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Lesson Study and Growth of Pedagogic Literacy in Initial Teacher Education (ITE)

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Overview

- explore lessons learned from our ITE LS projects
- present examples of outcomes (several projects)
- identify the essential conditions for successful use of lesson study in ITE
- argue that lesson study:

➢ offers a formative enquiry-focused complement to current parallel approaches to teacher education,

➢ gives opportunities for all participants to grow pedagogic literacy through collaborative inquiry.

Lesson Study Research Group (LSRG)

Phil Wood, **Fay Baldry,** Julie Norton, David Pedder, Jim Askham, Jo Reed-Johnson, Joan Woodhouse, Sue Wallin, Haiyan Xu, Stephanie Guene-Edwards, Jo Griffiths, Maarten Tas, Elodie Walsh, **Sarah Adams**, GSO (?), Debbie Larssen, Nina Helgevold, Maria-Laura Angelini, Neus Alvarez……..

- Collaborating
- Teaching
- Researching
- Writing
- Disseminating
- National/international

Lesson study: emerging UK approach?

- Co-preparation of a ‘research lesson’ by a group of teachers
- One of the group teaches
- Others observe with a focus on case students (not teacher)
- Collaborative evaluation of the lesson
- Possible inclusion of children’s perspectives
- Co-preparation of the next lesson

Influences

- Stigler and Hiebert (*The Teaching Gap*, 1999)

- Need to focus on improving 'teaching'

- Hiebert, Morris and Glass (2003): learning to learn how to teach

- Dudley, P. (2011, 2014)

- O'Leary, M. (*Classroom Observation,* 2014*)*

- Limitations/reliability of traditional graded classroom observation

- Sahlberg, P. (*Finnish Lessons,* 2011*):* GERM

- Standards-oriented performative culture

Hopes and doubts

Sahlberg (2011) claims:

- avoidance of business models;
- high confidence and trust in teachers;
- **putting curiosity, imagination, creativity** at heart of learning;
- pursuing interest in learning and the whole child, as the principal purposes of teaching.

Resolution by LSRG: adoption of lesson study as a complement to parallel approaches to ITE

