

AN EXAMINATION OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENGLISH TEACHERS' JOB SATISFACTION AND KEY COMPETENCES FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

The new trends, teaching methods and techniques in education have greatly altered the traditional understanding of how teachers can learn and teach. These changes force teachers to be in constant development and gain new proficiency. Besides that, today's political developments and social conditions also lead to positive or negative changes in the teachers' view on their profession. This paper examined the relationship between English teachers' job satisfaction and lifelong learning competences. The participants of this research were 306 English teachers, who work in a province located in the eastern region of Turkey in the spring semester of 2016/2017 academic year. In the research, Mann-Whitney U test was used in the analysis of gender variable, and Kruskal Wallis H test was used to compare the English teachers' opinions in the groups of occupational seniority and types of the schools they work in. Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between scores from job satisfaction scale and key competences for lifelong learning scores, and finally simple linear regression analysis was used to determine whether the teachers' job satisfaction is a meaningful predictor of key competences for lifelong learning. The results showed English teachers' job satisfaction and key competences for lifelong learning were high, and the English teachers' job satisfaction and key competences for lifelong learning levels did not differ significantly according to gender, occupational seniority, and type of school they work in. The research found that there is a positive, moderate and significant relationship between job satisfaction and key competences for lifelong learning, and job satisfaction is not a significant predictor of lifelong learning competences.

Keywords: *english teachers, job satisfaction, key competences for lifelong learning*

INTRODUCTION

English is a common communication tool (Lingua Franca) around the world and as more people have been trying to learn English as a second language, it has made the English teaching profession very popular. Since the most preferred language for political, cultural, education and economic relations is English, institutions need to meet the changing student needs, innovations in language exams and programs (Korkmazgil, 2015). The field of teaching English as a foreign language in recent years has seen an increase in its long-term interest of teachers' job satisfaction and lifelong learning competences. However, it has been observed that the job satisfaction of foreign language teachers is not adequately

touched upon even though the rates of depreciation have been expressed in a significant way (Griva, Panitsidou, & Chostelidou, 2012). Considering that job satisfaction is an important factor in teachers' motivation (Obineli, 2013), researching and exploring the foreign language teachers' perceptions on their satisfaction to their jobs may benefit school stakeholders such as teachers, students, administrators, and decision makers in educational policies (Salehi, Taghavi, & Yunus, 2015).

At the same time, in these recent years, the question of what qualifications are necessary for an individual to maintain a successful life in both social and professional terms, how to cope with the challenges of job or education and how to determine the core competences for lifelong learning at the global level have become huge topics of debate. In particular, the concept of core competences gained importance in European education systems. As a result, in 2006, the European Parliament and the Council defined eight key competences at the EU level, including knowledge, skills and attitudes that could be needed in the field of active citizenship, personal development and self-actualization, social and employment (European Commission, 2006):

- Communication in mother tongue
- Communication in foreign languages
- Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology
- Competence of learning to learn
- Digital competence
- Social and civic competence
- Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
- Cultural awareness and expression

These key competences, which have gained importance throughout Europe and are also called core competences in lifelong learning, have begun to take place in many European countries' national programs, either directly or with an understanding of interprogram competences. Moreover, most of the countries have proposed national strategies on the development of at least three core competences (European Commission, 2012).

European countries have made significant progress in integrating these core competences into their national and official programs and have made it possible for the skills taught in schools to integrate into society in order to use them in the social lives of young individuals (Aksoy, 2013). However, it is seen that there are very limited number of studies regarding the integration of the key competences for lifelong learning in education programs and its applications on teachers and students in Turkey, a country in the stage of gaining the European Union candidate membership. At this point, one of the dimensions of this study focuses on English teachers' key competences for lifelong learning in Turkey may allow us to have different interpretations on language teaching studies and relationship between lifelong learning processes and teachers' job satisfaction. In addition, it is important to examine the key competences for lifelong learning for English teachers of an EU candidate country since English is an international common communication language and a fundamental element for developing lasting relations between EU member states and candidate countries (Savuran, 2014).

