# A Comparative Look at Teacher Competences: European Union vs Turkiye Ministry of National Education

Ebru Kızılarslan [a1]

[a]*Erciyes University, Kayseri, Turkiye*

**Abstract**

Teaching has been one of the most significant professions in the world since it has a direct influence on a country's future. This vital position of teachers attracts a lot of attention to the competences that they should have. Several institutions have attempted to reveal the qualifications of teachers. This study was designed to determine the differences and similarities between Turkiye Ministry of National Education (MONE) General Competences for Teaching Profession (2017) and European Commission Competences Required for Effective Teaching (2012) documents. A comparative theme based content analysis is adopted. Two documents were compared to identify how they are similar to and different from each other. The results showed that main categories of two cases are parallel in terms of content. Although, it was found that there are many distinctive competences that one case contain whereas the other does not.

## 1. Introduction

As the core figure of education system, teachers represent modernization and open-minds. In order to guide the new generations effectively, their self-development is highly important. Alan and Guven (2022) emphasize the significant position of teacher competence frameworks in education as these documents aid teachers to be aware of what their profession requires them and how to meet these requirements. According to Alan and Guven (2022), a well-designed teacher competence framework should contain observable and measurable descriptors that will allow teachers to be able to track their professional development and reflect on progress and self-evaluate their necessary skills. A contribution of this kind of framework is to promote the transformation from theory to practice. In their major review, Dervenis, Fitsilis and Iatrellis (2022) state that teacher competence frameworks plays an important role in terms of education quality and strategies that will be applied regarding national education. In addition, it is asserted that scholars mostly focus on specific competence dimensions whereas neglecting some others and the importance of neglected competencies is realized when the current circumstances change. To exemplify, digital competence of teachers have not been a highlighted focus for scholars until COVID-19 pandemic and distance education era. In the same vein, Yuksel and Saglam (2018) claim that teacher competences possess the role of indicator for developmental teacher education and pave the way to examine the progress of pre-service teachers' improvement and deficiencies needed to be strengthened. Gumus (2022) put forward that the rapid change in education system through digitalization call for the same level changes on teacher competences since they have to keep pace with students' needs. Selvi (2010) supports the idea of updating teacher competences according to current trends and it should depend on both individualistic and professional development. Pointing out global changes, Selvi (2010) suggests new dimensions that should be considered while designing teacher competence frameworks. These are "field competencies, research competencies, curriculum competencies, lifelong learning competencies, social-cultural competencies, emotional competencies, communication competencies information and communication

*\*ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE: Ebru Kızılarslan, School of Foreign Languages, Erciyes University, Kayseri, Turkiye, E-mail address: ebrukizilarslan@erciyes.edu.tr, ORCID ID: 0000-0001-9069-420X.*

technologies (ICT) competencies, environmental competencies" p.168.Taking aforementioned statements into consideration, two different teacher competence frameworks will be investigated in the following part.

## 2. European Union Teacher Competences

Teacher's development is one of the main concerns of European Union. How to improve teachers' skills, teacher education, and requirements to be an effective teacher is an ongoing discussion across the continent. Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications (2010) has suggested four core policies to the countries which are in search of enhancing the quality of teacher education. First one is **a well-qualified profession** that implies teachers should master at their profession. They should possess all the necessary knowledge and competences to be able to proceed a decent teaching. **A profession placed within the context of lifelong learning** highlights the significance of continuous professional development that teachers are always encouraged to keep up with current trends and open to innovations. **A mobile profession** allowing teachers to be part of various EU projects and co-construct new teaching perspectives in line with their intercultural colleagues comes third in suggested principles. International collaboration does not ignore the necessity of local cooperation places itself under **a profession based on partnership** policy. The document contains key competences in order to make these principles work. To work with others, to work with knowledge, technology and information, and to work with and in society have been put forward to accomplish the principles. With respect to competences, a list of main competences for effective teaching in the 21$^{st}$ century was offered to Member States for reflection (European Commission, 2012b) (Table 1).

