

**LESSON STUDY AS A TOOL FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:
A CASE STUDY OF COLLABORATION
BETWEEN TEACHERS IN THE UPPER PRIMARY YEARS**

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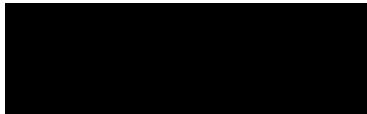
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I, the undersigned, declare that this dissertation entitled, “Lesson Study as a Tool for Professional Development: A Case Study of Collaboration between teachers in the Upper Primary Years” and the work presented is my own work. This research has been carried out under the supervision of Ms. Laura Formosa and Dr. James Calleja.



Tania Gauci Fenech

24th November 2025

Date

Abstract

This research explores Lesson Study (LS) as a model for collaborative professional development and teacher learning in a Maltese primary school context. It responds to dominant top-down professional development (PD) models by investigating how LS supports teacher agency, reflective practice, and cross-year collaboration. The research study took place in the junior sector of a private school and adopted a constructivist, practitioner-led action research approach. Four upper primary teachers engaged in a LS cycle, supported by a knowledgeable other (KO) and facilitated by the researcher-practitioner. Data were gathered through interviews, post-lesson debriefings, and a focus group.

Using Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2021) reflexive thematic analysis, the study examined teachers' meaning-making and professional dialogue. Findings suggest LS enhanced instructional decision-making, fostered collegial trust, and strengthened teacher ownership of pedagogy. Non-judgmental peer observation and structured reflection contributed to a richer understanding of student learning. The knowledgeable other's input added depth by challenging assumptions and broadening perspectives.

While the study's scale and duration were limited, it contributes to emerging research on LS in Malta's primary education sector. It shows that, when aligned with leadership and policy support, existing PD structures can accommodate sustainable, school-based inquiry. The study offers practical insights for educational leaders and policymakers seeking to embed collaborative, teacher-led approaches into professional learning.

Keywords: lesson study, teacher collaboration, professional development, practitioner research, Malta

Dedication

To my younger self

who didn't know her own strength.

*May this work be a reminder that the sky is the limit
and that believing in oneself can open doors one never
dreamed existed!*

Acknowledgments

I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to all who have supported and inspired me throughout this journey, both professionally and personally.

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I am grateful to my colleagues, for listening, engaging, and supporting me throughout this process. Your encouragement and collaboration have been a source of strength and motivation.

To the five participants in this study, it was an honour to learn from your experiences. Your enthusiasm, openness, and collaborative spirit enriched this research and taught me immeasurable lessons about professional growth and teamwork.

Finally, to my family, thank you for your unwavering love, patience, and encouragement. You have been my anchor and my inspiration. I hope I have shared with you the joy and value of lifelong learning.

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List of Abbreviations

CLeStuM	Collaborative Lesson Study Malta
CLIL	Content and Language Integrated Learning
CoP	Community of Practice
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
EU	European Union
KO	Knowledgeable Other
LS	Lesson Study
LSE	Learning Support Educator
MUT	Malta Union of Teachers
NCF	National Curriculum Framework
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PD	Professional Development
PLC	Professional Learning Communities
SDP	School Development Plan
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
TIMSS	Trends in Mathematics and Science Study

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

This chapter directs the reader towards my motivation and personal stance for engaging in research related to professional development (PD) in the upper primary sector of my school. In this research study, I explore how lesson study can be a tool which may foster collaboration amongst teachers across year groups. Such collaboration can also lead to professional growth for the teacher participants. This chapter presents the main research aims, questions and significance of this study. It also displays the study's approach and the research process. Finally, it outlines the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Preamble

“It [the PD session] was interesting, however, this is *not* what I need.”

“This approach is really useful but *putting it in practice* is another thing.”¹

As a class teacher for twenty years, I have said and heard these laments too often. Educators often find PD sessions engaging but struggle to implement effectively the suggestions offered. Despite their intent, school-directed PD initiatives frequently fail to address classroom realities (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Many are isolated events that lack follow-through, making it difficult for teachers to apply, assess, and refine new strategies (Desimone, 2009). When PD is designed primarily around institutional compliances or top-down objectives, it may be perceived as disconnected from teachers' real classroom needs.

As an assistant head for the past four years, I aim to tailor PD sessions to sector-wide needs. However, the diverse requirements of year groups, subject areas, and individual teachers are rarely addressed in depth. To bridge this gap, this study explores how PD can become an ongoing, collaborative process - one that encourages professional dialogue beyond the constraints of scheduled training days (Garet et al., 2001). By focusing on immediate classroom challenges, ongoing, collaborative sessions could offer timely,

¹ These statements reflect common sentiments shared informally by teachers during PD sessions. They are not drawn from formal interviews but represent recurring themes observed in professional discussions.

practical opportunities for development that translate into student progress and motivation. This aligns with international research highlighting the need for embedded, inquiry-based teacher development (Dudley, 2014; Takahashi & McDougal, 2016).

Lesson study is a form of professional development that originated in Japan and has since gained international recognition for its collaborative and research-informed approach to improving classroom practice (Isoda et al., 2017; Lewis & Hurd, 2011). It embodies the core principles of effective professional development, mainly the active involvement of teachers in identifying, analysing, and addressing classroom challenges. The process begins with teachers collectively identifying a common problem - typically related to subject content, though it may also pertain to pedagogy or skills-based issues. As they work collaboratively, the group of educators designs a research lesson intended to address the identified challenge. The planning phase may involve consultation with a knowledgeable other (KO), an expert in the field who offers subject-specific or pedagogical insights to support the lesson's development (Dudley, 2019). One teacher then delivers the research lesson while others observe, focusing particularly on how selected students respond to the learning experience. Following the lesson, the group get together to reflect on their observations, discuss student learning, and refine their instructional approach. Lesson study is often cyclical in nature, allowing for repeated planning, teaching, and revision of the research lesson in pursuit of more effective outcomes. Central to the entire process is a sustained focus on student learning, progress, and motivation, rather than solely on teacher performance.

Therefore, lesson study offers a compelling alternative to traditional models of professional development. Unlike conventional training sessions limited to fixed calendar dates, lesson study promotes sustained, structured collaboration throughout the school year. This ongoing process fosters deeper professional inquiry, peer learning, and the continuous refinement of teaching practices. In the Maltese educational context, the rigid structure of the school calendar tends to prioritise contact time with students, often relegating professional development to a few mandated sessions. While such sessions have their merit, they may not always be responsive to teachers' evolving needs. Recent national

initiatives, such as CLeStuM (Collaborative Lesson Study Malta), have sought to pilot and embed lesson study within Malta's professional development frameworks. This initiative demonstrates growing institutional interest in collaborative, teacher-led inquiry, making it a timely moment to explore lesson study at the school level. In contrast, lesson study - when integrated into the academic year - provides a sustainable and responsive model that supports both teacher growth and student learning. Calleja (2024) underscores this potential in the local context, identifying key insights that support lesson study as an effective form of in-school professional development. These include collaborative engagement among educators, increased teacher agency, alignment with long-term institutional goals, and the cultivation of professional learning communities that empower teachers to take ownership of their practice.

For this approach to succeed, school leadership must strategically plan schedules, allocate resources, and embrace a flexible mindset. In this study, four teachers meet to discuss Maltese in a vertical alignment². Effective leadership ensures that lesson study is embedded into the PD framework rather than treated as an additional burden. If adopted widely, it could become a standard professional development practice, which enriches educators' experiences and allows traditional PD days to be repurposed for targeted training or well-being initiatives.

1.2 What influenced the Study

The foundation of this research study was laid during my engagement with the *Lesson study* module, part of the Postgraduate Certificate in *Developing the Educator* post-certificate course (see <https://www.um.edu.mt/educ/study/postgraduate/>) in 2021. This module introduced me to the principles of lesson study, a professional development practice extensively used by Japanese educators to collaboratively address pedagogical challenges. The concept immediately captivated my interest. Lesson study exemplifies a pragmatic approach to educational improvement, as it enables teachers to collaboratively identify, analyse, and address classroom challenges. Its dual emphasis on problem-solving

² Collaboration meetings between teachers of different year groups focusing on a particular subject.

and professional collaboration resonates deeply with the needs of contemporary educators.

Two key aspects of lesson study particularly stand out to me. First, its collaborative nature, fostering a supportive environment for teachers. This collegiality is not only reassuring but also transformative; when teachers share their challenges, they often discover mutual struggles, which fosters solidarity and collective problem-solving. Second, its utility as a tool for addressing real-world classroom issues such as low student engagement, gaps in learning, difficulty in problem solving, differentiation and assessment modes, and misunderstanding of key concepts. These challenges directly influence students' learning experiences, progress, and engagement.

Reflecting on my own career as a primary teacher, I recognise that teaching, while rewarding, can also be an isolating profession. Without structured opportunities for collaboration, teachers often find themselves grappling with challenges alone, deprived of the chance to share insights, observe effective practices, or engage in meaningful professional dialogues. These missed opportunities can hinder both personal and professional growth. The absence of collegial engagement can result in teachers navigating their dilemmas in solitude, potentially overlooking perspectives or solutions that could enhance their practice.

During discussions with my leadership coach³, I was encouraged to reflect on what fuels my passion for education. My answer was unequivocal: the students. Each day, I am driven by a commitment to provide students with the best possible education. As educators, we bear a responsibility to approach our classrooms with unwavering dedication and a focus on excellence. Students deserve to be taught by passionate, reflective educators who continuously seek to refine their practice. This necessitates a mindset of ongoing inquiry, prompting questions such as, "Am I meeting my students' needs? How can I do better?" I

³ A professional leadership coach which the school provided me to mentor me in my role as assistant head.

believe that collaborative, inquiry-based approaches such as lesson study may provide a powerful response to these professional challenges.

1.3 Aims and Research Questions of the Study

This qualitative case study aims to explore the perceptions and experiences of four primary teachers regarding the implementation of lesson study as a professional development model within an independent school in Malta. The study investigates how collaborative practices fosters individual and collective teacher learning and agency. Importantly, it seeks to determine the extent to which lesson study is perceived as a practical and empowering professional development process that enables teachers to collaboratively co-construct solutions to common pedagogical challenges (Elliott, 2019; Takahashi & McDougal, 2016).

In line with Creswell's (2014) definition of a case study as an in-depth exploration of a programme, event, or process, this research examines how lesson study is put into practice in a local context, providing a nuanced understanding of its impact on teaching practices and on student motivation and engagement. The final goal is not to produce a "perfect" lesson, but to use the process of collaborative inquiry to enhance students' learning experiences and to inform possible enhancements to the school's current professional development framework. The study also aims to encourage a shift toward a more sustained, practice-oriented, and community-driven model of professional growth among teachers.

The research is guided by the following three questions:

- How does collaboration amongst teachers develop during lesson study?
- What are teachers' experiences of collaboration through a lesson study?
- To what extent do collaborative practices in lesson study enable opportunities for teacher learning?

1.4 My Position in Research

I am a direct participant in this study. With my experience in this school, I have in-depth knowledge of its practices and have established trust with the teachers. As an insider, I am mindful of the potential influence my position could have on participants. To ensure that teacher participation was entirely voluntary and free from any sense of obligation, a research guardian was appointed in accordance with Faculty Research Ethics Committee requirements prior to data collection. This measure safeguarded against any perceived pressure on teachers to take part in the study.

In my leadership capacity, I was able to facilitate the process by allocating dedicated time within teachers' schedules for planning, delivering four lesson study cycles, conducting evaluations and debriefing sessions, and gathering feedback. I positioned myself as a participant but also as a researcher and observer, leveraging my prior experience with lesson study - both as a study leader and as a senior leadership team (SLT) participant. Among the four participating teachers, three are new to the lesson study process. My role was to foster collaboration, support planning sessions, guide and mentor participants, and ensure that the study remained on track.

Through my position, experience, commitment to professional development and my training as lesson study facilitator, I was able to contribute to the effectiveness of this lesson study cycle, which has the potential to influence how my sector approaches professional development. However, given the inherent risk of bias associated with my insider status, measures were taken to uphold the objectivity and validity of the study. These measures include the appointment of a researcher guardian who acts as a middle person between the teacher participants and myself. They also include the invitation of an outsider, an expert Education officer in Maltese whom we refer to as the knowledgeable other (KO), who can advise the participants regarding lesson content and who joins in all lesson trials as an observer and a contributor during the debriefing sessions to ensure an additional layer of impartiality throughout the process.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study aims to document teachers' perceptions of existing professional development practices within the school, their perspectives on what constitutes effective professional development for teachers, and the challenges and successes they experienced throughout the lesson study process. The data gathered will enable an evaluation of whether lesson study can serve as a tool to foster collaborative practices, support teacher growth, and enhance student learning experiences. The findings have the potential to inform future professional development planning at the whole school level. By contributing to the emerging local literature on lesson study, particularly in relation to projects such as CLeStuM, this study complements national efforts aimed at institutionalising collaborative PD practices within schools.

Additionally, this research seeks to explore the extent to which lesson study can support ongoing teacher development and whether it can become an integral part of the school's professional development framework. A key focus is determining whether the participating teachers perceive changes in their instructional practices and eventually, feel empowered to lead a pilot study with the broader sector. Examining the effectiveness of a vertically structured lesson study model - where teachers across year levels collaborate - will provide valuable insights into its potential for sustained professional learning and institutional change.

1.6 The Study

This qualitative case study adopts a constructivist approach to teaching and learning, exploring real-time phenomena within their natural contexts, acknowledging that context significantly influences outcomes (Kaarbo & Beasley, 1999). The research methodology needed to be both flexible and pragmatic, allowing for necessary adjustments throughout the process. This adaptability enables teachers to take ownership of the research lesson, empowering them to make context-specific modifications that best suits the needs of their class. The research introduces lesson study as a potential design tool which aims at improving teaching practices and enhancing students' learning experiences, facilitating

teacher participants to collaboratively address common challenges. Action research was chosen as the methodology most aligned with this study's aims.

Aligned with this approach, the study comprises a process of collaboration introduced in the initial meeting with the four teacher participants which continued throughout the whole LS cycle. During the debriefing sessions, I positioned myself as the fifth participant, thus I refrained from imposing decisions, instead accommodating reasonable modifications from the original proposal submitted Faculty Research Ethics Committee to ensure the study amplified the teachers' perspectives and preferences.

Data collection methods included semi-structured interviews with the four teachers prior to the lesson study trials and debriefing sessions following each lesson study trial. Additionally, a focus group discussion was conducted to identify the successes and challenges associated with the lesson study and vertical collaborative meetings. Utilising multiple data sources facilitates triangulation, enhancing the credibility of the findings (Yin, 2018). The qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes related to changes in teaching practices, collaboration, student experiences, and the impact of lesson study on professional development. This approach is effective for identifying, describing, and interpreting patterns within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

1.7 Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 1: Introduction initiates the dissertation by delineating its inspiration, significance, and primary objectives. It also outlines the research questions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review explores models of effective PD, focusing on collaborative, inquiry-based approaches such as lesson study, focusing on identifying key characteristics of effective professional development within collaborative models. It examines the origins and fundamental aspects of lesson study, emphasising its efficacy in enhancing teaching and learning. Additionally, the review critically evaluates the benefits

and challenges of teacher collaboration and professional learning communities pertinent to this study. It also informs the theoretical approach and conceptual framework of this study.

Chapter 3: Methodology presents the study's methodology, primarily centred on action-based research. It provides contextual information about the participants and school profile, elucidates the data collection methods including semi-structured interviews, the transcripts of the four debriefing sessions, and a transcript of a focus group discussion. The chapter details the data analysis approach through thematic analysis and triangulation of these data sources to validate findings. Ethical considerations are also explored from an insider's perspective.

Chapter 4: Findings presents the themes constructed through reflexive thematic analysis of the interviews, debriefing sessions, and focus group. The chapter foregrounds teachers' perspectives on professional development, with particular attention to how lesson study shaped their collaboration, reflection, and professional growth. It also highlights the perceived impact of these processes on student engagement and progress.

Chapter 5: Discussion interprets these findings in relation to the three research questions and situates them within the wider literature on professional development and teacher learning. The chapter highlights alignments and tensions with literature, considers the implications for professional learning communities and communities of practice, and reflects on what the findings suggest for leadership practice in schools.

Chapter 6: Conclusion concludes by summarising key contributions, addressing implications for leadership and policy, and suggesting directions for future research. It summarises how the research addressed the three questions, outlines implications for schools and policymakers, and acknowledges limitations. The chapter also considers directions for future research and reflects on the potential for scaling lesson study across different school contexts.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents academic literature regarding educational professional development and teacher collaboration. This literature review also shows how lesson study is recognised as a potential tool for improved professional development which could potentially lead to a new learning experience for the teachers in the junior sector of the school where the study is being conducted.

The identification of sources was achieved through searches using Hydi, the University of Malta library portal, by using the key terms ‘professional development’, ‘Lesson study’ and ‘teacher collaboration’. Furthermore, I made use of the instructional material supplied during the Master of Educational Leadership and Management degree course and Developing the Educator Post-graduate Certificate course which applied well to my field of study. The research draws from both global and local research.

This section reviews literature related to the three important areas of this study – professional development, lesson study and teacher collaboration. The aim of this chapter is to show links between literature and these three aspects.

2.1 Professional Development in Education

2.1.1 Defining effective professional development

Effective professional development is defined by Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) as “structured professional learning that results in changes in teacher practices and improvements in student learning outcomes”. The authors also highlight that to implement professional development in a successful way “requires responsiveness to the needs of educators and learners and to the contexts in which teaching and learning will take place”. The importance of having key features in the professional development provision of an organisation, such as focus on subject content matter, active learning, coherence with teachers’ knowledge and beliefs, the duration of the PD and the collective participation and engagement of the teachers, are essential in promoting teachers’ learning (Desimone, 2009).

Nowadays teachers need a complex set of skills to prepare students as global citizens and leaders in the 21st century (Organisation for economic co-operation and development (OECD), 2018). Teachers need to be competent and well versed in teaching students critical thinking, complex problem solving, thorough mastery of challenging content, effective communication, collaboration skills, self-management and direction (Bedir, 2019). They need to take the initiative to upskill new technologies to support their teaching. High-level training should support them in rethinking and reshaping their pedagogical strategies to meet the continuously evolving demands of modern teaching (Archambault et al. 2010). The pressures outside the local context have forceable influence and they directly impact on the education policy of our country. Such examples are the demands of the European Union (EU) and the OECD (Dale & Robertson, 2009; Lawn & Grek, 2012). These are increasing demands on teachers which require them to high-perform (Attard Tonna et al., 2018). Consequently, school organisations should consider effective PD as an “essential component of a comprehensive system of teaching and learning” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017) where educators are encouraged to “seek to update, develop and broaden the knowledge teachers acquired during initial teacher education and/or [to] provide them with new skills and professional understanding” (OECD, 2018). These provisions will enable them to support teachers in rising to the challenge of these demands through updated learning and refinement of skills.

These theories, which are supported by literature, provide an important framework to conceptualise professional development for teachers which lay the foundation of my research study as underpinned by the three research questions.

2.1.2 PD in the Maltese Educational Context

The Maltese National Curriculum Framework (NCF) for All (2012) outlined the need for PD for teachers and informed that “regular curricular support as well as re-skilling and up-skilling of teachers and school leaders is needed to ensure that they have the necessary understanding, skills and tools to be able to successfully deliver the NCF in its complexity” (p. 18). In the document, there is acknowledgement that school leaders and educators need

more time for training purposes than the current structure allows for. However, a solution to how this time can be included in the scholastic year has not been suggested. The latest education framework, the Framework for the Education Strategy for Malta 2014-2024, also proposed a more “equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all” (MEDE), which included professionals in the educational field. According to the latest Eurydice report for Malta (11th March 2025, <https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/eurypedia/malta/continuing-professional-development-teachers-working-early-childhood-and-school>), “there are currently no statutory obligations that oblige independent education providers to provide a specific amount of continuous professional development (CPD) hours or specific amount of monetary investment in relation to ongoing professional training” whereas in state and church schools the obligation is of 40 hours of PD distributed throughout the scholastic year: 16 hours for training (without students present), 12 hours for School Development Planning (without students present) and 12 hours for preparation, videos or other material (with students present at school). In fact, the independent school where this study is taking place, typically assigns five days per year to professional development which are not sufficient to provide the continuous teacher growth the NCF, the Framework for the Education Strategy for Malta, (2014-2024) and the school itself aimed for. Moreover, due to the mandatory contact hours teachers must have with students and the restrictions imposed by the Malta Union of Teachers (MUT), the number of PD days per year is very difficult to increase and more school leaders are feeling the need for a “prolonged experience as compared to a one-shot programme, the power of teacher co-learning, and the opportunity to relate theory with practice” (Attard Tonna & Bugeja, 2019).