Moreover, when considering the change and development in English teaching, the core competences of English teachers are becoming more apparent and important. New trends in education, new teaching methods and techniques have greatly altered the traditional understanding of how teachers can learn and teach, and have forced teachers to be in constant development and gain new proficiency (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009). In addition, today's political developments and social conditions has lead to positive or negative changes in the teachers' view on their profession. Therefore, the teachers who are adversely affected by daily life and challenges in school may decrease their performance and job satisfaction in education (Serdyukov, 2017). For this reason, it has been considered that a research on English teachers' job satisfaction and key competences for lifelong learning alongside the examination of the relationship between them may be beneficial for relevant researchers, school stakeholders and educational policy makers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Job satisfaction is one of the topics that are frequently discussed in the field of organizational psychology and in studies for professional attitude (Judge & Church, 2000). Job satisfaction is related to productivity, motivation, ongoing or delayed work, mental/physical health and general life satisfaction (Landy, 1978). It is a concept that includes employees' salaries, working conditions, promotion opportunities, organizational climate and job-oriented expectations (Buluç & Demir, 2015). The widespread theory of this concept is explained as the mental states of the individual about the work environment (Judge & Larsen, 2001). Locke (1975) defined job satisfaction as a pleasant or positive emotional state resulting from one's work or work experience. According to Weiss (2002), job satisfaction is a job-related satisfaction and positive or negative judgment of a person's profession. According to Obineli (2013), job satisfaction is the reaction of someone to their respective workplace environment.

For teachers, job satisfaction can be defined as teacher's attitude to the school and his students, or his satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the job (Msuya, 2016). Teachers with an important role in the education system are required to have a high level of job satisfaction in terms of educational quality (Gençtürk & Memiş, 2010). In addition to this, job satisfaction for teachers is also important not only for the quality of education but also for the low level of job satisfaction leading to occupational exhaustion (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010), the inability of unmotivated teachers to motivate their students and to meet their needs (Ryan & Deci, 2000). However, it is expressed that high job satisfaction increases the motivation of teachers, and motivated teachers increase the motivation and success of students (Moè, Pazzaglia, & Ronconi, 2010). Teachers who are satisfied with their profession generally have a high level of professional competence and the ability to succeed, to organize and to fulfil certain tasks and behaviours (Gkolia, Belias, & Koustelios, 2014).

In recent years, researchers have been discussing issues such as the conditions under which teachers' job satisfaction is affected, in which occupational years they differ and the most important one, how it affects teaching. Previous studies have observed that the majority of the teachers started off with enthusiastic and positive expectations of their profession, but this changed within three or five years (Hicks, 2003). Meanwhile, the senior teachers were experiencing low job satisfaction in their profession or were looking for another occupation (Oyewumi, Ibitoye, & Sanni, 2012). In addition, it was suggested in previous studies that job satisfaction has: a positive correlations with student achievement (Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca, & Malone, 2006), has a positive effect on improving student autonomy and motivation (Klusmann, Kunter, Trautwein, Lüdtke, & Baumert, 2008) and somehow has a negative impact on employees' intention to leave work (Lai & Chen, 2012). In addition to that, job satisfaction also has a positive relationship between commitment to the school and teacher self-efficacy (Caprara et al., 2006), while self-efficacy increases the job satisfaction (Bradley & Roberts, 2004).

One of the factors that affect teachers' success at school is their self-improvement during the professional process (Feng & Ha, 2016). Some teacher only show the qualifications expected from them when it comes to renewal of their teaching post and this shows their lack of understanding on lifelong learning (Ayra & Kösterelioğlu, 2015). In this context, it is important that teachers should be willing to acquire new knowledge, skills and competences related to their professional and personal development (Yaman & Yazar, 2015).

Today, teachers are in a position to guide and teach students on how to access information and not as the person who provides the information and skills in package programs. This is due to the rapid developments in the field of science and technology which require constant updating of knowledge and skills, and force training of individuals who can organize these new knowledge and skills (Demiralay & Karadeniz, 2008). This is explained by the concept of lifelong learning, which states that individuals are in a learning process that is likened to the saying "from the cradle to the grave" (Kirby, Knapper, Lamon, & Egnatoff, 2010).

