Tuning Journal for Higher Education

Preparedness for higher education: What does it mean for today and tomorrow?

ARTICLES

Competence-based teacher education programmes: Transitioning towards a paradigm shift or preserving the traditional?

Fjolla Kaçaniku

Competence-based teacher education programmes: Transitioning towards a paradigm shift or preserving the traditional?

Fjolla Kaçaniku*

Abstract: Adapting teacher education programs to societal changes is a current issue, especially when viewed through the European frameworks driving transformative reforms. The paper reports how European frameworks and other initiatives in higher education and teacher education aim to support the transformation of teacher education programmes. Multiple European-level interventions have engendered shifts in the conceptual understanding and orientation of initial teacher education programmes across numerous contexts within Europe. The purpose of this paper was to examine the shift of teacher education programmes into competence-based in Kosovo, the youngest country in Europe, in the context of European frameworks as an impetus for transition. This qualitative research is a part of a broader study that involves analysing study programmes, conducting interviews with teacher educators and management staff, and holding focus groups with student-teachers. The goal is to explore the path of contextualizing European-inspired programme reforms in more detail. The findings show that Kosovo is shifting to a competence-based approach to align with EU integration, incorporating European principles for programme improvement. However, the study reveals a notable focus on maintaining programmes' tradition. This leads to tensions and contradictions regarding programme tradition, EU integration goals, and actual implementation. The results provide valuable insights into the significance of educational context and

---

* **Fjolla Kaçaniku** (fjolla.kacaniku@uni-pr.edu), PhD, is an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Education, University of Prishtina in Kosovo. Her research interests are quality teacher education and European education policies focusing on teacher education.

More information about the author is available at the end of this article.

the tacit knowledge of teacher educators and other stakeholders during programme reforms within the context of European initiatives.

Keywords: Competence-based programmes; teacher education; European frameworks; reform; tradition.

I. Introduction

The international literature review reveals various initiatives to enhance the quality of initial teacher education. A significant change recognized in these efforts involves the transition of study programs from traditional knowledge-based approaches to competency-oriented or standards-based approaches (Bates 2008; Cochran-Smith et al. 2017; Darling-Hammond 2017; Darling-Hammond and Lieberman 2012a; Darling-Hammond and Lieberman 2012b; Edwards and Usher 2008; Flores 2016; Ostinelli 2009). While traditional teacher education traditionally emphasized subject knowledge and disciplinary expertise, the shift towards competency-oriented teacher education aims to elevate professional standards and improve teacher competencies to address evolving societal needs (Flores 2016).

In Europe, there is a preference for a competence-based teacher education system (Ostinelli 2009). Although the literature lacks a strict definition of competence, this paper adheres to the broader notion of (teacher) competences as complex combinations of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and understanding that result in effective teacher practice (Caena 2011; Caena 2014b). According to the European Commission (2013), teacher education needs to be "founded upon a shared agreement in each education system about what it takes to be a high quality teacher: what competences (knowledge, skills and attitudes) they need, how those can be understood, described and deployed – and what policies and practical provisions can support teachers to acquire and develop them throughout their careers" (European Commission 2013, 5)

Scholars have regarded competence-based teacher education as an enticing concept that bridges the gap between theory and practice, enhances student-teacher employability, and forms the foundation for lifelong learning. Biesta (2012) expounds on two primary reasons why the notion of competence holds interest. Firstly, the concept of competence holds rhetorical appeal, portraying teachers as practically proficient individuals. Secondly, the discourse surrounding teacher competencies centres on the trajectory of teachers' abilities and skills rather than solely on their knowledge. As a result, teacher "competence" is perceived as a comprehensive and pragmatic approach that encompasses knowledge, skills, and action as an interconnected whole. The

literature shows that different countries have responded to the pressure of reforming teacher education programmes into competence-based using various intervention schemes (e.g., Darling-Hammond 2017; Page 2015; Caena 2014b). This paper focuses on European higher education and teacher education interventions that supported study programmes transformation into competence-based teacher education programmes. Here we have grouped such initiatives into the following: (i) the Bologna Process and its action lines (political level, general higher education), (ii) the Tuning project (grassroots level, programmes), and (iii) other initiatives related specifically to teacher education (e.g., European teacher competence frameworks) (e.g., Biesta 2012; Caena 2014a; Gassner et al. 2010; Hudson et al. 2010; Hudson and Zgaga 2008; Hudson and Zgaga 2017; Malinen et al. 2012; Schratz 2010; Schratz 2014; Valenčič Zuljan and Vogrinc 2011; Zgaga 2013).

Acknowledging the Bologna Process as a fundamental higher education intervention, its action lines and objectives are directed towards the establishment of a cohesive European Higher Education Area (EHEA). The Bologna Process endeavours to foster harmonization among European higher education systems, ensuring greater comparability and compatibility, promoting mobility, facilitating international collaboration, and elevating overall quality standards (Curaj et al. 2012, 2015). In this context, Zgaga (2013) supports the notion that this framework holds significance not only for higher education in general but also for the advancements in teacher education. The Bologna Process, as a political-level influence (e.g., Crosier and Parveva, 2013), stands in contrast to the grassroots initiative known as the Tuning Project, which involves academics strategizing to translate Bologna's initiatives into improved study programme quality (see: Wagenaar, 2013; Wagenaar 2014; Wagenaar 2019). Operating as a bottom-up approach, the Tuning Project engages European higher education institutions and their staff to modernize and enhance programme quality in alignment with the Bologna Process (González and Wagenaar 2005). It has fostered a common language and cooperation among institutions, countries, and regions worldwide in the dimensions of teaching, learning, and assessment (González and Wagenaar 2008; Wagenaar 2014).

Within the initial phase of Tuning, teacher education and education science were integrated as one of the "subject groups". Emphasizing the importance of transversal competencies to bolster teacher adaptability, this integration resulted in the designation of general and specific competences for the field of teacher education (Caena and Margiotta 2010). The outcomes and advancements stemming from this initiative have been instrumental in guiding the redesign and enhancement of initial teacher education

programmes' quality in the universities and countries involved (González and Wagenaar 2005; Wagenaar 2019). Furthermore, teacher education-specific measures aligned with European initiatives. Significantly, the endeavour to cultivate "a European Teacher" received paramount attention (Schratz 2010; Schratz 2014). In 2007 and 2009, the European Commission adopted its principal policy proposal, the Common European principles for teacher competences and qualifications, aiming to foster quality teachers dedicated to serving Europe (European Commission 2007; European Commission 2009). In 2013, the European Commission devised a teacher competence framework, providing policy guidance for the development of teacher competencies (European Commission 2013). This framework encompasses comprehensive elements to shape a European teacher's professionalism profile. It is worth noting that these initiatives did not aim to establish a uniform European teacher model, as emphasized by Schratz (2014). Instead, the overarching objective of these frameworks was to transcend national contexts and transform the teaching profession, accentuating the value of diversity and the richness that Europe offers, while urging collaboration among national teacher education programmes to preserve this "richness". This study focuses on Kosovo, the youngest country in Europe, to examine the shift of teacher education programmes into the competence-based design and delivery towards quality teacher education. Initial teacher education as part of higher education in Kosovo developed in 2002/3 academic year and its development is heavily influenced by various European interventions (Kaçaniku 2020; Kaçaniku 2022). Hence, it is relevant to understand how transitioning contexts as Kosovo have transformed study programmes into competence-based while using European frameworks as stimulus for change.

This paper serves as an in-depth exposition of the research findings conducted throughout rigorous PhD studies, firmly grounded in the data and content that have been previously published as an integral part of the doctoral thesis. The objective of this paper is to illustrate the transformation of study programme design and delivery, emphasizing the development of quality teacher competencies in response to European frameworks.

II. Literature review

II.1. *Understanding competence-based teacher education in Europe*

In European initial teacher education reform, there is a notable trend towards adopting a competence-oriented and learning outcomes approach to

shape future teacher professionalism (Werler 2016). The European Commission Report (2007) defines competence as a comprehensive concept encompassing knowledge, skills, and values (Caena 2014b). Future teachers' professional competences include a diverse range of skills and expectations (European Commission 2013). Increasingly, European teacher education institutions are strategically incorporating learning outcomes and transitioning to competence-based curricula (Caena 2014b; Flores 2016; Krek 2017; Pantić and Wubbels, 2010; Pantić and Wubbels 2012; Werler 2016). However, for seamless curriculum transformation within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), a comprehensive competence-based framework for teacher education is crucial (Caena, 2014a; Caena 2014b). European initiatives prioritize the development of teacher professionalism and future teacher competences to enhance the quality of initial teacher education (Caena 2014a; Caena 2014b; Zgaga 2013; Niemi et al. 2016; Werler 2016). This has led to the establishment of various European frameworks, communications, and guidelines, serving as foundational constructs for competence-based teacher education programmes (Caena, 2014a; Caena 2014b; Flores 2016; Krek 2017). These initiatives reflect concerted efforts at the European level to harmonize and enhance the management of European teacher competence development.

II.2. *A brief presentation of European initiatives towards teacher competence frameworks*

The conclusions drawn from the EU Education Councils in November 2007, 2008, and 2009 underscored the necessity of outlining expected competences development in initial teacher education. Initial teacher education institutions were presented with the following requirements to construct a European teacher professionalism profile (European Union 2007; European Union 2008; European Union 2009): specialist subject knowledge and pedagogical skills, including the ability to teach diverse student groups, utilize ICT, instruct transversal competences, foster safe and engaging learning environments, promote a culture of reflective practice, and encourage research, innovation, collaboration, and autonomous learning.

As part of the Lisbon agenda, conclusions aligned with the Lifelong Learning paradigm have accentuated the significance of developing transversal competencies in initial teacher education, such as digital literacy, learning-to-learn skills, and civic competences, within the broader scope of eight key competences required in a changing world. Notably, the meta-competence of learning to learn, adapting to change, managing vast

information flows, and making appropriate selections were highlighted as crucial (Caena 2011).

Specialized problem-solving skills in research and innovation, as well as competences in managing and navigating complex and unpredictable contexts, are deemed essential teacher qualifications in the European Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (*based on the Dublin Descriptors*), placing teacher qualifications at Level 7 (Caena 2011). The Dublin Descriptors (Joint Quality Initiative 2004) are "generic statements of typical expectations of achievements and abilities", which student-teachers are expected to achieve upon completion of an initial teacher education programme.

