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# Competencies in use and exploitation:
# a proposed research methodology

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**Abstract**

The proposed methodology compares employers' professional competencies development with the competencies gained during their education process (developed by curricula programs in universities) that provide specific qualification. The balance refers to the professional competencies comparison that is out-puts for the education providers and in-put for the employer organization (competencies balance card and profile design). The research motivation lies on: (a) harmonization and adaptation of the universities curricula programs to the real organizations specific needs, and vice-versa, (b) satisfying the needs of real organizations development based on human resources advanced competencies. A case study will demonstrate the proposed methodology effectiveness.

*Keywords*: Human resources, professional competencies, assessment, competencies use overview report;

## 1. Introduction and brief overview of the competencies assessment process

In the context of this article, the professional competencies assessment is debated in the framework of medical human resources development. Most authors agree that professional competence can be defined as habitual and judicious use of communication, knowledge, technical skills, clinical reasoning, emotions, values, and reflection in daily practice for the benefit of the individual and community being served. Competence builds on a foundation of basic clinical skills, scientific knowledge, and moral development (see Figure 1). Competence depends on habits of mind, including attentiveness, critical curiosity, self-awareness, and presence. Professional competences are developmental, impermanent, and context-dependent (Epstein and Hundert, 2002) and their functions are:
- Cognitive - Acquiring and using knowledge to solve real-life problems
- Integrative - Using biomedical and psychosocial data in clinical reasoning
- Relational - Communicating effectively with patients and colleagues
- Affective and/or moral - Willingness, patience, and emotional awareness skills use judiciously and humanely

Also, Govaerts (2008) brings some clarity to the identification and definition of competencies, but has concerns about oversimplification of the process. He states that "*effective assessment programmes ... will not be confined to standardized tests or checklists; workplace-based assessments involving professional judgments will have a*

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*prominent place in these assessment programmes*." The assessment process must take into account what is assessed, how it is assessed, and the assessment's usefulness in fostering future learning and human resources development, including vocational training programs. An efficient assessment process and program should provide experiences of learning, together with and guidance and support for satisfying learning needs.

According to Epstein and Hundert study (2002), the assessment process motivation could be:

1. To provide useful feedback about individual strengths and weaknesses that guides future learning; foster habits of self-reflection and self-remediation; promote access to advanced training; milestones for the career development;

2. To respond to lack of demonstrated competence (denial of promotion, mandated remediation); certify achievement of curricular goals; foster course or curricular change; create curricular coherence; cross-validate other forms of assessment in the curriculum; establish standards of competence for trainees at different levels;

3. To guide a process of institutional self-reflection and remediation; differentiation among candidates for further, advanced training or promotion; express institutional values by determining what is assessed and how assessment is conducted; develop shared educational values among a diverse community of educators; promote faculty development; provide data for educational research;

4. To align with human resources selection, recruitment and hire procedures into the organization (attract the more competence people into the organization); align with human resources development programs, with career development (plan), promotion strategies etc.; establish the right work conditions, including health and safety for the professional competence exploitation; align and harmonized the other organizational resources (know-how, technological and technical equipment, hardware and software etc.) with competitive human resources; creating an internal competitive environment of work and better satisfy clients needs with professional employees;

5. Certify competence of graduates in order to achieve high standards of work processes.

In additional, references have underlined that medical schools in Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, Spain, the Netherlands, United States and other countries have made commitments to developing innovative assessments procedures of professional competence (Epstein and Hundert, 2002). These assessments procedures are increasingly multimodal and tailored to the goals and context in which they will be used. Large-scale licensure examinations must use computer-gradable formats, but comprehensive examinations using structured direct observation, real patient cases, case-based questions (Wass et.al., 2001), peer assessments (Schuwirth et.al., 2001), and essay-type questions (Wass et.al., 2001) are reliable as well.

The new assessment procedures formats provide more useful feedback and are more efficient in terms of improvement the curricula and satisfying institutional interest (prestige increasing considering the graduates rate of success). These new procedures target core knowledge and clinical skills in different contexts and at different levels of assessment. More recent, a utility model have been used to illustrate that, firstly, selecting an assessment method involves context-dependent compromises, and secondly, that assessment is not a measurement problem but an *instructional design problem, comprising educational, implementation and resource aspects*. In the model, assessment characteristics are differently weighted depending on the purpose and context of the assessment (Van der Vleuten and Schuwirth, 2005).

After this brief overview of some relevant references regarding competence assessment (based on their practical observation and analysis) methods, procedure there will be describe a proposed methodology together with its validation by a case study the approach for the competencies use overview report based.

## 2. The proposed methodology for the competencies use overview report

The main idea behind the process of elaborating the methodology for the competence use or exploit in practice is to create a link between the human resources development into the organization (employer) and the organization that is the provider of education of the employees of a specific profession, qualification. The proposed methodology will balance between the two types of organizations that are linked on the labor market. The balance refers to the comparison of the professional competencies that are output for the education providers and input for the employer