Professional versus occupational models of work competence

Stan Lester[1]
Stan Lester Developments, Taunton UK

Draft of article published in *Research in Post-Compulsory Education*, 19 (3), 276-286, 2014.

Abstract

In addition to the occupational standards that underpin National Vocational Qualifications, the UK has a parallel if less complete system of competence or practice standards developed and controlled by professional bodies. While there is a certain amount of overlap between the two types of standard, recent research points to a distinct professional, as opposed to occupational, perspective on work competence. This can be characterised as focusing on ethics, professionalism and key standards rather than the detail of roles and functions; being universally applicable rather than having a core-and-options structure; and being designed to provide confidence in practitioners' abilities to act as a member of the profession rather than in a bounded occupational role. These factors are illustrated by reference to practices in professions with which the author has worked, suggesting that there is a spectrum of approaches from this archetypally professional one to a more utilitarian, occupationally-oriented one.

Key words

Occupational standards; professional standards; competence; capability.

Introduction

Over the last twenty-five years, the United Kingdom (UK) has developed an aspirationally comprehensive system of setting role descriptions and standards of competence for work occupations. This system of national occupational standards is best known for underpinning National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), and it continues to be used as the basis for many qualifications in the Qualifications and Credit Framework and in the separate Scottish system. Occupational standards follow a broadly common approach which assumes that all work can be expressed in terms of roles and functions and that these can be specified in more-or-less finite terms. They were originally introduced as part of a policy reform designed to improve the relevance of vocational education and training, and not least to provide meaningful qualifications for young people on government-funded training programmes; initially focusing on less complex kinds of work, they were quickly extended to management and now include many occupations that typically involve graduate or postgraduate entry. Most occupational standards are now developed and managed by Sector Skills Councils (SSCs), government-endorsed and at least nominally employer-led bodies that can generally trace their origins back to the NVQ lead bodies of two decades ago, and in some cases to the industry training boards set up in the 1960s.

[1] s.lester<at>devmts.co.uk

The UK also has a long-established and influential (if more loosely-defined) system of professions, working principally at what might be termed the upper end of the education and training spectrum. Professions have generally been responsible for the standards of education, practice and conduct of their members, archetypally through self-governing associations that set, monitor and where necessary enforce these standards. Historically the key elements underpinning professions' self-regulating activities were the knowledge-base and associated educational curriculum, the requirements for becoming a member of the profession, and the code of ethics, conduct or practice. More recent pressures for greater accountability from professions, supported to some extent by a desire to create more diverse entry-routes, have led to increased concern with ensuring that new practitioners are suitably proficient at the point when they are signed off as fit to practise. This has led to many professions reinforcing the 'requirements for becoming a member' through explicit standards of competence or practice (Lester 2014a, Williams *et al* 2013).

The interest of professions in competence and proficiency coupled with the now well-established extension of occupational standards to the upper levels of the occupational spectrum has created what appears to be a substantial overlap between the standards-related work of professional bodies and sector skills organisations. Although professional bodies are often represented on, or work with, SSCs, the use of the same standards by the two types of organisation is less common than might be expected. The reasons for this are potentially complex, although they stem partly from a difference between an occupational perspective on roles and competence and a professional one. The remainder of this paper draws on two main sources to explore this issue. The first is a study which I carried out in 2012 (Lester 2014a), involving examining standards and competence frameworks from 40 UK professions, supported by an earlier study of professional entry-routes and qualifying requirements (Lester 2008, 2009). The second is my work with four specific professions over the last fifteen years as a developer or reviewer of professional standards and qualifying systems.

Occupations and occupational competence

An occupation, drawing on the Latin root *occupare* (to occupy), is an activity that takes up time: more specifically in the sense under discussion here, a (normally remunerative) role that occupies a person's working hours. An occupational perspective therefore has no special claims to make, in terms either of self-actualisation (as might a vocational standpoint to use that word in its correct sense) or of the need for commitment to any particular ethos (as might be the case from a professional viewpoint); it can simply be concerned with how the time is spent and therefore with factors such as quality and efficiency. This perspective is essentially utilitarian in nature, and is reflected in the way that the SSCs and their predecessors have gone about describing and creating standards for the work of occupations.

