

Students in Lesson Study: A Spotlight on Ethics

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Lesson Study in Europe (MELSE 2020),
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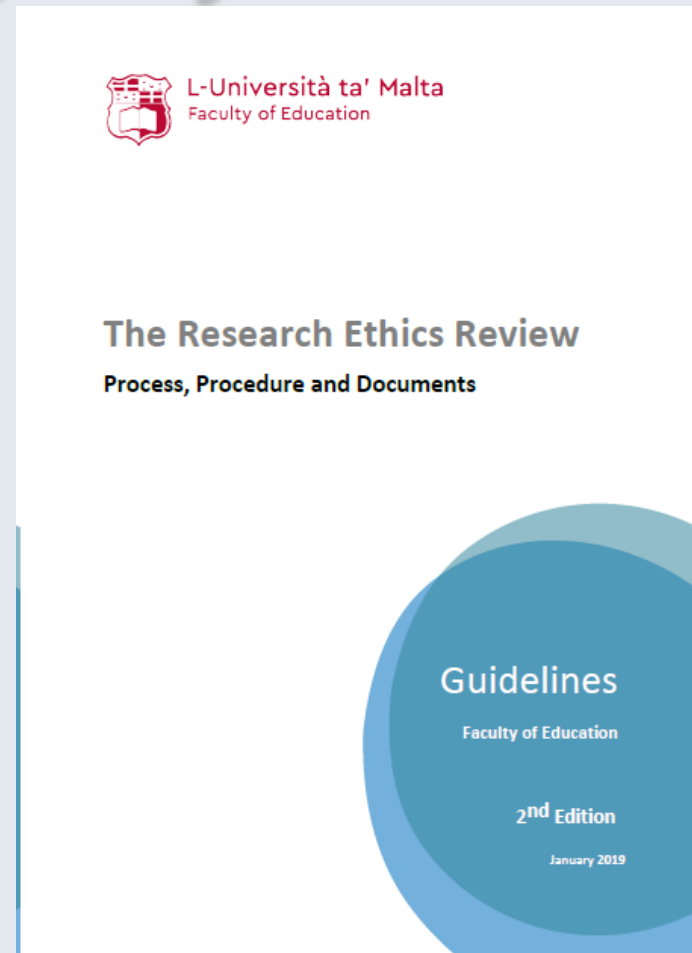
L-Università ta' Malta
Faculty of Education

Mapping out the Presentation

- Presenting myself
- Lesson study in Malta
- Perspectives: a pebble in the shoe?
- Empathy as a methodological tool
- Students in lesson study: potential ethical grey areas
- Inviting reflection / empowering action
- References

Presenting Myself

- Taught at primary, secondary and post-secondary levels.
- Teacher educator (mathematics) since 2008.
- Member of the Faculty's Research Ethics Committee (FREC)
- Involved in a lesson study project in Malta

