A task-oriented measurement concept in an employer survey of changing skill needs in Europe

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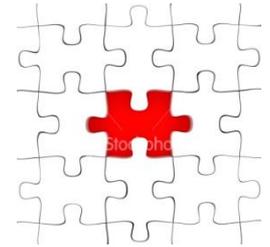T.A.S.K.S. 2nd international workshop

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Pilot employer survey on skill needs

Rationale and objectives:

In line with the current EU policy agenda (EU 2020) develop a **survey instrument to reliably identify future skill needs** in Europe as **recognized by employers/enterprises**.

- vacancies? occupations? training?
- focus on tasks, as indicators of skills in use

Innovative measurement concept

- task-related approach (task being easier conceptual unit for <u>employers</u> than skill);

- focus on <u>changes</u> in tasks and skills requirements;

- <u>both generic and occupation-specific</u> skill domains;

- <u>emerging</u> skills

- <u>harmonised</u>

- plus information on drivers of changes, preparedness for tasks, remedial actions by enterprises

Generic tasks: criteria for inclusion

- clear and translatable

- thought to be important

- expected to be in increasing demand

- focus on new skills

- length (<=25 minute telephone survey)

Generic task domains

i. <u>Cognitive</u> (Reading, Writing, Maths, Problem-Solving, ICT, Foreign Language)

ii. <u>Interaction/Social</u> (Speeches/presentations, Persuading, Instructing, Self-Direction, Teamworking, Interaction)

iii. <u>Physical</u> (Manual Dexterity)

iv. <u>Learning</u> (New ideas, Adapting)

v. <u>Green</u> (Anti-pollution tasks, Understanding of environmental regulations)

vi. <u>Self-direction</u> (Task Discretion)

A reading
B writing
C mathematics
D problem-solving
E foreign language
F manual dexterity
G making speeches or presentations
H working with a group or team
I persuading or influencing others
J providing emotional support or physical care
K learning new things
L adapting to new equipment or materials
M instructing or teaching
N reduce the use of raw materials, energy or water
O limit pollution waste, environmental degradation or biodiversity loss
P observing and applying rules and standards on environmental protection
Q determining their own tasks, working methods and speed of work
R setting objectives and planning resources
S co-ordinating co-workers and their tasks
T performing physically demanding tasks
U level of computer use

Generic task features

- "importance" scale

- current importance and change

- preparedness for increased importance

Occupation-specific task domains

- pre-selecting occupations

- task lists obtained and adapted from ISCO group definitions and task lists available for 3-digit and 4-digit occupations

- respondents asked about:
  - changes (staying about the same/ increasing/ decreasing)
  - preparedness for increases

- newly emerging tasks: open question

Coverage

- 9 countries: the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Spain, Poland and Finland

- 9 divisions sected according to NACE r2; one third industry, two thirds services

- pilot: pre-selected occupations with prepared occupation task lists; (in a full survey, occupations would not be pre-selected)

- target: 1000 interviews per country (500 in Ireland)

Mode

- Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews
- Establishment (rather than enterprise) as unit of analysis
- Single respondent: *"the most senior person who is in charge of personnel in <u>this</u> establishment"*

Cognitive tests: a few highlights

- most answered in respect of some sort of average of all employees in the occupation

- most were knowledgeable and able to articulate newly emerging tasks

- most (80%) thought the innovative questions on occupation-specific skills were easy to answer; only 2% said they were impossible to answer

- some issues with the task lists being too general

Q241_cog2: Employees or jobs respondents were thinking of in answering the questions on the tasks of the occupational group

Question Q241_cog2: In answering the questions to the tasks of this occupational group: What employees or jobs were you thinking about?

Basis: all establishments (cognitive pre-test only)
Table contains data for all of the selected occupational groups.

In %		Total	Assemblers	First occupational group selected						
				Building frame and related trade workers	Sales, marketing and public relations professionals	Software and applications developers and analysts	Finance professionals	General office clerks	Nursing and midwifery associate professionals	First group not selected
Basis (unweighted)		128	13	13	9	17	12	16	21	27
What employees or jobs were you thinking about?	The majority of employees or jobs within the group	58	69	54	44	59	50	56	71	52
	Those jobs that I know best within the group	9	15	-	-	18	8	19	-	11
	jobs or employees within the group on average	30	15	46	44	24	42	19	24	37
	Other	2	-	-	11	-	-	6	5	-
Total		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

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Q301_cog1: Task list too general, just right or too specific?

Are the tasks mentioned in the two previous sets of questions all in all…	First occupational group selected							
	Total (n=101)	Assemblers (n=13)	Building frame Workers (n=13)	Sales, marketing and PR professionals (n=9)	Software developers and analysts (n=17)	Finance professionals (n=12)	General office clerks (n=16)	Nursing professionals (n=21)
too general	30%	15%	38%	11%	29%	8%	44%	43%
Just right, providing a good description of the key tasks	44%	46%	23%	44%	41%	83%	44%	33%
Too specific, fitting only to a small part of this occupational group	25%	38%	38%	44%	29%	8%	6%	19%
Don't know	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%	5%

Cognitive tests: more highlights

- change questions: about half thought of "ongoing" or near future

- some (12%) of recent weeks

- about a third of the last couple of years

- no evidence from either here or elsewhere that employers think long term about skills needs

Q241_cog1:   Time period respondents had in mind when answering the questions on changes in importance of different tasks

Question Q241_cog1: What time period did you have in mind when answering the questions on whether a task is currently increasing or decreasing in importance? Were these mainly developments or changes ...

Basis: all establishments that require the use of computers (cognitive pre-test only)
Table contains data for all of the selected occupational groups.

In %		Total		First occupational group selected							
			Assemblers	Building frame and related trade workers	Sales, marketing and public relations professionals	Software and applications developers and analysts	Finance professionals	General office clerks	Nursing and midwifery associate professionals	First group not selected
Basis (unweighted)		128	13	13	9	17	12	16	21	27
What time period did you have in mind with respect to changes in importance?	That are ongoing and expected also for the near future	47	54	46	33	71	42	56	38	37
	Observable only now	5	-	8	11	6	8	6	5	4
	Of the recent weeks or months	12	8	8	11	-	25	13	19	11
	Of the last couple of years	31	31	38	44	12	25	19	33	44
	Different time periods, depending on the tasks	4	8	-	-	6	-	6	5	4
	Don't know	1	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	-
Total		100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

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Current status:

- pre-testing phase completed;

- pilot survey to be launched in 9 EU countries early 2012.

- report available by early 2013

- full survey??