



Lifelong Education of Civil-Military Teachers in Higher Education in Croatia

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Abstract: Numerous international and national documents highlight that higher education institutions should provide qualified educators and promote the professional development of teachers with a particular focus on student-centered learning and teaching. In the higher education system of the Republic of Croatia, most teachers do not receive specialized training in teaching competencies. While they possess the necessary professional expertise in their respective subject areas, they often lack the pedagogical and andragogical training required for effective higher education. Hence, the authors of this work aim to demonstrate the necessity of continuous education for civilian-military teachers in a certified program for lifelong development of teaching competencies. The continuous education will be delivered through specially designed courses and will be a prerequisite for assuming teaching responsibilities and advancing into scientific-teaching positions.

Keywords: lifelong education, civil-military teachers, competence development, lifelong education program.

Introduction

In line with the main idea of the European Higher Education Area, which states that higher education institutions should provide competent teachers and promote their professional development and student-centered learning and teaching, numerous international and national documents emphasize the need for training teachers in certified programs. Moreover, ongoing professional education for teaching should be mandatory for teachers in higher education.

Croatia's Strategy of Education, Science, and Technology¹ also acknowledges the importance of quality learning and teaching at universities, highlighting the insufficient basic methodical and broader andragogical skills among higher education teachers. The Strategy notes that most higher education teachers do not undergo specialized training to develop teaching competencies. Consequently, although they possess the necessary professional expertise in their subject areas, they often have to rely on the experience of colleagues or their own intuition and talent. Therefore, it is essential to introduce continuous teacher education through specially designed courses, which should be a prerequisite for assuming teaching duties and a requirement for selection into a scientific-teaching position.

Historically, and although teaching is fundamental to the academic profession and common to both scientific and teaching roles, the development of teachers has largely been limited to informal learning. Global social, economic, and technological developments have set new expectations and more complex requirements for higher education, prompting many institutions in developed countries to establish more systematic support for developing teacher's competencies. Consequently, there has been a significant shift from informal support toward formal training programs as part of lifelong education. Further, the establishment of external and internal systems for evaluating higher education institutions and integrating knowledge from educational sciences made an essential contribution to changing the understanding of the importance of the teaching process.

Based on empirical findings, the authors of this article developed a competency profile for civil-military teachers, drafted a framework curriculum for acquiring respective teaching competencies, and formulated recommendations for its implementation. The aim is to foster institutional innovation, leading to quality improvements and stimulating changes in courses and study programs, enhancing the recognition of the University of Defense and Security nationally and internationally.

Research Methodology

This qualitative case study explores strategies for providing competent teachers and promoting the professional development of civilian-military educators in higher education. A case study approach is used to generate an in-depth, multifaceted understanding of this complex real-life issue. The results suggest to provide continuous education for civil-military teachers through specially designed courses, which would be a prerequisite for assuming teaching duties and selection for scientific-teaching positions. The article proposes a curriculum for civilian-military teachers aimed at fostering continual improvement in their teaching through regular reflection on their methods.

¹ "Strategy of Education, Science and Technology," *Official Gazette*, no. 124/14 (2014).

The research sought to address the following questions:

1. What are the necessary competencies for civilian-military teachers in higher education?
2. How can the education of civilian-military teachers at the Croatian Defense Academy, the only institution for military education in the Republic of Croatia, be enhanced?

Lifelong Education of Civil-military Teachers

Competence Profile of the Civil-Military Profession

Under the influence of global social and economic changes, human capital has become the foundation of competitiveness and progress. Motivated, skilled, and capable employees who can create value and opportunities aligned with the organization's strategy and vision are of central importance. Such an environment requires competent individuals prepared to adapt to new situations and challenges posed by various stakeholders in both professional and social contexts.²

In recent years, there has been a growing global discussion on transforming the military education systems of NATO and European Union member countries. Its focus is on integrating new theoretical concepts and frameworks to ensure that future officers and non-commissioned officers receive a comprehensive professional military education.³

² Werawat Punnitamai, "The Application of Competency Modeling for Human Resource Management: A Holistic Inquiry," *Thai Journal of Public Administration* 1, no. 3 (2003): 113-132, <https://so05.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/pajournal/article/view/23242/19857>.

