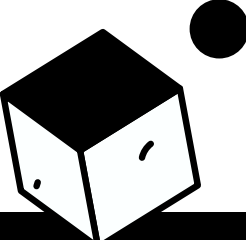



ContinueUP



**Co-construction
between ITE and
CPD: *guidelines
for strengthening
the continuum***



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Executive summary

Teacher learning is most effective when preparation, induction and ongoing professional development are **designed as interconnected phases rather than isolated learning experiences**. Yet in many systems, ITE and CPD operate in parallel, with different expectations, and pedagogical languages. This can result in duplicated efforts, gaps in support for early-career teachers and missed opportunities for mutual learning.

These guidelines offer practical approaches for bridging this divide. They invite ITE and CPD partners to build a shared vision of teacher learning as a continuum, to deepen understanding of each other's contexts, and to establish simple but robust communication and governance structures. The document outlines a phased process for co-construction—from needs analysis and joint pathway design to co-delivery and shared evaluation.

A central message is that **coherence across the continuum does not require major structural reform**. Small, intentional steps—such as creating a shared glossary, aligning a single pedagogical routine, establishing short regular check-ins, or co-developing one shared artefact—can significantly improve alignment and lay the groundwork for deeper collaboration. Over time, these steps enable ITE and CPD partners to design learning experiences that build on one another, support smoother transitions into the profession, and strengthen teachers' long-term professional growth.

Above all, **co-construction is itself a learning process**. By approaching collaboration with curiosity, transparency and respect for each partner's expertise, institutions can move beyond isolated initiatives and contribute to a more coherent and sustainable teacher-learning ecosystem.

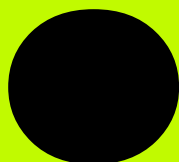
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1



Introduction

1.1 Background and rationale

Across Europe, responsibility for teachers' professional learning is typically shared between Initial Teacher Education (ITE) providers and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) providers. ITE institutions introduce student teachers to the profession, ground them in research-informed theory and offer structured opportunities for practicum and supervised reflection. CPD providers, together with schools and educational authorities, support teachers as they manage the day-to-day realities of classrooms, policy reforms and evolving societal expectations.

Despite this apparent continuity, these two worlds often operate in parallel rather than as a coherent system. Student teachers may encounter concepts, tools or pedagogical approaches during ITE that are not revisited or deepened once they enter the profession. Conversely, CPD offers may assume prior experiences or competences that student teachers have not had the opportunity to develop. Differences in institutional cultures, timelines, regulatory frameworks and working languages can all make it difficult to design learning opportunities that *deliberately* build on one another.

The ContinueUP project set out to address this challenge by bringing ITE and CPD partners into structured co-construction processes. Partners jointly designed an ITE short course and a CPD massive open online course (MOOC), each responding to national and local realities while contributing to a shared European vision of teacher professionalism. In doing so, they experienced both the benefits and the practical difficulties of working "across the border" between ITE and CPD. The insights, tools and examples generated through those experiences are at the heart of the present guidelines. They are based on lessons learned rather than a strict record of what was implemented and represent how we would approach co-construction with the benefit of hindsight.

This set of guidelines is the third in a three-part series of guidelines coming from the project. It focuses specifically on co-construction between ITE and CPD partners and thereby complements the existing guidelines developed separately with and for ITE providers and CPD providers¹. While many principles and processes are shared, this document zooms in on the *interface* between the two communities and on what it takes to turn a series of isolated initiatives into a more coherent teacher learning continuum.

1.2 Why a continuum approach is empirically supported

Extensive research demonstrates that teacher learning unfolds across interconnected phases rather than in isolated stages, underscoring the value of treating preparation, induction and early-career development as a developmental continuum. Longitudinal studies show that professional knowledge, identity

1 [HTTPS://CONTINUEUP.EUN.ORG/OUTPUT](https://continueup.eun.org/output)

and pedagogical reasoning evolve cumulatively and are highly sensitive to the coherence—or fragmentation—between ITE and CPD experiences (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Ronfeldt et al., 2014). When these phases align conceptually and structurally, teachers are more likely to integrate core ideas from ITE into sustained classroom practice, develop adaptive expertise and remain engaged in the profession (Korthagen, 2017). Discontinuities, on the other hand, often contribute to “practice shock”, reduced self-efficacy and higher attrition (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). Three transition points are particularly well studied:

Practicum > induction

During practicum, student teachers form initial understandings of classrooms, often shaped by strong mentoring relationships and structured reflection. The transition into full responsibility, however, exposes them to complexity that can challenge or destabilise these early frameworks. Research repeatedly shows that continuity in mentoring, shared pedagogical concepts and opportunities to revisit ITE artefacts can substantially reduce the abruptness of this shift (Hobson et al., 2009; Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Without such continuity, novices often perceive that they are “starting over”, which weakens the impact of earlier learning.

Induction > early career

Induction programmes offer crucial scaffolding for beginning teachers, and their quality strongly predicts confidence, classroom performance and retention (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). As teachers move into the early-career phase, they gradually shift from supported experimentation to greater autonomy. Evidence suggests that when early-career CPD explicitly builds on the approaches, language and frameworks introduced during ITE and induction, teachers develop stronger professional judgement and engage more productively in collaborative inquiry (OECD, 2019; Wang et al., 2008).

Early career > ongoing professional development

By around the third to fifth year of teaching, teachers consolidate core pedagogical repertoires. This period is a key inflection point: it is when teachers either deepen inquiry-oriented, reflective practice or settle into more routine patterns. Studies indicate that carefully aligned CPD—rather than CPD that introduces entirely new conceptual paradigms—helps practitioners meaningfully connect theoretical principles from ITE with classroom realities, which, in turn, promotes adaptive expertise and long-term professional growth (Korthagen, 2017; OECD, 2019).

Taken together, empirical findings suggest that designing learning opportunities as a coherent continuum—across practicum, induction and the early career—supports smoother transitions, reinforces core professional ideas and increases the likelihood that promising practices introduced in ITE become embedded in long-term professional repertoires. These insights align strongly with the purpose

of the present guidelines: strengthening intentional bridges between ITE and CPD so that teachers' learning trajectories are cumulative, supported and sustainable.

1.3 Purpose of these guidelines

The purpose of this document is to support ITE and CPD stakeholders who wish to jointly design, develop, implement and evaluate learning opportunities for teachers that span the transition from pre-service to in-service practice. Concretely, these guidelines aim to help ITE and CPD partners to:

- **develop a shared vision** of teacher learning as a continuum and position their joint work within that bigger picture.
- **understand each other's contexts, roles and constraints** well enough to make informed design decisions, rather than treating the other side as a "black box".
- **co-construct programmes and pathways** in ways that respect institutional mandates and regulatory frameworks, while still allowing for innovation.
- **create explicit bridges** between ITE and CPD offers (e.g. shared competence frameworks, overlapping pedagogical approaches, aligned assessment practices).
- **establish feedback loops** so that insights from ITE inform CPD design and vice versa, leading to mutual learning and ongoing improvement.
- **anticipate and manage typical challenges** in ITE–CPD collaboration, such as different working rhythms, decision-making cultures or expectations about outputs and timelines.

Rather than prescribing a single model, the guidelines collect strategies, examples and questions that teams can adapt to their own national, institutional and thematic contexts. They are meant to be used both when planning new initiatives and when revisiting existing collaborations that would benefit from deeper co-construction, both at national and international levels.

1.4 Target audience and typical use cases

These guidelines are written for stakeholders who are directly involved in ITE–CPD collaboration or who have a mandate to support such collaboration, including:

- **ITE stakeholders:** programme directors, course leaders, practicum coordinators, academic staff engaged in teacher education.
- **CPD stakeholders:** leaders and coordinators of CPD centres, course designers, training providers operating at regional or national level.
- **schools and school systems:** head teachers, mentor teachers, induction coordinators, pedagogical advisors.
- **policy-makers and intermediary organisations:** ministries, agencies, professional bodies, networks and projects (e.g. Erasmus+ projects) that could finance or steer joint ITE–CPD work.