When the related literature on lifelong learning is reviewed, the researcher found many studies encompassing different fields. Kirby et al. (2010) developed a 14-item scale to measure the lifelong

trends of students and applied them to 309 university students. The results of the research stated that the students' lifelong learning trends were significantly different according to the departments and faculties. Diker-Coşkun and Demirel (2012) found that the lifelong learning trends of the students changed according to the class, department and university variables, but the students' lifelong trends were low. Contrary to this study, Oral and Yazar (2015) determined that the lifelong learning levels of teacher candidates were high, and there were differences according to class levels but that the levels did not differ according to gender and departmental variables. In his study on English teachers, Selvi (2011) determined the teachers' professional competences in four main groups: Program Competence, Lifelong Learning Competence, Socio-Cultural Competence and Affective Competence based on delphi technique. According to the research results, it was determined that lifelong learning competences are the most important competence area for English teachers. Yaman and Yazar (2015) also examined the teachers' lifelong learning trends and found that the lifelong learning trends of teachers did not change according to gender and the university they graduated from, but changed according to the level of seniority. Feng and Ha (2016) found that there is a meaningful relationship between teachers' lifelong learning tendencies, information literacy and school effectiveness, which resulted in high-level effects of lifelong learning. Uzunboylu and Selçuk (2016) determined that there are significant differences in the teacher candidates' attitudes towards personal enterprise and entrepreneurship competence in terms of gender variable.

When the related literature was examined, it was revealed that that English teachers' job satisfaction and lifelong learning competences were never considered together. Therefore, this study is significant as it investigate the English teachers in Turkey, a possible European Union candidate country. For this reason, the main purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between English teachers' job satisfaction and lifelong learning competences. In response to this main objective, the following questions were sought:

- What are the English teachers' levels of job satisfaction and key competences for lifelong learning?
- Do the English teachers' job satisfaction and key competences for lifelong learning differ according to variables of gender, occupational seniority and type of school they work in?
- Is there a meaningful relationship between English teachers' job satisfaction and key competences for lifelong learning?
- Is the English teachers' job satisfaction a meaningful predictor of key competences for lifelong learning?

METHODOLOGY

The research is a quantitative study in a relational survey model. Relational survey models are research models that determine the presence and degree of exchange between two or more variables (Karasar, 2012).

Participants

This research involved 306 English teachers, who work in a province located in the eastern region of Turkey in the spring semester of 2016/2017 academic year. The Criterion sampling method, which is one of the purposive sampling methods, was used in the study. This method was chosen as the study needed to meet certain criteria or have certain characteristics (Patton, 1990). Since the main criteria of the study is English teachers, the scale was applied to all English teachers in primary, secondary and high schools in the city centre. Information on the participants is as shown in Table 1.

The majority of the participants for this study were women (70.9%) while teachers with 1-5 years of seniority (53.3%) constituted the highest percentage of participants, while teacher with over 21 years of seniority (6.2%) had the lowest number of participants. Out of all the teachers who participated,

15.7% of them were teaching in primary school, 45.7% were teaching in middle school and 38.6% were teaching in high school.

Table 1

Personal Information of the Participants

Gender	N	%
Women	217	70.9
Men	89	29.1
Occupational Seniority	N	%
1-5 years	163	53.3
6-10 years	48	15.7
11-15 years	54	17.6
16-20 years	22	7.2
21 years and over	19	6.2
Type of School	N	%
Primary school	48	15.7
Secondary School	140	45.7
High school	118	38.6
Total	306	100

Instruments

In order to determine the job satisfaction levels of the English teachers, "Job Satisfaction Scale" consisting of 20 items developed by Kuzgun, Aydemir-Sevim, and Hamamcı (1999) was used. In the validity study by the scale developers, the scale was applied to 114 teachers and as a result of the factor analysis, it was determined that the scale items were divided into two factors called "suitability to quality" and "development opportunity". The first factor is 36.4%, second factor is 12.2% and the two factors clarifies 48.6% of the total variance. It has been suggested that due to the size of the first factor in explaining the variance, the scale can be regarded as one dimensional. Thus, in the study, the scale was used in one dimension. Cronbach Alpha internal coefficient of consistence of the scale was .90 while the internal reliability coefficient of this study was found to be .93.

