



Constructive Contextual Education for Positive Development: A Three-Level Philosophy and Standards Model for Learning, Recognition, and Sustained Impact

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Abstract - Constructive Contextual Education for Positive Development (CCE-PD) is proposed as a practice-centred education philosophy and entity that links learning to verified performance, documented evidence, and sustained contribution. The problem addressed is a persistent gap between theoretical instruction and real-world capability, together with limited recognition pathways for experience-based learning and uneven standards for evidencing competence across disciplines. CCE-PD frames learning as an intentional cycle of practice, reflection, feedback, and improvement, and organizes progression through a three-level model: Level One (Learning Cycle), Level Two (Constructive Practice Cycle), and Level Three (Positive Development Cycle). Each level is associated with an outcomes-based designation (Emerging Practitioner, Refined Practitioner, Distinguished Practitioner) and is awarded through evidence verification and assessment rather than automatic equivalence to regulated degrees. The paper also positions Certified Constructive Education and Development (CCED) as the education, training, development, standards, and certification division within the broader CCE-PD institutional platform, responsible for translating the philosophy into validated programmes, credible assessment, and verifiable recognition. CCED also functions as a portfolio framework through which discipline-specific programmes and certifications are delivered (for example, Certified Constructive Accounting Education and Development), while the CCED division provides the shared quality assurance, standards, and verification architecture for all such offerings. Two pathways are specified: a taught training pathway and an experience-based pathway, with Level Three offering a research pathway and a Recognition of Prior Learning pathway. A notional learning time and internal credit model is proposed to support transparency in learning design while enabling modular, stackable recognition. The expected contribution is a portable, auditable framework for developing and recognizing competence and ethical judgement across disciplines, with specific relevance for workforce development and lifelong learning.

Keywords - Constructive learning; contextual learning; positive development; evidence-based assessment; certification levels; Recognition of Prior Learning; notional learning hours; standards and quality assurance.



I. Introduction

Across higher education and professional training, a recurring weakness is that learning is often demonstrated in classrooms but not consistently translated into dependable performance in real contexts. This challenge is linked to limited opportunities for authentic assessment, uneven integration of work-integrated learning, and insufficient emphasis on evidence, revision, and reflective improvement as measurable outputs (Vlachopoulos & Makri, 2024; Mabungela & Mtiki, 2024). In parallel, many capable practitioners acquire expertise through work and self-directed learning, yet recognition systems may not provide clear, credible routes for validating and crediting that learning, especially when documentation, verification rules, and assessor reliability vary across contexts (Raciti et al., 2024; Heinonen & Tuomainen, 2020).

This concept paper proposes Constructive Contextual Education for Positive Development (CCE-PD) as a new philosophy and standards model designed to: (i) strengthen the link between learning and verified outcomes; (ii) normalise iterative improvement through evidence; and (iii) operationalise Recognition of Prior Learning as a structured pathway rather than an informal exception. The scope is intentionally cross-disciplinary, recognising that accounting, engineering, education, health, technology, governance, entrepreneurship, and consulting all require demonstrable competence, ethical judgement, and sustained impact.

The paper is organised as follows: Sections 2 to 4 describe the philosophy, assumptions, and the three-level model; Sections 5 to 8 explain certification logic, credit design, assessment architecture, and Recognition of Prior Learning; Sections 9 to 10 outline the standards and certification institution model and the Certificate of Exceptional Potential; Sections 11 to 13 synthesise contributions, limitations, and conclusions.

II. Concept overview

Constructive Contextual Education for Positive Development (CCE-PD) is a new education philosophy and Institution introduced/proposed by Samuel Opata Sackitey. The philosophy proposes that high-quality learning and lifelong growth occur when education is designed as an intentional cycle of practice, reflection, feedback, and improvement, and when achievement is evaluated not only through classroom performance but also through verified real-world outcomes and documented evidence of growth.