Teaching staff must possess the competences to constantly innovate and adapt. "This includes having critical, evidence-based attitudes which enable them to respond to students' outcomes, new evidence from inside and outside the classroom, and engage in professional dialogue, in order to adapt their own practices" (European Commission 2012, 22–23). Reflective thinking and research actions are central to these competency-oriented frameworks, emphasizing the future teachers' ability to navigate change through research, collaborative learning experiences, and maintaining a critical stance (Niemi and Nevgi 2014).

In the context of summarizing the competence frameworks relevant for initial teacher education study programmes, Pantić and Wubbels (2010 and 2012) have identified four domains of teacher competences: (i) self-evaluation and professional development, which involve teachers' reflective practices on their educational impact and development, and various approaches to teacher evaluation; (ii) subject matter, pedagogy, and curriculum, encompassing competences related to a teacher's subject field, instructional methods, and the implementation, adaptation, or development of the school curriculum; (iii) understanding of the education system and contribution to its development, entailing a broader comprehension of the schooling context in which teachers operate, including the institutional setting; and (iv) values and child-rearing domain, focusing on competences related to addressing values and moral issues that emerge in teaching practice.

Considering the diversity and richness across European teacher education contexts (Schratz 2014), a common language is proposed for core competence requirements for teachers. This includes structured and well-organized knowledge frameworks, effective knowledge management strategies concerning curricula, educational theories, and assessment; sound knowledge of subject-specific teaching, digital competences, and an understanding of student learning; classroom teaching and management

122

skills; interpersonal, collaborative, reflective, and research skills for working in professional school communities; critical attitudes towards professional practice and innovation, informed by various sources such as student outcomes, theory, and professional dialogue; positive attitudes and commitment to ongoing professional development, collaboration, diversity, and inclusion; and adaptive expertise –the ability to adapt plans and practices to meet the needs of different contexts and students (European Commission 2013). This framework serves as a relevant frame of reference for analysing European initial teacher education approaches and promotes the identification of tensions between institutions and individuals, products and processes, and what is desirable versus what is feasible.

II.3. *Unveiling the educational benefits of teacher competence frameworks*

Teacher competence frameworks serve as effective tools for developing competence-based study programmes in teacher education (Caena 2014b). They offer flexibility, context responsiveness, and promote collective learning through mentoring and peer review. The value lies in enhancing awareness, fostering shared understanding, and encouraging collective discussion among stakeholders committed to quality initial teacher education (Caena 2014b). This tool, contributing to European teacher professionalism (Schratz 2014), cultivates a shared culture of quality. However, the literature underscores the need to consider aspects related to teacher professionalism, learning theories, quality cultures, and policy perspectives when conceptualizing competence-based education. This may lead to tensions due to diverse approaches (Caena 2014a; Caena 2014b; Flores 2016; Ostinelli 2009; Pantić and Wubbels 2010; Pantić and Wubbels 2012; Werler 2016). In the European context, it is crucial to define the purpose and implementation approach of competence frameworks, ensuring stakeholder commitment across diverse national cultures and contexts for quality initial teacher education within European initiatives.

III. Methodology

III.1. *Research approach and participants*

This is a qualitative study that analysed the content of (n = 6) study programmes at BA and MA levels, conducted interviews with (n = 6)

management staff (MS) and (n = 18) teacher educators (TE), and organised 2 group interviews with (n = 15) BA student-teachers (ST) and (n = 12) MA student-teachers (ST) in two initial teacher education institutions in Kosovo, Big urban – Capital and Small urban. See more details presented in *Table 1*.

Table 1

Sample characteristics

Programmes		MS	TE	ST
BA	Primary Teacher Education		10	15
MA	Master of Subject Teaching with a specialization in (i) Biology, (ii) Chemistry, (iii) History and (iv) Geography	6	8	12
TOTAL	**6**	**6**	**18**	**27**

III.2. Data collection

III.2.1. Study programme documents

The study involved the selection of six teacher education programmes from two institutions, comprising two BA programs and four MA programs. However, it is worth noting that the Small urban institution only offers BA programmes. The programmes were carefully chosen using purposive sampling based on criterion sampling, as proposed by Denzin and Lincoln (2018). The selection criteria aimed to represent various levels (BA and MA studies) and focuses (areas of teacher specialization) in the field of teacher education.

The Primary Teacher Education (BA) programme was designed to train teachers for grades 1 to 5. On the other hand, the Subject teaching (MA) programmes specialize in Biology, Chemistry, History, and Geography, preparing subject teachers. These subject teaching programmes catered to BA students with backgrounds in natural and social sciences, equipping them with pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge (*as described by* Shulman in 1987). These MA students were interested in teaching at upper secondary and high school levels as subject teachers. For more information on content of selected programmes and prospective teachers graduating from the selected programme, see *Table 2* on characteristics of programming documents.

Table 2

Characteristics of programming documents

Programme	Institution	Programme purpose and profile
Primary Teacher Education (BA) 4 years	Big urban - Capital	The programme aims to prepare primary school teachers (class 1 to 5). The following are the guiding goals and profile characteristics of the programme: Educating students to realize the subjects of primary education (mother tongue, mathematics, nature, society, music, art and health, as well as the implementation of educational technology). Preparing students for the promotion, organization, evaluation and implementation of the educational curriculum effectively to students, parents and other members of society. Emphasising various study-learning options, educational issues within primary education.
Primary Teacher Education (BA) 4 years	Small urban	Implementing a contemporary practice in the field of primary education as well as the application of information technology in the development of activities with primary school students. Knowing interdisciplinary content and inclusive education. Familiarising with work in primary school institutions during the implementation of professional practices, which develops within specific methodologies. Understanding the importance of practice in school institutions.
Master of Subject Teaching with a specialization in Biology (MA) 2 years	Big urban - Capital	The Master's programmes for subject teaching integrate students who complete Bachelor studies in any of the academic fields and who wish to become subject teachers.
Master of Subject Teaching with a specialization in Chemistry (MA) 2 years	Big urban - Capital	The general purpose of the Master programme in Subject Teaching is to further advance the modern competencies of teaching and pedagogical practice, in addition to academic ones, taking into account prior education and needs of each subject teaching profile
Master of Subject Teaching with a specialization in History (MA) 2 years	Big urban - Capital	The Master's programme in Subject Teaching contains several relevant specializations, while 4 of them have been selected as part of this study.
Master of Subject Teaching with a specialization in Geography (MA) 2 years	Big urban - Capital	The programme consists of general education courses that are the same for all specializations, while special courses respond to each specialization.

541

It is important to highlight that documents play a crucial role in allowing researchers to gather "social facts" related to the institution or subject of the study, as proposed by Matthews and Ross (2010). The objective of selecting programme documents was to analyse various aspects of the programmes, including programme goals and expected outcomes, student learning achievements, teaching and learning methodologies, assessment techniques and criteria, the relationship between theory and practice, and the prescribed course literature. The content of study programmes was analysed using the EU framework (2013) Supporting teacher competence development for better learning outcomes. The framework is a dynamic and holistic representation of teacher competencies into three areas of competence development, including: knowledge and understanding, skills, and dispositions: beliefs, attitudes, values, and commitment. Programmes analysis was done in terms of two pillars for analysis, including: programme design (course descriptions and student learning outcomes) and delivery (lecturing approach, student-teacher activities, practical engagement, and assessment). This is relevant to understanding the extent to which this framework is reflected in the design and delivery of competence-based teacher education programmes in Kosovo.

III.2.2. Interviews

Interviewees were also selected with purposive sampling (Denzin and Lincoln 2018). Maximum variation-convenience sampling (Given, 2008) was used as criteria to identify teacher educators from all selected programmes, gender, age ranges, different disciplines/education backgrounds, research and lecturing experience, academic rank, and institution. A similar approach was used to select management staff from different positions, academic ranks, and profiles. All criteria were carefully chosen to cover the entire spectrum of perceptions.

III.2.3. Group interviews

Group interview respondents were selected through purposive sampling to correspond to study programmes selected for analysis. The group interviews were organised in two interconnected steps. Firstly, student-teachers (both from BA and MA groups) who agreed to participate in group interviews have received electronically a discussion/feedback form based on the EU framework (2013) for supporting teacher competence development for better learning outcomes. The purpose of the form was to facilitate discussions during group interviews. It was designed based on the competence areas outlined in the

framework. The study respondents were requested to reflect on how well each competence area was integrated into the course design (including syllabus and other plans) and delivery (covering aspects like teacher educator lectures, activities, engagement, and assessment). Student-teachers were given the option to provide a brief written reflection or simply answer with Yes/No comments to indicate whether the competence areas were adequately addressed in their study programme. In the subsequent step, student-teachers were invited to participate in face-to-face group interviews. These group interviews were particularly beneficial as they allowed the researcher to gain valuable insights into how the discussions unfolded, with group members encouraging each other to actively engage in the conversation (Frey and Fontana 1991). The primary objective of these group interviews was to further discuss the development of competence areas concerning the European competence framework (2013). The aim was to gain a deeper understanding of how students were exposed to competence-based teacher education. The overall goal was to encourage discussions among student-teachers about their perceptions of quality initial teacher education and competence-based programmes in Kosovo in relation to European competence interventions and frameworks.

III.3. *Criteria for evaluating the credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative research*

In this research, we utilized established criteria for evaluating the credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative research, as outlined in *Table 3*. This approach was employed to ensure the validity, generalizability, reliability, and objectivity of our study. Scholars who align with a constructivist perspective, particularly those who adopt a qualitative and interpretive methodology, have introduced a set of key principles, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, to address the quality standards associated with assessing the trustworthiness of qualitative research, as originally proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

Table 3

Criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of qualitative inquiries
(adopted from Lincoln and Guba, 1985)

Aspect	Scientific term	Qualitative term	Approach
Truth value	Internal validity	Credibility	Operationalizing concepts clearly Allowing respondents to confirm the results

Aspect	Scientific term	Qualitative term	Approach
Applicability	External validity Generalizability	Transferability	Allowing other researchers the opportunity to compare context similarities and differences Achieving theoretical generalizations as the key advantage of conducting qualitative research
Consistency	Reliability	Dependability	Outlining the methodological approach in detail Diverse sample/groups of respondents
Neutrality	Objectivity	Confirmability	Diverse instruments of data collection to ensure data triangulation

III.4. Data analysis

Thematic analysis of the data followed the six phases outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). The initial phase involved familiarization through triangulation of data (Creswell and Creswell 2018) from interviews with teacher educators and management staff. Raw data were categorized, coded, and organized in an Excel spreadsheet before being transferred to ATLAS.ti for further sorting.

