Hiroshima · 10-12 NOV 2025

Conference Program

For Paper, Roundtable, and Teacher Talk Presenters

- Each presentation should be **no longer than 15 minutes**.
- The **first presenter** in each room will act as the **session facilitator**.
- There is **no required template** for presentations. Presenters are welcome to use their own slides.
- Presenters are asked to **bring their own laptops**. A projector and screen will be provided.

For Poster Presenters

- Posters should be printed in **upright A0 size** (841 × 1188 mm / 33.1 × 46.8 inches).
- There is **no required template** for posters. Presenters are welcome to use their own formats.
- Please **bring your printed poster** to the venue.
    - **Note:** There are **no printing facilities** available near the venue.

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Keywords: Facilitator, facilitator training, facilitator practice

Symposium abstract

Postures and Roles of the Facilitator: How to Teach Them? - State of our Experience and Research, and Opening the Discussion

The practice of facilitating Lesson Study is not used in all countries. In our European contexts, both in Switzerland and in Scotland, it is an important factor for a 'successful' LS. One of our concerns is the lack of trained facilitators. Some countries, like the Netherlands, have implemented institutionalised facilitator training. However, there isn't anything at that level in the countries represented in this symposium. Therefore, we will present the situation in the Swiss context in various settings, and then, with the help of a Scottish expert, endeavour to suggest avenues to think (or re-think) facilitator education in the various settings where LS can take place.

First, in the ITE context, we will discuss the roles and postures of the facilitator, based on a research in Mathematics education. Those roles are usually complex and varied, and in ITE the facilitator is often the educator as well, thus adding to the complexity.

Second, in the Placement (or Practicum) context, we will discuss how the facilitator can help foster reflexivity in classroom-based mentors through Mentoring Conversation Studies (MCS). Here, the facilitator works with experienced teachers to help them support preservice teachers' reflexivity during their post-lesson conversations.

Third, in Early Childhood Professional Development, we will explore the complexity of the role of the facilitator in a nearly fully unpredictable environment, that is 'pretend-play', an activity initiated by the pupils rather than the teacher. The complexity generated by this situation means the roles of the facilitator are under closer scrutiny than in a more 'classical' LS process, and therefore it opens new avenues for thinking and provides a brand-new variety of questions.

Fourth, in Primary and Secondary school Professional Development, we will discuss the need to train facilitators, what has already been done towards that in the Western Swiss context, and the feedback participants have given about the need for facilitators.

Finally, our aim is to discuss facilitator training in various contexts where LS can be implemented, and where there is no institutionalised or regular training available.

Facilitation: Roles and Postures - the Example of Initial Teacher Education

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For those who have practiced lesson study (LS), it is common knowledge to consider the facilitation and the presence of *koshi* as key elements of the process. Academic literature provides evidence of this phenomenon both inside and outside Japan (Takahashi, 2014; Takahashi & McDougal, 2016). However, while in Japan the distinction between the facilitators and the *koshi/*knowledgeable others is very clear, in LS forms developed abroad these two figures may overlap (Takahashi & Clivaz, 2018). This fact leads to an increasing complexity of the tasks, the interventions, as well as the required knowledge and skills.

The context of initial teacher education further complexifies the picture: in this setting, the facilitator is also an expert and an educator. Besides, in some cases there may be more than one guiding member with different skills or areas of expertise, which can additionally modify the dynamics and the power imbalance with the preservice teachers.

When researching LS or training new facilitators in this context, it becomes essential to better understand this multifaceted figure. This contribution explores facilitation within a PhD research on LS in initial teacher education (Presutti, 2024). The study is based on the distinction between the educators' *roles* and *postures* during the LS process. *Roles* are determined by the institutions to which the educators are subject. *Postures*, on the other hand, depend on educators' positioning within the roles and influence how they act, think or speak in a given situation, as well as their attitude towards knowledge. Thus, for each episode that occurs during LS, it is possible to identify a predominant posture based on the educators' actions and speech.

The contribution presents the analysis of some episodes taken from a LS conducted at Lausanne University of Teacher Education, in Switzerland. The LS was part of the Mathematics education programme, with the group reflecting on the teaching and learning of integer numbers in lower-secondary school. This analysis reveals the dynamics between the members of the LS group in terms of postures. Results show a 'mirror effect' between the posture of the educator and of the preservice teachers, and subsequent changes on the didactical contract and the learning responsibility. Broader results on the group's dynamics through all the LS process show an evolution, with the educator adopting more of an expert posture at the beginning and more of a practitioner-researcher posture at the end.

These findings raise a number of questions about their use for training new facilitators. For instance, how can awareness of these postures help new facilitators to develop their reflective attitude? What is the influence of the facilitator's own knowledge on these postures? When is it appropriate to hold this knowledge and when is it appropriate to disclose it?

The Facilitator in a LS on Activities Initiated by the Children

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Several studies highlight the importance of balancing children's initiated activities and activities initiated by adults in the early stages of schooling (Sylvia and Nabucco, 1996). An equivalent ratio between the two would be a sign of quality (Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2002) and would correspond to a practice adapted to the development of young children. It is often difficult for teachers to work from activities that cannot be fully mastered *a priori*. Thus, implementing a *lesson study* that is not based on a lesson prepared and tested in the classroom requires a number of adaptations (Clerc-Georgy & al., 2024).

