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Preparing teachers for diversity: how are teacher education systems responding to cultural diversity – the case of Austria and Ireland

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ABSTRACT

The paper begins with an overview of migration-related diversity in Austria and Ireland, both countries with high levels of cultural, linguistic and religious diversity in schools. Research in Europe indicates that migration produces a new context for teaching, for which many teachers do not feel sufficiently prepared. Hence, teacher education is at stake and rarely looked at systematically in migration-related research in education. Therefore, in this article secondary teacher education courses are analysed to ascertain how higher education institutions in these two countries are preparing secondary teachers for culturally responsive teaching. After describing the methodology used to examine the Initial Teacher Education curricula of the two countries an analysis of the research findings is provided. It turns out that relevant courses in the compulsory sections of the curricula are largely missing in both countries. Finally, based on an analysis of the literature and research findings, a discussion of the consequences for teacher education together with recommendations for improvement are formulated. It provides countries with a foundational discourse to equip student teachers with the necessary skills to embed cultural responsivity into their classrooms upon completion of their apprenticeship for teaching.

Introduction and background

Almost all European classrooms for a variety of reasons such as geopolitical and economic issues have become vastly and quite suddenly diverse in recent years (Crul et al., 2012; Schachner et al., 2015). This increasingly established norm of 'cultural diversity' that exists in European classrooms has challenged educators, administrators, and policymakers to develop policies and initiatives to cater for the significant challenges that education systems are facing due to 'increasing societal heterogeneity' in schools (Ford & Kea, 2009; OECD [Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development], 2009, p. 3). Indeed, PISA test scores show that in most countries, even when the socio-

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economic status and parental level of education is considered, not only first but also second-generation migration background students, i.e., those already born in the country, have continually performed worse in many of the participating countries compared to those from native-born parents (OECD, 2019). This is especially true for European countries and less so for traditional expatriate countries such as Canada where often there is no significant difference between the proficiency levels of migrant and non-migrant background students (Bilgili et al., 2018; OECD, 2018). However, regardless of the jurisdiction, concerns relating to the education of migrant background students are not only confined to numerical conjectures of quality in the form of transnational test scores but also, the interlinked capacity for all students and teachers to succeed in multicultural and by association, multilingual classrooms. Indeed, a series of case studies on how teachers are coping with cultural diversity in four European countries revealed that teachers are struggling to find professionally sound ways of responding to cultural diversity in their classrooms (Herzog-Punzenberger et al., 2020). The need to enhance teachers' professional competence is further exemplified in the 2018 TALIS report where it was found that more than 50% of teachers in the participating countries expressed concerns that they did not feel well-prepared 'for the challenges of a multicultural learning environment and were not confident in adapting their teaching to the cultural diversity of students' (OECD, 2019, p. 98). The report also highlights the need to provide more multicultural and multilingual supports for teachers, the importance of which is exemplified by the fact that the need for multicultural supports has now become the third-highest area of need for professional development, after teaching students with special needs and information and communication technology (ICT) skills for teaching (OECD, 2019, p. 99).

However, an essential point for policy formation in the European policy space is that the teaching workforce itself is rather varied regarding the training provided along different age-cohorts. In the case of Austria, the share of teachers aged between 50–59 years of age reported that they were trained for a multicultural classroom in their initial teacher training was only 18% while among those teachers aged between 30–39 this value was considerably higher (41%) and in the youngest cohort below 25 years old, the share reached 67% (Höller et al., 2019a). Consistent with these figures is that the support provided to teachers also varies considerably across European countries. A study by Nayir et al. (2019) found that almost 59% of school principals in Norway and 47% in Austria were of the view that professional development opportunities were available for staff to enhance their skills towards the integration of culturally relevant materials into assessment practices. In the case of Turkey (30%) and Ireland (18%), this value was considerably lower. What then of Initial Teacher Education given the stark needs for teachers that presently exist in the education system to be provided with the necessary competencies required for effective multicultural teaching?

The paper at hand uses Austria and Ireland as case examples. It acknowledges that teacher education consists of at least three building-blocks: the institutional structures, the institution's personnel (teacher educators and students) and the content (curriculum text and implementation). It specifically examines the secondary teacher education curricula in these two countries that have witnessed significant changes in the delivery of teacher education programmes and the cultural makeup of classrooms over the last two decades (Eurydice, 2019; OECD, 2019). Our particular focus is on compulsory

courses in Initial Teacher Education at the secondary level that are considered foundational to understanding migration-related diversities, i.e., multilingualism and multiculturalism in the classroom. The research design employed in this study used a qualitative document analysis to examine the secondary teacher education curricula of Austrian and Irish Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

The paper begins with an overview of migration related diversity in Austria and Ireland, followed by an overview of the policy and legislative requirements to become a secondary school teacher in these two countries. Leading on from this, a description of the research design used in the study is provided. The next section summarises the research findings derived from the analysis. Finally, consequences for teacher education discussed, and recommendations for improvement are formulated, providing a foundational narrative that can enhance HEIs propensity to equip student teachers with the necessary competencies to embed cultural responsivity into their classroom practice upon completion of their apprenticeship for teaching.

