**Module 3: Workforce development**

*The purpose of the* ***workforce development core function*** *is to support the recruitment, professional development and retention of a sufficient number of pre-primary teachers and other key personnel into the subsector, ensuring that they have the essential competencies, training and support required to promote children’s positive development and early learning.*

**Module 3** outlines four key goals and associated measures that can lead to progress in strengthening this core function of the pre-primary subsector:

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|  | **Goal 1: Establish a strategy for recruiting pre-primary staff, based on clearly defined staff qualification requirements and competency profiles.** *A vision for the entire pre-primary workforce is defined, including delineation of appropriate competency profiles and staff qualifications as well as strategies to attract a diverse and motivated workforce.*  **Goal 2: Implement effective and flexible pre-service training programmes, including alternative pathways to qualification and initial training.** *Before entering the profession, teachers and other pre-primary personnel receive high-quality preparation that integrates theory with practice and that responds to the diverse landscape of pre-primary services provision.*  **Goal 3: Implement evidence-based programmes for continuing professional development (CPD), including setting up career pathways for the subsector.** *The**ECE workforce is respected and recognized as a group of highly qualified professionals. This is reflected in the provision of CPD opportunities as a key incentive for staff to enhance their qualifications and update their skills, including through in-service training, reflective practice and on-site coaching, among other initiatives offered in pre-primary settings.*  **Goal 4: Promote continuous workforce improvement and staff retention.** *Investments are made in regularly assessing and improving workforce development programmes, including their impacts on teachers’ effectiveness and relevant outcomes for children. Working conditions are monitored and prioritized in the subsector.* |

The 14 measures listed below reflect progress against these goals. To evaluate whether each measure is being addressed, consider the associated questions. **In cases where not all of the questions are important or relevant in your context, you might decide to focus on only some of them.**

Note that questions highlighted in green cover play-based learning aspects, while questions highlighted in turquoise cover equity and inclusion considerations. Content highlighted in yellow is specific to humanitarian considerations. Where there is an overlap between equity and humanitarian considerations, humanitarian information is color-coded turquoise and referred to as an equity consideration.

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|  | **Goal 1: Establish a strategy for recruiting pre-primary staff, based on clearly defined staff qualification requirements and competency profiles**  *A vision for the entire pre-primary workforce is defined, including delineation of appropriate competency profiles and staff qualifications as well as strategies to attract a diverse and motivated workforce.* |

**Measure 1 – A robust, well-justified strategy for recruiting appropriate staff for the pre-primary subsector is in place.**

*A comprehensive strategy outlines the specific needs for early childhood educators, including underlying rationales, taking the realities of teachers’ scheduling and work hours into consideration. The strategy includes ways to attract new talent and to deploy new pre-primary teachers effectively. Strong policies, directives and programmes to recruit teachers are in place, including policies leading to appropriate salaries for pre-primary teachers.[[1]](#footnote-1) Strategies are intended to ensure sufficient numbers of qualified early childhood educators to meet a country’s ambitions for pre-primary education.*

**Questions:**

**Q1** Are there currently sufficient numbers of pre-primary staff in the subsector to meet the demand for pre-primary provision? Are there sufficient numbers of pre-primary teachers that have the requisite knowledge, skills and dispositions to support the learning and development of young children with disabilities? If not, where are the gaps are there and what are the reasons? One indicator to consider is the current child-to-staff ratio in pre-primary programmes in light of the curriculum and quality standards. Are these numbers of staff the same in humanitarian, refugee or emergency settings or are there additional needs and/or alternative service provider types available?

**Q2** Are specifically and officially defined job profiles and competencies for pre-primary personnel established in your country? If so, which job profiles and competencies are currently defined? Are these the same job profiles and competencies for service providers in humanitarian or refugee settings, or are there alternatives?

Noting that *profiles* describe the exact tasks involved in a particular job, along with the skills, experience and personal characteristics a person needs in order to do the job – and that *competencies* include all the related knowledge, skills, abilities and attributes needed for a specific job – do national definitions cover pre-primary teachers, assistant teachers, directors and principals, supervisors, trainers, coaches, specialists and any other essential personnel?