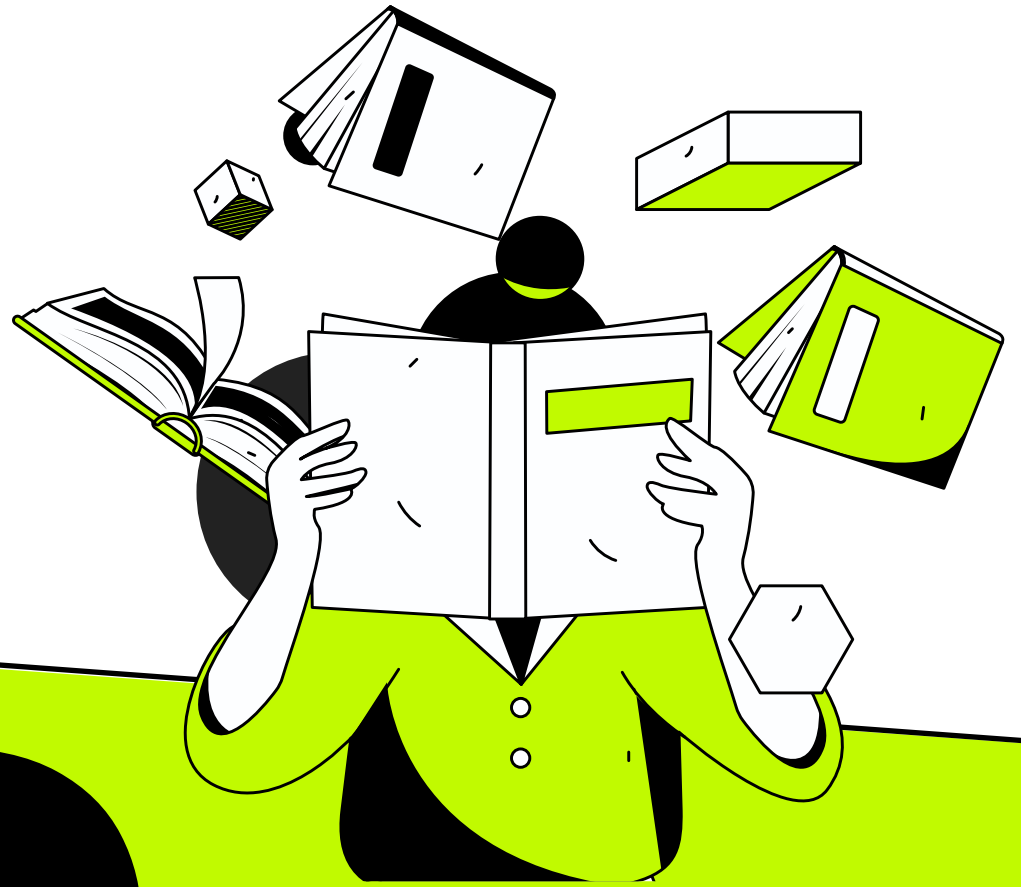
Typical use cases include, for example:

- a university and a regional CPD centre jointly designing an ITE module and a follow-up CPD course on the same theme, aimed at student teachers and newly qualified teachers respectively.
- an Erasmus+ project that wishes to ensure that its European-level offers are embedded in ITE curricula and CPD frameworks.
- a network of schools working with both a university and a CPD provider to create a multi-year learning pathway that starts during practicum and continues through the first years of employment.

For all of these actors, the guidelines provide a shared reference point and vocabulary to discuss how responsibilities, expertise and decision-making can be shared across institutional boundaries.

● 1.5 How to read and use this document

This document is designed to be **modular and practical**. It can be read from beginning to end, but it can also be dipped into at different stages of a project. Readers are encouraged to treat the guidelines as a starting point for discussion, adaptation and further refinement as more experience with ITE–CPD co-construction accumulates.



2.

**Shared vision, values
and principles for
ITE-CPD
co-construction**

Before partners decide *what* to design together, it is essential to agree *why* they are collaborating and *how* they want to work. A shared vision and a small set of clear principles help ITE and CPD providers to keep the “big picture” in view when they face time pressure, institutional constraints or diverging expectations.

2.1 Seeing teacher learning as a continuum

ITE–CPD co-construction starts from the idea that teachers’ professional learning is not a series of disconnected episodes, but a continuum stretching from initial preparation through induction and into ongoing professional development. In this perspective:

- **ITE** introduces core professional concepts, habits and identities. It provides a safe environment for experimentation, supported reflection and feedback.
- **Induction and early-career CPD** help novice teachers to translate what they have learned into real classrooms, make sense of the complexity they encounter and refine their practice.
- **Ongoing CPD** allows more experienced teachers to deepen and broaden their expertise, respond to new challenges and contribute to the profession’s collective knowledge.

TEACHER’S LEARNING JOURNEY

UNIVERSITY/COLLEGE (ITE)

SCHOOL (INDUCTION & EARLY-CAREER)

SCHOOL (ONGOING CPD & EXPERTISE)

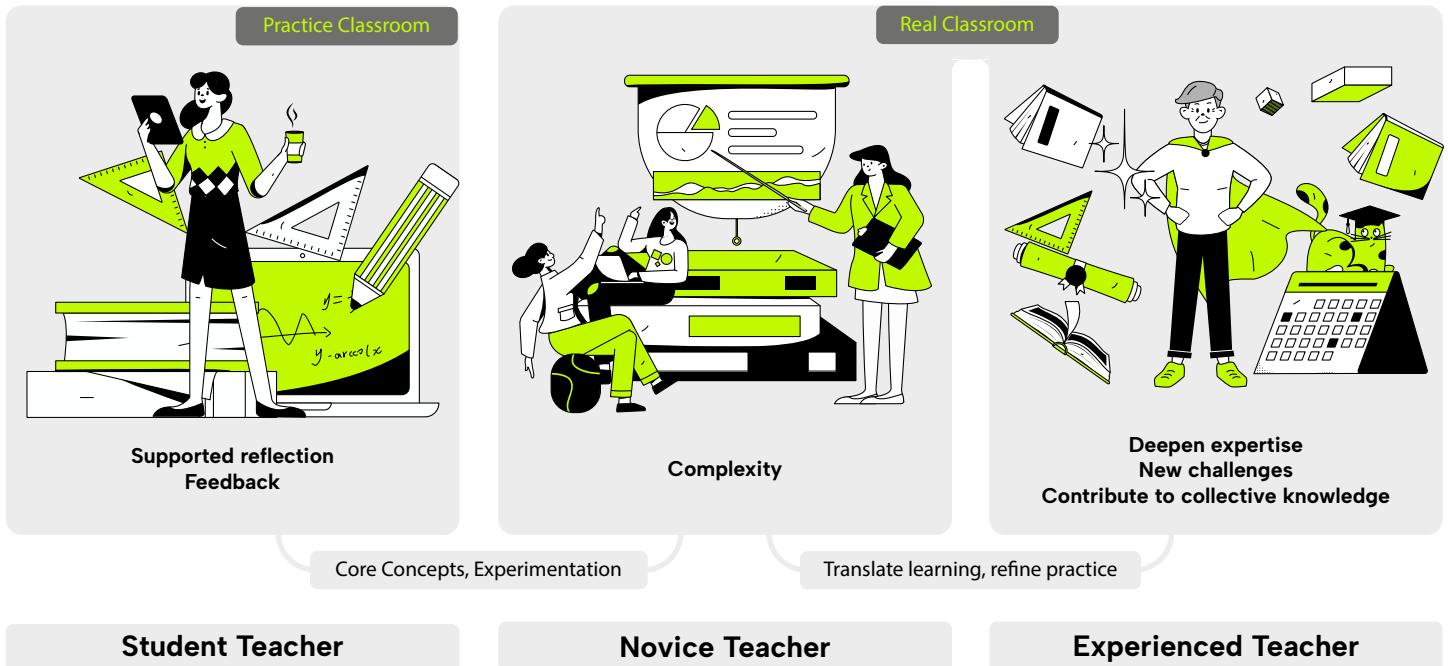


Figure 1. Teacher’s learning journey

When ITE and CPD providers co-construct offers, they are not simply creating “an ITE module” and “a CPD course”. They are designing linked learning episodes in a longer learning story for teachers. To make this visible, partnerships are encouraged to:

- draw a simple “learning pathway map” which shows the typical journey of a student teacher into their first years in the profession and beyond.
- mark on this map where the jointly developed ITE and CPD components sit, what comes before and after them, and what transitions participants will experience.
- identify explicit “bridges” (e.g. assignments that carry over, shared portfolios, shared concepts or tools) so that each component clearly prepares for the next.



Reflection prompt: If a student teacher followed your current ITE module and then took part in your CPD offer two or three years later, what would feel familiar? What would feel entirely new? What do you want that journey to look like?

