

International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research
 Vol. 25, No. 7, pp. 776-801, July 2026
<https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.25.7.35>
 Received May 6, 2026; Revised Jul 7, 2026; Accepted Jul 13, 2026

Teaching Collaborative Practices and Collegial Assessment in Professional Continuing Education

Patricia Vázquez-Villegas^{*} , Irma del Carmen Torres-Mata ,
 Claudia H. Aguayo-Hernández , José Noé Miranda Becerra 
 Tecnológico de Monterrey
 Monterrey, Mexico

Maura Borrego 
 University of Texas at Austin
 Texas, United States

Abstract. Instructor collaboration shapes the coherence and quality of educational programs, yet in professional continuing education it is often informal and dependent on individual goodwill. There is a research gap in how this collaboration unfolds in client-driven, modular continuing education, and how it operates in the Latin American context. This study addresses this gap by examining the pedagogical and assessment practices instructors employ in a Mexican continuing education program, as well as the factors that enable or constrain their collaboration. We conducted a qualitative case study, gathering data through six focus groups with 22 instructors. Transcripts were examined using reflexive thematic analysis, with *in vivo* coding consolidated into themes through collaborative, consensus-based coding. Based on Cultural-Historical Activity Theory, it was observed that informal exchanges and ongoing feedback are customary, whereas formal collegial assessments occur sporadically, limited by reluctance to evaluate beyond one's own discipline and by a lack of allocated time. This study's contribution is to reframe these obstacles as structural contradictions within the activity system, in which valued collaborative practices lack the rules and division of labor needed to enact them. The collaboration that does occur is motivated by a culture of affective trust that simultaneously fuels cooperation and impedes its formalization. This finding cautions against transplanting external collaboration models without adaptation.

Keywords: Collegiality; collegial assessment; Cultural-Historical Activity Theory; higher education; educational innovation

Citation:
 Vázquez-Villegas, P.,
 Torres-Mata, I, del C.,
 Aguayo-Hernández, C.
 H., Miranda Becerra, J.
 N., & Borrego, M.
 (2026). Teaching
 Collaborative Practices
 and Collegial
 Assessment in
 Professional
 Continuing Education.
*International Journal of
 Learning, Teaching and
 Educational Research*,
 25(7), 776–801.
<https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.25.7.35>

*Corresponding author: Patricia Vázquez-Villegas; paty.vazquez@tec.mx

1. Introduction

Collaboration among instructors enables the integration of diverse disciplinary perspectives and the implementation of strategies to ensure the quality and impact of learning programs (Nordgren et al., 2021). However, in many educational settings, it remains informal, relying on individual initiative (mediated by cultural factors) and not on structured institutional processes, even when valued by educators (Kelchtermans, 2006; Richter et al., 2022).

Research on collegiality often emphasizes instructor belonging and institutional collaboration (Esterhazy et al., 2021; Pifer et al., 2019; Spinrad & Relles, 2022; Stratton-Maher et al., 2025). However, attention has not been paid to how these dynamics unfold in professional continuing education programs. In this context, these practices assume dimensions that go beyond achieving pedagogical objectives; they must align with the organizational needs of learners' workplaces, support competency development, and enhance learners' professional performance (Spinelli, 2020).

This work qualitatively examined the current state of instructor collaboration in professional continuing education programs at a Mexican university. The objective was to identify the pedagogical strategies and assessment methods employed in teaching settings involving multiple instructors and to examine the facilitating factors and challenges that affect collaboration.

2. Literature Review

As Fenwick (2009) explains, professional continuing education often relies on self-assessment of learning and weak reflective practice. She suggests that this type of work-based learning should be understood as a socio-cultural process that involves the division of labor, community relations at work, rules, tools, and cultural norms, as well as the perspectives of the various actors. In this context, one of the actors is the instructor, who designs, facilitates, and supervises the learning of workers enrolled in a program and is an expert in the topics they teach. However, there is a gap in the literature regarding instructors' perspectives on their teaching practices (Herzog, 2024, p. 42). Next, we examine existing research on instructor collaboration in formal, continuing education environments.

2.1 Global Practices and Challenges

Over the past twenty years, strategies for continuing education have evolved to meet changing labor market needs and the growing importance of lifelong learning (Molnár et al., 2024). In Europe, efforts emphasize interdisciplinary cooperation and shared responsibility for educational quality, as well as the development of frameworks that integrate formal and informal adult education (Borg et al., 2026). In North America, professional learning communities and collaborative faculty development initiatives have been widely adopted to improve program coherence and learner outcomes (DuFour, 2016; Ran & Bickerstaff, 2026). In Asia, countries have implemented strategies to promote partnerships among academia, industry, and government, each from different perspectives, to ensure the relevance and impact of adult education programs (Kuk, 2024).

Within these global models, inter- and multidisciplinary have become top priorities, as they enable the integration of diverse disciplinary perspectives while preserving their methodological integrity (Paoli Bolio, 2019). This translates into teams from fragmented areas working together to coordinate strategies and content to address complexity through conflict-solving and knowledge sharing. This, in turn, enables adult learners to develop actionable skills in their professional contexts (Martínez-Estupiñán et al., 2020; Sánchez et al., 2021).

Thus, this priority should be reflected in the instructors' work. Nevertheless, despite these advances, challenges persist. In higher education settings, time constraints, competing priorities, and insufficient institutional support frequently hinder collaboration (Karlsdottir et al., 2023; Malmström & Zhou, 2025, p. 5). In professional continuing education, such challenges may be magnified by part-time faculty roles, heterogeneous professional profiles, and the fragmented nature of many programs (Nakar & Du Plessis, 2023; Williams et al., 2023, p. 6). Moreover, technological integration, which was accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has created both opportunities and new demands for collaboration, requiring instructors to adopt digital platforms and innovative pedagogical approaches (Valverde-Berrocoso et al., 2021).

2.2 Collegiality and Assessment

Collegiality extends beyond instructors' casual cooperation to encompass structured relationships grounded in shared goals, mutual accountability, and collaborative practices that are deeply embedded in institutional culture (Kelchtermans, 2006). In academic contexts, it enhances the coherence and quality of educational programs, encouraging faculty to adapt content, align pedagogical approaches, and provide peer feedback and support (de Jong et al., 2019). However, collaboration remains uneven, with some educators being reluctant to participate in peer observation or collegial assessment due to concerns over professional autonomy or fear of judgment (Kelchtermans, 2006).

Collegiality enhances coherence across modules, improves learner engagement, and fosters a shared professional culture among instructors (Aguirre Gómez & Barraza Barraza, 2021). Collaborative models, such as team teaching, co-teaching, and broader collaborative instruction, have yielded benefits including improved teaching practices, enhanced learner engagement, and increased instructor satisfaction (Minett-Smith & Davis, 2020; Vembye et al., 2024; Zach & Avugos, 2024). Nevertheless, their successful implementation requires careful planning, clear communication, and institutional support (De Weerd et al., 2025).

In the same vein, assessment signifies much more than knowledge testing. It functions as a tool for accountability, reflection, and long-term competency development (Stufflebeam, 2014). However, approaches such as formative, transformative (Sánchez Mendiola & Martínez González, 2020), or authentic assessment (Villarroel et al., 2018), and issues such as assessment reliability (Brookhart, 2003) and collegial assessment (Medina-Díaz & Verdejo-Carrión, 2020; Moskal & Leydens, 2020), as a structured process (Moonen-van Loon et al.,

2015), remain limited in modularity, particularly for client-driven, professional continuing education programs.

2.3 Study Context

In Mexico, continuing (or lifelong) education has become key for workforce development and national competitiveness (Álvarez-Mendiola, 2006). The National Association of Universities and Institutions of Higher Education (ANUIES) emphasize strengthening the quality of continuing education programs (Medina-Romero, 2024, p. 28). Doing this requires relevant innovative pedagogical strategies and tools to meet the diverse needs of adult learners.

The conditions under which instructor collaboration emerges, however, are not culturally neutral but are shaped by differing regional institutional norms, labor arrangements, and relational cultures. Latin American professional continuing education programs are frequently modular, client-driven, and staffed by part-time practitioners who teach alongside their professional careers. Research on collegiality in formal, full-time academic settings has largely focused on the Global North, leaving a specific gap (Joseph Jeyaraj & Wald, 2023).

