

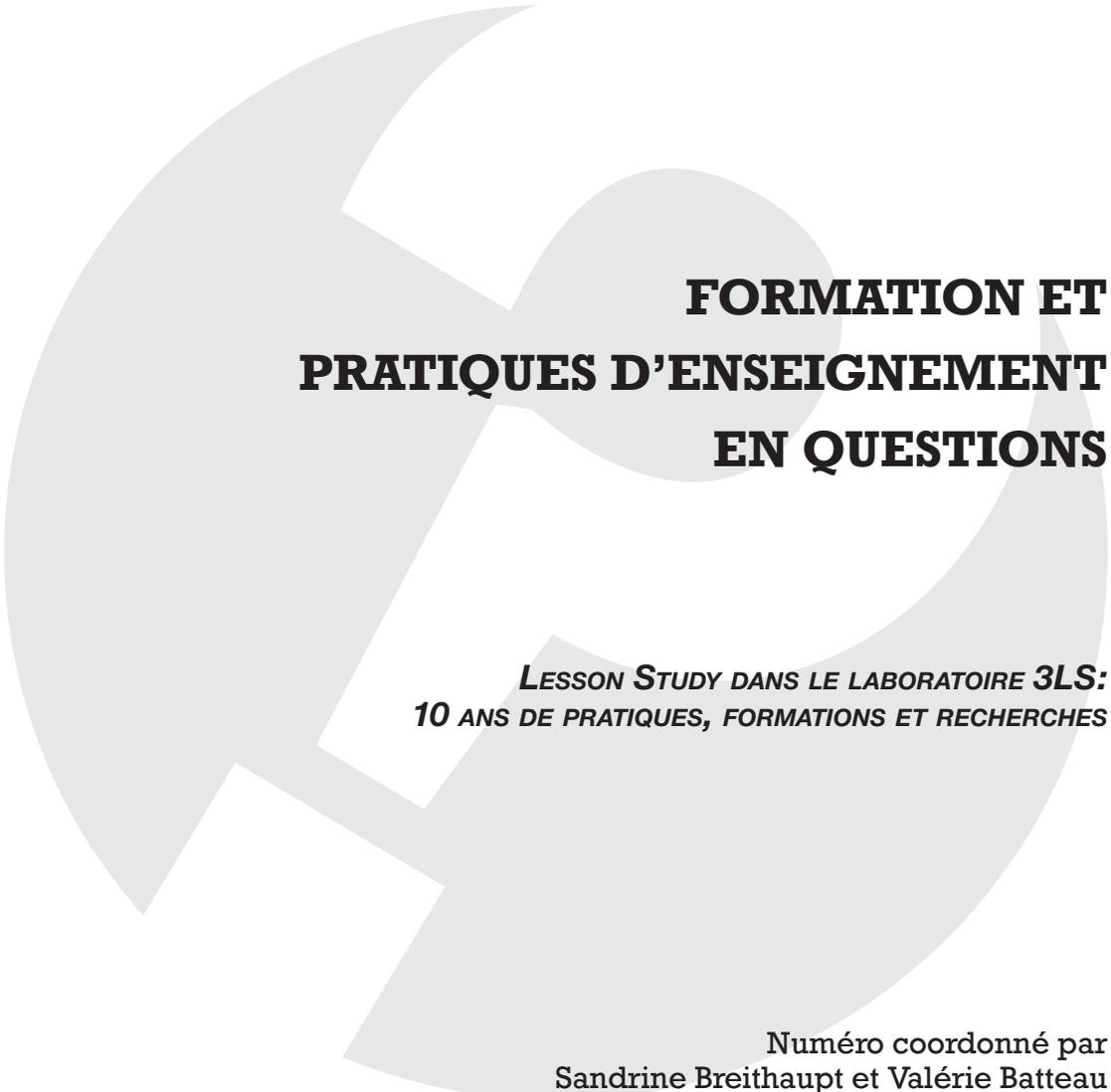


Lesson Study dans le laboratoire 3LS

10 ans de pratiques,
formations et recherches

Sandrine Breithaupt
et Valérie Batteau

Hors-série N°5



**FORMATION ET
PRATIQUES D'ENSEIGNEMENT
EN QUESTIONS**

***LESSON STUDY DANS LE LABORATOIRE 3LS:
10 ANS DE PRATIQUES, FORMATIONS ET RECHERCHES***

Numéro coordonné par