Generating initial codes followed, with a focus on reflection and interaction with data, as advocated by Nowell et al. (2017). A comprehensive code manual was developed, ensuring transparency for novice researchers and facilitating an organized approach. ATLAS.ti was instrumental in maintaining coding consistency.

The third phase involved searching for themes, grouping codes relevant to research questions using an inductive approach. Notes were kept for auditing and confirmability. The fourth phase included reviewing and revising themes, ensuring coherence and validity. External debriefing sessions with data auditors enhanced credibility and validity, aligning with Lincoln and Guba's (1985) recommendations.

Defining and naming themes constituted the fifth phase, seeking clarity through continuous consultation with data auditors. This step confirmed a clear and comprehensive final version of themes. The sixth and final phase involved producing a coherent and stimulating narrative report, aligning with Braun and Clarke's (2006) recommendation. The entire methodological process was meticulously recorded to ensure credibility in reporting the findings

III.5. *Ethical considerations*

Following Nowell et al.'s (2017) advice, I implemented two measures to address ethical concerns in the study: (1) allowing continuous negotiation of informed consent with respondents, and (2) sending summary points of transcribed data to interviewees to ensure unbiased data presentation. No respondent sought to negotiate consent or modify transcript text. Given the limited size of the initial teacher education community in Kosovo, this research guarantees the anonymity of student-teachers, teacher educators, and management staff identities.

IV. Findings

Findings synthesise multiple-source data to shape a consolidated understanding regarding the transformation of teacher education programmes into competence-based teacher education in the context of European frameworks. The analysis has revealed that programmes exhibit a certain degree of 'surface' convergence when they undergo improvement in accordance with European teacher education principles. The findings indicate a division in the development of knowledge, skills, and values within study programmes, which primarily focus on academic knowledge and rely on the classroom practices of teacher educators. Through the analysis of various data sources, several themes have emerged. A summary of these findings can be found in *Table 4* and is discussed in detail below (see Kaçaniku 2021, for more information).

Table 4
Detailed findings (see also: Kaçaniku 2021)

Themes	Detailed finding
Compartmentalisation of knowledge, skills and values development in programmes	• Content knowledge is the main learning outcome of programmes • Programmes overemphasise subject matter knowledge • Elective courses offered in different programmes entertain a less important status • Pedagogical knowledge is mostly offered through elective courses – making the pedagogical knowledge delivery limited • Programmes have limitations with missing subject didactics • Programmes offer limited knowledge in education policy and contextual awareness issues

Themes	Detailed finding
	• Limited knowledge about inclusion and psychological development issues is reflected in programmes • Knowledge about assessment is poorly addressed in programmes • Skills and values development is not prioritised in programmes learning outcomes • Courses are mainly organised through traditional lecturing • Student-teacher are not fully engaged in course processes • Programmes offer course variations from courses that organize practical activities to those offering isolated lecturing • Limited practical student engagement is represented in programmes • Student-teachers act mainly as an audience • Assessment is predominantly summative • Courses that focus more on skills and values are general education-related courses
Europeanisation or surface convergence of study programmes dilemma	• Programmes have engaged in continuous EU-led reforms • Partner European Universities offering initial teacher education assisted in reforming programmes structure and content based on European programmes models • Initial teacher education in Kosovo has harmonised degree structures (3+2 and 4+1 criteria accomplished) • Institutions adopted the three-cycle system (Bachelor, Master, and PhD) • Programmes are structured according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) • Kosovo has been a participant country in Tuning Europe (III-IV) (2005-2009) • Limited interest and commitment showed by teacher educators and institutional management to implement Tuning recommendations within reference points • Content of programmes has reformed • Formal drafting of competences and learning outcomes in programmes and syllabi • Lack of practical convergence and common understanding for initial teacher education • Lack of institutional indicators to follow-up programmes design and delivery • Limited interest and commitment showed by teacher educators and institutional management to follow the methodology of enhancing the quality of study programmes

Themes	Detailed finding
	• Variations among stakeholders in how they conceptualise quality programmes design and delivery • Teacher education programmes are treated as a national concern
Fragmented implementation of study programmes	• Course design and delivery is fragmented • Courses are implemented in isolation and knowledge is not connected as a programme approach • Lack of programmatic approach in teacher education • Teacher competences development is fragmented into individual courses • No linkage between courses and syllabi • Integrated teaching is a missing aspect • Theory-practice gap and fragmentation is promoted in programmes • Disciplines and subjects disintegration is not addressed in programmes • The development of research skills is approached in isolation • Pedagogy-Psychology division is present in programmes • System/institutional formalities prevent integrated teaching in programmes • There is a vast difference between teacher educators' practices • Limited integrated teaching has been implemented with teacher educator of the same group • Shared teacher educator values are required for implementing integrated teaching

IV.1. *Compartmentalisation of knowledge, skills, and values development in study programmes*

The findings reveal a notable lack of cohesion in teacher competence development, with a significant gap between the design and implementation of competence-based programmes. Variations in teaching styles, student activities, practical engagement, and assessment methods exist across courses and among teacher educators. These discrepancies lead to tensions stemming from differing emphases on knowledge, skills, and values, which seem compartmentalized rather than integrated into a unified programmatic framework. For a detailed analysis, refer to Tables 5 and 6, covering the results of BA and MA program analyses, respectively.

Table 5

BA level detailed programmes findings (based on EU Framework 2013) (see also: Kaçaniku 2021)

Categories	Competences (representation in %)	Detailed findings on programme design and delivery
Knowledge and understanding	Subject matter knowledge (26%)	**Knowledge development is the main programme focus** • Main programme outcomes relate to knowing, getting acquainted with knowledge, understanding, and learning • Theory and practice gap remains programme weakness • Developing knowledge and understanding of concepts as one of the most relevant aspects of the programme • Content reproduction and knowledge comprehension as the main programme learning outcomes • Programme encourages and expects factual knowledge • Mechanic learning is greatly promoted in programme delivery • Subject/academic courses dominate programme design and delivery • Subject matter knowledge is considered important for future teachers' knowledge base • Subject didactic courses are formally included in programme delivery • Didactic courses are delivered as subject (academic) courses due to teacher educator academic background • Didactic courses are content and knowledge-oriented • Pedagogical content knowledge is poorly represented in programme design and delivery • Lack of courses offering knowledge on strategies for teaching and learning • Limited courses discussing the knowledge of the teaching profession • Programme offers poor knowledge of teaching and learning process • Programme design reflects poor professional knowledge (e.g. knowing students, understanding how they learn, and how to teach?)
	Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) (15%)	
	Pedagogical knowledge (8%*¹)	
	Curricular knowledge (1%*)	
	Educational sciences foundations (5%)	
	Contextual, institutional, organizational aspects of educational policies (5%*)	
	Issues of inclusion and diversity (4%*)	
	Effective use of technologies in learning (1%)	
	Developmental psychology; Group processes and dynamics, learning theories, motivational issues (3%*)	

---

¹ Elective courses are identified with an asterix. Obligatory and elective courses decision is relevant for the Findings discussion.

Categories	Competences (representation in %)	Detailed findings on programme design and delivery
	Evaluation and assessment processes and methods (4%*)	• Knowledge of questions "How am I going to teach?", "Am I doing the right thing?" remain on the margins programme design and delivery • Limited programme possibilities for gaining pedagogical knowledge during 4 years of studies • Programme offers limited knowledge about curriculum demands and future teacher expectations • Poor practical involvement of students with curriculum demands • Programme treats education sciences foundation at a theoretical level • Programme delivery fails to engage student-teachers in critical application of different theories in practice • Programme includes a limited number of courses about system education policy • Limited discussion on policy implementation for the teaching profession • Future teachers are not prepared to engage in professional development and address teacher licensing framework demands • Programme poorly addresses the social and cultural context of teaching and schooling • Limited knowledge about school context and culture is provided • Programme fails to develop knowledge on education policy review • Issues of inclusion and diversity are treated in an abstract and theoretical way • Use of technology focuses on knowledge of the course and not on practical application to teaching and learning • Psychology courses are poorly represented in the programme • Developmental psychology and knowledge of motivation theories and approaches are not given the necessary attention • Limited knowledge about assessment processes and methods • Programme offers knowledge of assessment methods in theory • Traditional knowledge transmission is the typical teaching mode • Frontal lecturing style is the main teacher educator practice • Limited activities and practical engagement is present

Categories	Competences (representation in %)	Detailed findings on programme design and delivery
		• Students are required to memorize, listing facts from lectures and literature • Student-teachers are assessed based on their comprehension of content knowledge • Programme delivery reflects limited analysis and reflection required • Student-teachers knowledge is assessed mainly through final exams • Limited formative assessment is practiced • Individual student work is desired in the majority of course in the programme • Limited group work is required • Students are receivers rather than contributors to course development • Students are treated as an audience in the majority of courses • Teacher educators act distanced to student-teachers • Many courses promote the use of outdated books in the Albanian language as the main literature • In the absence of literature, lecture notes are prepared and distributed in many courses
Skills	Planning, managing and coordinating teaching (6%*) Using teaching materials and technologies (4%) Managing students and groups (1%*) Monitoring, adapting and assessing teaching/learning objectives and processes (0%)	**Skills development is not a programme priority** • Many skills are taught in a knowledge-based format • Knowledge and skills development is not linked within and among courses in the programme • Programme fails to promote the development of transversal skills • Planning lessons as part of future teachers practical work is only theoretically lectured • Programme embassies the theoretical understanding of planning rather than applying in practice • Limited practical planning activities are organized in course delivery • Limited courses on classroom management and assessment methods are available • Programme promotes a theoretical understanding of classroom management and assessment methods • Limited group work and practical collaborative tasks are implemented

