Teacher Perceptions of Benefits and Constraints of Active Learning in the Primary School Context

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Keywords: *active learning,* *primary school,* *teachers' perspectives,* *teaching techniques,* *Kosovo education system*	While some teachers enthusiastically embrace active learning as an effective means of engaging students in the classroom, many still prefer to stick to traditional teaching methods. Many teachers are reluctant to introduce active learning techniques, mainly because they are concerned about their practicality, especially when students have limited prior knowledge of the subject. They believe that active learning requires a high level of commitment from teachers and students and that implementing these modern teaching methods is hindered by institutional constraints. This scenario is particularly evident in Kosovo, where implementing the necessary changes is a major challenge, even though the current curriculum based on competencies favors this, making the required changes presents a major problem. This study aimed to understand how teachers perceive the benefits and barriers of using active learning methods with primary school students. Overall, respondents tended to rate the benefits of active learning more favorably than its constraints. However, there are differences between respondents in terms of effectiveness and feasibility, which emphasizes the nuanced nature of active learning, where benefits are recognized alongside the challenges.

1. Introduction

Education systems in the 21st century have transitioned their focus from instructing students on what to learn to guiding them on how to learn. Students are now tasked with understanding ideas and concepts, rather than simply memorizing them. Moreover, they are urged to explore a deeper comprehension of information and, once they have acquired a solid understanding, they are anticipated to be able to analyze and evaluate it effectively. Additionally, they must critically assess information, utilize it in decision-making processes and ultimately resolve problems. Engaging in this crucial process also nurtures the cultivation of various vital skills, such as communication, teamwork, leadership, and empathy. These skills make it significantly challenging to succeed in the progressively global and intricate job market.

The transformation in the educational perspective presents a worldwide challenge. Kosovo has embarked on this difficult journey under difficult circumstances and observed a notable evolution in its education system, driven by specific strategies aimed at enhancing academic

achievements and tackling traditional barriers. Due to the inherited traditional system, it had become essential to implement drastic reforms and recognize the crucial role of education in societal, economic, and national progress. The implementation of the " National Strategic Plan for Development of Education in the Republic of Kosovo highlights the incorporation of innovative teaching approaches, resource enrichment, and the adoption of a competency-based curriculum to enable the production of individuals with 21st-century skills"(MEST, 2022). Despite governmental efforts, ensuring high-quality education remains a formidable task. Restoring the teachers' dignity is deemed a critical component as advised by both international and local experts (Pupovci et al., 2001). Corresponding to Sommers and Buckland's (2004) findings, the report underscores the challenges faced by conflict-ridden nations and numerous hurdles in effecting change, regardless of the rationality of proposed new frameworks. The modifications, establishment, and execution of the novel curriculum transcend national boundaries, necessitating a comprehensive approach to align with the standards and demands of the contemporary global educational landscape.

The primary transformation observed in classrooms utilizing interactive teaching and learning platforms is the shift in the teacher's role from being a lesson orchestrator to becoming a facilitator of the learning process. This change allows students to take charge of their learning, leading to increased enthusiasm and motivation when exploring new information on a specific on a certain topic or subject. Active learning not only enhances understanding but also fosters students' accountability for their educational journey while enhancing critical thinking and writing abilities (Bonwell & Eison, 1991).

The work of McKeachie (1975) highlights that discussions, a form of active learning, outperform traditional lectures in terms of knowledge retention, student motivation, and cognitive skill development. Furthermore, (Felder et al., 2000) advocate for active learning in their teaching strategies, emphasizing its alignment with Chickering and Gamson's "Seven Principles for Good Practice"(Chickering & Gamson, 2006). Nevertheless, the empirical support for active learning is not entirely conclusive. McKeachie himself acknowledges that the benefits of discussions over lectures are marginal, and Chickering and Gamson's principles lack substantial evidence to validate active learning as a fundamental principle. Moreover, studies examining the research foundation for Chickering and Gamson's principles also lack robust empirical backing for active learning.