The Scale of Key Competences for Lifelong Learning developed by Şahin, Akbaşlı, and Yanpar Yelken (2010) was used to research the English teachers' core competences in the study. There are eight sub-dimensions and 23 items in the five-point likert-type scale. In the sub-scales there are dimensions of: communication in mother tongue, communication in foreign languages, Mathematical basic competence in science and technology, competence of learning to learn, digital competence, social and civic competence, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, cultural awareness and expression. For the validity and reliability study, the researchers applied the study to 415 teacher candidates, and Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the study was found to be .88. The result of the KMO test was .86 and its internal reliability coefficient was found to be .88.

Data Analysis

The data was analysed by using the Statistical Package for Social Science software (SPSS). The arithmetic mean (\bar{X}) and standard deviation (SD) were used to describe the demographic information of English teachers' frequency (f) and percentage (%) techniques, to state teachers' scores for job satisfaction and key competences for lifelong learning. In the research, Mann-Whitney U test was used in the analysis of gender variable, and Kruskal Wallis H test was used to compare the English teachers' opinions in the groups of occupational seniority and types of the schools they work at. Aside from that, the Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between scores from job satisfaction scale and key competences for lifelong learning scores. Lastly, simple linear regression analysis was used to determine whether the teachers' job satisfaction is a meaningful predictor of key competences for lifelong learning.

FINDINGS

Prior to the analysis, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test was performed to determine whether the data had normal distribution. Significance level in the study was accepted as .05.

Table 2
Normal Distribution Test Results of the Scores Related to Job Satisfaction and Key Competences for Lifelong Learning

Scales	N	K-Smirnov Z	p
Job Satisfaction	306	.086	.000*
Key Competences for Lifelong Learning	306	.121	.000*

* $p < .05$

When Table 2 was examined, it was found that scores on job satisfaction ($D=.86, p < .05$) and key competences for lifelong learning ($D=.121, p < .05$) did not show a normal distribution at .05 significance level.

For the purposes stated in the research, the research tried to determine the level of English teachers' job satisfaction and key competences for lifelong learning. The results are as shown in Table 3.

Table 3
General Mean and Standard Deviation Points for Job Satisfaction and Key Competences for Lifelong Learning and Its Sub-Dimensions

General Means	\bar{X}	sd
Job satisfaction	3.89	.57
Key Competences for Lifelong Learning	4.18	.55
Sub-Dimensions of Key Competences for Lifelong Learning		
Communication in mother tongue	4.56	.69
Communication in foreign languages	4.17	.83
Mathematical basic competence in science and technology	3.74	.84
Digital competence	4.09	.80
Competence of learning to learn	4.25	.77
Social and civic competence	4.32	.79
Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship	4.11	.68
Cultural awareness and expression	3.91	1.02

In the study, English teachers' job satisfaction level was found to be ($\bar{X} = 3.89$) and ($\bar{X} = 4.18$) for the key competences for lifelong learning. It was determined that the lowest mean among the eight sub-dimensions of the key competences for lifelong learning belongs to the sub-dimension of mathematical basic competence in science and technology ($\bar{X} = 3.74$) and the highest mean belongs to the sub-dimension of communication competence in the mother tongue ($\bar{X} = 4.56$).

Secondly, it was investigated whether English teachers' job satisfaction and key competences for lifelong learning differ according to gender, occupational seniority and types of the schools they work in. The findings are presented in Table 4, 5 and 6 respectively.

Table 4
Mann-Whitney U Test Results Regarding English Teachers' Job Satisfaction and Key Competences for Lifelong Learning According to Gender Variable

Scales	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Rank	U	p
Job Satisfaction	Female	217	156.39	33936.00	9030.000	.372
	Male	89	146.46			
				13035.00		
Key Competences for Lifelong Learning	Female	217	158.38	34369.00	8597.000	.131
	Male	89	141.60	12602.00		

When Table 4 is examined, it is seen that there is no statistically significant difference in English teachers' job satisfaction ($U=9030.000$; $p>.05$) and key competences for lifelong learning ($U=8597.000$; $p>.05$) according to gender variable. However, when the mean rank is taken into consideration, it is determined that the average of the female is higher than that of the males at both scales.