*Table 1. Competences required for effective teaching in the 21$^{st}$ century*

| Knowledge and understanding | Skills | Dispositions: beliefs, attitudes, values, commitment |
|---|---|---|
| Subject matter knowledge | Planning, managing and coordinating teaching | Epistemological awareness (issues concerning features and historical development of subject area and its status, as related to other subject areas) |
| Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), implying deep knowledge about content and structure of subject matter: <br> • knowledge of tasks, learning contexts and objectives <br> • knowledge of students' prior knowledge and recurrent, subject specific learning difficulties <br> • strategic knowledge of instructional methods and curricular materials | Using teaching materials and technologies | Dispositions to change, flexibility, ongoing learning and professional improvement, including study and research |
| Pedagogical knowledge (knowledge of teaching and learning processes) | Managing students and groups | Commitment to promoting the learning of all students |
| Curricular knowledge (knowledge of subject curricula — e.g. the planned and guided learning of subject-specific contents) | Monitoring, adapting and assessing teaching/learning objectives and processes | Dispositions to promote students' democratic attitudes and practices, as European citizens (including appreciation of diversity and multiculturality) |
| Educational sciences foundations (intercultural, historical, philosophical, psychological, sociological knowledge) | Collecting, analysing, interpreting evidence and data (school learning outcomes, external assessments results) for professional decisions and teaching/learning improvement | Critical attitudes to one's own teaching (examining, discussing, questioning practices |
| Contextual, institutional, organizational aspects of educational policies | Using, developing and creating research knowledge to inform practices | Dispositions to team-working, collaboration and networking Sense of self-efficacy |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Issues of inclusion and diversity | Collaborating with colleagues, parents and social services | |
| Effective use of technologies in learning | Negotiation skills (social and political interactions with multiple educational stakeholders, actors and contexts) | |
| Developmental psychology | Reflective, metacognitive, interpersonal skills for learning individually and in professional communities | |
| Group processes and dynamics, learning theories, motivational issues | Adapting to educational contexts characterised by multi-level dynamics with cross-influences (from the macro level of government policies to the meso level of school contexts, and the micro level of classroom and student dynamics) | |
| Evaluation and assessment processes and methods | | |

*Retrieved from Steger, 2014, p.341*

**3. Turkiye Ministry of National Education Teacher Competences**

   Teacher education has kept on evolving since Tanzimat Period.  Village Institutes, Educational Institutes, Higher Education Council, universities and education faculties are the pioneers of teacher education in Turkiye. Teaching profession has been valued and important steps have been taken to provide a quality education. Specifying requirements that will be looked for to be a teacher have been crucial during the process. Identifying competences of a teacher have been discussed in many critical organizations. A wide range of frameworks for competences have been suggested.  Higher Education Competencies Framework and Basic Domain Competencies of the Higher Education Competencies Framework were adopted in 2011 within the settings of Lisbon Strategy. Following that, new updates were called to keep pace with national education system.  A variety of contributors played a role while determining the final version of competence framework. The Board of Education and Training, Higher Education Council, and education policy documents of various countries such as Finland, Hong-Kong were just a couple of these consulted contributors. After renovations, The General Competencies of Teaching Profession has been finalized with three competency domains containing eleven competencies and sixty five descriptors regarding these competencies. The document can be seen in Table 2 below  (Directorate General for Teacher Training and Development, 2017).

*Table 2. General Competencies for Teaching Profession*

| **A Professional Knowledge** | **B Professional Skills** | **C Attitudes and Values** |
|---|---|---|
| **A1. Content Knowledge** | **B1. Planning of Education and Teaching** | **C1. National, Moral and Universal Values** |
| She/he has an advanced and critical perspective on theoretical, methodological and factual knowledge in his/her subject field | She/he plans education and teaching processes effectively | She/he observes national, moral and universal values. |
| **A2. Pedagogical Content** | **B2. Creating Learning** | **C2. Approach to Students** |

| Knowledge | Environments | |
|---|---|---|
| She/he has a good knowledge of the curriculum and pedagogical content knowledge of her/his subject area. | She/he prepares appropriate teaching materials and builds an healthy and safe learning environments, where effective learning can be achieved for all students. | She/he has an attitude that supports the development of students. |
| **A3. Knowledge on Legislation** | **B3. Managing the Teaching and Learning Process** | **C3. Communication and Cooperation** |
| As an individual and teacher, she/he conducts her/himself according to the legislation related to her/his duties, rights and responsibilities. | She/he manages the teaching and learning process effectively. | She/he establishes an effective communication and cooperation with students, colleagues, families, and other educational stakeholders. |
| | **B4. Assessment and Evaluation** | **C4. Personal and Professional Development** |
| | She/he uses the methods, techniques and tools of assessment and evaluation that fit for purpose. | By carrying out self-appraisal she/he participates in personal and professional development activities. |

*Retrieved from Directorate General for Teacher Training and Development, 2017, p.14.*

## 3. Method

This study employs a qualitative approach to display deeper insights from two distinct perspectives. A comparative case study method is adopted. Goodrick (2014) states that comparative case studies examine two or more cases in a way that increases the generalizability of knowledge concerning causal issues, such as how and why specific policies or programs succeed or fail. "Comparative case studies involve the analysis and synthesis of the similarities, differences and patterns across two or more cases that share a common focus or goal." (Goodrick, 2014, p.1.) In the light of this definition, the current study attempts to identify similarities and differences between MONE General Competences for Teaching Profession (2017) and European Commission Competences Required for Effective Teaching documents (2012b). The categories in each document will be identified and they will be analyzed if there is a match between their sub-skills. The differences and similarities in terms of categories and sub-skills will be listed.