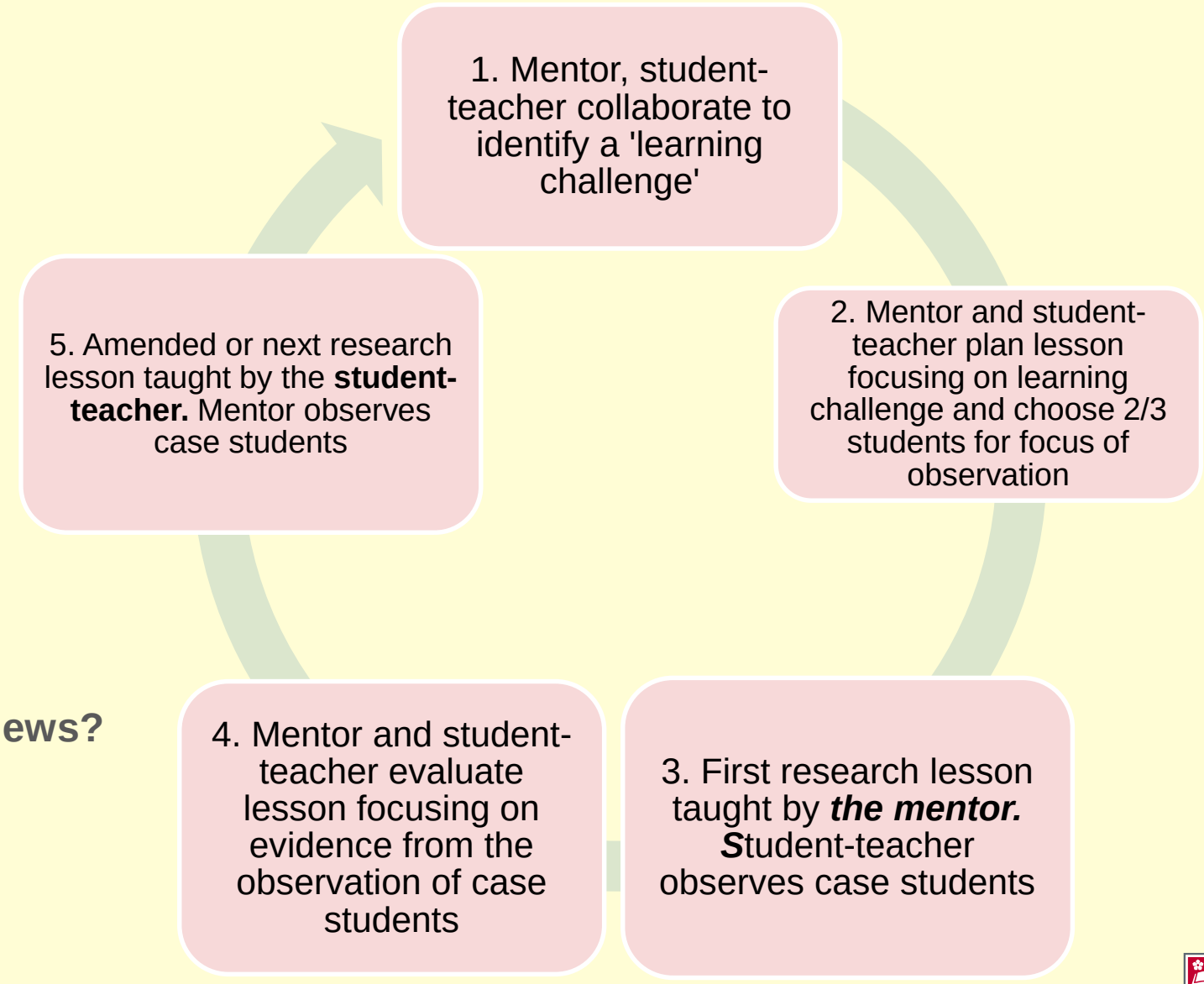
Projects + assignment in ITE with lesson study

- SCITT: one module (core) and assignment
- Secondary PGCE (option): Maths, Science, Geography, Modern Languages, Citizenship, Social Science
- Primary PGCE (option in specialist study module): inclusion, mental health teaching, modern languages
- Collaboration with Stavanger and Valencia: undergraduate Year 3 lesson study projects (Core: English language, Maths).

Variety of approaches

- mentor and student-teacher paired lesson study
- paired placement lesson study
- peer micro-teaching lesson study (secondary Humanities subject PGCE) between practices
- PGCE tutors lesson studying own practice (Professional Course)

