



Family, school integration and the development of community values in rural primary education: A mixed-method study in San Lucas, Bolivia

Integración familia, escuela y desarrollo de valores comunitarios en educación primaria rural: estudio mixto en San Lucas, Bolivia

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Family-school integration is an important component of holistic education, particularly in rural settings where educational dynamics interact with territorial conditions, community practices, and local cultural references. **Objective:** To analyze family-school integration practices and their articulation with the development of community values among primary school students in the San Lucas Educational District, Chuquisaca, Bolivia. **Methods:** A convergent mixed-method, non-experimental, cross-sectional, descriptive-interpretive design was adopted. The quantitative component included 351 parents or guardians, while the qualitative component comprised 24 key informants: eight teachers, eight school administrators, and eight family members. Data were collected through Likert-type questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, direct observation, and documentary review. The instruments were evaluated by eight experts, and the questionnaire showed adequate internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.84$). **Results:** Findings revealed that family-school integration was widely recognized as necessary but remained predominantly informational and episodic. Territorial, occupational, and communication barriers were identified alongside opportunities to strengthen shared responsibility, local knowledge, and everyday educational experiences aimed at promoting respect, solidarity, cooperation, responsibility, and community identity. **Conclusions:** Strengthening integration requires two-way communication, flexible participation, educational co-responsibility, joint values education, and pedagogical recognition of community knowledge.

Keywords: family-school relationship; family participation; community values; primary education; rural education.

RESUMEN

Introducción: La integración entre familia y escuela constituye un componente relevante para la formación integral, particularmente en contextos rurales donde las dinámicas educativas interactúan con condiciones territoriales, prácticas comunitarias y referentes culturales propios. **Objetivo:** Analizar las prácticas de integración familia-escuela y su articulación con el desarrollo de valores comunitarios en estudiantes de educación primaria del Distrito Educativo de San Lucas, Chuquisaca, Bolivia. **Métodos:** Se desarrolló un estudio mixto convergente, no experimental, transversal y descriptivo-interpretativo. Participaron 351 padres, madres o tutores en el componente cuantitativo y 24 informantes clave —ocho docentes, ocho directivos y ocho familiares— en el cualitativo. Se utilizaron cuestionarios tipo Likert, entrevistas semiestructuradas, observación y revisión documental. Los instrumentos fueron evaluados por ocho expertos y el cuestionario alcanzó una consistencia interna de $\alpha = 0,84$. **Resultados:** Los hallazgos evidenciaron una integración familia-escuela reconocida como necesaria, aunque todavía caracterizada por prácticas predominantemente informativas y episódicas. Se identificaron barreras territoriales, laborales y comunicativas, junto con oportunidades para fortalecer corresponsabilidad, saberes locales y experiencias cotidianas orientadas al respeto, solidaridad, cooperación, responsabilidad e identidad comunitaria. **Conclusiones:** El fortalecimiento de la integración requiere comunicación bidireccional, participación flexible, corresponsabilidad educativa, formación conjunta en valores y reconocimiento pedagógico de los saberes comunitarios.

Palabras clave: relación familia-escuela; participación familiar; valores comunitarios; educación primaria; educación rural.

INTRODUCTION

Primary education is a fundamental stage in the cognitive, social, affective, and ethical development of girls and boys. In this sense, during this stage, not only academic competencies are consolidated, but also ways of relating, taking on responsibilities, resolving conflicts, and participating in collective spaces. Current evidence on social and emotional learning demonstrates that systematic educational processes can improve interpersonal skills, behaviors, peer relationships, school performance, and academic outcomes (1).

The family is among the main non-school learning spaces. Within it, communication patterns, habits, expectations, norms, and behavioral references are initially constructed, which later interact with experiences developed in school. Accumulated evidence over the past decades confirms a generally favorable association between different forms of family involvement and educational outcomes, although its effects vary according to the specific form of participation and the socioeconomic conditions of the household (2,3).

Family participation constitutes a multidimensional phenomenon and cannot be limited to counting school meetings, attendance at events, or responses to institutional calls. Part of educational accompaniment occurs within the home and may remain invisible to school staff (4). In turn, an excessively institution-centered view can lead to valuing only the activities that occur within the school and to interpreting other forms of participation in a deficit-based manner (5).