Figure 1: The guiding principles and cyclical depiction of CCE-PD

CCE-PD is designed for global adoption across disciplines, including accounting, engineering, education, health, technology, governance, entrepreneurship, and consulting. It supports both taught training and experience-based assessment, enabling structured progression from foundational practice to sustained impact.

Within the CCE-PD institutional platform, Certified Constructive Education and Development (CCED) is intended to operate as the education, training, development, standards, and certification division that translates the philosophy into implementable programmes, credible assessment, and verifiable recognition. CCED's concept includes academic and professional collaborations, programme evaluation and validation, and integrity safeguards that support defensible decisions confirmed through transparent criteria and documented evidence. This positioning distinguishes the philosophy and institutional identity (CCE-PD) from the operational mechanism responsible for delivery and certification functions (CCED), while keeping both within one coherent architecture.

CCED as a portfolio of offerings under one division: In operational terms, CCED is not only a functional division; it is also the umbrella structure through which a family of CCE-PD-aligned programmes, training services, and certifications will be developed and delivered across disciplines. Accordingly, discipline-specific offerings may be branded as "Certified Constructive [Field] Education and Development" (for example, Certified Constructive Accounting Education and Development), while remaining governed by the shared CCED standards, assessment integrity rules, and verification processes defined within the CCE-PD platform.

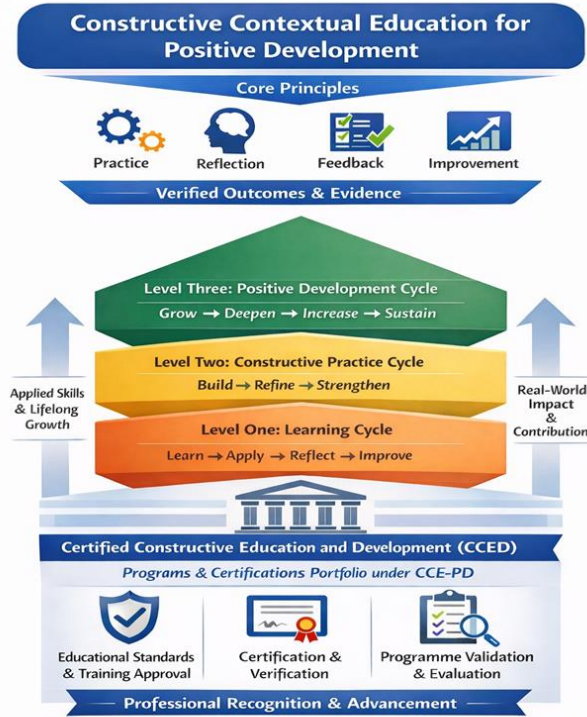


Figure 2: Conceptual overview of CCE-PD cycles and levels (Author synthesis).

Core assumptions and guiding propositions

CCE-PD is anchored by the following guiding propositions (presented as short, testable statements):

- Meaningful learning is demonstrated through evidence that can be reviewed, verified, and improved.
- Development is cyclical: Learn, apply, reflect, and improve are continuous rather than one-time events (Machost & Stains, 2023).
- Context strengthens transfer: Competence is more reliable when tested in real or realistic tasks and settings (Vlachopoulos & Makri, 2024; Nachtigall et al., 2022).
- Quality grows through revision culture: Building, refining, and strengthening outputs is a core learning outcome, not a remedial activity.
- Ethical judgement is part of performance: Evidence of competence should include safe, fair, and responsible practice.
- Recognition is earned by outcomes: Titles and levels are awarded based on assessed outcomes, not by time served or assumptions of status.
- Experience-based learning can be assessed rigorously when documentation, verification, and assessor calibration are designed into the process (Heinonen & Tuomainen, 2020; Yoo et al., 2020).



