

Szabolcs Jobbágy¹

Competency Based Modular Professional Training

Kompetenciaalapú, moduláris jellegű szakképzés

In my PhD thesis I discussed the possibility and necessity of revising and reshaping the NCO basic professional certification, signals and military information-network operator branch and its sub-branches, the new type two years full time education, and warrant officer half-year modular comprehensive training for signals and information branch certification at the HDF NCO Academy. In my present paper I would like to give an overview on what exactly competency based modular professional training means.

Keywords: professional training, competency based, modular professional training

Doktori (PhD) értekezésemben a Magyar Honvédség Altiszti Akadémia (MH AA) honvéd altiszt alap szakképesítést adó híradó, és katonai informatikai-rendszer üzemeltető ágazatának és szakmairányainak új típusú, kétéves, nappali iskolarendszerű, illetve a honvéd zászlós ráépülő szakképesítés híradó és informatikai ágazatának belső, féléves, tanfolyami rendszerű, kompetenciaalapú, moduláris jellegű szakképzési rendszere átalakításának, újragondolásának lehetőségét és szükségességét vizsgáltam. Jelen közleményemben fogalmi szinten röviden szeretném áttekinteni, hogy mit is jelent valójában a kompetenciaalapú, moduláris jellegű szakképzési rendszer.

Kulcsszavak: szakképzés, kompetenciaalapú, moduláris jelleg

Introduction

In my PhD thesis entitled *On developing the digital professional knowledge of the signals and information NCO and warrant officer operating personnel* I surveyed,

¹ National University of Public Service, Faculty of Military Sciences and Officer Training, Signal Department, Senior Lecturer, PhD, e-mail: jobbagy.szabolcs@uni-nke.hu, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2104-4665>

among other things, the possibility of fitting the knowledge material of different courses and their modules reachable on each level of CISCO Networking Academy Training – NetAcad Program into the signals and information education portfolio of the HDF NCO Academy, and if that is possible, through which means. We speak about an education portfolio within which – in accordance with the national professional education system, and its changes, meeting the requirements and expectations raised by the legislative background, the military leadership and the professional superiority – there is a possibility to get NCO professional certification without regard to any exact professional branch by achieving a new type two years full time education, also to get a complementary warrant officer professional certification by succeeding a half-year long internal competency based modular professional training.

The national professional education system got to its current form through a quite long supervision procedure affected by several regulators. One of the requirements within this supervision was the creation of a competency based modular type professional training system. One of the main reasons to this was the aim of raising the level of education quality, also the securing of comparable, practice-oriented knowledge [1: 99].

Naturally, these changes have not left the professional education of the concerned personnel within HDF without effect [1: 139–143]. Thus, as a result of all these procedures, the former system of NCO education has been revised according to the changes, and came the new type of NCO and warrant officer education to life at the HDF NCO Academy, Szentendre, on 31 July 2012 [1: 278–282].

In the digital society of the 21st century, which is based on knowledge [2], education has to be realised in a way that meets the appropriate criteria. A knowledge meeting the expectations of the work market and the employers can be gained when realising these requirements. This enables the employee to stand their ground on the work market, live up the changes of it, and stay ready to constant renewal based on their practice-oriented knowledge. At the same time, lifelong learning has an ever growing importance in the age of digital society, thus personal motivation, an urge to gain knowledge is crucial.

All these substantial elements are involved in the citation from Albert Szent-Györgyi, which I have chosen to my thesis: "The school is for people to learn to learn, to awaken in their craving for knowledge, to discover the joy of doing a good job, to taste the thrill of creation and to find the work they will love" [3].

With all these thoughts in mind, let us have a slight summarising view on what we understand on competency based modular professional training.