In response to this limitation, culturally inclusive approaches have been proposed that allow understanding how families themselves interpret their educational role, what their daily practices are, and what knowledge they can contribute to the school experience (6). This approach is especially pertinent for rural and community contexts, where family, territorial, and linguistic knowledge can be pedagogical resources and not merely elements external to formal education. Communication is important for maintaining stable relationships. Meta-analyses of family-school engagement interventions have shown favorable effects on parent-teacher relationships, especially in communication, and benefits in academic and socioemotional dimensions when collaboration is intentionally structured (7,8). This demonstrates that communication is not only an administrative pathway for transmitting information, but an element that can be pedagogically reinforced.

The expectations, emotions, and representations shared by teachers and families can favor or block collaboration (9). From the families' perspective, trust, student well-being, and the quality of interaction with teachers and institutions influence the assessment of collaboration (10). Ecological approaches to family engagement identify relationships, inclusive opportunities, communication, parental training, and joint activities as central elements (11).

In Latin America, the debate on the family-school relationship has conceptual and political particularities. The terms involvement, implication, and participation are used for different levels of action, which can generate confused expectations if a distinction is not made between receiving information, collaborating, and participating in decisions (12). Regional evidence also points to the importance of recognizing the knowledge, skills, and strengths that families have as a starting point for building relationships of mutual trust (13).

Measuring participation also requires recognizing its multidimensional nature. A scale developed for school education distinguishes educational support from home, democratic participation, and communication with the school (14). Studies in primary education also show that family-school-community relationships can differ across institutions and be linked to school effectiveness practices (15). From the teaching perspective, collaboration, communication, and learning support have been identified as key dimensions for fostering participation, which reinforces the need to prepare teachers to work with families and communities (16,17).

However, professional conceptions can maintain asymmetric relationships. Recent research shows that future teachers recognize participation, communication, and involvement as relevant dimensions, but they may still conceive them from a predominantly school-based and unidirectional logic (18). Therefore, broadening participation requires modifying not only administrative mechanisms, but also the conceptions from which the educational role of families is defined.

The development of values constitutes another relevant dimension of this relationship. Respect, solidarity, cooperation, responsibility, and coexistence can hardly be consolidated solely through conceptual definitions. They require opportunities for practice, consistent behavioral models, and experiences that allow reflection on their consequences. Recent literature highlights the need to incorporate values education in a cross-cutting manner in primary education and to relate it to social and civic competencies (19,20).

The Educational District of San Lucas, department of Chuquisaca, has geographically

dispersed communities and a significant presence of agricultural and livestock activities. Territorial, productive, and family conditions can influence the time available to attend school meetings and the modalities through which families support the education of girls and boys. In this context, reducing the concept of participation to in-person attendance may generate an incomplete interpretation.

The research problem therefore focuses on the limited systematization of family-school integration practices specifically aimed at developing values in primary education students in San Lucas. Although communication and participation mechanisms exist, it is necessary to understand their pedagogical orientation, the main barriers, and the available opportunities to strengthen shared responsibility adapted to the rural and community context.

In line with this issue, the objective of the research was to analyze family-school integration practices and their articulation with the development of community values in primary education students of the Educational District of San Lucas, Chuquisaca, Bolivia, integrating family perceptions with the experiences of teachers and administrators, as well as with evidence from the educational context.

METHODS

The research was developed using a mixed-methods approach with a convergent design, through the articulation of quantitative and qualitative procedures aimed at understanding the integration practices between family and school and their connection with the formation of community values. The choice of approach responded to the multidimensional nature of the phenomenon: family participation comprises behaviors that can be systematized through questionnaires, but also experiences, territorial conditions, perceptions, and meanings that require qualitative procedures. The convergent design allowed the analysis of both strands and their subsequent integration through triangulation.

The study was non-experimental and cross-sectional, since the categories were analyzed in their natural context, without deliberate manipulation, and within a delimited period of educational management. The scope was descriptive-interpretive. The descriptive component allowed characterizing family practices, actions promoted by institutions, and manifestations associated with community values; the interpretive component allowed understanding barriers, experiences, and meanings expressed by the different actors.