Little is known about how instructor collaboration functions in Latin American continuing education, the pedagogical and assessment practices involved, and the enablers and constraints in its modular, client-oriented programs. To address this gap, this study examined instructor collaboration in professional continuing education programs at a private Mexican university, following two research questions: RQ1. What pedagogical strategies and assessment practices do instructors employ when teaching in programs involving multiple instructors? And RQ2. What factors do instructors perceive as facilitating or hindering collaboration in these settings? Thus, it contributes to adult education scholarship and offers recommendations to strengthen institutional frameworks and collaborative practices in comparable settings.

3. Theoretical Framework

This study draws on the Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) to articulate the correlations of instructor collaboration, collegial assessment, and professional learning. CHAT originates from the principle that human action (subjects act on objects) is mediated through cultural tools and signs (Qureshi, 2021). This insight was later extended to the collective level, showing that activity is socially organized through division of labor and formalized in a unit of analysis, an activity system comprised of six interacting elements: the subject, the object toward which activity is directed, the mediating artifacts, and the rules, community, and division of labor that organize collective action (Engeström, 2001, 2015; Leont'ev, 1978).

Within this framework, the constructs examined by the present study cease to be discrete topics and become interdependent components of a single system. Instructor collaboration corresponds to the division-of-labor and community dimensions, i.e., how teaching responsibilities are distributed and the relational fabric that sustains collaborative work. Professional learning, operationalized as

learners' competency development and improved workplace performance (Spinelli, 2020), is the object, the motive for the collective activity. Collegial assessment functions as a mediating artifact. This is the tool the instructors use to collaborate on that object, where the assessment artifact materializes collaboration. To co-assess, the instructors must align criteria, negotiate standards, and acknowledge each other's judgments, exposing the division of labor and the relational tensions that occur.

Engeström and Sannino (2010) extend the model to two or more interacting activity systems, describing how actors and objects move between them. Because professional continuing education must align with the organizational needs of the learners' workplaces, this study treats the educational program and the learner's workplace as two such systems, whose alignment is part of what instructor collaboration must accomplish. These elements constitute the conceptual model guiding this study, which is schematized in Figure 1.

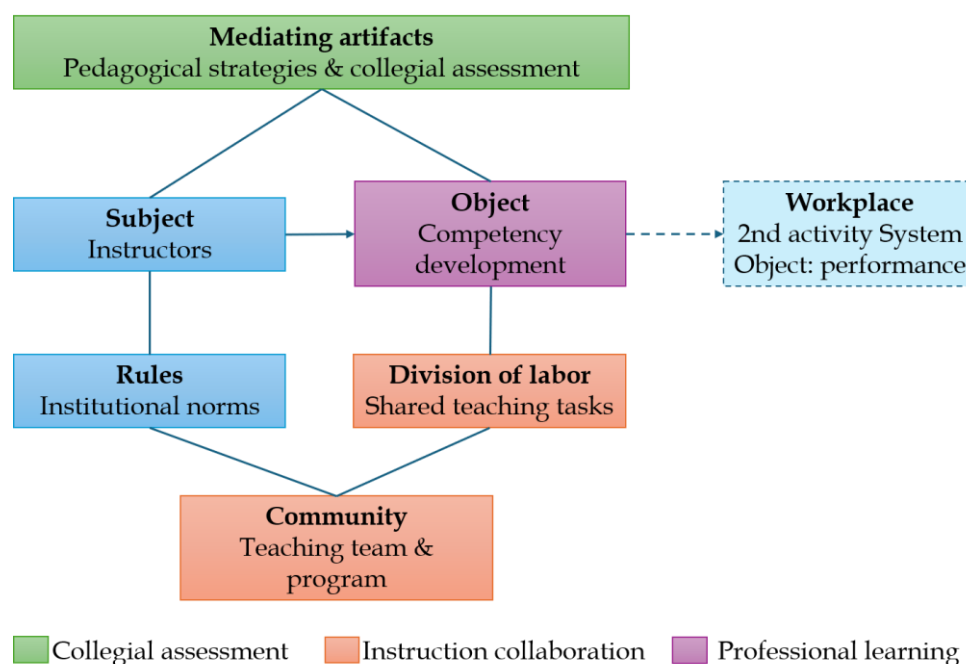


Figure 1: Conceptual model of instructor collaboration in professional continuing education, based on CHAT

4. Methodology

This section describes the methodology the authors used to gather information on how instructors collaborate in online continuing education programs.

4.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study design (Yin, 2018), allowing exploration of participants' perceptions and experiences through their narratives, while considering the specific characteristics of the context.

4.2 Case Selection and Context

Tecnologico de Monterrey was selected as the case study. The university offers a comprehensive portfolio of continuing education programs, including diploma courses, professional development workshops, and executive education programs. Diploma courses are oriented towards working professionals and include both theoretical and practical components. Instructors involved in the teaching process usually accomplish the following roles: facilitator (the instructor in each class) and academic coordinator (AC) (ensures academic quality and validates facilitator training in the continuing education model; they can also serve as facilitators for a given course topic). The AC also connects the facilitators and designs and plans for the program's content and dynamics.

4.3 Participants

The study involved 22 facilitators (some of whom were also ACs) from various continuing education programs, as described in Table 1.

Table 1: Participants and their associated teaching programs.

N	Professional Continuing Education Program
5	Agile Professional Project Management: Principles, Values, and Methodologies
2	Data Science
5	Real Estate Business Planning and Evaluation
3	Strategic Training for High-Performance Managers
7	Development of Managerial Skills: Leader of Leaders
22	Total

Note: The research was conducted in Diploma programs, which last 2 to 4 months, depending on the subject. These comprise 4 to 8 modules, each taught by a different facilitator. These diplomas can be open or closed to members of an organization.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling. The inclusion criteria were: (1) current involvement in diploma program instruction, (2) a minimum of two years of experience, and (3) participation in programs that tentatively involve collaborative teaching activities, that is, different modules taught by instructors from different disciplines.

4.4 Data Collection

Focus groups were chosen as the primary data collection method because they facilitate participant interaction, foster exploration of shared experiences, and generate insights through group dynamics, which is particularly well-suited to research on collaboration (Krueger & Casey, 2015). Data was collected through six semi-structured focus group (FG) interviews conducted via Microsoft Teams between June 3 and 30, 2024, held over 3 consecutive weeks, on Mondays and Tuesdays at 7 pm.

This study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki. Facilitators from five Diploma courses were invited via email, with the study's objective stated and an explanation that their responses would be used for research purposes (Appendix 1). Acceptance and participation constituted their

informed consent. Participants received a reminder of the study's objective and the intended use of their responses at the start of the focus group and were given the opportunity to withdraw before the session continued. Their continuance after this reminder confirmed their consent. No personal identifiers were collected or reported, and any information that could reveal a participant's identity was removed during transcription and analysis. After this treatment, the original transcripts were destroyed to safeguard participants' anonymity.

The methodology employed a semi-structured interview guide based on knowledge of the programs (Appendix 2). Each session, moderated by the authors, lasted 50-60 minutes, was conducted in the participants' native language, Spanish, and was fully transcribed. The transcripts (42 pages) were cleaned, translated using the Microsoft Excel translator, and normalized to remove repetitions, fillers, and fragmented expressions. The transformation of oral discourse into clear written text was performed by the bilingual authors, who then reviewed the 109 refined text segments (paragraphs), comparing them with the original Spanish transcripts to ensure fidelity of meaning and interpretation. These refined texts formed the corpus for subsequent analysis.

4.5 Data Analysis

Further analysis employed the thematic analysis method proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). Briefly, the authors familiarized themselves with the data by thoroughly reading the transcripts multiple times to gain a deep understanding of the content and context. A subgroup of the authors applied *vivo* coding to extract words and expressions that reflect key ideas. These codes were then clustered into broader categories to identify emerging themes. These themes were then discussed with the other authors to ensure their consistency with the programs and the relevance of the results.

