

# Changing testing and quality assurance competence needs in Finnish software product development

## Contents

Abstract

Preface

List of figures

List of tables

Terms and abbreviations as used in this thesis

Table of contents

1	INTRODUCTION .....	22
1.1	Background.....	22
1.2	The research frame, hypotheses and goals.....	25
1.3	Research approach.....	29
1.4	Elements of subjectivity.....	35
1.5	Quality criteria of the research.....	36
1.6	Related work – or the lack of it.....	38
1.7	Personal motivation and background .....	39
1.8	Structure of this dissertation.....	40
2	SETTING THE STAGE.....	42
2.1	General.....	42
2.2	What do we mean by competence? .....	42
2.2.1	What does the literature say about it? .....	42
2.2.2	The European e-Competence Framework .....	45
2.2.3	How this dissertation sees competence? .....	48
2.3	What is quality?.....	50
2.4	What is “testing”? .....	56
2.5	Who does testing, who is the tester?.....	58

2.6	Role of testing for an individual .....	59
2.7	Testing is done in contexts .....	59
2.8	Contexts are systems .....	61
2.9	Activity system as contextual model .....	63
2.10	Anatomy of change and how the contextual layers interact .....	66
2.11	Making sense of changes – chaos, complexity and Cynefin .....	69
2.12	General vision of Finland 2030 .....	74
3	COMPETENCE MODELS AND PRIMARY COMPETENCES FOR TESTING AND QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE COMING YEAR .....	84
3.1	Competences related to changes .....	84
3.2	Pattern language for changes and competences – change-competence snippets .....	86
3.3	Competence levels .....	92
3.3.1	Knowledge levels used in education, training and certification .....	92
3.3.2	Competence levels used in this dissertation .....	96
3.4	Competence model structured by the activity system .....	98
4	CURRENT UNDERSTANDING ABOUT A SOFTWARE TESTER'S COMPETENCE .....	100
4.1	Introduction .....	100
4.2	Different views to testing .....	100
4.2.1	The schools of software testing show differing thinking about testing ..	100
4.2.2	The classical plan-driven approach to software testing .....	104
4.2.3	Context-driven testing .....	110
4.2.4	Comparison of the tester stereotypes .....	113
4.2.5	Non-functional testing types are different .....	116
4.2.6	Working in a quality assurance framework .....	118
4.2.7	A short look into testing standards .....	119
4.2.8	IEEE's Software Engineering Competency Model (SWECOM) .....	121
4.3	Thinking and testing .....	123
4.3.1	Tester's mental models .....	123
4.3.2	Tester's understanding about how computers and software work .....	124
4.3.3	Do testers need to be creative? .....	125
4.3.4	"Testerly ways of thinking" .....	126
4.3.5	Testing as sensemaking .....	127

4.3.6	Tester's ethics.....	128
4.4	Experts in testing.....	129
4.4.1	General.....	129
4.4.2	Competences of educators .....	131
4.4.3	Competences of researchers .....	133
4.4.4	Competences of a consulting experts.....	134
4.4.5	The problem of guru-centric world view.....	136
4.5	Test automation skills.....	137
4.5.1	Automation as utopia .....	137
4.5.2	There are many kinds of test automation .....	138
4.5.3	Competences related to test automation .....	138
4.5.4	Example of automation competences: the difficulties in applying model-based testing.....	139
4.6	Relation to software engineer role and skills .....	141
4.6.1	Software engineering skills.....	141
4.6.2	The phenomenon of software engineer in test.....	142
4.7	Meta-competences.....	142
4.8	Gaining competences .....	143
4.8.1	Knowledge creation – personally and in an organization.....	143
4.8.2	Testing education.....	147
4.8.3	Testing included in various curricula .....	149
4.8.4	Training in industry and tester certification .....	153
4.9	Testing in an organisation .....	155
4.9.1	Elements of an organisation.....	155
4.9.2	High reliability and high innovation organisations .....	158
4.9.3	Project skills.....	159
4.9.4	Tester as a team member .....	160
4.10	Working in ecosystems and professional networks .....	161
4.10.1	Testing ecosystem .....	161
4.10.2	Platform ecosystems.....	162
4.10.3	Tester communities.....	163
4.11	Passion for testing.....	164
4.12	Paths to competence .....	165
4.12.1	model for changing competence needs.....	165