Competency Based Professional Training – Term and Meaning

The term of competency can be approached from multiple directions and in a manifold way. Among others, for example depending on whether one focuses on the average, everyday meaning, that of education policy or from a scientific aspect. Beyond that,

also international organisations, like the European Union, or the OECD² approach this issue in a slightly different way. All of them are affected by the appearance and effects of competency in any of the fields like education, academic life, or the economic and workforce aspects of it. In the first case for example, competency comprises the threefold summarisation of knowledge, capability and attitude. While according to the second, competency is a feature to tackle complex tasks successfully among a given context [4]. Consequently, no uniform definition evolved either in the Hungarian, or international literature, since each author grasps the meaning of the term via their own approach. What can be told for sure is that it is a word of Latin origin with the basic meaning of scope, assignment, know-how, adequacy and feature according to the online dictionary of foreign words [5]. According to the Hungarian online terminology dictionary, it bears a narrower, threefold meaning of scope, authority and assignment [6]. The following definition by Professor John Coolahan of the National University of Ireland, Department of Education, is one of the most fundamental ones to be found in almost all the literature and publication on education: "Competence be regarded as the general capability based on knowledge, experience, values, dispositions which a person has developed through engagement with educational practices" [7]. While defining the term in a more complex and specific educational approach, according to the definition connected to the national professional training system, Act LXXVII of 2013 on adult education can be regarded as fundamental, in which we also find a form of definition to it. According to the 20th point, second, explanatory part "competency is: the sum of the knowledge, abilities, behavioural features of the individual, through which the given person is ready to achieve a given task with success" [8: (Chapter 1) (2.) 2. § (20)]. At this point I would like to refer to the earlier mentioned citation from Albert Szent-Györgyi.

The word itself has been introduced in the world of education by the experts of professional training first, becoming one of the most widely used terms within professional literature, publications and legislative system.

According to these, it can be said that competency is a fairly complex term. On the one hand, it comprises the knowledge gained in the usual traditional frames, on the other hand, it also involves the given and earned personal features, abilities, knowledge of the individual and the informal fulfilling of their desire to know. Thus, from the source viewpoint, it can be defined as the attributes and features of the person, from the aspect of the outcome, it also comprises the production of deed and the achievement of the person.

Therefore, it can be said that in the world of professional education only knowledge has a value that gains manifestation in successful and valuable work [9]. Based on these, competency can be defined with two words: capable knowledge. "Thus competency based professional education is preparing for the summary of the expectable knowledge, abilities, behavioural features, through which the individual will be capable to fulfil a given task with success" [10: 4].

² Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Modular Type Professional Education – Term and Meaning

The other term closely connected to professional education is modular type education, to which I utilise a shorter way to the point definition.

Act LXXVII of 2013 as cited earlier in connection with competency based education, also gives a basis to define this term, giving an exact definition on how to create modular type of education. The 22nd point of the second, explanatory part gives the following definition: "Such unit of learning material within the education program, which is a part of the logically uniform knowledge material that can be maintained independently, bears defined personal and subject conditions, with a measurable outcome, that can be educated separately. It can be divided into further educational units, and after gaining the knowledge material, the individual partaking will be able to utilise the knowledge, abilities and features at a given level, also to utilise them during their further education" [8: (Chapter1) (2.) 2. § (22)]. Thus, the conclusion can be drawn that the importance of modularity shows duplicity. On the one hand, this unfolds in that it supports the effective gaining of capable knowledge, as prescribed by the competency based approach, through practice-oriented utilisation of knowledge, abilities features and attributes. On the other hand, it can be found in the expectation to support the system of comprehensive education, to enable transfer between each professional certification, also the resilient creation of required knowledge material, exam requirements and expectations. These are also supported by the following point of the act regarding the explanation of modular system. According to this, modular system is "an education system, knowledge material comprising of given, connectible units and modules, which enable the gaining of knowledge required to meet the outcome expectations piece by piece, secures the fluctuation between professions and educational levels, the adaption to different levels of knowledge and work experience, and the specialisation of education. By connecting and changing the modules, different modular education programs and learning materials can be created" [8: (Chapter1) (2.) 2. § (23)].