134

Categories	Competences (representation in %)	Detailed findings on programme design and delivery
	Collecting, analysing, 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 (1%*)	• Students are not prepared for classroom management and dealing with coordination matters • The use of technology in teaching has not been treated carefully • Students lack skills in using technology in teaching • Assessment methods and techniques in education are treated only in one course • Students have gained assessment skills in theory • Students lack skills in teaching modelling • Students lack the skills to judge the use of appropriate teaching methods and techniques • Students have a basic theoretical understanding of the steps of research methods • Only one research methods course us offered in the entire programme • Limited activities related to collecting and analysing evidence are organized throughout the programme delivery • Formal learning is embraced by the majority of teacher educators
	Collaborating with colleagues, parents and social services (1%*)	• Knowledge-based teaching and learning is the main programme theme • Limited courses promote analysis, discussion and research • No skills development for engaging in research to inform practice • Research engagement is considered separate to the teaching profession • Research activity is distanced as a complex task
	Negotiation skills (social and political interactions with multiple educational stakeholders, actors and contexts) (0%)	• The only research activity is thesis project (at the end of the programme) • Students are not skilled to complete a quality thesis work • No skills development for evidence-based decision-making • Knowledge of implementing the didactical triangle of collaboration is only considered from a theoretical perspective
	Reflective, metacognitive, interpersonal skills for learning individually and in professional communities (3%*)	• Teaching profession skills are development using a narrow traditional view • Students have developed limited skillset for adaptability • Narrow understanding of the education system is promoted • Students have a general comprehension of the relevance of collaboration

Categories	Competences (representation in %)	Detailed findings on programme design and delivery
	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)	• Limited group work was encouraged in programme • Limited collegiality experiences offered in programme • Programme fails to develop skills for critical education policy review • Reflection essays and seminar are constantly required in programme courses • Students rarely receive feedback on reflection and other assignments • Limited reflective discussions on education problems are organized • Classroom dynamics represent a theoretical understanding • Gaining knowledge is fostered in many courses • Some sociological theoretical background is covered in the programme • Limited contextual discussions are organized
Dispositions: beliefs, attitudes, values, commitment	Epistemological awareness (issues concerning features and historical development of subject area and its status, as related to other subject areas)	**Development of beliefs, attitudes, values, commitment is not considered a priority and it is missing entirely in programmes** • Heavily knowledge-based awareness about the teaching profession is represented in the programme • Limited development of the transversal sense in a limited number of courses • Adaptability as a missing aspect in the programme
	Teaching skills through content	• Limited activities for professional learning are organized • Students are only exposed to knowledge about teacher professional development • Flexibility is not developed as part of the programme
	Transferable skills	• Limited knowledge about the importance of lifelong learning is offered
	Dispositions to change, flexibility, ongoing learning and professional improvement, including study and research	• Lack of awareness of the teaching profession lifelong demands • Lack of awareness about induction phase challenges and the role of mentoring • Limited promotion of appreciation for research engagement for practice improvement • Programme develops an understanding of the importance of equality and diversity • Civic education is covered only within one theoretical course
	Commitment to promoting the learning of all students	• Superficial knowledge about civic education is promoted in the programme

Categories	Competences (representation in %)	Detailed findings on programme design and delivery
	Dispositions to promote students' democratic attitudes and practices, as European citizens (including appreciation of diversity and multiculturality)	• Students are assessed on the main knowledge frames of civic education • Respectful attitude is treated only by individual students • Programme promotes a limited understanding of minorities • Programme represents knowing about general European historic influence • No association with being European citizens reflected in programme • Limited student practical engagements in reflection, analysis and questioning discussions
	Critical attitudes to one's own teaching (examining, discussing, questioning practices)	• Limited sense for continuous self-reflection development through the programme • Teaching and learning is toughed at a traditional level • Mechanical learning is fostered • Programme and courses poorly trigger value creation • Creation of values is organized at the formal knowledge level • Critical thinking is not fostered as part of the programme • Group work is rarely required
	Dispositions to team-working, collaboration and networking	• Individual work and individually is cultivated throughout the programme • No networking platforms exist • No practical networking activities have been established
	Sense of self-efficacy	• Self-efficacy has never been discussed as part of the programme • Self-efficacy belief is not represented in the programme • Self-efficacy is not something student-teachers feel confident with.

The analysis of BA level studies, presented in *Table 5*, reveals that both programme design and delivery are predominantly focused on knowledge-based and academic approaches. This observation is further supported by various factors that emerged from the content analysis of the programmes and were corroborated by the study respondents. Additionally, the findings indicate that in numerous instances, there is a lack of alignment between course design and its actual delivery. This disparity between what is intended in the programme design and what is practiced during delivery is discussed throughout this section.

> Many course syllabi that are presented to us at the beginning of each semester are not in line with the actual implementation of those syllabi throughout the course delivery. (Primary teacher education student-teacher 18, phase 2)

The analysis reveals a significant prevalence of subject/academic courses within the programming, highlighting the substantial emphasis placed on subject matter knowledge in teacher education. According to feedback from several study respondents, even subject didactics courses are predominantly conducted as purely academic courses, further reinforcing the subject/academic orientation of the programmes.

> We have a lot of academic subjects in our programme. I am saying this because even the didactics of academic subject courses are treated as academic subject courses. We have had many subjects presented as "Methodology of the respective subject", but in reality, those courses did not correspond at all with the subject methodology course in practice. Although enrolled in subject didactics courses, we have been confronted with pure science. Therefore, I consider that the focus of the programme has been on preparing us with strong academic knowledge. (Primary teacher education student-teacher 284, phase 3)
>
> I consider subject teaching as a highly important aspect of the programme. Teachers should have a good command of the subject they will be teaching above everything else. (Teacher educator 8, phase 2)

Regarding the programme design (content), the analysis demonstrates that knowledge and understanding are the central elements, with subject matter knowledge taking precedence on the priority list. On the other hand, skills and values development seem to be overlooked and are absent from the programmes. The passage below serves as an example, highlighting the knowledge-focused nature of the learning outcomes.

> Gain knowledge and learn the rules of teaching and learning, as well as get acquainted with the relationships between learning processes on the one hand and the individual and society on the other. (Primary teacher education 1, p. 90)

The results also show the programme delivery (process and implementation) dimension. Conversations with study respondents have revealed that the conventional method of lecturing and knowledge transmission is the prevalent approach in teacher educator classroom practice. There is limited encouragement for practical engagement, and individual learning with exam-based assessment is the norm. Student-teachers have expressed their concerns about how this approach to programme implementation fosters memorization and mechanical learning. The delivery of the programmes has been extensively criticized by student-teachers, who have highlighted its strong emphasis on knowledge-focused teaching methods.

> I usually don't feel comfortable having to sit for 2 hours listening to the professors' lectures. Lectures should be interactive and engage us in various activities. But the vast majority of Professors choose the traditional approach of frontal lecturing with no interaction. Student contribution and engagement in activities is poor. There is no collaboration and debate. It is meaningless that we are assessed only with one exam at the end of the semester. Usually, we have no practical engagement. This approach of lecturing has created maximum distance between us and Professors because we are obliged to consider professors in distance as in the traditional education systems. (Primary teacher education student-teacher 298, phase 3)
>
> We have been encouraged to use mechanical learning and memorization. In a way, we are forced to be mechanical because this is determined both by the lectures and by the assessment approaches. I consider that the focus of the programme remains on knowledge and mechanical learning. (Primary teacher education student-teacher 289, phase 3)

Below, the discussion centres on the misrepresentation and inadequate implementation of competence areas as outlined by the European framework, drawing attention to the experiences shared by the study respondents.

> For curricular knowledge, apart from what we have learned a little in school practice, our cohort has learned almost nothing about the curriculum. In theoretical terms, it has been mentioned briefly and superficially. However, we as future teachers will be faced with curriculum planning and implementation and, unfortunately, we do not even know the curriculum well. (Primary teacher education student-teacher, 123, phase 2)
>
> We only had one course related to inclusion and I do not consider one course as being enough to equip us with knowledge and skills to be inclusive future teachers. Inclusion and diversity are issues that we will constantly face during teaching, which unfortunately we are only equipped with minimal knowledge in this regard. We did not have practical engagement and the tasks and activities were minimal. Therefore, we are not skilled in this aspect. (Primary teacher education student-teacher, 296, phase 3)

> Student-teachers do not need formal and theoretical courses. They need to be exposed to various activities that will help them be investigators and researchers. As future teachers, they need to be more analytical about the various problems in the classroom and at school and be able to evaluate them critically. Only in this way, they can be ready to face and be able to address different challenges. However, very few subjects at the Faculty of Education try to develop those skills and values. Acquiring knowledge is considered vital in programmes we offer, while critical and research skills development has not been dedicated the necessary attention. (Management staff 1, phase 3)

> We should be provided with more time-appropriate skills. We need to be teachers who know how to research, present arguments critically, and know-how to make sound decisions. Unfortunately, theory and knowledge prevail as the most important pillars of the programme. […] The aspect that the programme needs most, and what it lacks, is the practical engagement in research and the creation of a research approach to teaching and problem-solving. We need to deal more with education research. The only course is "Foundations of education research". We should be exposed more to education research in order to have the research skillset in order to better approach our students' needs adequately. (Primary teacher education student-teacher, 48, phase 2)

Lastly, the analysis presented in Table 5 has revealed that, although skills and values are not prioritised in programme design and delivery, general education-related courses have been shown to develop more skills and values than other course categories (i.e., Subject and Subject didactics).

At the Master's level, there is an improved integration of professional and academic course content, attributed to MA programmes' exposure to European-funded reform projects. This external focus challenges and reforms existing programme structures. Despite this improvement, the analysis reveals a prevailing content and knowledge-focused orientation in course implementation, with isolated courses lacking inquiry and problem-based teaching. Respondents note significant disparities influenced by individual teacher educators' practices. A specific example illustrates contradictions in programme content, highlighting the tension between knowledge-focused outcomes and the need for analytical and critical focus in student learning.