**Q3** Are job profiles varied enough in their scope and specialization to meet the needs of children in the pre-primary system? For example, do profiles describe specialists who can support children with disabilities, or the responsibilities of support staff, such as teachers’ aides? If not, what gaps need to be addressed?

**Q4** Is there a strategy to recruit new talent into the pre-primary profession? If so, does the strategy include outreach to potential educators from students who are completing secondary education, new graduates of vocational programmes, career changers and members of under-represented groups, etc.?

**Q5** Is there a strategy to recruit and deploy teachers and other staff in hard-to-reach areas and areas affected by crisis and conflict, with ethnic or linguistic minority populations, including potential staff who are members of those groups? Are appropriate support and incentives given to students or new graduates to work in these kinds of hard-to-staff locations? Does the strategy consider equitable distribution/deployment of teachers and other staff (e.g., equitable deployment of male and female teachers and staff, in urban and rural areas, etc.)?

**Q6** How does the average salary of a pre-primary teacher employed in the public sector compare to the average salary of similarly qualified primary teachers? Consider, for example:

1. What is the average salary[[2]](#footnote-2) of a pre-primary teacher as a percentage of the average salary of a primary school teacher (or similarly qualified primary school teacher)?
2. Is the pay scale for pre-primary teachers appealing? Is the starting salary competitive?
3. Do salaries vary according to a teacher’s past experience and current performance? Does the salary change over the course of a teacher’s career? What is the long-term plan for salaries of pre-primary teachers?
4. What percentage of pre-primary teachers are on government payroll? What are the long-term plans (if any) for pre-primary teachers’ salaries?
5. Are there alternative pay scales or incentives for providers in emergencies or refugee contexts? Is there a long-term plan for integrating emergency or refugee providers into the government payroll?

**Q7** Are pre-primary personnel at different levels and across provider types– from ministry staff to teachers, private to public and humanitarian/refugee providers – aware of any systematic plans or schemes related to pay and job-grade progression? If such schemes exist, do they serve the intended purpose of incentivizing and retaining qualified pre-primary staff? If not, what measures can be put in place to make the pay and grade scheme more functional?

**Measure 2 – A core set of professional competencies and standards for pre-primary educators is clearly defined.**

*The diversity of roles and settings in which pre-primary personnel work makes it important to have a common, unifying vision for this group of professionals. Whatever their roles, the work of all pre-primary personnel is directed by a common core of competencies and standards that respond to the developmental characteristics and needs of young children. The core set of professional competencies is applicable to all pre-primary personnel, with additional specialized expectations for particular roles and in accordance with the setting.*

**Questions:**

**Q1** Is there a competency framework specific to the pre-primary workforce (including teachers, assistants, specialists and others including in emergencies and refugee contexts as described above) that can guide policies related to staff qualifications and training programmes? While answering this question, consider that competency frameworks typically include three domains:

1. *knowledge* – existing knowledge or knowledge that educators should aspire to have;
2. *skills* – the application of knowledge, techniques or technologies to communicate and complete essential tasks; and
3. *attitudes or dispositions* – which include beliefs and commitments to the profession and to the goals of continuous improvement.

**Q2** Specific to the pre-primary subsector, do current competency frameworks outline competencies that are clearly explained and well-matched to the country’s pre-primary vision and are likely to contribute to achieving that vision for the country’s children? Depending on the country context, these competencies would include:

1. *knowledge* on typical child development and factors that influence development and learning; the importance of culture, community and family; and options for curriculum and teaching practices;
2. *skills* that relate to the job profile, for example, a teacher’s ability to apply knowledge in implementing the curriculum and child-centred teaching practices (including play-based pedagogies or provision of early learning environment-based psychosocial support in emergencies), or a principal’s understanding of how to use assessments to guide teaching practices and develop engagement strategies with families; and
3. *attitudes or dispositions,* such as respect for children and their cultures, gender awareness, the conviction that all children can learn, collaborative attitudes towards colleagues, and respecting the importance of reflection and self-evaluation.

**Q3** Are pre-primary competency profiles aligned or connected in any way with competency profiles for personnel in other subsectors – especially those teaching children in the early years of primary education? If not, what are the differences? Do these differences reflect what is known about effective teaching for children in pre-primary setting compared with primary-school settings?