4.12.2	Learning paths related to career paths .....	167
4.12.3	Contexts for training and learning.....	170
4.12.4	Personal learning from experienced people .....	171
5	ANALYSIS OF THE CHANGING ENVIRONMENT .....	173
5.1	General and rationale for the selected changes .....	173
5.2	Global environment .....	174
5.2.1	Digitalisation.....	174
5.2.2	Industrie 4.0 .....	182
5.2.3	Responding to change .....	183
5.2.4	Living with contradictions .....	187
5.2.5	Pervasive communication .....	188
5.2.6	Information security and privacy.....	189
5.2.7	Attitudes towards competence .....	192
5.2.8	Changes and implied competences for this section visualised .....	192
5.3	Changing national working life.....	193
5.3.1	Model of a nation .....	193
5.3.2	Changing working life.....	195
5.3.3	Need for new types of workers.....	197
5.3.4	Changing engineering education.....	203
5.3.5	Growing challenges for cultural competences .....	206
5.3.6	Changes and implied competences for this section visualised .....	208
5.4	Changes in the structure of the economy .....	209
5.4.1	The organisation types and sizes of companies .....	209
5.4.2	Companies' external operating environment .....	210
5.4.3	From products to services.....	210
5.4.4	Platform economy and API economy .....	212
5.4.5	The startup phenomenon .....	216
5.4.6	The rise of the game industry .....	220
5.4.7	Changes and implied competences for this section visualised .....	223
5.5	Changes in some businesses.....	224
5.5.1	From Western engineering culture to new Finnish culture? .....	224
5.5.2	Competence requirement differences in various types of business ....	227
5.5.3	From mechanical machine industry to intelligent software-driven machines .....	230
5.5.4	Changes and implied competences for this section visualised .....	231

5.6	Working style in companies.....	232
5.6.1	Companies' internal operating environment .....	232
5.6.2	Changing social systems.....	236
5.6.3	Experimentation culture .....	237
5.6.4	Agility and flexibility .....	240
5.6.5	Faster decision making .....	241
5.6.6	Maturity models losing relevance .....	245
5.6.7	Changes and implied competences for this section visualised .....	247
5.7	Relations to competence in companies .....	248
5.7.1	Quest for multi-skilledness .....	248
5.7.2	Business competences for everyone?.....	252
5.7.3	Scaling and adaptation of competences.....	254
5.7.4	The business processes where testing is used .....	256
5.7.5	Integration of quality management .....	257
5.7.6	Changes and implied competences for this section visualised .....	259
5.8	Changes in product technology .....	260
5.8.1	Industrial Internet .....	260
5.8.2	Big Data .....	263
5.8.3	The cloud as a platform for systems and testing .....	265
5.8.4	Virtualisation .....	269
5.8.5	Multi-device systems with new interaction styles .....	270
5.8.6	Changes and implied competences for this section visualised .....	271
5.9	Changes in product requirements .....	273
5.9.1	Explosion of important quality attributes .....	273
5.9.2	The changing requirements of technical software systems.....	274
5.9.3	Products with new business models in the Internet age .....	277
5.9.4	Testing of new technology products .....	277
5.9.5	Testing of intelligent systems .....	286
5.9.6	Changes and implied competences for this section visualised .....	294
5.10	Software development process changes .....	295
5.10.1	Innovation in product development.....	295
5.10.2	Relation and response to change.....	299
5.10.3	Time and rhythm .....	301
5.10.4	Towards continuous delivery .....	303
5.10.5	Fast product development.....	305