³ Jarmo Toiskallio, "Ethics, Military Pedagogy and Action Competence," in *Civil-Military Aspects of Military Ethics*, vol. 1, ed. Edwin R. Micewski (Vienna: National Defense Academy, Fall 2003): 52-64, https://www.bmlv.gv.at/pdf_pool/publikationen/08_cma_09_toi.pdf; John Allen Williams, "The Military and Society Beyond the Postmodern Era," *Orbis* 52, no. 2 (2008): 199-216, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orbis.2008.01.003>; Jim Barrett, "Modern Developments in Defense Education," *Connections: The Quarterly Journal* 8, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 1-6, <http://dx.doi.org/10.11610/Connections.08.2.01>; Sylvain Paile, *The European Military Higher Education Stocktaking Report* (Brussels, Belgium: ESDC, May 2010), https://www.emilyo.eu/sites/default/files/Gell%20Scientific%20Publications/2010%20Paile%20Stocktaking%20Report_0.pdf; Andrija Kozina, "Professional Military Education: Challenges Facing the Croatian Armed Forces," *Strategos* 2, no. 1 (2018): 119-136, <https://doi.org/10.1108/TLO-03-2018-0037> – in Croatian; Neno Hristov, "Nato Resilience, Deter and Professional Military Education," *International E-Journal of Advances in Education* 4, no. 10 (April 2018): 72-76, <http://ijaedu.ocerintjournals.org/en/download/article-file/458073>; Andrija Kozina, "The Culture of Military School: The Example of the Dr. Franjo Tuđman Croatian Defense Academy," *Connections: The Quarterly Journal* 18, no. 3-4 (Fall 2019): 45-63, <https://doi.org/10.11610/Connections.18.3-4.03>; Jadranka Herceg and Andrija Kozina, "Quality Assurance in Professional Military Education," in *Post-crisis Adult Education*, ed. Tihomir Žiljak (Croatia: Agency for Vocational Education and Adult Education, 2022), 27-35.

Individuals involved in academic activities are expected to fulfill several professional roles: teaching, research, management, and community engagement. Successfully executing tasks specific to each role requires mastery of a corresponding set of professional competencies that define the competency profile for the role. These competencies are acquired and developed throughout one's career and are supported by all forms of lifelong learning: formal, non-formal, and informal.

The methodological framework for civil-military education was established in 2020.⁴ Following this framework, the authors developed a competency profile for the civil-military profession. This profile does not view the profession merely as a set of automated, trained skills but rather as a combination of knowledge, skills, abilities, and responsibilities – competencies that a civil-military teacher should possess at the start of their academic career and continue to develop throughout it. In this process, it is important to consider both the specific nature of the civil-military profession and the unique circumstances of the environment in which it operates.

The competence profile of the civil-military profession is divided into four thematic groups: teaching competencies, strategic and management competencies, scientific-research competencies, and competencies related to contributions to society and the community.

The existence of a clear and defined competence profile would facilitate the planning and organization of education for civil-military teachers, aligning it with the competencies required for their work. It would also highlight the need for continuous learning, staying current with trends and changes in the profession, and ensuring improved individual and institutional outcomes. Consequently, the proposed competence profile would guide the design and development of educational programs for academic staff, ensuring alignment with the competencies needed for successful and high-quality work and responding to the evolving demands placed on them by the academic community and broader societal contexts. In this regard, it would also be appropriate to (re)define the criteria for advancement in scientific, teaching, and professional activities.