Sandrine Breithaupt et Valérie Batteau

Hors série No 5, 2025

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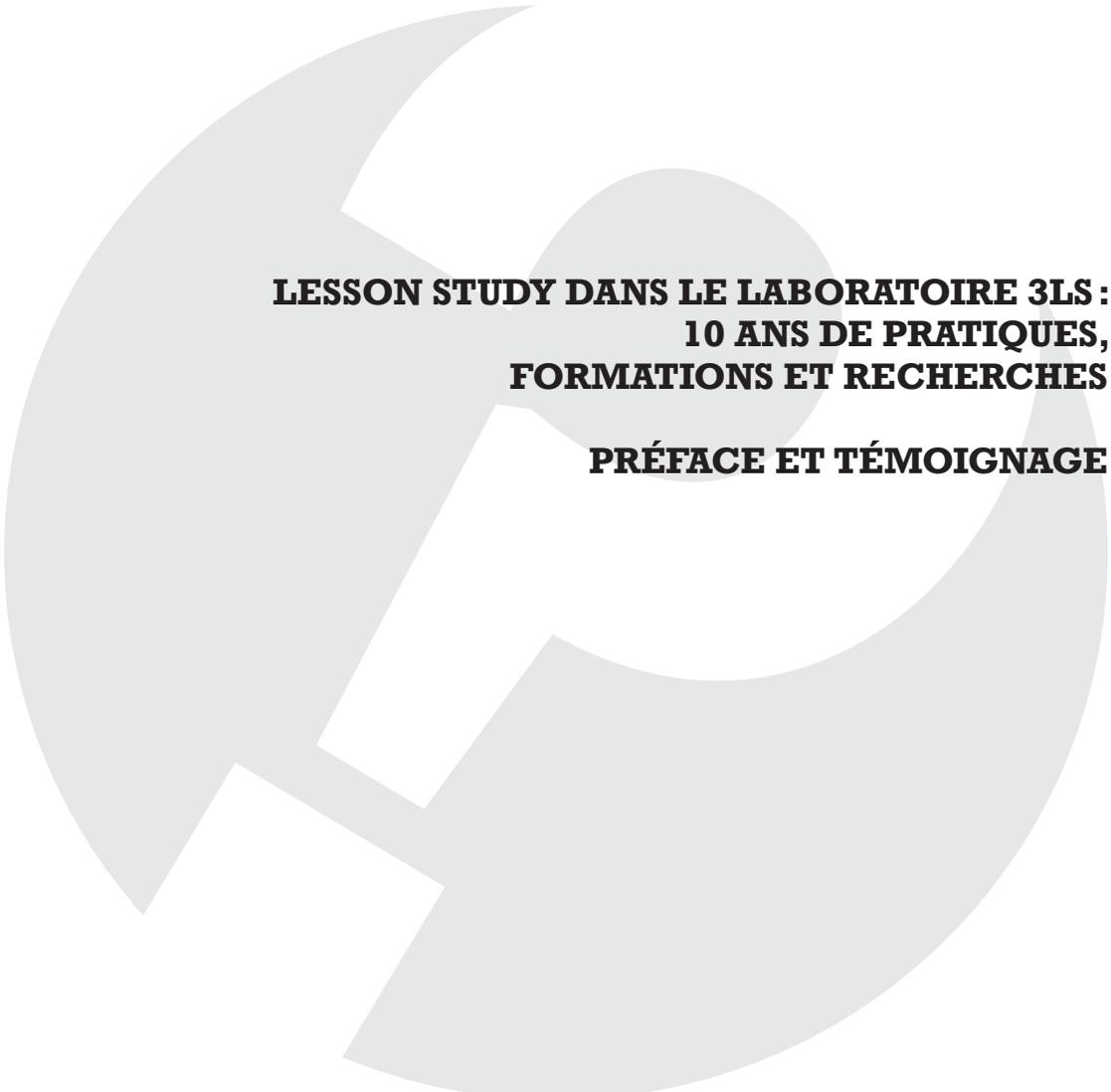
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**LESSON STUDY DANS LE LABORATOIRE 3LS :
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FORMATIONS ET RECHERCHES
PRÉFACE ET TÉMOIGNAGE**



