences?

Different tools are in use to diagnose competences, from general questionnaires to more specific tests which are employed in various companies.

The project *Literacy development and assessment and recognition of non-formal learning 2011 – 2014* is a continuation of a project *Literacy development and assessment and recognition of non-formal learning 2009 – 2011* (both founded by European social fund and Slovenian Ministry of education, science, culture and sport); the following tools for evaluating competences have been developed in both:

- questionnaire for evaluating key competence “learn to learn”,
- questionnaire for evaluating key competence “digital competence”,
- questionnaire for evaluating “career planning competence”,
- questionnaire for evaluating “competences acquired in everyday life”,
- biographic method
- e-portfolio.

#### Please describe 3 tools that are the most useful (in your opinion). Are they dedicated to pupils and students, academic students or adults?

One of such tools is an interactive computer programme for choosing the most suitable vocation Kam in kako ([http://english.ess.gov.si/vicc\\_ncc/vcc/where\\_and\\_how](http://english.ess.gov.si/vicc_ncc/vcc/where_and_how)) where special section is dedicated to questions on skills and competencies. Till now the programme was dedicated to all users, young and adults, but in new web version the programme will be divided for youngsters separately and for adults and unemployed separately.

The above mentioned questionnaire for evaluating key competence “learn to learn” is a self-evaluation questionnaire, created for adults but also suitable for students and younger adults.

The main objectives of the questionnaire:

- to help counsellors in the process of evaluation and validation of non-formal learning,
- to help counsellors provide individuals with feedback on their strengths and weaknesses in the field of learning,
- to enable sound planning of individual’s education, identification of needs for certain educational programs and support for planning and achieving individual’s educational goals,
- to enable result comparison among individuals and regions.

The questionnaire can be filled in on a computer (e-questionnaire) or printed out.

The tool for evaluating key competence “learn to learn” was designed to measure all of its three components: knowledge (individuals’ knowledge on learning to learn), skills (development of learning skills) and values, beliefs and personal characteristics (attitude towards lifelong learning). Knowledge about learning or experience with various learning techniques does not suffice; individuals must be motivated to learn.

Each component of the competence can be linked to one of the psychological aspects of learning. Key competence “learn to learn” is composed of three broad aspects:

- motivational aspects with the social context: internal (values, beliefs, emotions) and external factors (learning environment in its narrow and broader meaning),
- cognitive aspect: complex thinking, skills for processing information and mental habits, direct learning of successful learning strategies,
- metacognitive aspect: thinking about learning, monitoring, controlling and directing learning.

**What are the advantages or disadvantages of these tools for the counsellors and for the clients?**

In the case of Kam in kako program advantages are mainly in support to vocational and career counselors which can base further counseling, dialogue and research with a client on the field of vocational - career orientation. Very important is also assistance to client on way to further education, to those who ruminate on change of profession if a new field of interest is discovered and for unemployed on the way to new beginning in employment search. Disadvantage could be when

answers on the questions in the program are not sincere so proposals cannot match with realistic needs and inspirations.

The most important requirement when evaluating competences is that the process is agreed upon, clearly defined, transparent and understandable to all participating in it (organization, counsellor and client). For the process to be adequately performed, special attention must be paid to the clients and their needs.

When developing the tools for competence evaluation (self-evaluation tools for clients and tools used by counsellors), we were especially aware that the tools should:

- include the analysis of “individual’s potential”,
- promote the ability to express experience acquired through work and learning achievements,
- be comprehensible to clients and therefore flexible (adjustable to different skill).

When clients are self-evaluating a counsellor must be at hand to check the results of self-evaluation with them and advise them on evaluating other competences.

**What kinds of ICT tools (eg. computer programs, software, games etc.) are applied in your country to diagnose competences? How popular are they?**

In the case of interactive computer program Kam in kako which is in use in many elementary and secondary schools as well as in the frame of Employment service of Slovenia units throughout Slovenia we can say that this tool is quite popular and wide used.

In the *Literacy development and assessment and recognition of non-formal learning 2009 – 2011* project, an **ICT tool E-portfolio** was developed and upgraded in the current project (and is now being used and tested). The tool is basically an electronic collection of documents that show and record individual’s knowledge and skills acquired through formal and non-formal education and occupational competences acquired through work experience; all which can be evaluated and validated for the following purposes:

- to acquire formal education (re-entering or continuing the formal education programme ...),
- to acquire a National vocational qualification certificate,
- to document and describe individual’s knowledge and experience for more flexibility in the labour market, personal growth and the development of key competences.

The e-portfolio is based on *Mahara*, a free, open-source web application for creating e-portfolios.



E-portfolio for adults is a new ICT tool and is not yet very widespread.

How are these tools disseminated among guidance practitioners or teachers (via internet, via courses, etc...)?

Kam in kako program was disseminated for last 12 years via CD units and introductory education where caretaker got a basis for working with users of the program while in the next version this tool will reach all interested via internet.

As a part of the *Literacy development and assessment and recognition of non-formal learning 2011 – 2014* project, the tools are being pilot tested in 15 organizations participating in it. Counsellors from those organizations will be using our tools in years 2013 – 2014 and at the same time documenting observations and possible difficulties to provide us with feedback.

Does the system of diagnosis of adult competences exist in your country? If yes, is it related to the validation process of non-formal and informal learning?

The system of diagnose of adult competencies is partly developed. It is very well developed the system of National vocational qualification (NVQ) in which the vocational competences are validated. But we do not have very well developed system of diagnosis of adult key competence. In the project of SIAE we try to develop it. It based on validation of non-formal and informal learning of adults.

And there are some other projects in which they try to develop a certain approach of validation of non-formal in informal learning of adults which could be the basis for the recognition of prior leaning and competences.

What are the free online tools to test competences in your country?

Free online tools to test competences are published on internet, for example DNLA programs for measurement on: management potential, selling potential and social competencies and we can expect that soon some additional tools will be developed by centre for competencies which are set up with a support of European Social Found.

The tools which we have already mentioned: questionnaire for evaluating key competence "learn to learn", questionnaire for evaluating key competence "digital competence", questionnaire for evaluating "career planning competence", questionnaire for evaluating "competences acquired in everyday life", e-portfolio and have been developed at SIAE are free online tools.

But the staff from SIAE suggesting the training for all who want to use them.

## Research and development

Who/what organizations or institutions conduct research on competences or develop new tools in the field of diagnosis?

In Slovenia there are two main national institutes which are developing the tools in the field of diagnosis the competences:

- o Slovenian Institute for Adult Education – SIAE (Andragoški center Slovenije – ACS),
- o National Institute for Vocational Education (Center za poklicno izobraževanje - CPI)

In the frame of Employment service of Slovenia in the ESF project we will collect competencies in 7 different occupational fields for use in matching between unemployed people and their competencies and demands of employers.

And there are some other projects or research groups in public and private sector in which they try to develop new tools in the field of diagnosis of competences.

What fields or topics are researched?

- o descriptions of of key kompetences and professional competences,
- o the National Qualification Framework,
- o development of tools for diagnosis of key kompetences and professional competences,
- o what do they need the adults and what the young generation,
- o which approaches are suitable for different purposes of validation of non-formal and informal learning etc

How is the efficiency of tools measured?

In the project of SIAE, *Literacy development and assessment and recognition of non-formal learning 2011 – 2014*, we will evaluate the efficiency of the tools at the end of the year 2013 and we are planning to represent the results at the conference in March 2014.

Who/what organizations or institutions provide trainings for counsellors on diagnosis of competences?

In the project of SIAE, *Literacy development and assessment and recognition of non-formal learning 2011 – 2014*, the SIAE is responsible for the training for counsellors on diagnosis competences. In 2012 we prepared initial training programme of 24 hours which is upgraded in 2013 with further training of 24 hours. The providers are staff from SIAE and external experts. Regarding how complex are the knowledge and skills which



the counsellors need for the diagnosis of competences we believe that a longer initial training programme for the counsellor is needed.

**Prepared by:**

Urška Pavlič ([urska.pavlic@acs.si](mailto:urska.pavlic@acs.si)) in

Mag. Tanja Vilič Klenovšek ([tanja.vilic.klenovsek@acs.si](mailto:tanja.vilic.klenovsek@acs.si))

Slovenian Institute for Adult Education /Andragoški center Slovenije

Marko Zupančič, Employment service of Slovenia/Euro-guidance Slovenia

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*"People are known to claim that candidates are hired for their skills and knowledge – but fired for their attitude and aptitude."*

Hiring a new employee can be a complicated task. During a selection process we usually get a lot of information about our candidates. Psychologists and HR workers daily use a great set of tools and methods for getting various pieces of information about candidates. They assess candidates' knowledge and skills, personal traits, values, motives, interests... but to connect them and understand the candidate thoroughly is much more demanding. When we are trying to select the best candidate, there's always a question, if it is also possible to predict the candidate's future behaviour and success at his/her workplace in an organization at the time the selection process is going on.

That's why every assessor should be aware of candidates' competencies, which comprise more than just skills and knowledge; they predict effective performance, result in valid selection criteria, recognize the transferability of someone's skills and by using them the counselor is able to say which candidate is flexible enough to meet the changing needs of future requirements. Competencies are the human capacities and work-related behaviour and provide a competitive advantage to an organization. Therefore competency is any quality or characteristic of a person which predicts successful performance in a job.

Competency iceberg model helps us to explain the concept of competency:



Similarly to an iceberg the competency has some components like knowledge and skills, which are visible and easy to detect, thus protruding from the sea, but other behavioral components are hidden beneath the surface. Attitude, personal traits, self-image, the ways of thinking and motives take more than 75% of every competency. The hidden aspect of competency definitely has a great influence on using knowledge and skills when an employee wants to complete his job effectively.

The second very important part in the selection process of a competency based assessment includes a preliminary well-defined competency framework of the organization. In an organization every employee plays his own role. Every job in an organization has a requirement of a specific set of competencies to undertake it efficiently. When someone new is coming, he needs to meet the organization needs and fill the gap. Only when we are able to define well the employers' competency framework and needs, clarify the role and competencies required for the job, can the result of selection process bring success.

There are numerous methods to identify competencies, but the one which is regularly used and widely known is an interview. During a selection process we can use many different types of interview, such as a behavioral, stress, situational or competency interview. Interviewing can be more or less structured. In some situations it is possible to use also a group or panel type of interviewing.

The most difficult task at interviewing is to get objective data of a candidate, the ones that can also be comparable and give us an opportunity to make the right decision at the end. We can avoid the mistake of making the wrong decision by the systematic assessments and gathering data under standardized conditions.

1. Brigita Vončina graduated from Faculty of Arts at University of Ljubljana with a degree in psychology. Now she works at "Employers" Department at Employment Service of Slovenia, having gained more than ten years of experience in the organizational, counseling and pedagogical field. Her work includes recognizing potential competencies, motivation, personality and skills of an appropriate candidate applying for a certain vacancy. She has been cooperating in selection processes for numerous jobs and counseling to unsuccessful candidates after the selection processes have been finished. Previously she was a career counselor at Vocational Information and Counseling Centre. Her main responsibilities were providing thorough career counseling aimed to set appropriate career goals, planning education and training when necessary, removing obstacles to employment, changing attitudes that are not helpful and enhancing motivation. She has also provided counseling to students and pupils concerning their choice of studies and their future career. Besides she has been working as a psychology lecturer for many years.

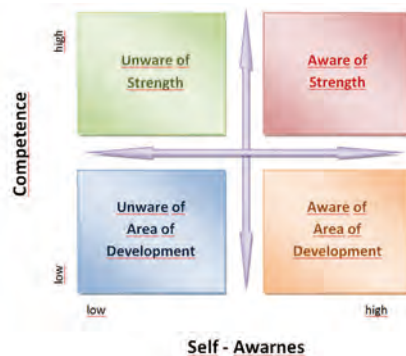
But there are some other more critical features of competency based assessment, such as some common mistakes we usually make in social relationships. Some of the assessors' biases are:

- the hallow effect,
- contrast errors,
- recency bias,
- leniency and severity bias.