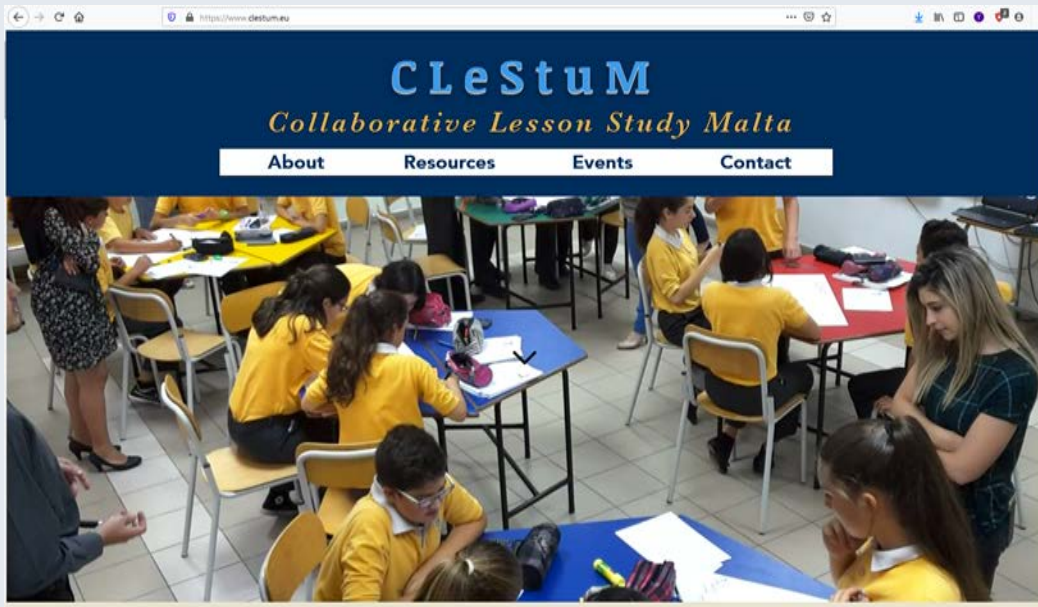


Lesson Study in Malta

the project

the team





The Website
www.clestum.eu

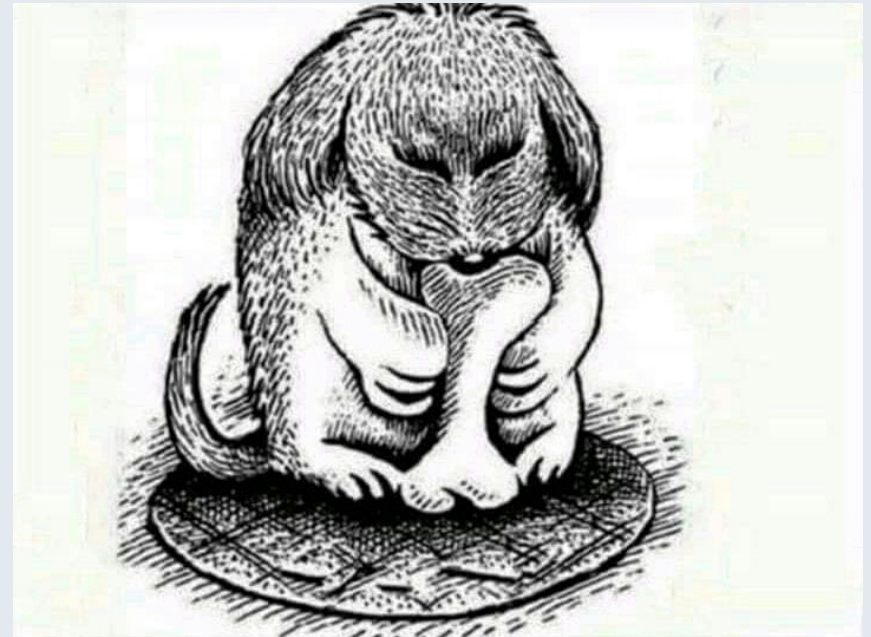
The work we do involves:

- o *providing professional development for teachers and school leadership teams on the lesson study process;*
- o *facilitating lesson study meetings with teachers;*
- o *observing and providing constructive feedback on lesson studies;*
- o *conducting research on lesson studies;*
- o *organising events in Malta to disseminate collaborative lesson studies; and*
- o *participating in conferences and meetings to present our research.*

A Question of Perspective

seen from one perspective

seen from another perspective



The 'Dominant' Perspective on Lesson Study

research on lesson study

Huang, Takahashi & Ponte (2019, p. 4) refer to a number of studies that document how LS contributes to:

- transforming teaching;
- promoting teachers' growth;
- sustaining professional learning communities;
- improving students' learning; and
- building connections between research and practice.

They acknowledge, however, that a number of constraints and challenges exist in the process of adapting LS to other countries.

'relevant' implications

- LS as a positive professional activity – benefits pedagogy, schools, teachers, students and research.
- Culture matters

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- Culture matters
- **So why do I choose to focus of students and ethics?**

Two Main Reasons

- Assent
- On the receiving side



a question of ethics

- Assuming that students have (with the consent of their parents) assented to be part of LS, do they actually know how their participation will affect them emotionally and psychologically, and possibly their learning?
- What decisional say do they have during LS?

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Since I have been a member of FREC my sensitivity to such issues has been heightened.



But don't these two concerns also apply to other forms of class-based research?

Probably **YES**, but 'things' are arguably more accentuated during LS:

- There are more 'flies on the wall'.
- Higher level of 'invasive' observation.

(see Bolton, 2010)

Empathy as a Methodological Tool

- My 'arguments' here are not based on evidence. Instead, the basis is **empathy** (i.e., the ability to share another person's feelings and emotions as if they were your own without necessarily agreeing with them).
- In qualitative research (where I position LS), the experiential world of 'the other' is seen as having cognitive, affective, emotional and motivational dimensions.
- Alma & Smaling (2006) define the methodological notion of **emphatic understanding** as "placing oneself imaginatively in another's experiential world while feeling into her or his experiences with the aim of comprehending these experiences" (p. 204).
- However, some philosophers and methodologists reject 'empathic understanding' as a methodological idea in the social or human sciences. For instance, Fay (1996) holds the opinion that **empathy is neither sufficient nor necessary** for understanding another person.

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**My
position:
necessary
but not
sufficient...
evidence
is essential.**

There is Evidence and Evidence

the 'collective'



the 'individual'



A Question of Ethics

(see Guillemin & Gillam, 2004)

procedural ethics

Refers to seeking approval from a relevant ethics committee to undertake research involving humans.

No reason to think that this is not happening.

ethics in practice

Refers to the everyday ethical issues that arise in the doing of research.

No guarantee that due consideration is given to it during 'ethically important moments'.



What do we Know about how Lesson Study affects the Individual Student?

Some questions (one can think of others) that carry ethical considerations:

- What implications are there for a student who opts out from LS?
- How comfortable does the student feel with the presence of 'many outsiders' in class?
- How is their presence affecting his/ her participation and learning?
- Can LS impact a student's self-esteem and self-confidence?



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My point: During LS a balance needs to be found between the 'common good' and the 'individual good' along the 'good continuum'.



Parting Shot

How can **all students in class** be better protected and supported during Lesson Study?

References

- Alma, H.A., & Smaling, A. (2006) The meaning of empathy and imagination in health care and health studies. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, 1(4), 195-211.
- Bolton, M. (2010) Fly on the wall: Using teleconferencing to supervise student teacher performance. *Journal of Open, Flexible, and Distance Learning*, 14(1), 62-76.
- Fay, B. (1996) *Contemporary Philosophy of Social Science*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Guillemin, M., & Gillam, L. (2004) Ethics, reflexivity, and "ethically important moments" in research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 10(2), 261-280.
- Huang, R., Takahashi, A., & Ponte, J.P. (2019) *Theory and Practice of Lesson Study in Mathematics: An International Perspective*. Switzerland: Springer.