The operationalization of the competence profile requires a highly flexible approach, allowing for demonstrating competence outcomes from a broader perspective. This perspective should include various forms of (measurable) knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors rather than relying solely on quantitative indicators to measure academic success. As already highlighted, the proposed competence profile is designed to be open, adaptable, and non-hierarchical, emphasizing that competencies should be viewed as a combination of knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors to be continuously developed throughout a scientific-teaching journey.

⁴ Jadranka Herceg, *Methodology of Civil-military Education*; document available at the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Croatia, 2020.

The proposed competence profile highlights the need for a stronger alignment with clearly defined competence outcomes specific to the civil-military profession, which can be operationalized as conditions for academic advancement and individual career profiling within the professional system. Acknowledging the criticisms of implementing a competence-based approach in education, the intention behind adopting an open and flexible framework for creating a competence profile is to avoid the pitfalls of rigid standardization, reductionism, and loss of academic freedom for civil-military teachers. Adopting the competence profile allows the civil-military profession to critically and systematically address new challenges, ensuring continuous progress and better outcomes in an increasingly competitive higher education landscape.

Competences of Civil-Military Teachers

The successful implementation of new policies relies on the preparedness and competencies of both the administration of higher education institutions and the teaching staff, who are responsible for integrating new activities and ideas into their daily work. Therefore, higher education teachers should undergo formal education in teaching by attending certified programs, with continuous professional development becoming a mandatory requirement for their roles. The Education, Science, and Technology Strategy highlights that most higher education teachers lack training specialized in enhancing teaching competencies. As a result, it emphasizes the need for continuous teacher education through specially designed courses, which would serve as prerequisites for teaching positions and advancement to scientific-teaching titles.

A high-quality civilian-military teacher is the key factor influencing the success of learning. Such a teacher is essential in preparing future generations to thrive in an environment characterized by continuous, rapid, and profound changes, as well as the significant challenges that impact teaching and learning systems. The teaching profession faces evolving demands, necessitating the development of new competencies.

Kozina highlights that "(...) the fundamental purpose of teacher training is to ensure the quality of effective planning, management, development, and implementation of teaching, as well as the development of key competencies."⁵ In its report *Improving the Quality of Teaching and Learning in Europe's Higher Education Institutions*, the European Commission emphasizes a key recommendation for the modernization and improvement of higher education: "All teaching staff at higher education institutions should have an official certificate by 2020 about the completed program of professional pedagogical education for work in higher education teaching. Constant professional training and acquisition of teaching

⁵ Andrija Kozina, "Key Competencies of the Military Teacher," in *Key Competencies in Adult Education* (Proceedings of the 6th International Conference on Adult Education, Vodic, Croatia, October 3-4, 2013), eds. Milan Matijević and Tihomir Žiljak (Croatian Andragogic Society, 2014), quote on p. 98, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281460435_key_competencies_of_the_military_teacher. – in Croatian

competencies should become a requirement for all employees in higher education.”⁶

University teachers typically embody two professional identities: one associated with their scientific discipline (e.g., physicists, architects, biologists, lawyers) and another as higher education teachers responsible for training students to become future professionals.⁷ In addition to these roles, civil-military teachers hold a third identity: that of an officer.

To enhance the teaching competencies of civil-military teachers, the Croatian Defense Academy currently offers two courses for civil-military lecturers: a basic and an advanced course. These courses were developed based on programs implemented through NATO’s Defence Education Enhancement Program (DEEP) in partner countries and align with the “Policy for a More Effective and Flexible Partnership” adopted at the NATO Summit in Berlin in 2011. Under this policy, NATO member states committed to offering enhanced support to interested partners for developing defense education and training capacities.⁸ The courses are conducted in coordination with the Partnership for Peace Consortium of Defense Academies and Security Studies Institutes.

NATO continuously conducts and supports Defense Education Enhancement Programs (DEEP) in friendly and partner defense institutions, as well as partner training and education centers. DEEP also extends to certain allied defense institutions. This initiative is built on a multinational approach, enabling greater flexibility in connecting partners and fostering collaboration across defense education systems.