● 2.2 Complementary roles and shared responsibility

ITE and CPD providers usually bring different but complementary strengths to the table. Recognising and valuing these differences is a precondition for meaningful co-construction. Typically:

- **ITE partners** contribute:
 - strong links to educational research and theory.
 - expertise in curriculum design, academic assessment and supervision of practicum.
 - direct access to student teachers, and insight into their prior experiences and needs.
- **CPD partners** contribute:
 - proximity to classrooms, school development processes and policy implementation.
 - experience in designing formats that fit in-service teachers’ time constraints and school cultures.
 - ongoing contact with mentors, school leaders and networks of practising teachers.

COMPLEMENTARY ROLES AND SHARED RESPONSIBILITY



Figure 2. Complementary roles and shared responsibility

ITE–CPD co-construction is most powerful when neither side is merely “consulted”. Instead, both sides:

- take joint responsibility for the overall learning pathway, not only for “their” component.
- are involved in key decisions about aims, content, pedagogy, assessment and evaluation.
- see each other as co-experts: ITE brings a research- and curriculum-oriented lens; CPD brings a practice- and system-oriented lens. Both are necessary to design learning that is both theoretically sound and practically relevant.

In practice, this can be supported by:

- designing tasks so that they are co-led by at least one ITE and one CPD partner.
- planning meetings where each side presents its constraints and strengths, and where time is reserved to explore how these complement each other.
- using language that signals shared responsibility (“our module”, “our course”, “our pathway” rather than “the ITE part” and “the CPD part”).



Reflection prompt: In your current collaboration, who is seen as “owning” which parts of the programme? Are there decisions where one side is routinely deferred to? Is this deliberate, and does it need to be rebalanced?

2.3 Core principles for ITE–CPD co-construction

On the basis of the teacher learning continuum and the complementarity of roles, ITE and CPD partners can agree on a small number of principles to guide all stages of co-construction. The list below can be adapted and prioritised by each partnership. For each principle, you will find a short explanation and suggestions of what it means in practice.

7 CORE PRINCIPLES FOR ITE–CPD CO-CONSTRUCTION

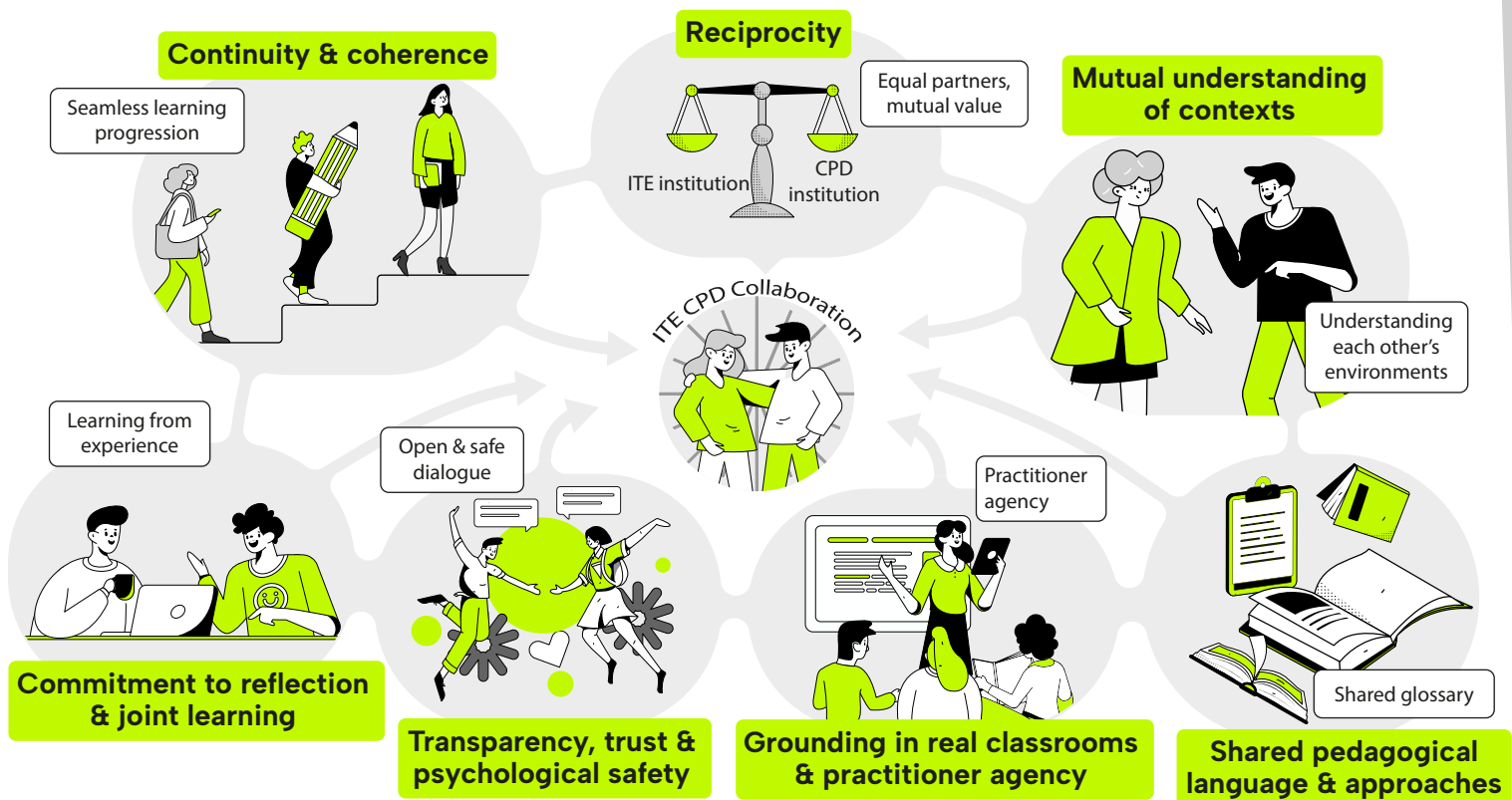


Figure 3. 7 Core principles for ITE–CPD co-construction

2.3.1 Continuity and coherence

What it means: Learning experiences in ITE and CPD should connect logically and conceptually. Participants should recognise themes, tools and approaches as they move from one phase to another, and feel that their prior learning is valued and built on.

In practice, this implies:

- using a shared competence framework or at least a shared set of key concepts to design both ITE and CPD components.
- designing assignments and activities so that they refer back to prior learning (e.g. asking early-career teachers to revisit artefacts or reflections from ITE).
- avoiding unnecessary repetition of identical content; instead, revisiting topics at a higher level of complexity or in new contexts.

In ContinueUP, the European Digital Competence Framework for Educators (also known as DigCompEdu) provided a strong starting point for planning the work. From the outset, it offered learning outcomes and a progression model that structured discussions about priorities and the level at which each programme component should operate. The framework therefore played a key role in guiding the co-construction. However, partners initially interpreted its progression levels differently, which required substantial discussion and negotiation to establish a coherent learning path from ITE to CPD. Partnerships are therefore encouraged to use similar competence frameworks to orient their work, but should not underestimate the time needed to develop a shared understanding of the framework's key elements.

2.3.2 Reciprocity

What it means: ITE and CPD institutions, and the people working within them, see each other as equal partners. The collaboration creates value for both sides and for the wider system, not just for one project or one programme.

In practice, this implies:

- ensuring that both ITE and CPD partners are equally represented in all key meetings, decisions, communications.
- seeking mutual benefits, for example:
 - ITE staff gaining fresh insights into classroom realities and system-level priorities.
 - CPD staff gaining access to research, new tools and student teachers as future participants.
- being attentive to power imbalances and addressing them openly.

2.3.3 Mutual understanding of contexts

What it means: Partners make an effort to understand each other's institutional, national and cultural contexts: regulations, calendars, typical participants, internal decision-making processes, and resource constraints.

In practice, this implies:

- investing time early in the collaboration for context-mapping exercises, visits or job-shadowing.
- developing a shared overview of key constraints (e.g. exam periods, school holiday peaks, recognition rules) and keeping it updated.
- being explicit about what is negotiable and what is not, so that expectations remain realistic.

2.3.4 Shared pedagogical language and approaches

What it means: While ITE and CPD will always use a variety of methods, it helps participants if they encounter some consistent pedagogical patterns and vocabulary as they move along the learning pathway.

In practice, this implies:

- agreeing key pedagogical principles (e.g. inquiry-based learning, collaborative tasks, reflective practice) that will underpin both ITE and CPD components.
- developing a common glossary of important terms (e.g. “module”, “lesson”, “case study”) and using it consistently in materials and facilitation.
- being transparent with participants about why certain methods are used, so they can recognise the continuity when they see similar approaches later.