Proposed variable model: Constructive Contextual Education (CCE) and Positive Development (PD)

The researcher conceptualizes Constructive Contextual Education (CCE) as the independent variable and Positive Development (PD) as the dependent variable. In this conceptualization, CCE represents the philosophy’s design features (contextualised authentic tasks, practice-based application, structured reflection, & evidence-based assessment), while PD represents the sustained developmental outcomes (capability growth, agency, ethical judgement, & durable impact). The pathway is theorised as both direct and indirect: CCE is expected to influence PD through change mechanisms that develop learners’ capacity to regulate their learning, interpret and use feedback, and reflect critically on evidence of practice (Alt et al., 2022; Hemmler & Ifenthaler, 2024; Zhan et al., 2022).

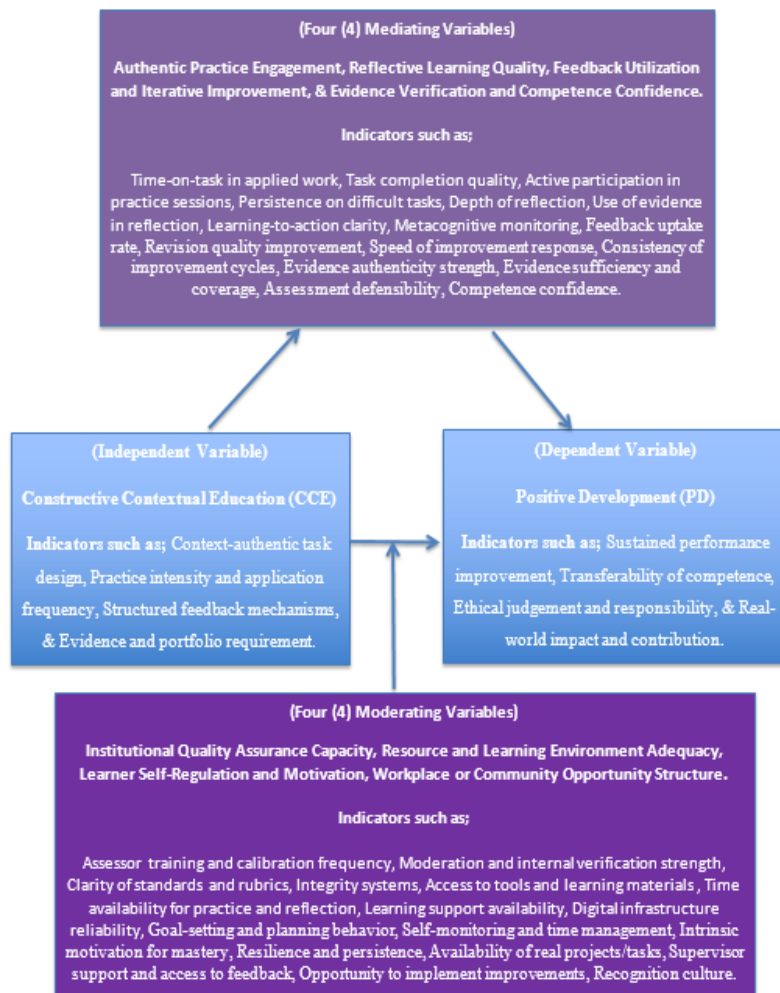


Figure 2: Researcher’s Proposed CCE→PD conceptual pathway with mediators and moderators.



The mediating variables proposed are: (1) Self-Regulated Learning capability, (2) Feedback literacy, and (3) Reflective practice and metacognitive awareness. These mediators are consistent with evidence that authentic, practice-oriented assessment and portfolio-based approaches can strengthen learning regulation, reflection, and the use of evidence for improvement (Vlachopoulos & Makri, 2024; Yoo et al., 2020).

The moderating variables proposed are: (1) Organizational learning support and culture, (2) Prior experience and baseline capability, and (3) Delivery modality and technology affordances. These moderators are expected to condition the strength of the CCE→mediators→PD pathway by enabling (or constraining) the time, resources, verification practices, and opportunities for transfer required for contextual learning to translate into sustained development outcomes (O'Neill, 2025; Hemmler & Ifenthaler, 2024).