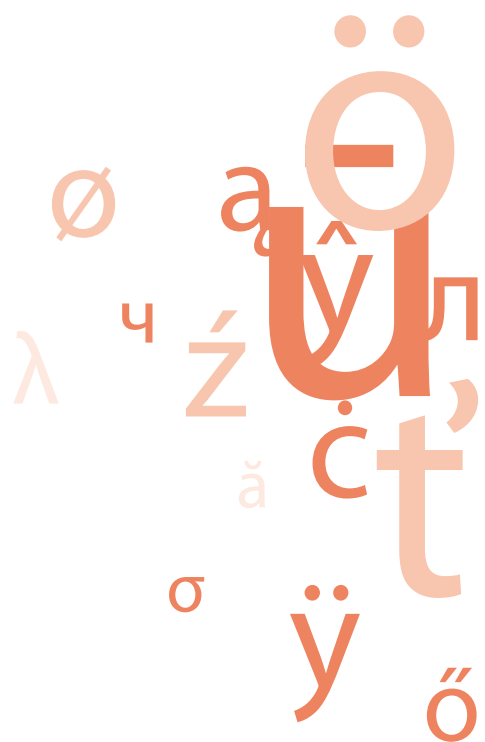
To get the best information about a candidate, every type of selection interview should be structured in a similar sequence from very open to open and closed questions:



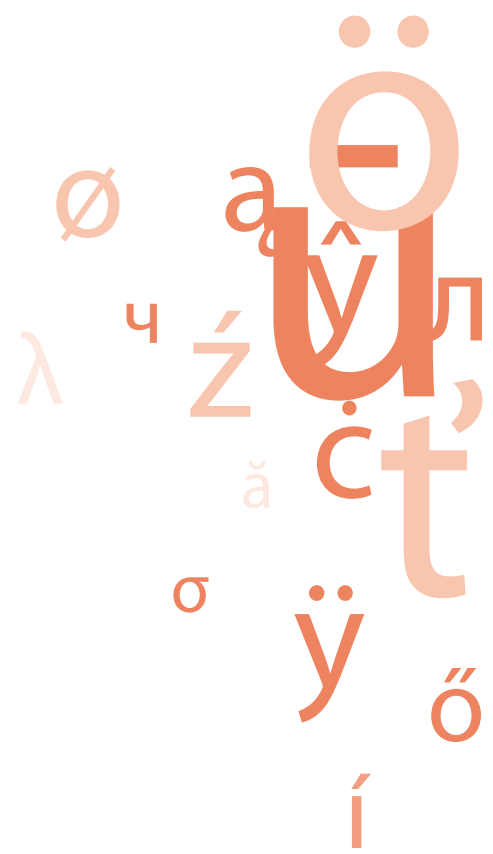
In conclusion, the essential thing to every assessor should be a way of giving feed back after assessment. The reviewer who may be reporting employer should present candidates on a following way:



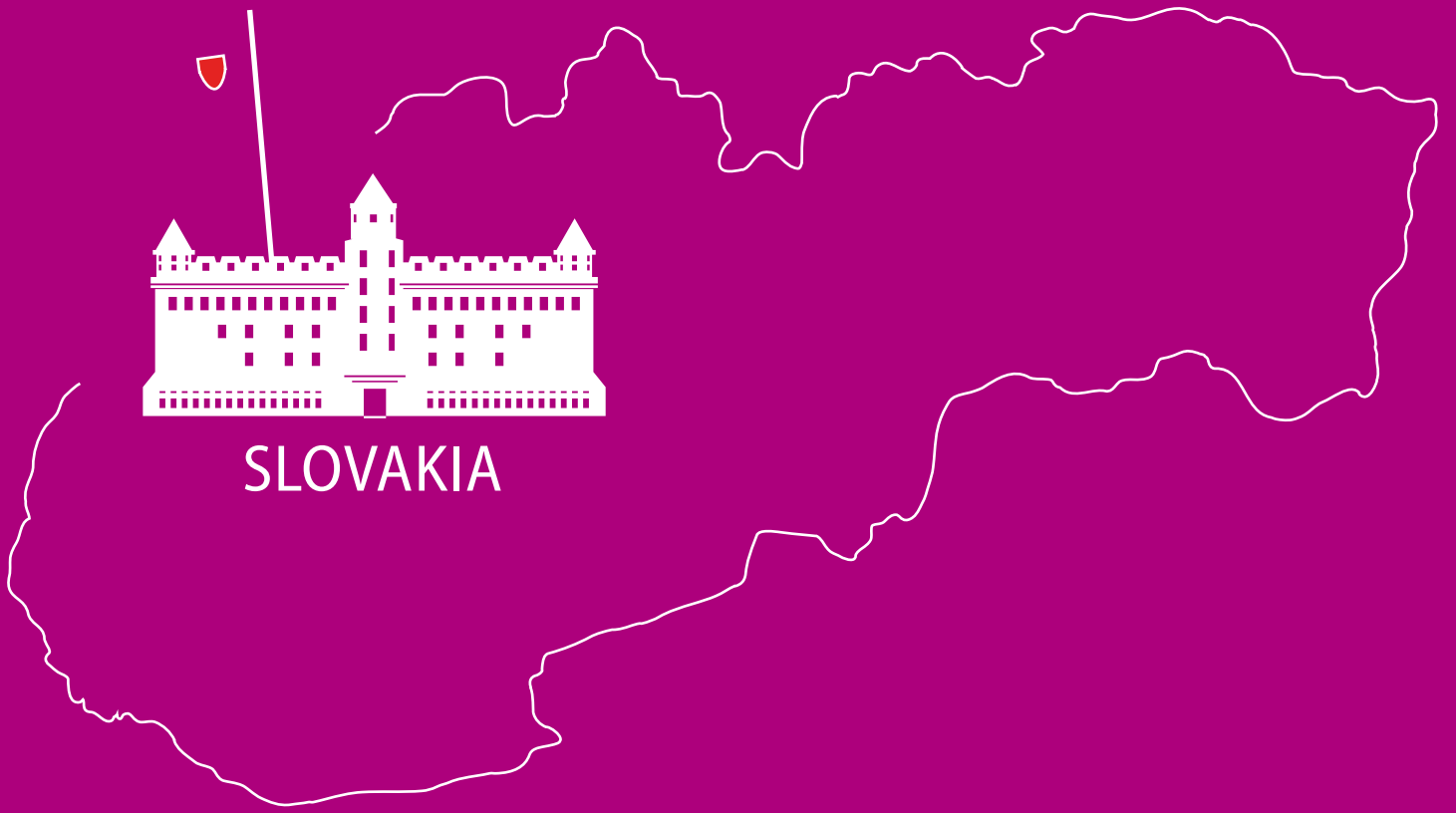
The goal of providing the feed back to a candidate is gaining the participant's awareness of his areas of strength and areas of development. It should encourage introspection, help participants draw interference and reach conclusions.



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## General questions

### How do you define “competences” in your country?

The term “competence” is widely used especially in the educational sector, and here quite frequently in relation to pre-primary, primary, secondary and post secondary (not tertiary) levels of education (ISCED 0, 1, 2, 3, and 4). The term itself is defined by the Act No. 245/2008 Col. on Education as follows: *“Competence is a demonstrated ability to use knowledge, skills, attitudes, value orientation and other capabilities to perform and implement functions according to given standards in work, while studying in personal and professional development of the individual and for his/her active involvement in society, in the future working and non-working life and in his/her further education”*.

In the educational sector the term “competence” together with other related terms (knowledge, skills, abilities, etc.) is mentioned in state educational programmes (curricula), which define what knowledge and skills graduates of respective education level and area should have. These documents also refer to key competences for lifelong learning.

In the labour/employment sector the National Occupational Framework (NOF) is currently being implemented as a national integrated information system containing descriptions of standard labour market requirements for skilled performance of particular jobs. NOF defines competence as a set of requirements (general skills, professional knowledge, and professional skills) necessary for good performance of the selected job.

### What kind of competences are diagnosed in your country?

In educational sector pupils and students at primary and secondary schools are evaluated by teachers also according to their level of acquired key competences in different subjects of curriculum. Pupils and students might be diagnosed also by different psychodiagnostic tools and methods by centres for educational and psychological counselling and prevention. These centres also prepare short-term programmes (according to requirements from schools), in which professionals help pupils and students to identify their competences, gain better self-knowledge, knowledge of their qualities, etc. In labour sector the National Occupational Standards in NOF cover requirements for a qualified employee’s performance. NOF contains online application „register of competences“, which defines general skills (complex personal abilities, which are not related to professional specialisation and are transferable into various work activities), professional knowledge (acquired information

gained through education or learning) and professional skills (individual’s ability to optimally perform certain work activities based on acquired knowledge as well as previous work). Employers and human resources professionals might use this register for identification of competences. In some cases they also prepare competence models for occupations.

### What are the regulations governing the use of diagnosis tools in your country?

Law regulates only the use of psychodiagnostic tools and methods. According to the law No. 199/1994 Col. on Psychological Activities and the Slovak Chamber of Psychologists, these tools and methods might be used only by psychologists.

### Who in your country is entitled to make the diagnosis of competences? (profession/required qualifications)

Qualified psychologists (the only ones allowed to use psychodiagnostic tools and methods) in Centres for Educational and Psychological Counselling and Prevention, and other guidance and counselling services providers in educational sector, teachers and other staff in education of children with special needs, educational and career counsellors (who are mainly qualified teachers), professionals working in offices of labour, social affairs and family, in personnel, recruitment and training agencies, and partly in the health sector (e. g. evaluation of health limitations).

## Specific questions

### What tools have been used in your country to diagnose competences?

In educational sector schools and their teachers in position of educational counsellors closely cooperate with Centres for Educational and Psychological Counselling and Prevention. These centres are equipped with different tools (mostly psychodiagnostic ones) for identification and diagnosis of competences of pupils and students. For pupils and students with disabilities (sensorial and physical) special educational counselling centres exist.

Teachers assess learning outcomes, acquired key competencies, personal growth, willingness to cooperate, etc. Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of the Slovak Republic has published guidelines for evaluation of pupils. These guidelines provide information also about methods that might be used for evaluation, e. g. through projects, self-evaluation sheets, personal records, questionnaires, observations, portfolios.

In the labour/employment services sector at offices of labour, social affairs and family tools and techniques

for identification of competences, professional skills, etc. for preparation of Individual action plan are also used. Some offices also use methods as assessment centre or skills audit.

In private sector personnel agencies and HR departments use well-known methods: different psychodiagnostic tools, assessment and development centres and skills audit.

**Please describe some tools that are the most useful (in your opinion). Are they dedicated to pupils and students, academic students or adults? What are the advantages or disadvantages of these tools for the counsellors and for the clients?**

Assessment and Development Centre for Adults

This method is used in the process of work with job seekers at some offices of labour, social affairs and family. The Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family in Dolný Kubín was the winner of the National Career Counselling Award 2012 in the category “career guidance and counselling services”, and this institution was awarded for the implementation of this approach and tool. This activity can help job seekers to assess their preconditions and strengths on the basis of a detailed self-knowledge gained through the ADC. The service has a positive influence on the motivation, orientation, self-marketing and self-development of clients. Assessment and development centres are also widely used in private sector (personnel and recruitment agencies, and HR departments).

**What kinds of ICT tools (e. g. computer programs, software, games, etc.) are applied in your country to diagnose competences? How popular are they?**

The Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family **is responsible for the administration of the Internet Guide to the Labour Market website (Slovak acronym – ISTP; <http://www.istp.sk>).** It is a database of information about the world of work and methods of using information to facilitate communication on the labour market and make it more efficient. **This website also provides some ICT tools: Individual Potential Analysis (AIP)** – program for collecting information on individuals’ skills, personal qualities, health conditions and personal preferences (special interests, aptitudes, talents, ideas and future job expectations), and **Career Planning (KP)** - program that enables to estimate client’s ability to perform a certain job, plan his/her career, it also gives information about the client’s weaknesses and strengths.

**How are these tools disseminated among guidance practitioners or teachers (via internet, via courses, etc...)?**

Centres for Educational and Psychological Counselling and Prevention provide methodological support for educational counsellors (teachers at schools) through meetings, seminars, workshops, etc. If there are any tools for diagnosis of competences available for practitioners in schools and counselling centres, due to the necessity of their protection these are disseminated either electronically (if available in electronic form), more often via personal contacts at seminars, workshops, etc.

**Does the system of diagnosis of adult competences exist in your country? If yes, is it related to the validation process of non-formal and informal learning?**

No, there is no officially established and/or recognised system allowing diagnosis of competences of adults in Slovakia.

**What are the free online tools to test competences in your country?**

There are no free online tools directly for testing competences – but as has been already mentioned, in the Internet Guide to the Labour Market there is a specific set of tools for self-assessment of various types of clients (pupils, students, employed or unemployed adults, job seekers, etc.) where it is possible to assess also one’s competences.

## Research and development

**Who/what organizations or institutions conduct research on competences or develop new tools in the field of diagnosis?**

Research in this field is being conducted by research institutes, academic and scientific institutions and different universities (e.g. faculties and departments of psychology, pedagogy and sociology).