**Measure 3 – Initial qualification requirements define the level of education and training needed to enter the profession. These requirements are achievable in the current environment, while also aiming towards higher requirements over time.**

*The lead ministry specifies qualifications for the pre-primary workforce, considering immediate policy goals and opportunities, while retaining the long-term goal of a highly qualified professional workforce.*

**Questions:**

**Q1** How does one become a pre-primary teacher or a supervisor in your country? Are there clearly defined minimum qualification requirements associated with each professional role, especially pre-primary educators? If there are gaps or vagueness in requirements, what are they? Are these the same qualifications for service providers in humanitarian or refugee settings, or are there alternative qualifications?

**Q2** Do the current qualification requirements include:

- expected levels of education, e.g., secondary education or a bachelor's degree;

- expected kinds of professional training, e.g., in curriculum implementation, communication with children and families; and

- training for specialized roles, e.g., supervisor, curriculum specialist?

**Q3** Have the existing qualification requirements for pre-primary teachers been validated to determine whether they are feasible in your country context? Are they achievable or are they currently out of reach for most educators in the system? What percentage of teachers currently meet the mandated requirements? Are they achievable in emergency or refugee settings?

**Q4** Are qualification requirements aligned with, or similar to, the qualifications for personnel in other subsectors, especially those teaching children in the early years of primary school? If not, what are the differences, and are there valid reasons for the differences?

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|  | **Goal 2: Implement effective and flexible pre-service training programmes, including alternative pathways to qualification and initial training**  *Before entering the profession, teachers and other pre-primary personnel receive high-quality preparation that integrates theory with practice and that responds to the diverse landscape of pre-primary services provision.* |

**Measure 4 – Specific to pre-primary education, effective** **pre-service training programmes and relevant pre-service training providers are in place.**

*Pre-service programmes, linked with the higher education system and formal degrees, prepare educators to meet qualifications and enter the profession. These programmes offer multiple options for high-quality training – options that build the qualifications and practical skills of pre-primary educators across all levels of staff. A wide range of training providers may be engaged in offering these programmes, including higher education institutions, other training institutions, and professional associations at the national and subnational levels.*

**Questions:**

**Q1** Is pre-service training mandatory, including pre-service orientation and/or training to providers in emergencies and/or refugee settings? If yes, what percentage of relevant staff (including teachers, leaders and other staff) have participated in pre-service training (for example, training on play-based pedagogies)? What patterns of differential access are evident by geographical location, urban-rural setting, etc.?

**Q2** What pre-service training opportunities, if any, are available for future pre-primary educators? Are there opportunities for pre-service training as part of emergency responses or refugee education efforts? If there are opportunities, what options, pathways or formats are available, e.g., only at universities, in communities, online, part-time? Do these options address the practical constraints pre-primary staff face, such as distance from training sites, cost, time limitations or family obligations?

**Q3** Are there sufficient numbers of pre-service training providers, including individuals and institutions? Are they well-equipped in terms of pre-primary content knowledge, training skills, national vs. subnational location, etc.? Are they well-equipped with teacher training packages or other resources/tools to implement pre-service training (e.g., teacher training package on play-based pedagogy)? Do actors that provide training in emergencies and/or refugee settings, if different than the government, have a process for harmonizing training approaches with the national government’s providers and approaches?

**Measure 5 – Content and methods of pre-service training programmes are appropriate for achieving established competency profiles and standards***.*

*Along with explicit alignment between core competencies and pre-service training, the content of the training and the methods adopted for its delivery enhance the development of key competencies. This is achieved by blending theory and practice, and by offering pre-service training with sufficient intensity and duration to prepare new staff for successful engagement in their work. These questions may also be applied to pre-service training programmes for emergency or refugee pre-primary service providers if included or separate from the national pre-service training programmes.*

**Questions:**

**Q1** Does the pre-service training emphasize key pre-primary competencies that are relevant to participants’ future roles – for example, emphasis on play-based, child-focused teaching,[[3]](#footnote-3) curriculum implementation, positive teacher-child interactions and relationships, and family support? Are there additional pre-primary competencies relevant for emergencies and/or refugees, and are these included in pre-service training initiatives?

**Q2** Is there evidence that pre-service opportunities are currently sufficient in length and intensity to prepare educators to begin their work with young children?