> The focus of this course is to equip students with knowledge about the use of basic teaching methods, in order to achieve learning objectives in school subjects related to Biology. The course helps students acquire the necessary knowledge on competencies for Biology teaching at different curricular levels in accordance with the national education system. (Master of Subject Teaching, 29)

Table 6

MA level detailed programming findings (based on EU Framework 2013) (see also: Kaçaniku 2021)

Categories	Competences	Detailed findings on program design and delivery
Knowledge and understanding	Subject matter knowledge (8%)	**Knowledge development is the main programme priority** • Programmes represent an equal range of professional and academic course • Course implementation is oriented towards knowledge delivery • The actual implementation of course delivery depends on teacher educator practice
	Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) (10%)	• Programmes offer quite a few subject courses • Pure academic subject courses still occupy subject teaching programmes • PCK occupies a good portion of programmes • There is an appropriate representation of PCK in programmes
	Pedagogical knowledge (6%*²)	
	Curricular knowledge (2%)	• Programmes cover the delivery of curricular knowledge from a theoretical perspective • The majority of teacher educators fail to engage student-teachers in practical engagement with curricular knowledge
	Educational sciences foundations (2%)	• Programmes cover educational sciences foundations only from a theoretical perspective
	Contextual, institutional, organizational aspects of educational policies (10%*)	• Student-teachers are required to deliver reflection papers that lack a follow-up discussion and feedback sessions
	Issues of inclusion and diversity (4%*)	• Programme covers an adequate level of knowledge distribution on issues of inclusion and diversity
	Effective use of technologies in learning (2%)	• Student-teacher are exposed to limited knowledge of use technologies in learning
	Developmental psychology; Group processes and dynamics, learning theories, motivational issues (2%)	• Basic knowledge of Psychology is delivered to student-teachers during programmes/course delivery • Programmes cover only a theoretical understanding of group processes and dynamics, learning theories, motivational issues

² Elective courses are identified with an asterix. Obligatory and elective courses decision is relevant for the Findings discussion.

Categories	Competences	Detailed findings on program design and delivery
	Evaluation and assessment processes and methods (6%)	• Programmes deliver an adequate knowledge of assessment methods • There is a variation between different course requirements, approaches, activities and assessment • Programmes give emphasis to heavily academic and subject-oriented courses • A minority of courses follow a problem and inquiry-oriented approach • Lecture-based courses dominate programme design and (especially) programme delivery • Activity and practically oriented courses are course and teacher educator-dependent • Activity-based and practical assignments, discussion, reflection and formative assessment remains on programmes delivery margins • A number of courses require collaborative group work, but afterwards asses individual work • Single final exam assessment approach is the typical student-teacher assessment approach • The common programme delivery approach turns student-teachers into receivers • The knowledge and content-based practice dominate programmes
Skills	Planning, managing and coordinating teaching (8%*) Using teaching materials and technologies (2%) Managing students and groups (2%) Monitoring, adapting and assessing teaching/learning objectives and processes (0%)	**Skills development is not considered programmes priority** • Programme offers opportunities for student-teachers to only develop basic planning skills • Planning in relation to curriculum requirements is addressed poorly in programmes • Programmes develop poor student-teacher skills in using teaching materials and technologies • Programme offers a general knowledge of assessment • Student-teachers do not feel confident in assessment skills • Research methods skills development is only covered in one course throughout programmes • Student-teachers feel good with research planning

142

Categories	Competences	Detailed findings on program design and delivery
	Collecting, analysing, 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 (6%*)	• Programme covers limited-to-no research engagement and discussion • Student-teachers do not consider themselves skilled for evidence-based decision-making • Skills for identifying, engaging and monitoring professional learning are missing • Student-teachers are not acquainted with professional development parameters and expectations • Thesis work as the only research engagement • Limited skills development opportunities for critical judgement of education problems • Programme/courses implementation offers rooms for limited group work collaboration
	Collaborating with colleagues, parents and social services (4%)	• Collaboration among student-teachers is usually treated as an isolated activity • Limited skills development opportunities for responsive, collaborative with colleagues, parents and social services
	Negotiation skills (social and political interactions with multiple educational stakeholders, actors and contexts) (0%)	• No negotiation skills development opportunities • Limited course cover teacher-stakeholder communication provisions • Reflection skills is developed as a formality
	Reflective, metacognitive, interpersonal skills for learning individually and in professional communities (4%)	• No feedback is provided on student-teacher reflection assignments • Programmes fail to develop a bridge between theory and practice
	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) (0%)	• Limited discussions on context-based variations and dynamics pertaining to teaching profession • Learning is organised as an individual and isolated process

Categories	Competences	Detailed findings on program design and delivery
Dispositions: beliefs, attitudes, values, commitment	Epistemological awareness (issues concerning features and historical development of subject area and its status, as related to other subject areas) (2%*)	**Development of beliefs, attitudes, values, commitment is missing component of the programme** • Limited courses offer a platform for exposing student-teachers to value creation for the interrelatedness of subjects • Student-teachers claim to have a limited sense of transferable skills • Programmes have created a picture of the education system as a static environment with formal requirements
	Teaching skills through content (2%)	• Programmes fail to organize activities to develop a flexibility-oriented approach to the teaching profession
	Transferable skills (2%*)	• Professional learning has been considered important in some cases (courses within programmes)
	Dispositions to change, flexibility, ongoing learning and professional improvement, including study and research (6%*)	• Lack of efforts to develop an understanding that teaching is a lifelong profession • Professional development prospects are only covered in terms of licensing (a formal TPD framework in Kosovo)
	Commitment to promoting the learning of all students (4%)	• Student-teachers understand career advancement as a top-down required process • Professional learning and improvement not internalized as part of programmes goals and values
	Dispositions to promote students' democratic attitudes and practices, as European citizens (including appreciation of diversity and multiculturality) (2%)	• Teacher-research work is perceived as a demanding task and not vastly covered within programmes • Democratic values • Student-teachers claim to feel no association with being European teachers
	Critical attitudes to one's own teaching (examining, discussing, questioning practices) (0%)	• Being critical and analytical is poorly addressed within the programmes • Examination and questioning is not a continuous programme effort
	Dispositions to team-working, collaboration and networking (4%)	• Teamwork is important but not practiced in terms of course and programme – based activities
	Sense of self-efficacy (0%)	• Student-teachers claimed to struggle with the self-efficacy concept

144

In some cases, programme analysis has shown that courses are titled as teaching methods and didactics courses, but their content only represents pure academic subject course. This result has also been confirmed by several study respondents and relates to their main argument that programmes' delivery depends on teacher educator practice.

> This course is focused on helping students to supplement their knowledge of the history of the development of the world's most popular religions, whether polytheistic (Egyptian, Greek, Roman and Illyrian), or monotheistic (Judaism, Christianity and Islam). Topics covered in this course include selected chapters dealing with the basic concepts of religions, differences and commonalities of different religions, coexistence between religions during different historical periods, religious conflicts and contradictions, etc. (Master of Subject Teaching, 54)

Apart from analysing programme content, respondents have shared their experiences and insights regarding course implementation. The findings shed light on the diverse approaches used in delivering different courses, including variations in teacher educator lecturing styles, assignments, activities, and assessment methods. The discussions among study respondents indicate a widespread consensus concerning the predominant type of lecturing, characterized by traditional knowledge transmission with limited student engagement, minimal practical activities, group work, and assessment mainly reliant on comprehensive final exams. While student-teachers did acknowledge some exceptions in certain courses where theory and practice were integrated, these instances were discussed to a lesser extent, highlighting their limited representation in the overall programme delivery.

> Unfortunately, the majority of teacher educators exercise their roles as teacher educators formally and traditionally. Lecturing and exam-based assessment promotes a limiting and knowledge-based teacher education. (Teacher educator 3, phase 1)
>
> There have been cases when we met with the Professor in the first week of the semester whereby presenting syllabus provisions. There, the Professor noted that we will be continuously assessed about activities, research projects, group collaboration, and discussion during lectures, all this in addition to the final exam. However, the syllabus has not been implemented in practice as stated, and teacher educator-centred lecturing was realised. We have reacted and wanted to clarify why the syllabus was not respected and why such a drastic difference in approaches transpired – from the one presented to the one implemented. In this case, the professor in question responded that "I took this syllabus as a template from the accredited programme, but I do not practice and respect such a syllabus". The Professor has argued that our gaining knowledge is something he considers

important for the course design and delivery, thus, our course content knowledge was assessed with a final exam at the end of the semester. (Subject student-teacher 281, phase 3).

Master programmes in subject teaching are designed to attract students from strong academic disciplines like Biology, History, Chemistry, etc., to prepare them to become subject teachers. Consequently, the programmes aim to equip these students with the necessary knowledge, skills, and values related to subject teaching. However, according to study respondents, some courses within these programmes still tend to prioritize the academic aspects of the subject rather than focusing on the teaching (didactic) dimension. A high focus on academic subject knowledge refers to the depth of understanding and expertise in the specific subject for future teachers, for example a strong grasp of Mathematics content knowledge, as opposed to how to teach Mathematics to pupils (the pedagogical content knowledge) (see also Hudson et al., 2023). Student-teachers have expressed their perception that subject teaching programmes heavily emphasize knowledge but lack emphasis on practical activities and skills development. Furthermore, there is a consensus among student-teachers that the development of values and attitudes is absent from these programmes. In light of these concerns, study respondents have expressed their apprehension that the knowledge acquired for the teaching profession may not be sufficient to meet the demands they will face as future subject teachers.

In many subject methodology courses, there is a complete deviation from the syllabus and what is expected from such courses. We are finishing the first year of the subject in teaching master programme, but I can say that I still do not have a command of subject teaching. We have professors of academic subjects, but not the methodology of subjects. This is a critical aspect of the programme, which is missing. (Subject student-teacher 7, phase 1).

We still do not have proper knowledge of how to assess our future students. Only considering how we are assessed by our Professors, which in most cases is through a final exam, it reflects how the main principles of formative assessment are not being followed. As future subject teachers, we will be expected to continuously assess the specific learning outcomes of students in accordance with the new national curriculum. However, I can say that I am only theoretically prepared for education assessment, but I lack the skills due to limited practical engagement and activities. (Subject student-teacher 279, phase 3).

We do not need to discuss skills and values development as they were completely ignored in programme delivery. I have some general values

previously acquired, but not anything coming from the course or programme delivery. (Subject student-teacher 199, phase 2).