In Attard Tonna et. al (2018), the authors recommended that teachers in Malta would benefit from continuous professional development opportunities especially those of a “circular nature” (p. 265). This is because in most cases, the school organisations choose the themes for their educators’ PD (Calleja, 2018). In certain instances, school leaders are obliged by the Ministry of Education and Employment to send their educators for compulsory courses which address curriculum changes or new initiatives. Therefore, if

more opportunities are given to teachers to take their professional development in their hands, they might be more intrinsically motivated to make the necessary classroom practices which will align more to the national policies and not rely on the personal initiative of a few highly motivated teachers (Bullough, 2009). This would mean that teachers become vital for national policy implementation which would highlight “the importance of relevant and meaningful CPD for them” (Attard Tonna et. al, 2018). Professional development would then take enhanced meaning as it would align teachers’ practices with educational policies, it would see progress in students’ achievement through improved teacher performances, and it would elevate the status and profile of the teaching profession (Day & Sachs, 2004). As Attard Tonna et. al highlight, such measures would enhance three interconnected aims of CPD – extension, growth and renewal (Grundy and Robinson, 2004). PD would be deemed by educators as an entitlement to their profession since it extends a teachers’ repertoire with new knowledge and skills which in turn improves expertise and transforms practice.

Attard Tonna et.al suggested that teachers in Malta value PD best in face-to-face training sessions, where outside experts offer a presentation intended to improve practices or address deficiencies. Such PD is a traditional ‘deficit model’ (Brown & McIntyre, 1993) which takes a top-down approach where transfer of knowledge is intended, leaving little to no input from the educators who most often end up disengaged, confirming their belief that PD days are a general waste of their time. The 2018 Attard Tonna study indicated that Maltese teachers do not opt more frequently for PD models such as mentoring and use of virtual platforms. Networking within and across schools, another form of PD, is relatively still very underutilised in the local scene. Such findings resonated with Cohen (1988) who implied that teachers’ experiences and beliefs “inherited through patterns of instructions” and the “resistance to adventurous instruction” (p.34) impacts educators’ growth. As one can note, there needs to be a paradigm shift in the teachers’ mindset. PD, which educators consider as part of the mandatory job should be viewed as an opportunity to grow as independent professions in a community of professionals. The study also indicated that teachers in Malta engage in PD for self-fulfilment purposes which is a positive aspect,

however, for notable change to occur, there ought to be PD focuses that lead to classroom practices and career advancement. This would, in turn, fulfil the educational policies' goals.

From his findings, Buhagiar (2018) concluded that PD sessions are “more likely to have an impact on teacher learning should they present learning as situated, with theory and practice constantly feeding into and developing each other”. Furthermore, Calleja (2018) reported that for PD to be effective, teachers needed to participate in learning actively, be immersed in practice-based understandings and form part of a community of practice. Calleja (2018) suggested that organisers of PD “still conceive teacher professional development as an isolated venture of off-site workshop training disconnected from practice, rather an ongoing collaborative on-site experience of practice-oriented development and learning”.

In conclusion, in Malta, although there is acknowledgment from the Ministry of Education, documented policies and educational frameworks which state that ongoing PD of teachers is essential and directly linked to students' achievements, there is an “underlying feeling [that] the authorities may be assuming that it can just happen” (Bezzina 2002, p.65). The establishment of supportive frameworks that promote the sustained professional growth of teachers continues to be an area that is frequently undervalued or insufficiently addressed in our educational system (Calleja, 2018). The creation and maintenance of professional learning communities, which cultivate a culture of professional and collaborative learning, remains largely absent within the context of local schools (Attard Tonna & Calleja, 2010; Bezzina, 2006). The setting up of the Institute for Education (IfE) in 2015 was a welcomed initiative. The IfE offers a range of professional opportunities designed to enhance teacher knowledge in a practical and flexible way. Other teacher programmes such as - Let Me Learn programme (1998), the Promoting Inquiry in Mathematics and Science across Europe - PRIMAS project - (2010), the Pestalozzi Action Research project (2013-2014), the Learning to Teach Mathematics through Inquiry – LTMI - (2015), University of Malta's Masters in Teaching and learning – MTL - programme (2016), Foreign language awareness programme – FLAP - (2017), INSOLVU project (2023) - reflect

Malta's commitment to provide local educators with diverse and contextually relevant learning.

2.1.3 Professional learning and adult learning theories

Literature consistently underscores that effective professional development is most impactful when it aligns with the principles of adult learning. This view is strongly supported by Knowles' (1984) theory of andragogy and Mezirow's (1991) transformative learning theory. Knowles (1984) asserted that adults, such as teachers, require a clear rationale for their learning; they need to understand *why* something is worth learning before they commit to the process. Adults learn best in environments that foster critical reflection on personal beliefs, prior experiences, and teaching practices. Mezirow (1991) complemented this view by emphasising that learning for adults involves the active transformation of previously held meaning structures. He argued that all significant learning is a process of meaning-making, particularly when it challenged and reshaped existing assumptions.

One essential element of adult learning, as highlighted by Mezirow (1991), is the opportunity for engagement in rational discourse. Through dialogue with colleagues, teachers tested emerging ideas, received feedback, and critically reflected on new perspectives. This collaborative element transformed learning into a social and emotional process, whilst enabling educators to become more open to change. Furthermore, both Knowles and Mezirow advocated for learner autonomy. When teachers are treated as self-directed professionals, capable of making their own decisions, they are more likely to demonstrate intrinsic motivation and deeper engagement. As Mezirow (1991) asserted, "autonomous thinking is the goal of adult education, and fostering critical reflection is the means."

Both theorists also emphasised the importance of problem-centred learning. Teachers are more likely to engage meaningfully in professional development when it directly addresses classroom challenges that they regularly face. In this regard, lesson study, the professional development tool chosen for this study, is particularly well-aligned

with adult learning principles. It allowed educators to collaboratively identify a shared instructional concern through the investigation of student learning via observation, discussion or assignments, and trial new strategies in a structured, cyclical process. This approach not only facilitated professional growth but also addressed practical classroom issues, thereby enhancing both teaching and student learning outcomes.

The emphasis placed by Knowles and Mezirow on readiness to learn, critical reflection, and transformative learning provided a robust foundation for understanding how teachers engage with professional development. These theoretical perspectives reinforced the importance of designing professional learning experiences that are collaborative, sustained, and grounded in practice - key characteristics also identified in lesson study. Compared to traditional, isolated workshops (Hunziker, 2011), lesson study fostered deeper engagement through teacher-led inquiry, peer dialogue, and iterative reflection. These features directly supported the aims of this study, particularly in addressing the first research question concerning collaboration, and the third question on how such collaborative practices support teacher learning. In this way, the frameworks of Knowles and Mezirow offered a meaningful lens to analyse the potential of lesson study as a form of professional development in the educational context of the independent school where the research was conducted.

2.2 Lesson Study as a Professional Development Tool

2.2.1 Origins and Global use of Lesson Study

Lesson study, which originated in Japan, developed as a professional development tool for educators with a rich, systematic process grounded in practice and collaboration. According to Inagaki (1995) and Inagaki and Sato (1996), there are two types of lesson study in Japan: top-down type which informed educators about the latest pedagogical or curriculum innovations and a grass roots type which reformed pedagogical practices by reviewing and improving teaching and learning methods.

Lewis (2000) described lesson study as a research-oriented form of instructional planning and reflection, built around a collaboratively designed and carefully delivered lesson, commonly referred to as a “research lesson”. According to Lewis (2000), there are five key features which define lesson study. The research lesson is observed by other educators; its design involves collaborative planning by participating teachers; the focus of the lesson typically addresses a pedagogical issue or a learning gap between students’ current understanding and intended learning outcomes; data is collected through various means such as video recordings, audio, observation notes, and student work; and finally, the process culminates in a structured debrief where educators reflect on the effectiveness of the lesson and identify areas for improvement.

Although lesson study is often associated with mathematics and science, in the Japanese context it extends across all subject areas and often centres on broader educational goals such as fostering student thinking, inquiry, and collaborative problem-solving. This flexibility and subject-transcending relevance positioned lesson study as a valuable tool for improving teaching and learning in any context - including language instruction. In this respect, it aligned well with the aims of the present study, which sought to enhance pedagogical strategies in the teaching of Maltese, with the goal of increasing student motivation and engagement in learning the mother tongue.

Japanese educators utilise research lessons not only for school-based professional growth but also as part of broader, system-wide initiatives. For example, when new curriculum content is introduced, research lessons are often opened to the wider public. Teachers from across the country are invited to attend, observe best practice, pose questions, and engage in insightful discussions. These open research lessons promoted a culture of transparency, inquiry, and collective professional learning. Lewis (2000) noted that lesson study is highly valued among Japanese teachers as a mechanism for self-improvement, professional feedback, and collaborative inquiry. One of its most profound impacts, according to Lewis (2000), is its role in helping educators “develop the vision to see children” - to become acutely attentive to how students learn, how they respond to

instructional strategies, what sparks their curiosity, and what hinders their engagement. This principle is central in the ethos of lesson study, and places student-learning and thinking at the heart of teacher development.

Lewis (2000) also outlined eight elements that contributed to the success of lesson study in Japan. When new curriculum was introduced, rather than viewing unfamiliar content as a source of anxiety, Japanese teachers used lesson study to explore new ideas through collegial discussion and observation. This process fostered professional confidence and built a shared repertoire of effective practices. Significantly, lesson study served to align individual teachers' instructional decisions with the broader goals of the school or national education agenda. One Japanese principal encapsulated this approach by stating: "As a faculty, you identify the biggest gap between the qualities your students have now and your ideals for them - when you focus lesson study there, it will be successful" (Lewis, 2000, p.5). This powerful statement highlights the strategic nature of lesson study; teachers begin by acknowledging the current realities of student learning, envision desired outcomes, and collaboratively work to bridge that gap through evidence-based, reflective practice.

Moreover, lesson study in Japan encourages a culture of constructive critique and mutual support. Teachers feel empowered to engage in dialogue that challenges assumptions, invites alternative viewpoints, and promotes professional inquiry. The process allowed educators to voice systemic needs, suggest interventions, and contribute to school or national-level changes. When research lessons are made public, they often attract a diverse audience - including school leaders, university researchers, and policymakers - who gain direct insight into classroom practice. As Lewis (2000) explained, this model of "formative research" created a valuable feedback loop between practice and policy, providing authentic data to inform educational decisions.

Ultimately, lesson study holds a central place in the professional identity of Japanese teachers. It provides a platform for "collective autonomy", (Lewis 2000 p. 26) collaboration,

inquiry, and empowerment. It enables teachers to enact national policy in meaningful classroom practice and to view themselves as knowledge creators rather than mere implementers. In contrast to Western contexts - where, as Ball and Cohen (1996) argued, the curriculum's potential to develop teachers' content knowledge often remained unrealised - Japan offers a compelling example of how research lessons can serve as a high-impact, motivating, and context-rich vehicle for building pedagogical knowledge. In fact, in Japan, it is often practicing teachers who author textbooks and instructional resources for students, further underscoring the profession's deep engagement with curriculum development and pedagogical leadership.

In 1995, the first international TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) took place and the outstanding student performance from Japan, particularly in problem solving and conceptual understanding, emerged very strongly. Japan was put on the forefront of education and triggered a lot of international attention regarding its ways of teaching and its professional developmental practices such as lesson study. Attempts at, or adaptations of, lesson study started to emerge on an international scale after publications of comparative studies such as Lewis, Perry, and Murata (2006).

In the United States, early attempts at replicating Japanese lesson study encountered challenges related to diverse educational cultures, which Fernandez (2002) referred to in her study case. Similarly, in the United Kingdom, lesson study was introduced as a PD tool to foster teacher-initiated professional growth, with provisions devised to accommodate local school structures and policies (Dudley, 2019). Adaptations in Singapore and China continued to showcase how lesson study could be amalgamated into organisations where collective professional learning is more culturally embedded (Huang & Shimizu, 2016). In most cases, whilst the fundamental structure of lesson study - collaborative lesson planning, observation, and reflective dialogue - remained constant; the procedure needed to adapt depending on the environments, cultures and circumstances of various countries and organisations. In the Maltese context, lesson study is gradually being presented in schools. A significant contribution to this introduction is attributed to CLeStuM

(Collaborative Lesson study Malta) research project which was initiated in 2017 to support schools and educators who are interested in learning and trialling lesson study. CLeStuM adapted the lesson study process to the local context and offered important insights into its flexibility and value within Malta's unique school system. Furthermore, lesson study is also being offered as a theoretical and practical module of professional development in tertiary education programmes including the Master's programme and mentoring course within the University of Malta. This addition to the preparatory courses for educators showcases a growing recognition of collaborative, inquiry-based models of teacher learning within Maltese educational policy and practice.

Vonk (1997) stated that every nation's educational system is defined by its own cultural definition of education within its own endemic social context. In the case of replication of Japanese lesson study in global contexts, Rock and Wilson (2005) highlighted that effective adaptations of lesson study need careful consideration to the underlying purposes of the process rather than a copy-paste of surface features. For lesson study to be effective on the global platform, it needed to be flexible and carefully aligned to the authentic cultural and structural systems of the country or organisation in which it is applied as a PD tool.

Challenges in adapting lesson study on a global scale included stark differences in educational cultures, time constraints, accountability pressures and misinterpretations of lesson study as model lessons rather than iterative inquiry cycles. According to Fernandez (2002) and Lewis & Tsuchida (1998), teachers in the western world have a more individualistic approach which clashed with the collaborative practices required in lesson study, a practice traditionally established in the Japanese educational system. Stigler and Hieber (1999) in their landmark book 'The Teaching Gap' referred to how western practices differ fundamentally from Japanese practices especially in terms of collaboration, teacher autonomy and lesson study misunderstandings. Furthermore, the rigor of standardised testing for accountability reasons put pressure on the time educators allocated to lesson study due to syllabus restrictions; a process which traditionally requires flexibility,

experimentation and reflection. Another challenge which western educators faced was time-related (Lewis, 2002). Whereas Japanese counterparts have dedicated collective and collaborative planning time, other international educators might struggle to find time within their schedule.

In conclusion, when lesson study is practiced internationally, it must morph to adapt to the local educational environments of the country or the organisation. Educational cultural differences must be considered and acknowledged. This recognition must be resolved without jeopardising the core structure that lies within the collaborative process and research driven nature of the traditional Japanese lesson study.

2.2.2 Key Features and Processes of Lesson Study

Translated from the Japanese words *jugyou* and *kenkyuu* meaning *lesson* and *study*, lesson study brings together a group of teachers who identify a gap in their students' learning, plan in detail a lesson, teach the research lesson while observing the students learn and finally regroup as a team to critically discuss the findings. Consistent with recent research on effective professional development, lesson study is characterised by a clear, purposeful focus from the outset (Stoll et al., 2006), active engagement with and in educational research (Bell et al., 2010), and structured collaboration among educators (Timperley et al., 2011). Furthermore, lesson study incorporated processes for knowledge mobilisation across schools (Stoll, 2009) and unfolded over an extended period of time to ensure depth and sustainability (Hallgarten et al., 2014).

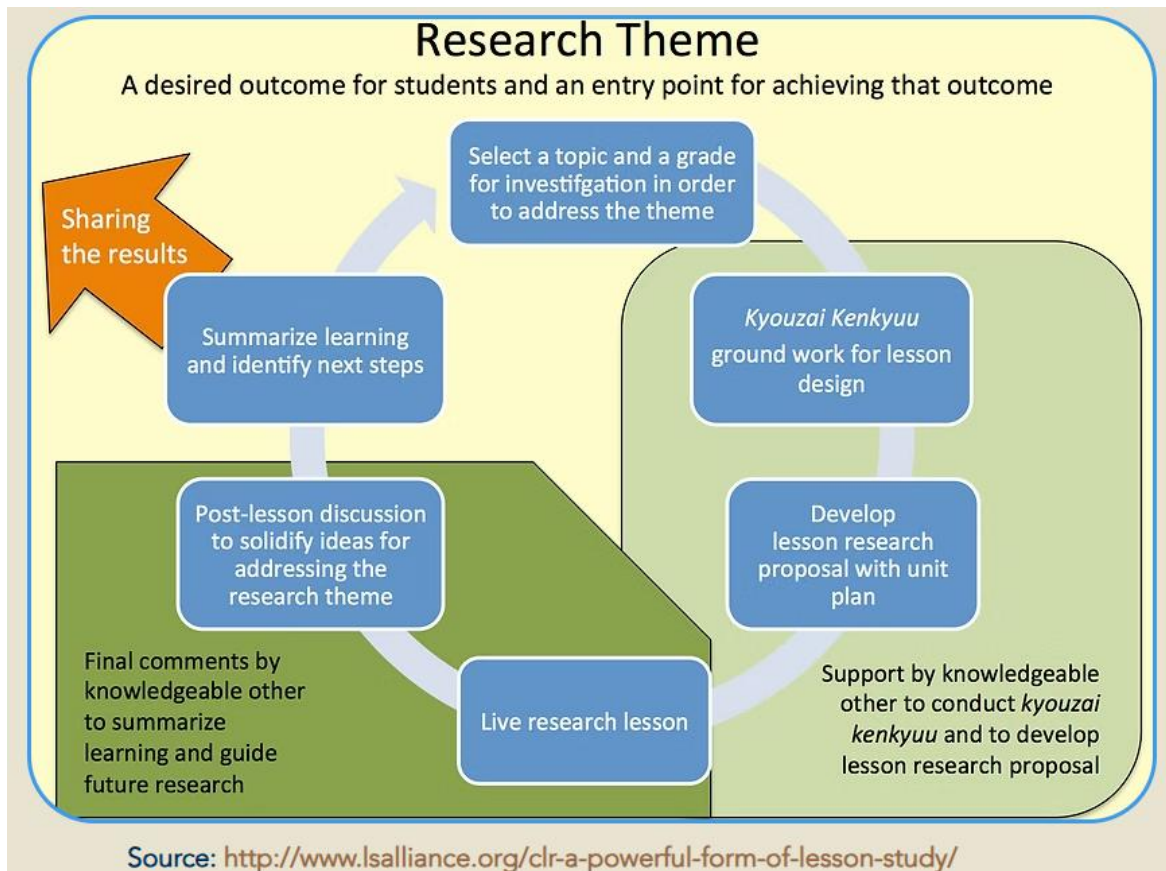


Figure 1: Taken from Takahashi, A., & T. (2016). Collaborative lesson research: Maximizing the Impact of Lesson study. *ZDM Mathematics Education*, 48(4), 513-526.

According to Seleznyov (2018), see Figure 1, the key features of lesson study are the following:

1. The Identification of the focus of the lesson through the selection of the year, topic, and problem for investigation. Teachers see where their students are and compare it to where they ideally should be. This shared focus is usually linked to a school-wide educational goal or a year gap which will motivate the team of teachers to work in close collaboration with each other. Often, the learning gap is identified through teacher discussion, review of student work or observation of lessons.
2. The planning of the lesson, *kyouzai kenkyuu*, is the process that sees teachers carry out research on how to solve the problem or the gap and make the intervention a success. This planning is more detailed than a normal lesson plan; in fact, the plan is designed

over several collaborative meetings. It includes research on the topic, anticipated student responses, it addresses common misconceptions, it seeks to differentiate work effectively and it formulates open-ended, inquiring questions. The design of the lesson could be aided by an outside expert, *koshi*, who gives their contribution on an academic or practice background. Also known as the *knowledgeable other* (KO), they intervene when the team of teachers seeks their expertise to satisfy the end-goal of the lesson.

3. The delivery of the research lesson is usually led by one of the teachers while other members of the team observe with a focus on the learning and participation of selected case pupils (Dudley, 2013). The observation is non-judgmental for both students and the teacher delivering the lesson. The focus remains the learning of the students.
4. The post-lesson discussion, or debriefing session is usually held after the delivery of the lesson where the evidence gathered will be discussed. Usually, the teacher who delivered the lesson will start sharing their feedback for the lesson, followed by the observers. Here the successes of the lesson and the areas for improvement are discussed.
5. In this next step, the team of teachers might need to amend their original planning and tweak it to improve it. In the subsequent research lessons, the findings from the post-lesson discussion will be implemented so that gradual, focused changes are introduced which will lead to visible progress of the teaching practices. These improvements are viable due to the cyclical nature of lesson study that enables teachers to keep on trialling the lesson until they see the result that they envision.
6. As part of the nature of lesson study, which encourages teachers' shared experiences, the lesson study experience is ideally disseminated amongst colleagues across the school, network of schools or publication.

Lesson study trials across the globe have consistently reported significant impact on teachers' collaboration processes. In fact, it has proven to be an innovative approach to professional development that centres around collaborative teacher learning and development; and reflective practice (Lewis & Tsuchida, 1998). This aligned well with the objective of this study, which is to determine the extent a small group of primary teachers

find lesson study a practical and effective professional development tool which can empower them to become autonomous experts, who can collaboratively, as a professional team, co-construct a solution to a problem encountered commonly in their teaching (Elliott, 2019; Takahashi & McDougal, 2016). The aim of my study is to offer opportunities for teachers to collaborate with the aim of improving students' learning experience rather than designing the perfect lesson.