The Research Institute for Child Psychology and Pathopsychology (VÚDPAP), directly resort-controlled scientific and research workplace of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic, is focusing on solutions of problems that social and mostly educational-pedagogic practice considers as a matter of priority from the aspect of psychological and pedagogic sciences. The Institute provides technical and methodological support, guidance and co-ordination of all components of educational, psychological and career counselling (pedagogic-psychological counseling centers, centers of educational and psychological prevention, school psychologists,

and educational counselors). VÚDPAP is also focusing on development of conceptual background materials and analyses and in collaboration with renowned test publishers prepares Slovak versions of psychological instruments for children and youth.

Website: <http://www.vudpap.sk/en/>

The National Institute for Education (ŠPÚ), directly-managed organization of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic, conducts applied educational research and experimental verification, provides professional and methodological management of schools (in particular the creation of school educational programs, preparation of pedagogical documentation for schools and school facilities in the field of education and training of teaching staff), etc. Website: <http://www.statpedu.sk/en/Home.alej>

The Institute for Labour and Family Research is state contributory organization covered by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic. It conducts research in the field of social and family policy, labour market and employment policy, industrial relations, working conditions and occupational safety and health.

Website: <http://www.ceit.sk/IVPR/index.php?lang=en>

The Slovak Academy of Sciences covers 51 scientific societies and conducts research in various fields.

Website: <http://www.sav.sk/?lang=en>

#### What fields or topics are researched?

Key competences, social skills, communication skills, etc.

#### How is the efficiency of tools measured?

For psychological questionnaires and tests should be determined validity and reliability.

For other instruments might be obtained feedback from users.

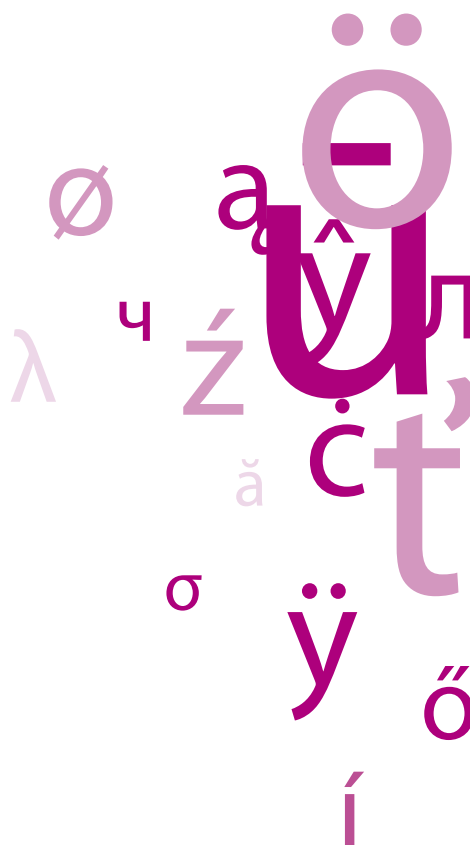
#### Who/what organizations or institutions provide trainings for counsellors on diagnosis of competences?

Trainings in this field are provided also by some of above mentioned institutes - Research Institute for Child Psychology and Pathopsychology and National Institute for Education.

**Also Methodology and Pedagogy Centre (MPC)**, state budgetary organization of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic, provides continual education for pedagogical and professional staff in schools and school facilities.

Website: <http://www.mpc-edu.sk/o-nas/english>

Companies developing and offering tools and methods are also providing trainings in this field.



Tomas Šprlák

## Competences diagnostic or empowerment towards a real competence based career guidance

### Introduction

Career guidance in the “bilan de compétences” approach in France is the product of a broad social dialogue between government, trade unions and employers’ concerning the system of lifelong learning with roots in the 1970’. As such, it has certain peculiarities, both in terms of system management and financing, but also in terms of objectives and the methodology. The initial ambition of *bilan de compétences* was to become a widely available tool not only for supporting the management of individual careers, but also a tool that fosters the communication between the the labor market, educational institutions and individuals. This wider societal, political and institutional context has direct methodological consequences, such as the emphasis on analysis of competence - competence is regarded as a common language, which links these different actors of the lifelong learning system in France. A key contribution of the *bilan de compétences* from the point of view of the beneficiary is to enhance the employability and career management skills, and therefore a great importance is given to the pedagogical dimension of the guidance process.

### Possible definition of competence in guidance

When we try to define the term of competence from the point of view of guidance, it is preferable to use intuitive definitions over scientifically rigorous or even psychometric definitions. The competence in guidance is understood as a multi-dimensional conglomerate of acquired individual factors that contribute to the effective realisation of a specific task within a given organisational context. There are several specificities in the French understanding of the term “competence”:

- The notion of ‘competence’ is conceptualised in terms of ‘capacity’ in relation to a broad occupational field rather than in terms of performance of particular skills.
- The description of competencies is often general and is rarely defined in terms of precise and discrete tasks.
- Competences are understood broadly, with a particular accent on explicit theoretical knowledge and a mastery of a broader set of skills
- Individual competencies are related to each other and are difficult to dissociate from the overall occupational or job profile; they are integrative rather than cumulative.
- Competences can sometimes be expressed as dynamic processes, that is, an individual is not just capable of doing something at a given point but is also capable of developing, learning and passing on knowledge.

Concerning the structure of the competence, is possible to use simple and effective didactic models in which we can distinguish:

- Cognitive component: knowledge (*savoir*) - based on a body of scientific and/or technological knowledge that can be acquired by teaching or by self-directed learning. We can distinguish:
  - declarative knowledge (theories, terminology, classifications...)
  - procedural knowledge (instructions, working procedures...)
- Functional component: Know-how (*savoir-faire*) - based on the implementation of knowledge and experience in a specific situation (such as the manual dexterity, the ability to deal with breakdowns or malfunctions). These ‘empirical’ forms of *savoir-faire* may be acquired both through learning and through professional experience.
- Social component: attitudes (*savoir-être*) - relates more to inter-personal relationships than to technical matters and that may also relate to communication (for example with peers or clients), to problem-solving capacity (*aptitudes, capacités*) within a team, or to the level of autonomy.

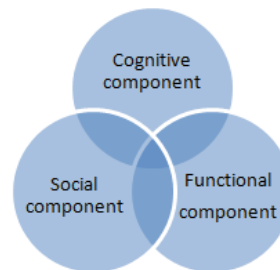


Image 1: The multidimensional model of competence used in *bilan de compétences*

Using some kind of competence analysis in career guidance has following advantages:

1. Helps client reflect his experiences (professional and non-professional)
2. Structures his competences in order to gain better legibility
3. Helps the client express and “sell” his competences on the labour market
4. Positions the client in relation to similar jobs on the labour market
5. Identifies “motivated skills”, “burn-out skills” and “potential-skills” in relation to his career development (guidance perspective)

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## Risks linked to “competence diagnostic”

When working with competencies, a particular emphasis is given to the educational aspect of the counseling process – the client should be able to adopt a certain vision of himself, that should correspond to the professional role. This allows him to better understand his competences and requirements of the labour market and respond adequately to the expectations of employers. A variety of tools can be used to analyse the career path of the client in terms of acquired knowledge, skills, attitudes and personal qualities. Indirect product of this work is the more complete and positive professional self-image and increased self-esteem of the client. Using expert methods, such as psychological assessment is highly discouraged: they are rarely adapted to provide a complex image of client’s acquired competences, but most of all, they hinder the pedagogical dimension of the guidance. There are several reasons for this:

- Analytical grip: Asymmetric relationship between counsellor and client, in which the client perceives himself as an object of an expert analysis instead of an active subject of the procedure.
- The fortune-teller syndrome – The client expects the counsellor to reveal magical solutions.
- Testing encourages client’s dependency and gives the counsellor a false authority
- Assessment methods show little predictive validity in terms of on the job success
- Testing can be used as a “shortcut” in counselling, but ignoring the complexity of the various factors that are important in career decision-taking can drive the client further away from himself.

## Examples of tools and techniques of competence analysis

Regarding specific ways of working with competences, intuitive and transparent tools and procedures should be used. They help the beneficiary *formulate explicitly* acquired competences and provide him with *a logical framework* in the next step. This framework may have different forms depending on the client’s needs and expectations, it is important to ensure the clarity and usefulness in relation to the initial objectives of the guidance.

### Competence portfolio

Competence portfolio is an instrument *par excellence* of competence analysis. It is a very useful tool for different reasons:

- Long-term guidance process – if well presented, the competence portfolio can be used beyond the duration of the guidance process and without any input of a guidance counsellor.
- Career memory – it helps the client trace his professional and extraprofessional experiences in a detailed and structured way.
- Valorisation of experiences – the analytical and summarizing work brings better legibility to his acquired competences. Often a mere fact of “putting things down” in a written form can have an immense effect on beneficiaries.
- Career transitions management – a systematic approach to competences facilitates the identification of transferable skills during career transitions
- Active involvement – the competence portfolio is a property of the beneficiary and requires his active involvement
- Communication and marketing tool – data indicated in the competence portfolio (proofs, certificates, diplomas, etc.) can be used to confirm one’s competences

The competence portfolio leads the client to record, sort, analyse, synthesise and evaluate his experience through different support sheets. It may take the form of personal file, however, electronic versions can also be used. The pedagogical clarity and guidance process that necessarily accompanies the portfolio are more important than the actual form. In this process, the client is guided through four levels of analysis of his own experience:

- simple reconstitution of facts (e.g. describing a typical working day)
- evidencing client’s personal input (similar to the behavioural events interview, where we try to “translate” the activity into the language of competences)
- identifying one’s transformation through working activity (monitoring professional, personal, relational, cognitive, emotional transformation induced by the experience)
- analysing meta-competences, or career management skills.



Experience	Acquired knowledge (noun)	Acquired skills and competences (verb and complement)	Developed personal qualities (noun)
2001-2004 Account manager (at Comp. Inc.)	Knowledge of main regional actors in industrial air-conditioning	Prospecting and finding new clients Maintaining client portfolio Developing new markets	Perseverance Credibility Aggressiveness
...			

Image 2: Example of the analytical sheet of a competence portfolio

### Career tree

This is a supportive technique for filling out the competence portfolio. It is particularly useful for clients with experiences that include a wide variety of tasks and responsibilities. The client is guided to elaborate a very detailed professional profile. The benefits are obvious

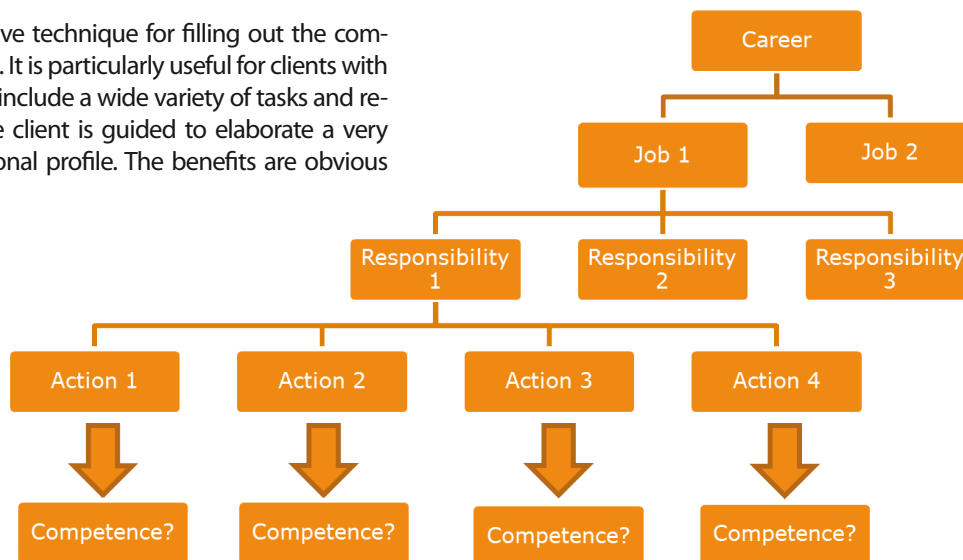


Image 3: Example of a career tree for analysing complex experiences

in terms of professional self-image and self-esteem; clients sometimes experience a sort of “aha” experience in terms of the valorisation of their acquired competences. This work also generates competences for further analysis and classification.

### Cards and checklists

Many different methods exist that can facilitate the process of competence emergence. This process is always very time consuming, because the idea is to make a thorough analysis of one’s career path (the notion of *audit, bilan or bilanzerung*). Different cards or predefined checklists with competence descriptions can be used in order to give the beneficiary the necessary vocabulary to express his skills and competences. Such cards can be derived from different national occupational

classifications or other sources (see *Knowdel motivated skills cards* or other existing methods for inspiration).

### Providing framework for competence analysis

Providing a logical and coherent framework can be a very useful way of bringing more legibility to the clients’ competences and harnessing the effects of the previous work of competence listing. After the analytical phase when client’s experience is detailed and translated into the language of competences, we can offer them some structure in terms of different categories, dimensions etc..