LS Methodology in paired placements

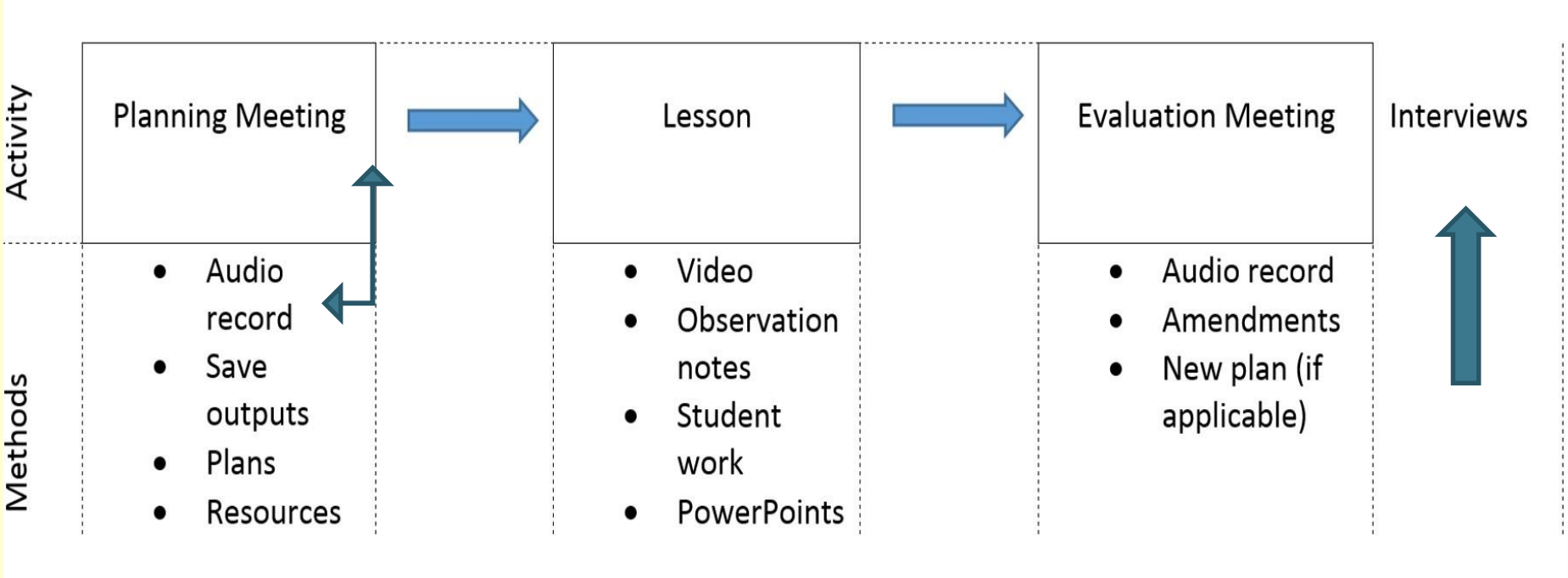


Interviews?

Data collection strategies in research lessons

- Direct observations of case students (annotated on lesson plan, adapting Dudley 2014 or Burghes/Robinson 2009 or UoL guide for mentors/student-teachers)
- Written work analysis
- Recordings of tasks
- Variety of 'measures':
  - Pre-test/post-tests
  - Entry-exit tickets
  - Postcards
- Recordings of planning/evaluation meetings (+ plans and artefacts)

Data capture and analysis



- **Unit of analysis**: collective learning and practice development of Lesson Study group
- **Focus**: individual interviews (informant-style, Powney and Watts 1987) and focus group interviews; some VSRIs/SRIs
- **Analysis:** community of practice; qualitative and inductive
- **Assignment** analysis (Cochran-Smith et al 2009)

Evaluations of Impact in ITE

- Surveys: questionnaire responses
- Recorded individual interviews
- Group meeting interviews
- Analysis of assignments (cf. Cochran-Smith et al 2009)
- End of year student panel reviews

Assignment analysis matrix

Cochran et al 2009

1. inquiry question
2. conceptual and theoretical framework
3. school/classroom context
4. participants
5. intervention(s)
6. data sources
7. student learning
8. social justice
9. findings
10. modifying curriculum and practice
11. implications

Larssen and Cajkler 2015

1. Learning Challenge
2. *Literature/conceptual framework*
3. Year Group /ability;
4. Case pupils
5. Intervention(s)/approach
6. *Data collection*
7. *Analytical tools*
8. Findings
9. Learning about learners
10. Learning about pedagogy and practice
11. Implications

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Outcomes: claims in assignments

- Positive reports from student-teachers, but not all …
- Echoed by mentors
- High levels of achievement in assignments (but ……)
- More awareness about learners (claimed, not proven)

Pedagogy: *This study has provided me with a well-rounded understanding of how to support children's self-regulation of difficult feelings* (Primary).