Local Experimentation with International Implications: The Powerful Contributions of Laboratoire Lausannois Lesson Study (3LS)

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In the region surrounding Lausanne, centuries of thoughtful experimentation and ongoing careful observation have produced chocolate, cheese, and wine that are famous around the world. In just a little more than 10 years, the Lausanne Lesson Study Laboratory (3LS) has built a body of knowledge about Lesson Study that is equally remarkable. Readers have a treat in store.

The articles of this volume both break new ground and expand on ideas about Lesson Study that are emerging in other parts of the world. In the spirit of a “tasting menu” I share some of the richness and variety of this volume. Readers will want to devour the full portions found in each of the articles.

Have you ever wondered how Lesson Study can be modified for use in early childhood settings where children learn through student-initiated imaginative play? Anne Clerc-Georgy, Isabelle Truffer Moreau and Myriam Garcia Perez (this volume) reveal how Lesson Study can be adapted to focus on the (unpredictable) activities initiated by students, rather than the lesson flow planned and directed by teachers. Their article helps us appreciate key underlying ideas of Lesson Study—such as the power of teachers’ upfront study and discussion of learning theories, and teachers’ careful observation of students—that operate even when some familiar features (such as a detailed lesson plan) are missing. Through observation of student-initiated imaginative play, teachers learned, for example, that great noise at the outset of the lesson would diminish as students organized their play and that students who seemed to be acting strangely in imaginative play might actually be enacting dramatic roles such as “spy.” The authors remark that the risky business of Lesson Study offers educators some of the same advantages that imaginative play brings to students:

It is surprising to note how, in such a short space of time, Lesson Study on play awakens the teachers’ creativity and confidence both in their ability to deal with the unanticipated and in the children’s potential to show resources in their play.

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Have you thought about using Lesson Study to support adoption of a new textbook or newly mandated pedagogical tools? You will find frameworks to guide your work and insights into challenges in the articles on testing of new history teaching resources (Rogere-Pignolet and Cuzzo) and on teacher trainers to support implementation of a new mathematics textbook (Balegno *et al.*). For example, educators encountered difficulty testing a new recommended history tool (a mindmap) designed for summative assessment of a history lesson, because the tool's purpose (assessment) focused students' attention on "doing rather than on learning". In contrast, a new resource that asked students to produce an investigative notebook related to Swiss history sparked unexpected involvement and motivation: "Teachers had not imagined that the students could develop a critical mind and demonstrate such a reflective approach... when they had the possibility of presenting independently elements that aroused their interest."

An issue that cuts across many of the articles is the role and training of facilitators. Article authors bring interesting and varied theories of adult learning to the question of what constitutes good facilitation (see articles by DeSimone and by Presutti). An idea new to me is to use two facilitators. The facilitators may differ in background or level of experience and may take different postures within the group (Hoznour and Presutti; Hoznour and Perrousseau). The articles suggest that dual facilitation can enhance the breadth of observations; highlight dual perspectives (such as teaching goals and research goals); and allow facilitators to balance tasks of listening to group members and moving forward the group's work. The following remarkably honest statement concludes the article by Hoznour and Presutti:

Facilitation is a practice at the heart of the 3LS laboratory. This article began with the admission that there is no common definition of the concept. We close it without having one that can really be generalised. However, we have a clearer vision of what 'facilitating' means for our institution and our laboratory. It's a consensus based on our practices, our readings, our experiences, our research, our discussions with colleagues in the field, and the training we've put in place. It includes points to watch out for, which enable us to move forward in our work and to dialogue with our research colleagues, trainers and teachers. We have developed a common language around facilitation, built in concert with our colleagues, which will of course continue to evolve.