Table 5
Kruskal Wallis H Test Results Regarding English Teachers' Job Satisfaction and Key Competences for Lifelong Learning According to Occupational Seniority Variable.

Scales	Occupational Seniority	N	Mean Rank	sd	χ^2	p
Job Satisfaction	1-5 years	163	159.06	4	3.435	.488
	6-10 years	48	141.82			
	11-15 years	54	147.24			
	16-20 years	22	130.50			
	21 years and above	19	162.79			
Key Competences for Lifelong Learning	1-5 years	163	153.04	4	3.538	.472
	6-10 years	48	152.47			
	11-15 years	54	166.25			
	16-20 years	22	137.27			
	21 years and above	19	127.24			

According to Kruskal Wallis H test results, in terms of occupational seniority variables, no significant difference was found in the mean of teachers' job satisfaction ($\chi^2=3.435$; $p>.05$) and key competences for lifelong learning ($\chi^2=3.538$; $p>.05$).

Table 6
Kruskal Wallis H Test Results Regarding English Teachers' Job Satisfaction and Key Competences for Lifelong Learning According to Types of the Schools They Work in Variable

Scales	Schools Type	N	Mean Rank	sd	χ^2	p
Job Satisfaction	Primary	48	165.65	2	1.219	.544
	Secondary	140	149.31			
	High	118	153.53			
Key Competences for Lifelong Learning	Primary	48	154.94	2	1.534	.464
	Secondary	140	147.00			
	High	118	160.62			

According to the results of the Kruskal Wallis H test on the type of school the English teachers work in, there was no statistically significant difference in the mean of the teachers' job satisfaction ($\chi^2=1.219$; $p>.05$) and key competences for lifelong learning ($\chi^2=1.534$; $p>.05$).

Finally, the researchers looked at the relationship between English teachers' job satisfaction and key competences for lifelong learning and whether they are meaningful predictors of each other. The findings are presented in Tables 7 and 8.

Table 7
Relationship between English Teachers' Job Satisfaction and Key Competences for Lifelong Learning

		Sub-Dimensions of Key Competences for Lifelong Learning									
Spearman's rho**		Communication in mother tongue	Communication in foreign languages	Mathematical basic competence in science and technology	Digital competence	Competence of learning to learn	Social and civic competence	Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship	Cultural awareness and expression	Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (General)	
N	rs	.188	.163	.147	.144	.185	.240	.283	.209	.302	
Job Satisfaction	306	p	.001*	.004*	.010*	.012*	.004*	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*

$p<.05^*$. ** Because the mean of both scales did not show a normal distribution (Table 2), Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient analysis was used for the mean of the two scales in the study (Kilmen, 2015).

A Spearman correlation test was conducted to determine the relationship between scores from job satisfaction scale and key competences for lifelong learning scores, and a moderately ($rs=.302$; $p=.000$) significant correlation was found in the positive direction. In other words, key competences for lifelong learning are increasing moderately as teachers' job satisfactions increase. When correlations are analysed according to sub-dimensions, it is understood that there is a low relation in the positive direction between sub-dimensions of key competences for lifelong learning and job satisfaction.

In the correlation analysis, the highest relation with job satisfaction is found to be sense of initiative and entrepreneurship ($rs = .283$; $p=.000$), while the lowest correlation is with digital competence ($rs=.144$. $P=.000$).

Table 8
Regression Analysis Results Regarding the English Teachers' Job Satisfaction and Key Competences for Lifelong Learning

Variable	B	Standard Error	β	t	p
Invariable	3.396	.209		16.224	.000
Job satisfaction	.202	.053	.302	3.785	.000

$R^2=.045$, $p<.05$

When the results of simple linear regression analysis regarding whether the teachers' job satisfaction is a meaningful predictor of key competences for lifelong learning are examined, it is seen that only 4.5% of job satisfaction predicts key competences for lifelong learning ($R^2=.045$; $p<.001$). Therefore, when we examine the standardized coefficient (β) and t values, it cannot be said that job satisfaction is a significant predictor of key competences for lifelong learning.