The two essential tools that have underpinned the UK occupational standards project are *occupational mapping*, essentially a research exercise to identify the nature and size of the occupation, the main roles within it and how they are organised, along with the main influences on its development; and *functional analysis*, an expert process to create standards by breaking the occupation down into successively more detailed work functions that contribute to achieving its purpose. These processes are described by Mitchell and Mansfield (1996), with more recent guidance provided by Carroll and Boutall (2010). Functional analysis is a development rather than a research technique, and although consultation is normally carried out as part of the process, it is a deductive method that depends for the quality of its results on the knowledge, currency and judgement of the expert group that carries it out. Three comments need to be made about functional

analysis and occupational standards in the context of the discussion to follow. The first is that by using an approach that works downwards from the purpose of an occupation, functional analysis creates a representation or map that attempts to define all the work that the occupation covers; typically this leads to a 'core and options' relationship between occupational standards and individual jobs, so that while some of the standards apply to all jobs, others will apply selectively. Secondly, because work is described by function, there is a tendency to differentiate between activities with different purposes even if the skills, knowledge and techniques needed to carry them out are essentially the same. Thirdly, unsophisticated use of functional analysis tends not to distinguish the critical from the trivial, and many (particularly earlier) examples of occupational standards have been justly criticised for containing excessive and sometimes inane detail.

Doubts about the ability of this functional approach to provide a realistic reflection of more than the most basic types of occupational competence have been voiced quite widely since the early 1990s. A particular critique has been that occupational standards are too static and closed to reflect the nature of complex work, where what is 'competent' both evolves and is subject to negotiation and context (e.g. Elliott 1991, Burgoyne 1993, Grugulis 2000). There has also been widespread concern particularly from an educational perspective that in focusing on the outputs of competent activity, the competent person – and what it is that makes them competent – becomes lost (Gonczi *et al* 1990, Cheetham & Chivers 2005). The functional approach has nevertheless survived several reviews of occupational standards and qualifications and two significant changes to the UK's vocational qualifications frameworks, although recent reviews of different aspects of the vocational sector have criticised the standards once again as too prescriptive (Wolf 2011, Richard 2012, Whitehead 2013).

More positively, the approach taken in occupational standards has promoted an external, socially-defined or activity-based version of competence that reflects being able to meet an explicit expectation (Eraut 1998). This contrasts with an internal view of competence (or competency) which focuses on the skills, knowledge and other attributes of individuals that are assumed to enable them to act competently. The external approach claims to be more holistic in that it represents the ability to use these attributes to achieve valued results, whereas from this perspective simply possessing skills, knowledge and attributes does not imply the ability to use them appropriately or effectively; to borrow a phrase, it may add up to no more than being "a homunculus with a toolkit" (Holmes 1999, p89). Nevertheless both approaches have validity in relevant circumstances; internal models of competence are generally more useful for aiding development, while the external version is more geared to assessment and sign-off as fit to practise (Lester 2014a).

Professions and professional competence

In the English-speaking world the term 'profession' is sometimes used synonymously with 'occupation' (as is the case in much of continental Europe), though its traditional usage is to refer to occupations associated with high levels of education and training and sometimes with well-developed systems of governance and self-regulation (e.g. Millerson 1964). However, the word's Latin root (*profiteri*, to declare publicly or make a vow) points to a more meaningful distinction in that being a member of a profession requires a formal commitment both to acquiring the relevant knowledge and skills and to the ethos and way of working of the profession, in a way that simply working in an occupation does not. While acknowledging the large body of literature on the nature of professions – useful discussions are provided by Abbott (1988), Freidson (2001) and Evetts (2003) among others – this more etymological notion is a useful one not least in that it focuses attention on *professionals* as active agents rather than *professions* as social constructs.