Modularisation appears on different levels in case of professional education. First on the level of outcome requirements but also on that of the education procedure leading to the former. In the first case, modularity refers first of all to the connection between the outcome expectations of each education, since "all professional certification within the new NQR comprises several different requirement modules. These involve each group of competencies characteristic to the given professional training within them" [9: 17]. As a result "outcome modularity secures the transfer between professional certifications, thus the possibility that if someone possesses already a professional certification, the competencies of which are also part of another professional training, then the achieving of the latter becomes easier to them, the timeframe of the education can be shortened, and evaluation becomes easier as well" [9: 17]. In the second case it means the gaining of required competency in form of learning material units at first place.

Thus modular professional education means "organising the form of education procedure, which transmits logically connected knowledge material and individual units among organised and defined conditions" [10: 4].

Conclusions

Since the professional education system, and the reachable certification analysed in my PhD thesis are part of the recent National Qualifications Register as effective since 10.08.2016, thus, in case of revising it, that has to be done with an eye to the national system of professional education, meeting the requirements and expectations within, and following the changes of it. Beyond that, the revision has to be achieved so that it meets the requirements and expectations of the military leadership and the professional superior, as well.

Based on my examination and analysis, I got to the conclusion that the new type of professional education system at HDF NCO Academy has been successfully created according to all these. As a result of the competency based, modular type professional education, such professional NCO-s and warrant officers appear at the outcome of the education, who bear up-to-date theoretical and practical knowledge, thus being a workforce with valuable and convertible knowledge both to the HDF and also the civilian work market. Beyond that, those succeeding, gain a useable knowledge based on which, their further education and training can be simplified and helped greatly and in case of possible secession, helping of their employment in the civilian work market can be secured.

References

- [1] S. Jobbágy, *A honvéd altiszt és zászlós híradó és informatikai üzemeltető állomány digitális szakmai ismereteinek fejlesztése. PhD-értekezés.* Budapest: Nemzeti Közszolgálati Egyetem, 2018.
- [2] Z. Haig, "The information infrastructure of the information society," *Bolyai Szemle*, vol. 18, no. 4, pp. 133–144, 2009.
- [3] Szellemi Tulajdon Nemzeti Hivatala, „Magyar feltalálók és találmányaik – Szent-Györgyi Albert,” [Online]. Available: www.sztnh.gov.hu/hu/magyar-feltalok-es-talalmanyaik/szent-gyorgyi-albert [Accessed Aug. 21, 2018]
- [4] A. S. Magyar, „A kompetencia alapú, moduláris felépítésű képzés,” [Online]. Available: www.szakmavalasztas.hu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=53&Itemid=74&lang=hu [Accessed Aug. 21, 2018]
- [5] "Kompetencia," [Online]. Available: <http://idegen-szavak.hu/kompetencia> [Accessed Aug. 21, 2018]
- [6] "Kompetencia," [Online]. Available: <http://mek.oszk.hu/adatbazis/magyar-nyelv-ertelmezo-szotara/kereses.php?kereses=kompetencia> [Accessed Aug. 21, 2018]
- [7] J. Coolahan, "Key Competencies for Europe," Report of the Symposium in the Berne 27–30 March 1996, Strasbourg, Council of Europe, 1997, p. 26.
- [8] „2013. évi LXXVII. törvény a felnőttképzésről,” [Online]. Available: https://net.jogtar.hu/jr/gen/hjegy_doc.cgi?docid=A1300077.TV [Accessed Aug. 12, 2018]
- [9] „HEFOP 3.5.1. Korszerű felnőttképzési módszerek kidolgozása és alkalmazása." A szakképzés rendszere. Tananyag-sorozat. Tanár továbbképzési Füzetek II. kötet, A Nemzeti Szakképzési és Felnőttképzési Intézet kiadványa, 2008. [Online] Avai-

lable: site.nive.hu/hefop351/ttk/download.php?filename=2_kotet_b5.pdf. [Accessed Aug. 12, 2018]

- [10] L. Vízvári, „Az új” moduláris kompetencia alapú szakképzés,” [Online]. Available: <http://mediatar.eti.hu/medialib/61F90A81-6BEE-6F66-4789-17EBDDBCB5DF.pdf> [Accessed Aug. 12, 2018]