IV.2. *Europeanisation or surface convergence of study programmes dilemma*

This section highlights tensions between the surface convergence of programmes with European models and their actual implementation, echoing inconsistencies revealed in the preceding section. Focusing on programmes restructured based on European models, the analysis unveils variations in implementation, heavily reliant on individual teacher educators' practices. Despite formal convergence, where programmes mirror European structures, implementation remains ad hoc and isolated, shaped by educator practices. All programmes adopt the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System, harmonized degree structures, and the three-cycle system, aligning with Bologna objectives. The commitment to the Bologna Process is reflected in programme content. Additionally, the findings affirm Kosovo's active participation in Tuning Europe (III-IV) from 2005 to 2009, with the University of Prishtina, Faculty of Education, contributing significantly. However, there's skepticism among teacher educators and management staff about the effective incorporation of Tuning project requirements into programme content, citing inadequate information.

> I don't think we refer to Tuning project in our programmes. I know vaguely about the project, but I could not say that we have used Tuning as reference point for our study programmes reform. (Management staff 1, phase 2)

Also, Master's programmes in subject teaching received distinct attention compared to other programmes. They have been privileged to receive support from various European-funded projects aimed at revamping their content based on the exemplary European initial teacher education programmes. As a result, numerous teacher educators observed that the programme content, including course descriptions and learning outcomes, underwent reform to align with the competence areas outlined in the European teacher education competence framework.

> The MedUP project has helped us to harmonize the programmes with the EU programmes and this project has been the "rescue" for us. […] Our current challenge is not the programme content, because we have generally harmonized MA programmes based on the European dimension of teacher preparation. We struggle with programme implementation. (Department head 3, phase 3)

While the efforts to align programmes with European teacher education frameworks might suggest progress towards European-level teacher preparation in Kosovo, challenges have surfaced at the level of teacher educator practices. It is widely recognized that teacher education remains a matter of national importance, and as a result, teacher educators impart their courses based on their individual beliefs, backgrounds, and experiences.

> We are having a lot of problems with the staff and the way they implement courses. […] We have just submitted programme syllabi for accreditation. Through a simple analysis of these courses, we can say that the courses are harmonized and equivalent to the course content in European initial teacher education institutions. But the problem is their implementation. Students are telling us that something else is presented as syllabus content, and something else is being implemented. This shows that the programmes have been reformed only superficially and that there is an urgent need to reform teacher educators. (Teacher educator 15, phase 3)

> The vast majority of syllabi are not implemented properly, everyone knows that, but nothing is done about it. The problem is with teacher educators who are not penalized for improper programme implementation. Syllabi are "perfect" on paper. (Subject student-teacher 17, phase 2)

The significance of teacher educators' role has been emphasized across various aspects of the discussions. The following excerpts underscore the relevance of this discovery concerning how the design and delivery of quality programmes is manifested.

> The programmes are implemented by the professors themselves and we continue to suffer the consequences of delivering quality programmes. I am not saying that we have not done anything because we have been engaged in various reforms and projects that have aimed to change. But, we deal with stagnant teacher educators. (Teacher educator 3, phase 1)

> Much of what is written in syllabi is not implemented. There is no mechanism that monitors and evaluates and that reveals how courses are carried out. (Department head, phase 2)

IV.3. *Fragmented implementation of study programmes*

This result highlights the existence of tensions between fragmented courses and integrated programmes within initial teacher education. Quality teacher education is structured in a disjointed and isolated manner, lacking a cohesive programmatic approach. Consequently, the development of future teacher competences is also fragmented into individual courses, resulting in

compartmentalized initial teacher education. Furthermore, there is a lack of harmonization or connection between different course syllabi and teacher educator classroom practices. Integrated teaching and learning are notably absent in these programmes, particularly in BA studies, where the issue of fragmentation is more pronounced.

> Courses are fragmented and the focus is on specific and isolated courses. There is no synthesis of topics concerning teacher development. This fragmented programme approach does not allow for the treatment of various problems related to the teaching profession in terms of a programmatic approach. (Teacher educator 12, phase 2)

> There is no collaboration between Departments or courses that should collaborate to harmonize syllabi. Everything is scattered. The purpose of teacher education is treated at the course and professor level and not at the programme level. There is no "we" and only "I" approach dominates teacher education programming. (Teacher educator 3, phase 2)

> I do not remember a time when two professors have integrated their efforts in two or more courses to provide integrated teaching and learning. I think this is a critical component in which we lack exposure. (Primary teacher education student-teacher 61, phase 2)

When considering potential opportunities for integrated teaching and learning, the participants in the study identified two obstacles that hinder productive engagement in teacher education: system/institutional formalities and significant disparities in teacher educator classroom practices. This discussion underscores how both formalities within the system and practical challenges contribute to the continued fragmentation of teacher education programmes.

> One year we have tried to offer a course that is co-taught by 3 teacher educators (15 weeks of a semester divided by 5 weeks for each teacher educator). The assessment has also been planned as a joint enterprise. This is a case where all three teacher educators have been of natural sciences disciplinary areas, thus, teaching the same course (i.e. Methodology of Natural Sciences) was "permissible". However, these three teacher educators could not come to a consensus on how to plan and deliver the course as well as how to assess students. Here, controversies related to "who is the leader of the course" needed to be settled. Another problem was institutional formalities. Our institution asks teacher educators to submit timesheets throughout the semester, totalling 15 weeks. However, the three teacher educators could not meet the formal institutional expectations of reporting hours held. Also, the great differences in the beliefs and practices of the three teacher educators were prominent, so much so that the students

have expressed difficulties to connect the knowledge they have gained through these three parts of the course. So, in a way, even though we are used to considering the programme design and delivery as fragmented through individual courses, in this case, we witnessed fragmentation within the same course. (Management staff 1, phase 1)

Study respondents showed a greater inclination towards implementing an integrated teaching and learning approach in cases where teacher educators shared similar values, beliefs, and practices concerning teacher development.

> I tried it with my colleague to integrate the courses. In the framework of this practice, we have integrated the students of two different disciplines and programmes. But, although I prefer cooperation, I do not believe that productive cooperation is possible when my colleague and I do not share the same beliefs and practices about how integration is organized and more broadly how quality teachers are developed. (Teacher educator 3, phase 3)
> We have been exposed to an integrated approach between courses for one day in which we had to collaborate with students from another programme. At first, it felt odd as a process, but it triggered us to engage in very productive discussions with colleagues from the other subject teaching programme. I would prefer similar experiences for a longer period to evaluate in depth the benefits of such engagement in my future teaching practice. (Subject student-teacher 94, phase 2)

V. Discussion and conclusion

This paper represents a comprehensive elucidation of the research findings derived from a rigorous doctoral pursuit, firmly rooted in the data and content previously published as an integral component of the doctoral thesis (for more information, see: Kaçaniku 2021). The purpose of this paper was to examine the shift of teacher education programmes into competence-based in Kosovo in the context of European frameworks as a stimulus for change. Within the European context, the Council of the European Union has placed high expectations on stakeholders involved in initial teacher education to enhance the quality of these programmes in response to societal shifts. Numerous European competency frameworks and other initiatives have been utilized to assist teacher education institutions in achieving this challenging objective (e.g., Biesta 2012; Caena 2014a; Hudson et al. 2010; Hudson and Zgaga 2008; Hudson and Zgaga 2017). Consequently, modifications in the conceptual understanding and orientation of initial teacher education programmes have occurred in various settings. Our findings show that transitioning towards a competence-based paradigm shift is seen in Kosovo's motivation for EU integration by adopting European principles for programme improvement.

However, findings reveal that preserving programmes tradition is considered even more significant. Consequently, tensions and contradictions arise between programmes' tradition, motivation for EU integration, and actual programme implementation (refer to *Figure 1*) (see also doctoral dissertation: Kaçaniku 2021). While the doctoral dissertation primarily has centred on three dimensions of change pertaining to the quality of initial teacher education within the framework of European initiatives –namely, (i) policies and institutional culture, (ii) teacher educators, and (iii) study programmes– this paper reports findings on programmes change in the context of European interventions. Therefore, our research findings underscore that the successful transformation of study programmes into competence-based structures relies significantly on the education context and tacit knowledge of local stakeholders, which is evident in the diverse approaches adopted for programme implementation. Consequently, this study makes a noteworthy contribution to elucidating the significance of considering the educational context and tacit knowledge of teacher educators and other relevant stakeholders during the process of programme reform within the ambit of European initiatives.
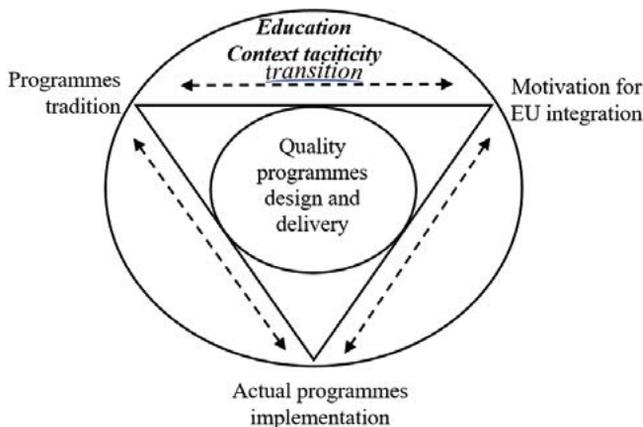
Figure 1

Quality programmes design and delivery (see also: Kaçaniku 2021)

Programmes' tradition plays a crucial role in the design and implementation of competency-based study programmes within the initial teacher education system in Kosovo. To comprehend this traditional aspect, it is important to acknowledge that Kosovo has been training teachers since

the 1950s. Over this period and within the specific context, local stakeholders have developed an understanding of the role of initial teacher education. Our findings indicate that the conceptual orientation of this programme tradition reflects the notion of preparing future teachers as holders of knowledge and views teachers as the primary source of knowledge in society. Loughran and Hamilton (2016) describe this conceptual orientation of the programme as the values and beliefs concerning teaching and the intended learning outcomes that the programme aims to achieve.

Furthermore, previous research reinforces the idea that conceptual orientations play a significant role in guiding practical activities involved in the design and implementation of teacher education programmes. These activities include the development of programmes and courses, teaching and learning methods, monitoring and evaluation procedures, and assessment strategies (e.g., Brouwer and Korthagen 2005; Flores 2016; Feiman-Nemser 1990; Zeichner 1983). Based on these sources, our findings support the notion that initial teacher education programmes in Kosovo prioritize the transmission and acquisition of knowledge as the primary goals of the programmes. The majority of stakeholders in Kosovo maintain a perception and understanding of competence-based programmes that align with the traditional orientation focused on academic and knowledge-based aspects. Through discussions with participants in the study, we contend that breaking away from generations of tradition in Kosovo's teacher education system remains a challenging endeavour. As a result, the implementation of programmes continues to be influenced by the implications inherited from the emphasis placed on the academic and knowledge-based tradition of teacher preparation.