The way that professions conceptualise their core territories cannot be said to follow any one particular approach or perspective. Nevertheless, compared with the even mapping of activities that functional analysis aims to achieve, professions tend to be more oriented towards core capabilities that can be taken, applied and developed further by practitioners into areas centrally or more peripherally associated with the profession's work. This has at least partially grown out of the historic concern of professions with educational curricula and entry-routes (e.g. Schön 1983), rather than with definitions of work roles. Taking this approach, being (for instance) an architect is less concerned with a bounded description of what architects do than with acquiring the knowledge, skills, mindset and ethos of an architect; the practitioner may then do things other than what is normally understood as practising architecture, but remains an architect.

Professions' more recent interests in standards of competence and proficiency have brought them into contact with the occupationally-oriented model, some features of which they have adopted. Their approaches to describing competence are however more varied than those that can be found in occupational standards, and recent trends are back towards a conception based on core capability rather than on the detailed mapping of functions (Lester 2014a). Initially it was fairly common for professions to use a largely internal approach to competence, i.e. to focus on the attributes needed by the practitioner. In a few cases this was simply concerned with the ability to apply the knowledge contained in the educational syllabus, but more sophisticated models also emerged drawing either on the instructional design tradition to identify in addition skills and personal attributes associated with the professional curriculum, or on the North American competency tradition (e.g. McClelland 1998) to identify attributes displayed by effective practitioners. Both the latter approaches lend themselves to a core capability perspective, the second particularly so, and they also support an orientation concerned with development rather than purely assessment. They do however have considerable disadvantages when used for assessment, particularly when the assessment is concerned with practice rather than learning (Lester 2014b). An increased focus on assessing practice, coupled with exposure over the last two decades to the occupational standards model, has tended to move professions away from internal approaches to competence and towards more external, activity-based conceptions; in my 2012 study (Lester 2014a), from a sample of 40 professions 88% used a principally external approach to competence, and just under half of these described all aspects of professional capability in activity-based terms alone.

Despite the move to using external models of competence, it can be hypothesised that an underlying professional as opposed to occupational perspective remains and this influences the essential approach to conceptualising both the nature of the profession or occupation, as well as what is set out in the form of assessable standards. A few professions have simply adopted occupational standards or created their own version of them, but it is more common for professions to use an approach other than functional analysis. My 2012 study indicated first that professions devote significant attention to generic aspects of professionalism and professional activity, with things such as ethics, professional development, self-management and management of work, and communication or client relations accounting for on average over 40% of the content of professional competence frameworks. Secondly, what might be termed the functional areas of the profession tend to be described in terms of essential standards of practice rather than detailed work functions, with enough flexibility to apply across different contexts and allow for practices to evolve. Additionally, a majority of professions (65% in the study) favour generic frameworks, where the whole framework applies to all practitioners, as opposed to frameworks with different standards for different career pathways, specialisms or work contexts.

In some of the better-conceptualised professional frameworks there is a concern with what might be termed capability, in the sense used by Stephenson and Yorke (1998) and O'Reilly *et al* (1999), as much as with competence and proficiency. Capability is arguably a less well-defined concept than competence, but an examination of the literature produced under the umbrella of the Higher Education for Capability movement (of which the above are prime examples) indicates that while, like competence, it is concerned with the ability to do, it also has a sense of being able to become (more) able to do, i.e. it also has a predictive element that goes beyond that present in the idea of competence. An (occupationally) competent practitioner should be able to act proficiently in a range of situations associated with the work of the occupation, but a capable practitioner can also be expected to develop competence as unforeseen contexts and new ways of working emerge. Frameworks influenced by a capability perspective tend to have as a core element a strong concern with the profession's ethics and ethos; they focus, in a carefully-crafted way, on essential and durable standards of practice; and they use centre-outwards rather than bounded-occupation conceptions of the profession (Lester 2014b).

A further feature that is at least implicit in many professions' conceptualisations is that competence is seen as a scale rather than a fixed point. The occupational orthodoxy is that standards are set at a particular level – or multiple standards are created representing different levels of job – within which there is a single threshold separating competent performance from that which is not yet competent. This conception suggests a finite or closed notion of competence; although it is neutral as to whether updating is required to maintain currency, as a model it provides no recognition of development to higher levels of proficiency, and the unwritten assumption is that progression involves becoming competent in additional functions. Professions on the other hand tend to have a conception of practitioners developing their proficiency progressively, both up to and (critically) beyond the point at which they can be considered fully qualified or licensed to practice. This notion is reflected, if imperfectly, in the Dreyfus skills acquisition or 'novice-to-expert' model (Dreyfus and Dreyfus 1986) which is used explicitly by some professions as a development and assessment tool.