*3.1 Research Questions*

RQ 1 *How are the competences in MONE General Competences for Teaching Profession (2017) and European Commission Competences Required for Effective Teaching documents (2012b) different from each other?*

RQ 2 *What are the specific differences between two cases?*
RQ 3 *How are the competences in MONE General Competences for Teaching Profession (2017) and European Commission Competences Required for Effective Teaching documents (2012b) similar to each other?*

RQ 4 *What are the specific similarities between two cases?*

## 4. Findings

Comparative analysis showed that there are many similarities and differences between two cases. Each category was analyzed and findings were presented distinctly via tables for the same categories' similarities and differences. MONE General Competencies for Teaching Profession will be referred as Case 1, European Commission Competences Required for Effective Teaching in the 21st Century will be referred as Case 2 in following parts.

*4.1 RQ 1 How are the competences in MONE  General Competences for Teaching   Profession (2017)  and European Commission Competences Required for Effective Teaching documents (2012b) different from each other?*
*RQ 3  How are the competences in MONE  General Competences for Teaching  Profession (2017)  and European Commission Competences Required for Effective Teaching documents (2012b) similar to each other?*

The aim of the present research was to examine the similarities and differences between Case 1 and Case 2. Research questions 1 and 3 are set to answer how these two cases are similar to and different from each other.  Table 4 compares the main competence categories in each case. It is apparent from this table that competence categories stated in Case 1 are similar to that are stated by case 2.  Despite the naming differences, two cases comprise all the competences required to be a teacher under three parallel categories. In addition to naming difference, sub-skills show a variety of changes in each category. A more detailed account of these changes is given in the following section.

*Table 4. General differences and similarities between two cases*

| MONE General Competencies for Teaching Profession | European Commission Competences Required for Effective Teaching in the 21st Century |
|---|---|
| *Professional Knowledge* | *Knowledge and Understanding* |
| *Professional Skills* | *Skills* |
| *Attitudes and Values* | *Dispositions: beliefs, attitudes, values, commitment* |

*4.2 RQ 2 What are the specific differences between two cases?*
*RQ 4 What are the specific similarities between two cases?*
Table 5 shows similarities between Professional Knowledge and Knowledge and Understanding categories.

*Table 5. Professional Knowledge and Knowledge and Understanding categories similarities*

| MONE General Competencies for Teaching Profession | European Commission Competences Required for Effective Teaching in the 21st Century |
|---|---|
| *Professional Knowledge* | *Knowledge and Understanding* |
| Content Knowledge | Subject matter knowledge |
| Pedagogical Content Knowledge | Pedagogical Content Knowledge |
|  | Pedagogical Knowledge |
|  | Curricular Knowledge |
| Knowledge on Legislation | Contextual, institutional, organizational aspects of educational policies |

It is seen that knowledge competences of both documents have a match among their sub-categories. The only difference regarding these categories is the titles. MONE  Pedagogical Content Knowledge  contains the elements of European Commission's   Pedagogical Content Knowledge, Pedagogical Knowledge, and Curricular Knowledge. That is to say, Knowledge competences are in the same fashion in both documents, but the second document has three titles for one title in the first document. Turning now to differences in Knowledge Competence, Table 6 illustrates distinct sub-categories for each case.

*Table 6. Professional Knowledge and Knowledge and Understanding categories differences*

| MONE General Competencies for Teaching Profession | European Commission Competences Required for Effective Teaching in the 21st Century |
|---|---|
| *Professional Knowledge* | *Knowledge and Understanding* |

| - | Educational sciences foundations (intercultural, historical, philosophical, psychological, sociological knowledge) |
|---|---|
| - | Contextual, institutional, organizational aspects of educational policies |
| - | Issues of inclusion and diversity |
| - | Effective use of technologies in learning |
| - | Developmental psychology |
| - | Group processes and dynamics, learning theories, motivational issues |
| - | Evaluation and assessment processes and methods |

European Commission case is different from MONE case in a number of respects. As shown in Table 6, there is no matching category for seven items in total.