In ContinueUP, we did not invest enough time at the outset to agree on a common vocabulary. By the time we realised this was causing problems, certain terms had already become embedded in everyday project language, making it much harder to adjust them later. The shared glossary created in the project can be seen [here](#).

2.3.5 Grounding in real classrooms and practitioner agency

What it means: ITE–CPD co-construction should bridge research and practice. Student teachers and in-service teachers are not passive recipients of content but active co-interpreters and co-creators.

In practice, this implies:

- incorporating real school cases, classroom videos, practitioner inquiries and examples of student work into both ITE and CPD offers.
- designing tasks that invite participants to try out ideas in their own settings, then bring back evidence and reflections.
- creating mechanisms for teacher voices (including student teachers) to feed into the ongoing refinement of both ITE and CPD components.

In ContinueUP, we used a rigorous validation process with both student teachers and in-service teachers. Each group tested draft versions of the ITE short course and the CPD MOOC and provided feedback in focus groups. Their insights directly informed the final design of the programme.

2.3.6 Transparency, trust and psychological safety

What it means: Co-construction thrives when partners feel safe to share half-formed ideas, uncertainties and constraints. Transparency about expectations, timelines and responsibilities builds trust and reduces misunderstandings.

In practice, this implies:

- starting collaborations by agreeing ground rules for communication, feedback and handling disagreements.
- being honest about time constraints, institutional priorities and limits—rather than silently absorbing pressure or over-promising.
- valuing constructive critique and learning from mistakes in pilots, rather than framing them as failures.

In ContinueUP, partners gradually developed this climate of transparency through several specific practices. Early in the project, teams introduced short warm-up activities and check-ins at the start of joint meetings, which helped create a more personal atmosphere and made it easier for colleagues to voice uncertainties. As design pressures increased, partners began to openly articulate institutional constraints – such as semester deadlines, national accreditation rules or workload peaks – rather than letting these surface only once delays occurred. This shift reduced frustration and allowed teams to adjust timelines collaboratively.

2.3.7 Commitment to reflection and joint learning

What it means: The collaboration itself is seen as a learning process. Partners take time to reflect on how they work together, not only on the products they create.

In practice, this implies:

- building regular reflection moments into project timelines (e.g. after key meetings, after piloting cycles).
- using simple tools such as debriefing questions or short surveys to capture experiences.
- documenting lessons learned and revisiting them when planning new iterations or new projects.

In ContinueUP, regular reflection sessions were built into project meetings, and a shared development diary was used to document the insights. Partners may wish to turn these principles into a short, shared statement or “partnership charter” that can be revisited during the collaboration and used to orient new colleagues who join later. In ContinueUP a similar type of document was developed which outlined the key principles of the co-construction.



3.

**Deeply understanding
each other's contexts**

For ITE–CPD co-construction to be meaningful, partners need more than good will and a shared topic. They need a realistic picture of each other’s institutional, national and cultural contexts: how programmes are structured, what constraints they operate under, how decisions are taken, and what daily work actually looks like.

This section proposes concrete processes and tools to build that understanding. Many of them emerged directly from the experiences of ContinueUP partners during preparatory meetings, interviews and joint reflection sessions.

UNDERSTANDING EACH OTHER’S CONTEXTS

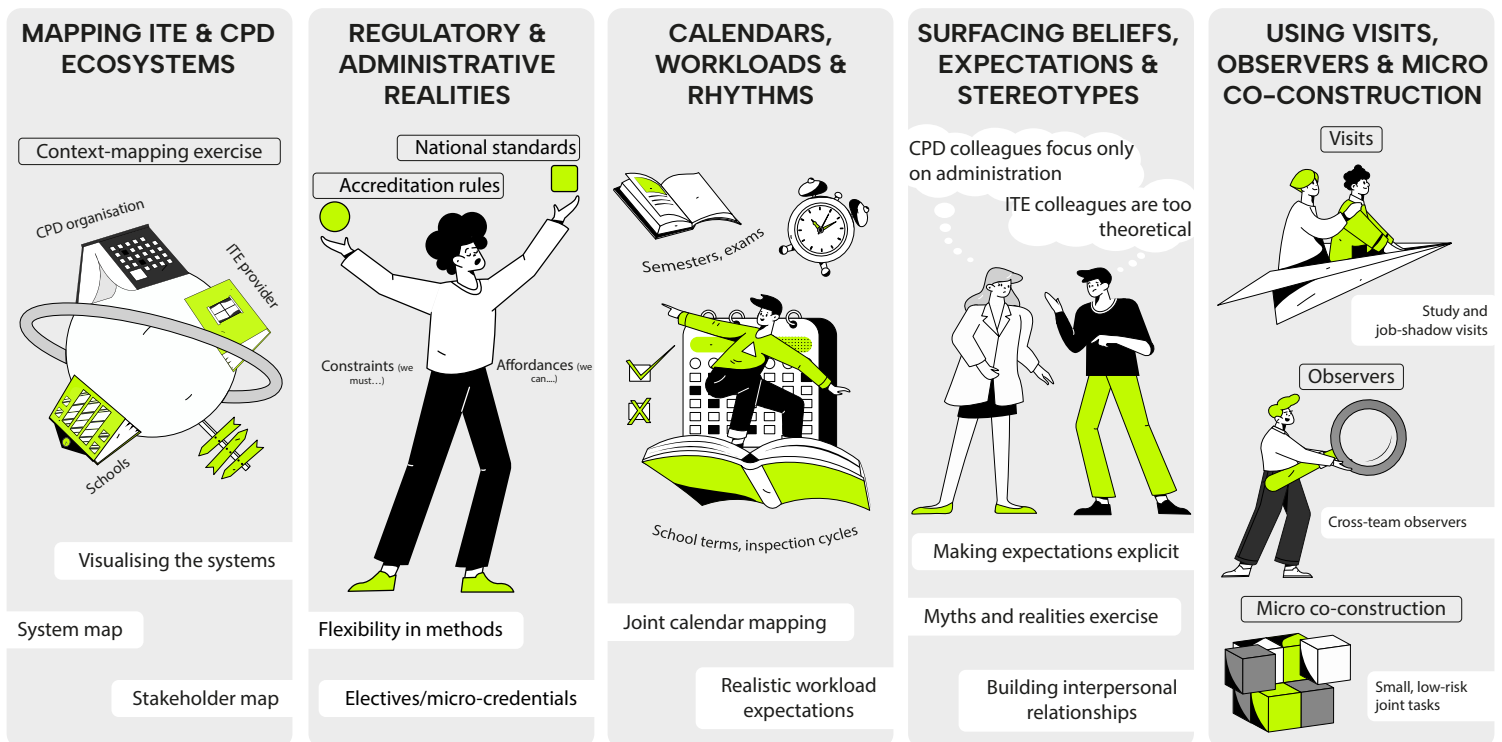


Figure 4. Understanding each other’s contexts

3.1 Mapping the ITE and CPD ecosystems

A first step is to make the two ecosystems visible to one another.

3.1.1 Context-mapping exercise

Partners can dedicate an early meeting (or series of short exchanges) to a structured context-mapping exercise in which each side presents:

- **Mandate and mission**
 - What is the institution and the team working on the co-construction specifically responsible for – both within their institution and within the education landscape more generally?

- Who are its primary stakeholders (students, schools, ministries, regions, etc.)?
- **Organisational structure**
 - How does this faculty/department working on the co-construction relate to other parts of their institution, what are the dependencies and hierarchies in place?
 - Typical decision-making lines (e.g. programme committees, boards).
- **Participant profiles**
 - For ITE: typical student teacher backgrounds, entry routes, practicum patterns.
 - For CPD: target groups (novice, experienced, subject-specific), motivations, incentives for participation.
- **Current offer**
 - Existing courses/modules on the theme of the joint project.
 - Ongoing reforms or other projects that might interact with the co-constructed work.

It is helpful to use a shared template (a simple 1–2 page form) that all partners complete in advance. During the meeting, each institution presents its completed template and others are encouraged to ask clarifying questions.

In ContinueUP, only institutions that hosted project meetings presented their organisations, and the lack of guidance on what to cover meant these presentations stayed too generic. They paid little attention to the specific institutional dynamics that would shape co-construction. As a result, we began the project without a solid understanding of each other's relevant contexts, which later led to challenges and misunderstandings.

3.1.2 Visualising the systems

To move beyond text-heavy descriptions, partners can jointly build:

- a “system map” showing how ITE providers, CPD organisations, schools, ministries and other actors relate to one another (e.g. arrows for flows of funding, accreditation, information).
- a “stakeholder map” identifying which actors are close to the daily work (teachers, mentors, course coordinators) and which shape the framework conditions (regulators, quality assurance agencies, funders).