Different more-or-less sophisticated ways of competences classification and formalization exist. The simplest ones is identifying priorities and constructing



hierarchies (e.g., identifying five most important hard skills, 5 most important transversal skills, etc.), Categorized that we can use can be *relatively broad* (e.g. transferrable and non-transferrable competences), based on *personal resources* mobilized in action (competences in creativity, communication, reflection, action...) or *occupational areas* (linguistic, technical, computer, organizational skills from Europass). Alternatively, you can use any other more or less specific categorisation that is useful for the client and that contributes to the objectives that were initially set. It is possible to rely on already existing systems that work with the concept of competence (e.g. different national competence frameworks). This enables the counselling process and career plan of the client to be rooted in a broader educational or socio-economic framework (e.g. system of recognition of prior and experiential learning). From the guidance perspective, it is interesting to use a *two-dimensional grid* for competence classification into four groups:

- Assets – competences with high level of interest (passion) and expertise, that represent the most valuable individual “assets”
- Burn-out skills – skills with high level of expertise but little level of interest, a usual situation for individuals contemplating career change
- Future career potential – this group can indicate long forgotten or neglected interests, that can potentially be transformed into career projects
- “Dogs”, competences with low level of interest and expertise, rarely worth of further exploration.

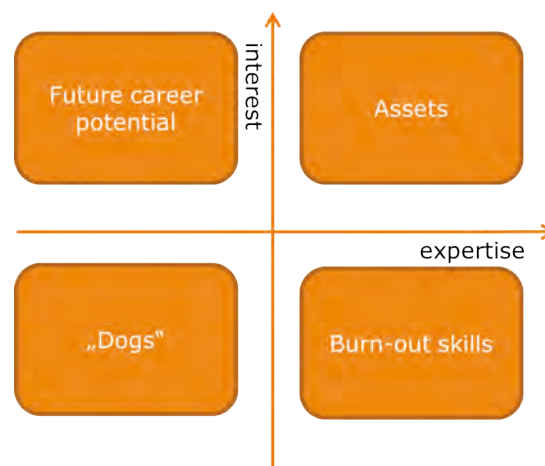


Image 4: Sorting acquired knowledge, skills and competences on a two-dimensional diagramme

## Conclusion

Competence analysis in career guidance has of course also its limitations – it is particularly usefull in guidance and counselling in employment services or in work with specific groups (e.g. experienced workers). The results of this work can also be relatively more interesting in an environment in which a system of recognition and validation of informal learning is well established and lifelong learning is accessible to a wide audience. Nevertheless, competence analysis can be a useful and empowering method in guidance. It uses non-scientific methods of analysis that are transparent for the client and that can help foster his employability. It also has positive impact on client’s professional self-image and self-esteem. Moreover, well-structured competence analysis can contribute to generation or concretisation of career project ideas.



# Competences diagnostic or empowerment towards a real competence based career guidance – workshop presentation

1.

**Competences: diagnostic, empowerment?  
Competence-based career guidance.**

Tomáš Šprlák, FECPBP.eu  
14-15 May 2013, Warsaw

2.

**Introduction and objectives**

- **Fédération Européenne des Centres de Bilan et d'Orientation professionnelle – FECPBP**
  - 110 members from 8 countries
  - Over 25 years of experience in competence-based career guidance "Bilan de compétences"
- Presentation of the core principles of the *competence-based career guidance*
- Definition and role of competence in career guidance
- Measuring competences vs psychological testing
- Tools for competence-analysis

3.

**I. Competence-based career guidance: core principles**

4.

**History of bilan de compétences (BdC)**

- Created in France in 1980', today used in many European and non-European countries
- Provided initially to jobseekers, later adapted to different target groups (employed people, youngsters, seniors, ethnic minorities, ...)
- Spread across Europe through over 80 international cooperation project, quality assurance by FECPBP since 2000
- In the context of CEE:
  - "Bilanční diagnostika" in Czech republic
  - "Kompetenzbilanz" in Austria
  - Poland – training of labour officers in early '90s
  - 2 ongoing Leonardo ToI projects in Slovakia

5.

**Methodological principles and quality criteria of BdC**

Level of impact	Methods, tools	Results
<b>EVALUATION</b>	Expertise, assessment, questionnaire, simulation of work situation...	Competence, aptitudes, motivation and personality profile
<b>GUIDANCE/COUNSELLING</b>	Active listening, accompaniment, coaching, dynamization	Definition of a professional project and of action plan
<b>ACTIVE PEDAGOGY / TRAINING</b>	Pedagogical techniques	Knowledge and skills development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of the labour market and the working environment</li> <li>• Ability of analysing and understanding professional situations</li> <li>• Mastering of the notion of « competence »</li> <li>• Ability to elaborate and verify a professional project</li> <li>• Communication / presentation skills</li> </ul>

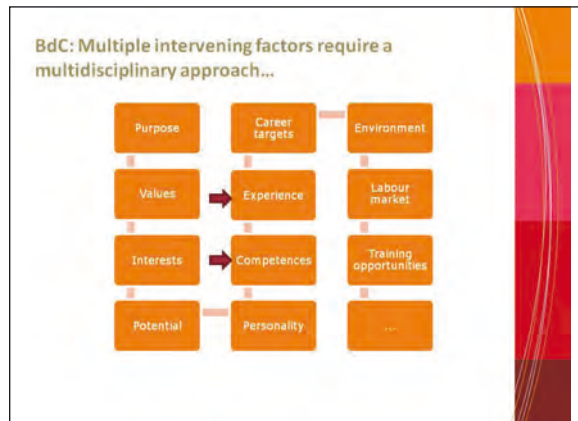
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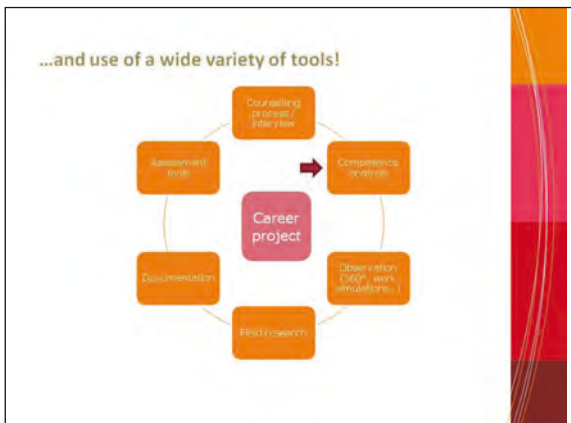
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**II. Role of competences in career guidance**

8.



9.



10.

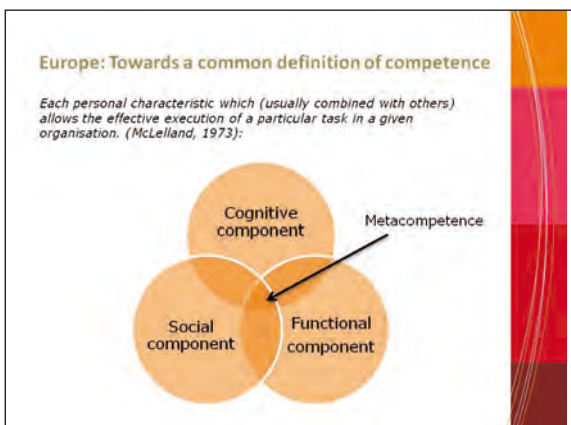
**The importance of working in competences in guidance**

**FOR PERSONAL ACCOMPLISHMENT:**  
 Valorisation of previous experiences  
 Recognition of prior learning  
 Better self-knowledge and self-esteem

**FOR CAREER EVOLUTION AND JOB SEEKING:**  
 Identification of lacking competences for professional evolution  
 Identification of appropriate training programme  
 Improvement of self-marketing skills for jobseekers

**FOR CAREER GUIDANCE:**  
 Exploring the motivated skills and corresponding jobs  
 Confrontation of own profile to the similar positions on the labour market

11.



12.

**Europe: Towards a common definition of competence**

**Cognitive components:**  
 declarative knowledge (e.g. theories, terminology, classifications. )  
 procedural knowledge (instructions, working procedures. )

**Functional components:**  
 skills  
 how-to  
 abilities  
 handycraft

**Social components:**  
 personality traits/factors  
 soft skills  
 motivations  
 values, ethics  
 social roles

**Metacompetences:**  
 ability to learn and to adapt  
 dealing with uncertainty

13.

**III. Diagnosing competences**

14.

**Risks linked to diagnosing competences**

**1. Analytical grip:**

- Asymmetric relationship between counsellor and client, in which the client perceives himself as an object of an expert analysis instead of an active subject of the procedure. This state can be caused by the use of analytical instruments, such as assessment tools. (Lemoine C., 2009)

Career guidance  
 ≠  
 evaluation / recruitment / assessment / ...

15.

**Risks linked to diagnosing competences**

- The **fortune-teller syndrome** – "Tell me who I am and what I should do with my life."
- Testing encourages client's **dependency**
- Testing gives the counsellor a **false authority**
- Assessment methods show **little predictive validity** (0,12 for MBTI; source: ROTHSTEIN & GON, R., 2006)
- Testing used as a "**shortcut**" in counselling
- Testing is not **future- nor action-oriented**

16.

**Defining competence: Competence vs. personality traits**

Personality traits are important, but what is their contribution to our clients' **employability**?

Ex. "Cover letter":

Dear Sir/Madam,  
 In response to your advertisement for HR Manager, please consider my candidature. I am in possession of all necessary skills for this position:  
 I am an **extraverted** thinker with a great **sensing** capabilities, and my MBTI profile (**ESTJ**) would perfectly fit your organisation. My scores in **NEO PI-R** personality inventory indicate a low level of **neuroticism** (17<sup>th</sup> percentile) and I have a **QI** of 137 (assessed by **WISC**). I managed to finish 10 lines out of 15 in the **d2 Test of Attention**, which further confirms the **dynamism of my cognitive functions**.  
 I am looking forward to hearing from you.  
 Yours sincerely,  
 Guidance counsellor (PhD. in Psychology)



17.

### Defining competence: Competence vs. personality traits

Personality traits are important, but what is their contribution to our clients' **employability**?

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 I am looking forward to hearing from you.  
 Yours sincerely,  
 Guidance counsellor (PhD. in Psychology)

18.

### Competence analysis: Competence portfolio

- **Know yourself and get recognized!**
- Personal workbook / portfolio with description of competences acquired during education, professional and voluntary experiences
- Can contain a *collection of proofs*
- Possible structure:
  1. Competences and knowledge acquired through education
  2. Competences and knowledge acquired during professional experience
  3. Competences and knowledge acquired during extra-professional experience

19.

### Competence portfolio

Experiences	Acquired knowledge	Required skills and competences	Developed personal competences
2001-2004 Account manager (at Comp. Inc.)	Knowledge of main regional actors in industrial air-conditioning	Prospecting and finding new clients Maintaining client portfolio Developing new markets	Perseverance Credibility Aggressiveness
...			

Source: Passeport de compétences, CIBC Bourgogne Sud

20.

### EXERCISE 1: IDENTIFYING RELEVANT KNOWLEDGE

A: Identify every possible subject you know something about. Break them down to 5 categories (at least 10 subject within 3 minutes):

1. Studied in high school
2. Learned on the job
3. Learned from conferences, workshops, trainings, seminars
4. Learned at home: reading, TV...
5. Learned in leisure time: volunteer work, hobbies, ...

B: Make a matrix: Enthusiasm+/-/Expertise+/-

21.

### FILLING IN COMPETENCE PORTFOLIO I.

Four levels of analysing client's experience:

1. simple reconstitution of facts
2. evidencing client's personal input
3. identifying one's transformation through working activity;
4. analysing meta-competences

"DECENTRATION" – ability to see and analyse oneself from the point of view of others.

22.

### FILLING IN COMPETENCE PORTFOLIO II.

```

    graph TD
      Career[Career] --> Job1[Job 1]
      Career --> Job2[Job 2]
      Job1 --> Res1[Responsibility 1]
      Job1 --> Res2[Responsibility 2]
      Job1 --> Res3[Responsibility 3]
      Res1 --> Act1[Action 1]
      Res1 --> Act2[Action 2]
      Res1 --> Act3[Action 3]
      Res1 --> Act4[Action 4]
      Act1 --> Comp1[Competence?]
      Act2 --> Comp2[Competence?]
      Act3 --> Comp3[Competence?]
      Act4 --> Comp4[Competence?]
  
```

23.

### EXERCICE 2 – ENUMERATING COMPETENCES FOR A SPECIFIC JOB

In group: find as much competences (cognitive, functional, social components) for volunteers' jobs

24.

### EXERCICE 3 – Transforming unstructured job description to competences

In group(s):

Identify as many competences as possible (verb+complement)  
 What questions could be used to gain more information?