On the question of Skills category, Table 7 provides an overview of similarities between two cases. Three main categories in Case 1 are similar to five items in Case 2. Planning of Education and Teaching competence contains Planning, managing and coordinating teaching, and Managing students and groups skills. Creating Learning Environments competences contains Using teaching materials and technologies, and Monitoring, adapting and assessing teaching/learning objectives and processes skills. Last competence in Case 1, Managing the teaching and Learning Process matches with Managing students and groups skill in Case 2.

*Table 7. Skills and Professional Skills categories similarities*

| MONE General Competencies for Teaching Profession | European Commission Competences Required for Effective Teaching in the 21st Century |
|---|---|
| **Professional Skills** | *Skills* |
| Planning of Education and Teaching | Planning, managing and coordinating teaching |
| | Managing students and groups |
| Creating Learning Environments | Using teaching materials and technologies |
| | Monitoring, adapting and assessing teaching/learning objectives and processes |
| Managing the teaching and Learning Process | Managing students and groups |

On the question of differences, Table 8 illustrates the different skills in two cases.

*Table 8. Skills and Professional Skills categories differences*

| MONE General Competencies for Teaching Profession | European Commission Competences Required for Effective Teaching in the 21st Century |
|---|---|
| *Professional Skills* | *Skills* |
| - | Collecting, analyzing, interpreting evidence and data (school learning outcomes, external assessments results) for professional decisions and teaching/learning improvement |
| - | Using, developing and creating research knowledge to inform practices |
| - | Collaborating with colleagues, parents and social services |
| - | Negotiation skills (social and political interactions with multiple educational stakeholders, actors and contexts) |

| - | Reflective, metacognitive, interpersonal skills for learning individually and in professional communities |
|---|---|
| - | Adapting to educational contexts characterized by multi-level dynamics with cross-influences (from the macro level of government policies to the meso level of school contexts, and the micro level of classroom and student dynamics) |
| Assessment and Evaluation | - |

As can be seen from table above, there is no matching skill for six items of Case 2 in Case 1. Similarly, Assessment and Evaluation skill from Case 1 has no match in Case 2.

As far as Attitudes and Values are concerned, the similarities between two cases are presented below. From Table 9 below, it can be seen that three main categories of Case 1 have match with three competences in Case 2. However, one category in Case 1 National, Moral and Universal Values does not match with any category in Case 2. In the same vein, three competences in Case 2 do not match with any categories in Case 1. It is possible to see these differences in Table 10.

*Table 9. Attitudes and Values and Dispositions: beliefs, attitudes, values, commitment categories similarities*

| MONE General Competencies for Teaching Profession | European Commission Competences Required for Effective Teaching in the 21st Century |
|---|---|
| *Attitudes and Values* | *Dispositions: beliefs, attitudes, values, commitment categories similarities* |
| Approach to Students | Commitment to promoting the learning of all students |
| Communication and Cooperation | Dispositions to team-working, collaboration and networking Sense of self-efficacy |
| Personal and Professional Development | Dispositions to change, flexibility, ongoing learning and professional improvement, including study and research |

*Table 10. Attitudes and Values and Dispositions: beliefs, attitudes, values, commitment categories differences*

| MONE General Competencies for Teaching Profession | European Commission Competences Required for Effective Teaching in the 21st Century |
|---|---|
| *Attitudes and Values* | *Dispositions: beliefs, attitudes, values, commitment* |
| National, Moral and Universal Values | - |
| - | Epistemological awareness (issues concerning features and historical development of subject area and its status, as related to other subject areas) |
| - | Dispositions to promote students' democratic attitudes and practices, as European citizens (including appreciation of diversity and multiculturality) |
| - | Critical attitudes to one's own teaching (examining, discussing, questioning practices) |

## 5. Conclusion

This study set out to investigate how Case1 and Case 2 are different from and also similar to each other. Two cases were compared in terms of their specific differences and similarities. This study has identified that two cases contain same three categories to list fundamental competences for a teacher. The second major finding was that

these three categories have both parallel and distinct competences. Whereas Knowledge categories have three similar items, they have seven distinct items. Regarding Skills categories, the number of similar items is three while the distinct items' number is six. With respect to Attitudes and Values categories, results showed that they have three similar and four distinct items. The most obvious finding to emerge from this study is that European Union and Turkiye share commonalities related to competences required being a teacher, however each counterpart possess its own unique competences which do not exist in the other. The comparison of two cases undertaken here has extended our knowledge of foreign and local teacher competences regarding teacher education. The insights gained from this study may be assistance to designs of teacher training programs. This study is limited to MONE General Competencies for Teaching Profession and European Commission Competences Required for Effective Teaching in the 21st Century documents, further research could also be conducted to examine various documents to shed more light on teacher competences.

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