These visualisations help everyone see where the joint work fits and where potential bottlenecks or leverage points lie.



Reflection prompt: If a student teacher from your ITE institution becomes a teacher in a school served by your CPD partner, what touchpoints would they have with each organisation over the first five years of their career?

3.2 Regulatory and administrative realities

ITE and CPD institutions are embedded in different regulatory frameworks. Misunderstandings often arise when one side assumes that the other can simply “decide” in areas that are actually tightly regulated.

3.2.1 Constraints and affordances

Partners are encouraged to openly share:

- **non-negotiable constraints**, for example:
 - accreditation rules (e.g. minimum ECTS, required content, assessment forms).
 - national standards and curricula.
 - limitations in the modality or format of delivery
 - legal obligations around data protection, ethics, or employment.
- **affordances and degrees of freedom**, for example:
 - flexibility in selecting teaching methods, assignments, formats or study materials.
 - options to create electives, micro-credentials or “bonus” activities.
 - the ability to recognise external CPD as part of career progression.

A simple way of doing this is to create a two-column table for each partner:

- column 1: “We *must* ...” (constraints).
- column 2: “We *can* ...” (degrees of freedom).

Partners can then look for overlaps and opportunities: places where one side’s flexibility can compensate for the other’s rigidity, or where joint solutions can satisfy multiple requirements at once.

3.3 Calendars, workloads and rhythms

Even when goals are aligned, ITE and CPD partners often live by different calendars. Universities may be dominated by semester schedules and exam periods; schools and CPD centres by school terms, inspection cycles and policy timelines. Failing to recognise this early can undermine co-construction.

3.3.1 Joint calendar mapping

Partners can jointly create a year-at-a-glance calendar that marks:

- For ITE:

- semester start and end dates.
- exam periods, practicum blocks, holidays.
- internal deadlines for curriculum changes or assessment design.
- For CPD:
 - busy and quiet periods in schools (e.g. exam weeks, reporting periods).
 - peak CPD seasons.

Using coloured blocks or symbols, the group can quickly identify:

- “red zones” where everyone is overloaded.
- “yellow zones” where some partners are under pressure.
- “green zones” where co-construction work is more realistic.

This map can then guide scheduling of joint meetings, design sprints and pilots, and reduce the likelihood of important tasks landing at impossible times for one side.

3.3.2 Realistic workload expectations

Context-mapping should include frank discussion of:

- typical teaching loads and administrative tasks for staff on both sides.
- availability of support staff (instructional designers, admin, IT).
- existing commitments to other projects.

The goal is to agree on realistic time allocations for co-construction and adjust ambitions accordingly.



Reflection prompt: Looking at your joint calendar, are there phases where co-construction work is concentrated on one group because the other is overloaded? Is this acceptable, or does it risk undermining the sense of shared ownership?

3.4 Surfacing beliefs, expectations and stereotypes

Context is not only structural; it also includes the beliefs and assumptions that professionals carry about each other’s work. ContinueUP partners reported that early conversations sometimes revealed implicit stereotypes, such as “ITE colleagues are too theoretical” or “CPD colleagues focus only on administration”, which needed to be unpacked.

3.4.1 Making expectations explicit

At an early joint meeting, partners can:

- share what they hope to gain from the collaboration (for their institution, for teachers, for the system).
- share what they fear (e.g. extra workload with little influence, being seen as junior partners, not meeting policy expectations).
- clarify success criteria: what would make the collaboration worth continuing after the project ends?

Using simple tools like sticky notes or online boards helps everyone see patterns and discuss them openly.

3.4.2 “Myths and realities” exercise

Partners can run a light-touch activity:

- in homogeneous groups (ITE with ITE, CPD with CPD), members list statements that they think the *other* group might believe about them (e.g. “They think we are too theoretical / they think we don’t understand schools.”).
- groups then swap lists and comment: which statements feel accurate, which are misconceptions?
- in plenary, groups discuss what surprised them and what they learned.

This exercise helps bring tacit assumptions to the surface and creates openings for empathy rather than defensiveness.

3.4.3 Building interpersonal relationships

Understanding context also happens informally. Partnerships can deliberately create space for:

- short 1:1 meetings or “speed-dating” sessions between people with similar roles across ITE and CPD.
- online or in-person “coffee chats” that are not tied to immediate deliverables.
- if possible, occasional on-site visits where visitors can sit in on classes, workshops or team meetings.

Such activities may feel like a luxury, but they often pay off later when trust is needed to navigate delays or disagreements.

3.5 Using visits, observers and micro co-construction

Some of the most powerful insights in ContinueUP came from seeing each other work, not just hearing descriptions. This can be systematised in three ways.

3.5.1 Study and job-shadow visits

Partners can arrange visits to each other’s institutions during which visitors:

- attend relevant ITE lectures, seminars or practicum briefings.
- observe CPD workshops, webinars or coaching sessions.
- meet with administrative staff to understand behind-the-scenes processes.

To make these visits productive, hosts can prepare a short orientation pack and visitors can be asked to note:

- what surprises them.
- what they recognise from their own context.
- what ideas they would like to bring back.

A debrief meeting after the visit can then turn impressions into concrete implications for joint design.

In ContinueUP, we organised two study visits, but they focused more on joint design work than on developing a deep understanding of the host institution and debriefing impressions. This was partly due to language barriers in the international partnership and partly because limited on-site meetings had to be prioritised for direct programme design.

3.5.2 “Learning spies” or cross-team observers

The idea of “learning spies” is to appoint one or two people who consistently attend meetings of both the ITE-focused and CPD-focused teams. Their role is to:

- observe how each team understands the shared goals.
- notice where work is diverging or where one side could benefit from the other’s insights.
- bring structured feedback back to both groups.

For this to work, the role should be:

- clearly explained and accepted by all partners.
- supported with simple templates (e.g. “What I heard”, “Possible implications”, “Questions to bring back”).
- recognised in workload planning; it is not an “extra” done on the side.

In ContinueUP, we introduced “learning spies” midway through the design process. They were useful for cross-group communication and alignment, but irregular attendance and rotating responsibility reduced their impact. Clearer guidance on notetaking and reporting back to colleagues would also have strengthened the approach. The guidance document on learning spies used in ContinueUP can be seen [here](#).

3.5.3 Micro co-construction activities

Instead of starting co-construction with large, high-stake products (whole modules or MOOCs), partners can begin with small, low-risk joint tasks such as:

- co-designing a single activity that could appear in both ITE and CPD contexts.
- co-creating a shared vignette or video scenario.
- jointly drafting a set of instructions for an assessment.

These “micro co-constructions” serve multiple purposes:

- they allow partners to experience each other’s design styles in a focused way.
- they generate early tangible outputs that can build confidence.
- they often reveal hidden assumptions about language, level, time-on-task or examples, which can then be discussed before larger-scale design.

Practice tip: After a micro co-construction sprint, debrief not only the product (“Is the activity good?”) but also the process (“How did we work together? What would we change next time?”).

This section has provided the foundation for the process-oriented guidance in Sections 4 and 5: once partners have a deep and shared grasp of each other’s contexts, they are better positioned to build robust governance structures and engage in meaningful joint design.



4 ●

**Governing ITE – CPD
partnerships**

Strong ITE – CPD collaboration does not happen automatically just because partners share a topic or a funding line. It needs deliberate partnership building and governance: the right people around the table, clear structures for steering and coordination, and transparent ways of making decisions and resolving tensions.

This section focuses on how to set up and maintain governance arrangements that support genuine co-construction rather than fragmented or symbolic collaboration.