REMINDER:

1. simple reconstitution of facts
2. evidencing client's personal input
3. identifying one's transformation through working activity;
4. analysing meta-competences





25.

**EXERCISE 4: Identifying talents – personal “key competences”**

Every client has specific talents that are manifested by their key competences.

*Success stories*

- 1 Your goal: what you wanted to accomplish
- 2 Obstacles, limits to be overcome
- 3 Step by step actions – detailed description
- 4 Description of results – measurable
- 5 Ressources - competences

26.

**III. Diagnosing competences**  
**B) Providing structure**

27.

**Transversal competences and employability**

The ultimate objective of a BdC is better employability.

- **Job-related competences** (sometimes also called “technical skills”, or “professional competences”). We mean by these all the knowledge and skills that are directly linked to the specific occupation or specific educational curricula.
- **Transferable competences** (personal, transversal, key competences) - a large group of skills and competences that are not linked to specific occupation or educational curricula and can be used in a large variety of contexts. This category includes groups of skills that are sometimes referred to as “social”, “methodological”, “soft” or other skills...

28.

**EXERCISE 5 – JOB-RELATED AND TRANSFERABLE COMPETENCES**

- 1 Work on previous sheets of paper and mark transferrable competences.
- 2 Find at least 1 possible job for every transferrable competence

29.

**Pedagogical utility vs. scientific rigor**

- Various goals of the competence analysis:
  - 1 Help client reflect his experiences (professional and non-professional)
  - 2 Structure his competences in order to gain better legibility
  - 3 Help the client express and “sell” his competences on the labour market
  - 4 Position the client in relation to similar jobs on the labour market
  - 5 Identify “motivated skills”, “burn-out skills” and “potential-skills” in relation to his career development (guidance perspective)
- **Any classification or competence framework that fosters these objectives can be used.**

30.

**Competence portfolio: synthesis**

**Key professional competences (top 5):**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**Key transferrable competences (top 5):**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**Key behavioral/social components (top 5):**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

31.

**EXERCISE 6: Competence analysis: card and checklist methods**

Basic principle: prioritising, numbering and graphic organisation -> creating structure and reducing chaos

1. Competence checklist with categories
2. Knowdell's motivated skills cards

32.

**Other approaches to competence analysis**

- **Field-based classification** (e.g. Europass):
  - Linguistic competences
  - Technical competences
  - Computer competences
  - Social competences
  - Organisational competences
  - Artistic competences
  - Other competences
- **Resource-based classification:**
  - Action
  - Reflection
  - Communication
  - Creation
- **NOTE:** always use the same framework (for the sake of pedagogy)

33.

### Conclusion

Competence analysis can be a useful and empowering method in guidance.

It uses "unscientific" methods of analysis, that are transparent for the client and that can help foster his employability.

It also has positive impact on clients professional self-image and self-esteem.

Moreover, well-structured competence analysis can contribute to generation or concretisation of career project ideas.

34.

Thank you for your attention!

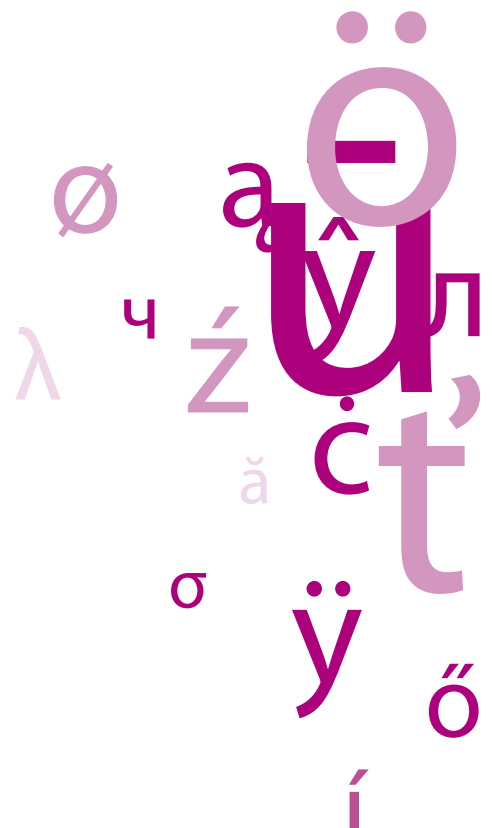
### Contact:

FEDERATION EUROPEENE DES CENTRES DE BILAN ET D'ORIENTATION PROFESSIONNELLE  
[www.fecbop.eu](http://www.fecbop.eu)

Tomas Sprlak  
International relations  
[t.sprlak@fecbop.eu](mailto:t.sprlak@fecbop.eu)



у



## Creative, expressive techniques in competence diagnostics and enhancement

Expressive techniques have their basis in therapeutic fields of psychotherapy, art, music, drama and other expressive therapies. The term “therapy” might have a connotation of being used with clients (patients) who are sick, have a disorder or a disability. Nevertheless, the usage of creative techniques serves for self-development and self-healing of anyone involved in the process. For these reasons I find it important to start with an introduction about my background which gives a shape to an approach towards clients and the usage of expressive techniques.

### Therapeutic Education in Slovakia

Slovakia has got a very specific field of study that does not exist in other countries in this form. We translate it as “Therapeutic Education”. In German it would be “Heilpädagogik”, in Hungarian “Gyógypedagógia”. However, it has got a different content compared to Hungary where the pedagogues study to be special teachers and therapists as well and they choose a field focused on a specific disability. In Slovakia, there are special educators, who are teachers for special schools, or they do assessments and re-education, correction, etc. And then, there is the field of therapeutic education that prepares students to become therapists. Therapeutic pedagogues can work, e.g.:

- in the school system, as professional pedagogical employees (together with school psychologists and school special educators);
- in the social care system, in social care institutions with people with disabilities, mental health vulnerability, or with elderly patients; or in children homes;
- in the health care system in early intervention, at psychiatry clinics, or as supportive therapists in hospitals;
- in their own practice (after gaining qualifications for opening a private office);
- or as psychotherapists (after completing an additional psychotherapy training and being registered in the Slovak psychotherapy association).

The focus of therapeutic education is on a person in a difficult life situation who needs support in development and self-employment. The main principle is a holistic approach to clients, perceiving them as human beings in their environment in the context of their strengths

and vulnerabilities and their relationships with themselves, the others and the world. Respect and values are an inherent part of therapeutic-pedagogical work. The therapist must have an attitude of deep respect towards the clients, regardless their disability or way of thinking. Our work is in supporting clients’ competences in all areas of life. The authors (Moor, 1974; Speck, 1998; Horňáková, 2007) of philosophy of therapeutic education say, helping means being close.

It is also necessary to work in a multidisciplinary team. It becomes a cliché in the area of helping professions to say we need to work in a team. But it has not been transferred to practice fully, at least not in Slovakia. In our qualitative research that was based on interviews with primary education teachers, we found out that teachers at schools think they work in a team. What actually happens is that when they meet a colleague in the school corridors they talk and discuss the issues they have with a problematic child. Informal talks can be considered a first step towards establishing a team. Or they talk about the child with a school psychologist. And then in the afternoon they talk to the parents and give them advice or assignments of what to do with the child at home. They feel that when parents listen to them and work with the child at home, they are cooperative. Not many teachers have an experience of working on a team based on partnership of all parties – regular meetings of all participating sides – teachers, psychologists, therapists, school directors, and the parents meet and discuss issues together, they set goals and regularly check on the process together. They are all partners in the process without hierarchy of anybody being an expert. Suggestions of the parents are as accepted as those of the professionals. Parents trust the teachers that they know what they are doing in the educational process. It is very important to learn from examples of good practice that exist in some institutions. Inclusive education that respects differences provides opportunities for each person to develop their skills.

Expressive techniques, from the point of view of therapeutic education, offer a chance for self-development. I would like to present the concept of salutogenesis, which is crucial to the understanding of clients in the way expressive methods approach them. Antonovsky (1996) talks about salutogenesis in the context of medical health care. He explains his understanding of health and sickness, or disease. He plays with words and says that a disease is not an illness in the common perspective but just a lack of wellbeing, dis-ease. Our task as doctors or therapists is to help people to feel at

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1. Contact: Mgr. Ivana Lištiaková, PhD.  
Institute of Social Sciences and Therapeutic Education  
Faculty of Education Comenius University in Bratislava  
Račianska 59, 813 34 Bratislava  
ivana.listiakova@gmail.com  
Tel.: +421 908 548 339



ease. Antonovsky (ibidem) uses a metaphor of a river. He says that the traditional medicine divides people into the healthy ones standing on the shore and the sick ones drowning in the water. Professionals are standing on the shore throw life buoys to their patients and pull them out of the sickness. Then people realized that it would be better to prevent this from happening so they created various preventive tools, they build fences on the shore so that people do not fall into the river of disease. Health care is preventing against symptoms and diseases. But Antonovsky (ibidem) says that in reality it is not quite like that. He states that we are all a little bit sick and healthy at the same time, that health is a continuum of health and sickness. There is no division of people into categories of healthy/intact and ill/disabled. Everyone is actually in the water. The difference is in how well we can swim. The task of the therapists is to teach people to swim and to teach them to swim well in their personal river. Each of us has a different river, some so have calm water, no hard obstacles and they just float through life. Some have got waterfalls and rocks in their river and they need to become very strong and courageous swimmers – some people naturally are, and some people need to learn – that is our job, to help them to build up their resilience (Komárik, 2009). This concept is transferable from the medical field to other helping professions as well. It is about changing the standpoint from symptomatic and pathogenic towards client centred and holistic approaches. Therapeutic education has its base on these principles and applies them in the process. Creative expressive therapies offered by a therapeutic educator have a philosophy personality and social development in the background – competence and skills enhancement, self-awareness, and positive self-esteem support.

## Expressive Techniques

Therapeutic education works with expressive therapies or art therapies in the broad sense. It uses art and its methods as a therapeutic means of change. In psychotherapy, it is words that help the client to grasp the ideas. Only after we name something it becomes real. Talking about the contents that are on a semi-conscious level or they are just a dim picture or an unspecific feeling, are explored through words. Often it is hard to name them immediately. The therapy is a process of finding the core of the issues. Creative expressive therapies work with even more tangible means. Artistic products stand somewhere between words and emotions in their ability to show meanings and help us understand.

- They offer a personalized symbolic way of expression that is easier for reaching deep concepts than trying to find the correct words.
- They offer tangible products that can be physically changed which enhances the inner psychological change (Šicková, 2002).
- They are a path connecting the concept to the words through a discussion about the product.

In the current studies of therapeutic education in Slovakia, the offered areas are: art therapy – using visual art (collage, painting, and drawing) and working with clay; music therapy, dramatherapy – using theatrical and drama techniques (including puppet therapy); play therapy focused on children; occupational therapy/ergotherapy – using crafts supporting fine motor skills and life skills, also enhancing everyday life skills, self care and professional competence; bibliotherapy – using literature, text, novels, poems or short pieces of written language, identification and contrast with characters; psychomotor therapy – working with body awareness, connection between physical and psychological world, including dance therapy.

The clients of therapeutic pedagogues are children, youth, adults and seniors. They are prepared to work with people with different kinds of problems and later in practice they can specialize. The focus is always on supporting competences of clients – life skills, helping to find and use hidden resources, learning support, decision making, etc. The principles of providing relief are not to work against the symptoms, but for the person, promoting development and health.

Currently, there are two international projects running focused on early intervention and supporting competences of professionals working with families in early intervention ([www.early-intervention.eu](http://www.early-intervention.eu), which offers ready to use materials for parents, and [www.icf-training.eu](http://www.icf-training.eu), which offers training for professionals in the usage of International Classification of Functionality, Disability and Health for Children and Youth – ICF-CY).

## Competence Enhancement

Stemming from the philosophical background and the approach towards clients, it is a key concept of therapeutic education to support competence of the person in need. Generally, it is thought, as well as Horňáková (2007) has written that the care or services are provided for people in difficult life situation, which in the traditional way of looking at special education, or psychotherapy would be people with disabilities, physical or mental health problems. As we see it now,



the resources of expressive therapies can be very useful for the “intact” population, too. However, returning to Antonovsky (1996), “intact” is a very tricky term and with regard to inclusive thinking it does not exist. Differences are “*natural, acceptable, and ordinary*” (Baglieri, Knopf, 2004, p. 525). Each person has got issues to work on and each person is entitled to help and support. The enhancement of competences should be the goal and the means of the process of education or therapy. The definition of a difficult life situation needs to be considered from a subjective point of view of the person involved. The approach of a therapeutic pedagogue is similar to the strategy of a life coach (Williams, Davis, 2002) regarding the client centred orientation and helping people in discovering their own solutions.