The research was conducted in the San Lucas Educational District, Department of Chuquisaca, Bolivia. Institutional records corresponding to the 2025 administration established a reference population of 4,080 students and 350 teachers at the Community Vocational Primary Education level. For the family component, fathers, mothers, and guardians responsible for the educational support of the students were considered.

The quantitative component consisted of 351 fathers, mothers, or guardians. The sample size was determined by calculation for a finite population, considering a 95% confidence level, a 5% margin of error, and maximum variability. The selection followed a probabilistic procedure aimed at representing families belonging to the participating educational units. For the qualitative component, we worked with 24 key informants, distributed among eight teachers, eight administrators, and eight parents. The selection was purposive and applied the following criteria: experience within the educational context, knowledge of family-school relationships, participation in institutional activities, and voluntary willingness to provide information.

Three central categories of analysis were established: family bonding practices, school bonding practices, and development of community values. The first considered communication and guidance, participation, establishment of norms, conflict resolution, coordination with teachers, and family example. The second included institutional communication, coordination, co-responsibility, family participation, contextualized use of the Quechua language, incorporation of local knowledge, and guidance activities. The third addressed solidarity, cooperation, respect, coexistence, responsibility, and identity and community belonging.

For the quantitative component, a structured questionnaire with a Likert-type scale of five response alternatives was used. The items were organized according to the previously defined categories and dimensions and were aimed at characterizing family practices, mechanisms of relationship with institutions, and manifestations of the analyzed values. The qualitative component used a semi-structured interview guide applied to teachers, administrators, and family members. The questions explored experiences of participation, communication, barriers to integration, institutional coordination, values education, community practices, and possibilities

for strengthening.

A structured observation guide was also used to record interactions, cooperation, compliance with rules, group participation, conflict resolution, and other manifestations related to coexistence and values. The documentary review included planning documents, academic reports, regulations, educational projects, and institutional records related to school coexistence, family participation, and comprehensive education.

The instruments were subjected to a content validity process through the judgment of 8 experts with experience in education, research methodology, family-school integration, and values education. The specialists evaluated the clarity, pertinence, coherence, and relevance of the items with respect to the established categories, dimensions, and indicators. Their observations allowed adjustments to be made before the final application. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was determined using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, obtaining an overall value of $\alpha = 0.84$, interpreted as adequate internal consistency for the purposes of the study.

The research process comprised five stages: review of background and conceptual delimitation; definition of categories and indicators and development of instruments; validation and adjustment; fieldwork and organization of information; and analysis and integration of findings. Data from the questionnaire were organized using descriptive statistics to characterize trends within the categories studied. Due to the ordinal level of the responses, interpretation focused on the patterns obtained and their correspondence with the other sources of evidence.

The interviews were transcribed and analyzed using thematic content analysis. The procedure included reading and familiarization, initial coding, grouping of codes, construction and review of categories, comparison between informant types, and interpretation. Finally, methodological and source triangulation was performed, contrasting questionnaires, interviews, observation, and documentary review to identify convergences, differences, and complementarities and to prevent interpretation from depending exclusively on a single source or educational actor.

During the process, the principles of voluntary participation, confidentiality, anonymity, and academic use of the information were respected. Participants received information about the study objectives and the conditions of participation. In activities involving underage students, the corresponding authorizations and measures aimed at preserving their identity were considered.

RESULTS

The results showed that the family-school relationship in the San Lucas Educational District develops through different levels and modalities of participation. The integration of questionnaires, interviews, observations, and institutional documentation made it possible to differentiate between accompaniment carried out within the home and participation developed directly in relation to the educational unit. In general terms, the actors recognized that the family has an important responsibility in the comprehensive formation of students; however, institutional linkage tended to acquire greater visibility during meetings, planned activities, delivery of information, and attention to academic or behavioral situations.

The identified family practices include communication with girls and boys, establishment of norms, guidance, dialogued resolution of everyday situations, accompaniment of responsibilities, and transmission of behaviors through adult example. Institutional participation, on the other hand, presented greater restrictions. Working conditions, family and productive responsibilities, and the distances between certain communities and educational units influence the capacity to maintain a frequent presence.

Educational institutions use different mechanisms to establish contact with families. Communication about activities, academic performance, attendance, or behavior constitutes an established practice; however, findings show that such communication still develops predominantly from the school toward families. This modality allows parents and guardians to stay informed but has less capacity to generate shared responsibility when it does not incorporate opportunities for listening, feedback, and joint construction of agreements.