Planning: *spending time meticulously planning with an experienced practitioner had a positive impact on my personal planning process, and …… my understanding of differentiation and personalised learning has improved (English, poetry lesson).*

Outcomes: claims in assignments

- ***Expectations:*** *The process has taught me not to judge students simply on their [predicted] grade , and to not teach to the 'middle', allowing high and low achieving pupils on each side to be left behind (Eng)* [on mentors too]
- ***Student focus:*** *Using lesson study has been very beneficial as it has made me focus much more on the students' reactions* (Physics)
- **Complexity:** *The experience has highlighted the complexity of underachievement ……. lesson study has allowed steps forward in terms of pinpointing the causes of underachievement in two of the case students* (Citizenship)

Outcomes: claims in assignments

- *'Lewis (2006) highlights that the concept* [LS] *cannot be treated like a recipe, and must be discovered naturally over a period of time. This aspect is overlooked in our current approach to the study, at times feeling like a trivial exercise rather than a valuable educational tool.'*
- Absent mentors?
- Limited engagement in LS
- Low-collaborative approaches to joint planning

The greatest challenge was getting quality time to plan and collaborate but we did manage to work it in during the days ***(S1)***

Conditions for success from one student-teacher

- Teacher-mentor willing to engage
- Adequate preparation for engagement in LS
- LS scheduled into teacher-mentor timetables for the whole cycle, not left to local chance
- Understanding of LS as continual process, not a training checkbox that needs ticking
- Cross-departmental, even cross-school, sharing of expertise to fully benefit from amalgamated findings (drawing on Lewis 2006).

How feasible are these conditions for success in SCITTs?

General findings from assignments (15-16)

- Variation in perspectives on LS
- Huge variability in approach to LS
- Influence of school priorities e.g. engagement of boys or attitudes to learning
- Some mentor absence/disinterest
- Difficulty of 'transmitting' LS to school-based programmes
- No consistent approach to observation of learners
- Limited theorisation for 'learning'
- Paired LS useful, but triad better
- Evidence of exploration of pedagogic black box in all cases
- Semi-success

Conclusions from written LS reports (2015)

- Difficulty/frustration of ‘learning’ LS (mentors): time
- Challenge of observation of students’ learning
- Evidence in reports of positive growth in pedagogic literacy of trainee
- Complexity of teaching recognised and exemplified, including questioning current orthodoxies e.g. reliability of target grades
- Danger of Lewis (2006) concerns being realised
- Limited theorisation for ‘learning’
- Semi-success?

Outcomes: evidence in post-LS interviews

- **Seeing learning in action**: *It was really rewarding actually, because I suppose because you can see the impact that your lesson had on, as I say, even just their dialogue, it was really, really nice to get that kind of immediate feedback. ……you could key in and listen to what they were saying, and you knew that they'd picked up the points that you wanted them to pick up. (S4)*

- **Reflection:** *doing lesson study has helped me to reflect in much more detail than I usually would. And literally you're sort of picking on everything in that lesson because you want something to write about, and you want to improve your lesson, so the children get the most out of it as well (S1)*

Outcomes: evidence in post-LS interviews

- ***Collaboration:*** *The detail my mentor knew about the focus children provided valuable insight. Also, during the planning stage the smallest of additions that my mentor suggested really added extra engagement to the task and helped me get good insight into her pedagogical expertise (Prim).*

- *….. we realised that we could improve the lesson by changing the order of activities, which was good because, when it came to my lesson, it was clear that the students learned the topic much better than in my co-tutor's lesson* (I ML).

- **Ability to take feedback:** *if it's somebody that doesn't like to receive feedback or isn't confident to offer their own ideas. Then I think that would be quite difficult, but we had quite a good professional relationship in that (M1).*

Outcomes: evidence from post-LS interviews

- **Learning about children:** *We learned that their understanding of words doesn't necessarily correlate with their understanding of emotion. So, they were saying words that seemed to be above their understanding. They were using really kind of complex words and then we were asking them what they meant…… (Prim)*
- **Observation**: *… I was just concentrating on the three students so I was just looking at what they were doing, …..so I was just literally writing the name and what they did* (H Geog)
- *Yeah, it was strange at first, but then it was useful to actually see if they were working throughout and then I interviewed them to see .. how they thought they worked* (H Geog).

