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COLLABORATIVE CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION: AN INTRODUCTION

DESENVOLVIMENTO PROFISSIONAL DOCENTE COLABORATIVO EM EDUCAÇÃO FÍSICA: UMA INTRODUÇÃO 

DESARROLLO PROFESIONAL DOCENTE COLABORATIVO EN EDUCACIÓN FÍSICA: UNA INTRODUCCIÓN 

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 **Luiza Lana Gonçalves*** <luizalana@hotmail.com>

 **Carla Luguetti**** <carla.nascimentoluguetti@vu.edu.au>

 **Cecília Borges***** <cecilia.borges@umontreal.ca>

* Monash University. Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

** Institute for Health and Sport, Victoria University, Australia

*** Université de Montréal. Montreal, Canadá.

Abstract: Collaborative practices in Physical Education continuing professional development (PE-CPD) have been increasingly recognized due to evident benefits for teachers and students. In introducing this special issue, this paper aims to extend and deepen conversations among scholars about the collaborative practices in PE-CPD. Co-designed as a two-year project about collaborative practices, this special issue pursued collaboration through solidarity, knowledge sharing, and negotiation of challenges in internationalised research. Researchers from Brazil, Australia, Canada, Ireland, Portugal, New Zealand, the U.S., and Turkey worked in six groups to explore four themes: (a) types of collaborative PE-CPD, (b) facilitation of PE-CPD, (c) innovative methodologies and, (d) the development of collaborative experiences. In this special issue, we highlight the opportunities and inputs that might improve the research and experiences of those who form, conceive, and participate in collaborative PE-CPD programs around the world.

Key words: Staff development. Teachers. Physical Education. Learning

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1 INTRODUCTION

Continuing professional development (CPD) encompasses multiple learning opportunities in which teachers engage with each other to improve their work throughout their professional learning trajectories (DAY; SACHS, 2004). Increasingly, CPD ensures that “teachers learn and develop professionally through participation in different practices, processes and contexts, whether intentional or not, that promote the development or improvement of teaching practice” (FIORENTINI; CRECCI, 2013, p. 13). Additionally, it is largely argued that, to be effective, teachers’ learning should occur collaboratively (PATTON; PARKER; GONÇALVES, 2022), which means, two or more teachers share their learning and experiences and offer mutual support when they face challenges along their career trajectories (CORDINGLEY *et al.*, 2003; 2015; HARGREAVES; O’CONNOR, 2017). In collaborative practices in CPD: (a) relationships between participants are characterized by mutual respect and support, and they are not supervisory by nature (participants are not monitored); (b) participants are motivated and committed to learning and collaboration; (c) learning activities take place in an environment where dialogue is possible and where participants seek feedback and constructive criticism, and (d) participants engage in reflective practice (KEAY, 2006).

In the last 20 years, and particularly in the last decade, the benefits of collaborative practices in the CPD of teachers, have been increasingly supported by policymakers and researchers in the field of education and physical education (PE). Among other benefits, studies indicate that formal and informal collaboration contributes to CPD processes (CORDINGLEY *et al.*, 2015; HARGREAVES; O’CONNOR, 2017; TIMPERLEY *et al.*, 2007), to the implementation of school curriculum and educational reforms (BORGES *et al.*, 2017; BORGES; LESSARD, 2007) and also introduces improvements in teaching, with benefits for student learning (HARGREAVES; O’CONNOR, 2017; VANGRIEKEN *et al.*, 2017).

Collaborative practices have had an impact on CPD programs and educational practices through the creation of learning communities (LC), collective pedagogical projects, group practices (involving the whole school or specific classes), and the establishment of co-development groups (CARON; PORTELANCE, 2016; VANDERCLEYEN; L’HOSTIE; DUMOULIN, 2019). Similar practices are reflected in educational research, which has adopted increasingly participative and collaborative forms such as action research or collaborative research (DESGAGNÉ *et al.* 2001; DESGAGNÉ; BEBNARZT, 2005; LECLERC *et al.*, 2011). Moreover, teachers themselves collectively appropriate research tools in order to investigate and solve pedagogical problems, and improving their own work (SANCHES NETO; OVENS; CRAIG, 2015).