GOVERNING ITE–CPD PARTNERSHIPS

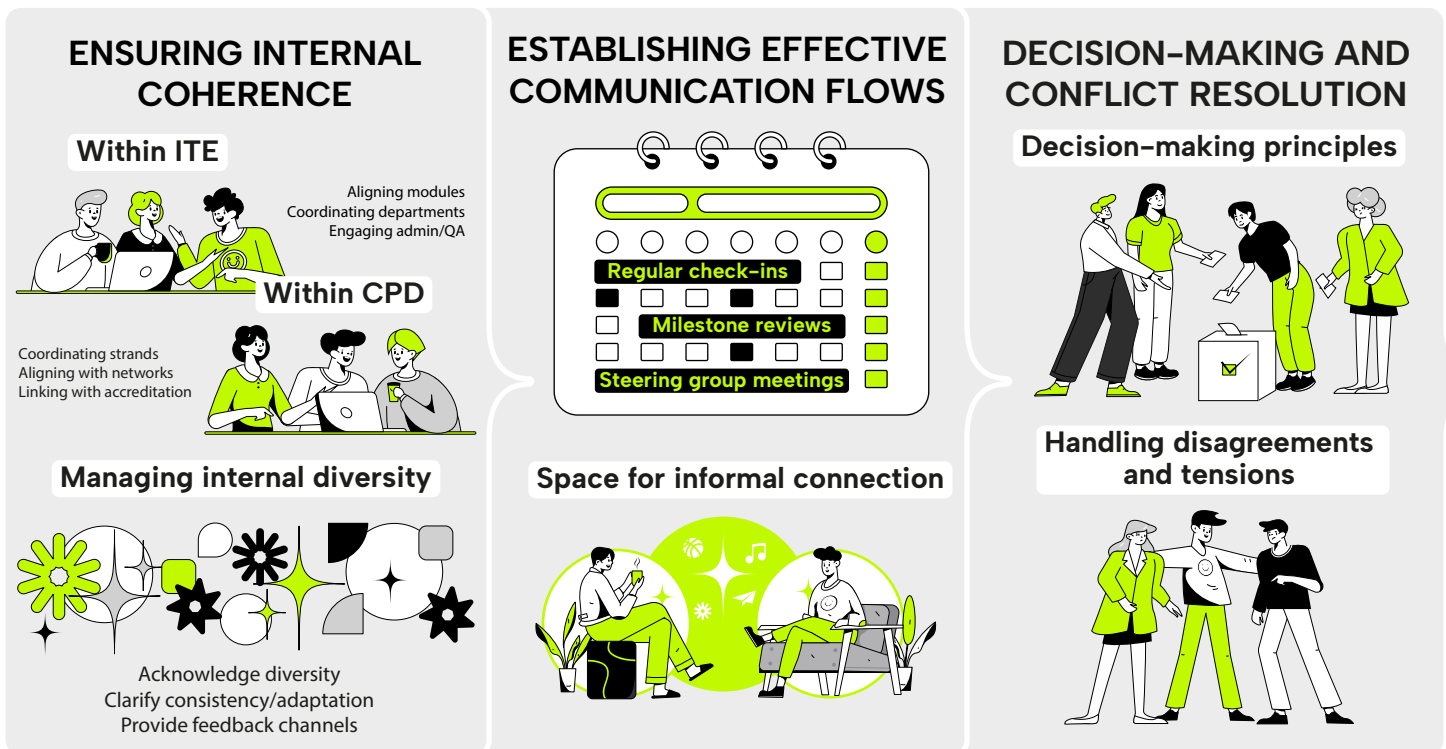


Figure 5. Governing ITE–CPD partnerships

4.1 Ensuring internal coherence within ITE and within CPD

Co-construction between ITE and CPD is easier when each side is internally aligned. If the ITE or CPD partners themselves are fragmented, cross-group collaboration may amplify, rather than resolve, tensions.

4.1.1 Internal alignment processes

Within ITE, internal alignment might involve:

- agreeing how the jointly developed module fits with existing programmes and specialisations.

- coordinating across departments or subject areas that share responsibility for teacher education.
- ensuring that administrators, course leaders and quality assurance units are informed and engaged.

Within CPD, internal alignment might involve:

- coordinating across different CPD strands (e.g. subject-specific, whole-school, leadership) that may interact with the joint offer.
- aligning with regional offices, school networks or professional associations.
- ensuring clear links with those responsible for accreditation and recognition.

Regular internal briefings (before and after major joint meetings) help representatives avoid acting as isolated individuals and instead bring well-grounded positions into cross-group spaces.

4.1.2 Managing internal diversity

Both ITE and CPD environments are internally diverse: different departments, teams, or individuals may have differing priorities and cultures. Governance should:

- acknowledge this diversity rather than forcing artificial uniformity.
- clarify which aspects of the joint ITE – CPD work must be consistent (e.g. core learning outcomes, quality standards) and where local adaptation is expected.
- provide channels for internal critique and feedback, so that concerns can be addressed before they become blockages.



Reflection prompt: When you represent your cohort in ITE – CPD meetings, how do you know whether your views reflect a broader internal consensus? What mechanisms could strengthen that link?

4.2 Establishing effective communication flows

Communication works best when there are predictable rhythms, not just ad-hoc exchanges triggered by problems.

4.2.1 Regular check-ins and milestones

Partnerships can agree on:

- short, regular check-ins for operational teams (e.g. every two weeks during intense design phases, monthly at other times), with focused agendas and clear actions.
- steering group meetings at key points (e.g. before each major phase and after pilots).
- milestone reviews, where teams pause to ask:
 - what have we completed?

- what have we learned?
- what needs to change in the plan?

4.2.2 Space for informal connection

Beyond formal meetings, relationships also grow through informal communication:

- short “coffee breaks” or open rooms after meetings.
- social moments during meetings.

These seemingly small practices can make it easier to raise concerns, ask for help and negotiate compromises later. In ContinueUP, for example, we introduced team-building and warm-up activities at the start of all joint project meetings. They helped create a trusting atmosphere in which participants felt more comfortable asking for support and reaching compromise.

4.3 Decision-making and conflict resolution

Clear, fair and transparent decision-making processes are essential for trust. Without them, partners may feel overruled, ignored or uncertain about their responsibilities, which undermines co-construction.

4.3.1 Decision-making principles

Partnerships can start by agreeing simple principles, such as:

- wherever possible, decisions are taken by informed consensus, not by simple majority.
- areas where veto rights exist (e.g. due to institutional rules) are clearly defined and used sparingly, with explanation.

These principles can be written into the partnership charter (see section 2) and revisited if they prove impractical.

4.3.2 Handling disagreements and tensions

Disagreements are normal in co-construction, especially when partners come from different systems with different pressures. Governance should focus on channelling these tensions productively, not avoiding them. Helpful practices include:

- normalising the idea that partners may bring non-negotiable constraints from their systems and that these should be discussed openly.
- using neutral facilitation (by a partner not directly involved in the contested issue, or by an external facilitator) for discussions that are expected to be sensitive.

- separating people from positions: focusing on the underlying interests and needs rather than on initial proposals.

In the ContinueUP experience, tensions sometimes arose when tight timelines or national requirements seemed to force a solution that others saw as premature or misaligned. Moments where partners paused to jointly revisit the shared vision and core principles (Section 2) often helped reframe the discussion and identify modified solutions.

This section prepared the ground for Section 5, which turns to concrete co-construction processes: how ITE and CPD partners jointly plan, design, develop, implement and evaluate their shared pathways in practice.



5.

**Joint ITE-CPD
co-construction
processes**

Co-construction between ITE and CPD partners is not a single workshop or meeting; it is a sequence of connected processes that stretches from the first conversations about needs to the evaluation of pilots and decisions about scaling or continuation.

This section proposes a process model with five interlinked phases:

1. Preparatory phase and joint needs analysis
2. Co-design of the joint ITE - CPD pathway
3. Co-development of content and materials
4. Co-implementation and co-delivery
5. Co-evaluation and joint learning

These phases often overlap in time and may require several iterations. What matters is not strict linearity, but making sure each phase is given explicit attention and that both ITE and CPD partners are genuinely involved. More limited forms of co-construction that do not span all phases are also possible and may be a more suitable starting point for institutions new to this way of working.