Competence support is a general principle, but it can also be understood as a narrower concept of discovering and enhancing life skills and their usage in a professional career. Everyone possesses skills for various things. It is often the role of the counsellor to help clients discover their skills. Not to identify the skills for them, but to create an environment where in the safe conditions skills can be discovered. Competence awareness is one of the goals that create a solid basis for building up career orientation. Thus in this article, we present activities based on expressive therapies and applied in the area of career counselling and we demonstrate their usage in the competence diagnostics and enhancement.

These techniques can be modified and used in the context of adult – individual or group counselling, career counselling when there is a need for change in the professional life or the client is trying to find employment. Often it is necessary to support client’s self-confidence, especially after an experience of a failure at a job interview or fear from attending one. School counsellors may find inspiration here as well. Expressive techniques are not limited by age or mental capacity. They work through means of arts and self-expression that allow variations and do not have “wrong answers”. The only condition is ethical – we offer the techniques in a way that is based on our professional expertise. We have to make sure that the aim of our endeavour matches our professional competence and we know how to deal with possible processes that might be triggered in the client’s thinking or feeling. As teachers, our goals will be educational or focused on the social relationships in the classroom. As special educators our goals will try to compensate for disabilities or difficulties. As psychologists our goals will be personality oriented. As psychotherapists our goals will be touching the level of a deep change in cognition, actions and emotions. As

coaches our goals will be in offering questions rather than answers and following the client’s way of thinking. All of these are valid and correct goals and we naturally engage in the counselling process from our own professional perspective. It can be considered a limitation that we do not fully use the potential of expressive therapies, only their constricted form, but I would rather see that as a protective factor. Expressive techniques have a lot to offer and the outcome will depend on the client as well on the way the professionals have used them and set their goals according to their professional competences.

## Practical part Introduction

=> The focus is on ice-breakers; creating welcoming and safe atmosphere; experiencing a feeling of being accepted in the group; releasing stress and hesitation about movement activities, being visible in the group or presenting; opening creativity channels.

- Say your name together with an adjective that starts with the same letter. Add a movement. E.g.: Crazy Catherine (and jump). The others repeat the name and the movement. => It gives a message of being welcomed. The focus is not only on remembering the name as it is in regular introduction. Participants fully focus on the person and show acceptance by repeating the movement and feeling the person through their own body. It is an activity suitable as a warm-up exercise. It needs a bit of creativity. It is fun.

- Giving a signal around in a circle. Make an eye-contact with the person on your right, both of you clap at the same time. Then the next person turns to the right and does the same with the next person. The signal goes around in a circle. To change direction, you can wave your hand in front of your nose. Go as fast as possible. => This game is focused on loosening hesitation, breaking barriers, tuning the group on the same wavelength.

- Elephant, toaster, Paris Hilton – One person stands in the middle and points at a person in the circle. He/she has to make an elephant’s trunk with their hands and the people standing on the sides make the elephant’s ears. Toaster: the person in the middle jumps, the two others on the sides make a box around him/her. Paris Hilton poses for the photographers and they take pictures. => Participants must focus and react quickly. It is fun. It is an introduction to acting in a role.

- Using a chair and making a statue – one person starts, the others join. Then the first one stands up and looks at the picture. => empathy, acting, connections in the group.

- Different kinds of walking. We are walking around in a forest, we are running, we are tired, there is a river.



It is muddy. There is a bear! Jump on the stones. We are walking towards a city. We meet a farmer, and a hunter. Now we meet different people in the city. A postman. A teacher. A businessman. A secretary. Participants can suggest their own ideas. We imagine we are in the role and we act it out. => Introduction to acting. Introduction to the topic of career.

## Directed imagination

Close your eyes, you can move around as you wish, imagine...

You just returned from a really good holiday. You feel fresh and relaxed. You are full of energy and you are looking forward to a new day at work. You woke up just as you like it – did you get up early? Did you sleep long? Maybe you have a coffee, maybe you drink a tea. You do your morning ritual and you go to work. Do you take a bus/drive/walk? You are enjoying the day. Do you work outside or inside? Do you work alone or on a team? Are you the boss? What are you responsible for? You feel strong. You know you can manage everything. This is your dream job.

=> realizing what is important for us to be happy. It is an orientation towards being successful, happy at work without sacrificing our lives.

## Visual art expression

- o Individual work – Draw the feeling you have now in any way you want – abstract or symbolic...=> realizing feelings connected with our work, job – drawing is medium that helps us to focus on our inner world. We bring our images from the previous activity.

- o Group interactions – Each group of 3-4 people has got a big paper. Put your mood from your individual pictures together on the big paper. Try to draw your mood on the big paper now. Do not talk too much to the others. Just observe how you can communicate in the drawing.

- o Discussion – How did you feel? How was it in the group? Who started drawing? Did you understand each other? Did you have enough room for expression?

=> The focus is on group interactions, keeping or changing our emotions according to the group interactions.

## Trace your hand

- o Trace your hand. Write your name into the drawing. Write something you really really like doing into the fingers, one hobby for one finger. It is followed by a quick sharing.

- o Now, think about skills and personal characteristics, personality traits that you need for being good at these

things you love doing. E.g.: Cooking – following instruction, creativity, patience, etc.

- o Do you apply these characteristics also at your work? => It is important to this activity in connection with the body – tracing a hand (or the whole body with a help of another person). We make a deep connection to ourselves through the body. The five fingers give us a limit – we have to be creative but it is not stressful. It is the best to focus this activity on hobbies that are seemingly absolutely different from the person's job and just then find the connections.

## Who I am..., who I should be..., and who I want to be...

- o Divide the paper into three parts – you can just draw three lines, you can use bubbles, circles, turn the paper any way you want. The first part is: Who I am..., the second part is: Who I should be..., and the third part is: Who I want to be... Draw these three things. You can draw yourself, or you can make it abstract or symbolic.

- o Come to the circle again. Act out all three parts. You can explain it afterwards.

=> This activity is bringing the focus on realizing how content we are or if there are any discrepancies between our wishes, social pressures and the way we see ourselves. It is important to realize who we are before we talk about particular jobs. Jobs give us a mask. As Jung explains (1921. In Gordon, 1987 & Pitruzzella, 2004), each profession has its own mask – persona – that is represented as a socially accepted acting in a role of a doctor, lawyer, etc. The risk is when we stop being ourselves and our personality becomes only that of the particular professional role.

## Train game

Three people make a train. The first one leads, the others close their eyes and follow. Then they change positions. Each person tries all the positions. It is followed by a discussion about how people felt in each position and why. A question can be raised – are you a leader?

=> The goal of a game at the end is relaxation, lightning-up, switching from serious and deep focus on oneself back on reality around us, interactions and cooperation.

## Closure

Express your feeling at the moment, from this session, what was important or interesting or just how you are with one or two words and a movement – show it and the others repeat the word, and the movement.



=> The opening and closing is similar. We start and finish in a ritualized way. By repeating each others' words and movements we share the experience.

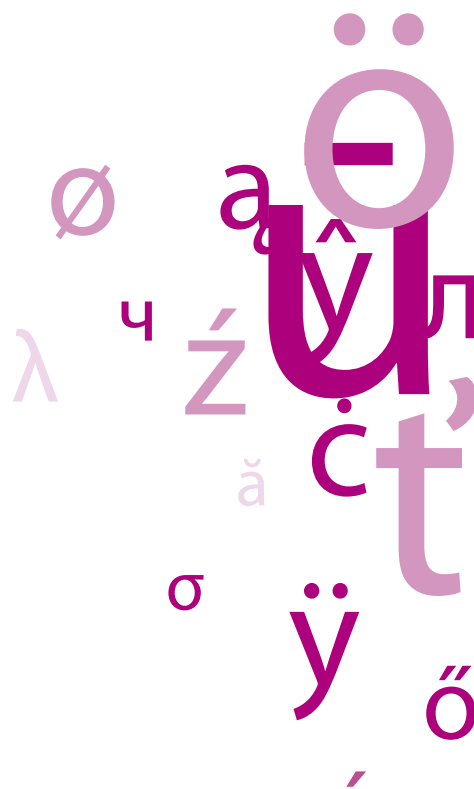
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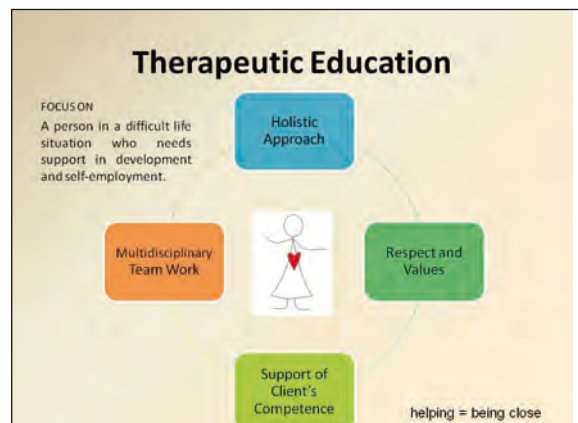


# Creative, expressive techniques in competence diagnostics and enhancement – workshop presentation

1.



2.



3.

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4.



5.

- ### Therapeutic background
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6.

Program operatívneho vzdelávania

### Current projects

#### Department of Therapeutic Education



Early childhood intervention – European Competence Initiative  
[www.early-intervention.eu](http://www.early-intervention.eu)

- Ready-to-use materials for professionals and parents about child development
- Coordinated by BISEV, Turkey

ICF-TRAIN  
[www.icf-training.eu](http://www.icf-training.eu)

- Usage of ICF-CY
- Online training of professionals in the field of early intervention
- Online team evaluation tool
- Coordinated by VINCO, Austria



7.

### Our clients

People in Difficult Life Situations

Children – Youth – Adults - Seniors

Focus on supporting competences of clients – life skills, helping to find and use hidden resources, learning support, decision making, etc.

8.

- ### Principles and goals of support
- Relieving from and lowering symptoms
  - Not against symptoms but for the person
  - Changes in attitudes and behavioural patterns
  - Changes in cognitive and emotional area
  - Promoting development and health





9.



10.

**Trace your hand**

- Trace your hand
- Write your name in the middle and write a sentence: I am good at...
- What activities are you good at? What are your hobbies? Write them into your hand, one in each finger.
- What skills, special personal characteristics do you need and employ when doing these activities?
- How do these characteristics get a use in your job or future job?

11.

**How do I feel when..?**

- Imaginative movement technique
- Imagine you work as a... How do you feel? How do you walk? Are you proud? Are you tired?
- Follow-up exercise – collage and paint – This is what my choice will bring me. This is what it will cost me. How do I feel about it?
- Write a poem about yourself in this position (you can use a play with words or hints - poem for starting letters of a word or poem using particular chosen words)

12.

**What is in my head?**

- Work in pairs – trace around each others heads – the papers can be on the wall or on the floor. Look into your head. What thoughts are in there? What can our mind do? Think, learn, dream, remember...
- What characterizes you?
- Collage, drawing, pantomime, drama sketch


13.