At the same time, due to the growing interest in collaborative practices in schools, pre-service, or in-service teacher education, CPD programs are the subject of many investigations. These studies have revealed different concepts, typologies, and characterizations as well as multiple challenges, for both teachers and researchers who engage in collaborative projects. Currently, LC is one of the most common

collaborative practices used in PE-CPD (PARKER *et al.*, 2022), thus it is important to introduce here some LC concepts adopted in the field.

1.1 LEARNING COMMUNITIES AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Based on frameworks from either psychology and sociology, or learning organisation theories, several terminologies have been adopted by researchers to refer to learning communities (LCs). According to Grossman, Wineburg, and Woolworth (2001) and Toole and Louis (2002), a variety of terms have been developed to define or explain collaborative learning contexts, such as but not limited to, apprentice communities, school communities, teacher communities, and communities of practice. These terms have led to misunderstandings and sometimes the terms have been developed without due attention to theoretical foundations (VANGRIEKEN *et al.*, 2017).

Despite the variety of terms however, there seems to be consensus about the characteristics of a LCs: supportive groups with shared leadership where people share values, visions, and goals, that engages collective learning and application, shared individual practice and supportive conditions (VANGRIEKEN *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, this consensus demonstrates that the primary foundation of LCs (whether it is created by teachers in the school or linked to CPD programs), is the potential transformation of teachers' practices which ultimately supports students' learning.

In the PE field, Parker *et al.* (2022) highlight that studies about LCs appear early in 2000 and are mainly based on situated learning theory (LAVE; WENGER, 1991; WENGER, 1998). Since then, there has been an exponential growth of research in the field internationally. LCs have been used as a CPD strategy in PE (BEAUDOIN; TURCOTTE; GIGNAC, 2018; DUMOULIN *et al.*, 2019; PARKER *et al.*, 2022) as well as a path to overcome the challenges of professional development by enhancing teacher agency and collaboration between PE teachers, pre-service teachers, and teacher educators (MACPHAIL; LAWSON, 2020). This body of research has reported outcomes that include improving students' learning (HUNUK *et al.* 2013), improving teachers' learning (PATTON; PARKER, 2014) and teachers' empowerment (TANNEHILL; MACPHAIL, 2017). Others have investigated the role of facilitators in LCs (GONÇALVES *et al.*, 2022a; LUGUETTI; OLIVER; PARKER, 2020), and teachers' professional change (DEGLAU; O'SULLIVAN, 2006). From the initial studies in 2000 until 2020, almost one hundred studies addressed LCs in the PE field (PARKER *et al.*, 2022).

Considering Brazil, initial studies were developed with PE teacher-researchers (SANCHES NETO; OVENS; CRAIG, 2015), coaches (BRASIL *et al.*, 2015), in university contexts (LUGUETTI *et al.*, 2018), PE teachers in school environments (GONÇALVES *et al.*, 2022b), and PE teachers in an online space (HEIDI; GONÇALVES; PARKER, 2022). Furthermore, with the growth of the interest about LCs, not only the opportunities of working with collaborative practices were considered, but also the challenges that are presented in developing these practices in the educational field.

1.2 OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF COLLABORATIVE PRACTICES

Studies have already shown that teachers' collaborative practices are part of a *continuum*, from a simple conversation to sharing ideas and anecdotes about teaching, to more robust, interdependent relationships, characterized by shared planning and joint work (BORGES; LESSARD, 2007; DIONNE, 2003; LITTLE, 1990; 2003; TOOLE; LOUIS, 2002). Sometimes, the establishment of collaborative practices is a great challenge for teachers. The fostering of LCs, for example, depend on a combination of factors, such as teacher learning, human and social resources, physical structure, and relationships with stakeholders outside the LC (STOLL *et al.*, 2006; VANGRIEKEN *et al.*, 2017).