Variable category	Proposed variable	Four indicators (illustrative, measurable)
Independent variable	Constructive Contextual Education (CCE)	1) Contextualized authentic tasks 2) Structured learning-cycle fidelity (learn–apply–reflect–improve) 3) Formative feedback and revision mechanisms 4) Evidence-based assessment/portfolio quality
Dependent variable	Positive Development (PD)	1) Sustained competence and performance improvement 2) Self-efficacy and learning agency 3) Ethical judgement and professional responsibility 4) Transferable impact and contribution (work/community outcomes)
Mediator	Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) capability	1) Goal-setting and planning 2) Monitoring and strategy use 3) Resource management/help-seeking 4) Self-evaluation and adaptive improvement
Mediator	Feedback literacy	1) Valuing feedback and willingness to engage 2) Judgement-making about quality 3) Emotion management during critique



		4) Action-taking (closing the loop)
Mediator	Reflective practice and metacognitive awareness	1) Depth of reflection on evidence of practice 2) Identification of strengths/limitations and causal reasoning 3) Learning-oriented revision plans 4) Metacognitive monitoring of progress over time
Moderator	Organizational learning support and culture	1) Supervisor/mentor support 2) Time/resources for practice and documentation 3) Recognition incentives for quality improvement 4) Psychological safety and learning culture
Moderator	Prior experience and baseline capability	1) Prior domain experience 2) Baseline competence/skill readiness 3) Motivation and goal orientation 4) Workload/time constraints
Moderator	Delivery modality and technology affordances	1) Access/reliability of learning technology 2) Interactivity and scaffold quality 3) Usability of portfolio/evidence tools 4) Integrity and verification capacity in assessment

Operationally, the CCE indicators can be captured through programme design audits (presence of authentic tasks, cycle structure, & feedback rubrics), and through portfolio quality scoring. The PD indicators can be measured through longitudinal portfolio evidence, performance ratings in authentic tasks, and structured self-report scales for agency and ethical decision-making. The mediator indicators can be measured using validated or adapted scales for self-regulated learning and feedback literacy, and through rubric-based coding of reflective journals (Alt et al., 2022; Zhan et al., 2022).

For rigour, portfolio and evidence-based assessment should include explicit quality criteria, assessor training, and inter-rater reliability checks, because reliability improves when rubrics and standardization procedures are used consistently (Yoo et al., 2020).



The three-level model of Constructive Contextual Education for Positive Development

The model progresses through three levels, each expressed as a developmental cycle. The cycles are designed to help learners (and practitioners seeking recognition) produce verified evidence, build higher-quality outputs, and sustain impact over time.

Level One: Learning Cycle (learn, apply, reflect, improve)

Purpose: establish foundational competence through structured learning followed by application in context. The learner is expected to demonstrate baseline capability, guided reflection, and initial evidence of improvement.

- What the level produces: foundational performance evidence, a basic portfolio, and documented reflection-to-improvement loops.
- Typical evidence: Supervised tasks, case write-ups, workplace logs, skills demonstrations, micro-projects, reflective journals, and assessor feedback records.
- Assessment emphasis: Validity through clear criteria and rubrics, and reliability through assessor guidance and calibration (Yoo et al., 2020).
- Learner designation: Emerging Practitioner (awarded based on evidence & assessed outcomes).

Level Two: Constructive Practice Cycle (build, refine, strengthen)

Purpose: embed a revision culture that improves the quality of practice outputs. This level prioritises the ability to design, test, document, and refine outputs using feedback, standards, and measurable performance indicators.

- What the level produces: Stronger outputs with documented iterations, improved decision quality, and consistent application across settings.
- Typical evidence: Revised projects, improved prototypes, policy drafts with version history, audit files, client reports, lesson study cycles, or engineered artefacts with test logs.
- Assessment emphasis: Authentic assessment tasks aligned to real roles, with evidence of improvement between iterations (Vlachopoulos & Makri, 2024).
- Learner designation: Refined Practitioner (awarded based on evidence, verification, & assessed outcomes).