A second round of coding in ATLAS.ti facilitated a co-occurrence matrix using the thematic codes from the first round. This enabled a double-check of the text segments for code accuracy. Tables showing the frequency of each code were downloaded from the application. This information was fed into a co-occurrence graph, with themes as nodes and the frequency of co-occurrence across groups as edges, to assess saturation.

In vivo coding of the 109 refined text segments yielded an initial set of 398 codes. Following Braun and Clarke's (2006) procedure, these codes were iteratively grouped into 50 subthemes based on shared meaning, and the subthemes were then examined for higher-order patterns, producing primary themes. For instance, *in vivo* codes such as "talks between facilitators", "constant dialogue", "talk before the module", and "WhatsApp" were grouped into the subtheme "Communication", which, together with other subthemes, such as "Coordinator", constituted the theme "Dynamics of collaboration between instructors." Consistent with the reflexive thematic analysis approach adopted here, a statistical inter-coder agreement coefficient was not computed; coding reliability was assessed through collaborative coding and consensus.

4.6 Trustworthiness

The study's trustworthiness was determined using Lincoln and Guba's (1986) criteria (Enworo, 2023). Credibility was addressed by allowing participants in focus groups to corroborate, qualify, or contest one another's accounts in situ, providing a form of cross-validation of shared experiences. Triangulation between researchers was achieved through collaborative coding and continuous debriefing, resolving discrepancies through discussion until interpretive consensus was reached. Researchers with close knowledge of the instructor training programs and proven expertise in educational research checked the resulting themes. Data-source triangulation was achieved by drawing on six focus groups across five distinct programs, enabling the identification of convergent patterns across heterogeneous teaching contexts.

Dependability was supported by maintaining an audit trail of the analytical process. Each stage (cleaning, translation, normalization, familiarization, coding, clustering of codes into categories, theme development, and the second coding round in ATLAS.ti) was documented. The co-occurrence matrix and frequency tables generated in ATLAS.ti provided a traceable record linking themes back to the underlying text segments. Although no member checks were conducted, some of the authors of this study are also facilitators of the program, which helps ensure accurate understanding of the transcriptions.

Confirmability was strengthened by grounding codes in participants' own words through *vivo* coding and by using the co-occurrence matrix to verify that each theme was supported by the data and not by the researchers' preconceptions. The research team's members of the case study affiliation afforded deep contextual knowledge. Collaborative coding reinforced vigilance against assumed understandings. Transferability was supported by providing a description of the case, including the institutional context, the names of the diploma programs, and the instructional roles, enabling readers to judge the applicability of the findings to other professional continuing education settings.

5. Results and Findings

This section describes the findings from the focus groups. Table 2 presents examples of quotations that support two subthemes of the identified principal themes.

Table 2: Themes, subthemes, and supporting data.

Theme	Subtheme (code)	Supporting Data (quotations)
Instructor collaboration dynamics	Communication	<i>"... instructors have formed facilitator networks [...] dynamics and exercises are exchanged [...] outside the program."</i> <i>"... In some programs, we share materials, but it is not something that is always done."</i>
	Coordinator	<i>"... Much more connection between modules transpired in the several meetings convened by the coordinators."</i> <i>"...the coordinators [...], through their personal initiative, have the opportunity to get closer to others and share."</i>

Evaluation process and the use of the transversal challenge	Challenge	<i>"... the 4 modules developed by the facilitators comprised a backbone..."</i> <i>"... Each module's challenge can be independent of the others."</i>
	Client as a limitation	<i>"... it depends a lot on the client [...] some do not want to take on a transversal challenge [...] they prefer something fast."</i> <i>"... the client must be on board from the beginning [...] if not, it becomes impossible."</i>
Collegial assessment	Expertise	<i>"... The modules require a fairly high level of expertise [...] I could never evaluate something related to neuroscience."</i> <i>"... I do not say anything about another module's challenge because it is not my topic."</i>
	Collegial assessment (evaluation)	<i>"[...] the robust and complete evaluation by the different facilitators [...] adds a lot of value."</i> <i>"... We have never done an overall assessment; it would be contributory if someone else could give a second opinion."</i>
Alignment with the andragogic institutional model	Evaluation	<i>"... Evaluation is always one of the most important stages [...] you have to prepare it very well [...] it entails more than asking questions."</i> <i>"... the evaluation will always be [...] the verification of knowledge [...]; it provides excellent closure."</i>
	INSPIRA	<i>"... I think INSPIRA helps us because it provides clarity about what is expected from learning and how to apply it in practice."</i> <i>"...the full INSPIRA helps focus on the learning and the participant as well."</i>
Barriers and culture in collaborative teaching and assessment practices	Social dynamics	<i>"...personal differences among members [...] is part of the social dynamic."</i> <i>"... the network formed by facilitators [...] is more by affinity than by structure."</i>
	Continuous improvement	<i>"... is the practice that teachers have of continuously updating on their own initiative..."</i> <i>"...is not just about improving the program but about thinking about how we learn from what we do institutionally."</i>

The next section presents the main findings and co-occurrence networks of codes assigned to the texts, showing which codes were most closely correlated, most frequently repeated, or mentioned only a few times.

5.1 Dynamics of Collaboration Between Instructors

Based on the facilitators' responses, the characterization of their collaboration was informal, uneven, and highly dependent on the program context and the coordinator's leadership. The ACs were identified as the primary enablers of collaboration, which flowed when program coordinators showed leadership and openness. In their absence, they tended to work in isolation, unaware of what was covered in other modules, and reporting strategies to maintain coherence across modules. These include informal communication via WhatsApp, sharing learner profiles, and using the kickoff sessions to establish common ground. Such strategies reflected participants' description of collaboration as being *"more of a*

practice than a norm." Some participants described more structured collaboration, including joint design sessions and open dialogue; others described collaboration as reduced to basic information transfer, often described as *"passing the baton."*

Instructors also raised concerns about curricular adaptability and the constraints imposed by rigid structures. They expressed frustration with tools and platforms, and with limited autonomy to update content, which hampered their ability to integrate emerging topics (*"such as artificial intelligence"*). While there was a widespread recognition of the value of collaboration, including its potential to enhance module alignment, reduce content duplication, and improve learning, formal, institutionalized mechanisms for joint planning and continuous dialogue were described as absent. Figure 2 presents a network of co-occurrences among emerging codes of the first theme.

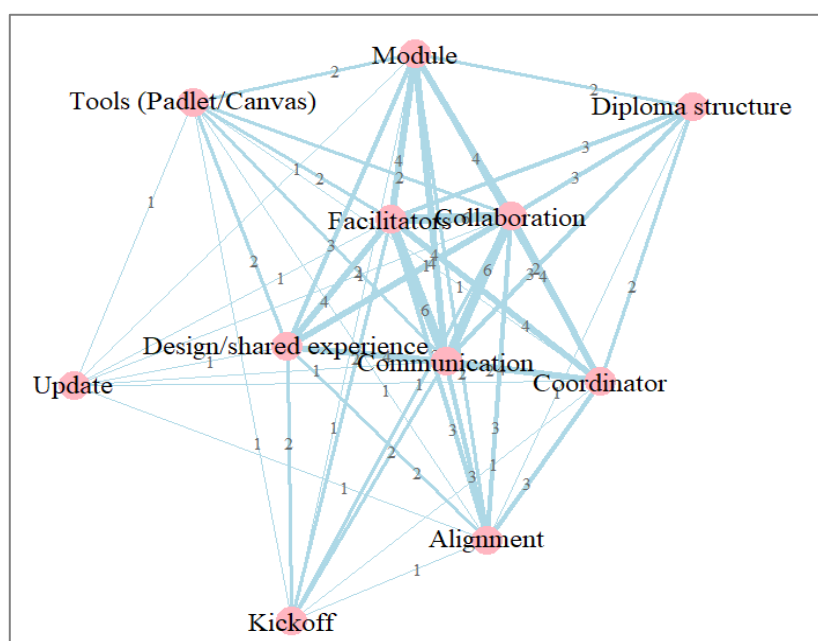


Figure 2: Map of co-occurrence of codes in the thematic analysis of the dynamics of instructors' collaboration in professional continuing education programs.