Professional standards in practice

The following short case-studies, drawn from four professions where I have been involved in developing or reviewing standards, are presented as a range of instances to illustrate how different professions have gone about defining their territory and setting out standards for practice. These are offered as examples rather than exemplars, illustrating how professional bodies adopt different approaches to articulating their perspectives on competence.

Conservation of cultural heritage

The activity of conserving and restoring items of material heritage has evolved gradually as a profession. University courses appeared in the 1930s, professional associations in the 1950s, a formally qualified designation was introduced in 1999, and the Institute of Conservation (Icon) was formed five years later. Professional standards were initially developed rather hurriedly and on a small budget to support assessment for qualified status; these comprised a functional section, drawing on (and condensing substantially) a set of pre-existing occupational standards (conservation was, after management, the first occupational area to develop standards at the old level 5), and a section on judgement and ethics that was heavily influenced by a European development project, FULCO (Foley and Scholten 1998). The Dreyfus model was used explicitly as an aid to development and assessment. The original functional standards were quickly criticised for, effectively, being too occupational in style and restricting qualified status to too narrow a group of practitioners; they were

essentially written for two specific work roles and proved divisive within the profession. An initial review involving expert groups enabled some tidying-up of the standards to make them more generic and easier to use, while a second review drew on research and consultation into what practitioners actually did as well as trials with groups previously excluded from coverage. The result was a move away from this functional approach, enabling a single set of professional standards to encompass a wide range of roles that included hands-on conservation treatment, environmental and other preventive measures, collections care management, advisory work, and (in terms of conservation expertise and competence) conservation teaching. The judgement and ethics standards were at the same time condensed, but presented and applied as central to all the other standards. The current document consists of twelve pages of text, including notes to aid assessment (see Icon 2007).

Despite the linkage between the occupational and professional standards, in some respects the approach to describing competence taken in conservation epitomises the difference between an occupational and a professional model. The standards start from the core of the profession – the ethos and ethics, the essential decision-making processes involved in conserving heritage – and are written in a way that both avoids the detail of specific roles and provides room for practice to evolve, while making clear the standard that is needed. This ensures that they can apply across specialisms and, more critically, across different roles. Perhaps interestingly they have been used to inform the development of revised occupational standards and transfer some of the breadth of the professional approach back into them.

Landscape architecture

Landscape architecture is a well-established profession with an institute formed in 1929 and a Royal Charter since 1997. Entry is at postgraduate level, and all would-be practitioners are required to undergo a period (normally in the region of two years) of supervised practice and training which is assessed formatively in the workplace and summatively through a presentation and oral examination. Until recently, this assessment was based on what was effectively a knowledge-based syllabus. The Landscape Institute developed a set of professional standards ('elements of practice') in 2010-11 (Landscape Institute 2012), largely following the conservation model in style and level of detail. These were designed in principle to apply across the profession's five current specialisms, although early testing suggested that not all areas of the standards worked equally well for each. As with the later conservation standards, they were set at the level of a proficient, experienced practitioner and designed to encompass a broad range of roles as well as current and potential future specialisms. A key difference is that the standards are not used directly for assessment, but represent a guide to proficient practice; a subset of the main standards, scaled back to competent or advanced beginner level, has been produced for assessment after the training period, and it is also intended to use the standards to inform course approval processes.

Similar comments apply to the landscape architecture standards as to those in conservation, except that there were no suitable occupational standards available to aid development. Conservation uses its standards directly for assessment (generally assuming around five years' or more experience on the part of candidates), with a few additional notes of explanation to guide assessors and aid candidates. To date the promotion of the conservation standards for other purposes, such as acting as a general standard of practice or informing clients of what can be expected from conservators, has been limited despite the fact that they are eminently suitable for doing this. Landscape architecture on the other hand views the standards more as a blueprint that can be used to convey a general standard of practice to members, clients and the public, as well as to develop the more specific applications referred to above.