Level Three: Positive Development Cycle (grow, deepen, increase, sustain)

Purpose: demonstrate sustained contribution, mature judgement, and ethical practice over time. At Level Three, competence is evaluated through impact, depth of reasoning, and the capacity to lead or mentor, while sustaining quality and responsibility.

- What the level produces: Evidence of sustained impact, advanced judgement, and contribution to systems, communities, or professional standards.
- Typical evidence: Peer-reviewed outputs, evaluated innovations, leadership portfolios, validated frameworks, sustained organizational improvements, or research contributions.
- Assessment emphasis: Triangulation of evidence, panel review, and calibrated decision-making to strengthen defensibility (De Jong et al., 2022; Torre et al., 2022).
- Learner designation: Distinguished Practitioner (awarded based on verified evidence, ethics, & demonstrated sustained impact).



Table 1 summarizes the three levels, their intended outcomes, and evidence expectations.

CCED Level	Cycle focus	Primary outputs	Learner designation
Level One	Learn, apply, reflect, improve	Foundational capability evidence; initial improvement loop; basic portfolio	Emerging Practitioner
Level Two	Build, refine, strengthen	Iterated outputs; quality improvement; standards-aligned artefacts; stronger portfolio	Refined Practitioner
Level Three	Grow, deepen, increase, sustain	Sustained contribution; advanced judgement; ethical maturity; impact evidence	Distinguished Practitioner

Certification levels, equivalence, and learner status titles

The equivalence stated within CCE-PD is expressed as level-of-learning equivalence and does not automatically imply a regulated academic degree unless accredited by an awarding body. This distinction protects learners and institutions by preventing misleading claims while still allowing transparent benchmarking against recognised learning-outcomes descriptors.

The learner designations Emerging Practitioner, Refined Practitioner, and Distinguished Practitioner are professional progression titles within the CCED structure. They communicate demonstrated capability across the CCE-PD cycle and are awarded strictly on the basis of evidence, verification, and assessed outcomes, not on the basis of regulated academic degree status.

For transparency and portability, each CCED level should be benchmarked using outcomes-based descriptors in the style of major qualifications frameworks, rather than being described as a direct substitute for degree, masters, or doctoral awards. This approach supports international readability while respecting national regulation. In Ghana, CCED may align its descriptors to the National TVET Qualifications Framework (NTVETQF) terminology and Recognition of Prior Learning policy architecture without claiming automatic equivalence to regulated awards (Commission for TVET, 2022; Commission for TVET, 2026).



Table 2 presents an outcomes-based benchmarking logic for CCED levels (benchmarking, not degree equivalence).

CCED Level	Learner designation (title)	Benchmark alignment (descriptor-style)
Level One	Emerging Practitioner	Comparable to foundational competence: applies guided knowledge and skills to routine tasks; demonstrates basic autonomy under supervision; produces initial evidence and reflections.
Level Two	Refined Practitioner	Comparable to advanced applied competence: integrates knowledge to solve non-routine problems; improves outputs through feedback and revision; demonstrates increasing autonomy and responsibility.
Level Three	Distinguished Practitioner	Comparable to expert professional competence: demonstrates advanced judgement, ethical reasoning, leadership, and sustained contribution; designs or evaluates systems; evidence shows impact over time.

Credit design and notional learning time model

CCE-PD proposes a twelve-month design per level to support deep practice, evidence collection, and sustained improvement. A notional learning hours model is used for transparency in design, not as a claim of equivalence to any external credit system.

- Internal design rule: One internal credit equals ten notional learning hours.
- Internal design rule: One learning year equals one hundred and twenty internal credits (one thousand two hundred notional hours).
- Notional hours include teaching contact time, supervised practice, assessment activities, directed study, and evidence development.

This structure supports modularity and planning while leaving room for context-specific delivery (for example, hybrid teaching, supervised workplace tasks, or field-based projects). Notional learning time is widely used internationally for transparency and planning, but credit comparability depends on local regulation and quality assurance mechanisms (European Training Foundation, 2021).