The table shows that family accompaniment cannot be reduced to physical presence within the school. An important part of the training occurs through domestic and community practices that are not always visible to teachers and administrators. The findings also allow us to interpret that limitations on in-person participation do not necessarily represent lack of interest. Agricultural and livestock activities, work schedules, domestic responsibilities, and territorial characteristics condition the possibilities of attending certain activities.

Table 1. Family practices of involvement with school

Dimension	Identified practice	Observed manifestation	Interpretation
Family communication	Dialogue with girls and boys	Conversations about experiences, difficulties, and responsibilities	It promotes socio-educational accompaniment and trust.
Standards and guidance	Organization of family guidelines	Rules and responsibilities within the home	It contributes to the daily development of responsibility.
Conflict resolution	Use of dialogue	Seeking agreements in the face of difficulties	It promotes respect, listening, and coexistence.
School participation	Attendance at meetings and calls	Greater presence in response to specific activities or needs	Episodic institutional participation predominates.
Teaching coordination	Contact with teachers	Exchange on performance and behavior	It requires advancing toward continuous pedagogical agreements.
Community participation	Collaboration in collective actions	Presence in community activities and responsibilities	It connects the school experience with the community.
Family example	Adult modeling	Role models of respect, solidarity, and responsibility	Values are strengthened through observable behaviors.

Note. Own synthesis of questionnaires, interviews, and field observations.

The findings show a substantial difference between information and participation. Timely communication of activities and results constitutes a necessary condition, but pedagogical integration also requires mechanisms through which families can express opinions, share experiences, and participate in decisions related to their children's education. The use of the Quechua language and the incorporation of local knowledge were identified as resources with the capacity to bring school work closer to the sociocultural characteristics of the communities; their potential is greater when they are part of regular processes and not only of commemorative activities.

The values analyzed were expressed in practices related to solidarity, cooperation, respect, coexistence, responsibility, and community identity. However, the findings showed that their manifestation depends on the situations in which students participate. A relevant difference was that between conceptually recognizing a value and regularly expressing it through concrete behaviors.

Table 2. School practices related to family-school integration

Component	Identified situation	Pedagogical potential	Need for strengthening
Institutional information	Communication of activities, performance, and behavior	It keeps families informed.	Complement information with dialogue and feedback.
Teacher-family communication	More frequent contact in specific situations	It facilitates exchange about student needs.	Convert it into preventive and continuous communication.
Participation in decisions	Consultation spaces with variable scope	It may increase co-responsibility.	Expand effective participation in training matters.
Use of Quechua	Use when necessary	It favors understanding and sociocultural proximity.	Integrate it systematically when the context requires.
Local knowledge	Presence in certain school experiences	It connects school, culture, and community life.	Avoid incorporating it only occasionally.
Family orientation	Activities aimed at parents and guardians	It strengthens accompaniment tools.	Relate it to the specific needs of the families.
Co-responsibility	Recognition of shared responsibilities	It allows common objectives to be established.	Transform discursive recognition into practical agreements.

Note. Own synthesis of interviews, questionnaires, and institutional document review.

Solidarity and cooperation were mainly associated with situations of helping, group work, and community activities. Respect and coexistence were manifested through relationships among peers and adults, while responsibility was linked to the fulfillment of commitments. Community identity acquired particular meaning through its relationship with the language, traditions, knowledge, and practices specific to San Lucas. This result expands axiological formation beyond interpersonal values and incorporates cultural belonging as an educational component.

Table 3. Community values and their educational manifestations

Value	Identified manifestations	Spaces of expression	Educational involvement
Solidarity	Help and willingness to support others	Home, classroom, and community	It requires concrete opportunities for help.
Cooperation	Joint participation to achieve objectives	Group and community activities	It is strengthened through collective tasks.
Respect	Recognition of people, norms, and opinions	Family and school relationships	It requires coherence between discourse and behavior.
Coexistence	Dialogue and resolution of differences	Home, classroom, and community	It must be developed through real experiences.
Responsibility	Completion of tasks and commitments	School, home, and community	It is consolidated by assuming authentic responsibilities.
Identity and belonging	Appreciation of language, traditions, and local knowledge	Family, school, and community	It links school education with sociocultural reality.