**Q3** Do pre-service training opportunities help build practical skills, including the use of practicum (supervised classroom experiences and student teaching)? Or is the training only theoretical or information-oriented?

**Q4** Is there a system in place to assess whether those completing the programme are ready to teach in classrooms, e.g., observation and assessment during student teaching?

**Measure 6 – A system for recognition and accreditation or licensing of pre-service programmes has been developed.**

*This includes identification of a body that assesses such programmes, approves or accredits, and recommends improvement strategies. A variety of evaluation approaches helps ensure that pre-service programmes support participants’ achievement of their goals for professional competency. The presence of an accreditation or recognition system for initial and continuing professional development (CPD) training providers, such as higher education institutions and other training centres, helps assure consistent quality and adherence to professional and training standards. These questions may also be applied to pre-service training programmes for emergency or refugee pre-primary service providers if included or separate from the national pre-service training programmes.*

**Questions:**

**Q1** Is a national regulatory structure and system in place for accreditation, licensing and quality assurance of pre-service providers and programmes? Does the system evaluate pre-service training programmes for consistency with standards and effectiveness in developing competent pre-primary teachers?

**Q2** Are evaluation criteria transparent, relevant to core pre-primary professional competencies, administered equitably and consistently across pre-primary service providers, and responsive to local constraints and contexts?

**Q3** Does the pre-service programme accreditation system include feedback loops to guide improvement by pre-service training providers, including institutions, individual university lecturers and others?

**Measure 7 – Staff who currently do not meet qualifications have opportunities to develop the same levels of competency as qualified practitioners*.***

*While keeping the acquisition of a full university degree as a long-term goal, interim strategies such as part-time, short-term certificate programmes, ‘bridging courses’, distance learning and/or intensive CPD, brief, intensive or alternative on-the-job programmes for service providers in emergencies and/or refugee settings, credit for prior learning are used to support the professional advancement of currently non-qualified teachers and other pre-primary personnel.*

**Questions:**

**Q1** For teachers who do not currently have the required qualifications, are additional or alternative pathways as well as traditional university degree programmes available? This might include, for example, interim strategies, a vocational track, online learning or other routes.

**Q2** Are these pathways to qualification reaching the staff who need them with programmes that are widely available through different providers, in varied community settings and not only online?

**Q3** Are there mechanisms to link alternative pathways with traditional higher education, e.g., university credit for prior learning through community-based or online classes?

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|  | **Goal 3: Implement evidence-based programmes for continuing professional development (CPD), including setting up career pathways for the subsector**  *The**ECE workforce is respected and recognized as a group of highly qualified professionals. This is reflected in the provision of CPD opportunities as a key incentive for staff to enhance their qualifications and update their skills, including through in-service training, reflective practice and on-site coaching, among other initiatives offered in pre-primary settings.* |

**Measure 8 – CPD programmes are evidence-based and effective in leading to ongoing professionalization of staff.**

*The positive impact of professional development depends on the content and delivery mode of the training. CPD programmes are evidence-based, utilizing the right training and support strategies to help pre-primary staff apply new knowledge and skills in their work. In addition, these programmes actively involve practitioners in designing content for the training by addressing issues that arise in everyday practices. These questions may also be applied to CPD programmes for emergency or refugee pre-primary service providers if included or separate from the national CPD efforts.*

**Questions:**

**Q1** Are the CPD programmes that are currently available to pre-primary educators based on best practice and evidence of effectiveness? Have they been recently evaluated for adherence to professional standards and effectiveness in improving instructional practices?

**Q2** Is CPD content directly relevant to the competencies identified for ECE staff? Is this content focused on instructional improvement (e.g., improving play-based pedagogy) and on generating solutions to key issues that teachers may be facing in their classrooms? Are there appropriate materials/resources to support the CPD content (e.g., training package on play-based pedagogy)?

**Q3** Does CPD connect with pre-service training? For those who have already participated in pre-service training, does CPD provide a coherent extension, not just repetition, of what was covered? Especially for teachers who currently lack qualifications, does CPD offer opportunities that can lead to formal qualifications?

**Q4** Does CPD include activities that aim to promote best practice sharing and exchange among teachers, for example, visits to other teachers’ classrooms, or coaching and mentoring?