Migration and diversity in Austria and Ireland

Taking 15-year-old students from the PISA 2018 study (Höller et al., 2019b, p. 76) the percentage of students with both parents born abroad is 22,7% in Austria and 17,9% in Ireland with a higher proportion of 1st generation students in Ireland (9,8%) and a higher share of second-generation students in Austria (14,9%; Table 1). Therefore, it is no surprise that both countries have embraced the concept of migration-related diversity that is enshrined in legislation and various policy instruments such as the Education Act (Government of Ireland, 1998) in Ireland and the Decree on Intercultural Education in Austria (BMB [Bundesministerium für Bildung], 2017).

An analysis of these acts suggests that migration-related diversity in Austria and Ireland is conceptualised from the perspective of at least two interrelated areas that influence educational provision in both countries: i.e., socio-cultural and linguistic diversity.

Focusing on linguistic diversity, teachers in most jurisdictions are concerned about students' proficiency in the language of instruction, especially when they have been trained for a monolingual setting (Burns et al., 2019). This is unsurprising given the percentage of migrant background students who speak the language of instruction at home (Table 1). In Ireland, however, it was found that 73% of second-generation students overwhelmingly speak the language of instruction (English) at home which is in stark contrast to Austria where only 28% of second-generation students in Austria

Table 1. Percentage of 1st and 2nd generation migration background students in Austria and Ireland. Source: PISA 2018 (Höller et al., 2019b, p. 76).

Students with migration background	Percentage of cohort		Percentage of students mostly speaking the language of instruction at home	
	Austria	Ireland	Austria	Ireland
1st generation students	7,8%	9,8%	23,7%	32,2%
2nd generation students	14,9%	8,0%	27,6%	73%
Total 1st+2nd generation students with both parents born abroad	22,7%	17,9%	26,2%	50,6%

overwhelmingly speak that language of instruction (German) at home. However, first-generation students that mostly speak the language of instruction at home is a comparatively low level in Ireland (32%) and Austria (24%) compared to other OECD countries (Höller et al., 2019b). Nonetheless and regardless of the variance between the language of instruction and that of the spoken language for migration background students; universally, the language issue has traditionally been conceptualised as a deficit for children growing-up with a language at home other than the language of instruction (Gogolin, 2008). While it has been shown in research since the 1960's that multilingualism is an advantage in many respects—from cognitive development to health delaying the onset of dementia (Bialystok et al., 2012; Coelho, 2012; Peal & Lambert, 1962; Vega-Mendoza et al., 2019)—the advantage resulting in subject-related proficiencies (e.g., mathematics) depends on the instructional model chosen (Valentino & Reardon, 2015) and requires adequately trained teachers. Nevertheless, the deficit perspective is still widely spread among teachers and there is a growing gap between celebratory literature and the actual practice (Daryai-Hansen et al., 2015). On top of that this understanding counteracts a nascent although a growing body of research pinpointing the fact that the academic language of schooling is problematic for many children not only those coming from migrant backgrounds but rather those coming from families whose language is less close to the language of schooling; the academic language (Cummins, 1979; Ranney, 2012). Therefore, the issue of teaching for language learners is not merely directed to multilingual students but also to monolingual ones which have resulted in a new orientation towards the development of language-sensitive subject-teaching for all pupils especially in the German-speaking countries (cf., Becker-Mrotzek & Roth, 2017; Röhner & Hövelbrinks, 2013).

The second area relates to that of socio-cultural diversity. In Ireland's case, the Education Act of 1998 requires schools to respect 'the diversity of values, beliefs, languages, and traditions in Irish society' (Government of Ireland, 1998). In a similar vein to that of Ireland, Austria's Ministry of Education (BMB [Bundesministerium für Bildung], 2017) issued a new version of the Decree on Intercultural Education in 2017 which has been anchored in the curricula of all schools since 1992 and describes the aims, teaching principles, and intercultural competences to be achieved in the classroom.