Figure 2 suggests that communication among facilitators, motivated by the coordinator, was common in the continuing education programs studied. However, this collaboration depended on the course structure. This map complements the narrative analysis by showing the distribution and relative weights of the codes, considering the six focus groups. The overall density and the links with high co-occurrence values indicate a significant interconnection among the concepts, suggesting that the main dimensions of the phenomenon were widely explored and that the analysis approached saturation (represented by the number 6 in the links between nodes).

5.2 Evaluation Process and the Use of the Transversal Challenge

Across the focus groups, a transversal challenge (one that spans all modules in a single program) was described as the central tool for evaluating participant learning in diploma programs, particularly valued for its ability to connect

theoretical content with practical applications. However, instructors noted that each module, taught by a different instructor, presented its own challenge and was often designed independently, with little to no coordination among the instructors. As one participant observed, *"The challenges are present in each module but do not function as a transversal axis of the diploma course."*

When the transversal challenge was implemented as intended, facilitators described it as highly effective, with projects progressing cumulatively across modules, resulting in a more coherent learning journey and avoiding content duplication. However, they also pointed out barriers to its implementation, such as time constraints, workload, and rigid program structures. Client pressure was mentioned as further undermining the feasibility of designing and integrating the challenge, *"in part because the client often prioritizes speed over depth."*

Another mentioned obstacle was the technological and organizational rigidity that prevented content updates or challenge re-design. Instructors noted that the use of closed platforms and the removal of integrative modules (such as final presentations) reduced opportunities for collegial assessment. Some instructors noted that transversal challenges are more feasible in face-to-face or hybrid programs, and when supported by academic coordinators. Figure 3 presents a map of the co-occurrence of codes associated with this theme.

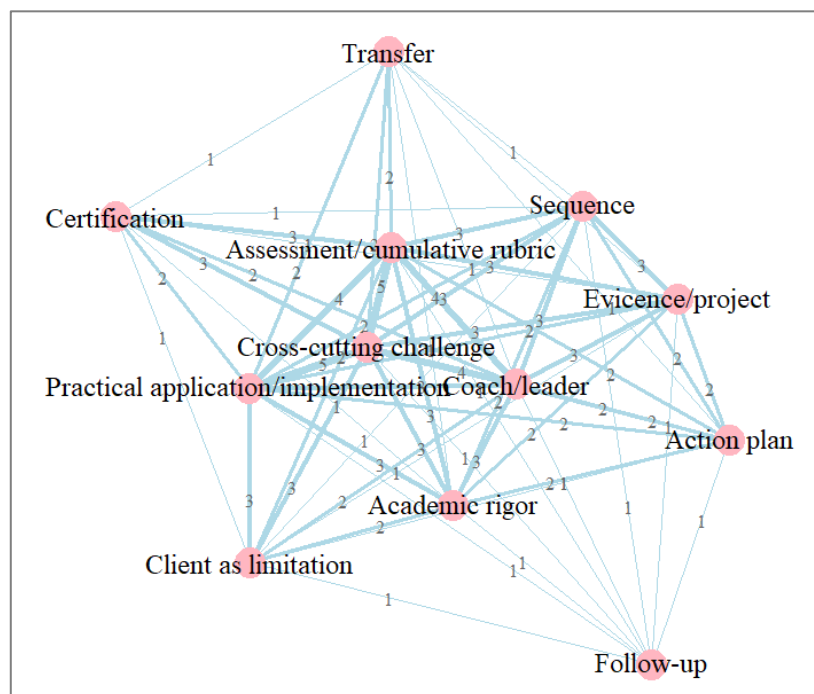


Figure 3: Map of the co-occurrence of codes in the evaluation process and the use of the transversal (cross-cutting) challenge in diploma programs.

In this map, the density of the connections confirms that this theme was also widely explored. Figure 3 shows that the challenge occupied a central position, with a stronger connection to the practical application of what had been learned in the course, where the facilitator acted as a coach. It also shows that assessment

through cumulative rubric is key and the primary representative of collegial assessment, even though each facilitator assesses separately through a module-based learning sequence.

5.3 Collegial Assessment

Our analysis revealed that collegial assessment was absent primarily as a formalized practice in the programs. However, the focus group participants widely viewed it as a highly desirable and transformative approach. They emphasized that collegial assessment could significantly enrich the teaching and learning process, particularly in the final, integrative stages of diploma programs. They expressed enthusiasm for multi-evaluator panels (synodals), seeing them as opportunities to provide more comprehensive and balanced feedback while integrating multiple disciplinary perspectives.

Despite this interest, logistical constraints were cited as barriers. These included time limitations, heavy workloads, and the complexity of coordinating across multiple programs. According to the facilitators, such practices require unpaid additional work and “*different structural conditions*” to be viable. Moreover, the high degree of module specialization complicated collaborative evaluation, as they were often hesitant to assess work outside their domain of expertise. However, informal practices were described. For example, facilitators' joint participation in final presentations and informal dialogues to align grading criteria was noted, with coaching-style accompaniment in some programs, in which instructors validated how participants applied their learning in workplace contexts.

Despite these challenges, instructors across all groups expressed openness to implementing collegial assessment if programs create dedicated spaces, establish clear evaluation rubrics, and allocate time and resources for multi-evaluator collaboration. They connected these aspirations to the maturity of institutional initiatives in turn, highlighting that structured collegial assessment is not only pedagogically desirable but also aligned with broader organizational goals (that is, the goals of the companies where the learners worked). Figure 4 shows the co-occurrence map for the theme.

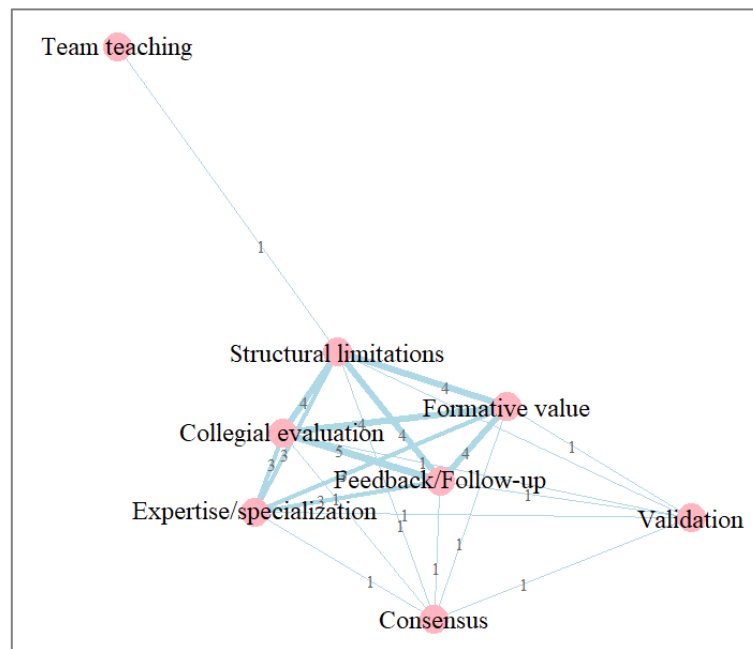


Figure 4: Map of co-occurrence of codes on collegial assessment in diploma programs.

The map shows that collegial assessment was the central node, with multiple connections. Team teaching appears isolated, with a single connection, indicating it was mentioned only marginally and did not form significant relationships with other concepts, suggesting it did not reach saturation. Perhaps it also implies that the instructors do not consider this form of teaching to lead to collegial assessment, and that it may be a topic for future studies. Other codes relevant in this figure help visualize how instructors relate this practice to other concepts, including formative value, structural limitations, and the need for consensus in evaluation.

5.4 Alignment with the Andragogic Institutional Model

Across all focus groups, the institutional andragogic model (Torres Mata et al., 2025)[†] was consistently recognized as a robust and valuable andragogic framework that provides a clear structure for program design and a shared methodology among instructors. Its role in fostering methodological consistency, aligning assessments with program objectives, and integrating both partial and final assessments was emphasized. Its focus on applied learning that links knowledge to real-world practice was appreciated.