**For more ideas ...**

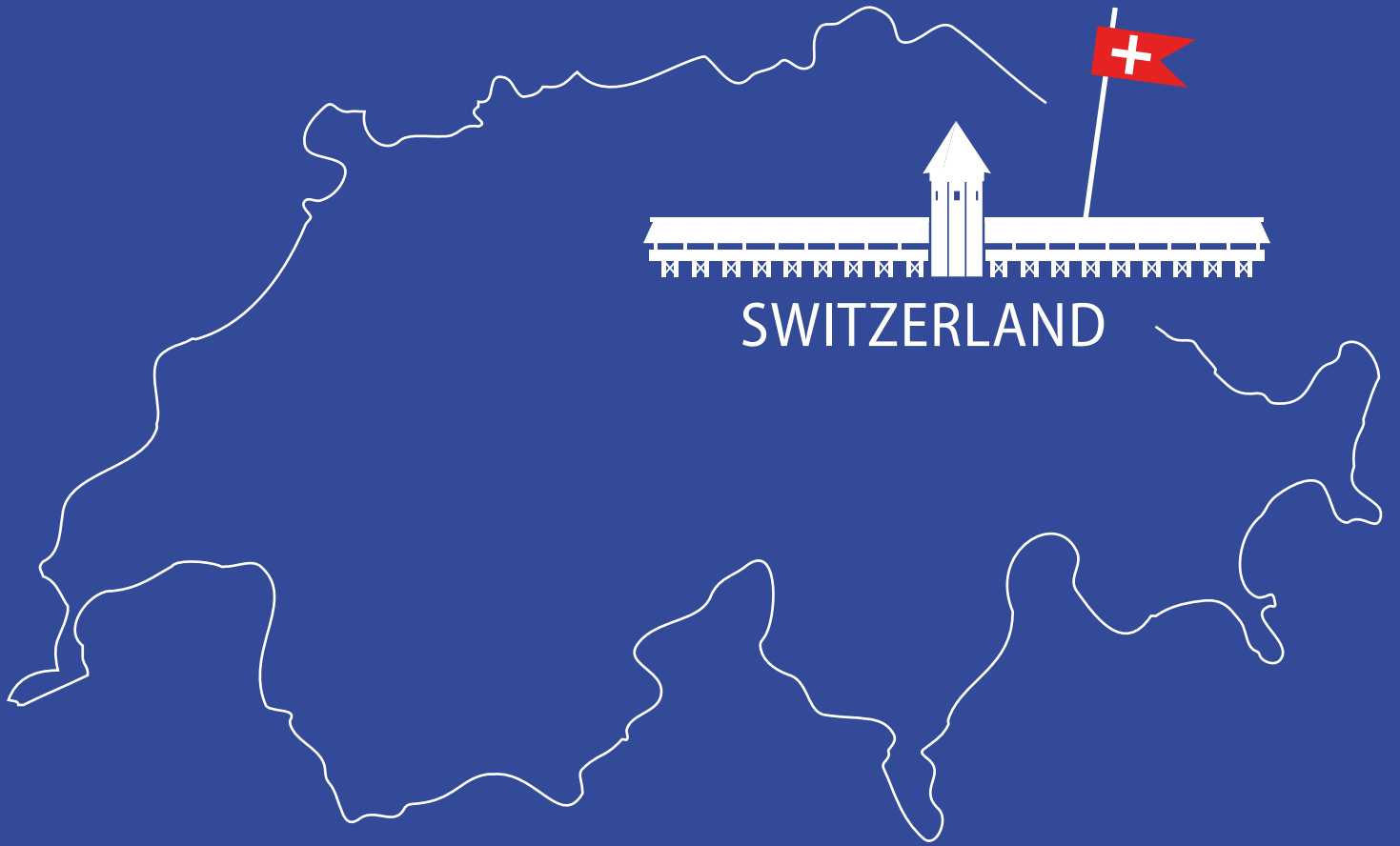
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14.

**Thank you!**



ivana.listiakova@gmail.com



10



### General questions:

How do you define “competences” in Switzerland?

There is no unique definition of competences in Switzerland and various categories of characteristics are included concerning this domain. However, a generally accepted – yet quite broad and ambiguous – definition would be: Competence is the validated ability to combine knowledge and skills in order to carry out efficient behaviors and achieve expected results in a specific professional situation. Thus it refers not only to technical and academic knowledge, but also to more general cognitive abilities (such as reasoning and problem-solving) and personal qualities (self-regulation, resistance to stress, interpersonal skills...).

According to such a definition, competence is the combination of different knowledges in a specific context and aiming to achieve a specific result. Three groups of knowledge are generally considered:

- o Factual knowledge (know that): The available theoretical background that can be mobilized in situation;
- o Nomological knowledge (know why): The capacity to conduct abstract and critical reasoning to extract general laws and methods from the available knowledge, hierarchise information, and perceive and understand specific dimensions and demands of the encountered professional situations;
- o Nomopragmatic or technological knowledge (know how): The capacity to carry out efficient behaviors that actually help achieving the expected results; this part implies that competences can only be observed in situ, and that the assessment requires the expertise of the observer (e.g. only experienced professionals can attest that competences are present).

When looking to identify and assess competences, one must take into account the importance of soft skills that contribute to communication, collaboration, planification and coping with environmental demands and pressure.

### Specific further questions:

What are the advantages or disadvantages of these tools for the counsellors and for the clients?

The main disadvantage is that competence assessment usually focus on academic achievement and technical or hard skills. This seems insufficient, since a significant part of academic and professional performance and success may be predicted by more subjective and psychological features (e.g. dispositions or self judgments) as well as by contextual and psychosocial factors (socio-economic status, cultural origin and immigration status, gender...).

Such interventions may lack efficiency when it comes to supporting marginalized or at-risk populations.

What kind of ICT tools (eg. computer programs, software, games etc.) are applied in Switzerland to diagnose competences? How popular are they?

Such tools are not very developed in Switzerland.

How are these tools disseminated among guidance practitioners or teachers (via internet, via courses, etc.)?

Career counseling centers have access to national distributors of psychometric instruments (e.g. [www.Tesztentrale.ch](http://www.Tesztentrale.ch)) or collaborate with research institutes to develop specific instruments. The practitioners within these public institutions receive proper training to use different instruments, via internal or external (university) courses. They are integrated in the school system and present in school institutions, and therefore ensure the diagnosis process themselves.

### Research and development:

Who/what organizations or institutions conduct research on competences or develop new tools in the field of diagnosis?

- o Swiss Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training
- o Laboratory of developmental, Counseling, and Intervention Psychology, University of Lausanne
- o School of Applied psychology, Zürich

What fields or topics are researched?

- o Development, validation and investigation of psychometric properties of diagnosis tools and instruments - Assessment of the effects of counseling and diagnosis on performance and success
- o Analysis of different job situations and identification in terms of demands, resources and competence needs in modern professional environments

How is the efficiency of tools measured?

the efficiency studies generally investigate the effects at two distinct levels:

- o At a personal level (e.g. effects on personal health and well-being, self-esteem, self-awareness, employability...)
- o At an environmental level (e.g. effects on the labor-market, efficiency in terms of re-employment rate, adequation with organizational needs and demands...)

Who/what organizations or institutions provide trainings for counsellors on diagnosis of competences?

Swiss Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training Institute of Psychology, University of Lausanne School of Applied psychology, Zürich

# Koorosh Massoudi

## Competences assessment in a highly selective labour market.

### Diagnosis tools and methods used in Switzerland – workshop presentation

1.



Competence assessment in a highly selective labour market:  
Diagnosis tools and methods used in Switzerland

Koorosh Massoudi PhD  
Institut of Psychology, University of Lausanne  
Géopolis, Bureau 4214  
CH-1015 Lausanne  
Tel.: +41 21 692 32 85  
Koorosh.Massoudi@unil.ch

2.

### Human subjectivity



KM-GEF-2013

3.

### Introduction

*The swiss educational system: Compulsory education*

- Strongly de-centralized: 26 cantons and three languages;
- Highly selective: assignment to hierarchized programmes after 5 to 7 years of primary school;
- Three main « tracks » or school levels: Basic, medium and extended academic requirements;
- The compulsory track highly determines the post-compulsory trajectory and the career options available (Hupka, et al., 2006);

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4.

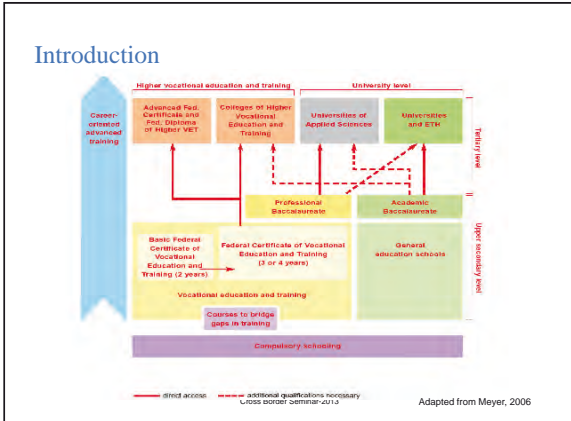
### Introduction

*The swiss educational system: Post-compulsory education*

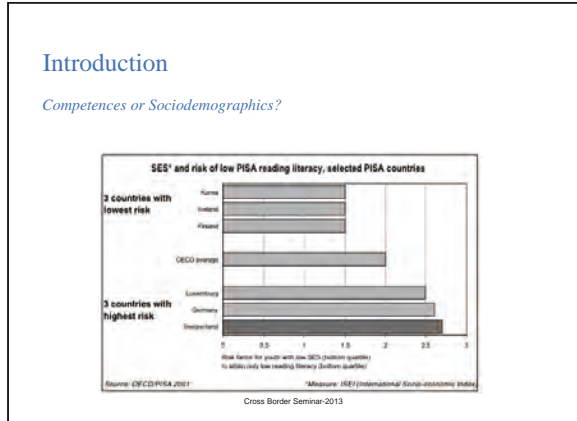
- VET represents almost 2/3 of post-compulsory education;
- Access to VET highly dependent of market conditions;
- Strong decrease of VET opportunities and high increase of competition;
- Transition from compulsory to upper secondary is not automatic: 1/4 of temporary preparatory programmes
- Access to and completion of upper secondary education as a social norm: Aggravation of poverty and social exclusion risk for « the forgotten few » (Streuli & Bauer, 2001);
- At-risk transitions (Masdonati, 2007; Masdonati & Massoudi, 2012)

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5.



6.



7.

### Introduction

*Competence assessment in Switzerland*

- From 4 to 12 weeks depending on the aim of the process
- Exploration of career/training options
- Information gathering (self, labor market and the decision-making process)
- Reinforcement of self-concepts (self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-competence)
- (Re)-entering the labor-market
- Professional transitions
- Validation of professional experience

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8.

### Introduction

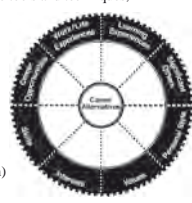
*Competence assessment in Switzerland*

Assessment methods:

- Psychometric tests;
- Systematic observation (e.g. AC)
- Self-reports;
- Narrative tools and techniques;

Dimensions:

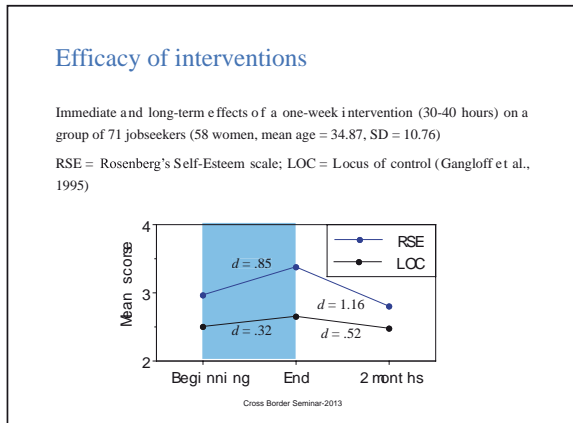
- Cognitive (abstract reasoning, memory);
- Motivational (interests, values);
- Affective (personality, emotions)
- Behavioral (hard vs soft skills)
- Self-concepts (perceived self-efficacy, self-esteem)



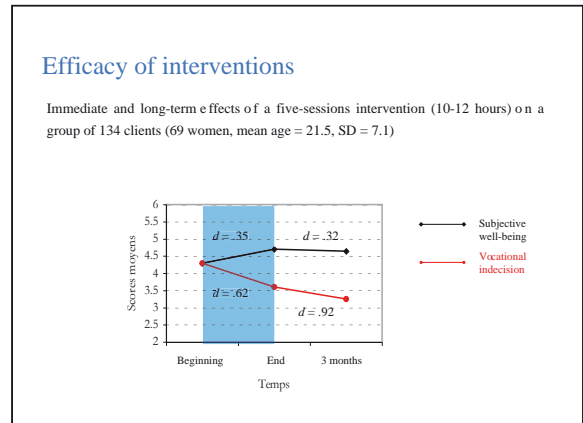
Cross Border Seminar-2013 (Amundson et al., 2003)



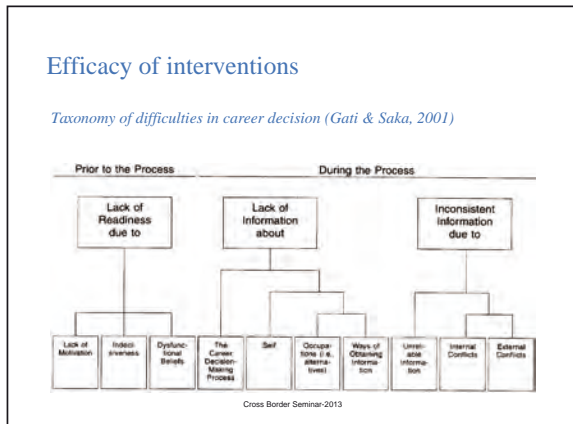
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10.



11.



12.

### Definition

Competence is the individual's ability to combine different types of knowledge and experience in a specific situation, in order to achieve a specific result. Three dimensions are considered:

- Declarative knowledge (theoretical and educational background)
- Procedural knowledge (know how, skills and capacities)
- Individual style and characteristics (motives, dispositions, attitudes)

Competence is tightly associated with experience and entirely contextualized, thus it can only be observed in a specific personal or professional situation.