The objective of this study is to examine the perceptions of teachers regarding the benefits and constraints of active learning strategies currently being utilized in primary schools within the Prishtina region. Additionally, this research aims to determine which perceived benefits such; as long-term memory retention, student engagement, comprehension of concepts, logical reasoning abilities, collaboration, creative and innovative thinking, and self-reflection on teachers' identity are considered to be more significant. By establishing a connection between teachers' perceptions and their actual implementation of active learning strategies, we can determine if those who perceive greater benefits are more likely to incorporate these strategies into their teaching practice. Furthermore, this study seeks to explore the factors that influence teachers' decisions to either adopt or resist active learning approaches in their classrooms.

By gaining an understanding of these factors, we can provide insights on how to promote the adoption of active learning and overcome potential barriers to its implementation. Moreover, we aim to identify the primary constraints that hinder the effective implementation of active learning in the context of primary schools. By comprehending these constraints, we can develop strategies to overcome them and facilitate the successful integration of active learning in primary schools. Through this study, we aspire to contribute to a deeper understanding of the evolving educational landscape in Kosovo and encourage further progress toward achieving

international standards of academic excellence. By addressing teachers' perceptions and challenges in implementing active learning methods, our goal is to inform educational policies and practices, ultimately leading to improved educational outcomes for all students in Kosovo.

2. A Critical Review of the Literature on Active Learning in Education

Researchers are highly interested in active learning, a student-focused pedagogical method, because of its ability to increase students' interest in what they are learning and improve their academic performance. Although it is evident that this approach is gaining popularity, the identification of the existing knowledge gaps in addition to the recommendations for future research is imperative. It discusses the current knowledge of active learning and its benefits to determine the challenges that may arise while implementing it and to call for the need to further explore and understand them.

2.1. Understanding Active Learning

Active learning is a process that is interactive and does not only involve passive acceptance of information. It incorporates students in the process, which can be through active learning, which could include reading, writing, discussing, and problem-solving (Howell, 2021). The introduction of such activities helps develop critical thinking skills such as evaluation, synthesis, and analysis of the class content. This educational tactic develops a deep understanding of academic material, as students do not just take in knowledge but become agents of the learning process.

Since teachers play such a significant role in designing and implementing instructional practices, their beliefs, attitudes, and experiences can have a significant impact on the uptake and success of active learning in the classroom. Bean (2011) indicates the central role of cooperation in practice-based learning. This implies that students do not only go to school, but they are also emotionally focused. They are urged to inquire, formulate opinions, and apply their learning in real-life situations. This type of interaction, however, would be likely to stimulate a deeper and more permanent kind of learning process. Monks and Silman (2013, pp. 45-50) stressed that active learning is an integral part of the educational process. It creates a perfect educational environment in which students develop a complete set of skills that are essential not only for high academic performance but also for career and personal life success. Through involvement, critical thinking, and problem-solving, active learning contributes to the student's preparation for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.

2.2. Benefits of Active Learning

Active learning strategies have proven to be very effective in improving the knowledge of students. This is because they ask students to work with the content instead of listening to the lecturer. Students can comprehend the concepts better by simultaneously processing and applying the information. Involvement in the learning process makes the whole experience more relevant and meaningful, thus increasing the comprehension and retention of the material.

Besides, active learning techniques also play a role in improving retention. When students actively participate in learning, they are more likely to retain the material in the long term. The reason is that deeper cognitive processing occurs in active learning, strengthening memory traces; hence, the recall is simplified (Sridhar et al., 2023). This may be especially important for educational settings where long-term retention of information is usually the greatest concern for educators.

Another benefit of active learning is that it enhances critical thinking abilities. Students are engaged in active learning, which leads to the development of critical thinking skills like analyzing, evaluating, and interpreting. Competencies of this kind are the most important for problem-solving, decision-making, and careers.

2.3. Constraints of Active Learning

While active learning strategies are effective, their implementation does not come without challenges. Inadequate time is the major problem that teachers always struggle with (Robinson et al., 2023). Active learning strategies, as effective as they might be, are time-consuming. Teachers have to develop and design active learning classes, which are time-consuming. However, it can be exceptionally difficult when the content is vast and the timeline is limited.

Another major limitation is crowded classes. The use of active learning strategies usually involves students working in groups or on their own (Lombardi, 2021). Under these circumstances, it is hard to take charge and involve all the learners in practical tasks. Overcrowding can equally take up space for active learning activities, so employing these strategies becomes a complex task.

Limited materials and resources can also be a hurdle to overcome. Active learning involves different learning resources, like learning aids, technology, and physical space (Lombardi et al., 2021). Active learning strategies can appear difficult to implement in environments where these resources are lacking.