2.2.3 Lesson Study and Teacher Collaboration

The purpose of this study and my intention was to explore professional development as a more ongoing, collaborative process which created opportunities for teachers to talk and was not restricted to assigned PD days (Garet et al, 2001). In fact, this focus aligned perfectly with the first research question of this study - *How does lesson study foster collaboration amongst teachers across the junior sector of an independent school in Malta?* According to Lewis (2002), Dudley (2019), and Fernandez (2005), lesson study is a tool that fosters collaborative structures which manifest themselves in practices such as shared planning, constructive discussion, and reflection.

Collaboration is defined as a structural characteristic that distinguishes high-impact professional development from traditional, one-off training (Garet et al., 2001). Lesson study implemented this aspect in three inter-locking phases: joint planning where teachers collaboratively build the research lesson, live observation of the delivery of the research lesson which usually is led by one of the teacher participants, and post-lesson reflection where the LS team, together with the knowledgeable other re-group to share feedback. This cycle encouraged teachers to work interdependently around a shared instructional problem (Lewis, Perry, & Murata, 2006). During the collaborative planning, teachers engaged in *kyouzai kenkyuu*; the in-depth study of curriculum materials and anticipated student thinking and responses, and collectively produce a single, detailed “research lesson” plan. In this phase, the support of the knowledgeable other might have been very useful and insightful. Lewis (2002) highlighted that this stage builds an explicit, shared language for

discussing pedagogy and encourages teachers to re-evaluate tacit assumptions about content and learners; precisely the kind of “talk about teaching” that this present study seeks to examine.

Observation of the research lesson further deepened collaboration. Rather than evaluating the teacher delivering the lesson, observers in a lesson study team collected evidence on pre-agreed focuses; usually the responses or learning pattern of two or three assigned students per observer (Dudley, 2013). This shared observational lens was further strengthened during the following debriefing session since the data collected is focused and objective rather than personal. This practice was described by Fernandez (2002) as vital for sustaining productive collegial dialogue especially in western contexts where individual autonomy is predominate over collective investigation.

The final debriefing session, the *kōshi-kai*, was where collaboration become learning. Structured questions guided teacher participants. Feedback was gathered from the teacher delivering the lesson. The data regarding students’ responses was shared, and these observations were evaluated in line with the lesson design. Subsequently, recommendations regarding revisions and edits were discussed for the improvement of the next research cycle of lesson study (Lewis & Hurd, 2011). Dudley’s (2019) UK-based studies demonstrated that these reflective conversations accelerated the development of what Shulman termed as “pedagogical content knowledge” because teachers together analysed how subject matter, pedagogy, and student response interrelated in factual time, in real classrooms.

Empirical research constantly demonstrated that such collaborative structures reinforce professional relationships and cultivate a school-level mindset of inquiry. Lewis and Takahashi (2013), in their collaborative research which involved 240 Japanese primary educators, stated that substantial gains in trust, shared efficacy, and collective responsibility were reported after a single year of lesson-study cycles. Similar successes have been documented in global settings. Fernandez and Robinson (2006) learnt that

American elementary teachers who engaged in lesson study for two semesters increased the frequency of instructional talk in their grade-level meetings by 42 percent and shifted the discourse from “telling” to “probing”. Such a shift indicated the level of depth in teacher collaboration and the great impact it had on teacher productivity and growth.

These outcomes, when viewed comprehensively, directly informed the first research question of my study. Literature indicated that when lesson study is implemented and structured as part of the school’s practices with regularly scheduled meetings, focused observations based on evidence, and constructive feedback and reflective sessions, an ideal environment for sustained, high-quality teacher collaboration was created which transcended the constraints of designated PD days. The predefined PD days which the school ensured in its scholastic calendar could then be used for the much-needed wellbeing sessions which all educators necessitate and appreciate. The present research study will explore whether these collaborative mechanisms emerged in a Maltese junior sector context and how they were experienced by participating teachers.

2.2.4 Lesson Study and Teacher Learning

Lesson study, by design, unites collaboration, reflection and practice-based research embedded in real-class settings (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Opfer & Pedder, 2011). It provides a systematic and cyclical model that provides the enhancement of teacher practice as well as deeper changes in teacher beliefs and theories about teaching and learning. This statement addressed the third research question in this study - *To what extent do collaborative practices in lesson study enable opportunities for teacher learning?* and intends to prove that professional learning was most effective when it encompassed these three characteristics.

An essential element in lesson study was the facilitation of teacher learning and development through collective inquiry from teaching practice. In lesson study, teachers have the time and space to co-plan, observe, and reflect on a research lesson designed to address a specific learning challenge (Lewis et al., 2006). The collaborative process

between the teachers fostered knowledge co-construction; an important pillar of principle of sociocultural learning theory which saw educators build shared understandings through conversation, observation, and collective problem-solving (Vygotsky, 1978; Perry & Lewis, 2009).

Another pivotal element in lesson study, which allows for teacher learning, is reflective practice. Dewey (1933) was a pioneer in claiming that reflection begins when one is confronted with uncertainty or difficulty. The lesson study cycles precisely generated such scenarios by engaging teachers in challenging student-focused investigations. After the research lesson is observed, a structured meeting - the debriefing session - followed, enabling the team of teacher participants to analyse and interpret student responses, assess the efficacy of instructional strategies, and readdress and reframe prior assumptions (Dudley, 2013). These discussions went beyond broad feedback and evaluation. They created transformative learning experiences (Mezirow, 1991), especially when teachers confronted discrepancies between intended outcomes and actual student learning.

Furthermore, peer feedback during the debriefing discussions served as a low-risk, high-value form of professional critique. Unlike top-down models of evaluation, lesson study encouraged horizontal learning, where colleagues supported one another in refining their pedagogical thinking without any form of judgement. Studies by Lewis and Hurd (2011) found that peer feedback in lesson study develops teachers' ability to observe and interpret student thinking which is a key attribute of pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987). Dudley (2019) supported this line of thought and demonstrates that repeated engagement in lesson study strengthened teachers' meta-cognitive awareness, enabling them to be more deliberate, specific and intentional in their instructional practices.

Empirical research also showed that sustained engagement in lesson study can lead to measurable shifts in teacher beliefs and classroom practices. Lewis, Perry, and Murata (2006) documented changes in teachers' conceptions of student learning, moving from

transmission models to constructivist, inquiry-based orientations. Similarly, Fernandez and Chokshi (2002) observed that American teachers involved in lesson study cycles acquired a more refined understanding of mathematical thinking and restructured their classroom discourse accordingly.

While lesson study promoted teacher learning, it also impacted student outcomes. In a longitudinal study conducted by Perry and Lewis (2009), students whose teachers participated in lesson study showed progress in their problem-solving skills, paired with a deeper conceptual understanding of the subject. This improvement was attributed not to any single “better” lesson, but to the cumulative effect of teachers becoming more responsive to student thinking over time.

Therefore, the collaborative practices within lesson study - collective planning, focused observation, structured reflection, responsive refining, reviewing, and adjusting - help to create a dynamic professional learning environment which supported changes in teachers’ instructional knowledge, pedagogical beliefs, and ultimately their classroom practices. Through this lens, lesson study emerged as a form of professional development but also as a tool which enabled transformative teacher learning.

2.3 Teacher Collaboration and Professional Learning Communities

2.3.1 Defining Collaboration in Education

“Collaboration is a purposeful relationship in which all parties strategically choose to cooperate in order to accomplish a shared outcome” (Schrage, 1990, p. 40).

Collaboration, in the education field, goes beyond simple cooperation. Schrage (1990) encapsulated the essence of partnerships in education. Collaboration requires a real understanding and a deep commitment to working together toward common goals that improve student learning and professional growth. Teachers learn to recognise and value each other as expert professionals, rely on each other’s contribution, share responsibilities

to create a bank of knowledge and solutions which improves their own practice and increases students' achievements or reaches a desired set goal.

Four critical characteristics supported effective collaboration: trust, mutual respect, shared vision and goals, and interdependence. Trust was essential as it allowed educators to feel safe in expressing uncertainty, sharing vulnerabilities, and accepting feedback (Hargreaves, 1994). Mutual respect fostered a culture where different perspectives were acknowledged and valued, without any judgment. This created a safe space necessary for authentic dialogue and co-construction of knowledge (John-Steiner, 2000). A shared vision and common goals were vital in stream-lining efforts and maintaining consistency in collaborative practices (Sergiovanni, 1994; Hord, 1997). Lastly, interdependence was defined as a shift from autonomous, isolated practice to collective teamwork where teachers did not work in silos but were supported by a network of common practice in the organisation (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991; Vygotsky, 1978). This approach required educators to share accountability and recognise joint ownership over mutual difficulties and shared success. Such mindsets set the scene for a learning journey for educators who learn from one another through meaningful, ongoing conversations.

Together, these dimensions contributed to a professional culture in which collaboration became not only a structural feature of schools, but a frame of mind that elevates teaching and learning (Todd, 2007).

2.3.2 Professional learning communities (PLCs) and collaborative inquiry

According to Hord (1997), a Professional Learning Community (PLC) is defined as a network “in which the teachers in a school and its administrators continuously seek and share learning and then act on what they learn.” This structure has its foundational roots in collective inquiry, shared values and vision, reflective dialogue, and supportive leadership which leads to authentic and sustained teacher growth.

PLCs provide organised yet malleable frameworks for educators to participate in ongoing professional dialogues, challenge assumptions, test theories and critically examine teaching practices. Dufour et al. (2006) stated that effective PLCs are founded on three main aspects: a focus on learning rather than teaching, a culture of collaboration, and end achievements.

Stoll et al. (2006) emphasised that collaborative principles in PLCs do not emerge by coincidence. These communities require intentional design which include thorough scheduled timetabling, facilitation of space and human resources, and clear norms of engagement and expectations. When these structures are in place, collaboration may lead, over-time, to “shared professional learning” and capacity-building with activities such as training, coaching, mentoring, networking, and collaborating across schools.

Framing this, Lave and Wenger’s (1991) concept of Communities of Practice (CoP) provides an important theoretical lens for understanding how PLCs function. They argued that learning is socially situated, taking place through participation in shared practices where members engage in a joint enterprise, build mutual relationships, and develop shared repertoires. Seen in this light, PLCs are not simply organisational mechanisms. They are living communities where knowledge is co-constructed and professional identities are shaped. This perspective is particularly relevant for the present study, where lesson study is examined as a collaborative professional development tool.

These opportunities or facilitations in the organisation can lead to collaborative inquiry where teachers feel safe to pose questions, question the status quo, collect and analyse evidence and reflect on their practice together. Such joint inquiry has shown to foster transformative learning. Vescio, Ross, and Adams (2008) argue that participation in PLCs has a positive impact on both teacher practice and student achievement, especially when collaboration is focused, data-informed, and sustained over time.

Studies from Bell and Gilbert (2010) suggested that collaborative inquiry enhances teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge whilst strengthening the co-construction of

professional knowledge which, in turn, enables collective problem-solving. These collaborative efforts result in more responsive and adaptive teaching, which directly supports student learning and attainment.

Research underpins that PLCs and collaborative inquiry are powerful tools for meaningful teacher learning, innovation, and sustained improvement. When PLCs are purposefully designed with specific intention, they transcend collegiality or team meetings and become drivers of professional development and targeted student performance.

2.3.3 Teacher Experience and Perceptions of Collaboration

The decision of teachers to engage in collaborative experiences in their professional development initiatives, such as lesson study, were shaped by emotional, relational, and contextual factors. As previously argued, collaboration is not simply the coordination of tasks. It is an affective and social process that promotes teachers' sense of agency, wellbeing, and professional identity. Bell (1992) observed that effective teamwork allows educators to "sing from the same sheet of music," creating unity which enables members to contribute with their unique strengths. Such setting sets the tone for confidence-building. It reduces stress and cultivates a sense of togetherness and belonging.

Sergiovanni (2006) further supported this idea by describing schools as communities of practice in which informal and close relationships are central. In such spaces, emotional expression and subjectivity are naturalised, and individual concerns are seen as valid contributions. Educators work together not because they are forced, but because they find intrinsic value in the act of coming together; being one.

Lave and Wenger's (1991) seminal work explored this notion by conceptualising communities of practice as spaces where identity and learning are inseparable, as teachers negotiate meaning through participation. In this sense, collaboration became more than technical task-sharing: it was a process of professional growth and identity formation, sustained through shared practice, dialogue, and engagement with peers. This theoretical framing will be drawn on later in this study to interpret how teachers experienced

collaboration within lesson study and how such participation shaped their professional learning trajectories.

Building on the foundational perspectives discussed above, recent scholarship has begun to conceptualise lesson study as a developmental trajectory of collaborative professionalism, where teacher learning evolves through iterative cycles of shared inquiry, reflection, and refinement. Cajkler and Wood (2016) describe this process as a movement from initial cooperation to deeper forms of collegial trust and professional dialogue, reflecting a gradual shift from procedural collaboration to genuine co-construction of knowledge. Similarly, Verhoef et al. (2015) highlight that the collaborative nature of lesson study supports the emergence of shared cognition and collective agency, both of which are central to sustained professional growth. More recent studies, such as Leakey and Mynott (2025), extend this perspective by linking lesson study to the theory of collaborative advantage, showing that shared purpose and psychological safety enable teachers to move beyond surface-level collaboration toward a sustained culture of professional learning. Together, these studies frame lesson study as a progressive model of collaborative professionalism that can reshape how teachers engage with and learn from one another.

These relational dynamics are vital to how teachers experience and make sense of collaborative professional development. Research suggests that collaborative models, such as lesson study, create opportunities for teachers to exercise agency, where they are not passive recipients of knowledge but active co-constructors (Biesta, Priestley, & Robinson, 2015). This kind of agency is critical in shaping professional identity, as teachers continuously negotiate their roles, values, and beliefs through dialogue with peers (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Kelchtermans, 2009). Collaborative work, especially when built on mutual trust and shared purpose, empowers educators to reflect more deeply on their practices and explore new ways of thinking without fear of judgment. In this context, lesson study becomes a professional tool to improve teaching practice and a transformative space where professional identities are affirmed and developed. Understanding teachers' lived experiences of such collaboration is therefore fundamental for evaluating how

effective lesson study is as a professional development model that fosters growth beyond technical skill acquisition.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework guiding this study constitutes professional development, collaborative inquiry, and teacher learning. This literature review showed that effective professional development should be continuous, contextually grounded, with a clear alignment to the principles of adult learning and transformative practice (Knowles, 1984; Mezirow, 1991; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Lesson study emerged within this context as an ideal and promising tool of professional development that is both practice-based and inquiry-driven. It provides an informed, cyclical design for teachers to collaboratively plan, observe, and reflect on actual classroom practice (Lewis, 2000; Dudley, 2013), thereby creating an idyllic environment for meaningful collaboration and professional growth. This framework directly informs the first research question by exploring how lesson study can foster collaboration across the junior sector of an independent school in Malta, through practices such as team planning, peer observation, and shared reflection.

Moreover, the literature reveals that teacher experiences of collaboration are deeply influenced by emotional and relational factors. These factors include trust, mutual respect, common goals, and professional identity (Hargreaves, 2000; Sergiovanni, 2006). Such insights support the second research question, which seeks to uncover teachers' personal experiences and their opinions on collaboration in a lesson study context. Finally, this literature review connects to the third research question this study seeks to explore, that is, understanding the degree of teacher learning that can occur through collaborative practices within the lesson study experiment. It seeks to understand the impact that reflective practice, peer feedback, and knowledge co-construction can have in fostering teacher agency and instructional improvement (Stoll et al., 2006; Vescio, Ross & Adams, 2008; Timperley et al., 2011). Therefore, the conceptual framework that emerges from the literature integrates professional development, lesson study, and collaboration within

PLCs, offering a lens through which to examine how lesson study may serve as a transformative tool for teacher collaboration and sustained professional growth.

2.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter highlights how effective professional development should be continuous, collaborative, and founded in real-world scenarios teachers live daily in their classrooms. Despite widespread recognition of these findings, the prevailing model in Malta remains largely immobilised to sporadic, one-off training sessions with limited long-term impact. This study seeks to address this disconnect by exploring the potential of lesson study as a sustainable tool of professional development that fosters authentic collaboration, reflective practice, and teacher-led inquiry. Lesson study offers a platform for educators to engage in meaningful dialogue about teaching and learning and positions them as co-constructors of knowledge within a professional learning community. This study seeks to explore language teaching in a vertical setting within the Maltese educational context. By investigating how lesson study promotes collaboration among teachers, their perceptions of such collaboration, and the extent to which it facilitates teacher learning, this study aims to contribute to a reconceptualisation of professional development in the junior sector of the school where the study is conducted. Ultimately, the findings may offer valuable insights into how this sector, and potentially the whole school, can shift from top-down training models to more empowering, embedded practices that genuinely support teacher growth and school improvement.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological framework underpinning this study. It restates the aims and objectives of the research and explains the rationale for adopting a qualitative, empirical approach situated within a constructivist paradigm. This methodology was deemed most appropriate for exploring the complex, context-specific nature of lesson study as a professional development tool in a primary school setting.

The chapter proceeds to describe the research design and offers a rationale for the data collection methods, which include semi-structured interviews, debriefing meetings, and a focus group. The school context is introduced to provide insight into the setting in which the study was conducted, followed by an explanation of the participant selection process.

The thematic analysis used to interpret the data is presented along with the triangulation strategies used to enhance trustworthiness. Ethical considerations, such as informed consent, confidentiality, and the mitigation of researcher bias, are also discussed. Finally, the chapter addresses the limitations of the study and concludes by linking the chosen methodology to the overarching aims and research questions.

3.1 Research Aims and Questions

The aim of this study was to explore the potential of lesson study as a professional development tool within the upper primary sector of an independent school in Malta, with a focus on fostering collaboration among teachers and contributing to both individual and collective professional growth. In doing so, the research examined how such collaborative models of development influenced teaching practices and student engagement, particularly in the teaching of Maltese.

To achieve this aim, the study sought to:

- Understand teachers' perceptions of their current professional development experiences;
- Explore the collaborative dynamics that emerge through the lesson study process;

- Examine how participation in lesson study influences teachers' professional practices, beliefs, and sense of agency;
- Consider the implications of these experiences for future PD models within the school or similar educational contexts.

These objectives aligned with the overarching research questions, which directly informed the choice of a qualitative, action-oriented methodology. The research questions guiding this study are:

- How does collaboration amongst teachers develop during lesson study?
- What are teachers' experiences of collaboration through a lesson study?
- To what extent do collaborative practices in lesson study enable opportunities for teacher learning?

The interpretive nature of the inquiry called for an in-depth, context-sensitive exploration that prioritised participant voice and hands-on meaning-making; elements best supported through a qualitative case study approach (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018).

3.2 Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative case study design embedded within an action research framework and framed by a constructivist epistemology. A qualitative approach was particularly suitable, as it allowed for a rich, contextualised understanding of teachers' experiences and the social dynamics of collaborative professional learning (Creswell, 2014). The case study design enabled an in-depth investigation of a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life setting using multiple data sources (Baxter & Jack, 2008). In this study, a group of four primary teachers participated in a lesson study cycle within one independent school in Malta. The case was bound by time, setting, and participants, ensuring a focused approach.

Taking a constructivist approach, knowledge was viewed as co-constructed through social interaction (Vygotsky, 1978), shaped by the participants' prior experiences, the input of the KO, and the collaborative inquiry within the lesson study process. Professional

development is understood as a situated, relational, and transformative process rather than the mere transmission of knowledge.

At its core, this research was grounded in action research methodology. As defined by Carr and Kemmis (1986), action research is a reflective and transformative process through which practitioners systematically investigate their own practice to enact positive change. This approach is especially relevant to school settings, where inquiry, action, and reflection occur in cycles (Kemmis, McTaggart, & Nixon, 2014). In this case, the research involved four educators engaging in lesson study - a cyclical form of professional learning that includes planning, observation, reflection, and revision (Dudley, 2014).

Case study research is a qualitative research approach that explores a particular phenomenon in its real-life context. It is particularly useful when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not explicitly evident (Yin, 2018). A case study typically involves in-depth, context-specific analysis, using multiple data sources to build a detailed understanding of the case at hand. In this study, the case was the implementation of lesson study as a professional development tool in an independent school in Malta. The research examined the experiences of four teachers who participated in the lesson study cycle, providing a rich, contextualised understanding of how lesson study influenced both their professional learning and student engagement.

Action research complemented the case study approach by positioning the researcher as both observer and facilitator. As an assistant head and participant-researcher, I worked alongside the teachers to co-construct professional knowledge and reflect on the implementation of lesson study. This dual role aligned with the participatory ethos of action research, enhancing the authenticity of the findings.

The constructivist paradigm underpinned this study by recognising that knowledge is co-constructed between the researcher and participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Instead of seeking objective truths, this approach valued participants' subjective meanings and allowed for the socially constructed nature of teaching practices

to emerge. Through dialogue, reflection, and shared experiences, the participants and the researcher built new understandings of teaching and professional learning.