According to the EU framework (2013), our research findings indicate that there is a significant focus on course descriptions and learning outcomes related to knowledge and understanding, while skills, beliefs, attitudes, and values receive limited attention. The content of the programmes places excessive emphasis on subject matter knowledge, with other forms of knowledge being underrepresented. This conceptual orientation is also reflected in the delivery of the programmes, where teacher educators play a guiding role in implementing the planned course content. The majority of teacher educators in Kosovo support a formalistic approach to knowledge transmission, wherein courses primarily consist of traditional lectures, student-teachers have limited involvement in the learning process, practical activities are scarce, and assessment is primarily conducted at the end of the course. The dominance of an academic orientation is considered the hallmark of 'quality' in competence-based teacher education programmes, leading to significant implications in practice. Consequently, the existing attachment of

institutional stakeholders, particularly teacher educators, to such traditional programme approaches acts as a barrier to improving the quality of programmes and implementing necessary changes.

The drive for EU integration serves as a strong motivator for Kosovo's endeavours to transform its study programmes into competence-based designs and delivery. Based on our research findings, it is evident that the motivation for EU integration among local stakeholders plays a pivotal role in engaging initial teacher education institutions to restructure their programmes and enhance their quality. In line with these efforts, Kosovo's initial teacher education institutions have actively participated in the EU-led restructuring process to ensure the compatibility of their programmes with those of European partner institutions. At the structural level, these institutions have aligned their degree structures, implemented the three-cycle system, and implemented the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). Furthermore, our findings affirm that the process of programme reform has been facilitated through EU-funded projects. Partner universities from Europe have provided assistance to Kosovo's initial teacher education institutions in reforming their programme structures and content, drawing on European competence-based programme models. Within the framework of these projects, Kosovo stakeholders, including teacher educators and other staff members, have benefited from capacity-building initiatives and mobility schemes.

Nevertheless, European initiatives primarily focus on implementing structural reforms in programmes and providing frameworks for discussing the essential competencies that future teachers should possess. Within the scope of our study, this implies that local stakeholders in Kosovo were offered a platform to adapt competence-based teacher education programmes to their specific context. According to Krek (2017), the lack of a standardized teacher education process across Europe makes it challenging for initial teacher education institutions to ensure consistent implementation of competency-based education. Therefore, European competence-based frameworks offer precision and foster a shared understanding of the development of teacher competencies across Europe (European Commission 2013). These frameworks also stimulate new perspectives on conceptual orientations for teacher education, with a focus on preparing teachers for the demands of the 21st century. Consequently, local stakeholders within Kosovo's initial teacher education institutions had the opportunity to transform their programmes into competence-based approaches by exploring how these teacher education paradigms could be adjusted to the national and local context of teacher competence development in Kosovo. Schratz (2014)

also advocates for a European-led approach that considers the specific contexts in which teachers' competencies are developed. In line with our findings, this means that local stakeholders in Kosovo were not forcibly imposed with European guidelines for transforming their study programmes, but instead were given the opportunity to adapt European teacher competence areas to the design and implementation of their programmes while considering their local context.

European-led initiatives aimed at enhancing programme quality provide opportunities for individual institutions and stakeholders to exercise autonomy and flexibility in designing and implementing competency-based programmes (Caena 2014a; Flores 2016). However, our research findings indicate that the European-led frameworks for competence-based programme reforms were primarily utilized to achieve superficial compliance. Local stakeholders were mainly involved in the formal drafting of competencies and learning outcomes for programme and syllabus design. Our findings emphasize that competence-based teacher education programmes are treated and implemented as a matter of national concern. The structural changes made to align programmes with competence-based principles were primarily driven by the motivation to please international partners and the donor community, which was a shared value among local stakeholders. Nevertheless, our study reveals that the initial openness and willingness of stakeholders to engage in structural reforms does not necessarily indicate their genuine appreciation or acceptance of a complete transformation towards competence-based programmes. The local stakeholders' willingness to align with EU structures often reflects a superficial readiness to demonstrate engagement with the EU reform process and make 'cosmetic' changes in order to integrate into EU frameworks. Consequently, we argue that the autonomy and flexibility afforded to local stakeholders hinder the full-fledged transformation of programmes towards a paradigm shift that truly ensures quality teacher education.

The actual implementation of programmes is shaped by the internal values and practices of local stakeholders, which reflect how the quality of programme design and delivery is realized within the framework of European initiatives. Our research findings indicate that, although programme content underwent reforms based on European models for initial teacher education programmes, the same stakeholders displayed significant resistance when it came to committing to and implementing European initiatives aimed at improving programme quality. Our study reveals a dichotomy between stakeholders' apparent readiness to enhance programme quality within the framework of EU competence frameworks and their actual readiness as

demonstrated in the implementation of programmes. As discussed by Caena (2014a) and Flores (2016), this gap or dichotomy can be attributed to the substantial autonomy enjoyed by teacher educators who serve as implementers of programmes (see also Flores 2018). Due to the autonomy and flexibility granted to teacher educators in Kosovo, greater emphasis is placed on their individual values and beliefs regarding how to implement programme content and shape the desired outcomes for student-teachers as future teachers. In summary, we contend that the practices of teacher educators hold significant influence over programme implementation.

The discourse surrounding the improvement of quality teacher education over the past two decades has been marked by various emerging issues related to different conceptualizations of teacher professionalism. These conceptualizations range from viewing teachers as mere "doers" and "technicians" to considering them as "curriculum developers" and "researchers" (Biesta 2012; Biesta 2016; Caena 2014b; Flores 2016; Loughran and Hamilton 2016). However, the PhD dissertation (see also: Kaçaniku 2021) and findings in this paper indicate that these 20 years of debates are confined to a specific context of initial teacher education programmes in Kosovo, where significant contradictions exist between programme tradition and the pursuit of improvement and change. The dependence on teacher educators in programme implementation has contributed to a situation where Kosovo's initial teacher education is caught between two highly conflicting paradigms of programme implementation. The role of initial teacher education programmes has become increasingly ambiguous, accommodating alternative interpretations, conceptualizations, and approaches put forth by teacher educators within their specific educational context. This predicament arises from an unequal distribution of power among local stakeholders, with teacher educators holding significant "control" over course and programme implementation and the determination of future teacher competencies.

In conclusion, further exploration is warranted to understand the roots of predominant focus on knowledge-based and academic approaches in the design and delivery of teacher education programmes and to propose corrective actions. Our discussion has underscored the intricate dynamics between the preservation of programme tradition, the motivation for EU integration, and the challenges encountered in actual programme implementation. The historical context of teacher education in Kosovo, dating back to the 1950s, has cultivated a deep-seated belief in the role of teachers as knowledge holders. This conceptual orientation, shaped over decades, has influenced the design and implementation of programmes,

favouring a traditional academic emphasis. Consequently, the transformative shift towards competence-based paradigms faces resistance as local stakeholders, particularly teacher educators, exercise significant autonomy in programme implementation. Therefore, the transformation of study programmes into a competence-based paradigm shift is shaped by the push-pull dynamics within the educational context, influenced by the stakeholders' tacit knowledge and understanding.

The study recommends continued collaboration with European partner institutions to further harness their expertise in developing competence-based teacher education programmes. Additionally, the study suggests facilitating networking opportunities for local stakeholders to exchange insights and best practices with peers from other countries. In terms of stakeholder engagement and dialogue, the study recommends encouraging open collaboration among teacher educators, policymakers, and diverse stakeholders. This inclusive approach is vital for collectively envisioning and implementing transformative reforms. Seeking input from a variety of perspectives is also recommended to ensure a comprehensive and well-rounded approach to the ongoing transformation of teacher education programmes in Kosovo.

Notes

In contrast to the doctoral thesis (see: Kaçaniku 2021), which is focused on three dimensions of changes manifested in the quality of initial teacher education in the context of European initiatives, such as (i) the dimension of policies and institutional culture, (ii) the dimension of teacher educators and (iii) the dimension of study programmes, this paper demonstrates the scholarly efforts in providing a comprehensive understanding of study programmes' change in the context of European interventions.

References

Bates, Richard. 2008. "Teacher Education in a Global Context: Towards a Defensible Theory of Teacher Education." *Journal of Education for Teaching: International Research and Pedagogy* 34, no. 4: 277–293. https://doi.org/10.1080/0260747 0802401388.

Biesta, Gert. 2012. "The Future of Teacher Education: Evidence, Competence or Wisdom?" *Research on Steiner Education* 3, no.1: 8–21.

Braun, Virginia, and Victoria Clarke. 2006. "Using thematic analysis in psychology." Qualitative Research in Psychology 3 no. 2: 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/ 1478088706qp063oa.

Brouwer, Niels, and Fred Korthagen. 2005. "Can teacher education make a difference?" *American Educational Research Journal* 42, no. 1: 153–224.

Caena, Francesca. 2014a. "Comparative Glocal Perspectives on European Teacher Education." *European Journal of Teacher Education* 37, no. 1: 106–122. https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2013.845165.

Caena, Francesca. 2011. *Literature Review. Teachers' Core Competences: Requirements and Development*. European Commission.

Caena, Francesca. 2024b. "Teacher Competence Frameworks in Europe: Policy-As-Discourse and Policy-As-Practice." *European Journal of Education* 49, no. 3: 311–331. https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12088.

Caena, Francesca, and Umberto Margiotta. 2010. "European Teacher Education: A Fractal Perspective Tackling Complexity." *European Educational Research Journal* 9, no. 3: 317–331. https://doi.org/10.2304/eerj.2010.9.3.317.

Cochran-Smith, Marilyn, Baker, Megina, Burton, Stephani, Chang, Wen-Chia, Carney, Molly Cummings, M. Fernández, Beatriz, Keefe, Elizabeth Stringer, Miller, F. Andrew, and Juan Gabriel Sánchez. 2017. "The Accountability Era in US Teacher Education: Looking Back, Looking Forward." *European Journal of Teacher Education* 40, no. 5: 572–588. https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2017.1385061.