Intercultural education has undergone some transformation and is now conceptualised along with global citizenship education ideas, and therefore as a part of civic education. Indeed, at the level of aspirational interpersonal competences there is a convergence in both countries: goals and ideals whose aim is to provide students with a rounded global citizenship education that is in line with goal four of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals; i.e. 'ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development' (United Nations, 2017, p. 17). However, proceeding at the next level, a widening gap is apparent at the meso-level of schools as it relates to access and the composition of student bodies. Whereas article six of the Austrian Constitutional Law acknowledges the rights of all students regardless of the various cultural labels that exist and states that public schools should be accessible without distinction between birth, gender, race,

status, class, language and confession within the framework of the legal requirements the selection logic of the Austrian school-system works otherwise (Bruneforth et al., 2012). With the aim to increase the level of homogeneity in learner-groups class repetition, allocation to lower-status school-types and early school-leaving affects students with migration-background to a much higher degree than those with native-born parentage (Herzog-Punzenberger & Schnell, 2019). Consistent with the Irish Education Act of 1998 (Government of Ireland, 1998), the Intercultural Education Strategy (IES) in Ireland provides more specific details to that of Austrian legislation and focuses on mainstreaming education for all students which includes desegregating migrant students from their native-born peers (DES [Department of Education and Skills], 2020). This strategy requires the removal of segregated from Irish schools and that educational provision must be based on each student's needs, regardless of their cultural and national affiliation. Every student is required to learn in the same classroom, has an opportunity to study the full curriculum and to attain equally with his/her peers. In other words, the IES aims to ensure that inclusion and integration within an intercultural learning environment becomes the norm (DES [Department of Education and Skills], 2020). In summary, while policies and legislative instruments targeting socio-cultural and linguistic diversity in both countries are viewed as appropriate tools for the beneficial coexistence of all citizens regardless of their cultural affiliation, the extent to which teachers are prepared to implement the various aspects of cultural diversity into their classroom practice is to a significant extent, dependent on how teachers are trained to embrace such practices as a standard process for teaching and learning that should form a core part of the apprenticeship of teaching.

The pathway to becoming a secondary teacher in Austria and Ireland

In this paper we will focus on the education of teachers for (lower and upper) secondary schools. However, there are various meanings of the term 'secondary level' across both countries (European Commission, 2021a, 2021b). In Austria, secondary schooling starts at age 10, i.e. grade 5, and covers a level referred to as 'lower secondary' (ISCED level 2[1]) until age 14, i.e. grade 8, followed by the 'upper secondary' level (ISCED level 3) until age 18/19, i.e. grade 12/13. It is a special feature of the Austrian education system (and other German-speaking countries) that at 10 years of age, children are streamed into two different school-types according to a performance-based recommendation of their primary school teacher. Both lower secondary school types are 'lower secondary general education' in the sense of ISCED category 24: While 'Middle Schools' (Mittelschule) which presently cater for around 60% of a cohort usually prepare for entry into vocational education, 'academically oriented lower secondary schools'(Allgemeinbildende Höhere Schule) which cater for 40% of the cohort are considered cognitively more challenging and offer a more direct pathway to higher education (Statistik Austria, 2021, p. 25). Upon entry to the upper secondary level (ISCED level 3), lower secondary graduates may choose between a number of different school-types both with general (ISCED category 34) and vocational education (ISCED category 35) emphasis.

The term 'secondary level' is also used in Ireland where upon completion of the primary curriculum, students attend a Secondary school at approximately 12 years of age. However, in Ireland, academic selection at the secondary level does not exist (Brown

et al., 2021) in a way comparable to Austria's lower secondary school-system. The lower secondary level, referred to as the 'Junior Cycle', consists of three years of study followed by, at the upper secondary level, what is referred to as the 'Leaving Certificate' that normally consists of two years of study with the completion of a government devised examination. Results derived from this examination are used as part of a competitive process to gain entry into courses in Higher Education Institutions.

Recently, both countries have witnessed profound changes relating to the mandatory requirements to become a practising teacher. In Austria's case, a law was passed by the Austrian Parliament in 2013 that reorganised the teacher education system for the education of both primary and secondary school teachers (BMBWF [Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung], 2020; New Teacher Education Act, 2013). While there still exists a bipartite system of lower secondary schools described above, the new law legislated that teachers for both types of secondary school should be educated in the same teacher education programme for secondary school teachers. Prior to the 2013 law, responsibility for teacher education had been separated between 'Pädagogische Hochschulen' (Universities of Teacher Education) who were responsible for teachers in primary schools and lower secondary 'Middle Schools', and traditional universities who provided the preparation for teachers in the 'academically oriented secondary schools'. With this changed structure of teacher education, the two types of HEIs were also required to collaborate in four regional clusters to provide a joint secondary teacher education programme.

Consequently, there are now four different curricula for teacher education in Austria, according to the four regional clusters. For example, in the 'Central Cluster,' four universities of teacher education and six traditional universities in two Austrian provinces (Upper Austria and Salzburg) collaborate to offer a joint secondary teacher education programme based on the same curriculum (BMBWF [Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung], 2020; Krainz-Dürr, 2015). Although there is an entry test for applicants, access to these teacher education programmes is in practice non-competitive and open to most upper secondary graduates. Regardless of the varied curriculum content of the four clusters, all secondary school teachers' curriculum stipulates the first phase of studies of four years, which awards the degree of the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.; 240 ECTS). However, full employment as a secondary school teacher is only possible after the completion of an additional two-year phase of studies with the award of Master of Education (MEd; 120 ECTS). Both the Bachelor and Master programmes must include courses in the following areas: foundations of education (Bildungswissenschaftliche Grundlagen), practicum phases (Pädagogisch-praktische Studien) and—usually in two secondary school subjects—teaching methodology (Fachdidaktik) and subject content (Fachwissenschaft).