The research design aligned with the iterative, participatory nature of lesson study. As Elliott (1991) and McNiff and Whitehead (2011) argued, action research is not only a method for exploring change but a design that empowers teachers, positioning them as agents of their own development. This was especially relevant in the Maltese context, where structured collaboration in professional development is still developing, and teachers benefit from engaging in inquiry-led practices tailored to their classroom realities (Cassar, 2012; Grech & Mifsud, 2013).

3.3 Case Context and School Profile

The school context was essential in a constructivist paradigm, as teachers' engagement with professional development was shaped by the school's culture, leadership, and language practices. This study situated itself within the unique realities of the school, acknowledging the relational and contextual factors that influenced how teachers co-construct knowledge, in line with the action research methodology (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000) and the CoP framework (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The constructivist approach, as highlighted by Piaget (1973), underscores the idea that knowledge is actively constructed through interaction within a specific context, underlining the importance of the school environment in forming professional learning and development.

This study was conducted within a private, independent, English-speaking school in Malta, focusing specifically on four teacher participants from the junior sector, whose students range in age from approximately 7 to 11 years. The school's PD structure is shaped by both internal planning and external frameworks, particularly those outlined by the MUT (Attard Tonna & Buhagiar, 2015). PD hours are largely pre-scheduled in the preceding academic year. Typically, these consist of three half days and one full day in September, two full days during the scholastic year, and an additional three to four half days in July. These allocations are carefully balanced with teaching and learning entitlements, limiting the extent to which structured professional learning can take place.

The initial September PD days are often used for handover meetings, classroom preparation, and collaborative planning at the departmental and year levels. Although many educators voluntarily begin their planning and classroom setup during the summer months, school leadership is restricted from mandating work during this period. Consequently, the time officially designated for in-depth PD remains limited.

Traditionally, PD priorities are established by the SLT, guided by whole-school development plans and sector-specific needs. In the past four years, particularly following the appointment of assistant heads in both the junior and senior sectors, greater efforts have been made to include teachers' voices in identifying training needs and promoting continuity across the year. Within the junior sector, the September PD hours often offer lecture-style sessions led by an external expert. These experts are encouraged to maintain ongoing contact via email and follow up with year teams during planning meetings or mid-year PD sessions to support implementation and gather feedback, therefore establishing a more dialogic and iterative PD process (Darling-Hammond, Hylar & Gardner, 2017; Knight, 2011).

Table 1 conveys a description of planning time in the junior sector. Teachers are allocated 80 minutes of official weekly planning time. With my appointment as assistant head of sector, a separate, additional 40-minute weekly session was introduced. This time is intended to supplement existing collaborative planning and has been positively received, especially by year groups that choose to meet collectively rather than work in isolation. It has also provided opportunities to embed informal training and foster more sustained collaboration, as research indicates that integrating professional development into teachers' daily practices leads to more effective outcomes (Timperley et al., 2007). Vertical meetings have been implemented across the core subjects of Maltese, English, and Mathematics. These meetings are led by subject coordinators and have a scheduled 40-minute meeting session weekly. These coordinators are not formally appointed but are instead invited to represent the subject based on their aptitude and interest. Their responsibilities include maintaining schemes of work, evaluating new resources, and overseeing assessment tools, particularly in the upper primary years. The purpose of these

meetings is to foster collaboration among teachers from Year 3 to Year 6, ensuring continuity in the curriculum, monitoring the achievement of learning objectives, and addressing potential teaching gaps. Additionally, these meetings provide a platform for evaluating new resources and exploring professional development opportunities. According to Hargreaves and Fullan (2012), sustained collaboration is a key factor in fostering a culture of continuous improvement. Although still evolving, participation tends to increase when the meetings are structured with a clear agenda and supported by the SLT. This is consistent with the idea that structured, purposeful collaboration among teachers is integral to improving teaching practices and promoting professional learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

In the case of Maltese language teaching, the vertical team, which consists of the four teacher participants in this study, is especially committed and passionate. All teachers involved in the coordination of teaching Maltese demonstrate high levels of motivation and subject pride. For example, one educator independently enrolled in a university course on the updating of rules in the Maltese grammar, while another led conversation sessions for students and supported non-native colleagues in attaining language proficiency certification. Their enthusiasm was also evident in their communication style; the vertical team conducted planning sessions and email correspondence in Maltese. This choice of language reflects the community's shared values and practice, consistent with Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of CoP, where the language used within the community is central to the identity and collaborative engagement of its members. In the initial stages of this research, it was proposed that during the vertical meetings English would be the communication language for transcription convenience. However, the participants expressed discomfort with this, and the study adapted accordingly, reverting to Maltese. This shift reflected the authentic, language-rich environment in which these educators operate and reinforced the importance of maintaining coherence between language and practice within their professional community and being role-models to their students.

Planning Type	Description	Duration	Frequency	Participants
Official Year Group Planning	Dedicated planning time for teachers within the same year group (e.g., all Year 3 teachers).	80 minutes (2 lessons, back-to-back)	Weekly	All teachers per year group (Y3–Y6)
Additional Year Group Planning	An extra session teachers can use as an additional planning session.	40 minutes (1 lesson)	Weekly	All teachers per year group (Y3–Y6)
Vertical Planning	Subject-based planning across year groups for core subjects: English, Maths, Maltese.	40 minutes	Weekly	One subject representative per year group (Y3–Y6) per subject

Table 1: *Planning Time in the junior sector*

3.4 Participants

Four of the participants (teachers) in this study were purposively selected based on their role as Maltese subject representatives within their respective year teams. These teachers are known for their commitment to the teaching of Maltese and their engagement in subject-

specific coordination tasks. The other two participants are the KO; an external to the school who was involved in providing subject expertise and a more objective perspective and myself in the role of participant-researcher.

Table 2 below conveys key information about each participant. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, with informed consent obtained from all five participants. Pseudonyms were used to protect anonymity. To ensure ethical integrity, a research guardian was appointed to mitigate power imbalances. Full ethical procedures are detailed in section 3.8.

Pseudonym/ Positionality in the Study	Role/Position	Background & Expertise
Lily (insider)	Teacher Participant- Maltese Coordinator	Joined the junior sector in recent years. Extensive experience in education despite lacking formal pedagogical training. Recognised for her knowledge of Maltese and involvement in language-related projects.
Rose (insider)	Teacher Participant - Maltese Coordinator	Long-serving educator with extensive experience in the junior sector, particularly in Maltese teaching. Key reference for colleagues, including those newer to the profession. Proactive and adaptive to change, integrating curricular updates and pedagogical developments into her practice.
Daisy (insider)	Teacher Participant -	Recently joined the junior sector with a strong commitment to developing her classroom practice.

	Maltese Coordinator	<p>Passionate about the Maltese language and shares new language resources with colleagues.</p> <p>Proactive in suggesting innovations to enhance student learning and teaching effectiveness.</p>
Iris (insider)	Teacher Participant - Maltese Coordinator	<p>Experienced educator with formal teacher training qualifications, teaching in the same year group for several years.</p> <p>Strong commitment to teaching the Maltese language with passion and precision.</p> <p>Prefers structured, teacher-led, academically focused instruction.</p>
Violet (outsider)	Knowledgeable Other - KO Education Officer - EO (Maltese)	<p>Served as the KO in this study, selected for her extensive experience teaching Maltese and her role as an EO in the primary school sector.</p> <p>Previously taught at the school where the research was conducted, offering deep familiarity with its environment and the challenges teachers face in teaching Maltese.</p> <p>Has extensive experience observing teaching practices across various schools in Malta, including state, church, and independent institutions.</p>
Myself (insider)	Researcher-Participant Assistant Head (junior sector)	<p>Over twenty years of experience in education, having taught across a broad range of year groups in both the early years and primary sectors.</p> <p>Assumed the role of assistant head in the junior sector four years ago, fostering a collaborative and supportive environment for both students and staff.</p>

Table 2: Overview of Study Participants

3.5 Data Collection Methods

This study employed a multi-method approach to triangulate the data and provided a comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences with lesson study as a professional development tool. The methods used in this study included semi-structured interviews with each teacher participant, four debriefing sessions with all six participants following the four lesson studies done, and a focus group to gather concluding insights from the four teacher participants. This approach aligned with the idea of methodological triangulation, which was used to enhance the validity and reliability of the research by drawing on multiple data sources and methods (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018).

Table 3: *Timeline of the Research Process* outlines the steps and the sequence of data collection throughout the study.

Timeline of the Research Process	
Date	Phase
March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical approval granted by Faculty Research Ethics Committee • Invitation email sent to the four teacher participants requesting voluntary participation. • Research guardian met with teacher participants to explain her independent role • Signed information/ consent forms received from all four teachers. • Vertical planning meetings (40 mins/week) began. • Semi-structured interviews conducted online after school.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers agreed to contact the external KO to join the process during the teaching of the lesson study and debriefing.
April 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signed information/consent form received from KO. Lesson study 1 conducted by Rose, followed by Debriefing 1.
May 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lesson study 2 conducted by Iris, followed by Debriefing 2. Lesson study 3 conducted by Rose, followed by Debriefing 3. Lesson study 4 conducted by Daisy, followed by Debriefing 4. A Focus Group was held with the four teacher participants and the researcher-participant. KO was not present.
June–August 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transcription, translation, and thematic analysis of the four interviews, the four debriefs, and the focus group data.

Table 3: *Timeline of the Research Process*

3.5.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

The semi-structured interview method was chosen for its ability to provide flexibility while maintaining a focus on specific research questions. This method was well-suited to qualitative research aimed at exploring the complexities of participants' experiences and perspectives (Denscombe, 2014). Teachers in this study expressed a preference for verbal

discussions, as they found it easier to articulate their thoughts and reflect on their experiences through dialogue.

This method aligned well with my approach, as semi-structured interviews offer rich, in-depth insight into the lived experiences of teachers; crucial for understanding the impact of lesson study on their professional development. According to Carr and Kemmis (1986), qualitative methods like semi-structured interviews are fundamental to action research because they provide opportunities to explore and co-construct meaning, a core principle of this research design. The interviews enabled the collection of teacher voices and personal narratives, which were vital for capturing the nuanced experiences of participants throughout the lesson study process.

Initially, twelve questions were developed to explore aspects of professional development, teaching practices, and lesson study. However, following consultation with my tutors, the interview guide was refined to five core questions to ensure focus and relevance to the research aims. Questions were open-ended and reflective, designed to elicit in-depth responses regarding teachers' perceptions, experiences, and needs in relation to professional development, as well as their perspectives. The interview script can be found in Appendix C.

The interviews were conducted in English, online using Microsoft Teams, and scheduled after school hours to minimise disruption to teachers' routines. Each interview was recorded and lasted approximately twenty minutes. The semi-structured format allowed for flexibility, enabling exploration of similar patterns raised by participants. As a researcher-participant, I guided the conversation while also engaged in meaningful dialogue with the teachers to explore examples and clarify concepts. This approach supports Kvale's (1996) view on semi-structured interviews, where the researcher acts as both a guide and a conversational partner, allowing for in-depth exploration while maintaining flexibility. Furthermore, as Cohen et al. (2018) highlight, the researcher-participant role requires balancing the facilitation of dialogue with maintaining reflexivity to ensure authentic data collection. All interviews were transcribed in English for analysis (see Appendix D) and subsequently analysed using thematic analysis.

3.5.2 Teaching of the Lessons and Debriefings

The teaching of the four lesson studies and the subsequent debriefing sessions were central to the research and exemplified the cyclical nature of lesson study. These phases, where the design of the lesson was planned during the vertical meetings, were put into practice through the teaching of the lessons followed by debriefings, reflecting the continuous cycle of inquiry and improvement experienced by the group of participants. Through collaborative planning, teachers co-constructed lessons to address specific instructional goals. The practical teaching of the lessons in the classroom allowed teachers to observe the enactment of the lesson firsthand, while written feedback from the observers and the KO provided additional insights into student responses and lesson dynamics. The debriefing sessions then facilitated reflective practices, where teachers critically analysed student responses, instructional strategies, and the impact on learning outcomes. This cyclical process ensured that each iteration of lesson study integrated teacher feedback and fostered ongoing professional growth, aligning with Schön's (1983) notion of reflective practice in professional development and Dewey's (1938) concept of reflective thinking, which underscores the importance of inquiry and problem-solving in the development of professional knowledge.

In the four debriefing sessions, all four teacher-participants, the KO, and I were present. All sessions were audio-recorded with participants' consent, providing rich data for later analysis. Transcripts and translations of these recordings were generated, translated, and reviewed before the next vertical meeting, enabling teacher-participants to use this data to inform the design of subsequent lessons (See Appendices E and F). Creswell (2014) emphasises the importance of using rich, contextual data for analysis in qualitative research, which justified my decision to focus on the transcripts. Although observation sheets and written reflections were collected during the lesson study process, they were not included in the data analysis. I felt that the transcripts alone provided sufficient data, as teachers were more comfortable discussing their thoughts freely in the debriefing sessions than when required to put their insights, reflections or feedback in writing.

Each debrief session began with the teacher leading the lesson sharing her reflections on the teaching of the lesson. The remaining three teachers, acting as observers, then provided feedback based on their observations of student learning, with each observer focusing on a specific group of students to ensure comprehensive observation. The KO and I also took on the role of observers. During the vertical meetings prior to the lessons, it was decided that each observer would focus on a particular group of students to capture varied perspectives across the classroom. This process supports Dudley's (2014) model of lesson study, where teachers engage in collaborative observation and feedback to enhance their teaching practices. According to Lewis et al. (2009), lesson study encourages shared reflection and feedback among teachers which enables them to view teaching from multiple perspectives, which ultimately strengthens their understanding and ability to improve student learning outcomes.

Throughout the debriefing sessions, I served as the moderator, guiding the order of feedback and prompting teachers to reflect on both the strengths of the lesson and areas for improvement. As Dudley (2014) points out, lesson study provides a valuable opportunity for teachers to observe one another's teaching and engage in detailed, constructive feedback, which can inform and refine future lessons. The role of feedback, whether from peers, the expert (KO), or the researcher, is crucial in fostering teacher development and improving instructional practices. Knight (2011) also highlights that such feedback is foundational in ensuring that professional development leads to genuine improvements in teaching practice.

I also made connections to prior feedback during these sessions, fostering a sense of continuity and encouraging teachers to integrate previous suggestions into their future lessons. This approach reflects the feedback loop described by Kemmis et al. (2014), which is essential in professional development settings for continuous growth. By facilitating reflection on both the lesson and the feedback received, I helped create a collaborative learning environment, which aligns with the concept of a CoP (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This process, driven by a constant cycle of reflection and feedback, contributed to the collective development of the teaching practices involved.

3.5.3 Focus Group

The focus group was conducted five days following the completion of the teaching of the last research lesson and debriefing session. It took place in person during the designated vertical meeting time. All teacher participants attended, with the exception of Daisy, who was unavailable on that day. The KO was intentionally excluded from this session to gather feedback solely from the teachers. The discussion was audio recorded with the consent of the participating teachers. Due to Daisy's absence, I sent her the questions in advance and the session's recording after the discussion, and she subsequently provided her recorded feedback. Both recordings were later transcribed in Maltese and translated into English to facilitate data analysis. The focus group was structured informally, with four questions related to the teachers' experiences of lesson study presented to the group (See Appendix G).

The focus group was included to provide an additional layer of data for triangulation and to gather team reflections from the teachers after completing the four lesson study cycles. This method allowed for cross-validation of the insights gathered from the semi-structured interviews and served as a platform for teachers to discuss their shared experiences in a group setting. Morgan (1997) argued that focus groups enable participants to react to each other's ideas, enriching the data and providing more comprehensive insights into the group experience. This was particularly important for comparing the findings from the individual interviews and examining any shifts in teachers' attitudes or understanding as a result of their participation in lesson study.

The focus group also allowed me, in the role of researcher-participant, to explore how teachers perceived the impact of lesson study on their professional growth and teaching practices. Teachers' reflections in this format were seen as more authentic and detailed than written reflections, aligning with the constructivist approach that values authentic teacher input through discussion and dialogue (Vygotsky, 1978). This dynamic exchange also supported Denzin's (1978) notion of triangulation, enhancing the validity of the findings through the use of multiple data sources.

3.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) (See Appendix J). Thematic analysis is a widely used qualitative method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns within data. This process involved an iterative cycle of familiarisation with the data, generating initial codes, and refining these codes into broader themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I carefully reviewed each interview, debriefing, and focus group transcript and highlighted segments that reflected key aspects of the research questions. As I reviewed these highlighted sections, I compared them across transcripts to identify recurring ideas, concepts, or patterns. When grouped together, these patterns helped me to generate initial codes which later helped me construct more overarching themes.

Figure 2: *How themes were constructed* showcases an example of how a theme was created from the narratives.

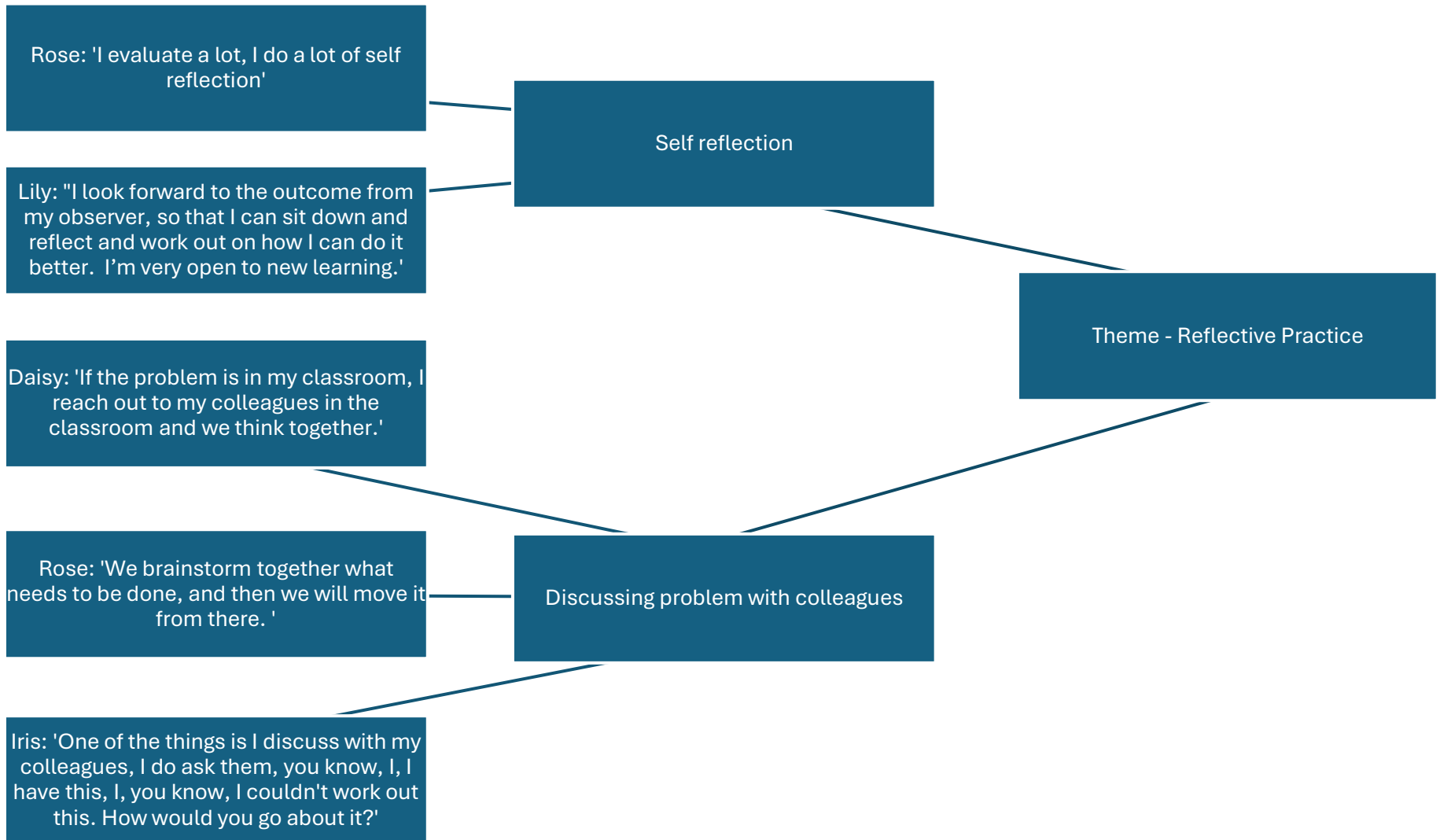


Figure 2: How themes were constructed

Since the coding process was manual, it allowed for an in-depth engagement with the data and ensuring that the themes developed were rooted in the participants' authentic voices. Each transcript was thoroughly reviewed to ensure that significant portions of the data were captured, and relevant codes were assigned to meaningful excerpts. As the themes were constructed from the data, they were organised, re-examined, and refined to capture the essence of the participants' perspectives.

During this process, some excerpts that were initially coded under one subtheme were later reallocated to another when further reflection revealed a better conceptual fit. For example, data extracts first labelled as *self-reflection* were later reclassified under *planning future action* when it became clear that participants were explicitly linking reflection to changes they intended to make in practice. Braun and Clarke (2006, 2019) emphasise that thematic analysis is recursive and reflexive rather than linear; reworking codes is therefore not only acceptable but essential to deepening analysis. This iterative movement between data, codes, and themes ensured that the final thematic structure was both coherent and analytically meaningful.