Vocational rehabilitation

Vocational rehabilitation (VR) is concerned with the return to work of people with disabilities and long-term illnesses. Many practitioners will already have qualified in areas such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy, careers guidance or vocational education, and as yet there is no widely-accepted qualified status in VR. The VR Association published a set of professional standards in 2007, amounting to 128 pages and reading as an extended code of practice; this was developed roughly in parallel with a British Standard for service providers. While the professional standards document attracted criticism for being excessively detailed, not particularly well-structured and in some places too restrictive, it was also seen as capturing much of the researched and practical wisdom about effective VR practice. The document was revised in 2012-13 to a set of statements contained in sixteen pages (Vocational Rehabilitation Association 2013) that expressed the ethos and ethics of VR as well as providing functional standards for core activities. These are designed to apply to a broad range of VR contexts, and include a mixture of highly general sections and those that relate to specific functions and are more occupational in character. At present the standards are used for guidance and self-assessment, and while they have been through a consultation process they have not been subjected to detailed testing to determine how well they apply to the work that individual VR practitioners actually do.

The VR standards aim, like those for conservation and landscape architecture, to apply to all practitioners. The standards are however more specific in the way that they describe work processes, reflecting their origins as a code of practice; ignoring the presentational style, the function-specific sections of the standards take a more occupational perspective than the previous two examples. Detailed testing of the standards may indicate that they need to be applied via a core-and-options approach, albeit with the majority of the standards forming the core.

Personnel and development

The personnel and development community is represented by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), established in 1994 from a merger of pre-existing bodies dating back to 1913; its charter was granted in 2000. Various routes are available to chartered membership, including a postgraduate course followed by relevant experience, progression from lower grades of membership, and direct assessment for experienced practitioners. The CIPD initially used what was effectively a syllabus in place of professional standards, choosing not to adopt existing occupational standards due to concerns about their relevance, currency and (lack of) depth. These ‘standards’ were replaced in 2008-9 by a ‘profession map’ based on ten functional areas, each described at four levels equating broadly to job roles between assistant and director level and expressed in terms of key activities and underpinning knowledge. Each functional area is also referenced to eight behavioural areas, again expressed at four levels. The CIPD profession map (CIPD 2012) has proved considerably more successful and versatile than the earlier syllabus-based standards. However, it has also attracted a certain amount of criticism in being too limited in terms of the roles it covers, these being largely geared to the human resources function in large organisations and less easily applicable to (for instance) external consultants and service providers or generalist practitioners in small firms. Some minor amendments have been made to the map since its inception, but it retains the same basic structure and focus.

The CIPD profession map differs from the preceding examples in several respects. Firstly it contains standards at different levels, although this is no different from areas such as engineering where

different grades of qualified membership are defined (Icon, somewhat similarly, uses what is effectively a subset of its standards for a qualification at technician level). Secondly, the function-based standards are organised by role (e.g. employee relations, learning and development, organisation development) with what is effectively a small common core, in contrast with the more generic approach of the examples described above. Thirdly, the map includes separate specifications for knowledge – generally expressed as context-specific factual knowledge – which is normally left as implicit in most professional standards frameworks. Finally, the presence of behavioural competencies is now uncommon in professional or occupational standards, though shared with the occupational standards for management; both this and the knowledge content partly reflect that the map is intended to be a development (including self-development) tool as much as a framework for assessment. Overall this suggests that the CIPD map reflects at least partly an occupational standpoint, although it provides a deeper and more capability-oriented perspective than the corresponding occupational standards (see Skills CFA 2012).

Conclusion: a professional perspective on work competence

Both the examples above and the research study suggest that there is no single recipe for professional competence standards parallel to that used in UK occupational standards, but they do concur with the notion of a distinctive professional perspective on competence. Translating this into a set of principles for a competence framework suggests the following:

- Firstly, the work of the profession is normally covered by a single universal set of standards: there is not normally a 'core and options' structure relating to different functions, but standards are set in a way that allows for them to be interpreted into different contexts and for practices to evolve. The framework generally conceptualises the profession in terms of a set of ethics, principles and key standards, emphasising activities and requirements that apply across the profession's work rather than attempting to map detailed functions and tasks.