Teacher education in Ireland has also undergone significant changes with the establishment of the Teaching Council of Ireland (Government of Ireland, 2001) who are responsible for the accreditation and determination of teaching standards for all teacher education programmes at the Initial Teacher Education level. With this centralisation of Teacher education provision, there is now considerable uniformity concerning the areas of study that must be included in all accredited Secondary Teacher Education Programmes and for those teachers who have been trained in other jurisdictions and are seeking registration with the teaching council (Teaching Council, 2011, 2020). These

guidelines serve as mechanisms to assure the quality of the content taught, the methods of programme delivery and assessment procedures provided by HEIs. While most secondary school teachers in Austria are trained in a concurrent system (with consecutive options offered for very few exceptional cases), becoming a secondary teacher in Ireland consists of concurrent and consecutive routes that depend on the subject that a student is aiming to teach. For secondary school subjects such as Physical Education, Home Economics and Engineering, the curriculum requires students to complete a 240 ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) concurrent (normally four-year) Bachelor of Education degree where trainee teachers are also concurrently taught in subjects as well as in pedagogy. The consecutive route requires students to have obtained at least a Bachelor's Degree or equivalent in an approved secondary school subject that must extend over a minimum period of three years and has at least 180 ECTS credits. Upon completion of this degree, a two-year 60 ECTS qualification in secondary education, referred to as the Professional Masters in Education is required for registration with the teaching council. However, regardless of the approved subject that students are being trained to teach; the education elements of all accredited Teacher Education programmes in Ireland must include three areas: Studies in the Foundations of Education, Professional Studies and Practical Teaching Programme/School Placement (Teaching Council, 2011). Entry to the concurrent teacher education programmes is implemented via a competitive process primarily derived from the Irish State Examination results in the Leaving Certificate. The Professional Masters in Education, on the other hand, is typically advertised in the national media and each HEI's website. Applicants, having met the minimum entry requirements (e.g., a bachelor's degree in an approved secondary education subject such as Mathematics and Politics and Society) are then awarded places on the programme based on their qualifications and performance at an interview.

Research design

The research design employed in this study used a qualitative methodology, i.e., document analysis that focused on understanding, describing and interpreting data. In line with Fitzgerald's (2007) avowal that official websites can be used as the primary sources of data as long as they conform to Scott's (1990) criteria for assessing the suitability of documentary evidence for research (authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning). The authenticity of the data refers to the soundness and authorship since all institutes develop and author their websites. The credibility of the evidence depends on its accuracy. Generally, universities assign codes and a time-period to their programmes. When these programmes are revised, the older programmes are digitally archived with their codes and hence satisfying the representativeness criterion that refers to the availability and survival of the data. Additionally, HEIs in both countries present information clearly and concisely to engage the readers and in the case of this case study, to satisfy the fourth criterion of making sense of the data.

Following a review of the literature on migration-related diversity and Initial Teacher Education, the authors reviewed all of the Austrian and Irish HEIs' websites to examine the extent to which cultural diversity is incorporated in the course content of secondary teacher education programmes. The data collection and analysis phase of the research occurred between August 2020 and February 2021 and consisted of two distinct phases.

The first phase of the study involved randomly reviewing three secondary Teacher Education programmes in each country. The purpose of this phase of the study was to develop criteria for subsequent data gathering and analysis. The indicators identified and used in the second phase were taken from the study on diversity in the curricula of Austrian primary school teacher education (Schrammel-Leber et al., 2019): the structure of the programme; the title of the course or module; the manner of teaching and assessment (e.g., seminar, lecture, independent study); whether the module is compulsory or optional; the number of ECTS for the module; the level of embedment; requirements for participation; and a description of the course content. Based on the initial review, six categories of embedment were identified:

(1) Modules that have diversity or inclusion used in the title along with the weightage in the overall programme (e.g., 60 ECTS)
(2) Diversity/inclusion is used explicitly in the title of the module;
(3) The main aim of the module relates to that of diversity or inclusion;
(4) The dominant theme in the description of the module relates to that of diversity/inclusion
(5) Diversity is mentioned in the general description of the module;
(6) Diversity appears together with other diversity topics such as gender, disability, social class, race, ethnicity in a general description of a course.

In total, the database included 39 secondary teacher education curricula from 12 Higher Education Institutions in Ireland and 4 such curricula from four teacher education clusters (including 12 universities and 14 universities of teacher education) from Austria. An overview of the findings derived from the analysis of this database is provided in the next section of this paper.