This approach aligns with the view of Elliott (1991), who stresses the importance of a flexible and reflexive coding process in qualitative research, which allows for deeper insights into the participants' experiences. By presenting the themes I constructed from the data, the analysis highlighted the inductive nature of the research, where the patterns and insights evolve naturally from the data rather than being imposed by pre-existing frameworks.

3.7 Researcher Positionality, Reflexivity and Co-construction of Meaning

In this study, my dual role as both assistant head of sector and researcher offered valuable insights but also introduced potential power dynamics. As an insider, I had pre-existing relationships with all participants, particularly in professional settings such as school development planning and curriculum implementation. While this familiarity fostered openness and trust, it also required ongoing reflexivity to mitigate bias or influence over participants' responses. Insider research can enhance the authenticity of data

collection but also introduces the risk of researcher bias, necessitating continuous self-reflection (Kemmis et al., 2014).

To mitigate the impact of my leadership role, I consciously accentuated my position as a co-learner throughout the lesson study process, rather than assuming the role of evaluator. This aligns with Dudley's (2014) argument that lesson study should be grounded in a collaborative, non-evaluative framework that promotes shared learning. I also encouraged participants to suggest the direction of planning sessions, ensured the choice of the KO was made by them, and framed my feedback in a dialogic, rather than directive, manner. This approach reflects the principles of collaborative professional development highlighted by Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), where teacher autonomy and input are central to the development process.

In interviews, I remained mindful of not leading the conversation, even when my professional insights aligned with participants' perspectives. Braun and Clarke (2006) stress the importance of allowing participants to share their own interpretations during thematic analysis, while acknowledging that the researcher's perspective will inevitably influence the interpretation of data. I ensured that my prompts were non-impositional and only contributed to the conversation when participants explicitly agreed with them, elaborated further, or integrated them into their own explanations. This dynamic interaction is in line with the interpretivist paradigm underpinning this study, which views knowledge as socially constructed through interaction (Kvale, 1996; Braun & Clarke, 2021).

This dual role enabled me to contribute to the co-construction of meaning, particularly during the vertical meetings and debriefing sessions. The collective building of meaning is central to social constructivism, which posits that knowledge is developed collaboratively through dialogue and shared experiences (Vygotsky, 1978). While my interpretations were informed by my pedagogical beliefs and prior experiences, they were constantly refined through collaborative dialogue with participants. Dewey (1938) asserts that true learning occurs through reflective inquiry and dialogue, where ideas are refined through active discussion and critical reflection. Lave and Wenger (1991) further support this view,

emphasising that knowledge is co-constructed within a CoP, where participants share common goals and engage in mutual learning.

As the primary researcher conducting the four semi-structured interviews, I acknowledged that my role actively shaped the dialogue and co-construction of meaning. This aligned with the interpretivist view, where knowledge is not objective or detached but is instead socially constructed through interaction (Kvale, 1996; Braun & Clarke, 2021). At times, I prompted reflection through clarifying questions or examples, but these contributions were never forced onto participants. Rather, they were incorporated into the conversation when participants explicitly agreed, expanded upon, or integrated these prompts into their own narratives. These exchanges, presented verbatim in the interview transcripts, ensured that participants could articulate their experiences with clarity and confidence, especially on abstract or emotional aspects of collaboration and professional learning.

My professional familiarity with the school context enabled rapport and mutual trust, while also requiring constant self-awareness to minimise bias. Consequently, my position as both researcher and colleague was carefully managed, with a critical focus on ensuring that the participants' authentic voices were distinguished from my interpretive lens. This approach aligns with Lave and Wenger's (1991) notion of CoP, where the researcher's insider status provides rich insights, but required careful balance to ensure that participant voices are not overshadowed.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are central to this research to ensure the integrity of the study and the protection of participants. Informed consent and confidentiality were paramount throughout the study. Following the guidelines set by Faculty Research Ethics Committee (2018), all participants were provided with detailed information about the study's aims, procedures, and potential risks, ensuring they could make an informed decision about their participation. Participants gave their consent voluntarily and were assured that they had the right to withdraw at any time without needing to provide an explanation. To maintain

confidentiality, pseudonyms were assigned to all participants, and no identifying information, such as the year groups they teach, was included in the study, safeguarding their anonymity, in line with Bloor and Wood (2006), who highlight the importance of confidentiality in qualitative research.

However, it is important to acknowledge that there is a risk that participants could still be identifiable due to the small sample size and the specific context of the study. To address this, I took additional measures to minimise any risks to participants' anonymity. Member checks were incorporated into the study process. Participants were given the opportunity to review the data collected from the interviews, debriefs and focus group, ensuring they were comfortable with the content. Additionally, they were invited to review the findings chapter to ensure their perspectives were accurately represented and that they were agreeable with the interpretations presented.

Given my dual role as both researcher and participant, managing insider bias and influence was a critical consideration. I was aware of the potential for insider bias to affect the research process, particularly in terms of the dynamics between myself and the participants. Cohen et al. (2018) note that reflexivity is key to mitigating insider bias, ensuring that researchers critically examine their positionality and its influence on the research process. To address this, I followed Faculty Research Ethics Committee's (2018) recommendations and appointed a research guardian to serve as an intermediary between myself and the participants. This role was intended to ensure that the teachers did not feel intimidated by my position or perceive any obligation to participate due to my role as assistant head. Punch (2014) discusses the importance of minimising power imbalances and ensuring that participants feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and experiences.

Additionally, recognising the importance of maintaining impartiality, the team selected a KO from outside the school environment to avoid any biases stemming from internal relationships. The external KO was crucial in providing unbiased, objective feedback that contributed to the authenticity of the study, as Lewis et al. (2009) suggest, external feedback ensured a more balanced perspective in collaborative research contexts.

Regarding data storage and GDPR compliance, all data collected was handled with the utmost care to protect participants' privacy and comply with relevant data protection regulations. Denzin (1978) states the need for researchers to safeguard participants' data and comply with ethical guidelines related to privacy and data storage. Intellectual property rights for the data belong to the participants, and consent was obtained before any data was used in the research. Data is stored securely on my personal laptop with limited access to ensure confidentiality. The data will be retained for a specified period, as per the requirements of the study and GDPR guidelines, after which it will be securely deleted.

3.9 Trustworthiness

To ensure the trustworthiness of this study, several strategies were employed, including triangulation, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

3.9.1 Triangulation

This was achieved using multiple data sources, which provided a more comprehensive and balanced understanding of the collaboration process in lesson study. By using one-to-one interviews, debriefing sessions, and a focus group, this study was able to capture different facets of teachers' perspectives on professional development and collaboration. The interviews allowed individual perspectives, the debriefing sessions provided insights into collaborative dynamics, and the focus group explored teachers' professional growth and their development as potential members of a CoP. A pattern is constructed from these multiple data sources, especially regarding teachers' views on professional development and collaboration, which will be discussed in Chapter 5.

3.9.2 Credibility, Transferability, Dependability and Confirmability

Credibility was ensured through careful transcription for the interviews and accurate translation of the debriefing sessions, which were conducted in Maltese and translated to English. I transcribed all conversations verbatim to preserve the integrity of the participants' voices. This approach aligns with the notion that participant voices should be central in qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Transferability was considered by providing sufficient contextual information about the school setting, the participants' backgrounds, and the teaching practices in the junior sector. The study's findings are expected to be relevant in similar educational contexts, particularly within the Maltese Islands, and may inform future changes in professional development practices. While the study involved only four teachers, the rich contextual detail presented in Chapter 4 provides information to make informed judgments about the applicability of the findings to broader educational settings.

Dependability was achieved by maintaining consistency in research design. The same format was used for all interviews and debriefing sessions, and changes made to the study, such as the reduction in interview questions and the shift from a case study approach to action research, were carefully documented. Despite having extensive data, such as vertical meeting minutes and written teacher reflections, not all data was used to maintain focus and ensure consistency in the analysis.

Confirmability was ensured by documenting and providing evidence that supports the findings, which will be included in the appendices. To minimise researcher bias, the study included feedback from the KO, the external participant who provided impartial insights into the lesson study process. Additionally, I maintained reflexivity and transparency throughout the study to ensure that the findings were grounded in the data rather than personal biases.

3.10 Limitations of the Study

This study is subject to three primary limitations: time constraints, sample size, and the positionality of the researcher.

Coordinating time for vertical planning meetings proved occasionally challenging due to unforeseen scheduling conflicts. On a few occasions, participants were unable to attend due to a lack of classroom cover. Where possible, I, the researcher-participant in my dual role as assistant head, facilitated solutions such as rescheduling or providing internal cover to maintain continuity. When a session was missed, detailed planning minutes or a recording of the session were shared with the absent participant, who then contributed her reflections asynchronously to ensure her voice remained part of the process.

The small sample size inherently limited the breadth of perspectives captured. The absence of one participant from a session represented a significant portion of the group. While this was mitigated by asynchronous contributions, the dynamics and interactions of the full group could not be replicated in those instances.

Finally, my position as both practitioner and leader within the school introduced the risk of response bias. Participants may have felt implicit pressure to engage positively or align with perceived institutional expectations. Although efforts were made to mitigate this, such as appointing a research guardian, promoting voluntary engagement, and fostering a collaborative, co-learning environment; the influence of power dynamics and positionality cannot be eliminated in insider research.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined a qualitative, action research methodology designed to address the research aims of this study. By utilising a multi-method approach, including semi-structured interviews, debriefing sessions, and a focus group, the research offered an in-depth exploration of lesson study as a tool for professional development. The triangulation of multiple data sources, alongside ethical considerations, and measures to ensure trustworthiness, supports the study's focus on understanding teacher collaboration and growth. The following chapter will present the findings, demonstrating how these methodological choices have supported to answer the research questions.

Chapter 4



Findings

4.0 Introduction

As outlined in Chapter 3, the analysis followed a reflexive thematic approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019), characterised by an iterative and recursive movement between data, codes, and themes. The findings presented here are the outcome of that process.

This chapter introduces the themes and subthemes constructed from the analysis; each illustrated with verbatim excerpts from the dataset. A complete coding table, documenting excerpts, initial codes and related themes and subthemes, is included in Appendix M as part of the audit trail.

The chapter is structured in five parts: first an orientation to the findings (Section 4.1), then an overview of themes (Section 4.2), thirdly a detailed presentation of themes and subthemes (Section 4.3), followed by cross-theme reflections (Section 4.4), and finally a summary of the findings (Section 4.5), which provides the foundation for the discussion in Chapter 5.

4.1 Orientation to the Findings

4.1.1 Data Sources and Analysis approach

The findings are drawn from three sources of qualitative data: semi-structured interviews with four teachers, four post-lesson debriefing sessions conducted after each lesson cycle (with the four teachers, the knowledgeable other and myself as researcher), and a focus group discussion (with the teachers and myself) held at the end of the process. Following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase process, excerpts were coded, then compared across transcripts to identify patterns that informed the construction of themes and subthemes.

4.2 Overview of Themes

The thematic analysis generated eight overarching themes, each of which captures key aspects of teachers' experiences of professional development and reflections on lesson study as a professional development approach. These themes were developed inductively across the dataset, drawing together insights from interviews, debriefing sessions, and the

focus group. Each theme is further divided into subthemes which highlight particular dimensions of teachers' perspectives and professional learning. Their relationship to the research questions will be examined in detail in Chapter 5.

Table 4: *Overview of themes and subthemes* summarises the themes and subthemes, which are presented in detail in Section 4.3.

	Theme	Subthemes
1	Collaboration & Peer learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affective-relational role of venue • Interdisciplinary collaboration • Open communication and peer consultation • Shared problem-solving • Vertical meetings (cross-year collaboration)
2	Practical and Relevant PD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Context-responsive and differentiated PD • Active and participatory professional learning • Translating learning into classroom practice • Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and cross-curricular links • Subject-oriented PD • Follow-up and continuity in PD
3	Teacher Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tailoring strategies for student needs • Advocating change/navigating constraints • Valuing teacher voice and professional judgment • Creating own resources • Teachers as key learning assets
4	Community of Learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling valued within the community • Leveraging internal expertise • Reciprocal learning between peers • Role modelling

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers as central instructional tools
5	Reflection in Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustained and ongoing reflection • Planning future action • Peer feedback and observation • Self-reflection and evaluation • Refining Lesson Study observation tools
6	Student Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional engagement and participation • Cognitive engagement • Motivation driven by topic relevance
7	Psychological Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe space (students and teachers) • Trust-based culture (non-judgmental peer feedback)
8	Impact of Lesson Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional learning through collaboration • Student progress

Table 4: Overview of themes and subthemes

4.3 Detailed Presentation of Themes

This section presents the eight themes that were constructed through the thematic analysis, each supported by subthemes. For each theme, a short definition and scope are first provided to clarify its relevance to the research focus. The subthemes are then elaborated and illustrated with verbatim excerpts drawn from the interviews, debriefing sessions, and focus group. Each excerpt is accompanied by a brief commentary to show how it reflects the theme or subtheme. The intention is to foreground participants’ voices while highlighting the patterns that emerged across the dataset. Excerpts are referenced by data source (INTV = interview, DB = debriefing session, FG = focus group) and participant pseudonym; debriefs are numbered (DB1–DB4) to indicate the lesson cycle, and my own contributions as participant-researcher are marked as “I.”

4.3.1 Theme 1: Collaboration and Peer Learning

Collaboration and peer learning was constructed as a central theme, reflecting how teachers relied on one another for support, problem-solving, and the exchange of professional knowledge. This theme captures the ways in which participants described the benefits of working together both formally, through structured meetings and debriefs, and informally, through ongoing consultation. The theme also reflects the relational dynamics that shaped the collaborative process, including the influence of venue and context on peer interaction.

Subtheme 1.1: Affective-relational Role of Venue

Teachers emphasised that the physical and relational environment shaped the quality of collaboration. Rose found that “it [the venue] was noisy... I couldn’t concentrate” (INTV – Rose), while Daisy similarly noted that distractions limited deep exchange. By contrast, Iris described how meeting off-site helped teachers feel “more relaxed with each other” and gave “opportunity to talk” openly (INTV – Iris). These accounts underline that the venue influenced not only comfort but also whether professional dialogue felt safe and authentic.

Subtheme 1.2: Interdisciplinary Collaboration

Teachers valued opportunities to collaborate across subject areas, emphasising how diverse expertise enriched planning and reflection. Lily highlighted that “having strong people in different aspects helps bring together solutions which can later on be implemented in classroom environments” (INTV – Lily). Iris similarly noted that cross-disciplinary input encouraged her to “think in new ways about linking subjects” (INTV – Iris). These reflections show that collaboration across disciplines was not only practical but also generative, enabling teachers to broaden their approaches and draw on each other’s strengths.

Subtheme 1.3: Open Communication and Peer Consultation

The process encouraged open dialogue, though experiences varied. Iris described how she could “discuss with colleagues what [she has not] understood” (INTV – Iris),

emphasising the value of peer consultation. Rose similarly highlighted that planning sessions worked because “you’re [SLT] open to listen to what we’re doing” (INTV – Rose). However, Lily admitted that outside the study group, colleagues could be defensive and critical: “They’re always on the defence... saying this doesn’t work” (INTV – Lily). Taken together, these accounts suggest that while lesson study fostered open communication in this group, such relational trust was not always the norm across the wider school culture.

Subtheme 1.4: Shared Problem-solving

Collaboration was most evident when teachers worked collectively to solve classroom challenges. Lily noted that mixed-ability groups allowed “strong people in the topic” to guide others, avoiding situations where “one was left alone... to face this” (INTV – Lily). Daisy echoed this benefit, explaining that guidance from colleagues “helped [one] to relate with the problem... they gave examples” (INTV – Daisy). These reflections highlight how pooling expertise distributed responsibility and ensured no teacher felt isolated in tackling complex classroom issues.

Subtheme 1.5: Vertical Meetings (cross-year collaboration)

Participants also saw potential in extending collaboration across year groups. Iris suggested that “more vertical meetings... even with early years and senior sector” would enrich understanding (INTV – Iris). Lily agreed that when teachers from different year levels met during PD, they brought insights that could “later on be implemented in classroom environments” (INTV – Lily). Such perspectives illustrate teachers’ recognition that meaningful collaboration extends beyond immediate teams and can support coherence across the school.

4.3.2 Theme 2: Practical and relevant professional development

A strong theme across the dataset was the need for professional development that was directly applicable to teachers’ classroom contexts. Teachers consistently emphasised that for PD to be valuable, it must be practical, differentiated, and embedded in their professional realities rather than delivered as generic, one-size-fits-all training. They valued

PD that was responsive to their contexts, subject needs, and student diversity, while also recognising the importance of continuity and follow-up to make learning sustainable.

Subtheme 2.1: Context-responsive and differentiated PD

Participants highlighted the relevance of PD that was adapted to teachers' immediate classroom needs. Daisy valued approaches that focused on tailoring lessons, noting, "I liked it because it's adapting the lessons to meet the needs of the students" (INTV – Daisy) while Lily remarked on the practicality of ready-made resources such as the "dyslexia friendly toolkit" (INTV – Lily). Lily also called for workshops that targeted specific challenges, suggesting that "if we could have workshops where... each person is combined with a subject," the sessions would feel more purposeful (INTV – Lily). Together, these accounts suggest that teachers saw PD as most effective when it was differentiated and directly applicable to their contexts.

Subtheme 2.2: Active and participatory professional learning

Teachers appreciated PD that involved active participation rather than passive listening. Daisy explained that facilitators "helped you to relate with the problem... guided us step by step... showed videos... gave examples" (INTV – Daisy), while Iris stressed the importance of hands-on activities where "you learn by actually doing it together" (INTV – Iris). These reflections underscore the value of experiential and participatory models of PD, where teachers can test ideas and learn collaboratively rather than being lectured to (INTV – Iris).

Subtheme 2.3: Translating learning into Classroom practice

Teachers reported that PD which immersed them in pedagogical practices gave them deeper insight into student learning. Rose described adapting her strategies by first identifying the type of problem and then "adjust[ing] teaching level... try[ing] another way... discuss[ing] with colleagues" (INTV – Rose). Daisy similarly reflected on the role of practice and repetition, noting that "with a lot of practice, support, and drilling, the children make progress" (FG – Daisy). These reflections highlight how immersive pedagogy not only

deepened teachers' own learning but also provided a model they could transfer into their classrooms.

Subtheme 2.4: CLIL and Cross-Curricular Links

Cross-curricular approaches were discussed as a way of enriching both teaching and student engagement. During the first debriefing session, Violet, in her role as knowledgeable other, explicitly suggested the use of CLIL, encouraging teachers to integrate language and subject learning (DB1 – Violet). This idea resonated with participants, who valued the potential of linking disciplines to create more meaningful learning experiences. Similarly, Lily commented that project-based learning “got everything together” and provided a natural space for cross-curricular integration (DB1 – Lily).

These examples illustrate how lesson study prompted teachers to experiment with subject integration and validated the role of CLIL as a practical, forward-looking approach to curriculum design.

Subtheme 2.5: Subject-oriented PD

While teachers appreciated cross-curricular approaches, they also stressed the importance of PD grounded in subject expertise. Iris expressed interest in “research approaches and visual help” to strengthen her practice (INTV – Iris), while Lily reflected on the persistent challenges of teaching Maltese, admitting that “no matter what you do, I can’t seem to find the right way” (INTV – Lily). Rose reinforced this need for subject-specific training by suggesting the value of targeted session on the rules of Maltese (INTV – Rose). These accounts reveal that subject-oriented PD was seen as essential to tackle particular content areas such as language teaching where difficulties were persistent.

Subtheme 2.6: Follow-up and Continuity in PD

Teachers repeatedly stressed that professional development should not be a one-off event but part of a sustained programme. Daisy explained that PD felt more meaningful when it was “like a programme...rather than one day” (INTV – Daisy), while Rose expressed frustration that initiatives were often limited to the start of the school year: “not just in

September” (INTV – Rose). These reflections highlight teachers’ desire for ongoing opportunities to revisit and refine their practice, rather than being left with isolated inputs. Sustained follow-up was seen as critical to embedding professional learning and ensuring that its benefits carried over into classroom practice.

4.3.3 Theme 3: Teacher Agency

Teacher agency emerged as a central dimension of lesson study, with participants describing how the process enabled them to adapt strategies to their students, create resources, and assert their professional judgement. At the same time, teachers also reflected on how their contributions were sometimes constrained or undervalued within the wider school context.

Subtheme 3.1: Tailoring Strategies for Student Needs

A recurring dimension of teacher agency was the adaptation of strategies to address the specific needs of students. Rose described the importance of diagnosing problems before adjusting her approach: “Try to identify what kind of problem it is... adjust teaching level... try another way... discuss with colleagues” (INTV – Rose). Iris similarly emphasised researching “approaches and visual help” to respond to students’ needs (INTV – Iris). Lily, on the other hand, used a relationship builder exercise to promote the use of Maltese language during the session with students “using their own native tongue” (INTV – Lily). These reflections show how teachers used their professional autonomy to shape learning experiences in ways that matched the realities of their classrooms.