DISCUSSION

In the study, it was determined that the English teachers' job satisfaction and key competences for lifelong learning were high. While the highest mean among the key competences is *communication competence at the mother tongue*, it is followed by *social and civic competence*. It was determined that the lowest mean among the sub-dimensions belongs to *the mathematical basic competence in science and technology*. In a similar study by Şahin et al. (2010), the results also found a significant difference on the views between mathematics and verbal course teachers in the same sub-dimension. Therefore, it can be argued that this is caused by the fact that English teachers are non-math course teachers.

The research results also revealed that the English teachers' job satisfaction and key competences for lifelong learning levels did not differ significantly according to gender, occupational seniority, and type of school they working at. These results are parallel to the results of many studies, but studies that reach different findings were also encountered. The studies by Kartal (2006), Taşdan and Tiryaki (2010) and Obineli (2013) found that teachers' job satisfaction levels did not make a meaningful difference in terms of gender and occupational seniority variables. Meanwhile, Msuya (2016) reached the result that gender and working experience had a great contribution towards teachers' job satisfaction. Gençtürk and Memiş (2010) did not find difference according to gender but instead found significant differences in the variable of occupational seniority. Leppänen (2011) found that English teachers were satisfied with their profession and that they were most satisfied with sociality of their professions, and that job satisfaction did not differ significantly between the less experienced and more experienced teachers.

A similar situation was experienced in the results of studies regarding the teachers' lifelong learning competences. In other words, the findings are consistent with the findings of many studies. For instance, Diker-Coşkun (2012); Gencil (2013); Oral and Yazar (2015); Uzunboylu and Selçuk (2016) found that the life-long learning tendencies of the teacher candidates did not change according to the gender. Similarly, Şahin and Arcağök (2014) also determined that the teachers' lifelong learning competences did not differ according to gender and occupational seniority variables. Yaman and Yazar (2015) found that teachers' lifelong learning tendencies did not change according to gender and the university they graduated from, but they changed according to their domain and occupational seniority variables. Unlike the above findings, Yavuz-Konokman and Yanpar-Yelken (2014); Kılınc and Yenen (2015) found statistically significant differences between gender and lifelong learning tendencies.

Finally, in the research, the relationship between the teachers' job satisfaction and key competences for lifelong learning was examined. When the teachers' relationship between job satisfaction and key competences for lifelong learning is examined, it is seen that there is a positive, moderate and significant relationship between two variables ($r=.302$; $p=.000$). However, this relationship is very close to low level. According to Cohen (1988) and Huck (2008), the "r" value obtained as a result of the correlation analysis is low between .10 and .29; the values between .30 and .49 indicate moderate correlation. According to Büyüköztürk (2011), the level of relationship is low between .00 and .30 and moderate between .30 and .70.

In addition, positive and low correlations were found between job satisfaction and all sub-dimensions of key competences for lifelong learning scale. In this respect, whether the teachers' job satisfaction is a meaningful predictor of key competences for lifelong learning was also investigated in the research. The results show that job satisfaction explains only 4.5% of key competences for lifelong learning and it is not a significant predictor.

CONCLUSION

In the study, the relationship between English teachers' job satisfaction and key competences for lifelong learning was examined. The results showed that the teachers' levels of job satisfaction and key competences for lifelong learning were high and did not differ significantly according to gender, occupational seniority, and type of school they work at.

In summary, although there is a moderate relationship between job satisfaction and key competences for lifelong learning, the result is that this level of relationship is very close to the low level and thus reflects that job satisfaction is not a significant predictor of lifelong learning competences.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results, it can be suggested that future in-service training studies should be organized in order to increase English teacher's job satisfaction and their mathematical core competences in science and technology and digital competences. Aside from that, having vocational counselling centres that can help solving all kinds of professional problems could also be extended.

The only limitation of this study was that the data collected was only from English teachers using quantitative data collection tools and thus cannot be generalized to other groups. Therefore, for any future further studies, it is recommended that the researchers conduct them using qualitative methods which can collect data in a broader way by different domain groups, and obtain more in-depth information on teachers' job satisfaction and lifelong learning competences.

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