- Secondly, the standards are designed to provide a measure of confidence not only in practitioners' ability to act competently in specific situations, but to work effectively – currently and into the future – within the profession. There is generally an assumption that development will continue beyond the threshold or licence-to-practise level, even if this is not made explicit. Assessments using the standards will look for contextual competence, but they will treat it as providing an example of wider professional capability, and typically they will also want to see more holistic evidence of the ability to understand situations in depth and make sound professional judgements.

- Finally, accreditation of an individual according to a professional model is endorsement as a member of the profession, not to do a specific job; the scope of the individual's practice becomes a matter of ethics (not practising or 'holding out' to practise unsupervised in areas where competence and expertise are lacking) and if necessary disciplinary measures, rather than (normally) needing reference to additional standards or assessments.

These principles represent an archetypal or ideal model that reflects the notion of a profession based on value-commitment as opposed to an occupation concerned more purely with role performance. Of the four examples discussed in detail, this model is most evident in conservation and landscape architecture. Conservation follows the principles almost in their entirety, despite covering a large number of technical specialisms as well as accommodating a broad range of work roles; landscape architecture is currently in transition from an older model where entrants qualified in one of three

divisions, to one where the number of specialisms is increasing and the boundaries between them blurring, focusing attention on the profession as a whole rather than on discrete divisions. In vocational rehabilitation the view has prevailed that more detailed attention is needed to the key occupational role of the profession, partly because this is seen as critical for raising standards and effectiveness; it may also stem, in an area that is less mature as a profession than the two previous examples, from a concern to ensure that the standards explicitly communicate good practice. In personnel and development the CIPD's 'map' reflects the diverse roles and specialisms within the human resources function, for which it provides a reasonably sophisticated and practical structure. On the other hand it gives far less of a sense of a coherent profession than the other three sets of standards. While parallel if different solutions have been adopted in a few other diverse professions (surveying is a notable example), this may reflect wider issues as to whether the CIPD's constituency can be regarded as a single profession, or whether it is essentially shaped by an organisational function that brings together what are effectively different professions with different outlooks.

In practice the approach taken by any profession to describing work competence will need to reflect its particular make-up, operating context and expectations. My 2012 study found a large variation in the quality of competence frameworks used by professions, but as illustrated here, there is substantial variation in approach even among well-researched and thought-out frameworks. In reality, 'professions' are not all of the same type, nor are 'occupations;' even using the simple etymological definitions given earlier in this paper, any given area of work, viewed from any of several perspectives, is likely to have a mix of professional and occupational characteristics. This suggests that the kind of competence model that is appropriate will range from the archetypally professional to the pragmatically occupational, with various mixed models in between. This has implications for professions, in that while there are some guiding principles and potential exemplars there is no single methodology for developing professional standards. A similar caveat must also apply to occupational standards, as many occupations have some of the characteristics of professions and they may not be best served by conceptions of competence that are, in the terms used here, narrowly occupational.

Author

Dr Stan Lester has been a consultant, researcher and developer in professional and work-related education since 1993. He has worked with several professional bodies to develop or revise professional standards, assessment and regulatory processes, as well as with projects to develop vocational and higher education qualifications and frameworks in the UK and Europe.

References

Abbott, A. 1988. *The System of Professions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Burgoyne, J. 1993. "The Competence Movement: Issues, Stakeholders and Prospects." *Personnel Review* 22 (6): 6-13.

Carroll, G. and T. Boutall. 2010. *Guide to developing National Occupational Standards*. Wath-upon-Dearne: UK Commission for Employment and Skills (available from http://www.ukces.org.uk/assets/ukces/docs/supporting-docs/nos/guide-to-developing-nos.pdf, checked 31.10.2013).

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD). 2012. *HR Profession Map*. London: CIPD (available from https://www.cipd.co.uk/cipd-hr-profession/profession-map/profession-map-download.aspx, checked 31.12.2013).