Subtheme 3.2: Advocating Change and Navigating Constraints

Teachers’ agency also involved initiating change, even when this required working beyond formal expectations and the constraint of time. Daisy admitted that the process required extra effort: “Although it’s a bit over and above... we fit it in” (INTV – Daisy). The lesson study process also revealed the constraints the teachers faced. Lily highlighted that not all colleagues shared the same perseverance: “Not everyone has this grit and initiative to do it” (FG – Lily). I also reflected on this aspect through the leadership perspective, noting, “You start with the champions who are willing to join... some will resist. But because of that,

we don't say, 'I'm not going to do anything'" (FG – I). Taken together, these insights suggest that teachers were willing to push for change, but they also recognised that systemic and cultural barriers could slow progress.

Subtheme 3.3: Valuing Teacher Voice and Professional Judgement

Teachers appreciated that they were valued for their professional expertise and weight was duly given to their insights. Rose explained, "Planning sessions... [are] good because you're [SLT] open to listen to what we're doing" (INTV – Rose). This value was reinforced at different levels. In my role as participant-researcher, I acknowledged how teachers' contributions shaped my own perspective recalling how "we all took part in the planning... the sharing gave me ideas I hadn't thought of" (DB2 – I). Likewise, the KO reinforced this recognition by validating the diversity of approaches taken by stating: "You all tackled it differently, and they were all a success in their own way." (FG – I, reporting Violet). At the same time, Lily described moments when her input felt dismissed by colleagues outside the group: "Some [teachers]... told me this to zip me up, shut me up. You cannot say" (INTV – Lily). These contrasting perspectives show that while opportunities for collaboration affirmed teacher voice, entrenched hierarchies in wider school culture sometimes constrained agency.

Subtheme 3.4: Creating own Resources

Several participants noted how they created or adapted resources during the process, demonstrating initiative and ownership. Lily described developing her own materials to support her students' needs (INTV – Lily), while Rose explained how resource-sharing among colleagues reduced her workload and sparked new ideas (INTV – Rose). This illustrates a proactive stance in which teachers asserted ownership over instructional design, positioning themselves not only as implementers but also as producers of pedagogical knowledge.

Subtheme 3.5: Teachers as Key Learning Assets

Finally, participants emphasised that teachers themselves were the most valuable resource for professional learning. This perspective emphasised that sustainable

professional development was rooted not only in external input but also in the internal capacity of teachers themselves. Daisy pointed out the limitations of external observers: “They’re not in the classroom... they don’t know your reality” (INTV – Daisy). Iris expressed clearly the perception of teachers as central professional resources: “We have a lot of potential... best resources are the teachers... but we don’t have time together” (INTV – Iris). Lily echoed this view, highlighting that collective expertise could be harnessed to “bring together solutions which can later on be implemented in classroom environments” (INTV – Lily). These reflections underline that teacher agency was seen not only in individual initiatives but also in the collective capacity of teachers to drive professional growth.

4.3.4 Theme 4: Community of Learners

While closely related to collaboration, this theme reflects a different dimension: the relational and cultural experience of belonging to a professional learning community. Whereas Theme 1 focused on what teachers did together, *Community of Learners* captures how they experienced mutual respect, recognition, and shared growth through the process. Teachers spoke about feeling valued within the group, learning reciprocally from one another, and leveraging internal expertise. In this way, the theme moves beyond collaboration as a set of practices, emphasising instead how collaboration fostered identity, trust, and a collective sense of professional purpose.

Subtheme 4.1: Feeling valued within the Community

A recurring feature of teachers’ accounts was the affirmation of being recognised and supported as members of a professional community. For some, this recognition came from leadership and colleagues. Iris noted how “support from SLT... Mr. H. [external expert] coming in and speaking to us” contributed to her sense of belonging, while Rose explained, “We feel we’re being heard” (INTV – Rose). Validation from external voices was equally significant. Violet, participating in the role of expert and outsider, reflected and commented how she “never entered a state school where the teacher spends 40 minutes like this!” (DB2 – Violet). Her comment illustrates how teachers’ efforts were not only acknowledged within their immediate circle but also declared as exceptional by those less familiar with the

school's daily practices. Together, these accounts suggest that feeling valued; whether by peers, leaders, or external experts, reinforced teachers' sense of professional worth and belonging within the community of learners.

Subtheme 4.2: Leveraging internal Expertise

Teachers repeatedly highlighted that their greatest resource was each other. Iris expressed this most directly, reflecting, "We have a lot of potential... but we don't have time together" (INTV – Iris). Rose built on this idea, stressing that professional knowledge already exists within schools but is often hidden: "We keep good practices to ourselves... we should celebrate them and share" (INTV – Rose). The importance of different perspectives was also emphasised. Iris noted how collaborating with learning support educators who can offer alternative solutions (INTV – Iris), enriched her own practice. Lily similarly commented that "having strong people in different aspects helps bring together solutions which can later on be implemented in classroom environments" (INTV – Lily). Together, these reflections underline that professional expertise was not confined to external experts or external training but resided within the teaching body itself. Lesson study provided a structure that enabled this expertise to be surfaced, shared, and built upon, although teachers were acutely aware that systemic constraints - particularly lack of time - often limited their ability to fully leverage it. These accounts also highlight how teachers drew on each other's strengths, redistributing expertise in ways that ensured no one was left to tackle challenges alone.

Subtheme 4.3: Reciprocal learning between Peers

Rather than expertise flowing in a single direction, teachers described mutual exchange as central to their professional growth. Rose and Iris explained how they "learn from each other" (INTV – Rose), and get practical ideas from each other, such as lesson closures (DB3 – Iris). Such exchanges were not limited to structured training but extended into everyday practices of dialogue and peer observation. Daisy summed this up: "We're all professionals... maybe we deliver differently... but we learn from each other" (INTV – Daisy).

These reflections show how reciprocal learning created a culture of affirmation, where each teacher's contribution shaped the group's growth.

Subtheme 4.4 Role modelling

Another important aspect of community learning was the role of colleagues as models of practice. For many participants, observing and learning from peers with greater experience was a powerful form of professional development. As Lily reflected: "The fact that somebody with a lot more experience than me in the classroom can only give me ideas, can only pave the way better for me to tread on" (INTV – Lily). This sense of reciprocal modelling was echoed by Daisy, who described it as a process of mutual scaffolding (INTV – Daisy). Similarly, Iris emphasised respect as a cornerstone of learning relationships, noting that "if you want someone to listen to you, you must listen to them too" (DB2 – Iris). Although she was describing one of her essential classroom agreements, this highlight on reciprocity and mutual respect reflects the values that participants sought to extend across professional interactions as well. Taken together, these accounts underscore how teachers viewed one another not just as colleagues but as essential instructional resources. The modelling of practice was less about hierarchy and more about respect, mutual recognition, and the transfer of lived classroom expertise.

Subtheme 4.5: Teachers as central instructional tools

Finally, participants reinforced the idea that teachers themselves were the key drivers of learning within the school. As Violet confirmed, "the teacher was the most effective resource... correcting, modelling" (DB1 – Violet). Similarly, Iris noted that "sometimes your colleagues explain it better than the expert" (INTV – Iris). Such remarks affirm the value of embodied, context-specific professional knowledge as a foundation of effective practice and that teachers conceptualised themselves as learners and as instructional tools central to school improvement.

4.3.5 Theme 5: Reflection in Practice

Reflection was consistently mentioned by participants as essential to the professional learning process. It was not framed as a passive afterthought but rather as an active and

ongoing dimension of practice that sustained growth over time. Teachers described reflection as a way of consolidating what they had learned, questioning assumptions, and translating PD into meaningful classroom practice.

Reflection took multiple forms: sustained self-questioning, forward-looking planning, learning through peer feedback and observation, and adapting lesson study tools to sharpen classroom inquiry. Together, these practices show how reflection functioned as both an individual and collective process, enabling teachers to deepen their learning and adapt strategies to the needs of their contexts.

Subtheme 5.1: Sustained and ongoing Reflection

Teachers underlined that reflection was not a one-off activity; it was a continuous process that extended well beyond individual PD sessions. Rose illustrated this by describing how she would anticipate difficult topics and “stagger” them to make learning more manageable (INTV – Rose). Daisy also linked reflection with responsiveness, recalling that an approach first tested in a previous lesson study cycle was refined and applied more effectively the following year: “We worked with S.E [a teacher in the grade] ... then this year I used it... it worked” (INTV – Daisy).

These examples highlight how reflection accumulated over time, enabling teachers to test, adapt, and reapply strategies in ways that strengthened both their practice and their confidence. Reflection was therefore not only retrospective but iterative and sustained, allowing professional learning to build progressively from one experience to the next.

Subtheme 5.2: Planning Future Action

Reflection, while often retrospective, was also described as forward-looking, serving as a springboard for planning and improvement. Lily explained that she could see a difference between the first writing task and the later ones, showing how reflection enabled her to track progress and adapt practice (INTV – Lily). Violet reinforced this by reminding colleagues of the importance of pacing, noting that teachers sometimes need to slow down to give students time to process and respond (DB2 – Violet).

During collaborative planning, reflection was not confined to individual teachers but became a structured, collective activity. Lesson study provided the framework for these conversations, with prompts and insights building into action plans. Summarising the group's discussion during the focus group, I observed that lesson study was "an ideal PD... you pick a problem you have, and your colleagues have... together you tackle it" (FG – I).

Taken together, these accounts illustrate how reflection was used not only to evaluate practice but also to plan concrete next steps, moving teachers from insight to implementation in ways that supported continuous improvement.

Subtheme 5.3: Peer Feedback and Observation

Teachers consistently valued peer observation and feedback, describing them as both constructive and eye-opening. Daisy reflected that she would not have realised certain aspects of her teaching with observing colleagues, explaining how the experience "made [her] reflect on [her] own lesson" (DB2 – Daisy). Violet reinforced the value of immediate feedback, pointing to practical strategies such as simply asking pupils "What did you learn today?" (DB1 – Violet)

The constructive nature of peer dialogue was particularly emphasised. As Daisy explained she "took a lot on board from the constructive criticism," noting that "even failures became learning opportunities that pushed her to improve" (FG – Daisy). These episodes exemplified how peer feedback functioned not only as affirmation but also as a source of challenge, enabling teachers to extend their reflective lens and refine their practice.

Subtheme 5.4: Self-reflection

While collaboration was central to lesson study, teachers also emphasised the value of individual reflection as a route to professional growth. Lily explained that she would look forward to feedback from her observer because it gave her the chance to sit down, reflect, and plan how to improve, adding that she was "open to new learning" (INTV – Lily). Rose similarly described how self-reflection pushed her to question her own delivery, asking herself whether she had rushed a lesson or overlooked something important (INTV – Rose).

These reflections illustrate that professional learning was also a deeply personal process, enabling teachers to pause, evaluate, and reframe their practice considering both successes and challenges.

Subtheme 5.5: Refining LS Observation Tools

A more specific dimension of reflection involved the adaptation of lesson study observation tools to make them more effective in practice. Rather than simply using the frameworks provided, teachers questioned and refined them to sharpen their focus. For example, during a debrief, Violet and I discussed whether it was more useful to observe the whole class or a smaller group, concluding that focusing on one group provided richer insights (DB1 – Violet/I). This illustrates that teachers were not passive users of observation templates but active contributors to their development. By refining the tools to match their needs, they ensured that observations captured relevant data and directly supported professional learning.

4.3.6 Theme 6: Student Engagement

Student engagement was consistently described as a vital dimension of effective teaching and learning, encompassing emotional involvement, active participation, and motivation linked to meaningful tasks. Participants' reflections showed that these aspects were not incidental, but essential for sustaining learning and progress. Within the context of lesson study, engagement was discussed not simply as a positive outcome but as a necessary condition for the professional development cycle to succeed.

Teachers highlighted how engagement manifested at different levels; from enthusiasm and participation to deeper cognitive involvement, to motivation sparked by authentic and relevant tasks. These accounts show the importance of student engagement for both the affective and intellectual dimensions of learning, underscoring its centrality to the goals of lesson study.

Subtheme 6.1: Emotional Engagement and Participation

Lesson study created opportunities for students to participate actively and display positive emotional engagement. Teachers noted how the structured activities within the lesson study cycles fostered enthusiasm and sustained attention. Iris described how pupils were “enthusiastic, positive in attitude, and willing to contribute” (DB1 – Iris), while later reflecting that with “practice, support, and repetition the children not only made progress but also felt happy with their achievements” (FG – Iris). From my perspective as participant-researcher, I confirmed this sense of collective participation, observing that “everyone joined in and their enthusiasm was sky high” (DB3 – I).

These situations illustrate that emotional engagement was not incidental. It was the result of routines and structures that encouraged students to participate fully, linking motivation with the satisfaction of visible progress.

Subtheme 6.2: Cognitive Engagement

Alongside emotional participation, teachers valued the importance of engaging students at a cognitive level. Violet described how students demonstrated their understanding through spontaneous expression noting the effective “use of idioms” during the lesson (DB1 – Violet). Rose reinforced this perspective, explaining how she encouraged learning to monitor their own progress by asking them how confident they felt and reminding them that practice leads to improvement (FG – Rose).

These examples show how engagement was not passive enthusiasm but about students taking an active and thoughtful role in their own learning.

Subtheme 6.3: Motivation driven by Topic Relevance

Another strong thread in participants’ reflections was how the relevance of lesson topics fostered deeper engagement. The project-based learning cycle, which focused on food, created an immediate connection with students. Daisy noted that “food is something they see every day” (DB1 – Daisy), while Rose explained that pupils were motivated precisely because lessons were set in practical situations (DB3 – Rose). Iris added that authentic

contexts also boosted confidence, recalling how children sometimes became the teachers themselves, and no one disengaged (FG – Iris). Daisy reinforced this point with a concrete example: when introducing traditional sweets, “some of them had never tasted *imqaret*... I made them buy and taste them” (DB4 – Daisy).

These reflections demonstrate how connecting classroom activities to students’ lived experiences captured their interest and created meaningful opportunities for sustained participation and learning.

4.3.7 Theme 7: Psychological Safety

Psychological safety was a recurring dimension of participants’ reflections, shaping both student learning and teachers’ professional growth. It referred to contexts where risk-taking, vulnerability, and experimentation were possible without fear of ridicule or judgement. For students, this meant feeling able to contribute and persist with challenging tasks; for teachers, it meant engaging in new forms of professional dialogue underpinned by respect and trust. These conditions created an environment in which both learners and educators could take risks, learn from mistakes and grow through authentic collaboration.

Subtheme 7.1: Safe Space

Emotional security emerged as a crucial condition for both student learning and teacher professional growth. Participants described how lesson study created spaces where risk-taking, experimentation, and even mistakes were not only tolerated but seen as part of meaningful progress. For students, this meant feeling confident to participate, contribute, and persist with challenging tasks. Rose recalled how a child who had previously suffered anxiety attacks was able to “stand up and read aloud” (DB1 – Rose). Daisy also noted the excitement generated by the lessons, explaining that pupils “were tense... they had been waiting since this morning” (DB4 – Daisy). Violet added that careful structuring reduced fear of failure, remarking that with prompts and questions “there was no resistance” (DB4 – Violet). Together, these reflections highlight how safety in the classroom was intentionally fostered, allowing students to take intellectual risks and experience success.

For teachers, safe spaces were equally important in encouraging openness and experimentation. Rose described planning sessions as supportive and inclusive, where colleagues were “open to listen to what we’re doing” (INTV – Rose). Daisy admitted that although she initially felt hesitant, “when [she] got to know [her] colleagues... [she] felt very, very comfortable” (FG – Daisy). Iris explained how collective support reinforced this, describing a session that felt “like a well-being session... [educators] understood it’s not [them] on [their own]” (INTV – Iris). Reflecting on this dynamic, I observed that “school is a safe place to make mistakes... even we model them” (DB1 – I).

These accounts show that psychological safety was intentionally cultivated for both students and teachers. It enabled learners to engage more fully and allowed teachers to take part in authentic reflection and collaborative growth.

Subtheme 7.2: Trust-based Culture (Non-judgmental Peer Feedback)

Beyond the creation of safe spaces, participants emphasised the role of trust in sustaining open dialogue and non-judgmental peer feedback. Teachers described the value of a collegial culture where critique was framed constructively, and contributions were respected. Iris reflected that such interactions empowered her personally, building confidence because feedback was not about criticising each other (INTV – Iris). Lily reinforced this, noting that trust was shaped by the people involved: “It’s more of the individuals that make up the group” (INTV – Lily). Daisy recalled her own initial hesitation, but explained that as trust developed, she became “very, very comfortable” working with colleagues (FG – Daisy).

These insights underline that trust was not automatic. It had to be cultivated through consistent acts of listening, respect, and support. Once established, it allowed teachers to share doubts, take risks, and engage in professional conversations without fear of judgement, strengthening both collaboration and reflection.

4.3.8 Theme 8: Impact of Lesson Study

The final theme focuses on the perceived impact of lesson study, both in terms of teachers’ professional learning and students’ growth. Participants described how the

process enriched their pedagogical repertoires while also translating into visible gain in student progress and motivation. This dual impact was pivotal to why lesson study was valued and why teachers expressed interest in sustaining it as a professional development model.

Subtheme 8.1: Professional learning through Collaboration

Teachers consistently described lesson study as a transformative form of professional development because of its collaborative and practice-oriented design. Rose captured this succinctly, explaining that “lesson study... you stop, reflect, and you learn” (INTV – Rose). Daisy echoed this perspective, emphasising the value of collaborative professional development and learning from others (INTV – Daisy). Lily went further, describing lesson study as promoting what she called “collaborative proof growth” - a process where teachers worked together to generate and implement new methods, combining everybody’s input to strengthen practice (INTV – Lily).

These reflections highlight how teachers valued lesson study as an embedded form of professional learning. Its strength lay in combining collaboration, reflection, and shared experimentation, which not only enhanced teachers’ skills but also boosted their confidence in classroom practice.

Subtheme 8.2: Student Progress

Alongside their own professional learning, teachers were attentive to how lesson study impacted students’ engagement and achievement. They frequently linked changes in teaching to tangible gains in oral expression, vocabulary, and confidence. Daisy recalled how pupils who once struggled to speak were now “actively contributing in class” (DB1 – Daisy), while Rose observed that structured vocabulary work enabled children to “use new words more confidently - a big step forward” (DB1 – Rose). Iris described similar progress, noting that students who once lowered their heads were now “eager to participate and even volunteered to speak” (DB2 – Iris).

Violet pointed to improvements in writing, remarking that lessons “paved the way for creative writing... they now have the ideas” (DB1 – Violet). Others reflected on the affective

dimension of this progress: as I observed, the most important measure was “seeing how the student benefited... I enjoyed seeing the children participate” (FG – I). Daisy echoed this sense of transformation, recalling that while students initially resisted Maltese lessons, “now they don’t” (DB4 – Daisy).

Together, these episodes show that the impact of lesson study extended beyond teacher growth to visible improvements in student outcomes. Gains were evident in language proficiency and in engagement, confidence, and willingness to participate. These are factors that teachers viewed as the ultimate validation of the process.

4.4 Cross-Theme Reflections

4.4.1 Overlaps, Tensions and Contrasts across Themes

The thematic analysis revealed overlaps and points of intersection across the eight themes. Collaboration, for example, was not confined to *Theme 1: Collaboration and Peer Learning* but also underpinned *Community of Learners (Theme 4)* and *Teacher Agency (Theme 3)*, where peer exchange, resource-sharing, and collective planning were central to professional growth. On the other hand, reflection emerged not only as a discrete theme (*Theme 5: Reflection in Practice*) but also as an embedded feature of professional learning more broadly, reinforcing the iterative and dialogic character of lesson study.

At the same time, certain tensions were evident. While many participants valued open communication and trust, there were accounts; particularly in *Teacher Agency (Theme 3)* and *Psychological Safety (Theme 7)*, that revealed defensiveness, undervalued contributions, or uneven trust across groups. This contrast highlights the fragile nature of collaborative cultures, which can enable growth but also risk silencing voices when trust is absent. Another recurring tension lay between the desire for professional learning that is context-responsive and teacher-led (*Theme 2: Practical and Relevant PD; Theme 3: Teacher Agency*) and the structural or systemic constraints that, at times, limited autonomy.

Finally, the impact on students (*Theme 6: Student Engagement; Theme 8: Impact of Lesson Study*) cut across the dataset, reinforcing that teachers consistently viewed their own learning as meaningful only insofar as it translated into improved student participation,

confidence, and progress. This dual focus - teacher growth and student benefit - emerged as a unifying thread linking the themes.