DEEP helps to modernize and professionalize NATO partner defense educational institutions, usually categorized as PME schools, which include war colleges at the strategic level of war, staff colleges at the operational level of war, military academies that recruit new junior officers and non-commissioned officers (NCO) academies that educate and train younger leaders at the tactical level of war.⁹

⁶ European Commission, *High Level Group on the Modernisation of Higher Education – Report to the European Commission on Improving the Quality of Teaching and Learning in Europe’s Higher Education Institutions* (Publications Office, 2013), <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/fbd4c2aa-aeb7-41ac-ab4c-a94fee9eb1f>, quote on p. 64.

⁷ Vesna Kovač, *Advanced Training of University Teachers* (Rijeka: Filozofski fakultet u Rijeci, 2001).

⁸ Alan G. Stolberg, “Defense Education Enhancement Program: The Kazakhstan Experience,” *Connections: The Quarterly Journal* 11, no. 4 (Fall 2012): 108-113, <http://dx.doi.org/10.11610/Connections.11.4.12>.

⁹ Trevor Johnston and Alan G. Stolberg, “The Challenges and Opportunities of Institutional Capacity Building Through Professional Military Education: Lessons from the Defense Education Enhancement Program,” Research Report (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2022), https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA1238-1.html.

The first DEEP project was launched with Armenia in 2007. Today, it is available to all NATO partners and focuses on four key areas:

- *What to teach:* Curriculum development aimed at shaping educational content for defense education
- *How to teach:* Development of specialized defense education programs tailored for civilian-military teachers
- *Ensuring partner satisfaction:* Providing necessary services and support based on partner nations' requests and needs
- *Program development:* Advising partners on how to further develop and enhance their existing defense education programs.

In 2015, the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Croatia incorporated the Croatian Defense Academy (CDA) into the DEEP program as the only higher education institution within the Croatian Armed Forces. Since then, CDA staff have successfully implemented DEEP programs in various countries, including Afghanistan, Iraq, North Macedonia, and Ukraine, with the program nearing completion in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It has been shown that similar DEEP programs could be effectively adapted to develop civil-military personnel within Croatia's Ministry of Defense through lifelong education initiatives.

At the beginning of 2015, the *Modern Teaching Methods* program was introduced to refresh and enhance the knowledge of military teachers for the academic year. This program was repeated at the end of the academic year and included participation from all dean's chairs and instructors at the Damir Tomljanović Gavran Non-Commissioned Officer School. Leveraging the teaching experience gained by employees involved in the NATO DEEP project, the lifelong education program was officially recognized. Since 2018, the *Basic Course for Military Lecturers* has been implemented, specifically targeting civil-military teachers, deans, instructors from non-commissioned officer schools, and all Croatian Armed Forces (CAF) personnel involved in any form of military training and education.

The *Basic Course for Military Lecturers* is structured to equip instructors with essential knowledge of modern teaching solutions, the unique aspects of adult education, student-centered teaching approaches, and andragogical theories. The course aims to provide Croatian Armed Forces (CAF) teachers and lecturers with practical and creative teaching strategies while improving their execution of lessons. It integrates modern didactic theories and concepts, helping instructors apply them in lesson planning and delivery.

Through backward planning instructional design, the following learning outcomes were identified for the military instructor core course:

Outcome 1: Understand didactics as a pedagogical discipline.

Outcome 2: Comprehend the relationships between pedagogy, didactics, and methodology.

Outcome 3: Adopt and use basic didactic terms.

Outcome 4: Differentiate, analyze, and apply various teaching systems.

Outcome 5: Define learning goals and outcomes.

Outcome 6: Implement teaching methods, including blended learning, and choose the most suitable method for each situation.

Outcome 7: Assess teaching technologies and media.

Outcome 8: Develop necessary materials for classes based on active teaching.