One of the main challenges is that teachers are already overworked, adding collaborative practices gives them more work. It has been argued that with the amount of work teachers are made accountable for and the reduced school funding and staffing, engaging in collaborative practices such as action research projects, for example, is problematic (TINNING *et al.*, 1996). Additionally, when collaborative practices are imposed and do not emerge from the teachers themselves, collaborations become a burden, since they require energy, skill, and a high level of investment and mutual trust, which cannot be imposed. Collaboration requires adequate working conditions and support from the school board or educational authorities (BORGES; LESSARD, 2007). Moreover, when collaborative practices do not provoke questioning about current practices and reflection to solve common problems, participation and interaction between teachers become ineffective (or are reduced, etc.) (HARGREAVES; O'CONNOR, 2017; KEAY, 2006; WATSON, 2014). Finally, we should not naively assume that the LCs could solve all problems. As Wenger (1998) points out, they are not a panacea and do not constitute or contain by themselves an emancipatory force. LCs could become a space where participants, from a functionalist perspective, only reproduce the current social order, instead of questioning and transforming their realities (KENNEDY, 2014; LAVE; WENGER, 1991; WATSON, 2014).

Despite these challenges, different formats of collaborative practices have been widely used in several academic areas, largely in the CPD, since they can provide possibilities for meaningful learning, encourage the collective work of teachers, enhance personal engagement, facilitate peer negotiation, and transform individual practices (KENNEDY, 2014; PARKER *et al.* 2022; WATSON, 2014).

2 OVERVIEW OF THE SPECIAL ISSUE

In introducing this special issue, it is important to point out that this issue aims to extend and deepen conversations among scholars about the collaborative practices in PE-CPD. This special issue brings diversity of collaborative practices and approaches, demonstrating different experiences, contexts, and actors involved in those experiences. Twenty-two Brazilian and international researchers from Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, Portugal, the U.S., and Turkey, were united to share experiences and investigations with and about collaborative PE-CPD practices. These researchers collaborated in small research groups and their work generated the six

papers that constitute this special issue. Additionally, we wrote a final paper to offer a template for colleagues who wish to co-design a Special Issue that interrogates the notion of solidarity.

The reader will notice that the studies are from different theoretical and methodological frameworks, highlighting experiences about the opportunities and challenges of collaborative PE-CPD practices, and were guided by different themes and research questions. The following were considered:

- **Types of collaborative PE-CPD.** How are collaborative PE-CPD programs characterised? What are the objectives pursued? What is the nature of collaborative PE-CPD programs (e.g. professional induction, curriculum development and reforms, transformation of practices, support for student learning, etc.)? What types of collaborative practices are actually implemented?
- **The facilitation process in the development and cultivation of collaborative PE-CPD.** What is the role of the facilitator in collaborative PE-CPD? What facilitator's actions contribute and/or hinder the emergence, development, and cultivation of collaborative practices among teachers, students, and researchers?
- **The process of developing collaborative PE-CPD.** How are PE-CPD practices developed? How do the groups evolve during long periods? What are the stages of development? What are the opportunities and challenges in the process of developing collaborative PE-CPD?
- **Innovative methodologies in collaborative PE-CPD.** What are innovative methodologies for the assessment of PE-CPD? What are the research methods? What forms of innovative data collection are employed in the area?

Addressing the types of collaborative PE-CPD, Roraima, Roberto, Stephani, Tim, Anne-Sophie and Cecilia came together to share their different experiences with collaborative PE-CPD practices in Brazil and in different parts of Canada (COSTA FILHO *et al.*, 2022). This first paper highlights these experiences, but additionally examines how they learned by listening to each other's experiences. This article gives insights about designing collaborative PE-CPD practices, highlighting how the frequency and intensity of collaboration, and the degree of interdependency amongst teachers and between teachers and researchers are essential to participants' changes, and the improvement of teaching practices.