Findings

Teacher education for secondary school teachers in Austria provides students with a minimum of 60 ECTS of foundations of education across their Bachelor and Master studies. This is where the topic of diversity is primarily found and which our analysis focuses on, since it is very rarely included in the courses of secondary school subject content or subject teaching methodology[2] that cover an additional minimum of 230 ECTS in the Bachelor and Master studies. Generally, in the prefaces to all curricula, there are references to various aspects of diversity, e.g., 'Aspects of diversity in formal educational processes will be paid attention to specifically and continuously. Thereby the term diversity covers heterogeneity, gender, social background, multilingualism, different abilities, concepts of inclusion, interculturality and the plurality of world views' (University of Innsbruck, 2019, p. 14). The existence of such texts is most likely due to the requirements laid down by the Quality Assurance Agency for teacher education institutions and is necessary for the accreditation of the curricula (Braunsteiner et al., 2014). However, what exists on the surface is often at odds to what is implemented in practice as it relates to preparation for cultural diversity in classrooms. Indeed, terms such as 'inclusion' and 'diversity' can often be found in many

course titles, but, in practice, they are not referring to migration-related aspects of diversity but to heterogeneity of talents, skills, interests, and proficiencies or to special needs.

As has been explained above, there are four different secondary teacher education curricula, according to the four regional clusters. Let us have a closer look at the curriculum of the most populous region, the North-East Cluster, which also caters for teachers in the City of Vienna who will more frequently meet multilingual than mono-lingual students in their classrooms (as they make up more than 50% of the total pupil population). There are no compulsory courses exclusively devoted to migration-related topics in any of the teacher education institutions in this region. Instead, at the Bachelor level,[3] a compulsory 5 ECTS module *Inclusive school and diversity: Opportunities and limitations* provides students with the opportunity to choose between five different options. One of these options covers among other topics, inequality and migration, German as a second language, language-sensitive teaching, and multilingualism. At the Master level,[4] students learn to create inclusive learning processes via compulsory 4 ECTS seminars relating to a gamut of diversity-related issues such as heterogeneity, disability, talent, gender, regional context, migration background, cultural, religious, and societal diversity, socio-economic status, and media culture.

There is a similar situation in the Central Cluster; Bachelor students must attend a seminar on *Gender, Diversity and Inclusion: Diversity in Schools* (3 ECTS) and a teaching practice course on *Responding to Heterogeneity: Individualising, Diagnosing, and Supporting Learning Processes* (1,5 ECTS) which, again, seem to cater for everything not being perceived as 'normal', 'average', or 'mainstream'. Master students can choose an optional module focusing on diversity and inclusion with 5 ECTS, again covering the whole range of diversity-aspects.

In the South-East Cluster, 'diversity and inclusion' is included as a topic in seminars () titled *Teacher as a profession* at the Bachelor level. When calculating the time available for this course, it seems rather odd that approximately only two hours can be allocated to each aspect of diversity (such as gender, socio-economic background/class, sexual orientation, religion, ablism . . . .). However, the South-East Cluster is the only one of the four regions which devotes a full compulsory course exclusively to migration-related diversity. It is situated at the Master level with the title *Contemporary challenges of educational science: Language education and multilingualism in school and society* (2 ECTS). Two optional courses titled *Multilingualism and Interculturalism* (2 ECTS) are found at the Bachelor and Master level in the West Cluster. However, as these are stand-alone courses, the competencies derived from these modules do not build upon each other.

In summary: Diversity as an important issue in teacher education is beginning to be taken aboard by Austrian HEIs, however, there is great variation between the four cluster with respect to level (Bachelor, Master), format (lecture, seminar, practice format), obligation (compulsory or optional) and workload (between 1,5 and 5 ECTS) of courses on 'diversity'. Among this abundance of differences, a recurring element becomes obvious: the reference to aspects of classroom diversity in the curricula very often remains general and allows (and necessitates) covering a wide range of different aspects of diversity. Thus, it is left open for the university lecturers which aspects of diversity they will focus on and whether or not they will include cultural diversity. The importance of

providing student teachers with the requisite skills to teach in multicultural classrooms has, as of yet, not had a significant impact on the content-design of secondary teacher education curricula in Austria.

For Ireland, analysis of teacher education curricula related to cultural diversity is less complex to that of the Austrian education system. This is primarily because all accredited Teacher Education Programmes in Ireland up to the launch of the newly revised guidelines (Teaching Council, 2020) have been developed in accordance with the various iterations of the Teaching Councils *Initial Teacher Education: Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers* (Teaching Council, 2011, 2017). As previously stated, whilst there is a minimum requirement of 240 ECTS to become a secondary teacher in Ireland, the newly revised guidelines also require three specific areas of educational provision for the accreditation of Initial Teacher Education Programmes (Foundations of Education, Professional Studies, and Practical Teaching). The notion of providing student teachers with the skills necessary to teach in culturally diverse environments is primarily addressed in the Practical Teaching and Foundations of Education areas.