The principles of adult education are founded on the trust established within the classroom environment. These principles emphasize respect for all participants, transparency, exchange of relevant experience, and equal engagement of all individuals. This portion of the course covers the fundamental didactic concepts essential for the role of a civil-military teacher.

Participants explore various didactic theories,¹⁰ emphasizing that no single didactic theory dominates; instead, an effective approach typically involves a synergy of two or more theories. Creative teaching models¹¹ tailored to adult education are also discussed, given that officers and non-commissioned officers engaged in lifelong learning are adults.

The course concludes with an evaluation, where participants submit an assessment paper on a teaching topic. This paper must demonstrate the use of modern teaching methods and the implementation of active learning principles, reflecting the content and skills developed throughout the course.

The *Advanced Course for Military Lecturers* builds on the foundational knowledge from the basic course. It focuses on the planning and evaluation of the teaching process, including diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments. The course aims to equip teachers and lecturers at CDA and CAF with practical, creative solutions that enhance the planning, implementation, and evaluation of lessons. The goal is to prepare lecturers to apply modern theoretical knowledge in lesson planning, programming, and assessing the teaching process. This includes the effective evaluation and assessment of teaching to ensure high-quality learning outcomes. The course deepens participants' skills for lesson planning and systematically evaluating teaching practices.

The learning outcomes of the advanced course are as follows:

Outcome 1: Implement the best practices using contemporary theories of adult education.

Outcome 2: Develop a plan and evaluation method aligned with the set learning outcomes.

¹⁰ Herbert Gudjons, Rita Teske, and Rainer Winkel, eds., *Didactic Theories* (Zagreb: Educa, 1994). – in Croatian

¹¹ Marko Stevanović, *Models of Creative Teaching* (Rijeka: Andromeda, 2003). – in Croatian

Outcome 3: Use assessment and evaluation tools based on Bloom's taxonomy, to enhance teaching and learning.

Outcome 4: Create a lesson plan following the principles of active learning and adult learning using backward planning.

Outcome 5: Identify best practices in adult learning, student-centered learning, active learning, and instructional design.

Outcome 6: Apply adult learning methods through discussions and small group presentations.

Outcome 7: Design lessons and course curricula incorporating innovative methods for adult learners.

Outcome 8: Utilize the instructional design model ADDIE (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation) when planning lesson implementation.

The course explains Kirkpatrick's evaluation model through its four levels: reaction, learning, behavior, and results.¹² The civil-military teacher plays a crucial role in motivating students, which can be achieved using the ARCS (Attention, Relevance, Confidence, and Satisfaction) model.¹³

In addition to fostering motivation, the civil-military teacher must create a stimulating learning environment by establishing foundations based on theories of adult learning, examining problems at higher levels of Bloom's taxonomy, facilitating a discourse that transitions smoothly from conversation to discussion and dialogue, encouraging constant team building, and promoting self-reflection among participants.¹⁴ Instructional design, guided by backward planning, feedback, feedforward, and lesson design using the ADDIE model, is essential for creating an effective lesson or course.¹⁵ The advanced course for military lecturers was evaluated by having participants present a teaching lesson designed using the reverse planning instructional design method, with a particular emphasis on the WHERETO (Where, Hold, Equip, Rethink, Evaluate, Tailor, Organize) principle.

- *Where:* Help students understand the direction of the topic and what is expected of them. This also allows the teacher to understand the students' prior knowledge and interests.

¹² Donald L. Kirkpatrick and James D. Kirkpatrick, *Evaluating Training Programs: The Four Levels*, 3rd ed. (San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2006).

¹³ John M. Keller, *Motivational Design for Learning and Performance: The ARCS Model Approach* (New York: Springer, 2010).

¹⁴ Richard M. Meinhart, "Insights for a Committed Learning Environment," *Journal of Military Learning* 2, no. 1 (April 2018): 76-93, <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Journal-of-Military-Learning/Journal-of-Military-Learning-Archives/April-2018-Edition/Learning-Environment/>.

¹⁵ Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, *The Understanding by Design Handbook* (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1998).