The shortage of teacher training is also a big barrier. Active learning requires a change in traditional teaching approaches, and not every teacher may possess the skills and knowledge to use these methods effectively(Børte et al., 2023). This highlights the importance of training and professional development programs that can build teacher competencies in this regard.

2.4. Gaps in the Literature

Although the existing literature provides useful information regarding the advantages and disadvantages of active learning, research gaps still exist and have to be addressed. There is still a lack of research about the teachers' experiences in various cultural and socioeconomic situations. Analyzing what diverse factors contribute to the formation of educators' viewpoints could reveal the depth of the hurdles and merits of active learning. The current discussion should also consider the extended studies that assess the effects of active learning on students' outcomes in the end.

2.5. How Does the Kosovo Core Curriculum Integrate Active Learning?

In the past twenty years, Kosovo has made significant advancements in modernizing its educational system. However, the education sector still faces numerous challenges such as underperforming teachers, inadequate infrastructure, insufficient funding for teacher training, and a lack of teaching materials that align with the curriculum (OECD, 2021).To overcome these obstacles, a comprehensive strategy is required, one that recognizes the interdependence of various aspects of education. The quality of teaching and learning is a critical concern, as progress in one area is closely tied to progress in others a major issue, therefore, progress in one area is closely linked to progress in others. Therefore, a solution-oriented approach is essential to address the core issues and ensure the long-term effectiveness of implemented solutions.

While the international community has launched several initiatives to improve the educational conditions in Kosovo, these efforts often overlook the local context. The Kosovo Curriculum Framework is a recently developed and organized plan tailored specifically to the conditions in Kosovo and is a crucial document that outlines measures to improve education. However, its partial implementation underscores the necessity for a more comprehensive understanding of the realities on the ground. The core objective of the framework is to determine specific knowledge and skills students should possess, as well as the competencies to be achieved at the end of each semester. Additionally, it encompasses engagement strategies and teaching techniques (MEST, 2016). The curriculum core lies in the guidelines for learning outcomes and student assessment. However, the successful attainment of the framework's objectives heavily relies on effective collaboration between educational institutions and stakeholders. This collaborative aspect is considered a crucial element for any educational system to function optimally.

Recent literature emphasizes the of professional capital in ensuring sustainable learning outcomes. Hargreaves and Fullan's (2012, pp. 88-96) formula highlights three essential pillars that serve as the foundation for successful and quality education. These pillars include human capital, which pertains to the knowledge, skills, and abilities of teachers; social capital, which refers to the collective power of the group; and decisional capital, which encompasses the wisdom, judgment, and expertise that teachers develop regarding learners over time. The advantage of this formula is that it enables teachers to collaborate, share their knowledge within the group, and utilize various platforms to facilitate students' acquisition of factual and procedural knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values within a specified timeframe.

The Core Curriculum is a structured collection of materials that act as a roadmap for students, aiding in their progressive growth, fostering social inclusion and skills for lifelong learning, and equipping them for the challenges of adulthood. These materials also support teachers in delivering effective instruction, planning lessons, managing classrooms, and evaluating learning outcomes. The incorporation of active learning strategies and techniques is highly recommended as they are deemed crucial for the overall success of the educational process. However, it is deemed essential for teachers to adapt their roles to new trends and requirements (Rexhaj, 2016). In addition to the shift from traditional to constructive teaching paradigms, the new competency-based curriculum transitions teaching from being subject-focused to a more comprehensive curriculum, from learning based solely in schools to a lifelong learning approach, and transforms mindsets and thinking patterns from quantity-driven to quality-driven, and from mechanical to logical or reasoning-based thinking.

To ensure the effective implementation of the curriculum, active learning must be incorporated into all classrooms at every educational level. A wide range of strategies and techniques specifically tailored for primary school environments can be easily implemented in any classroom setting. These methods encompass interdisciplinary approaches, conceptual exploration, and practical activities. Integrating active learning into Kosovo's national competency-based curriculum requires diverse techniques such as group work, inquiry-based learning, role-playing, simulations, games, gamification, and outdoor, and experiential learning. These methods aim to promote collaboration, critical thinking, communication, problem-solving, and creativity among students. Therefore, teachers play a crucial role in designing activities aligning with the curriculum's goals, encouraging students to delve into topics, pose questions, and apply their knowledge practically.