Two papers emphasise the facilitation process in the development and cultivation of collaborative PE-CPD. Carla Vidoni, Deniz, and Luiza discussed the facilitation process of PE-CPD practices in PE teacher education programs (VIDONI, HUNUK; GONÇALVES, 2022). Additionally, as much as they came together to share their experiences, the authors noticed they also were learning together about the facilitation process. As a result of this collaborative self-study, they recognised that the process of learning to become a facilitator is a never-ending journey. They highlighted that even though challenges such as isolation and power relations will always be present in this journey, the learning journey is richer if supported by critical friends and lived practice. The self-study with a focus on the facilitation process was also the method used by Luiz Sanches Neto, João and Alan to reflect on and share

the experiences of Luiz as a participant in a 17-year-long knowledge community of teachers in Brazil (SANCHES NETO, COSTA; OVENS, 2022). Through the support of João and Alan as his critical friends, Luiz was able to look back and bring forward his experiences in fostering and maintaining this community in collaborative work with the other members for so many years. They highlight the complexity of this process, considering the relational connections, affective forces, affordances and agential capacities that are present within communities. Both papers in this theme focus on the importance of understanding facilitation as a critical element of collaborative practices development, which requires the support of critical friends and a long-term engagement with the group and/or with the learning about how to facilitate these practices itself.

Two papers focus on the process of developing collaborative PE-CPD. In the first paper, Heidi, a teacher-facilitator of a Brazilian learning community since 2020, worked with Missy and Kevin to share in detail how her community developed. The authors describe what joined a teacher-only community and what keeps them together even in the challenging period of COVID-19 and subsequent remote PE teaching (FERREIRA, PATTON; PARKER, 2022). The second paper about the process of developing collaborative PE-CPD was written by Janaina, Samuel, and Paula (FERREIRA, SOUZA NETO; BATISTA, 2022). This paper describes the experiences of one of the largest professional development programs in Brazil, the *Residência Pedagógica*, as a collaborative practice¹. Janaína, Samuel and Paula analysed how PE student-teachers developed their professional knowledge within a community, transitioning from a peripheral and individualized position of knowledge to knowledge built collectively. Both papers in this theme highlighted how learning communities can be structured, especially in the online/hybrid format, to facilitate the development of the community itself and ultimately, student-teachers and teachers learning.

The sixth paper in this special issue reflects on innovative methodologies in collaborative PE-CPD. Luiz Gustavo, Marcos, Carla, and Cassandra (RUFINO *et al.*, 2022) demonstrate the matches and mismatches found in collaborative practices that can occur in the life of teachers and researchers in Brazil. Using innovative research methodologies such as living graphs and photo-elicitation, the authors revisited the professional trajectory of Luiz and Marcos to showcase barriers to collaborative work in Brazil, but also, effective collaborative practices that can help teachers to surmount their daily challenges.

In the final paper in this special issue (LUGUETTI *et al.*, 2022), we as editors with the support of Ann as critical friend, detail the co-design process of this special issue and discuss the theoretical bases that motivated the project. In addition to setting a form of template for colleagues who wish to work with collaboration and internationalisation, this final paper reinforces the importance of recognising

¹ The *Programa Institucional de Bolsas de Iniciação à Docência* and the *Residência Pedagógica* are the two Brazilian national Physical Education Teacher Education programs that focus on the induction of student-teachers. The programs were school-based and collaborative in their nature since they bring together teachers, teacher educators, and student-teachers in weekly meetings and teaching practices establishing a partnership between schools and universities around Brazil. To understand more about these programs, we encourage the readers to read Costa Filho *et al.* (2022) and Ferreira, Souza Neto, Batista (2022) in this Special Issue.

collaboration and internationalisation grounded in solidarity as a critical aspect of transforming inequality in the academy.