- *Hold*: Capture the attention of all participants and maintain their interest throughout the session.
- *Equip*: Equip students by helping them engage with key ideas and explore relevant issues.
- *Rethink*: Provide opportunities for students to reflect on and revise their understanding and work.
- *Evaluate*: Allow participants to assess their work and consider its broader implications.
- *Tailor*: Adapt lectures to meet the diverse needs, interests, and abilities of the participants.
- *Organize*: Ensure that lessons are well-organized to foster maximum engagement and effective learning, both initially and over the long term.

The basic and advanced courses are structured to ensure that civilian-military teachers at the Croatian Defense Academy follow a progressive development path. Upon arrival, they first complete the basic course for military lecturers. Under the guidance of assigned mentors within their department, they progressively engage in military training instruction. Before being permitted to teach independently, they must deliver an introductory lecture to a selected commission, assessing their competency to teach at a military institution. After gaining sufficient experience, they must complete a psychological-pedagogical course to develop the necessary competencies for teaching adults. Once these conditions are met, and after having taught at the department for some time, they proceed to the advanced course for military lecturers. This advanced course helps them develop lesson planning and programming competencies, evaluate the teaching process, and assess their own performance.

Framework Curriculum for the Acquisition of Civil-Military Teaching Competencies in Higher Education

The word *curriculum* is multifaceted and can refer to competition, a course of events, a race, or life itself. Etymologically, curriculum originally signifies a course or sequence of planned and programmed events, describing the most favorable path of action to achieve a goal. The definition of *curriculum* can range from very general to highly specific. Jackson points out that the field of curriculum studies is heterogeneous and lacks a single, uniform definition.¹⁶ Various curriculum theories—rooted in philosophy, psychology, and sociology—further complicate its interpretation. One definition of curriculum describes it as “(...) a targeted approach to upbringing and education, representing a relevant, reliable, precise,

¹⁶ Phil W. Jackson, “Conceptions of Curriculum and Curriculum Specialists,” in *Handbook of Research on Curriculum*, ed. Phil W. Jackson (New York: MacMillan, 1992).

and optimal way of implementing a flexibly planned process of learning, education, and competence acquisition.”¹⁷

From the above, we can conclude that the curriculum is a set of performance objectives that are student-centered, measurable, and encompass knowledge, skills, independence, and responsibility that students are expected to attain. In simple terms, the curriculum encompasses everything taught both in and outside of school, guided by the school. It represents what each learner gains due to their time in school while laying the groundwork for future activities. As aptly stated, “The curriculum is the heart of education.”¹⁸

The authors developed the framework curriculum for acquiring civilian-military teacher competencies in higher education, drawing on the Competence Profile of civilian-military teachers in higher education and the competence areas it outlines. The curriculum is structured into three cycles.

The first cycle is designed for teachers who are either at the beginning of their careers in higher education or those who, despite having more experience, have not completed formal education that adequately prepares them for quality teaching. Acquiring the competencies intended for this cycle is a prerequisite for participating in military education classes and essential for achieving the teaching title of lecturer and the academic rank of assistant professor. This cycle equips civil-military teachers and lecturers with the skills needed to find the most effective and creative solutions in their teaching. It prepares them to use modern, student-centered teaching methods while continuously striving to create engaging and active learning experiences.

The second cycle is designed for those who have completed the basic course for military lecturers, delivered an introductory lecture, and are now qualified to teach independently. These teachers are referred to a faculty that offers the Pedagogical-Psychological-Didactic-Methodical Education (PPDME) program. This program focuses on the development of teaching competencies. Upon completion, participants acquire essential teaching skills, as well as the psychological and pedagogical fundamentals required for effective instruction. PPDME is part of a lifelong learning initiative that prepares teachers and experts to apply and continually refine their teaching competencies in their educational practices.