The importance of critical thinking as a fundamental skill for the 21st century is emphasized in the curriculum, which promotes thorough analysis and discussion using techniques such as Socratic questioning. In addition to engaging in collaborative analysis and application during

class time, teachers utilize various resources and technology to enhance the learning experience.

3. Methodology

3.1. Main Hypothesis

- **Null Hypothesis (H0):** There is no significant difference in teacher perceptions of the benefits and constraints of active learning in the primary school context.
- **Alternative Hypothesis (H1):** There is a significant difference in teacher perceptions of the benefits and constraints of active learning in the primary school context.

3.2. Research Objectives

This study aims to:

1. **To Explore Perceived Benefits:** Examine and identify the perceived benefits of active learning among primary school teachers, examining how these methodologies contribute to student engagement, academic achievement, and overall learning outcomes.
2. **To Examine Perceived Constraints:** Analyze the challenges and constraints that primary school teachers encounter when implementing active learning strategies, exploring factors such as time constraints, resource limitations, and potential resistance from students or colleagues.

3.2. Study Design

The research was designed in a survey model aimed at teachers from 18 public and private primary schools in urban and rural areas of the Prishtina region. Institutions were selected randomly and teachers were surveyed on a voluntary anonymous basis.

3.3. Sample and Data Collection Tools

The study was conducted in public and private, as urban, and rural primary institutions within the Prishtina region. The study's sample consisted of N=120 teachers. Each teacher was provided with an online questionnaire. However, N=12 of them failed to return the questionnaire, and 8 of the questionnaires were invalidated due to incomplete data or erroneous completion. The remaining sample was further processed for data analysis.

3.4. Data Analysis

Teachers' responses were collected and transferred into Excel sheets before they were transferred into SPSS for data analyzing procedures. The questionnaire was designed in two major parts: The first part with independent variables (age group, gender, education level, experience, and public vs private institution engaged), and the second part with dependent variables. The dependent variable answers were designed using a 5-point Likert scale, and all questions were categorized into two groups to measure active learning advantages and constraints. Continuous means of grouped Likert scale data were recorded and converted to categorical data using the following conversion scheme:

Table 1.
Scoring range of Likert scale conversion from nominal to categorical statement questions

Positive Statements		
	Value	*Range*
Very low	1	1.00-1.80
Low	2	1.81-2.60
Neutral	3	2.61-3.40
High	4	3.41-4.20
Very high	5	4.21-5.00

4. Results

4.1. Independent Variables

The study investigated the teachers' perception of the advantages and constraints of Active Learning as a teaching method. The entire pool of our respondents was females. The respondents' age was 21 to 59 years old. Two age groups, 21-29 and 30-39 years old, constitute 80% of our respondents. The majority (83%) had a BA level, while 11% and 6 % had a secondary school and MA degree, respectively. Most of the respondents had 10-15 working experience, while the number of respondents was slightly higher from public institutions (57 vs 43 %).

Table 2.
Age distribution, education level, and Working experience of respondents.

		Frequency	**%**
Age group	21-29	34	34.0
	30-39	47	47.0
	40-49	15	15.0
	50-59	4	4.0
	Total	100	100.0
Education	Secondary School	11	11.0
	Bachelor Degree	83	83.0
	Master Degree	6	6.0
Experience	<1 year	4	4.0
	1-5 years	12	12.0
	6-10 years	18	18.0
	11-20 years	36	36.0
	> 20 years	30	30.0
	Total	100	100.0

4.2. Dependent Variables

Dependent variables measure the perception by teachers of the advantages and constraints of active learning application in their daily routine. Questions were grouped into two group variables:

1. **Advantages of active learning** – questions that measure the advantages and benefits of active learning as a teaching tool.
2. **Constraints of active learning**– questions that explore constraints and limitations teacher face when applying active learning to their routine.