The facilitators praised it as a “complete” model that integrates both quantitative and qualitative feedback and framed it as a structural guide that organizes learning and validates competence development. Still, instructors repeatedly reported that it is not fully implemented in practice and is often reduced to what they called a “light” version. One facilitator explained, “The model is robust, but clients often demand immediacy, leaving no space for its full implementation.”

[†] All facilitators of the professional continuing education programs at the institution are trained in andragogic practices (the art of teaching adults). The institutional leaders developed a model for this effect.

The focus group's participants also critiqued institutional assessment instruments such as the Net Promoter Score (NPS) and recommendability indicators, questioning their ability to capture the complexity of participants' experiences, and noting that overreliance on these metrics can obscure deeper insights into the program's impact.

They proposed strategies to enhance the value of the andragogic model and its adoption, grouped as follows: (1) integrating certification modules that holistically connect program components and support collegial assessment, (2) offering optional advanced credentials for participants seeking more profound, practice-oriented evaluation, (3) making the model more consultative and flexible, aligning its output with client needs while maintaining pedagogical integrity, and (4) improving evaluation instruments to reflect learning outcomes and participant application of knowledge. Figure 5 presents a map of code co-occurrence associated with the theme.

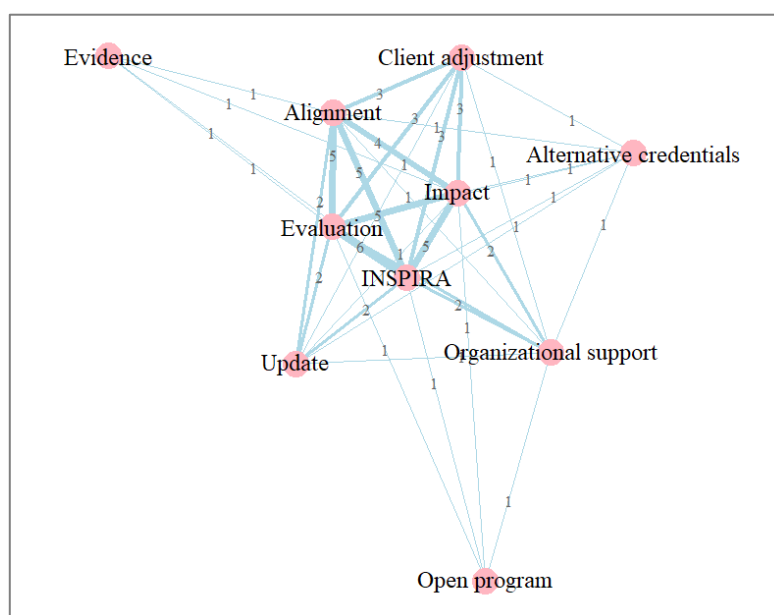


Figure 5: Code co-occurrence map on alignment with emerging institutional and educational processes.

The map shows that the model (INSPIRA) is the central node, strongly connected to Evaluation, Impact, and Alignment. On the other hand, the Open program[‡] code appears more peripheral, indicating that, although relevant, this aspect was less developed in the discussions. Perhaps these programs and their implications could be explored more in depth in future work. The figure also shows how instructors linked the institutional model to evaluation practices, perceived impact, and tensions (Update, Organizational support and Evidence), arising from adaptation to clients and organizational constraints.

[‡] Open program means that the professional continuing education is open to the public. In contrast, a closed program is dedicated to a single organization and its workers as clients.

5.5 Barriers and Culture in Collaborative Teaching and Assessment Practices

The participants in the focus groups expressed pride in the programs' academic excellence and a willingness to engage in reflective practice to improve both their teaching and program outcomes. They described their readiness to contribute beyond classroom delivery through follow-ups on evaluation processes, faster responses to participant needs, and content updates, provided they are given appropriate autonomy and institutional support.

Despite this willingness, participants reported rigid institutional structures, technological limitations, and interpersonal conflicts as barriers to effective collaboration. Some of them referenced style differences and personal conflicts as social barriers to collegial assessment. Additionally, the lack of formal mechanisms for instructor input into program design and evaluation processes leaves many contributions invisible or underutilized.

Much of the current collaborative culture operates informally, relying on personal relationships and previous shared experiences rather than systematic co-creation mechanisms. As one participant noted, *"There is a lot of data generated by the programs, but they are not systematized or used adequately."* Despite this, they offered constructive proposals to strengthen the institutional culture of continuous improvement, including: (a) creating specialized cells or units dedicated to analyzing program data and measuring organizational impact, (b) establishing formal channels for instructor voice, transforming focus groups and other spaces into ongoing organizational listening mechanisms, (c) promoting co-creation in challenge design to ensure thematic continuity across modules, and (d) fostering empathy and interpersonal understanding among instructors to overcome social barriers and build trust.

One facilitator shared the LEGO-brick metaphor to illustrate these aspirations, explaining that each module is a building block that should connect with others to create a holistic, participant-centered learning experience, ideally evaluated by multiple voices through collegial assessment. Such a shift would require new structures for data collection, interpretation, and dissemination, ensuring that program design evolve based on evidence rather than intuition or client demands alone. Figure 6 presents the co-occurrence map of the codes associated with the theme.

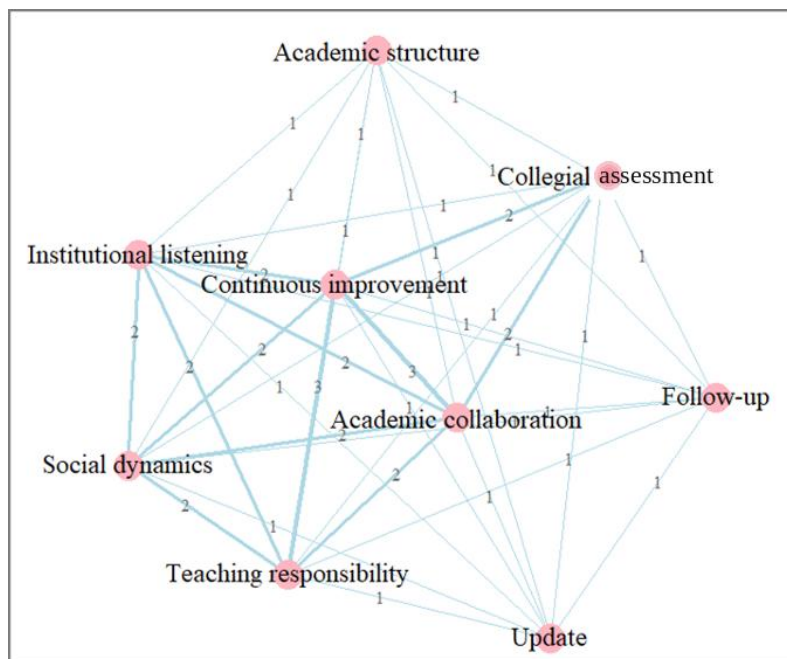


Figure 6: Code co-occurrence map on barriers and culture in collaborative teaching and assessment practices.

The density of connections and the presence of medium-frequency co-occurrences suggest that the codes did not reach theoretical saturation. The map shows that academic collaboration was central and connected to codes such as continuous improvement, collegial assessment, teaching responsibility, and updating, demonstrating the facilitators' willingness to make a structural change in the way they collaborate that asks to be heard by the institution.

6. Discussion

This study examined how instructors in professional continuing education programs collaborate on the design, delivery, and assessment of their courses, and what they perceive as the main enablers and obstacles to these. We focus on five main aspects. First, regarding collegiality, meaningful exchanges among instructors do take place but rest on individual goodwill, lacking rules that would institutionalize them. Prior research has established that instructor collaboration is central to program coherence and learner outcomes (Kelchtermans, 2006), and that the field has shifted from individual toward structural and institutional explanations of engagement (Park & Su, 2026).

This work shows empirically how this plays out in an understudied setting (a client-driven, modular continuing education program in Latin America). Here, the absence of mediating structures leaves coordinator leadership to operate as the mediator of collaboration. The fact is that informal interactions remain genuine and valued but lack the systemic support needed to sustain coherence, as has been reported before (Pharo et al., 2014), leading to instructors' enthusiasm for collaborative practices that rarely translate into sustained enactment.