Creswell, W. John, and David, J. Creswell. 2018. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. SAGE Publications.

Crosier, David, and Teodora Parveva. 2013. *The Bologna Process: It's Impact on Higher Education Development in Europe and beyond*. UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning.

Curaj, Adrian, Matei, Liviu, Pricopie, Remus, Salmi, Jamil, and Peter Scott. 2015. *The European Higher Education Area: Between Critical Reflections and Future Policies*. Springer.

Curaj, Adrian, Scott, Peter, Vlasceanu, Lazăr, and Lesley Wilson. 2013. *European Higher Education at the Crossroads: Between the Bologna Process and National Reforms*. Springer.

Darling-Hammond, Linda. 2017. "Teacher Education Around The World: What Can We Learn From International Practice?" *European Journal of Teacher Education* 40, no. 3: 291–309. https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2017.1315399.

Darling-Hammond, Linda, and Ann Lieberman. 2012b. *Teacher Education around the World: Changing Policies and Practices*. Routledge.

Darling-Hammond, Linda, and Ann Lieberman. 2012a. "Teacher Education Around The World: What Can We Learn From International Practice." In *Teacher Education around The World: Changing Policies and Practices*, edited by Linda Darling-Hammond and Ann Lieberman, 151–169. Routledge.

Denzin, K. Norman, and Yvonna S. Lincoln. 2018. *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Sage Publications.

Edwards, Richard, and Robin Usher. 2008. *Globalisation and pedagogy: Space, place and identity*. Routledge.

European Commission. 2007. *Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications*. European Commission.

European Commission. 2009. *Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications*. European Commission.

European Commission. 2012. *Study on Policy Measures to Improve the Attractiveness of the Teaching Profession in Europe*. Publications Office of the European Union.

European Commission. 2013. *Supporting Teacher Competence Development for Better Learning Outcomes*. European Commission.

European Union. 2007. *Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, Meeting Within the Council, on Inclusion in Diversity to Achieve a High Quality Education For All (2017/C 62/02)*. Official Journal of the European Union.

European Union. 2008. *Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, Meeting Within the Council of 21 November 2008 on Preparing Young People for the 21st Century: An Agenda for European Cooperation on Schools (2008/C 319/08)*. Official Journal of the European Union.

European Union. 2009. *Council Conclusions of 26 November 2009 on the Professional Development of Teachers and School Leaders (2009/C 302/04)*. Official Journal of the European Union.

Feiman-Nemser, Sharon. 1990. "Teacher Preparation: Structural and Conceptual Alternatives." In *Handbook for Research on Teacher Education*, edited by Robert W. Houston, 1–61. Macmillan.

Flores, A. Maria. 2016. "Teacher Education Curriculum." In *International Handbook of Teacher Education*, edited by John Loughran and Mary Lynn Hamilton, 187–230. Springer.

Flores, A. Maria. 2018. "Tensions and Possibilities in Teacher Educators' Roles and Professional Development." *European Journal of Teacher Education* 41 no. 1: 1–3. https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2018.1402984.

Frey, H. James., and Adrea Fontana. 1991. "The Group Interview in Social Research." *The Social Science Journal* 28, no. 2: 175–187. https://doi.org/10.1016/0362-3319(91)90003-M.

Gassner, Otmar, Kerger, Lucien, and Michael Schratz. 2010. *The First Ten Years after Bologna*. Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti.

Given, M. Lisa. 2008. *The Sage Encyclopaedia of Qualitative Research Methods*. Sage Publications.

González, Julia, and Robert Wagenaar. 2005. *Tuning Educational Structures in Europe II*. University of Deusto and University of Groningen.

González, Julia, and Robert Wagenaar. 2008. *Universities' Contribution to the Bologna Process: An Introduction*. University of Deusto and University of Groningen.

Hudson, Brian, Gericke, Niklas, Olin-Scheller, Christina, and Martin Stolare. 2023. "Trajectories of Powerful Knowledge and Epistemic Quality: Analysing the Transformations from Disciplines across School Subjects." *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 55, no. 2: 119–137, https://doi.org/10.1080/00220272.2023.2182164.

Hudson, Brian, and Pavel Zgaga. 2017. "History, Context and Overview: Implications for Teacher Education Policy, Practice and Future Research." In *Overcoming Fragmentation in Teacher Education Policy and Practice*, edited by Brian Hudson, 1–25. Cambridge University Press.

Hudson, Brian, and Pavel Zgaga. 2008. *Teacher Education Policy in Europe. A Voice of Higher Education Institutions*. University of Umeå.

Hudson, Brian, Zgaga, Pavel, and Bjorn Åstrand. 2010. *Advancing Quality Cultures for Teacher Education in Europe: Tensions and Opportunities*. University of Umeå, Faculty of Teacher Education.

Joint Quality Initiative. "Dublin Descriptors for the Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral Awards 2004." Accessed May 17, 2020. https://www.unidue.de/imperia/md/content/bologna/dublin_descriptors.pdf.

Kaçaniku, Fjolla. 2020. "Towards Quality Assurance and Enhancement: The Influence of the Bologna Process in Kosovo's Higher Education." *Quality in Higher Education* 26, no. 1: 32–47. https://doi.org/10.1080/13538322.2020.173 7400.

Kaçaniku, Fjolla. 2022. "Lost In Translation? Improving Quality in Initial Teacher Education in the Framework of European Initiatives." *Policy Futures in Education*, 20, no. 8: 922–940. https://doi.org/10.1177/14782103211072963.

Kaçaniku, Fjolla. 2021. "Advancing a Culture of Quality in Initial Teacher Education in Kosovo in the Context of European Initiative." PhD diss., University of Ljubljana.

Krek, Janez. 2017. "Teacher Education: Between Knowledge of Scientific Disciplines and Competences." In *The prospects of reforming teacher education*, edited by Blerim Saqipi and Janez Vogrinc, 15–38. Libri Shkollor.

Loughran, John, and Mary Lynn Hamilton. 2016. "Developing an Understanding of Teacher Education." In *International Handbook of Teacher Education*, edited by John Loughran and Mary Lynn Hamilton, 3–22. Springer.

Malinen, Olli-Pekka, Väisänen, Pertti, and Hannu Savolainen. 2012. "Teacher Education in Finland: A Review of a National Effort for Preparing Teachers for the Future." *Curriculum Journal* 23, no. 4: 567–584. https://doi.org/10.1080/09 585176.2012.731011.

Matthews, Bob, and Liz Ross. 2010. *Research Methods: A Practical Guide for the Social Sciences*. Pearson Longman.

Niemi, Hannele, Nevgi, Anne, and Fisun Aksit. 2016. "Active Learning Promoting Student Teachers' Professional Competences in Finland and Turkey." *European Journal of Teacher Education* 39, no. 4: 471–490. https://doi.org/10.1080/0261 9768.2016.1212835.

Nowell, Lorelli, Norris, Jill, and Moules Nancy. 2017. "Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 16: 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069177338.

Ostinelli, Giorgio. 2009. "Teacher Education in Italy, Germany, England, Sweden and Finland." *European Journal of Education* 44, no. 2: 291–308. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1465-3435.2009.01383.x.

Page, M. Tina. 2015. "Common Pressures, Same Results? Recent Reforms in Professional Standards and Competences in Teacher Education for Secondary Teachers in England, France and Germany." *Journal of Education for Teaching* 41, no. 2: 180–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2015.1011900.

Pantić, Nataša, Theo Wubbels. 2010. "Teacher Competencies as a Basis for Teacher Education – Views of Serbian Teachers and Teacher Educators." *Teaching and Teacher Education* 26, no. 3: 694–703. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2009.10.005.

Pantić, Nataša, and Theo Wubbels. 2012. "Competence-Based Teacher Education: A Change from Didaktik to Curriculum Culture?" *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 44, no. 1: 61–87. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220272.2011.620633.

Schratz, Michael. 2010. "What Is A "European Teacher"?" In *The First Ten Years after Bologna*, edited by Otmar Gassner, Lucien Kerger and Michael Schratz, 97–102. Editura universităţii din bucureşti.

Schratz, Michael. 2014. "The European Teacher: Transnational Perspectives in Teacher Education Policy and Practice." *CEPS Journal* 4, no. 4: 11–27. https://doi.org/10.26529/cepsj.183.

Valenčič Zuljan, Milena, and Janez Vogrinc. 2011. *European Dimensions of Teacher Education: Similarities and Differences*. Faculty of Education; National School of Leadership in Education.

Wagenaar, Robert. 2013. "Columbus' Egg? Qualifications Frameworks, Sectoral Profiles and Degree." *Tuning Journal for Higher Education* 1, no. 1: 71–103. https://doi.org/10.18543/tjhe-1(1)-2013pp71-103.

Wagenaar, Robert. 2014. "Competences and Learning Outcomes: A Panacea for Understanding the (New) Role of Higher Education?" *Tuning Journal for Higher Education* 1, no. 2: 279–302. https://doi.org/10.18543/tjhe-1(2)-2014pp279-302.

Wagenaar, Robert. 2019. *TUNING the Modernisation Process of Higher Education in Europe: A Blueprint for Student-Centred Learning*. University of Deusto and University of Groningen.

Werler, Tobias. 2016. "Commodification of Teacher Professionalism." *Policy Futures in Education* 14, no. 1: 60–76. https://doi.org/10.1177/1478210315612646.

Zeichner, M. Kenneth. 1983. "Alternative Paradigms of Teacher Education." *Journal of Teacher Education* 34, no. 3: 3–9. https://doi.org/10.1177/002248718303400302.

Zgaga, Pavel. 2013. "The Future of European Teacher Education in the Heavy Seas of Higher Education." *Teacher Development* 17, no. 3: 347–361. https://doi.org/10.1080/13664530.2013.813750.

About the author

DR. FJOLLA KAÇANIKU (fjolla.kacaniku@uni-pr.edu) is an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Education, University of Prishtina in Kosovo. Her research interests are quality teacher education and European education policies focusing on teacher education. She has held several research grants and contributed to several national and international research projects in Europe

and Asia. She is currently a board member of the Teacher Education Policy in Europe (TEPE) network. Recent articles and book reviews appear in Policy Futures in Education, Quality in Higher Education, and European Journal of Teacher Education and she also serves as a reviewer for Tuning Journal for Higher Education.