

# Exploring the coherence of teacher education programmes via a mixed methods approach

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# Leading Question of our Research

- Can transnational coherence be achieved (good-practice)?
- How can this possibly be achieved?
- Can (transnational) coherence, perceived by student teachers, be compared?
- What causes these (different) perceptions?

# Exploring the coherence of teacher education programmes...

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# I. The Concept of Coherence in Teacher Education (TE)

- TE = Initial Teacher Education (ITE) + Teacher Induction (TI) + Continuous Professional Development (CPD)
- Structural and contextual problems of a fragmented (I)TE led to increased attention towards 'coherence'  
(Canrinus et al., 2015, Hammerness & Klette 2015; Stéger 2014)
  - Umbrella term: Types of structural and/or content-related alignment, linking or cooperation (Hellmann 2019)
  - Continuous process: Constant communication and permanent adjustments with all stakeholders  
(EC, 2015; Hammerness, 2006; Hermansen 2019; Levine et al. 2023)
  - Offer- and use-side: Professional knowledge domains, phases, contents, theory-practice proportions, actors, policy aspects (offer) <---> Professional knowledge and/or competencies (result)  
(e. g. Cramer, 2020; Hellmann et al. 2021).

## II. Coherence from a Transnational Perspective

- Pressures towards coherence in the context of a Europeanisation of TE, due to ...
  - ... a lack of transnational mobility of student and in-service teachers
  - ... a lack of comparability of professional qualifications
  - ... a wish for the internationalisation of curricula  
(European Commission, 2018; European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2021; Kotthoff & Denk, 2007; Symeonidis, 2021)
  - European Higher Education Area (EHEA) (Council of Europe, 2023)
- Transnational coherence in TE is understudied (Symeonidis et al., in preparation)
  - National concepts explored to a certain extent (e. g. Hellmann et al. 2021 (Germany); Lilliedahl et al. 2020 (Sweden))
  - Some attention has been paid to discussing approaches comparatively (Canrinus et al. 2019; Darling-Hammond et al. 2017; Flores 2017; Jensen et al. 2017; Lindvall & Ryve, 2019; Nordine et al. 2021; Symeonidis et al., in preparation)

## II. Coherence from a Transnational Perspective

- Transnational collaborative approach useful in two ways
  - Provide comparative insights on *how* coherence is conceptualized and implemented in different countries (i. e. „good practice“)
  - Building on this, joint coherent teaching and learning opportunities (TLO) could collaboratively be designed, initiated, adapted and disseminated
- Goal: New possibilities for the creation of coherence between different European TE systems
- Today's focus:
  - Comparative mapping of national policies related to coherence
  - Identifying convergences and divergences that inform a transnational understanding of coherence
  - Exemplary results of an empirical study in Finland (student perceptions)

### III. ConnEcTEd (Erasmus+ programme (2020-2023))

#### Partners

<b>Coordinator:</b> <b>University of Education Freiburg</b>  Germany		
<b>Université Côte d'Azur Nice</b>  France	<b>University of Freiburg</b>  Germany	<b>University of Helsinki</b>  Finland
<b>University of Oslo</b>  Norway	<b>University of Turku</b>  Finland	<b>University of Zagreb</b>  Croatia



- Joint development of innovative practices (e. g. regarding teaching concepts, learning opportunities, learning communities) and empirical measures (e. g. student perceptions of coherence in ITE).
- Established transnational professional learning communities, providing knowledge about European TE systems and offering access to professional training opportunities (e.g. video-tutorials, virtual lectures)

## IV. Research Questions and Methods

- How is coherence currently manifested/achieved in the national TE systems (macro comparative perspective)?
- Coherence conceptualized via...
  - *Governance dimension* of TE systems across the continuum and the extent to which the different phases of TE are *vertically* interconnected
  - *Structural and organisational characteristics* of ITE and *horizontal* coherence regarding knowledge domains (CK, PK, PCK)
- Data collection:
  - 2 qualitative questionnaires (Jan 2021, May 2022), (2x Finland, Croatia, France, Germany, Norway)
  - Answered by project coordinators (TE experts with more than 10 years of research experience) and team members at each partner university



# Exemplary Items from Questionnaire

- Do national and/or regional **frameworks and/or standards** for TE and/or for teachers' competences exist (by whom are they composed, authorized, enforced)?
- Do students in TE programs for primary and secondary education (i. e. ISCED levels 1, 2 and 3) usually study ***one, two or three subjects*** (and/or other options)?
- Which academic ***degrees*** are recommended/required for entering the second school-based induction phase of TE (***B.A., M.Ed., State Exams***)?
- According to which criteria are ***students selected*** for university-based TE in your country (e. g. grade point average, aptitude tests, interviews)?
- Which ***phases/stages*** does your national TE consist of, e. g.
- Are there ***different models for different categories of teachers*** (for example: primary, lower or upper secondary)?
- Do you characterize your TE systems as being ***concurrent, consecutive, or both?***
- ...

## V. Results Summary: Governance of TE across the continuum

- To be published by the end of 2023

## V. Results Summary: Organisational characteristics of ITE programmes

- To be published by the end of 2023

## V. Results: Perception of coherence in Finnish Student Teachers

- To be published by the end of 2023

## VI. Summary

- *Incoherence* within and across TE systems, particularly when it comes to interlinking and governing the different phases of the continuum.
- Focus of policymakers rather on reforming ITE, than developing a comprehensive continuum.
- Continuum remains fragmented; phases do not (need to) communicate.
- Potential of current ITE competence frameworks to facilitate dialogue along the continuum (European Commission 2018) remains idle.
- Structure and duration of ITE proves somehow coherent, distribution of knowledge domains and contents differs significantly among countries (Symeonidis, 2021)
- Difficult to infer “good practice” (i. e. structures and content) from student perceptions, especially transnationally.

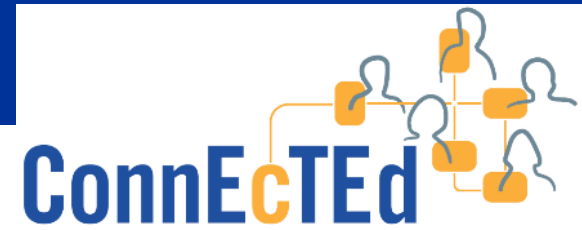
# Leading Question of our Research

- Can transnational coherence be achieved (good-practice)?
  - **yes**
- How can this possibly be achieved?
  - **To a limited extent (e. g. Virtual lecture series, Joint virtual seminar on FLTE)**
- Can (transnational) coherence, perceived by student teachers, be compared?
  - **Perceived differently, depending on specific aspects of coherence**
- What causes these (different) perceptions?
  - **Infering good practice (structures and contents) from student perceptions hard to find and to interpret.**

## VI. Pedagogical Implications

- The diversity of systems and multitude of actors involved reveal a **need for coordination and transparent communication**, if the EHEA is to be a reality in the future.
- Transnational coherence requires a commitment to a teacher's lifelong learning and a **common understanding regarding the purpose of each phase**.
- The “**School of Education**” model in France and Germany has recently emerged as a viable solution for governing **ITE**, but data for its efficiency are rare (see Volume on „Schools of Education“ (2023) by Kotthoff & Altrichter, *Bildung und Erziehung*) and TI and CPD are again not covered (yet?).

# Thank you!



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„Coherence in European Teacher Education”

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