Benefits in ITE

- Focused enquiry-oriented approach
- Accessible ‘action research’ approach
- Enhances partnership collaboration
- Professional development for all
- Structured research possible
- Manageable data sets
- Manageable learning-focused assignments
- Glimpses of what it means to be a teacher
- Allows for scrutiny of complexity of teaching

Challenges

- Specifying the exact focus of research lessons (learning challenge)
- Theoretically frail assignments
- Keenness to write about success
- Difficulty of observation
- Interpretation of what it means to ‘collaborate’
- Intrusion of parallel approaches
- Time

Conditions for successful LS

- Preparation of student-teachers
- Mentor readiness
- Impact of knowledgeable other?
- Willingness to engage
- Positive mutual regard (Dudley 2011)
- Ability to observe and notice: read the classroom (attentional skills, Ainley and Luntley 2007)
- Acceptance of limited, partial or no success

Collaboration in LS

contributes to student-teachers' growth:

- planning, teaching and formative assessment
- observing learners?
- use of attentional skills to read the classroom??
- application of wiser judgement? (Biesta 2014)
- dialoguing with learners
- reflecting-in-action
- developing a broad, critical approach to pedagogy (Stenhouse 1975)
- getting a **glimpse** of what it means to be a teacher.

A glimpse of being a teacher:

Foundational Knowledge

- personal experience of learning and teaching
- subject knowledge
- professional skills e.g., planning; questioning etc.
- understanding through PCK
- experience & reflection
- ethics

pedagogic literacy

Societal dimensions

- policy awareness
- socio-economic patterns
- cultural frameworks
- change orientations
- accountabilities
- working with the community
- diversity

Organisational dimensions

- curriculum
- assessment frameworks
- disciplinary cultures
- preparation
- induction
- understanding /undertaking research

Learner dimensions

- abilities
- disabilities
- cultures
- interests
- strategies
- expectations

In-class literacy

- educational wisdom
- using attentional skills
- applying wise judgement
- reading the learners/classroom
- dialoguing with learners
- reflecting-in-action
- observing learning
- learner-responding
- PCK: application
- scaffolding
- assessing, AfL, feedback

Legal dimensions

- children's acts
- safeguarding
- rights
- other agencies

Affective dimensions

- values
- attitudes
- philosophies
- ethics
- passion/care

Socio-cultural dimensions

- learning in action
- professional learning
- collaborative development & learning
- seeking advice about teaching

Interpersonal dimensions

- interpersonal skills
- empathy
- leadership skills
- firmness of purpose
- ethics
- inspiration/motivation skills
- managing behaviour for learning

complexity of pedagogy

Essence of pedagogic literacy

Teachers' pedagogic literacy develops by:

- observing and responding to learning/learners
- reflecting in action to make wise educational judgements (Biesta 2014)
- collaborative practice
- drawing on underlying foundations e.g. ethics, values, empathy, far too numerous/complex to reduce to a list of standards:

  - limitations of standards: reductive view of teaching
  - need for holistic view of teaching
  - preparation for complexity

Strength of LS in ITE

- confronts complexity of teaching and learning early in teaching practice/experiences
- collaborative inquiry for 'pedagogic literacy'
- mentor and student-teacher as learning partners
- *'we'* inclusive perspective (but mentors lead?)
- increased confidence
- working from the perspective of learning
- less teacher-centred approaches
- integrated approach: more relevant to student-teacher's teaching
- **but** does it move away from 'technicist' approaches?

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Conclusion: hope that we can entrust teaching to teachers, working together.

Thank you.

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