Table 3.
Advantages of active learning – Descriptive statistics

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Long-term memory	2	5	3.82	.957
Student's engagement	2	5	3.92	1.002
Understanding of concepts	2	5	3.62	.919
Critical thinking	2	5	3.74	1.001
Student's collaboration	1	5	3.82	1.019
Creativity and innovation	1	5	3.82	1.114
Reflects positively on teacher's professional identity	1	5	3.64	1.040

4.3. Post-Processing

As mentioned above, the mean values of the Likert scale data were converted from nominal to categorical data and further pointed into a new scale (5-very high, 4-high, 3-neutral, 2-low, and 1-very low) in terms of advantages and constraints of active learning. Both sets of dependent variables were checked for data integrity and the derived Cronbach's alpha was 0.945 vs .898, respectively, indicating that the items had relatively high internal consistency.

4.4. Reliability Analysis

The reliability of the scales was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha.

- **Advantages Scale**: The Cronbach's Alpha for the advantages scale (7 items) is 0.945, indicating excellent internal consistency.
- **Constraints Scale**: The Cronbach's Alpha for the constraints scale (6 items) is 0.898, indicating good internal consistency.

4.5. Factor Analysis

A Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was conducted to explore the underlying structure of the data. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was 0.768, and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant (Chi-Square = 1161.800, DF = 78, $p < 0.001$), indicating that factor analysis was appropriate.

The analysis identified two main components:

- **Advantages component**: This component includes the advantages of active learning such as long-term memory, student engagement, understanding of concepts, critical thinking, student collaboration, creativity and innovation, and positive reflection on the teacher's professional identity.
- **Constraints component**: This component includes items related to the constraints of active learning such as limited time to complete teaching plans, overcrowded classes, limited materials and resources, class management difficulties, pressure to complete the curriculum, and lack of teacher training.

4.6. Comparative Analysis

To compare the mean perceptions of advantages and constraints, a paired-sample t-test was conducted.

- **Advantages Mean**: 3.77 (SD = 0.875)
- **Constraints Mean**: 2.89 (SD = 1.007)

The results show a significant difference between the perceived advantages and constraints of active learning (t(99) = 7.871, p < 0.001). The mean difference of 0.88 (95% CI [0.65, 1.10]) indicates that teachers perceive the advantages of active learning significantly more positively than the constraints.

4.7. Advantages of Active Learning

Respondents generally consider active learning to be moderately effective in enhancing understanding of concepts and aiding long-term memory retention. Active learning is perceived to have a moderately positive impact on a teacher's professional identity and is moderately effective in promoting critical thinking skills and student collaboration among students. Active learning is perceived to be relatively more effective in enhancing student engagement. Respondents generally believe that active learning fosters creativity and innovation to a moderate extent. Overall, the data suggest that respondents generally perceive active learning as beneficial across various aspects such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and student engagement. However, there is some variability in opinions, suggesting that respondents' perceptions may differ.
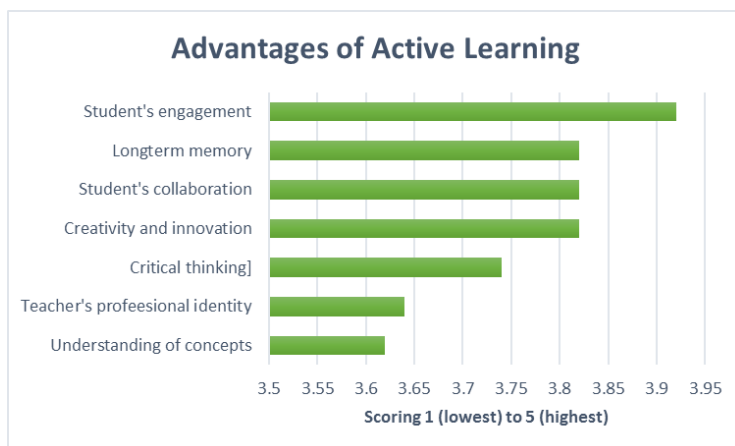

Figure 1. Diagram showing the mean teacher's perception score of advantages in active learning application