Note. Integration of family perceptions, interviews, and observations on community values.

Triangulation allowed us to identify convergences among family experiences, teacher and administrator perceptions, observations, and institutional documentation. The main patterns pertained to communication, participation, co-responsibility, values, community knowledge, territorial barriers, and trust.

Table 4. Triangulation of the main findings

Axis	Family evidence	School evidence	Integrated interpretation	Orientation
Communication	Contact regarding meetings and needs	Institutional transmission predominates.	Communication exists, but it is primarily informative.	Strengthen bidirectional dialogue.
Participation	It depends on time, occupations, and distance.	In-person activities predominate.	Physical presence does not represent the whole commitment.	Diversify modalities.
Co-responsibility	The educational function of the family is recognized.	Teachers recognize the need for collaboration.	There is conceptual consensus but less practical systematization.	Build shared agreements.
Values education	The home provides norms, guidance, and example.	The school generates experiences of coexistence.	Values require coherence between contexts.	Design articulated experiences.
Community knowledge	Their own cultural knowledge and practices exist.	They are incorporated into certain activities.	They are potential pedagogical resources.	Integrate them systematically.
Barriers	Work, responsibilities, and distance	Predominance of face-to-face meetings	Participation is structurally conditioned.	Establish flexible alternatives.
Confidence	It favors willingness to communicate.	Listening facilitates approaching.	It is a cross-cutting condition of collaboration.	Avoid relationships that are only corrective.

Note. Authors' triangulation of quantitative, qualitative, observational, and documentary sources.

The integration of the findings shows that the main challenge does not lie solely in increasing the number of activities aimed at families. The central aspect is to modify the pedagogical orientation of such activities. The practices with the greatest potential are those that allow moving from a convening-based logic to a logic of shared responsibility, recognizing families as educational actors, generating participation mechanisms compatible with their real conditions, and valuing community knowledge as educational resources.

Overall, the results allow the identification of five priority components for strengthening family-school integration: bidirectional communication, flexible participation, educational co-responsibility, joint training in values, and pedagogical recognition of community knowledge.

DISCUSSION

The results contribute to a multidimensional understanding of the family-school relationship, which cannot be evaluated solely by attendance at meetings or some institutional activity. In San Lucas, educational support from home was observed, whereas institutional participation was

much more episodic. This distinction aligns with the literature indicating that an interpretation focused solely on the school can render family actions occurring outside the institution invisible and lead to deficit interpretations of family commitment (4,5). This interpretation is of particular interest in a rural district such as San Lucas. The demands of agricultural work and livestock tasks, the distances, and the daily organization of families can influence attendance and presence at certain activities, but they do not diminish families' commitment. From a pedagogical standpoint, evaluating participation solely on the basis of institutional presence in activities can lead to biased conclusions. A more culturally inclusive approach may require understanding how families develop their educational responsibility from their contexts and resources (6).

Communication constitutes another central dimension. The results show that contact mechanisms between schools and families exist, but a substantial portion of them serve a fundamentally informative function. This situation is consistent with research that identifies predominantly unidirectional representations of the family-school relationship (18). Transforming this dynamic does not mean eliminating the informative function, but rather converting it into a starting point for listening, dialogue, establishing commitments, and conducting follow-up.

Meta-analytic evidence supports this interpretation. Family-school engagement interventions can improve the relationship between parents and teachers and, in particular, communication (7), whereas collaboration programs show academic and socioemotional benefits when their components are structured and contextualized (8). In this sense, the quality of the interaction should be considered an educational outcome amenable to planning and evaluation.

Trust also appears as a cross-cutting element. Family satisfaction with school collaboration is related to the quality of the bond, student well-being, and trust in teachers and institutions (10). The findings from San Lucas suggest that trust increases when families perceive that communication serves not only to report difficulties or issue warnings, but also to acknowledge progress, listen to concerns, and build solutions.

Participation therefore needs to be flexible. Ecological approaches to family engagement identify relationships, communication, inclusive opportunities, and parental education as significant elements (11). This perspective aligns with the need to expand the modalities through which a family can participate in San Lucas, incorporating home-based activities, community projects, monitoring mechanisms, and forms of communication compatible with the territory.