For this communication, we will analyse the role of the facilitator (Clerc-Georgy & Clivaz, 2016; Martin & Clerc-Georgy, 2017) in a LS which object of study is 'pretend play'. The *a priori* analysis of the teaching/learning processes took up a significant amount of time, particularly because preparing a lesson becomes 'BEING' prepared to observe, intervene, seize or provoke learning opportunities in the play initiated by the children. As the 'lesson' becomes a 'play time', its planning includes an important part for identifying the focus points of observation that will feed the critical analysis.

In this particular case of LS, the facilitator is in the same situation as the teachers, not knowing in advance what will happen in the observed class(es). They are forced to adopt an 'open-ended' posture. Furthermore, as the teacher's interventions are not planned, their analysis requires particular attention not only to the effects of these interventions, but also to what may have provoked them. Observation requires specific and probably more complex preparation.

The risk-taking of the participants is greater than in a LS where the interventions are planned in advance. The teacher who opens their class could find themselves in a sensitive situation, having to improvise based on what happens. In this case, the debriefing would probably require more than the teacher could explain, which led them to intervene or not. To reduce the pressure on the teacher, we have opted for three types of lessons: 1) observation of the children's free activities without intervention; 2) possible interventions by all participants and observation of their effects on children's play; and 3) *Conceptual PlayWorlds* where the teacher guides the activity while remaining open to the children's suggestions.

In any case, working with children's initiated activities requires remaining open to unpredictability, developing observation skills, identifying knowledge invested by the children in their play, and developing a creative approach to teaching.

Finally, what emerges from our initial analyses of the group discussions and the video-recordings of classroom moments is that the role of the facilitator can be that of a role model: it is often the facilitator who intervenes first or who models a possible type of intervention. The participants also often take up the facilitator's suggestions and put them into action. Is the line between facilitator and trainer more blurred than in a traditional LS, or is the transition from one role to the other more visible?

Facilitator in the Mentoring Conversation Study context

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Discursive exchanges between mentors and trainees during mentoring conversations (Orland-Barak, 2006) are seen as privileged places for supporting the construction of professional knowledge about teaching (Hennissen & al., 2008). Mentors are experienced school teachers who tutor preservice teachers during their placement/practicum. This mentoring practice can be trained to become a reflexive learning practice, with the use of a model based on LS.

Mentoring Conversation Study-MCS (De Simone, 2023) is inspired by the Lesson Study (LS) research-training model. As known, LS generates collective analyses between teachers concerning the study, planning, teaching and observation, analysis and modification of a teaching lesson (Miyakawa and Winsløw, 2009). In the MCS model, the collective lesson study has been replaced by the mentoring conversation study. As with the LS, the MCS process takes place longitudinally, through several loops of interview studies about the planning, implementation, analysis and regulation of transcribed interviews, having been conducted by the mentors with their preservice teachers.

The facilitator is one of the keys to the success of LS. They are described as an expert, a trainer, a guide, a support or an observer who asks questions and moves the discussions forward (Clerc-Georgy & Clivaz, 2020). In MCS, the facilitator is a university-based educator. The aim of this research is to find out whether this role is transferable to the MCS and to the person who guides participants to ask themselves questions, to unfold their thinking and to dissect their professional actions (De Simone, 2023; Truffer-Moreau, 2021) in order to make them accessible to preservice teachers.

This contribution discusses how the facilitator can help foster reflexivity in preservice teachers through MCS analysis. The facilitator works with experienced teachers, called “mentors”, to help them support their preservice teachers’ reflexivity during their post-lesson conversations. This paper therefore focuses on the content analysis (Balslev, 2016) of collective exchanges between mentors and a facilitator during group MCS sessions. It also highlights changes in the content of interviews conducted by mentors with their pre-service teacher during the three MCS loops.

From Facilitating LS to Training Facilitators

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One of the keywords we can take from the other three contributions is 'complexity'. Being a facilitator is not easy nor straightforward: when to intervene? When to let the team free rein? How to intervene? Silent or not? How to help the team explore dissonance? Ultimately, the central question for a facilitator is 'how to foster learning and change of practice in teachers' so that their pupils would learn better?' The umbrella-question is 'how to plan all this? How to prepare facilitation?' (Clerc-Georgy & Clivaz, 2016; Ergilbin & Robinson, 2025; Gomes et al., 2023; Mynott & Michel, 2022; Morago & Grigioni Baur, 2020). I would add the questions 'how far am I ok with stepping out of my comfort zone, as a facilitator, and how to analyse and metarflect on my practice as a facilitator to foster my own professional development?'

In a context where LS is not embedded in culture, or formally institutionalised within Universities, the question of how to spread LS, or how to make it known to others without imposing it, is a fiddly one. Central to this, apart from the way to communicate with schools, is having the right workforce to carry out LS within the schools to make it a relevant Professional Development (PD) process for the teachers, one that they would embrace, thus helping to make LS a sustainable PD in their schools. The core is how to train or educate facilitators. Over the years, we, as teacher educators, researchers and facilitators ourselves, have tried out various ways, which include a) training an 'apprentice' during a LS process, the apprentice being either a fellow teacher educator or a teacher from the school where the LS was being carried out; b) an online 6-module and one-year-long LS-and-its-facilitation programme for French-speaking facilitators-in-being; and c) training a group of teachers from the same school to become facilitators within their school.

This contribution will focus on the feedback given by the teachers who were trained within their school (c) and the use of a tool created during the online training programme (b) (Hoznour, Haan & Grigioni Baur, 2024). The aim, based on our four presentations, is to propose and discuss a series of keys for reading and analysing facilitator practice that could be avenues to explore when training facilitators in contexts where there is not institutionalised tuition.