For the Practical Teaching area, students are required to ambiguously teach in a variety of school-based settings, i.e., 'as far as practicable and appropriate: different age groups of students; different sectors; various socio-economic and cultural environments' (Teaching Council, 2017, p. 17). They are also required to respond to and be sensitive to the diverse needs of learners. For example, to achieve an 'Excellent' grade in teaching practice for the Professional Masters in Education at University College Dublin, students must demonstrate how they are 'managing pupil diversity in a sensitive manner'.[5] However, for some student teachers, there can be limited exposure to culturally diverse student populations. To concur with McGarr (2019, p. 162): 'Unless opportunities are included within these pre-service programmes for students to experience different cultures and settings, teacher education could become an exercise in conformity within a particular jurisdiction as opposed to an opportunity to challenge and interrogate prevailing mindsets'.

The Foundations of Education area also includes various subsets of education deemed essential to understanding cultural diversity such as the philosophy, psychology and sociology of education. On the other hand, and quite possibly leading to misinterpretation, demonstration of the varying parts of this area can be provided in modular or in an integrated form. Finally, there are also mandatory elements that must be demonstrated by HEIs in their Teacher Education curricula. As is the case with Austria, terms such as cultural diversity appear to be subsumed within the spectrum of diversity-related issues in comparison to other elements of teaching and learning such as Digital Skills. Of the 16 elements listed in these guidelines, the term Multiculturalism appears within the second element, 'Inclusive Education, (Special Education, Multiculturalism, Disadvantage, etc.)' (Teaching Council, 2017, p. 14). Indeed, an analysis of the Teaching Council criteria and guidelines including the newly devised guidelines (Teaching Council, 2020) in many respects, foregrounds how cultural diversity is conceptualised and provisioned to student teachers as part of the secondary teacher education curricula in Ireland. For example, and in line with Teaching Council accreditation standards, the objective of a Professional Masters in Education module at University College Cork aims 'To develop key inclusionary theories, concepts, policies and practices in relation to Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Intercultural Education'.[6]

Analysis of the secondary teacher education curricula in Ireland also reveals that there are a number of optional modules available to secondary teacher education students that engender various elements of cultural diversity such as the optional 5 ECTS module entitled *Teaching and Learning Politics and Society* that is part of the Professional Masters in Education (PME) at NUI Maynooth. However, in line with Teaching Council guidelines and illustrative of most HEIs, analysis of the curricula in HEIs reveals that cultural diversity is primarily framed as a subset of social justice, equity, and inclusion with terms such as gender, disability, ethnicity, social class, and ability quite frequently appearing in the same module descriptors. For example, and reflective of most secondary teacher education modules that address cultural diversity, the course content of a compulsory 5 ECTs module entitled *Access, Disadvantage, Equality in Education* that forms part of the Dublin City University Bachelor of Science Education provides an introduction to 'the sociology of access, disadvantage and equality education, social class and theory education, ability grouping and theory education, gender and theory education, discrimination and theory education, multiculturalism, interculturalism and theory education, disability and theory'. Another example at the PME level also reflective of the other education providers curricula is the compulsory level 5 ECTS module entitled *Inclusion—Special Educational Needs and Multicultural Education* that is offered at University College Cork. '[It] introduces students to conceptual and practice-based issues pertaining to the inclusion of learners with special educational needs in educational settings. The module content also includes a conceptual treatise of varying approaches to multicultural education and critical engagement with culturally responsive forms of pedagogy' (University College Cork, n.d.). Indeed, an analysis of 39 secondary teacher courses at the Bachelor and Master level in Ireland reveals that on the one hand, while aspects of migration-related diversity can be found in the compulsory modules of all secondary Bachelor and Masters courses. On the other hand, as with Austria, the question relates to the extent to which these modules, in reality, provide students with the necessary conceptual knowledge and requisite competencies to teach in culturally diverse classrooms given that modules that contain elements of cultural diversity are almost always provisioned to students together with a full spectrum of other diversity-related issues such as class, gender, discrimination and the pedagogical implications of diversity in classrooms.