I was struck that this statement might be applied to the overall endeavor of Lesson Study. We should expect to keep moving forward in our work as we continue to learn from colleagues, rather than assuming that today's Lesson Study is the ultimate form of our work.

Reading about facilitation in this volume, I realized an assumption in my own thinking: that facilitation will become unnecessary (or will rotate among members) as Lesson Study matures. My assumption came, I think, from studying Japanese groups (where groups often self-manage and teachers rotate the role of research coordinator over time), and from studying teacher-led U.S. Lesson Study groups (which often rotate the facilitation role over



meetings). I am reconsidering my assumption after reading about the many affordances of facilitation and dual facilitation described in this volume. I think this issue is ripe for future international collaboration!

The work of 3LS fleshes out understandings of Lesson Study that are emerging around the world, such as the power of cross-institutional and international collaboration. From its early days, the 3LS work included interactions with educators in the U.S., Singapore, and Japan and interactions across different institutions in Vaud (schools, teacher training organizations, universities) (Introductory Article).

Many articles contribute to the growing literature from around the world on the impact of Lesson Study. What constitutes successful Lesson Study? Articles provide rich qualitative answers to this question. For example, Aeby and Guignard (this volume) write that “the most lasting effects of the approach are to be found in the changes in the way pupils’ learning is viewed. When experienced participants were asked to coach new teams as facilitators, it gave them an opportunity to see how far they had come... their own observations... more precise and more comprehensive than those made by the novice participants.” Aeby and Guignard recommend that facilitators initially place heavy emphasis on observation of pupils, not just on content study, and they recognize that these two elements are intertwined. Their idea reminds me of an idea developed by Jackie Hurd, one of the first U.S. educators to build Lesson Study at her school, who proposed teaching “dirty lessons” (research lessons that had not been planned in great depth) in order to give teachers an opportunity to experience the power of observation (Lewis and Hurd, 2011). Often teachers would choose a favorite lesson and would be very surprised to discover the impact on students was different than imagined.

Hoznour and Perez (this volume) also write about the power of teachers’ observation of students: “Observation of the students in all its implications, instead of focusing solely on the product... Actively listening to what student are saying, observing non-verbal communication, and studying and analysing student traces.” The authors question whether a common observation tool is necessarily the best strategy to support observation; they do argue for a common observational focus, which may include dimensions related to research, teaching and pedagogy.

Their discussion of observational focus reminded me of a practice that has impressed me in San Francisco, where school-wide Lesson Study brings together all the educators from a school as well as some teachers, coaches, professors, and others from outside the school. Just before going in to observe the research lesson it is common to conduct a “wave” in which each person mentions one thing they are looking forward to learning during the lesson. This activity always elicits a remarkable range of responses—for example, related to students’ content knowledge, use of practices learned in prior years, task effectiveness, and routines that allow students to build on each other’s ideas. The variety of things adults hope to learn is a reminder that Lesson Study is the ultimate in differentiated professional learning,



with the potential to support learning by educators with a wide range of experience levels and institutional roles about topics ranging from students to content to classroom routines to curriculum (Lewis *et al.*, 2025).

Lesson Study also makes teachers visible to themselves. In their article on Lesson Study in Initial Training, Batteau *et al.* (this volume) quote a student who said “I realize that my view of pupils, learning, and knowledge acquisition methods has changed...” Didier, Chatelain, Hoznour and Goetschi-Danesi (this volume) quote an educator who says: “And...before this opportunity to put a camera in my classroom, I didn’t really know what kind of teacher I was. I think I was perhaps idealising the person or imagining that I taught like that. And the fact that I saw myself, that I was filmed, was very, very, very interesting”.