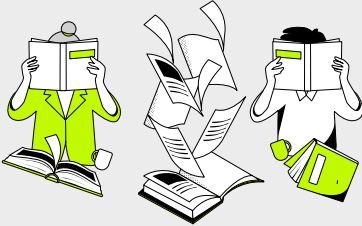
JOINT ITE-CPD CO-CONSTRUCTION PROCESSES

1. PREPARATORY PHASE & JOINT NEEDS ANALYSIS

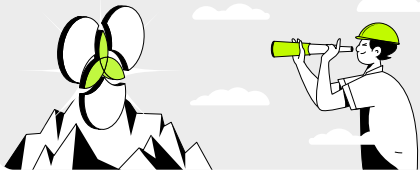
Co-planning



Joint needs analysis

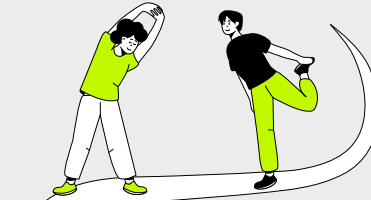


From needs to focus areas



2. CO-DESIGN OF THE JOINT PATHWAY

Designing the pathway

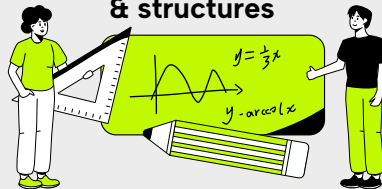


Co-constructing learning outcomes & progression

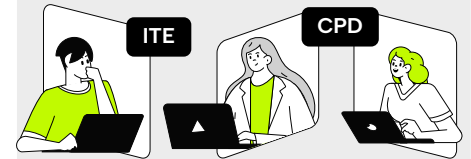


ITE:
Exploring
Early-career CPD:
Applying
Later-career CPD:
Leading

Aligning terminology & structures



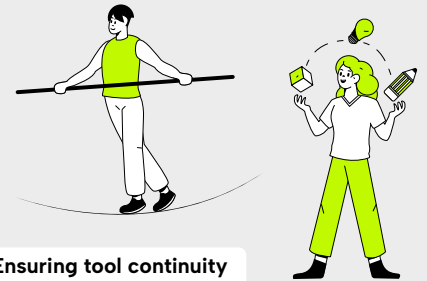
3. CO-DEVELOPMENT OF CONTENT & MATERIALS



Iterative development



Balancing theory, practice & reflection

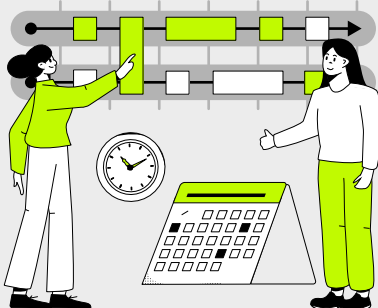


Ensuring tool continuity

Agreeing core pedagogical commitments

4. CO-IMPLEMENTATION & CO-DELIVERY

Coordinating timelines & cohorts

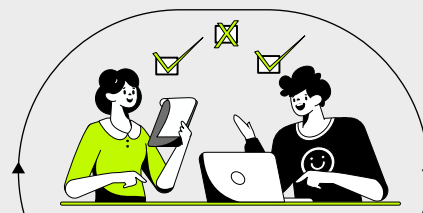


Shared facilitation & visibility



5. CO-EVALUATION & JOINT LEARNING

Shared evaluation framework



Feeding evaluation into improvement cycles



Wider ITE curriculum

Policy dialogues

Broader CPD strategies

Figure 6. Joint ITE-CPD co-construction processes

5.1 Preparatory phase and joint needs analysis

The preparatory phase lays the foundation for later co-construction. It builds on the context understanding and governance arrangements described in Sections 3 and 4, and turns them into a shared sense of purpose and direction.

5.1.1 Co-planning the planning

Before partners start discussing content, it helps to “co-plan the planning”:

- **clarify objectives** of the co-construction process:
 - what decisions do we need to reach together?
 - what products or outputs do we aim for (e.g. ITE module + CPD course, set of shared tools, joint framework)?
- **agree on steps and milestones:**
 - which phases will we go through?
 - where are the key decision points and by when?
- **confirm roles during the process:**
 - who convenes meetings, who facilitates, who documents?
 - how will student teachers and in-service teachers be involved?

5.1.2 Joint needs analysis across the continuum

To determine what exactly will be the focus of the joint programme a joint needs analysis can be useful. The needs analysis should look at the whole teacher learning continuum, not just at separate ITE or CPD components. Partners can bring together:

- **ITE sources:**
 - student teacher feedback on existing modules.
 - practicum reports and mentor observations.
 - findings from research or internal evaluations.
- **CPD sources:**
 - needs assessments from schools or regions.
 - participation and completion patterns in existing CPD.
 - policy priorities and national strategies.

On this basis partners can then identify overlapping needs and how these needs relate to phase-specific needs of the target audiences. For example, what do student teachers need before graduation and what do newly qualified teachers need in their first years?

In ContinueUP the needs had already been determined in the project proposal, so the joint programme focused specifically on “digital professional engagement” as defined by DigCompEdu.

5.1.3 From needs to focus areas

Based on the analysis, partners can define:

- a small number of focus areas that will structure the joint pathway

(e.g. in ContinueUP these areas were pre-determined by the specific competences defined in DigCompEdu and included “professional collaboration”, “reflective practice”, and “digital life”).

- for each focus area:
 - why it matters in the local and national context.
 - what is already being done in ITE and CPD.
 - what added value joint work could bring.



Reflection prompt: **Looking at your focus areas, can you clearly articulate how each area speaks to both ITE and CPD realities, rather than belonging mainly to one side?**

5.2 Co-design of the joint ITE–CPD pathway

With a clearer sense of needs and focus areas, partners can move to co-designing the pathway: the overall structure, learning outcomes and progression across ITE and CPD.

5.2.1 Designing the whole pathway, not just separate courses

Partners are encouraged to think beyond “an ITE course” and “a CPD course” and instead design a coherent pathway:

- start by sketching the teacher journey:
 - where along the continuum will your joint offers sit?
 - what comes immediately before and after them?
- decide on shared overarching goals:
 - what do you want participants to be able to understand, feel and do after completing the combined ITE–CPD pathway?

- identify bridges between components:
 - shared concepts and frameworks.
 - assignments or artefacts that can be revisited (e.g. a personal learning portfolio used in ITE and expanded in CPD).
 - shared spaces or communities (e.g. an online forum that remains accessible as participants move from ITE to CPD).

In ContinueUP, using the DigCompEdu framework to design the ITE module and CPD MOOC helped create a clear learning journey and sense of progression for participating teachers. However, we did not focus early enough on the specific bridges between the ITE and CPD parts. Only after both the ITE course and the CPD MOOC were largely developed did we turn to making these links explicit. This made the task harder and meant that some “bridges” felt like add-ons rather than integral elements of the programme.

5.2.2 Co-constructing learning outcomes and mapping progression across the pathway

A crucial design step is agreeing on learning outcomes that:

- are aligned across ITE and CPD, yet recognise different depths of engagement.
- make explicit what is introduced, practised and consolidated at each stage.

Alignment does not mean that ITE and CPD repeat the same activities. Instead, they should build progression: revisiting core ideas at deeper levels, in new contexts and with increasing responsibility. Building on the joint needs analysis and learning outcomes, partners can:

- create a progression overview for each focus area, indicating what level of understanding and practice is expected in:
 - ITE (e.g. exploring concepts, trying out strategies with high support).
 - early-career CPD (e.g. applying strategies more independently, analysing their impact).
 - later-career CPD (e.g. leading peer learning, mentoring others, engaging in inquiry).
- use this overview to check whether planned activities in ITE and CPD actually represent a step up, rather than a repetition at the same level.

In ContinueUP, using the DigCompEdu progression levels and associated learning outcomes saved considerable design work and allowed us to move forward more quickly. However, even with such a framework, it is essential to discuss the precise progression across ITE and CPD, as partners may interpret levels and outcomes differently.

5.2.3 Aligning terminology and structures

ITE and CPD often use different terms (modules, units, strands, sessions) and structures (semester-based vs flexible micro-units). During co-design, partners should:

- create a glossary of key terms for the joint work (see section 2).
- decide how they will translate structures into each context:
 - For example, a three-part thematic sequence might be one 1 ECTS module in ITE but three 2-hour online units plus a school-based assignment in CPD.
- ensure that participants can recognise the pathway even when it appears in different formats.

Practice tip: When drafting outlines, always include a “mirror column” indicating how the same element appears in ITE and in CPD. This makes alignment gaps visible.

5.3 Co-development of content and materials

Once the overall pathway and learning outcomes are agreed, partners move to co-developing the concrete activities, materials, assessments and supporting tools.

5.3.1 Working in mixed ITE–CPD design teams

Rather than dividing tasks strictly by institution, co-development is strongest when small, mixed teams of ITE and CPD colleagues work together on specific chunks of the pathway, for example:

- one team responsible for a “module” or “theme” that appears in both ITE and CPD.
- another team focused on cross-cutting elements such as assessment or digital tools.

To make mixed design work:

- teams need clear briefs (what they are responsible for, by when, with which constraints).
- there should be a balance of experience and perspectives in each team.
- time for synchronous collaboration (online or in-person) should be protected, not replaced entirely by asynchronous exchanges.

5.3.2 Iterative development

A useful pattern is to move through layers of detail in an iterative “reverse pyramid”:

- **high-level outlines** developed jointly in a plenary group (e.g. titles, key outcomes, main activities for each unit).
- **drafting in small groups** (2–4 people) of mixed ITE – CPD membership, writing specific activities, instructions and materials.
- **cross-review** by other partners, focusing first on alignment with the shared vision and progression, then on clarity and feasibility.
- **consolidation** by a small editorial group that ensures coherence of language, structure and layout across units.