Discussion and conclusion

Due to the significant proportion of 1st and 2nd generation students in Austria and Ireland, a variety of strategies and supports have been developed for schooling in a society of migration. In Austria, the recruitment of foreign labour started in the 1960s and the inflow of families from those countries in the 1970s. A long and winding history unfolded which at first ignored the challenges involved (Jaksche, 1998). At the beginning of the 1990s, quite progressive legal provisions were made, e.g., German language-support and instruction in the family languages (Fleck, 2013), which, for the most part, were only occasionally and fragmentarily implemented depending on the personal interest of individual actors at the school-level (Herzog-Punzenberger & Schnell, 2019). However, compared to other countries the willingness of political actors to offer varying supports free of charge within the school-system (mostly with respect to the linguistic domain but also religious instruction in all accredited religious confessions)

is a positive aspect of the Austrian system that stands out in international comparison (Eurydice, 2019). In the case of Ireland, a country that has also witnessed strong migration flows since the 1990's; a variety of motivating mechanisms and supports have also been developed, such as the IES (DES [Department of Education and Skills], 2020) whose aspiration is to ensure that all students experience an education that 'respects the diversity of values, beliefs, languages and traditions in Irish society and is conducted in a spirit of partnership' (Government of Ireland, 1998).

However, there also appears to be challenges for the education of migrant students as it relates to the required supports and multicultural competencies of practising teachers and school leaders across the continuum of education (Brown et al., 2019; Darmody et al., 2014). By association, what is not as widely known and what formed the basis for this research relates to the ways in which HEIs are providing student teachers with the competencies necessary to teach in secondary level classrooms in an age of migration. To fill the lacuna of research in this area, document analysis of secondary education curricula of HEIs in both countries revealed some promising and challenging aspects of how HEIs are preparing secondary teachers for multicultural classrooms.

The analysis revealed that the curricula of almost all ITE programmes in both countries have embraced the concept of diversity. In both countries, we found that 'diversity' is a core component part of an up-to-date educational terminology and quite often mentioned in the teacher education curricula examined. However, 'diversity' is also a broad concept including a range of different aspects, such as gender, sexual orientation, social milieus, culture, religion etc. as well as differences in school performance. If a curriculum provides, e.g., for a course on *Diversity and Inclusion* of 3 ECTS and leaves it open in its general description what aspects of diversity to focus on, then HEI teachers can potentially oscillate between treating many or all aspects of diversity superficially or focussing on specific aspects of diversity. It seems that these teacher education reforms have not stimulated significant curricular innovations concerning migration-related diversity in comparison to other aspects of diversity. Furthermore, whilst all HEIs curricula in Ireland are strongly aligned to the Teaching Council's criteria and guidelines for programme providers (Teaching Council, 2011, 2017), the new curricula in Austria do not reflect all the curricular recommendations set out by the Austrian Quality Assurance Council. A plausible explanation is that the huge organisational reform happening at the same time (when up to ten universities and universities of teacher education had to join forces in regional clusters to collaborate in a single curriculum) consumed so much energy that little was left for infusing innovation in the curricula. This resulted in curricula which conformed to the new formal requirements, but often assembled and codified existing institutional practices (Weber et al., 2021).

Succinctly put, the teacher education curricula in both countries appear to reflect migration-related diversity in a marginal way and are certainly far off sequentially building up knowledge and competences of productively responding to the challenges of culturally diverse classrooms. From a governance point of view, it would be somewhat risky to leave this issue to the normal course of HEIs' institutional development and interpretation. Leaving the situation as it is, accepts the danger of future teachers with limited knowledge about migration-related diversity which they will find difficult to productively respond to in their practical teaching. Indeed, some of the potential learning experiences appear to be of a conceptual nature and casually subsumed into modules that

cater for a range of diversity-related issues. Providing students with the knowledge to explore the varying concepts associated with cultural diversity is but one vital aspect of educational provision. However, in practice, providing student teachers with the actual competencies needed to teach in multicultural classrooms is an entirely different matter. In this regard, the analysis reveals that the vast majority of compulsory modules that prepare students to become secondary school teachers do not provide student teachers with a specific knowledge base for multicultural learning. Instead, what is offered relates to various aspects of diversity and differentiation and, in the case of Ireland, also equity and social justice in education. In this regard, our analysis of teacher education curricula in both countries suggests that teacher education institutions are beginning to react to the growing diversity in the classrooms, however, that a lot more must be done to prepare student teachers for culturally diverse learning environments. Promising examples do exist in other countries (e.g., Petersen, 2017; PPMI [Public Policy and Management Institute], 2017), however, also significant variation between (Wernicke et al., 2021) and within countries (Baumann & Becker-Mrotzek, 2014).