4.8. Constraints of Active Learning

Respondents perceive limited time to complete the curriculum, overcrowded classes, limited materials and resources, lack of teacher training, and pressure to fulfill the curriculum as moderate barriers to active learning. Overcrowded classes are perceived as a moderate constraint of active learning.
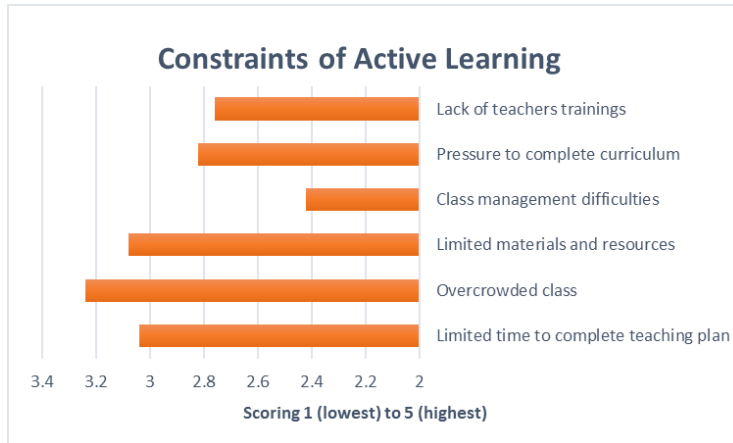
Figure 2. Diagram showing the teacher's perception score of constraints in active learning application

4.9. Summary of Findings

- **Descriptive Statistics**: Teachers generally perceive the advantages of active learning positively, with mean scores ranging from 3.62 to 3.92. The constraints are perceived less positively, with mean scores ranging from 2.42 to 3.24.
- **Reliability**: The internal consistency of both scales is high, indicating reliable measurements.
- **Factor Analysis**: Two distinct factors represented advantages and constraints.
- **Comparative Analysis**: There is a significant difference between the perceived advantages and constraints, with advantages being rated more positively.

5. Discussion

This study aimed to examine the perspectives of teachers engaged in primary school settings regarding their practice and the challenges they face when implementing active learning strategies following state curriculum guidelines; to achieve this, we developed a comprehensive set of items to capture both the positive and negative aspects of these constructs, ensuring a thorough analysis of teachers' attitudes, experiences, and perceptions. To systematically gather this information, we employed the Likert scale tool, which allowed participants to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each item, using response options that ranged from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree," thus providing a nuanced understanding of their viewpoints.

The overall findings of this study demonstrate that teachers hold diverse views on the benefits and constraints of active learning strategies in primary school contexts. The majority of teachers expressed positive attitudes towards the benefits, which include an increase in student engagement, enhanced retention of information in long-term memory, improved collaboration with peers, the promotion of creativity and innovation, the development of critical thinking skills, a positive impact on teachers' professional identity, and a better understanding of new information and concepts. These findings have significant implications for the implementation of active learning, as they support the hypothesis that there are notable differences in teachers' perceptions of the benefits and constraints of active learning in primary school contexts. Additionally, our findings align with previous research that highlights the confirmed benefits of active learning across various grade levels and educational settings, enabling the validation of our approach (Bean, 2011; Bonwell & Eison, 1991; Felder et al., 2000; Freeman et al., 2014; Howell, 2021; Mazur, 1997; Monk & Silman, 2013).

Furthermore, the study indicated that teachers regard several factors as major constraints to the implementation of active learning in primary school classrooms. A significant constraint identified is the high number of students in classes, which often surpasses the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology's (MEST) recommended range of 22 to 30 students per class (MEST, 2015) with numbers frequently reaching 35-42 students. This finding aligns with the research conducted by Lombardi et al. (2021) underscoring the need for strategic planning to implement policies aimed at reducing class sizes to more manageable levels. Potential solutions to address this issue might include hiring additional teachers, constructing more classrooms, redistributing students across different schools, or even extending school hours to allow for smaller class sizes, thereby creating a more conducive environment for active learning.

Another noteworthy finding is the shared concern among teachers regarding the lack of materials and resources, which significantly hinders effective lesson and course planning. The teaching and learning process becomes increasingly complex, particularly when attempting to align with international educational standards, thereby necessitating that educational institutions provide the essential resources that meet curriculum requirements and address students' needs to prepare them adequately for real-world challenges. Consequently, educators should meticulously evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of these resources and adhere to guidelines for their appropriate use (Bušljeta, 2013). However, a more sustainable long-term solution would involve investing in infrastructure improvements, allocating resources to enhance school facilities, and integrating technology into education to facilitate learning in larger class settings. This might include the implementation of interactive whiteboards, educational software, a digitalized system of evaluation (such as PowerSchool), and various online resources.