Cheetham, G. and G. Chivers. 2005. *Professions, competence and informal learning*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Dreyfus, H. L. and S. E. Dreyfus. 1986. *Mind over machine: the power of human intuition and expertise in the era of the computer.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Elliott, J. 1991. *Action Research for Educational Change.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Eraut, M. 1998. "Concepts of Competence". *Journal of Interprofessional Care* 12 (2): 127–139.

Evetts, J. 2003. “The sociological analysis of professionalism: occupational change in the modern world”. *International Sociology* 18 (2): 395-415.

Foley, K. and S. Scholten. 1998. *FULCO: a framework of competence for conservator-restorers in Europe*. Amsterdam: Instituut Collectie Nederland.

Freidson, E. 2001. *Professionalism: the third logic*. Cambridge: Polity.

Gonczi, A., P. Hager and L. Oliver. 1990. *Establishing competency-based standards in the professions*. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service.

Grugulis, I. 2000. “The management NVQ: a critique of the myth of relevance.” *Journal of Vocational Education and Training* 52 (1): 79-99.

Holmes, L. 1999. “Competence and Capability: from ‘confidence trick’ to the construction of graduate identity”. *Developing the capable practitioner*. Ed. D. O’Reilly, L. Cunningham and S. Lester. London: Routledge. Pp 83-98.

Icon (Institute of Conservation). 2007. *Revised professional standards for conservation*. London: Icon (available from http://www.sld.demon.co.uk/iconstds.doc, checked 31.10.13).

Landscape Institute. 2012. *Landscape Architecture: elements and areas of practice*. London: Landscape Institute (available from

http://www.landscapeinstitute.org/PDF/Contribute/A4_Elements_and_areas_of_practice_education_framework_Board_final_2012.pdf, checked 31.10.2013).

Lester, S. 2008. *Routes and requirements for becoming professionally qualified.* Bristol: Professional Associations Research Network.

Lester, S. 2009. “Routes to qualified status: practices and trends among UK professional bodies.” *Studies in Higher Education* 34 (2): 223-236.

Lester, S. 2014a. “Professional competence standards and frameworks in the UK.” *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education* 39 (1), 38-52.

Lester, S. 2014b. “Professional standards, competence and capability.” *Higher Education, Skills and Work-based Learning* 4 (1), 31-43.

McClelland, D. C. 1998. “Identifying competencies with behavioral-event interviews.” *Psychological Science* 9 (5): 331-339.

Millerson, G. 1964. *The Qualifying Associations: a study in professionalization*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Mitchell, L. and B. Mansfield. 1996. *Towards a competent workforce*. Aldershot: Gower.

O’Reilly, D., L. Cunningham and S. Lester (eds). 1999. *Developing the capable practitioner*. London: Routledge.

Richard, D. 2012. *The Richard Review of Apprenticeships*. London: School for Startups.

Schön, D. A. 1983. *The reflective practitioner: how professionals think in action*. New York: Jossey-Bass.

Skills CFA. 2012. *Human Resources National Occupational Standards*. London: Skills CFA (available from http://www.skillscfa.org/images/pdfs/National%20Occupational%20Standards/Human%20Resources%20and%20Recruitment/2011/Human%20Resources.pdf, checked 31.10.2013).

Stephenson, J. and M. Yorke (eds). 1998. *Capability and Quality in Higher Education*. London: Kogan Page.

Vocational Rehabilitation Association (VRA). 2013. *Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics for Vocational Rehabilitation Practitioner*s. Doncaster: VRA (available from http://www.vra-uk.org/civicrm/contribute/transact?reset=1&id=10, checked 31.10.2013).

Whitehead, N. (chair). 2013. *Review of adult vocational qualifications in England*. Wath-upon-Dearne: UK Commission for Employment and Skills.

Williams, C., W. Hanson and A. Harrington. 2013. *Framing professional competence: lessons for professional bodies on creating, using and reviewing competency frameworks*. Bristol: Professional Associations Research Network.

Wolf, A. 2011. *Review of Vocational Education – The Wolf Report*. London: Department for Education and Department for Business and Skills (available from https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-vocational-education-the-wolf-report, checked 31.10.2013).