One crucial element that exists in Austria, Ireland and other European countries is that an overwhelming majority of teachers and teacher educators have the same majority-group ethnic and social background though attempts have been made to increase the accessibility of the HEI and teaching workforce to underrepresented ethnic minorities (Keane & Heinz, 2015; McGarr, 2019). For example, at the teacher level, the *Migrant Teacher Bridging Programme* (Marino Institute of Education, n.d.) is available to migrant teachers to enhance their skills and confidence to gain employment in schools in Ireland. Several initiatives supporting refugee teachers to continue with their profession in the migrant receiving country had reacted quickly to the influx of refugees to Europe in 2015 and 2016. Training programmes were offered by private foundations (e.g., Bertelsmann Stiftung in Germany[7]) as well as public bodies (e.g., the Austrian labour market service, the education directorate of Vienna and the University of Vienna)[8] and the European Union (R/Equal[9]). However, many of these initiatives were not sustainable as the interest of the financing institutions faded in line with the decreasing public attention towards refugees. In this regard, at the teacher educator level, initiatives such as the DICE (Development and Intercultural Education) project in Ireland[10] (whose purpose is to promote 'the integration of development education and intercultural education in Initial Teacher Education at primary level' (Dublin City University, n.d.)) seem to be more sustainable approaches to Preparing Teachers for Diversity. It is a promising example of what can be achieved with the existing teacher educator workforce and within the confines of existing curricula and institutional structures.

The importance of such initiatives resonates with Vranješević (2014) observation that teacher educators being mostly members of dominant groups may have difficulty seeing problems in diverse environments from that position. Some teacher educators may have experienced diversity in classrooms, but many who have not taught in schools for some time and are teaching a nearly homogenous class of prospective teachers may not be fully aware of the challenges of a diverse student body (e.g., Brown et al., 2019). This is unsurprising given that an EC-commissioned study on diversity in initial teacher education indicated that there are only a few initiatives in Europe to train teacher educators for cultural diversity in teaching and assessment (Dumcius et al., 2017). In this regard, given the non-requisite requirements for all teacher educators as

it relates to cultural diversity, it is imperative that the leadership of teacher training institutions by those with specific expertise in cultural diversity is a critical first step towards improving school environments that are responsive to a migration society. As such, there is an overwhelming need to organise professional learning activities not only for student teachers but also for teacher educators to develop their competencies for inclusive education and facilitate them to adopt positive attitudes towards cultural and linguistic diversity besides all other forms of diversity such as religious diversity that are characterising European societies.

In conclusion, there is an overwhelming need to provide all teacher educators with the competencies needed to embed cultural and linguistic responsivity in their practice. There is also a need to have at least one compulsory core module that covers both the theoretical and practical aspects of multicultural teaching and learning in a multilingual environment to ensure that every student teacher receives the full knowledge and understanding of the skills needed to embrace multicultural and multilingual classrooms (Becker-Mrotzek, Rosenberg, Schroeder & Witte, 2017). It will be interesting to follow initiatives which suggest that the core content of such modules should be developed trans-nationally as opposed to at a local level (Beacco et al., 2016 for a focus on linguistic diversity). Indeed, Hammer et al. (2019) stress the need to engage in cross-national, multilingual, and multicultural research on teacher education that spans varying dimensions across national contexts. Such work provides the 'opportunity to grow a global community of researchers whose work seeks to support the increasing number of multilingual learners who are immigrants, refugees, or impacted by current migration patterns around the globe' (p. 192). Ultimately, collaborations of this nature can lead to joint ventures of developing teacher education programmes or sharing best practices and the requirements needed to support teacher education students and teacher educators.

Notes

1. For references to ISCED see, UNESCO UIS (2012, pp. 34–43).
2. For example, in the curriculum of the Cluster West (Tyrol and Vorarlberg) migration-related topics were not found in the course descriptions and module topics of the subject content or teaching methodology courses with the only exception of the subject Religious Instruction.
3. See the curriculum at https://senat.univie.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/s_senat/konsolidiert_Lehramt/Allgemeines_Curriculum_BA_Lehramt.pdf (Downloaded: January 7, 2022).
4. See the curriculum at https://ssc-lehrerinnenbildung.univie.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/s_ssc_lehrerinnenbildung/Studienangbeot/Master_Studienplan.pdf (Downloaded: 7 January 2022).
5. See the School Placement grade descriptors at https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FDcesOGQmCPQmXTPA5qjp3Tu5H5SqNUW/view (Downloaded: 7 January 2022).
6. See the module descriptor for the module entitled 'Inclusion—Special Educational Needs and Intercultural Education' at https://www.ucc.ie/admin/registrar/modules/?mod=ED6306 (Downloaded: 7 January 2022).
7. https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/de/unsere-projekte/in-vielfalt-besser-lernen/projekt nachrichten/qualifizierungsprogramm-fuer-lehrkraefte-mit-fluchtgeschichte (Downloaded: 7 January 2022).
8. https://bildungswissenschaft.univie.ac.at/inklusive-paedagogik/forschung/lehrkraefte-mit-fluchthintergrund-lehrgang-2/ (Downloaded: 7 January 2022).

9. Requalification of recently immigrated and refugee teachers in Europe. https://blog.hf.uni-koeln.de/immigrated-and-refugee-teachers-requal/ (Downloaded: 7 January 2022).
10. https://thediceproject.ie/ (Downloaded: 7 January 2022).

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