Second, in the case of collegiate assessment, the literature also has established that authentic, integrative assessment mirrors real professional demands (Medina-Díaz & Verdejo-Carrión, 2020; Villarroel et al., 2018), and that multi-evaluator models improve the reliability and validity of judgments (Moonen-van Loon et al., 2015). This study's data indicates that the practices are endorsed in principle but remain sporadic or aspirational, constrained by infrastructural factors. In CHAT terms, these practices are mediating artifacts whose enactment is blocked by the absence of shared rubrics, standing evaluation panels, and explicit coordinator roles (Bogle et al., 2023). The artifacts exist conceptually, but the rules and division of labor that would operationalize them do not.

Third, a distinctive finding of this setting concerns the cultural basis of the collaboration. That informal networks and affective bonds drive professional interaction is well known (Flores-Fahara et al., 2021; Schwabe et al., 2025). In this study, the bonds that enable collaboration also impede its formalization, because those who collaborate most are colleagues who already trust one another, and newer instructors find fewer opportunities to collaborate. We found professional collaboration (spontaneous and relational) but not collaborative professionalism, which is intentional, structured, and designed to be inclusive (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018).

This cultural specificity is the article's principal contribution. Best practices imported from other contexts cannot simply be transplanted but must be culturally adapted to build trust already present. This diverges from the collegiality literature from full-time academic settings where collaboration is typically analyzed as a function of institutional culture and formal structures. In the context of the current study, affective trust was the driver that formal structures must accommodate.

Fourth, when asked what they would need to collaborate more effectively, instructors mentioned protected collaboration time, technological infrastructure, shared planning and integrative design processes in which they participate. These are studied features of a professional learning community (DuFour, 2016), and its value is well documented internationally. Finland's institutionalization of collaboration time within contracted hours (Sahlberg, 2015), Singapore's investment in digital platforms for professional learning (Hung & Huang, 2016), and regionally, where Joaquín-Cárdenas and Leyva-Aguilar (2023) likewise conclude that institutional mechanisms must be strengthened to foster collegial work.

And fifth, the depth of collegial work varied with client demand, pointing to the boundary between the educational program and the learner's workplace as a site that collaboration must continually negotiate (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011). As Aguirre Gómez and Barraza Barraza (2021) note, informal networks can compensate for institutional gaps but cannot substitute for formal structures that make collective knowledge cumulative.

These findings propose that, in the studied context, collegial assessment is not a function of instructors' competence or willingness but is mediated by three interacting conditions that map onto the activity system. In terms of the CHAT theory, institutional structures (the rules) determine whether collegial assessment is expected or left to discretion. Coordinator leadership (the division of labor) operates as a pivotal mediator, and where weak, personal initiative substitutes for collective practice. And organizational culture (the community and its relational norms) conditions whether collaboration extends beyond established networks of trust. Thus, collegial assessment in this sector is best understood as an emergent property of the alignment of these three mediators, rather than as a practice that instructors can adopt individually, reframing the challenge as persuading instructors to collaborate to design the conditions that sustain collaboration.

7. Limitations and Future Research Directions

First, this was a qualitative case study conducted at one private Mexican university. It did not aim to generalize statistically but offers analytical insights whose transferability readers must assess in their contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Yin, 2018). Institutions with different funding models or contractual arrangements for instructors may exhibit different dynamics. Second, the sample was dominated by business and management programs, which may shape both the instructors' disciplinary profiles and the kinds of collaboration they value; the patterns reported here may not extend to programs in, for example, the health sciences, the humanities, or technical fields.

Third, the study lacked systematic triangulation, relying on instructors' self-reported perceptions without direct observation of collaborative practice or corroboration from learner outcomes, institutional documentation, or learners' viewpoints. Therefore, it was not possible to independently confirm the difference between stated enthusiasm and actual implementation. Fourth, because data were gathered at a single point in time, it could not capture how collaboration unfolds in situ or evolves across programs. Finally, because some members of the research team were affiliated with the case institution, interpretation might have been shaped by insider perspectives. Collaborative coding might not have eliminated bias.

These limitations define an agenda for future research. First, comparative international studies spanning institutions, countries, and disciplinary fields would test how far the trust-based pattern of collaboration extrapolates beyond the context examined here. Second, mixed-methods designs would combine the interpretive depth of qualitative inquiry with quantitative methods. Third, longitudinal investigations would allow the enthusiasm-practice gap to be examined as it unfolds across cohorts, rather than as recalled at a single point in time.

Fourth, research examining the effectiveness of collegial assessment on learner outcomes, linking collaborative evaluation to participants' competency development and workplace performance, would test the assumption that collegial assessment improves learning. Such triangulation would also strengthen

confirmability and test the activity-theoretical claim that collaborative artifacts fail for infrastructural reasons. Finally, design-based or intervention studies that introduce protected time, shared rubrics, or inclusive onboarding for peripheral instructors would move the field from describing contradictions to resolving them.

8. Practical Implications

This study's findings translate into concrete, actionable steps, with the condition that any intervention must preserve the responsiveness a client-oriented portfolio demands. Building on instructors' proposals, the study categorizes these recommendations by the most suitable audience for implementation. For academic coordinators, who shape day-to-day program operations, formal collaboration protocols, structured planning meetings, shared assessment rubrics, and multi-evaluator assessment panels are suggested. Programs should define a written protocol specifying, at minimum, a kickoff session at program launch in which all instructors review the integrated learning journey, a shared repository of module materials and learner profiles, and an explicit coordinator task for cross-module coherence.

Also, programs should schedule coordinated meetings to articulate how each module's challenge feeds into a single transversal project and to address the fragmentation participants described. A common program-level rubric should be co-developed by instructors before delivery and applied across modules to define shared criteria for the transversal challenge, ensuring evaluation is cumulative when required. Moreover, for the integrative stage of each diploma, programs should convene a panel of two or three instructors from complementary disciplines to jointly assess final projects, with time allocated and compensated. This can address the lack of remuneration and the reluctance to assess outside one's expertise.

At the institutional level, mechanisms for sustained collaboration are suggested. Sustaining these practices requires recognizing collaboration time within instructors' contracted hours rather than as discretionary effort (Sahlberg, 2015). It also requires investing in shared digital infrastructure (Hung & Huang, 2016), establishing formal channels for instructor input into program design, transforming one-off focus groups into ongoing listening mechanisms, and creating a dedicated unit to systematize program data so that design evolves from evidence.

9. Conclusion

This study aimed to understand how instructors in professional continuing education collaborate on the design, delivery, and assessment of their programs, and what they perceive as the enablers and obstacles to doing so. It found a setting in which collaboration is genuine but sustained by relationships rather than by structure. The study makes three original contributions. First, it applies CHAT to an understudied context (client-driven, modular continuing education in Latin America). It reframes the obstacles instructors face not as failures of motivation but as structural contradictions within the activity system, in which valued

collaborative artifacts lack the rules and division of labor needed to enact them. Second, it identifies a recurring enthusiasm–practice gap across collegial assessment and transversal challenges. Third, it characterizes the collaboration as resting on a culture of affective trust that fuels organic cooperation and obstructs its formalization, excluding newer and more peripheral instructors. The findings also speak about the broader tension between pedagogical integrity and market-driven demands. This is: when clients expect rapid, tailored responses, the path of least resistance is to let instructors work in parallel. However, as continuing education becomes increasingly central to workforce development, structured, culturally grounded collaboration, built on the trust already in place, offers a path to stronger programs, more successful learners, and greater organizational impact.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

10. Acknowledgments

The authors acknowledge the financial and technical support of the Writing Lab, Institute for the Future of Education, Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico, in the production of this work. During the preparation of this work, the authors used Grammarly and Claude to assist with language editing, drafting, and refining portions of the manuscript, thereby improving clarity and structure. After using these tools, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the publication's content. The paper remains an accurate representation of the author's work and intellectual contributions.