**Q5** Are current CPD programmes demand-driven? For is example, do the format and content meet teachers’ needs as identified in pre-primary classrooms? Are the duration and frequency appropriate for the context and the complexity of skills or issues being covered? Are the CPD programmes designed to meet the goals of universal design for learning?

**Measure 9 – Ongoing opportunities for professional development are flexible and accessible to all pre-primary personnel.**

*CPD programmes offer teachers and other personnel equitable and flexible access to training that is responsive to cultural and contextual diversity. This includes formal support provided to all pre-primary staff and opportunities for reflection on their practice. These questions may also be applied to CPD programmes for emergency or refugee pre-primary service providers if included or separate from the national CPD efforts.*

**Questions:**

**Q1** Is CPD available and accessible to all pre-primary educators, and is itperceived as a professional responsibility? What pathways and options exist to participate?

**Q2** Are teachers required to participate in in-service training and CPD? And is this requirement backed by accountability mechanisms? This might include both negative consequences for failing to participate despite opportunities and concrete incentives to encourage participation, e.g., advancements, salary increases and certificates.

**Q3** Are any pre-primary personnel unable to participate in CPD, and what are the underlying barriers? Indicators that can be used to determine where and why there are gaps include:

- the percentage of pre-primary teachers who do not participate or infrequently participate, in total and disaggregated by region;

- the availability of nearby training programmes; and

- mapping the auspices that deliver CPD programmes.

**Q4** Are pre-primary teachers enabled to use time when they are not in the classroom to reflect, discuss and prepare for teaching? Are there opportunities and support within CPD for teachers to reflect on and analyse their own instructional practice? This may occur in such contexts as mentoring, coaching, teachers’ research and guided reflection.

**Measure 10 – CPD is provided to non-teaching personnel in the pre-primary system.**

*Ongoing training and support are viewed as essential not only for teachers but also for other pre-primary personnel, including supervisors, programme directors, inspectors, technical specialists, and others who are essential to teacher effectiveness and programme quality. Implementing CPD for all staff working in a pre-primary context helps to create a shared understanding of quality while also meeting the diverse needs of diverse personnel. These questions may also be applied to CPD programmes for emergency or refugee pre-primary service providers if included or separate from the national CPD efforts.*

**Questions:**

**Q1** Are there supports and opportunities for training on early childhood development and education for non-teaching staff?

**Q2** Are relevant leaders – including principals, pre-primary agency/programme directors and inspectors across national and local government levels – also receiving appropriate training and orientation to adequately support teachers (e.g., are leaders receiving training on play-based pedagogies; are they providing ongoing coaching and mentoring to teachers on play-based pedagogy approach)? Does this training include assessment of the leaders’ own skills and competence?

**Q3** What kinds of competencies and expectations exist for those in pre-primary leadership positions? Are both management and technical skills covered, so that CPD for pre-primary leaders shares core content with training for classroom personnel, while also focusing on role-specific knowledge and skills?

**Measure 11 – CPD training providers have adequate capacities and technical skills.**

*Once training providers with the proper capabilities are identified and secured, CPD programmes take place under multiple auspices – including higher education institutions along with national and subnational professional associations, community groups, government training institutions, NGOs and pre-primary programme managers and supervisors. These questions may also be applied to CPD programmes for emergency or refugee pre-primary service providers if included or separate from the national CPD efforts.*

**Questions:**

**Q1** Do the institutions engaged to provide CPD have adequate capacities and personnel with appropriate technical skills to do so? If not, what are the bottlenecks? These may include:

- lack of specialized knowledge on pre-primary teaching and effective training methods;

- not enough personnel with time available to conduct in-service training;

- inadequate supply of training in remote areas, leading to inequitable CPD access for pre-primary staff; and

- lack of funds to pay trainers.

**Q2** In regard to the previous question and potential bottlenecks, do the institutions engaged to provide in-service training, mentoring and ongoing support have the necessary technical background, capacities and skilled personnel to facilitate these?

**Q3** Do the institutions and individuals in management roles responsible for different aspects of continuing teacher support have the management skills and capacity to plan for implementation of CPD programmes? For example, is there capacity to ensure good planning, budgeting and timely activities to support teachers? Have policy directives been issued specific to teacher development and support, outlining role and responsibilities, etc.?