4.4.2 Signposting to Chapter 5: Discussion

These cross-theme connections provide the foundation for the interpretive analysis developed in Chapter 5. The overlaps between collaboration, agency, and reflection will be considered in light of literature on professional learning communities and teacher-led inquiry. The tensions around trust, defensiveness, and constrained contributions will be discussed through the lens of psychological safety and the dynamics of collaborative professionalism. Finally, the consistent link between teacher development and student engagement will be examined in relation to the study's overarching research questions and broader debates about the purpose and impact of professional development.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings of the study through eight themes and their associated subthemes, highlighting how teachers made sense of professional development and the lesson study process. As Braun and Clarke (2019) emphasised, themes are not discovered but actively constructed through the researcher's engagement with the data. In this study, that construction was the result of iterative analysis across interviews, debriefings, and the focus group, ensuring that the themes reflected both individual voices and collective patterns.

The themes illustrate both opportunities and challenges, showing how collaboration, agency, reflection, and psychological safety intersected with teachers' experiences and student learning. Rather than interpreting these findings here, the chapter has provided a descriptive account that foregrounds participants' voices. The next chapter moves from description to interpretation, examining how these findings relate to the study's research questions and how they connect with existing literature on professional development, collaboration, and teacher learning.

Chapter 5

Discussion

5.0 Introduction

This chapter moves beyond the descriptive presentation of the findings in Chapter 4 to interpret their significance in relation to the three research questions and the wider literature on lesson study and teacher professional learning. The discussion draws on contemporary research to illuminate how collaboration, reflection, and agency intersected to shape teachers' experiences of learning through lesson study.

Each research question is examined in turn, linking the findings to recent empirical and theoretical work in the field. In doing so, the chapter positions lesson study as a structured professional development process and an interpersonal and reflective practice that has the potential to transform how teachers learn within their everyday school contexts.

In recent years, lesson study has gained renewed attention as a powerful, practice-based approach to teacher learning (Vermunt et al., 2023; Leakey & Mynott, 2025). Research has increasingly focused on its relational and contextual dimensions, emphasising that its success depends on the structure of the lesson study cycle and on the quality of dialogue, trust, and joint meaning-making within it (Formosa & Calleja, 2025; Dudley, 2019). The emerging consensus suggests that collaboration in lesson study is developmental, shaped by teachers' evolving relationships, shared cognition, and reflective agency.

This interpretive discussion adopts that perspective through each research question, showing the extent to which the findings from this Maltese primary school study align with and extend current understandings of lesson study as a form of situated professional learning. In doing so, the chapter illustrates how collaboration developed during lesson study (RQ1), how it was experienced affectively and relationally (RQ2), and how it enabled opportunities for professional growth and teacher learning (RQ3). The chapter concludes with an integrative synthesis, highlighting the interconnections among collaboration, reflection, agency, and trust, and how these dynamics together shaped the lesson study process.

5.1 Research Question 1: How does Collaboration amongst Teachers develop during Lesson Study?

The findings demonstrated that lesson study created the structural and relational conditions through which collaboration developed and deepened over time. Collaboration was an evolving process shaped by shared inquiry, joint responsibility, and collective reflection. Through the iterative structure of lesson study that involved; planning, observation, and post-lesson discussion, teachers moved beyond isolated practice toward a more dialogic form of professional engagement. This progression reflects what recent research has described as the developmental trajectory of collaborative professionalism within lesson study (Cajkler & Wood, 2016; Leakey & Mynott, 2025; Verhoef et al., 2015).

Data suggest that collaboration was strengthened through the structured opportunities for collegial dialogue and shared problem-solving that lesson study provided. The cyclical process of planning, observation, and reflection created a disciplined yet supportive space where teachers could collectively examine practice, exchange ideas, and adapt strategies. Over time, participants shifted from working in parallel to engaging in collaborative dialogue that shaped shared pedagogical understanding, where diverse expertise was valued and joint responsibility became the norm. This shift reflected a gradual deepening of professional trust and the emergence of a collaborative learning culture. Rather than being mandated, collaboration developed organically through repeated cycles of interaction and mutual recognition of professional competence.

Interdisciplinary and cross-year exchanges also contributed to collaboration. Working beyond subject and year-group boundaries prompted teachers to view pedagogical challenges through a wider lens, enabling insights to travel across contexts. Strategies trialled in one subject were adapted for others, and discussions on language scaffolding or inquiry-based approaches informed teaching across disciplines. Such fluid sharing of pedagogical strategies aligns with findings by Cajkler et al. (2015) and Vermunt et al. (2023), who note that cross-disciplinary collaboration fosters both professional innovation and

cognitive development. In this research study, the ability to move beyond disciplinary silos demonstrated the potential of lesson study to function as an integrative and contextually responsive form of professional learning.

However, the development of collaboration was not uniform. While the lesson study group cultivated openness and collegiality, such trust was not consistently reflected in the wider school culture, where defensiveness or competition occasionally persisted. This unevenness underscores that collaboration in lesson study is contingent on both relational dynamics and institutional conditions. Calleja (2019) and Formosa & Calleja (2025) similarly observe that Maltese schools often face cultural barriers to collegiality, where hierarchical relationships and workload pressures constrain authentic dialogue. The findings in this research study echo those challenges: while lesson study generated a micro-community of collaborative professionalism, its sustainability was limited by broader systemic and cultural realities.

Overall, lesson study supported the development of collaboration by providing a structured yet flexible framework that enabled teachers to plan, observe, and reflect together in meaningful ways. Collaboration evolved through shared inquiry, interdisciplinary dialogue, and a growing sense of mutual trust. Yet, this process remained fragile and context-dependent, highlighting the importance of both relational commitment and institutional support. In this sense, collaboration developed not only *within* the lesson study group but also *in response* to the surrounding culture, revealing the complex interplay between structure, relationships, and school context in shaping professional learning.

5.2 Research Question 2: What are Teachers' Experiences of Collaboration through Lesson Study?

While the previous section examined how collaboration developed through the structures and cycles of lesson study, this section focuses on how teachers experienced that collaboration. The findings show that teachers' engagement in lesson study was marked by affective and relational dimensions that shaped their learning. Collaboration was

much more than a technical exercise of joint planning or observation; it was an emotionally charged, reflective, and professionally affirming process.

Teachers experienced lesson study as a purposeful and meaningful form of professional development because it centred on real classroom challenges. Addressing authentic pedagogical problems allowed them to connect theory with practice and to see the direct impact of professional inquiry on students' learning. This responsiveness to practical needs created a strong sense of relevance, echoing recent research that highlights the value of situated professional learning; where inquiry emerges from teachers' lived experiences (Formosa & Calleja, 2025; Leakey & Mynott, 2025). Such alignment between professional learning and classroom realities fostered motivation and ownership, transforming professional development from an external requirement into an internally driven endeavour.

Reflection was a defining feature of teachers' collaborative experience. The iterative cycle of planning, observing, and discussing lessons enabled a form of structured reflection that deepened teachers' professional understanding. Through sustained dialogue, teachers revisited their assumptions, re-evaluated strategies, and refined their approaches over time. This process resonates with Mezirow's (1991) concept of transformative learning and with Vermunt et al.'s (2019, 2023) findings that collaborative reflection within lesson study stimulates deeper cognitive engagement and adaptive expertise. The teachers' reflections were both personal and collective; an exchange through which professional insight evolved alongside a growing sense of shared purpose.

The emotional climate within the group strongly influenced how collaboration was experienced. Lesson study provided a psychologically safe environment where teachers could express uncertainty, share challenges, and take risks without fear of judgement. This climate of trust and mutual respect was imperative to the learning process. It allowed teachers to move beyond surface-level cooperation toward genuine collaboration, where vulnerability was accepted as a catalyst for growth. This finding aligns with Hargreaves and O'Connor's (2018) concept of collaborative professionalism and with Takahashi and

McDougal's (2016) emphasis on psychological safety as a precondition for sustainable lesson study practice.

However, the experience of collaboration also revealed its fragility. While the lesson study group established a climate of trust, such openness was not always mirrored in the wider school context. Teachers described how, in more hierarchical or evaluative settings, collaboration risked becoming performative rather than authentic; a dynamic echoed in Calleja's (2019) analysis of Maltese professional cultures. Lesson study, therefore, served a dual function: it was both a mechanism for professional learning and a lens through which teachers could perceive the enabling or constraining forces of their institutional environments.

In sum, teachers experienced collaboration within lesson study as a purposeful, reflective, and emotionally supportive process. It was purposeful because it addressed authentic classroom challenges; reflective because it enabled sustained professional dialogue and iterative refinement; and emotionally supportive because trust and psychological safety allowed teachers to take risks and learn collectively. These interwoven experiences highlight that the success of collaboration in lesson study rests on both the procedural design and on the relational and affective conditions that sustain engagement and foster professional growth.

5.3 Research Question 3: To what extent do Collaborative Practices in Lesson Study enable Opportunities for Teacher learning?

The findings indicate that lesson study created multiple and interdependent opportunities for teacher learning by fostering professional agency, shared reflection, and innovation. Collaboration served as both the context and the catalyst for teacher learning, enabling teachers to connect professional growth directly with student outcomes. Whereas the previous section explored how teachers experienced collaboration, this section considers how that collaboration translated into learning; both individually and collectively.

Lesson study supported teacher learning through a continuous cycle of inquiry. The planning, observation, and post-lesson reflection phases provided structured opportunities

for teachers to test ideas, gather evidence, and analyse practice. This iterative process encouraged adaptive expertise, as teachers became more confident in identifying problems, proposing solutions, and evaluating the impact of their interventions. Such findings resonate with recent work by Leakey and Mynott (2025), who found that shared cognition and joint endeavour are critical mediating mechanisms in effective lesson study collaboration. Similarly, Vermunt et al. (2019, 2023) demonstrated that sustained participation in lesson study nurtures learning patterns that balance external feedback with self-directed inquiry, thereby strengthening teachers' agency and professional identity.

Collaboration also contributed to the creation and refinement of pedagogical knowledge. Through collective experimentation and dialogue, teachers developed a shared repertoire of strategies, materials, and insights that could be adapted and transferred across subjects and year groups. This form of knowledge construction exemplifies what Dudley (2019) terms joint professional inquiry: a process in which teachers move from reflection to co-production of practice. Importantly, this research study reinforces that such professional learning is not limited to individual gains but extends to the collective capacity of the teaching team. Lesson study therefore acted as a mediating structure between personal growth and institutional learning, bridging micro-level reflection with meso-level professional development.

The link between teacher learning and student outcomes was particularly significant. Teachers frequently connected their professional growth to observable changes in student engagement, confidence, and achievement. This reciprocal relationship supports findings from Xu and Pedder (2015), Cajkler & Wood (2016) and Verhoef et al., (2015), all of which demonstrated that the success of lesson study lies in its capacity to generate reciprocal learning loops where teachers learn from evidence of student learning, and in turn, adapt teaching to enhance student outcomes. In this study, such cycles created a sense of ownership and validation that reinforced teachers' motivation to innovate.

However, the extent of teacher learning was shaped by the cultural and structural context. While the lesson study group provided a safe and enabling space for

experimentation, broader school conditions; particularly workload, time constraints, and hierarchical norms, limited the depth and sustainability of learning. These findings echo Formosa and Calleja (2025), who argue that lesson study's transformative potential depends on an institutional culture that legitimises teacher inquiry and values professional trust. Without such systemic support, professional learning risks remaining localised, relying on the enthusiasm of a few rather than becoming a collective norm.

In summary, collaborative practices within lesson study enabled teacher learning by combining inquiry, reflection, and agency within a psychologically safe environment. Teachers developed adaptive expertise, generated shared pedagogical knowledge, and strengthened links between their own learning and student outcomes. Yet, these opportunities remained contingent on relational trust and institutional recognition. Lesson study, therefore, should not be viewed as a fixed professional development tool but as an evolving process; one that thrives when structural support and professional culture converge to sustain collaborative inquiry over time.

5.4 From Collaboration to Collective Learning: Interconnections within Lesson Study

The findings across the three research questions reveal that collaboration, reflection, and agency were mutually reinforcing processes that collectively defined how professional learning unfolded within lesson study. Each process sustained the others, showing that meaningful professional development depends on the dynamic interaction between social, emotional, and structural factors. Understanding these interconnections clarifies how lesson study operates as a cycle of planning and reflection and as a professional culture where inquiry, trust, and shared responsibility are embedded in everyday practice.

5.4.1 Synergies between Collaboration, Reflection, and Agency

Collaboration provided the foundation for professional learning, enabling teachers to share expertise, distribute leadership, and engage in joint inquiry. Through sustained dialogue during planning and post-lesson analysis, teachers developed a collective sense of responsibility for student learning. This process enhanced both reflection and agency:

reflection deepened as teachers examined evidence and challenged assumptions, while agency strengthened as they took informed ownership of pedagogical change.

These reciprocal dynamics align with findings from Leakey and Mynott (2025), who showed that lesson study's success lies in cultivating shared cognition and collaborative advantage where joint meaning-making fosters both confidence and innovation. Similarly, Formosa and Calleja (2025) argued that collaborative professional inquiry can shift schools from compliance-based cultures toward communities of growth, if teachers are supported to make autonomous, evidence-informed decisions. In this research study, such interdependence between collaboration, reflection, and agency created a learning environment that valued curiosity, experimentation, and mutual respect.

The professional dialogue that developed through lesson study also led teachers to view learning as a continuous and contextually grounded process. The iterative structure of lesson study encouraged adaptive expertise, echoing Vermunt et al. (2023) who describe how professional learning is sustained when educators alternate between self-regulation and collaborative knowledge construction. Teachers' discussions increasingly focused on how changes in teaching influenced student engagement and progress, illustrating a feedback loop between teacher inquiry and classroom learning.

In this sense, lesson study fostered what Dudley (2021) terms knowledge-rich collaboration: an approach that transforms professional development from episodic training into a sustained culture of inquiry. The coherence between reflection and agency reinforced the perception of professional learning as both individual growth and collective improvement, enabling teachers to translate shared insights into refined practice.

5.4.2 Tensions and Enablers in sustaining Collaborative Learning

While lesson study established strong collegial relationships and professional confidence within the research group, several tensions complicated its sustainability. The most consistent challenge concerned time and workload. Teachers described the process as valuable yet difficult to maintain alongside daily teaching responsibilities. This finding mirrors broader international trends noted by Verhoef et al. (2023), who observed that even

in mature LS systems, competing priorities and institutional pressures often limit long-term engagement.

Cultural and structural factors also shaped the durability of collaboration. Although the lesson study group developed a culture of openness and mutual respect, these relational conditions were not always mirrored across the wider school environment. Hierarchical expectations and accountability pressures occasionally discouraged vulnerability and experimentation. These findings parallel Calleja's (2019) observation that Maltese schools often struggle to maintain authentic collegiality within systems that privilege efficiency over reflection.

Sustaining collaborative learning therefore requires both relational and organisational enablers. Leadership commitment, protected time, and recognition of teacher-led inquiry as legitimate professional practice are essential. Without these supports, lesson study risks becoming an isolated initiative reliant on individual enthusiasm rather than an embedded school-wide norm. As Formosa and Calleja (2025) emphasised, sustainable professional learning emerges when teachers' collaborative work is institutionalised within school structures and policy frameworks that value reflection as an integral part of teaching, not an additional task.

5.4.3 Implications for Professional Learning and School Culture

The synthesis of these findings indicates that lesson study's effectiveness depends on a balance between relational trust and structural alignment. When schools provide time, leadership encouragement, and a climate that legitimises professional dialogue, collaboration becomes self-sustaining. In this research study, the group functioned as a microcosm of what Hargreaves and O'Connor (2018) describe as collaborative professionalism, that is a culture where teachers engage as partners in learning rather than recipients of top-down directives.

Schools should therefore regard psychological safety and relational trust as professional assets, not peripheral attributes. These qualities enable innovation, collective efficacy, and resilience. Embedding lesson study within school development planning can

strengthen coherence between teacher learning and institutional goals, helping schools evolve into genuine learning organisations.

However, for lesson study to move beyond pilot implementation, systemic recognition is needed. As Leakey and Mynott (2025) argue, the success of LS depends on reducing collaborative inertia; the friction that arises when schools lack shared understanding or logistical support. Creating enabling conditions across Maltese schools could transform lesson study from a localised experiment into a sustainable national model for teacher professional growth.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed how lesson study fostered collaboration, reflection, and teacher learning within an independent Maltese primary school. The discussion has shown that professional growth was relational, iterative, and grounded in shared inquiry. Lesson study operated as a form of collaborative professionalism that bridged individual learning and collective improvement, transforming professional development from procedural compliance into authentic engagement.

At the same time, the findings underline that lesson study's success depends on structural and cultural conditions that support sustained collaboration. Without time, leadership advocacy, and systemic recognition, the process risks being confined to isolated projects. The next chapter draws these insights together, situating the research study's contributions within the wider landscape of educational research and professional practice, and outlining implications for policy, future research, and the ongoing development of collaborative learning cultures.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

6.0 Introduction

The preceding discussion presented a case showing that lesson study's success depends on the interplay between relational trust, reflective practice, and structural support. Building on these findings, this final chapter draws together the research study's insights and situates them within broader implications for theory, practice, and policy. It begins by revisiting the research goals and summarising the key findings in relation to the three research questions. The chapter then outlines the research study's contributions to knowledge, identifies its strengths and limitations, and proposes recommendations for schools, policymakers, and future researchers. It concludes with a reflective commentary on the personal and professional learning that emerged through this research journey.

6.1 Research Goals

This research study examined how lesson study could function as a model for collaborative professional development within an independent Maltese primary school. It explored three interrelated questions:

1. How does collaboration amongst teachers develop during lesson study?
2. What are teachers' experiences of collaboration through lesson study?
3. To what extent do collaborative practices in lesson study enable opportunities for teacher learning?

The overarching goal was to investigate how lesson study could serve as a tool for professional development by fostering collaboration among teachers in the upper primary years, within a system where professional learning is often fragmented and compliance driven. Through reflexive thematic analysis, the research study identified how lesson study fostered shared inquiry, teacher agency, and psychological safety, while also revealing the challenges in structural and cultural conditions required to sustain such collaboration over time.

6.2 Key Findings and Contributions to Knowledge

This research study deepens our understanding of how lesson study, when implemented within a real school context, can support meaningful teacher development through collaborative reflection and inquiry. Rather than relying on external or one-off initiatives, the findings suggest that sustained, teacher-led cycles of lesson study foster rich opportunities for growth by grounding learning in authentic classroom experience and shared pedagogical problem-solving.

6.2.1 Collaborative Learning and Teacher Agency

A key contribution of this research study lies in its demonstration that LS can function as a professional learning tool and as a catalyst for enhancing teacher agency. Teachers reported increased ownership over their practice, confidence in their instructional decisions, and a stronger sense of professionalism. These findings align with existing literature (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Timperley, 2011) where teacher learning is found to be most effective when embedded in authentic classrooms to address contemporary challenges while co-constructed through collaborative inquiry.

6.2.2 Professional Culture and Leadership Conditions

The research study demonstrates that lesson study fosters a culture of collaboration and reflective professional learning. Teachers shifted from working in isolation to engaging in open, non-judgmental dialogue about pedagogy, student needs, and instructional challenges. This shift was supported by structured protocols and a shared commitment to improving practice.

Critically, the research study underscores the leadership conditions that enable such cultures to take root and thrive. These include distributed leadership, time allocation for joint planning and reflection, and openness to teacher voice and initiative. These are the factors also identified by Calleja (2024) as foundational to embedding LS within school improvement practices. The findings also resonate with international literature suggesting that strong leadership and shared responsibility are essential to sustaining collaborative

inquiry models like lesson study (Takahashi & McDougal, 2016; Lewis & Hurd, 2011). Without alignment between school structures and leadership commitment, collaborative learning risks becoming fragmented or superficial.

6.2.3 School Improvement and System Alignment

From a local educational policy perspective, this research study contributes to emerging Maltese literature on LS by demonstrating its potential as a school improvement strategy. While most prior research has focused on secondary or international contexts (Cajkler & Wood, 2016; Xu & Pedder, 2015), this research locates LS within a Maltese primary school setting, offering insights into addressing local challenges such as rigid timetabling, curriculum coverage pressures, and limited cross-year collaboration.

It also supports Calleja's (2024) argument that lesson study, when systemically supported, can bridge the gap between national reform agendas and school-level realities. By enabling teachers to co-construct practice in response to local needs, LS fosters implementation of curriculum changes that are not only contextually relevant but also sustainable over time. This aligns with more recent literature advocating school-based, teacher-led inquiry as a means of aligning policy and practice in meaningful, enduring ways (OECD, 2025; Wall & Carroll, 2025).

6.2.4 Methodological Contribution and Reflexivity

The research study contributes methodologically by applying Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2021) reflexive thematic analysis in a practitioner-led, school-based inquiry. This approach enabled a deep, context-sensitive exploration of teacher meaning-making while maintaining transparency and rigour. Reflexive thematic analysis is increasingly recognised as a flexible yet systematic method well suited for capturing the complexity of human experience in practice-based research (Braun & Clarke, 2019, 2021). It also models how small-scale qualitative research, when carefully designed and grounded in real-world settings, can yield findings that are analytically transferable beyond the immediate case (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018).