11. References

- Aguirre Gómez, F. J., & Barraza Barraza, L. (2021). El trabajo colegiado y sus implicaciones: diseño de una propuesta pedagógica. [Teacher collaboration and its ramifications: designing a pedagogical approach]. *Revista Educación*, 45(2), 505–526. <https://doi.org/10.15517/revedu.v45i1.42985>
- Akkerman, S. F., & Bakker, A. (2011). Boundary crossing and boundary objects. *Review of Educational Research*, 81(2), 132–169. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654311404435>
- Álvarez-Mendiola, G. (2006). Lifelong Learning policies in Mexico: Context, challenges and comparisons. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 36(3), 379–399. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057920600872555>
- Bogle, L., Day, S., Matthews, D., & Swan, K. (2023). The power of a collaborative, collegial approach to improving online teaching and learning. In K. Shattuck (Ed.), *Assuring quality in online education* (pp. 110–123). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003443124-10>
- Borg, C., Gravani, M. N., Brown, M., & Hatzopoulos, P. (2026). Reception or deception? Formal and non-formal education provision for adult migrants in Greece and Malta. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 0(0), 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370.2026.2646185>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>

- Brookhart, S. M. (2003). Developing measurement theory for classroom assessment purposes and uses. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, 22(4), 5–12. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-3992.2003.tb00139.x>
- De Jong, L., Meirink, J., & Admiraal, W. (2019). School-based teacher collaboration: Different learning opportunities across various contexts. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 86, 102925. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2019.102925>
- De Weerd, D., Simons, M., Struyf, E., & Tack, H. (2025). Studying the effectiveness of team teaching: A systematic review on the conceptual and methodological credibility of experimental studies. *Review of Educational Research*, 95(5), 1053–1098. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543241262807>
- DuFour, R. (2016). *In praise of American educators: And how they can become even better*. Solution Tree Press.
- Engeström, Y. (2001). Expansive learning at work: Toward an activity theoretical reconceptualization. *Journal of Education and Work*, 14(1), 133–156. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639080020028747>
- Engeström, Y. (2015). *Learning by expanding: An activity-theoretical approach to developmental research* (2nd edition). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139814744>
- Engeström, Y., & Sannino, A. (2010). Studies of expansive learning: Foundations, findings and future challenges. *Educational Research Review*, 5(1), 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2009.12.002>
- Enworo, O. C. (2023). Application of Guba and Lincoln's parallel criteria to assess trustworthiness of qualitative research on indigenous social protection systems. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 23(4), 372–384. <https://doi.org/10.1108/QRJ-08-2022-0116>
- Esterhazy, R., De Lange, T., Bastiansen, S., & Wittek, A. L. (2021). Moving beyond peer review of teaching: A conceptual framework for collegial faculty development. *Review of Educational Research*, 91(2), 237–271. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654321990721>
- Fenwick, T. (2009). Making to measure? Reconsidering assessment in professional continuing education. *Studies in Continuing Education*, 31(3), 229–244. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01580370903271446>
- Flores-Fahara, M., Bailey-Moreno, J., & Mortera-Cavazos, L. E. (2021). Comunidades profesionales de aprendizaje en escuelas públicas mexicanas: Explorando su desarrollo. [Professional learning communities in Mexican public schools: exploring their development]. *Educación XX1*, 24(2), 283–304. <https://doi.org/10.5944/educxx1.28556>
- Hargreaves, A., & O'Connor, M. T. (2018). *Collaborative professionalism: when teaching together means learning for all*. Corwin. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781506328133>
- Hennink, M. M., Kaiser, B. N., & Marconi, V. C. (2017). Code saturation versus meaning saturation: How many interviews are enough? *Qualitative Health Research*, 27(4), 591–608. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732316665344>
- Herzog, L. M. (2024). *Andragogy and microlearning in professional continuing education* [Doctoral dissertation, Franklin University]. Franklin University Scholarly Exchange. <https://fuse.franklin.edu/docpub/160/>
- Hung, D., & Huang, J. S. (2016). Reflections on 12 years of Research into ICT-in-Education and the Learning Sciences in Singapore. *Educational Technology*, 56(1), 27–31. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44430438>
- Joaquín-Cárdenas, A. M., & Leyva-Aguilar, N. A. (2023). Trabajo colegiado en la práctica docente. [Collegiate work in teaching practice] *Revista Tecnológica-Educativa Docentes 2.0*, 16(2), 307–317. <https://doi.org/10.37843/rtd.v16i2.424>
- Joseph Jeyaraj, J., & Wald, N. (2023). 'I am surrounded by people who are not motivated to do research': Harnessing collegiality for developing research active academics

- in a teaching-focused institution. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 47(7), 901–912. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2023.2200135>
- Karlsdottir, V., Torfason, M. T., Edvardsson, I. R., & Heijstra, T. M. (2023). Barriers to academic collaboration with industry and community: Individual and organisational factors. *Industry and Higher Education*, 37(6), 792–809. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09504222231173953>
- Kelchtermans, G. (2006). Teacher collaboration and collegiality as workplace conditions. A review. *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik*, 52(2), 220–237. <https://doi.org/10.25656/01:4454>
- Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. A. (2015). *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research* (5th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Kuk, H.-S. (2024). In search of “Asian perspectives” in the field of adult education: From Asian perspectives to deimperialization. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 2024(182-183), 27–38. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ace.20531>
- Leont'ev, A. (1978). *Activity, Consciousness, and Personality*. Prentice-Hall. <https://lhc.ucsd.edu/mca/Paper/leontev/>
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1986). But is it rigorous? Trustworthiness and authenticity in naturalistic evaluation. *New Directions for Program Evaluation*, 1986(30), 73–84. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ev.1427>
- Malmström, H., & Zhou, S. (2025). Language–subject teacher collaboration in English-medium higher education: Current practices and future possibilities. *RELC Journal*, 00336882241313234. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00336882241313234>
- Martínez-Estupiñán, V. F., Pinargote-Reyes, E. X., & Bermúdez-Zuleta, N. (2020). La educación sustentada en los medios audiovisuales desde un enfoque multidisciplinario. [Education based on audiovisual media from a multidisciplinary approach]. *Revista Científica FIPCAEC (Fomento de la investigación y publicación científico-técnica multidisciplinaria)*. ISSN : 2588-090X. *Polo de Capacitación, Investigación y Publicación (POCAIP)*, 5(16), 146-163. <https://doi.org/10.23857/fipcaec.v5i14.165>
- Medina-Díaz, M. D. R., & Verdejo-Carrión, A. L. (2020). Validez y confiabilidad en la evaluación del aprendizaje mediante las metodologías activas. [Validity and reliability in student learning evaluation throughout active methodologies]. *Alteridad*, 15(2), 270–284. <https://doi.org/10.17163/alt.v15n2.2020.10>
- Medina-Romero, M. Á. (2024). *The evaluation of educational quality in public higher education institutions in Mexico: A case study with a quality assurance and accountability approach*. Atena Editora. <https://doi.org/10.22533/at.ed.631242901>
- Minett-Smith, C., & Davis, C. L. (2020). Widening the discourse on team-teaching in higher education. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 25(5), 579–594. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2019.1577814>
- Molnár, T., Jenei, S., Moreno, E., Lakshmi, V. P., Malatyinszki, S., & Dávid, L. D. (2024). The role of lifelong learning in labour market competitiveness. *Journal of Ecohumanism*, 3(8), 7743–7761. <https://doi.org/10.62754/joe.v3i8.5396>
- Moonen-van Loon, J. M. W., Overeem, K., Govaerts, M. J. B., Verhoeven, B. H., Van Der Vleuten, C. P. M., & Driessen, E. W. (2015). The reliability of multisource feedback in competency-based assessment programs: The effects of multiple occasions and assessor groups. *Academic Medicine*, 90(8), 1093–1099. <https://doi.org/10.1097/ACM.0000000000000763>
- Moskal, B. M., & Leydens, J. A. (2020). Scoring rubric development: Validity and reliability. *Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation*, 7(1), 10. <https://doi.org/10.7275/Q7RM-GG74>
- Nakar, S., & Du Plessis, A. E. (2023). Facing the dilemma of the out-of-field teaching phenomenon in Vocational Education and Training (VET). *Vocations and Learning*, 16(3), 551–575. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12186-023-09329-8>