As editors, we were motivated to organise this project based on collaboration and internationalisation in Brazil, firstly because of the increasing growth of the collaborative PE-CPD theme, as demonstrated previously and, secondly, to disseminate the diverse rich experiences that are lived in Brazil and not always shared and recognised. However, we wanted to avoid a special issue format based on a modern form of colonisation, where international researchers are invited to work individually and import theories or experiences to Brazil. Instead, we pursued collaboration and solidarity, shared knowledge, and negotiation of challenges in the internationalisation of research. Thus, more than a collection of articles, this special issue was a two-year collaborative project about collaborative PE-CPD practices. In the end, we expect not only to contribute to a better understanding of collaborative PE-CPD as a field of study, but also to highlight the challenges and opportunities that can improve the research and experiences of those who form, conceive, and participate in collaborative PE-CPD programs around the world. We hope readers enjoy the articles of this special issue, and that this work resonates in the planning, action, and research about collaborative PE-CPD practices in Brazil and internationally.

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Resumo: Práticas colaborativas no desenvolvimento profissional docente em Educação Física (DPD-EF) tem sido cada vez mais apoiadas devido aos benefícios reconhecidos para professores e alunos. Ao apresentar este número especial, este artigo visa ampliar e aprofundar as conversas entre pesquisadores sobre as práticas colaborativas no DPD-EF. Codeseñado como um projeto colaborativo de dois anos sobre práticas colaborativas, esta edição especial buscou colaboração e solidariedade, compartilhamento de conhecimento e negociação de desafios na internacionalização da pesquisa. Pesquisadores do Brasil, Austrália, Canadá, Irlanda, Portugal, Nova Zelândia, Estados Unidos e Turquia trabalharam em seis grupos para discutir quatro temas: (a) tipos de DPD-EF colaborativo, (b) facilitação de DPD-EF, (c) metodologias inovadoras e, (d) o desenvolvimento de experiências colaborativas. Ao final, esperamos destacar os desafios e contribuições que podem melhorar as pesquisas e experiências daqueles que formam, concebem e participam de práticas colaborativas de DPD-EF em todo o mundo.

Palavras-chave: Desenvolvimento de pessoal. Professores. Educação Física. Aprendizagem.

Resumen: Prácticas colaborativas en el desarrollo profesional docente en Educación Física (DPD-EF) han sido cada vez más apoyadas debido a sus beneficios reconocidos para profesores y alumnos. Al presentar esta sesión En Foco, este artículo pretende ampliar y profundizar el diálogo entre investigadores acerca de las prácticas colaborativas en el DPD-EF. Codiseñado como un proyecto colaborativo de dos años sobre prácticas colaborativas, esta sesión especial buscó colaboración y solidaridad, intercambio de conocimiento y negociación de desafíos en la internacionalización de la investigación. Investigadores de Brasil, Australia, Canadá, Irlanda, Portugal, Nueva Zelanda, Estados Unidos y Turquía trabajaron en seis grupos para discutir cuatro temas: (a) tipos de DPD-EF colaborativo, (b) facilitación de DPD-EF, (c) metodologías innovadoras y (d) el desarrollo de experiencias colaborativas. Al final, esperamos destacar los desafíos y contribuciones que pueden mejorar las investigaciones y experiencias de aquellos que forman, conciben y participan en prácticas colaborativas de DPD-EF en todo el mundo.

Palabra clave: Desarrollo de personal. Profesores. Educación Física. Aprendizaje.

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CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in this study.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Luiza Lana Gonçalves: Conceptual development; Writing; Translation.

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Alex Branco Fraga*, Elisandro Schultz Wittizorecki*, Mauro Myskiw*, Raquel da Silveira*

*Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Escola de Educação Física, Fisioterapia e Dança, Porto Alegre, RS, Brasil.