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|  | **Goal 4: Promote continuous workforce improvement and staff retention**  *Investments are made in regularly assessing and improving workforce development programmes, including their impacts on teachers’ effectiveness and relevant outcomes for children. Working conditions are monitored and prioritized in the subsector.* |

**Measure 12 – Training and support opportunities for ECE staff are well-coordinated across the subsector and promote career progression and retention.**

*The diversity of professional learning provision in the pre-primary subsector is fully considered, for example, when assessing whether core competencies and qualifications are being addressed consistently to meet the needs of all personnel, during both pre-service and in-service training, and whether these promote career development and retention. Service providers in emergencies and/or refugee settings should also be considered when responding to these questions.*

**Questions:**

**Q1** Are career development pathways identified within the pre-primary subsector to attract and retain teachers and other personnel?

**Q2** Exactly what opportunities available to ECE staff for career development, progression and mobility? Are these opportunities sufficient? What are the potential obstacles to creating new opportunities?

**Q3** Are promotion opportunities linked to performance? What criteria need to be met for high-performing staff to become eligible for promotion, such as moving into a ‘master teacher’ role? Are promotion opportunities linked to the defined criteria?

**Q4** Are there specific initiatives to retain experienced workers in the subsector and reduce turnover rates? If pre-primary is losing workers to other subsectors, what appear to be the reasons?

**Measure 13 – Mechanisms are in place to monitor working conditions and ensure they are favourable and supportive.**

*Monitoring mechanisms apply, for example, to providing data that inform decisions on raising staff salary levels, providing non-financial benefits, and increasing the staff-child ratios in pre-primary settings. Conditions in emergencies and/or refugee settings should also be considered when responding to these questions.*

**Questions:**

**Q1** Are working conditions favourable and supportive for ECE staff? Consider, for example:

- average ratio of children to all pre-primary staff working directly with children;

- average ratio of children to professionally trained pre-primary staff; and

- adequate opportunities for lesson preparation, professional development time, peer learning.

**Q2** Are policies in place to ensure a supportive work environment in terms of mentoring, the availability of teaching and learning materials, and timely remuneration?

**Q3** Are there efforts to provide staff with non-monetary incentives, such as public recognition of notable performance?

**Q4** Are there mechanisms to facilitate systematic data collection related to implementation of policies for pre-primary working conditions? If so, do these mechanisms achieve their intended goals?

**Measure 14 – Specific data on teachers’ training and support programmes are collected and used to inform ongoing improvements in the pre-primary workforce.**

*This includes a coordinated system to monitor and evaluate individual staff performance, and to monitor and evaluate the quality of training and support programmes. These questions may also be applied in humanitarian or refugee settings, however they may be most relevant and able to be examined in protracted crises.*

**Questions:**

**Q1** Is there a system in place to regularly review the content and format of training and education for teachers and other pre-primary personnel to improve quality and delivery and increase relevance of the qualifications?

**Q2** Is teacher performance monitored nationally, subnationally, locally? How regularly? Does this vary across pre-primary settings? Where are strengths and gaps in monitoring?

**Q3** Are classroom observations part of teacher assessment systems? If so, how are data used to improve performance?

**Q4** Are a variety of criteria and relevant tools used to assess/evaluate teacher performance? Are those conducting such assessments adequately trained to do so?

**Q5** Are the results from monitoring teachers’ performance used to inform quality improvement initiatives, and vice versa? This includes national initiatives, such as revising pre-service programme content, and subnational or local activities aimed to improve individual teachers’ performance. For example:

1. If a teacher’s performance is not satisfactory, is he or she assigned to a supervisor or mentor?
2. Are teacher performance evaluations used to assign professional development?
3. Are compensation and/or career opportunities and promotions linked to performance?
4. Are new training modules or approaches developed based on teacher performance evaluations?

1. For example, policies, directive and programmes might consider parity in ECE salary, benefits and training opportunities, with the primary/secondary education levels. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Depending on your context, you may consider the basic salary and any allowance or entitlement. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. For example, the pre-service training might include a specialized course in play-based pedagogies. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)