The third cycle is intended for individuals who have completed the first and second cycles and seek to further enhance their teaching competencies, particularly in curriculum planning, development, and evaluation. Through this cycle, teachers are trained to design and develop higher education curricula using instructional design principles, including backward planning and the ADDIE methodology. The course emphasizes various methods to boost participant motiva-

¹⁷ Vlatko Previšić, “Pedagogy and Curriculum Methodology,” in *Curriculum: Theories, Methodology, Content, Structure*, ed. Vlatko Previšić (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 2007), 15-33, quote on p. 20. – in Croatian

¹⁸ Wesley Null, *Curriculum: From Theory to Practice* (New York, Toronto, Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011), quote on p. 1.

tion, apply formative evaluation techniques, and offer timely feedback. By integrating these approaches, the third cycle aims to improve students' overall knowledge acquisition and learning quality.

Recommendations for Developing and Improving the Competencies of Civil-Military Teachers

Recommendations for developing and improving teaching competencies at the Dr. Franjo Tuđman University of Defense and Security are grounded in proven examples of best practices and the authors' expertise. Given the current state and unique characteristics of the civil-military higher education system, these recommendations aim to propose a framework for improving learning and teaching in civil-military education. The aim is to encourage institutional policies that promote activities that strengthen the role of university teachers and increase awareness of the importance of improving the quality of learning and teaching in higher education.

The first recommendation is to establish and implement a transparent legal framework for the lifelong professional development of civil-military teachers. Lifelong professional education for teaching should become a mandatory requirement for civil-military educators. This requirement should be clearly outlined in the provisions that define the criteria for selecting and promoting civil-military teachers in accordance with the *Law on Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Science*¹⁹ and the *Law on Higher Education and Scientific Activity*.²⁰ Additionally, considering that this status is not yet legally mandated in the Republic of Croatia, the obligation to acquire basic teaching competencies for civil-military education should be included when defining the conditions for selection into teaching positions and employment in associate roles.

The second recommendation is to recognize the lifelong professional development of civil-military teachers as the university's strategic goal. It is essential to build mechanisms for its implementation by establishing the necessary institutional infrastructure to achieve this. It is also important to develop and implement an institutional strategy to enhance the quality of teaching in civil-military education, with particular emphasis on developing teacher competencies.

The third recommendation is to ensure that all civil-military teachers acquire basic teaching competencies upon entering the academic profession. This foundational training should be mandatory to prepare teachers for the unique demands of civil-military education.

Fourth, the curriculum for the professional development of civilian-military teachers should be rooted in the competency profile specifically designed for this profession. This competency profile defines the criteria for employment and promotion based on the skills and knowledge required for success in the civil-

¹⁹ "Law on Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Science," *Official Gazette*, no. 151/22 (2022).

²⁰ "Law on Higher Education and Scientific Activity," *Official Gazette*, no. 119/22 (2022).

military profession. It serves as the foundation for developing a curriculum. This approach ensures that the professional development program effectively equips teachers with the essential competencies needed for their roles.

Fifth, a flexible system to enhance teaching competencies throughout the academic career of a civil-military teacher should be established. It needs to provide continuous monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the programs in developing teaching competencies.

Conclusion

Lifelong education should be established as a requirement for selecting and advancing teachers in civil-military education and recognized as a strategic goal of the Dr. Franjo Tuđman University of Defense and Security. Only the development of an institutional strategy focused on enhancing teaching competencies and an institutional policy for the employment and advancement of civil-military teachers can ensure the institution's quality.

Building on key empirical findings, the authors of this article developed a competency profile for civil-military teachers, proposed a framework curriculum for acquiring teaching competencies in civil-military higher education, and formulated recommendations for implementation. That should lead to the development of institutional innovations, fostering quality and stimulating changes within courses and study programs, and enhancing the recognition of the Dr. Franjo Tuđman University of Defense and Security both nationally and internationally.

Disclaimer

The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Partnership for Peace Consortium, its participating institutions, or any governmental or international organizations affiliated with its governance structure.

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