Pathways and assessment architecture

Taught training pathway

The taught training pathway is designed for cohorts receiving guided instruction. It combines structured teaching, supervised practice, and portfolio outputs aligned to clear rubrics.

- Core components: Guided instruction, supervised practice, scaffolded reflection, feedback loops, and portfolio compilation.
- Quality control: Rubric-based marking, assessor training, moderation, and periodic calibration meetings to improve reliability (Yoo et al., 2020).
- Outputs: Verified artefacts (projects, reports, demonstrations) with version history and evidence of improvement.

Experience-based pathway

The experience-based pathway enables experienced practitioners to be assessed without repeating learning they already possess, provided that they can document and verify competence. This pathway reflects the RPL literature emphasising evidence quality, transparency, and fairness (Raciti et al., 2024; Heinonen & Tuomainen, 2020).

- Evidence expectations: Structured portfolio of practice outputs, third-party verification, and reflective narratives linking evidence to outcomes.
- Verification: Authenticity checks, triangulation (multiple evidence types), and audit trails for assessors.
- Decision rule: Certification is awarded only when evidence meets threshold standards for relevance, sufficiency, authenticity, and currency.

Level Three pathways

At Level Three, CCE-PD specifies two routes, both requiring rigorous evidence and panel decision-making:

- Research pathway: A structured inquiry project that produces evaluated evidence, such as a publishable study, validated framework, or documented innovation.
- Recognition of Prior Learning pathway: A structured assessment of prior achievements and sustained contributions, defended before a calibrated panel.

Recognition of Prior Learning in Constructive Contextual Education for Positive Development

Within CCE-PD, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) refers to the structured validation of learning acquired through work, community engagement, self-directed study, or prior training, where that learning is evidenced and assessed against CCED outcomes. A key principle is that RPL is not a shortcut; it is an alternative assessment route with equally demanding standards (Raciti et al., 2024).

Evidence that may count (subject to verification & rubric alignment) includes:

- Workplace outputs: Reports, audits, designs, lesson plans, clinical logs, project files, and documented results.
- Reflective evidence: Journals, learning logs, improvement narratives, and decision rationales (Machost & Stains, 2023).
- Public outputs: Articles, conference presentations, policy briefs, verified innovations, or peer-reviewed work.



- Third-party verification: Supervisor letters, client attestations, organisational records, or independent confirmations.

Verification rules should reflect good practice in RPL assessment and national policy expectations, including transparency of criteria, assessor training, digital documentation where appropriate, and moderated decision-making to strengthen fairness and reliability (Heinonen & Tuomainen, 2020; Commission for TVET, 2022).

Defence process: candidates submit an evidence portfolio, receive an initial screening, and then defend the portfolio before a panel. Panel decisions are recorded with scores, narrative justifications, and conditions for improvement where required. This operationalises contextual learning by requiring candidates to explain how evidence demonstrates competence across different contexts and how learning is sustained.

CCED standards, certification, and programme portfolio model

Positioning of CCED within CCE-PD. CCE-PD is presented in this paper as the overarching education philosophy and institutional platform. CCED is positioned as an internal division under CCE-PD responsible for education and training delivery, programme development, standards-setting, assessment integrity, and certification/verification functions. This clarification distinguishes the philosophy (CCE-PD) from the operational division (CCED) while maintaining a coherent institutional architecture and reducing ambiguity in how standards and awards are governed. The CCED division model is proposed to provide quality assurance and credibility safeguards for CCE-PD-aligned awards.

In this model, CCED operates as the internal standards-and-delivery division of CCE-PD and simultaneously as a portfolio label for discipline-specific CCE-PD programmes and credentials that follow one shared quality assurance and verification architecture.

- Educational standards and training approval: Training requirements for staffing, facilities, learner support, governance, and assessment capability.
- Programme validation: Alignment checks for curriculum, assessment tasks, evidence requirements, and notional learning design.
- Assessment integrity: Assessor training, moderation, audit trails, and periodic review of rubric performance and panel consistency.
- Certification register: A verifiable public record of certifications (with privacy protections), enabling employers and institutions to confirm status.