Recently, the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MEST) in Kosovo has undertaken a significant reform by changing the education policy and launching an innovative platform known as the Learning Passport in collaboration with UNICEF. This new learning platform represents a major advancement in the educational landscape of Kosovo, as it combines the largest repository of curriculum-aligned video learning content with advanced communication tools such as Microsoft Teams, alongside access to the comprehensive 365 desktop suite. By leveraging this platform, known as Skollat.org, teachers and students are provided with a dynamic and interactive space where they can communicate seamlessly, share and engage with a vast array of educational content, collaborate effectively on team projects, and even create individualized quizzes tailored to specific learning needs (UNICEF, 2021). The Learning Passport initiative, spearheaded by MEST, is designed to enhance the educational experience by integrating technology into the teaching and learning process in a way that is both user-friendly and highly effective. This platform's repository of video learning content is meticulously aligned with the national curriculum, ensuring that the materials are relevant and supportive of the student's educational journey. The integration of Microsoft Teams allows for real-time communication and collaboration, fostering a more connected and interactive learning environment. Furthermore, access to the 365 desktop suite provides both teachers and students with a suite of powerful tools for productivity, creativity, and learning.

Through Skollat.org, teachers are empowered to create a more engaging and interactive classroom experience. They can design and share multimedia-rich lessons, facilitate group discussions, and assign collaborative projects that help students develop critical thinking and teamwork skills. The platform also supports the creation of personalized quizzes, enabling teachers to tailor assessments to the individual learning needs of their students, thus providing a more personalized and effective educational experience. Students, on the other hand, benefit from the platform's interactive features and extensive content library. They can engage with

video lessons that complement their classroom learning, participate in virtual study groups, and utilize communication tools to seek help from teachers and peers. This collaborative approach not only enhances their understanding of the subject matter but also helps build important digital literacy skills that are essential in today's world.

In summary, the launch of the Learning Passport platform by MEST, in collaboration with UNICEF, marks a significant milestone in the evolution of the educational system in Kosovo. By combining a vast repository of curriculum-aligned video content with robust communication tools and access to the 365 desktop suite, this platform provides a comprehensive solution for modern education. Skollat.org facilitates effective communication, engagement, and collaboration among teachers and students, ultimately aiming to improve educational outcomes and prepare students for future challenges. Moreover, mentoring and coaching mechanisms should be regularly established, where experienced teachers are paired with those struggling with the new curriculum, providing proper guidance, feedback, and support to help their colleagues navigate challenges and improve their teaching practice. Additionally, by establishing proper feedback mechanisms, such as a quality assurance office, teachers can provide reports and feedback on what is working well, what isn't, and where they need additional support. This feedback can inform necessary adjustments and improvements to the curriculum implementation process.

However, implementing a competency-based curriculum (CBC) translates into various practical educational strategies and shifts in teaching and learning. The Kosovo competence-based curriculum is structured around clearly defined competencies, which include not only knowledge but also essential skills, attitudes, and behaviors needed for real-life success. Instead of focusing on what students need to memorize, CBC emphasizes what students need to be able to do, with specific and measurable learning outcomes guiding the process. In the classroom, instructional strategies shift significantly. Teachers employ active learning methods such as problem-based, project-based, and inquiry-based learning, which encourage students to engage deeply with the material, collaborate with peers, and apply their knowledge in practical, real-world contexts. This approach often involves personalized learning, where instruction is tailored to meet the diverse needs of students, including individualized learning plans and flexible pacing to accommodate different learning styles. Assessment methods in CBC also differ from traditional approaches. Formative assessments are used frequently to monitor student progress and provide ongoing feedback, helping teachers adjust their instruction as needed. Summative assessments are aligned with the competencies and often involve practical tasks, projects, or performances that require students to demonstrate their ability to apply what they have learned. Performance-based assessments, such as projects, presentations, and portfolios, are common, as they allow students to showcase their competencies in a meaningful way. The curriculum design in CBC is often modular, with units focused on specific sets of competencies, providing flexibility in how students progress. An interdisciplinary approach is common, integrating multiple subjects to help students see the connections between different areas of knowledge and their application in real-world contexts. The role of the teacher in a competence-based curriculum shifts from being a traditional lecturer to a facilitator or coach. Teachers guide students in their learning journey, helping them set goals, find resources, and reflect on their progress. Continuous professional development is crucial for teachers to effectively implement these new teaching methods and assessments. Students, on the other hand, take on a more active role in their learning. They set their own goals, engage in self-assessment, and take responsibility for their learning progress. Collaborative learning is emphasized, helping students develop not only subject-specific skills but also critical soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving. The learning environment in CBC is designed to be flexible and adaptable, supporting a variety of instructional strategies and