Another benefit of Lesson Study that emerges strongly from this book is strengthened collaboration among teachers, what Rogere-Pignolet and colleagues call “cognitive democracy.” Suddenly, as educators plan and reflect, they hear their colleagues’ voices:

I go back mentally to what we do at Lesson Study, saying to myself, “No, I can’t leave it like that! I’d rather go like this. What would Lara do? And what would Sabrina do?” And then, afterwards, it allows me to build a new course, really inspired by my colleagues. It’s very rewarding.

With Lesson Study, I’m constantly questioning myself: in the end, when I do this in class, is it really the right thing to do? [...] I haven’t interested my pupils for so many years of teaching, and it’s now with Lesson Study that I’m seeing how to do things differently. [...] I don’t think you should be afraid of being judged because that’s not what Lesson Study is about, it’s about collaboration and working together.

Didier *et al.* (this volume) share the thoughts of another educator:

I think we should really systematise the fact of carrying out analyses of practice, of sharing, of bringing our practices together [...] in order to become aware of what is being done elsewhere, not from the point of view of judgement but from the point of view of sharing in order to understand the ins and outs of it, which is not always obvious».

Taken together, the articles of this issue left me with a new thought about spread and sustainability of Lesson Study. The articles represent so many levels of the education system—from preschool to adult education—and so many disciplines (e.g., mathematics, science, history, art, language) and pedagogical approaches (e.g., play-based learning, investigation of primary sources). The 3LS work is not siloed within a single discipline or level of education, and this suggests there is a strong underlying network of human relationships and high capacity for innovation that have allowed the Lesson Study approach to be tested in new contexts by new actors. In Japan, Lesson Study is used across a broad range of contexts and subject areas (including “non-academic” subject areas such as class meetings and school-wide festivals). But in many other regions of the world Lesson Study has not broken out of the silo of a single discipline or level of education. Reading this



volume, I was struck by the potential connection between spread and sustainability: Experienced groups articulate underlying principles of Lesson Study as they convey the work to newcomers in different settings and disciplines; new Lesson Study groups spark innovations that can re-invigorate the work of established groups that may have hit roadblocks.

I do not want to paint a too-rosy picture of Lesson Study as it comes to life in this issue. Several articles (Breithaupt; Clivaz) honestly report on challenges such as finding time for Lesson Study; embracing the power of disagreements and avoiding a “dialogue of the deaf”; and sustaining interest over time. As Batteau (this volume) points out, Lesson Study acts in part by creating dissonance: “The Lesson Study system acted like a ‘crisis’ or a disrupter on practices, destabilising the teachers’ ordinary practices during the system’s lessons (research lessons and lessons prepared during the sessions).”

But precisely because of the challenges, it is essential to listen closely to educators’ words reported in this volume. Educators tell us what makes the hard work of Lesson Study worth it—what we should be listening for in our work around the world.

The Lesson Study gave us a new boost of motivation to prepare our [daily] mathematics lessons [...] It has given us a much more comprehensive view of the difficulties encountered by pupils and their strategies for solving problems.

The benefits of Lesson Study are not limited to the specific subject addressed but can be transposed to other subjects and even other disciplines.

I’d never heard of LS before. At first, I was a little reluctant, as the preparation time for a single task seemed disproportionate. But day after day, I’ve seen the sense in it: Defining the objective more clearly, thinking about the structure of the lesson, anticipating the pupils’ difficulties so as to anticipate the help they need. Lesson Study has also made me think about how to [...] make links between students to get them to abstraction. I’d say my pupils are exhausted now, because I keep them active and aware of what they’re learning!

Visits to colleagues’ classrooms have also sharpened my sense of observation and analysis [...] I have a better idea of where I’m going and I’m clearer about my choices and arrangements. I’m enjoying teaching maths more and I’m putting to good use what I’ve learnt in the other subjects I teach.

We acquire a super-power of observation.

As we go forward in our own individual work, reflecting on what is working and identifying what needs to be modified, the voices of Vaud educators can help guide us. Happy Birthday 10+ to the Laboratoire Lausannois Lesson Study (3LS). This volume is a magnificent birthday present to the international Lesson Study community.



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