In national contexts such as Ghana, CCED would need to respect statutory education regulation and quality assurance. Where programmes are positioned as formal tertiary awards, appropriate accreditation routes through the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission and relevant regulators apply (Ghana Tertiary Education Commission, 2021; Education Regulatory Bodies Act, 2020). Where positioned as professional or continuing education credentials, alignment to quality assurance principles and truthful marketing remain essential.



The Certificate of Exceptional Potential

The Certificate of Exceptional Potential is proposed as a recognition for learners who demonstrate unusually strong capability, rapid improvement, and high integrity of evidence relative to their level. 'Exceptional' refers to performance exceeding stated rubrics, strong reflective judgement, and verified impact beyond minimum requirements.

- Evidence thresholds: Outstanding rubric scores across most domains, triangulated evidence of impact, and high-quality reflective reasoning.
- Decision process: Independent review by a panel, with assessor calibration to reduce bias (De Jong et al., 2022).
- Recording: award status is recorded in the certification register and can be verified.

Distinct contribution and global adoption potential

CCE-PD contributes a structured synthesis of three elements that are often treated separately: (i) cyclical learning with reflection and feedback; (ii) evidence-centred authentic assessment; and (iii) Recognition of Prior Learning as a formalised pathway. Literature on reflective practice supports the claim that reflection gains power when paired with feedback and actionable improvement (Machost & Stains, 2023). Systematic reviews on authentic assessment highlight the value of real-world tasks for building transferable skills and employability, while also noting the need for resources, training, and stakeholder buy-in (Vlachopoulos & Makri, 2024). RPL research similarly shows that robust RPL requires clear evidence rules, transparency, and reliable assessment processes (Raciti et al., 2024).

The model is designed for adoption across disciplines because its core unit is evidence of performance and improvement, not subject-specific content alone. It can support workforce readiness through work-integrated learning, portfolio assessment, and standards-aligned outputs (Mabungela & Mtiki, 2024; Yoo et al., 2020). The approach also aligns with micro-credential and modular recognition trends, where smaller verified units can be stacked to support lifelong learning pathways (Ahsan et al., 2023; Gamage et al., 2025; Parsons & Van Dyke, 2025).

Limitations and future work

CCE-PD is a foundational proposal and therefore requires empirical testing and refinement. Key limitations include: the potential variability of panel decisions across disciplines; the cost and time of evidence verification; and the risk of inconsistent standards if assessor training and moderation are weak.

- Panel reliability: Future work should test inter-panel consistency and develop calibration protocols (Yoo et al., 2020).
- Evidence verification: Research is needed to evaluate efficient verification methods, including digital documentation and audit trails (Heinonen & Tuomainen, 2020).
- Comparability: pilots should test whether rubric criteria function similarly across disciplines and whether descriptors remain meaningful across contexts.
- Impact evaluation: longitudinal studies should examine whether higher levels correlate with sustained professional performance and ethical practice.



A recommended research agenda includes pilot implementations in selected fields, mixed-method evaluation of learner outcomes and stakeholder perceptions, and iterative refinement of rubrics and pathway rules.

III. Conclusion

This concept paper has presented Constructive Contextual Education for Positive Development (CCE-PD) as a three-level philosophy and standards model designed to link learning with verified outcomes, documented evidence, and sustained contribution. The model structures progression through the Learning Cycle, Constructive Practice Cycle, and Positive Development Cycle, supported by two pathways (taught training & experience-based assessment) and a Level Three split between research and Recognition of Prior Learning. It further proposes a standards and certification institution model, Certified Constructive Education and Development (CCED), to support credibility, educational standards and training approval, programme validation, and a transparent certification register. CCE-PD aims to provide a portable, outcomes-based approach that can be adopted across disciplines while respecting national regulatory boundaries and avoiding misleading degree equivalence claims.

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