5.10.6	Modern risk management.....	313
5.10.7	The two-edged sword of craftsmanship.....	314
5.10.8	Changes and implied competences for this section visualised .....	315
5.11	Evolving lifecycle models .....	316
5.11.1	SEMAT as a framework of software development activity context.....	316
5.11.2	Working in various development lifecycles .....	319
5.11.3	The next steps in software development lifecycles .....	321
5.11.4	Agile software development .....	323
5.11.5	Lean.....	329
5.11.6	Changes and implied competences for this section visualised .....	336
5.12	Changes in testing thinking .....	338
5.12.1	Rethinking of the goals of testing and quality assurance .....	338
5.12.2	Need for personal understanding of quality .....	342
5.12.3	New thinking on defect costs during application lifecycle .....	343
5.12.4	Changes and implied competences for this section visualised .....	344
5.13	Testing arrangements .....	345
5.13.1	Testers changing context more often .....	345
5.13.2	Better workplaces .....	348
5.13.3	Gamification for engagement .....	351
5.13.4	Subcontractor competences.....	353
5.13.5	Testing service competences.....	356
5.13.6	Crowd testing – or testing in the human cloud.....	357
5.13.7	Changes and implied competences for this section visualised .....	359
5.14	Is it all about changes?.....	360
5.15	Reflection on ranking the changes .....	361
5.16	Summary at this point .....	364
5.16.1	Most important changes.....	364
5.16.2	Most important competences .....	368
5.16.3	Top competences of types #O, #U, and #A.....	374
5.16.4	Competences grouped by traditional levels.....	377
5.16.5	Competences related to activity system elements.....	381
6	SURVEY TO FINNISH TESTING PROFESSIONAL.....	386
6.1	Introduction .....	386
6.2	Answers and reflections .....	387

6.3	Work profile.....	388
6.3.1	Tester role and title .....	388
6.3.2	Attitude.....	389
6.3.3	What does the tester concentrate on?.....	391
6.3.4	Breadth of work profile and learning.....	392
6.3.5	Changing jobs – robotics and polarisation.....	393
6.4	Competences.....	395
6.4.1	Nature of testing competences.....	395
6.4.2	Competence palette .....	396
6.4.3	Computer-aided testing.....	398
6.4.4	General competences .....	398
6.4.5	Business competences .....	400
6.4.6	Generic ICT competences.....	401
6.4.7	Effectiveness and efficiency .....	401
6.4.8	Communication skills .....	403
6.4.9	Gaining competences during education .....	404
6.5	Things under test .....	405
6.5.1	Central things to test in the future.....	405
6.5.2	Nature of the systems that are tested.....	406
6.5.3	Deeper understanding of systems under test .....	407
6.6	Contexts.....	408
6.6.1	Acting in the organisation.....	408
6.6.2	Acting in projects.....	409
6.6.3	Adaptation to contexts.....	410
6.6.4	Working environments and test environments.....	411
6.6.5	Nature of companies .....	413
6.6.6	Testing services in companies .....	413
6.6.7	Testing service providers .....	414
6.7	Generic changes in the environment.....	415
6.8	Overall reflections of the responses .....	416
7	EVALUATION AND CONCLUSIONS.....	417
7.1	Time to revise stereotypes .....	417
7.2	Evolution of testing.....	419
7.3	Creating opportunities to evolve .....	423

7.4	General changes in testing and quality assurance .....	424
7.4.1	Environmental changes.....	424
7.4.2	Towards a new cultural phase.....	429
7.4.3	Changes in product development phases .....	432
7.5	Most essential competences in relation to the activity system .....	434
7.5.1	General.....	434
7.5.2	Self .....	435
7.5.3	System under test .....	436
7.5.4	Development goals .....	437
7.5.5	Organisation.....	438
7.5.6	Teamwork.....	439
7.5.7	Processes .....	439
7.5.8	Tools and methods.....	439
7.6	Competence lumps .....	440
7.7	End of low-competence professionals .....	443
7.8	Learning-related competences .....	443
7.9	Changes in core competences? .....	445
7.10	How much competence do we need?.....	446
8	ASSESSMENT OF THE DISSERTATION .....	449
8.1	Main contributions of the dissertation .....	449
8.2	Reliability of the research .....	449
8.3	Reflection on the quality criteria of the dissertation.....	452
9	CONCLUSIONS .....	454
	BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	457
APPENDIX 1:	Contents of ISTQB Foundation syllabus, 2011	
APPENDIX 2:	Raw answers on the survey to Finnish testing community about future competences	
APPENDIX 3:	Collected change-competence snippets	
APPENDIX 4:	Competences referenced in change-competence snippets	
APPENDIX 5:	Changes ranked by their effect on product development performance factors	