learning activities. Technology is often integrated into the learning process, providing tools for personalized learning, collaboration, and access to a wide range of resources. Stakeholder involvement is also a key component of CBC. Partnerships with businesses, community organizations, and other stakeholders provide real-world learning experiences and ensure that the competencies taught are relevant to societal and labor market needs. Parental engagement is encouraged, helping parents understand the competencies their children are working towards and supporting their learning at home. Despite its benefits, implementing a competence-based curriculum can present challenges. Standardizing assessments to ensure they are fair and equitable can be difficult, especially when moving away from traditional testing methods. The approach can be resource-intensive, requiring significant investment in teacher training, curriculum development, and learning materials. Additionally, shifting from a traditional to a competence-based approach requires a cultural change within schools, which can face resistance from educators, parents, and students accustomed to conventional methods.

In essence, a competence-based curriculum in practice involves a comprehensive approach to education that prioritizes the development of practical skills and competencies through active, personalized, and flexible learning experiences, supported by continuous assessment and a collaborative learning environment. A significant finding is the teachers' struggles with classroom management. To prevent problems in this area, teachers should establish clear expectations and rules to create a conducive learning environment. It is crucial to define these rules clearly by developing a set of concise and consistent classroom guidelines, which should be communicated to students at the beginning of the school year and revisited regularly to ensure understanding and compliance. Additionally, involving students in the rule-making process can help them take ownership and responsibility for following the rules. Visual reminders, such as posting the rules in a visible location and referring to them often, can reinforce expectations effectively. Educators who exhibit effective classroom management skills are particularly attentive to the needs of high-needs students and employ specific techniques to address these needs (Marzano & Marzano, 2003)This proactive approach helps maintain order and ensures that all students receive the support they need to succeed academically and socially. Teachers perceived a lack of training as a moderate constraint in their profession. However, possessing knowledge, skills, and abilities is essential for a teacher's professional identity, highlighting the importance of addressing this issue comprehensively. The assessment of teacher needs could be the first step towards improving the situation, enabling a more targeted approach to professional development. MEST should organize workshops tailored to these identified needs, whether they pertain to classroom management, new instructional strategies, or technology integration, ensuring that the professional development provided is relevant and practical. Providing ongoing professional development throughout the year for the entire teaching faculty is imperative to ensure continuous improvement and adaptation to new educational challenges and methodologies. Additionally, MEST should consider creating online platforms and libraries aligned with the current curriculum, where teachers can have unlimited access to professional development guidelines and materials, allowing them to stay in line with their colleagues and up-to-date with best practices. According to Andy Hargreaves (Hargreaves, 1998), the professional culture of teachers is often influenced by the behaviors and relationships within the teacher community, which are reflected in their teaching practice, beliefs, routines, and interactions with other educational stakeholders. These interactions foster a strong sense of belonging among educators, enhancing their professional identity and effectiveness.

It is important to acknowledge several limitations of our study. First, this is a micro-piece study, meaning the participant pool was relatively small, which may limit the generalizability of our findings. Conducting surveys on a larger scale would provide a more reliable representation of

teachers' perceptions regarding the benefits and constraints of active learning in primary school settings. Additionally, including education experts and teacher trainees in the study would offer a multiperspective view of the problem, enriching the findings with diverse insights. Overall, this study contributes to our understanding of the advantages and limitations of implementing active learning in primary school settings, providing valuable insights for teachers, experts, and policymakers. It serves as a starting point for focusing on quality teaching and learning in Kosovo, emphasizing the need for continuous professional development and the cultivation of a supportive professional culture.

6. Conclusion

Teachers acknowledge that although active learning plays an important role in improving student involvement and performance, it also comes with the problem of implementation. Some of these are lack of time, overcrowded classes, and resource constraints. In future studies, these problems should be explored, concentrating on teachers' experiences in diverse settings and examining the long-term influence of active learning on student achievements. This will make active learning more efficient and minimize its challenges.

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