- Nordgren, K., Kristiansson, M., Liljekvist, Y., & Bergh, D. (2021). Collegial collaboration when planning and preparing lessons: A large-scale study exploring the conditions and infrastructure for teachers' professional development. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 108, 103513. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2021.103513>
- Paoli Bolio, F. J. (2019). Multi-, inter- y transdisciplinariedad. [Multi-, inter- and transdisciplinarity]. *Problema. Anuario de Filosofía y Teoría del Derecho*, 1(13), 347–357. <https://doi.org/10.22201/ij.24487937e.2019.13.13725>
- Park, J.-H., & Su, M. N. (2026). Adult learners' participation in higher education: A systematic review of determinants and barriers (2000–2025). *Trends in Higher Education*, 5(1), 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.3390/higheredu5010019>
- Pharo, E., Davison, A., McGregor, H., Warr, K., & Brown, P. (2014). Using communities of practice to enhance interdisciplinary teaching: Lessons from four Australian institutions. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 33(2), 341–354. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2013.832168>
- Pifer, M. J., Baker, V. L., & Lunsford, L. G. (2019). Culture, colleagues, and leadership: The academic department as a location of faculty experiences in liberal arts colleges. *The Review of Higher Education*, 42(2), 537–564. <https://doi.org/10.1353/rhe.2019.0006>
- Qureshi, S. P. (2021). Cultural Historical Activity Theory for Studying Practice-Based Learning and Change in Medical Education. *Advances in Medical Education and Practice*, 12(0), 923–935. <https://doi.org/10.2147/AMEP.S313250>
- Ran, F. X., & Bickerstaff, S. (2026). Connecting faculty development and student outcomes: Evidence from faculty professional development in two community colleges. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 50(4), 348–366. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10668926.2025.2546363>
- Richter, E., Fütterer, T., Meyer, A., Eisenkraft, A., & Fischer, C. (2022). Teacher collaboration and professional learning: Examining professional development during a national education reform. *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik*, 68(6), 798–819. <https://doi.org/10.3262/ZP2206798>
- Sahlberg, P. (2015). *Finnish lessons 2.0: What can the world learn from educational change in Finland?* (2nd ed.). Teachers College Press.
- Sánchez, G. L., Solé-Llussà, A., & Bautista, C. V. (2021). La obesidad. Un enfoque multidisciplinar como paradigma para enseñar en el aula [The obesity. A multidisciplinary approach as a paradigm for teaching in the classroom]. *Retos*, 42, 353–364. <https://doi.org/10.47197/retos.v42i0.87153>
- Sánchez Mendiola, M., & Martínez González, A. (2020). *Evaluación del y para el aprendizaje: Instrumentos y estrategias*. [Evaluation of and for learning: Instruments and strategies]. Imagia Comunicación.
- Schwabe, J., Altenmüller, M. S., & Gollwitzer, M. (2025). The double-edged sword of informality: How informal communication shapes closeness and trustworthiness in personal and professional relationships. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 42(5), 1149–1177. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02654075251314810>
- Spinelli, L. (Ed.). (2020). *Teachers to trainers: Apply your passion and skills to a new career*. Association for Talent Development.
- Spinrad, M. L., & Relles, S. R. (2022). Losing our faculties: Contingent faculty in the corporate academy. *Innovative Higher Education*, 47(5), 837–854. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10755-022-09602-z>
- Stratton-Maher, D., Kelly, J., & Livesay, K. (2025). The challenge of belonging: Exploring collegiality and incivility in the transition to academia for nurse clinicians. *Applied Nursing Research*, 81, 151889. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apnr.2024.151889>
- Stufflebeam, D. L. (with Coryn, C. L. S.). (2014). *Evaluation theory, models, and applications* (2nd ed.). Jossey-Bass & Pfeiffer Imprints, Wiley.

- Torres Mata, I. del C., Miranda Becerra, J. N., & Vázquez-Villegas, P. (2025). Exploring the impact of a training program for continuing education facilitators: An empirical journey. *Frontiers in Education*, 10(0), 1601508. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2025.1601508>
- Valverde-Berrocso, J., Fernández-Sánchez, M. R., Dominguez, F. I. R., & Sosa-Díaz, M. J. (2021). The educational integration of digital technologies preCovid-19: Lessons for teacher education. *PLOS ONE*, 16(8), e0256283. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0256283>
- Vembye, M. H., Weiss, F., & Hamilton Bhat, B. (2024). The effects of co-teaching and related collaborative models of instruction on student achievement: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, 94(3), 376–422. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543231186588>
- Villarroel, V., Bloxham, S., Bruna, D., Bruna, C., & Herrera-Seda, C. (2018). Authentic assessment: Creating a blueprint for course design. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 43(5), 840–854. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2017.1412396>
- Williams, J. J., Tractenberg, R. E., Batut, B., Becker, E. A., Brown, A. M., Burke, M. L., Busby, B., Cooch, N. K., Dillman, A. A., Donovan, S. S., Doyle, M. A., Gelder, C. W. G. van, Hall, C. R., Hertweck, K. L., Jordan, K. L., Jungck, J. R., Latour, A. R., Lindvall, J. M., Lloret-Llinares, M., ... Woodley, L. (2023). Optimizing short-format training: An international consensus on effective, inclusive, and career-spanning professional development in the life sciences and beyond. *bioRxiv*, 2023(03), 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.1101/2023.03.10.531570>
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: design and methods* (6th ed.). Sage Publications Inc.
- Zach, S., & Avugos, S. (2024). Co-teaching in higher education: Implications for teaching, learning, engagement, and satisfaction. *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living*, 6: 1424101. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fspor.2024.1424101>

Appendix 1

Invitation to the focus group:

Dear Facilitators,

As part of the development initiatives in the Vice-Rectorate of Continuing Education, we are strengthening the work of Academic Research and Scientific Publishing, so we want to invite you to this next research project entitled "*The Collegiate Evaluation Conducted by Adult Education Facilitators in Multidisciplinary Learning Experiences*."

To carry out this research, we need to conduct "focus groups" in 1-hour sessions to obtain information by recovering the experiences of the learning facilitators in our programs. The information will be handled with academic confidentiality, that is, for research and publication use only, and will omit participants' names. For us, your help and participation in this call as expert facilitators who collaborate in successful programs are very valuable. We are meeting with you on June 10 at 7 p.m.

We sincerely hope that you can join us as well, and I would appreciate your confirmation of your participation by this means. Such support will help to continue offering cutting-edge programs and initiatives with a differentiated value proposition.

Thank you very much in advance for your generous participation.

Appendix 2

Interview guide:

Objective: To learn about participants' experience with collaboration and, as facilitators, with collegiate (peer) assessment.

Initial reference to the focus group: A methodological research tool used to gather information on how collaboration and collegiate assessment are experienced in the diploma programs, understood as teaching experiences that bring together different disciplinary approaches. The information collected is for research purposes only and is confidential.

Working definitions used in the study

- *Collaborative work:* Any cooperative action by facilitators with an objective related to their teaching role in the group in which they form a team.
- *Collegiate assessment:* Assessment carried out by multiple evaluators through a process of dialogue, calibration, and consensus.

Logistics

- Approximately 50 minutes
- 2 minutes per intervention
- Each facilitator may speak a maximum of 2 times

Interview questions

1. Do you carry out activities together with the facilitators of the other modules of the diploma program, during planning and implementation?
2. If so, what do these activities consist of? In what way does the design require this collaboration?
3. If there is no collaboration, what are the reasons it does not occur?

4. In what way does the cross-cutting challenge compel collaborative work among teachers?
5. How does each module address the challenge?
6. Does the challenge serve any function in the assessment process?
7. Is there a collegiate assessment? If so, how do you carry it out?
8. What positive and negative aspects do you observe when assessing collegially?
9. In what way does the current assessment align with the educational processes of emerging Continuing Education programs?
10. How can the INSPIRA model promote high-impact assessment processes?

Closing: Final comments, then thanks to participants.