Teachers play an important role in generating these conditions. Collaboration, communication, and learning support have been identified as central dimensions for promoting participation (16), while teacher preparation for establishing effective relationships with families and communities constitutes an explicit dimension of their professional development (17). If integration is to become a systematic pedagogical practice, it cannot depend solely on personal initiatives.

Latin American evidence helps to contextualize this challenge. Regional policies use involvement, engagement, and participation to represent different levels of action (12), while qualitative research highlights the importance of recognizing families' knowledge and strengths to build less asymmetrical relationships (13). The distinction between support from home, democratic participation, and communication with the school (14) helps to understand that a family can demonstrate relevant participation in daily accompaniment while having few opportunities to intervene in institutional decisions.

The results related to values reveal another significant dimension. Manifestations of solidarity, cooperation, respect, coexistence, responsibility, and identity were identified; however, their expression was not homogeneous across all contexts. This allows distinguishing between declarative knowledge and axiological practice. Recent literature on primary education maintains that values require transversal incorporation and concrete experiences that articulate coexistence, citizenship, and everyday practice (19,20).

The findings also suggest that coherence between home and school can facilitate the consolidation of these practices. A student receives more consistent formative messages when encountering similar expectations regarding dialogue, respect, collaboration, and responsibility in both settings. Evidence on family involvement and socioemotional development shows relationships mediated by school engagement (21), which reinforces the idea that the family is part of a network of interactions, not an isolated cause.

In the Bolivian context, the community dimension is particularly important. Identity was manifested not only in institutional belonging, but also in language, traditions, and local knowledge. The historical experience of Warisata reminds us that education, community organization, and social participation have profound antecedents in Bolivian educational history (22). Similarly, schools in indigenous communities can serve as spaces for cultural, territorial, and political negotiation (23).

Various Bolivian historical experiences demonstrate that cooperation, production, and

community life have been integrated into educational projects of various orientations (24), while interculturality and indigenous participation have held a central place in the country's educational debates (25). These precedents allow us to interpret the value that San Lucas attributes to the Quechua language, identity, and community knowledge as elements with pedagogical potential, not merely cultural.

However, recognizing community knowledge requires avoiding a superficial use of culture. Certain schooling processes can contribute to the devaluation of family and indigenous knowledge when school knowledge assumes an absolute hierarchical position (26). Therefore, incorporating language, productive practices, narratives, territorial knowledge, and community forms of cooperation requires explicit pedagogical objectives and a relationship of recognition with families.

This study has limitations. Its cross-sectional nature does not allow establishing changes over time or causal relationships between family integration and values development. The findings correspond to the particular characteristics of the San Lucas Educational District, and their transfer to other contexts must be undertaken with due consideration of sociocultural and territorial differences. Likewise, perceptions of behavior and values may be influenced by social desirability. Future research could incorporate longitudinal follow-up, comparative analyses among educational centers, and statistical models based on individual scores to examine associations between specific dimensions of integration and values development.

CONCLUSIONS

The inquiry indicates that mother-father-school integration plays a leading role in comprehensive education in the San Lucas Educational District, but the quality of this integration should not be evaluated solely by the number of meetings or activities in which families participate. This relationship encompasses home accompaniment by families, institutional communication, pedagogical coordination, community practices, and opportunities for co-responsibility.

Families gradually establish accompaniment practices, including dialogue, norms, guidance, conflict resolution, and adult example. These practices become valuable educational experiences, although they often go unnoticed by the school institution. For this reason, considering only physical presence can lead to a reduced interpretation of family commitment.

The territorial and productive conditions of the context must be considered in any integration strategy. Participation is conditioned by agricultural and livestock activities, family responsibilities, available time, and geographical dispersion. Schools therefore require flexible modalities that allow participation without relying exclusively on in-person meetings.

The results on axiological formation lead to the conclusion that solidarity, cooperation, respect, coexistence, and responsibility acquire meaning when they become everyday experiences. Knowing a value does not ensure that it is put into practice; rather, putting it into practice requires observing it, practicing it, assuming the consequences, and reflecting on it in different contexts.

Community identity represents a particularly significant dimension. The Quechua language, traditions, and local knowledge can strengthen both a sense of belonging and the family-school relationship when they are recognized as legitimate educational resources. Their incorporation must go beyond occasional activities and be linked to contextualized pedagogical experiences.

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