This approach allows for both diversity of ideas and consistency of final products, while making good use of participants’ time.

5.3.3 Balancing theory, practice and reflection

In co-development, partners should pay attention to blending:

- **conceptual input** (research findings, theoretical models, frameworks).
- **practical tools and examples** (cases, videos, templates).
- **reflective activities** that invite participants to connect input with their own context.

ITE partners often have rich conceptual resources; CPD partners can provide practice-based material and insight into what resonates with in-service teachers. Deliberately combining these avoids both overly theoretical and overly “tips-and-tricks” designs.

5.3.4 Agreeing core pedagogical commitments

Early in the design process, partners can identify a small set of shared pedagogical commitments, for example:

- learning is collaborative and dialogic.
- theory and research are woven into practice through cases and inquiry.
- reflection on one’s own beliefs and context is integral, not an add-on.

These commitments can then be made visible in both ITE and CPD components, for instance by:

- using similar types of learning activities (e.g. case discussions, inquiry cycles, peer feedback) across both parts of the pathway.
- explaining to participants why specific approaches are used, so they can recognise them later in other contexts.
- ensuring that online and blended formats still embody these commitments rather than defaulting to content transmission.

5.3.5 Ensuring tool continuity while not compromising on tool diversity

Participants can benefit when they encounter familiar tools across ITE and CPD, even if the tasks become more complex. Partnerships can therefore:

- identify a core set of tools or platforms (e.g. LMS, collaborative document tools, video platforms, discussion forums) that will appear in both components.
- plan how their use evolves:
 - in ITE: more guided use (e.g. structured templates, step-by-step tasks).
 - in CPD: more autonomous use (e.g. designing their own tasks, leading online discussions).
- provide consistent guidance on digital ethics, data protection and accessibility across the pathway.

When ITE and CPD components are hosted on different platforms, partnerships can still create a sense of continuity by:

- using similar visual identities and navigation logics (e.g. units, weeks, icons) where possible.
- providing clear signposting between platforms (e.g. links, shared orientation videos).
- creating shared online spaces (forums, communities of practice) where participants from different phases can connect.

In ContinueUP, we used a shared set of icons and visual designs across the ITE course and the CPD MOOC, and linked publicly accessible parts of the ITE course into key sections of the MOOC. Attempts to align tool use across the programme were only partly successful, however, because instructors were restricted by national or institutional regulations or they simply preferred familiar tools and valued exposing participants to a wider range of options.

5.4 Co-implementation and co-delivery

Co-construction does not stop at the design table. How the joint pathway is actually implemented and facilitated matters greatly for participants' experience and for the partnership's learning.

5.4.1 Coordinating timelines and cohorts

Implementation planning involves:

- aligning start and end dates of ITE and CPD components as far as possible.
- considering whether the same cohort might:
 - experience the ITE component first and the CPD component later (e.g. as early-career teachers).

- or whether different cohorts will be involved at each stage, requiring more emphasis on documentation and handover.

5.4.2 Shared facilitation and visibility

Where feasible, co-delivery can reinforce the sense of a joint pathway:

- ITE staff can appear as guest speakers or moderators in CPD activities (e.g. webinars, forums), reinforcing continuity with prior learning.
- CPD practitioners can be invited into ITE sessions (on-site or online) to share classroom perspectives or lead practice-focused workshops.
- co-branded materials and communication (logos, welcome videos, introductory messages) underline that this is a shared offer, not two separate products.

In ContinueUP, CPD colleagues joined the final live session of the ITE course to introduce the CPD MOOC and create a bridge to the next stage of learning. In turn, ITE colleagues joined live MOOC events to highlight the continuity of the experience.

5.5 Co-evaluation and joint learning

Finally, partners need systematic ways to evaluate the joint pathway and to turn those insights into learning for both ITE and CPD systems.

5.5.1 A shared evaluation framework

Before implementation, partners can agree on:

- **key evaluation questions, for example:**
 - to what extent did the pathway support progression in the targeted competences?
 - how did participants experience the transitions between ITE and CPD components?
 - what benefits and challenges did partners experience in co-construction?
- **indicators and data sources, such as:**
 - participant surveys and interviews.
 - learning artefacts (e.g. assignments, portfolios).
 - facilitator reflections.
 - institutional feedback (e.g. from programme committees, school leaders).

Importantly, the evaluation framework should cover both ITE and CPD parts and include questions about the interface between them.

5.5.2 Feeding evaluation into improvement cycles

Evaluation should lead to concrete decisions, for example:

- minor adjustments for the next iteration (e.g. clearer instructions, different examples, adjusted timing).
- more substantial revisions of structure or focus areas where evidence shows misalignment or limited impact.
- strategic choices about scaling or institutionalisation (e.g. integrating the module into core curricula, repeating the CPD offer annually, developing follow-up pathways).

Crucially, partners should consider how findings can:

- inform wider ITE curriculum discussions (beyond the specific module).
- shape broader CPD strategies at regional or national level.
- feed into policy dialogues on ITE – CPD cooperation.

By treating co-construction itself as a learning process, ITE and CPD partners not only improve their specific shared pathway but also build capacity for ongoing collaboration beyond the life of any single co-construction project.



6

Conclusion

At the heart of these guidelines is the conviction that teacher learning should be understood as a continuous professional journey rather than a series of separate learning episodes. When ITE and CPD are designed in isolation, this journey is easily fragmented, and key ideas or competences risk being introduced once and then left behind. By co-constructing across ITE and CPD, partners can shape a more deliberate continuum in which central themes are revisited, extended and adapted over time, providing more coherent support to teachers as they move from preparation into practice and beyond.

Across the chapters, several core messages emerge. First, co-construction is grounded in a **shared vision and set of principles**. Seeing teacher learning as a continuum, recognising the complementary roles of ITE and CPD, and committing to continuity, reciprocity, mutual context understanding and shared pedagogical language are not “nice-to-haves”; they are the conditions that make joint work possible. These principles help partners keep the bigger picture in view when time pressure, institutional constraints or diverging expectations surface.

Second, effective co-construction depends on a **deep and realistic understanding of each other’s contexts**. The guidelines highlight practical ways of achieving this: structured context-mapping, joint visualisation of systems and stakeholders, explicit discussion of constraints and affordances, calendar mapping, and exercises that surface beliefs, expectations and stereotypes. Tools such as study visits, “learning spies” and micro co-construction activities help partners move beyond abstract descriptions to shared experience of each other’s work. Where ContinueUP did not invest enough, for example in systematic institutional presentations or early vocabulary work, misunderstandings emerged later in the process—offering important lessons for future partnerships.

Third, co-construction requires **deliberate governance and communication**, not just goodwill. The document emphasises the need for internal alignment within ITE and within CPD, so that representatives do not act as isolated individuals but are connected to broader institutional conversations. Regular check-ins, milestone reviews and space for informal connection help maintain momentum and trust, while clear decision-making principles and transparent handling of disagreements prevent tensions from undermining the collaboration. The ContinueUP experience shows that even simple practices—such as warm-up activities, agreed ground rules or returning to a shared partnership charter—can make it easier to navigate tight timelines, policy pressures and differing institutional logics.

Fourth, the guidelines present co-construction as a **process made up of distinct but connected phases**: preparatory work and joint needs analysis, co-design of the overall ITE–CPD pathway, co-development of materials, co-implementation and co-delivery, and co-evaluation and joint learning. Each phase has its own questions, tasks and potential pitfalls. The ContinueUP case illustrates, for example, how using a shared framework such as DigCompEdu can accelerate design and support progression, but also how bridges between ITE and CPD need to be planned from the start rather than added late in the process. Likewise,

the emphasis on validation with both student teachers and in-service teachers underlines that teachers are not just recipients of co-constructed programmes but co-interpreters and co-shapers.

Finally, the guidelines invite readers to treat co-construction itself as a **learning process**. They do not propose a single model to be copied, but a set of questions, examples and practices that teams can adapt to their own national, institutional and thematic contexts. Partnerships may start with more limited forms of co-construction, focusing on a single phase or component, and gradually extend their collaboration as trust, experience and internal alignment grow. What matters is not perfection at the first attempt, but the willingness to reflect critically, document lessons learned and use those insights to refine both the joint pathway and the way of working together.

Taken together, the elements in this document suggest a simple but demanding conclusion: **designing across the continuum is possible, but it is not accidental**. It emerges when ITE and CPD partners commit to understanding each other's worlds, share responsibility for a common pathway, and organise their collaboration with as much care as they organise their courses.

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