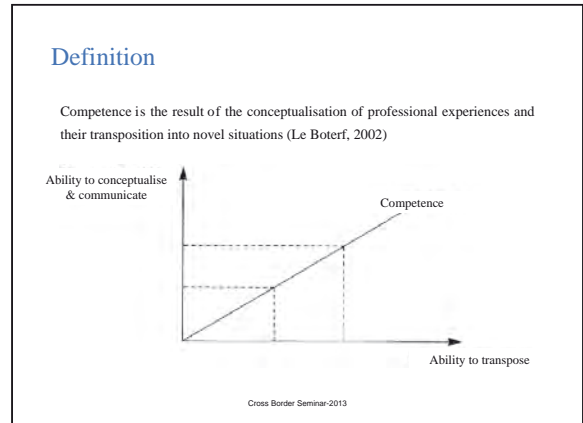
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### Definition

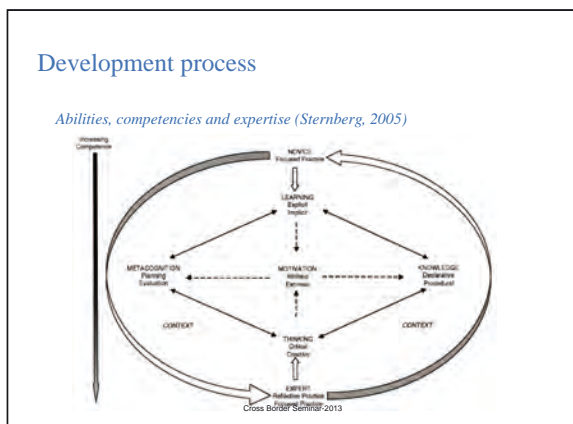
Zarifian (2001) gives a broad definition of competencies, comprising of several dimensions:

1. Ability to take initiatives and responsibilities, and to carry out actions in order to cope with the demands of encountered professional situations (individual involvement).
2. A practical intelligence that feeds on available knowledge and skills and transforms them to meet the demands of a novel situation (ability to adapt and transpose).
3. The ability to mobilize a network of agents, to share goals and responsibilities (collective involvement).

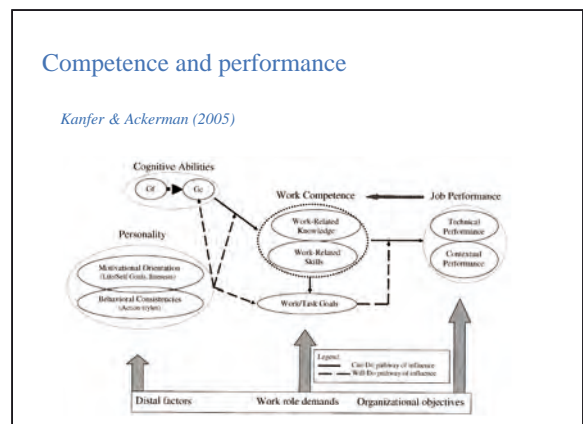
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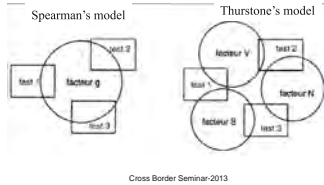
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17.

### Cognitive abilities

- Single general intellectual ability (g)
- Lower order factors of intellectual abilities (spatial, verbal, numerical)
- General fluid intelligence (Gf): Abstract reasoning, memory and novel problem solving
- General crystallised intelligence (Gc): accumulation of educational and experiential knowledge and skills



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19.

### Cognitive abilities

#### Fluid Intelligence (Gf):

- Highly associated with genetic factors;
- Peaks early in an individual's work life then decreases with age;
- Mainly an indicator of the ability to learn, thus a good predictor of academic success and achievement for adolescents and young adults;
- Indicates potential for developing competence in cognitively challenging jobs and novel situations;
- Interindividual differences are stable, but vulnerable to pathologies;

#### Crystallised Intelligence (Gc):

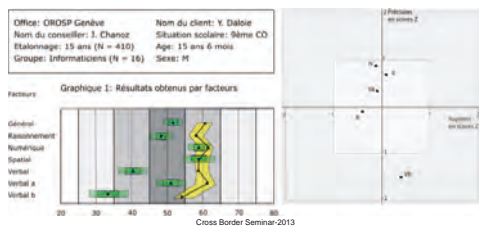
- Represents a wide range of academic, professional and extra-professional knowledge and skills, thus it is critically associated with work competence;
- Develops until relatively old age;
- Seen to be a better predictor of work competence (since it is easier and more effective to solve a problem based on experience, rather than through a novel information processing)
- Interindividual differences are unstable, depending on learning opportunities and individual motivational factors

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21.

### Cognitive abilities

- Batterie Romande de Tests d'Aptitudes (BRTA): General factor, abstract reasoning, numerical, spatial and verbal factors
- Comparison by age and education level



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23.

### Non cognitive abilities

#### Emotional-social intelligence (Bar-On, 2000):

A range of non cognitive abilities that allow individuals to effectively understand and express themselves, understand and relate with others, and cope with environmental demands and pressures:

1. Intrapersonal (self-awareness, assertiveness, independence and self-actualisation)
2. Interpersonal (empathy, social responsibility and relationship)
3. Adaptability (reality-testing, flexibility and problem-solving)
4. Stress management (stress tolerance and impulse control)
5. General mood (optimism and happiness)

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18.

### Cognitive abilities

#### Three-Stratum Theory (Carroll, 1993):

- Stratum I: specific factors
- Stratum II: 8 broad factors
  - Gf
  - Gc
  - Memory and learning
  - Visual perception
  - Auditory perception
  - Retrieval ability (long-term memory)
  - Cognitive speediness
  - Processing speed
- Stratum III: General level of intelligence (g)

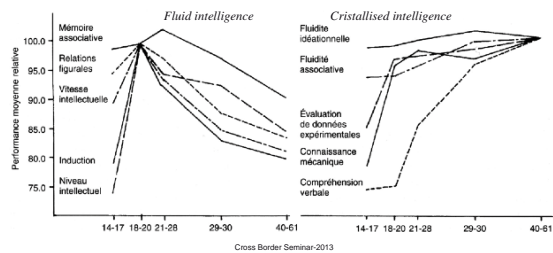


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20.

### Cognitive abilities

- The evolution of Gf and Gc with age (Ackerman, 1996; Cattell, 1971)



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22.

### Cognitive abilities

- Numerous studies show high (around .60) correlation between cognitive abilities and academic performances (Zimmerman et al., 1997);
- This correlation decreases when the level of education increases: Elementary school, 0.6-0.7; High school, 0.5-0.6; College, 0.4-0.5; Graduate school, 0.3-0.4 (Jensen:1980)
- The link between cognitive abilities and performances depends on the complexity of the tasks performed (Salgado et al., 2003)

	Job performance	Training success
High complexity	.64	.74
Medium complexity	.535	.3
Low complexity	.51	.36

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24.

### Non cognitive abilities

#### Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT, 2002)

Overall Scale	Two Areas of the MSCEIT	Four branches of the MSCEIT	Task Level
Emotional Intelligence (EQ)	Experiential Emotional Intelligence (EEI)	Perceiving Emotions (PEI)	Faces
		Facilitating Thought (FT)	Pictures
	Strategic Emotional Intelligence (SEI)	Understanding Emotions (UEI)	Changes
		Managing Emotions (MEI)	Blends
			Emotional Management
			Emotional Relations

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25.

### Non cognitive abilities

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26.

### Non cognitive abilities

	MSCEIT	SREIT	EQ-i
<b>Measures of emotional IQ</b>			
MSCEIT	1.00		
SREIT	.18**	1.00	
EQ-i	.21**	.43***	1.00
<b>Big Five</b>			
Neuroticism	-.08	-.19**	-.57***
Extraversion	.11	.32***	.37***
Openness	.23***	.43***	.16*
Agreeableness	.28***	.09	.27***
Conscientiousness	.03	.25***	.48***
<b>Measures of well-being</b>			
Psychological well-being	.28***	.69***	.54***
Subjective well-being	-.05	.22***	.35***
Verbal SAT	.32***	.05	-.03
<b>M</b>	101.44	5.74	90.87
<b>SD</b>	12.91	.44	13.81

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27.

### Non cognitive abilities

Measures of Emotional IQ	Social Deviance	High School Rank	College GPA
MSCEIT	-.27***	.21**	.16*
EQ-i	-.21**	.04	.10
SREIT	-.07	-.02	.06
<b>Big Five</b>			
Neuroticism	.00	.07	-.03
Extraversion	-.07	.05	.15*
Openness	-.07	.15	.12
Agreeableness	-.39***	.24***	.06
Conscientiousness	-.20**	.19*	.33***
<b>Measures of well-being</b>			
Psychological well-being	-.16*	.06	.19**
Subjective well-being	-.07	.01	.16*
Verbal SAT	-.08	.39***	.27***

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### Affective dispositions

NEO-PI-R (Costa & McCrae, 1992): Stable dispositions through time and situations

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29.

### Motivational orientation

Correspondence between Holland's hexagonal model (1975) and Tracey's tridimensional model (2002)

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30.

### Motivational orientation

Opus: Inventory of activities and professional roles (geca-psytest.com)

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31.

### Motivational orientation

Schwartz (1996, 2004): 4 value categories (self-transcendence, self-enhancement, openness to change and conservation) and 10 motivational types.

32.

### Motivational orientation

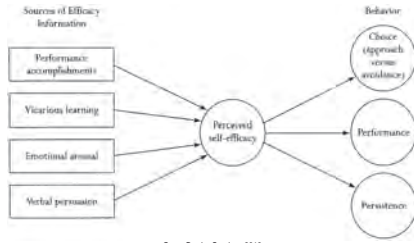
I.V.P.G.: Inventory of general and professional values (geca-psytest.com)



33.

### Self-concepts and personal resources

Although self-realisation (and thus development of competences) is a basic human motive, people do not engage in activities unless they expect some success!



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34.

### Self-concepts and personal resources

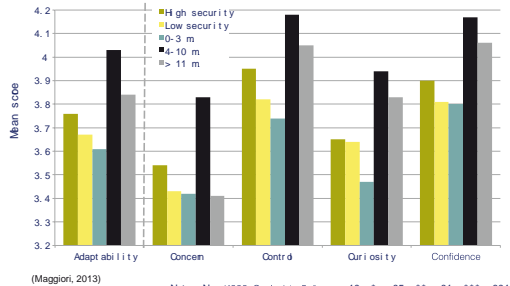
Career Adaptabilities (Savickas, 1997, 2005; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012):

- Individual's resources for coping with current and anticipated tasks, transitions, and traumas in their occupational roles that alter their social integration
- Four dimensions:
  1. Concern – about one's future role as a worker
  2. Control – perceived personal control over vocational future
  3. Curiosity – tendency to explore one's environment
  4. Confidence – self-confidence in the ability to solve concrete career problems

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35.

### Self-concepts and personal resources



(Maggiore, 2013)

Notes: N = 1'998; Scale 1 to 5; \* p < .10, p\* < .05, p\*\* < .01, p\*\*\* < .001

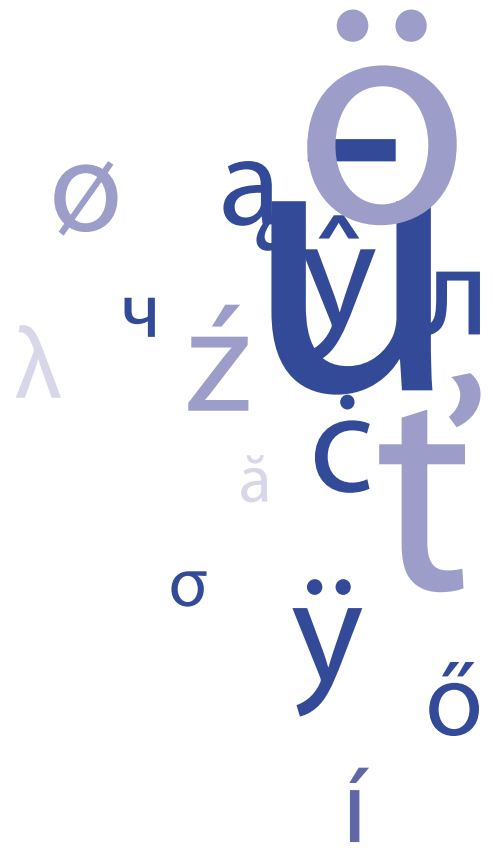
36.

### Conclusion

- The interview remains the main instrument when it comes to assessing competences;
- Narrative techniques enhance clients' autonomy and reflexivity, thus reinforcing the self-concepts;
- Cognitive abilities are robust predictors of competence. However, the use of cognitive tests may be most useful with clients lacking official training or diplomas (the educational background being a sufficient indicator of cognitive abilities for others)
- Personality assessment offers useful information on personal style and affective tendencies;
- Vocational interests and values assessment offer information on motivational direction and intensity.

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