In summary, the research study advances knowledge by demonstrating that teacher-led, collaborative professional development can drive instructional improvement and shift school culture. It highlights the conditions necessary for lesson study to thrive, such as leadership support and timetabled collaboration, and contributes to both Maltese and international understandings of teacher agency, inquiry, and school-based reform (Dudley, 2014; Lewis & Hurd, 2011; Xu & Pedder, 2015). Methodologically, it provides a model for rigorous, context-driven school-based research.

These findings offer important insights into both practice and policy. By fostering teacher agency through structured collaboration, lesson study enables educators to engage more critically and confidently with curricular reforms, adapting them in ways that are responsive to their students and context (Biesta et al., 2015; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009). For school leaders, this research study suggests that introducing LS does not require a complete overhaul of current systems; rather, it can be effectively piloted through existing structures, such as vertical meetings or scheduled PD time. Leadership support, particularly in creating protected time and establishing a culture of trust, is key to embedding LS as a sustainable approach to ongoing instructional improvement (Calleja, 2024; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

6.3 What this study adds to the field

This research study offers a contextually grounded contribution to the emerging body of literature on lesson study within small education systems such as Malta. Its significance lies in generating what Bassey (2001) terms “fuzzy generalisations”; insights that are plausible and informative for practitioners and policymakers in comparable settings, rather than aiming to produce universally generalisable conclusions.

Key contributions include:

- Demonstrating the viability of vertically structured lesson study in Maltese primary schools, offering an example of how cross-year collaboration can be organised to build whole-school professional dialogue and a stronger collegial culture. While LS is gaining

traction locally (Calleja, 2024), few studies have explored its application across year levels, a structure that this case study showed to be feasible and enriching.

- Providing a practitioner-led model of lesson study that integrates reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), thus contributing to the methodological literature on small-scale, school-based inquiry. This model highlights how rigorous, context-sensitive analysis can be applied to practitioner research in ways that retain transparency and relevance to educational practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Yin, 2018).
- Illustrating how teacher agency and reflective practice can develop within the constraints of an existing school timetable, when leadership enables collaboration through protected time, trust, and alignment with school development priorities. This resonates with international findings (Dudley, 2014; Lewis et al., 2006) that sustained, embedded professional learning structures are more impactful than fragmented, one-off sessions.

By sharing these findings, this research study aims to support other schools or education leaders considering lesson study as a mechanism for professional development. Although bounded to a particular context, the study offers analytically transferable insights that may inform future adaptations in similar small-scale systems.

6.4 Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings from this research study offer implications for both school-level practice and national educational policy. Lesson study, as implemented in this small-scale case, has shown the potential to be more than a professional development activity; it can serve as a strategic tool for sustained instructional improvement and teacher empowerment. To harness this potential, certain structural and cultural conditions must be addressed at multiple levels of the education system.

6.4.1 Implications for Schools

At the school level, this research study highlights the need for distributed leadership and structural support to enable lesson study to flourish. School leaders play a critical role

in modelling, enabling, and sustaining collaborative professional learning. As Calleja (2024) argues, when leadership actively supports and even participates in lesson study, it becomes embedded into the school's improvement strategy rather than being treated as an add-on.

This research study showed that teachers benefit from working across year groups and subjects, particularly when shared goals are clearly defined and protected time is allocated. For primary schools seeking to implement lesson study, the following strategies are recommended:

- Start with pilot groups of interested teachers, preferably within the same grade, and gradually scale up.
- Integrate LS cycles into the School Development Plan to give it strategic visibility.
- Use existing planning time such as the 80-minute or the 40-minute weekly slot more flexibly, scheduling LS during these sessions or alternating weekly formats.
- Create a safe, non-evaluative culture for peer observation and post-lesson dialogue.

This case also illustrates that teachers' professional dialogue intensified with each successive cycle, even within the limited timeframe of a single term. Although the lesson study pilot involved just four sessions, followed by a focus group, professional engagement strengthened over time. Teachers became more open, reflective, and collaborative as they developed greater confidence in the process and in each other. This reinforces the value of repeated cycles, even in short-term implementations, and suggests that sustained lesson study over longer periods may further deepen professional learning. When schools position teachers as knowledge creators rather than recipients of external expertise, it fosters stronger engagement, innovation, and morale; a view supported by Avalos (2011) and Kennedy (2014), who argue that professional development is most effective when it is teacher-led, contextually grounded, and promotes professional agency.

6.4.2 Implications for Policymakers

At a system level, policymakers should consider how existing frameworks including the Malta Union of Teachers (MUT) collective agreement, School Development Plans (SDP), and Ministry for Education guidelines shape the opportunities for teacher-led collaborative inquiry. The MUT agreement currently allocates 40 hours of annual professional development, of which 12 hours are dedicated to the School Development Plan and 28 hours to school-defined and centrally identified PD. In addition, the agreement allows for up to 60 minutes per week of on-site non-contact time for activities such as meetings or professional functions.

When this time is managed strategically, by aligning LS with SDP priorities and using weekly non-contact time for post-lesson reflection, lesson study can be embedded into the school calendar without requiring additional hours. This approach has already been trialled in several Maltese schools and colleges, as documented in Calleja's (2024) study on system-wide lesson study implementation within state schools. These examples show that, with strong leadership and appropriate timetabling, LS can be embedded into professional development practice at scale, even within the parameters of current agreements and structures. They also echo international findings on how LS can be sustainably implemented through careful leadership planning (Lewis, Perry & Murata, 2006; Dudley, 2014).

However, this research study suggests that despite these time allocations, lesson study is not yet embedded in most Maltese schools as a core PD approach. The challenge may lie less in the amount of time provided, and more in how PD time is conceptualised, prioritised, and coordinated. In many cases, the allocated hours are fragmented or focused on one-off, compliance-driven sessions that do not support sustained collaborative inquiry. Embedding LS requires both policy provision and leadership capability where leaders value teacher-led learning and know how to structure time and routines accordingly.

This research therefore reinforces the need to reframe PD structures not by adding more hours, but by reallocating existing time to promote ongoing, teacher-led, classroom-embedded learning models such as lesson study. Internationally, schools that have

embraced LS as part of their PD structure have reported stronger instructional coherence, improved student outcomes, and higher levels of teacher motivation (Takahashi & McDougal, 2016; Murata, 2011).

Policymakers are encouraged to:

- Recognise lesson study as a legitimate form of accredited CPD within national PD frameworks.
- Provide leadership training on facilitating collaborative inquiry as part of headship and middle leadership development.
- Support school clusters or networks where teachers from similar contexts can engage in LS cycles together.
- Embed LS into reform initiatives related to curriculum renewal, formative assessment, and student-centred pedagogy.

The findings support Calleja's (2024) proposition that lesson study can be a vehicle for school improvement leadership, particularly in small systems where schools can share learning across settings.

6.4.3 Bridging Policy and Practice

Research has shown that middle leaders, such as deputy or assistant heads, play a pivotal role in driving instructional improvement by supporting teacher learning and leading curriculum implementation (Bush & Glover, 2014; Muijs et al., 2006). Their strategic position allows them to translate school-wide reform goals into context-sensitive pedagogical practice. This research reinforces these insights by showing that bottom-up initiatives, when supported by leadership with relevant expertise, can enact national reform aims in sustainable and contextually relevant ways.

In this case, the lesson study process was facilitated by me, the researcher, who also served as the sector's assistant head and a trained LS facilitator. This dual role proved instrumental: it enabled LS to be aligned with curriculum priorities and embedded within the

school's professional development structure. It also illustrates the unique contribution that middle leaders can make as curriculum leaders; managing operations and more importantly, their support in the shaping of instructional culture through informed, teacher-led development models such as lesson study.

A possible pathway forward is the inclusion of lesson study in national professional development strategies, such as through the Ministry for Education or the Institute for Education, where it could be promoted as a structured yet flexible methodology. Embedding LS into leadership preparation such as the elective already offered within the Master's in Educational Leadership and Management at the University of Malta, could further strengthen its system-wide adoption. As Bubb and Earley (2007) argue, sustained professional learning is most effective when leaders themselves are trained to facilitate collaborative inquiry and create conditions of trust, visibility, and protected time.

Ultimately, bridging policy and practice requires more than policy endorsement; it demands strategic leadership, operational space, and a commitment to teacher-led inquiry that aligns school improvement with classroom realities.

6.5 Recommendations for Future Research

While this research study provides valuable insights into how lesson study can foster professional learning and collaboration in a Maltese primary school setting, it also raises several questions that merit further investigation. The following recommendations aim to guide future research efforts that can deepen, extend, or scale the current findings, and support evidence-informed educational reform locally and in similar systems.

6.5.1 Scaling Lesson Study across different School types and settings

Given that this study was conducted in the junior sector of a single independent school with a small, voluntary group of educators, future research could examine the implementation of LS across other school types (state and church), as well as across educational levels, including middle and secondary schools.

Comparative studies could explore how contextual variables such as leadership structures, teacher workload, and institutional priorities influence LS feasibility and outcomes (Lewis et al., 2006; Rock & Wilson, 2005). In particular, studies could build on Borko's (2004) call for multi-site PD research to investigate how scalable and adaptable models function across diverse contexts, especially in systems where top-down reform dominates.

6.5.2 Longitudinal Research on Sustainability and Impact

Due to its short duration, this research study could not capture the long-term impact of LS on teaching practices, student learning, or professional culture. Longitudinal research is needed to understand whether teacher-led models like LS can be sustained over time and how these models interact with structural conditions (Stoll et al., 2006; Avalos, 2011).

Investigations should examine how repeated LS cycles affect pedagogical depth, collaborative norms, and the institutionalisation of professional dialogue within schools, extending work by Dudley (2014) and Perry & Lewis (2009) on sustained inquiry in LS contexts.

6.5.3 Investigating the role of School Leadership in sustaining Lesson Study

This research study highlighted the critical role of leadership in enabling collaborative inquiry. Future studies could investigate how school leaders, particularly assistant heads and middle leaders, can be trained and supported to sustain LS (Bush & Glover, 2012; Muijs et al., 2004).

Leadership development programmes and national headship standards should be examined to determine whether they incorporate teacher-led inquiry models and to what extent leaders feel empowered to prioritise them amid competing demands. This aligns with the notion that effective school leadership involves creating the conditions for ongoing professional learning (Leithwood et al., 2008).

6.5.4 Exploring Inter-School Collaboration and Lesson Study Networks

Malta's small and centralised education system presents fertile ground for researching inter-school LS networks or clusters (Hadfield & Chapman, 2009). Future studies could examine whether shared LS cycles across schools foster knowledge exchange, reduce professional isolation, and promote equity.

These networks could also contribute to system-wide capacity building, echoing arguments by Hargreaves & Fullan (2012) on professional capital and the power of networked learning communities. Calleja (2024) similarly advocates for exploring LS as a vehicle for whole-system improvement in small education systems.

6.5.5 Investigating Student Outcomes and Learning Gains

Although the current study focused on teacher learning, future research could investigate how LS affects student outcomes, particularly engagement, understanding, and achievement (Hiebert & Stigler, 2000; Fernandez, 2002). Connecting teacher professional learning to student impact remains a critical gap in PD literature, especially in light of ongoing national curriculum reforms that emphasise student-centred, formative approaches (Timperley et al., 2007).

6.5.6 Examining the Role of National Policy and Institutional Support

Finally, further research is needed to understand how national policies such as the MUT collective agreement, professional development frameworks, and curriculum reform strategies, shape or constrain the implementation of lesson study. Policy studies could investigate how bureaucratic expectations, or institutional logistics shape the feasibility and implementation of collaborative, inquiry-based approaches (Ball, 2008; Coburn, 2005).

Such research would be valuable in informing how future PD strategies can remain responsive, scalable, and grounded in authentic teacher learning. Given the emerging interest in LS in Malta, particularly through initiatives like CleStuM, further policy-aligned research could support its institutionalisation within national frameworks.

It is hoped that future research can build on these insights to support scalable, context-responsive, and teacher-led approaches to school improvement.

6.6 Strengths and Limitations of the Study

As with any small-scale qualitative study, this research study has its own strengths and limitations, both of which are important to recognise in evaluating the trustworthiness and scope of the findings.

6.6.1 Strengths

One of the main strengths of this research study lies in its practitioner-researcher positioning. Being embedded in the school context allowed for rich, authentic engagement with participants and enabled the collection of insightful data that reflected the realities of classroom practice and professional dialogue. This insider perspective supported a deeper understanding of the interpersonal dynamics, school culture, and practical constraints that shape collaborative professional learning. Such insider research positioning aligns with the arguments of Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009), who emphasise that teachers conducting inquiry in their own contexts can produce deeper pedagogical insights.

In addition, the participation of a knowledgeable other (KO), a trusted educational officer external to the core teaching group, significantly enhanced the lesson study process. The KO brought an informed yet neutral perspective, that encouraged professional dialogue, challenged assumptions and enabled critical reflection. This aligns with Dudley's (2014) findings that KOs can act as catalysts for higher-order dialogue and help connect practitioner learning with broader pedagogical frameworks.

The study also benefited from the use of reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2021), which provided a detailed and systematic method to explore the meaning-making processes of teachers. The iterative coding process, coupled with the reflective sessions and participant feedback loops, enhanced the rigour, authenticity and transparency of the analysis. Such characteristics are vital for quality in qualitative research (Nowell et al., 2017).

Another strength lies in the rich qualitative insights generated through interviews and debriefing sessions. These data sources allowed the research study to capture what teachers did during the lesson study process and how they interpreted, valued, and responded to the experience. This contributes to a nuanced understanding of teacher agency and professional culture within school-based PD, consistent with findings from Avalos (2011) and Opfer & Pedder (2011) on the complex, relational nature of teacher learning.

Lastly, this study makes a meaningful contribution to the expanding body of local research on lesson study, which - while still emerging within the Maltese primary sector - is showing steady growth. By focusing on a real-world implementation within a local school context, this research study offers practical, research-informed insights of how collaborative inquiry can be initiated and sustained in line with local education policy. It complements national efforts such as Calleja (2024) and initiatives like CLeStuM, which aim to embed LS into school improvement frameworks and national professional development strategy.

6.6.2 Limitations

The primary limitation of this research study is its small scale and single-site focus. Conducted in one independent primary school with four voluntary participants, the findings may not be representative of other school types or contexts. While rich, the data lacks input from educators in state or church schools, and broader systemic or cultural factors could not be explored. As Bassey (2001) notes, small-scale studies may offer “fuzzy generalisations,” offering insights that are informative rather than predictive.

The short duration of one term also restricted the ability to assess the long-term impact of lesson study on teaching practice or student learning. Longitudinal approaches are crucial to examining how innovations such as lesson study embed and evolve over time (McMillan, 2012).

Another limitation lies in the practitioner-researcher dual role, which may have influenced participant responses. While measures were taken to foster a safe, reflective

environment, my leadership role may have introduced power dynamics or perceived expectations (Mercer, 2007; Floyd & Arthur, 2012). Insider research provides depth but requires critical reflexivity to mitigate bias.

Additionally, lesson study was conducted alongside teachers' established full workload. The design and preparation of the research lesson were not part of the official scheme of work, requiring additional planning and coordination on the teachers' part. Despite being supported by timetabling adjustments, LS required extra planning and coordination, which may limit its scalability in schools without similar structures, particularly in contexts where leadership support or protected time are not systematised. As Lewis et al. (2006) argued, sustainable lesson study requires institutional conditions such as protected time and leadership support; elements that were present but not guaranteed system wide.

Finally, this research study focused primarily on teacher learning; and no direct student data was collected. While participants reflected on student engagement, this was anecdotal and not triangulated. Future studies could incorporate student outcome data to explore how teacher-led inquiry impacts learning; a gap identified in LS literature (Takahashi & McDougal, 2016; Rock & Wilson, 2005).

6.7 Reflective Conclusion

Engaging in this research study as both a teacher and a researcher has been a professionally transformative experience. What began as an exploration into lesson study soon evolved into a deeper journey of reflection, collaboration, and growth, for the participating teachers and for me in my dual role as a school leader and practitioner.

The process of planning, facilitating, and analysing lesson study cycles offered powerful insights into how teachers, when provided with protected time and non-evaluative space, can reignite their sense of professional purpose, agency and collegiality. These observations echo the work of Timperley (2011) and Dudley (2014), who highlight the value of professional development that is embedded in collaborative, teacher-led inquiry.

Positioned as a researcher-practitioner, I was continuously challenged to navigate the insider-outsider tension, manage ethical considerations, and remain reflexive throughout. This dual role aligns with what Floyd & Arthur (2012) described as a space of “internal ethical engagement,” where researchers must balance relational proximity with analytical distance. Applying Braun and Clarke’s (2006, 2021) reflexive thematic analysis helped me critically examine both participant narratives and my own positionality, enhancing the trustworthiness, empathy, and rigour of the study.

Equally, this process affirmed my belief in context-responsive, school-based professional development. As supported by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009), Timperley (2011), and Dudley (2014), meaningful instructional change is more likely to occur when professional learning is iterative, inquiry-driven, and situated in authentic school contexts rather than imposed externally.

I conclude this research study with a sense of optimism. Despite the real challenges educators face: time pressures, curriculum demands, and accountability frameworks; this research study has shown that there remains a space for innovation, dialogue, and professional renewal. The experience has strengthened my resolve to advocate for systems and structures that nurture collaborative inquiry and support middle leaders in championing pedagogical growth.

Ultimately, this research study has reminded me that while educational change often begins with policy and structural shifts, its sustainability is secured through empowered teachers who are trusted, supported, and given the opportunity to learn and grow together.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Permission letters

Head of school

26/07/24

Subject: Permission for Research on Professional Development and Lesson Study

To whom it may concern

I am writing to formally endorse and grant permission for the research project that Ms. Tania Gauci Fenech, the Assistant Head of the Junior Sector at San Anton School, will be conducting as part of her masters in leadership dissertation. The research focuses on professional development, specifically exploring lesson study as a potential tool for professional growth and collaboration within our school.

Ms. Tania Gauci Fenech has selected four teachers from the Junior Sector who will be invited to voluntarily participate in the study. These teachers will collaboratively plan and deliver a lesson, each contributing to the research by engaging in the lesson study process.

To ensure ethical standards and support the research process, Ms. Kathleen Calleja, the INCO in the Junior Sector, will serve as the research guardian. She will act as a liaison between Ms. Tania Gauci Fenech and the teacher participants, facilitating communication and addressing any concerns that may arise.

Additionally, an external educational officer, who specialises in the teaching of Maltese at the primary level, will be consulted and invited to observe the delivery and debriefing of the four lessons. This will provide an external perspective and enhance the validity of the research findings.

I fully support this research initiative and believe it holds the potential to positively influence the approach to professional development across our school. The findings could provide valuable insights into more effective methods for teacher collaboration and professional growth.

Please feel free to contact me if you require any further information or clarification.

Sincerely,



Bernadette Stivala

Head of School

San Anton School

L-Imselliet,

l/o Zebbiegh

MGR 2850

Tel: +35621581907

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Ministry of Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation



Tel: 25982743

rsird.meyr@gov.mt

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH STUDY

Date: 20th January 2025

Ref: R01-2025 2134

To: Director – Early Years, Languages and Humanities

From: Director – Research and School Internal Review Directorate

Title of Research Study: *Lesson study as a tool for professional development: A case study of collaboration between teachers in the upper primary years.*

The Research and School Internal Review Directorate, within the Education Strategy and Quality Assurance Department, would like to inform that approval is granted to **Ms Tania Gauci Fenech**, to conduct the research in State Schools according to the official rules and regulations, subject to approval from the Ethics Committee of the respective Higher Educational Institution.

The researcher is committed to complying with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and will ensure that these requirements are followed in the conduct of this research. The researcher will be sending letters with clear information about the research, as well as consent forms to all data subjects and their parents/guardians when minors are involved. Consent forms should be signed in all cases particularly for the participation of minors in research.

For further details about our policy for research in schools, kindly visit www.research.gov.mt.

Thank you for your attention and cooperation.

Claire Mamo MA Ed
Research and School Internal Review Directorate
Education Strategy and Quality Assurance Department

f/Dr Anthony Sammut
Director
Research and School Internal Review Directorate
Education Strategy and Quality Assurance Department

MINISTRY FOR EDUCATION, SPORT, YOUTH, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Appendix B: Information and Consent letters to participants

Teacher Participants

My name is Tania Gauci Fenech, and I am a student at the University of Malta, reading for a **Masters in Educational Leadership and Management**. I am presently conducting research as part of my thesis titled **Lesson study as a tool for professional development: A case study of collaboration between teachers in the upper primary years**. This research is being supervised by Ms Laura Formosa lform01@um.edu.mt and Dr James Calleja james.j.calleja@um.edu.mt, both of which can be contacted on their respective professional email. The aim of my study is to find out if Lesson Study can be a useful professional development tool in the school, where I am currently an assistant head, and if such practice can create opportunities for collaboration amongst teachers in the Junior Sector.

Your Participation

Any data collected from this research will be used solely for purposes of this study. The outcome of this research can potentially lead to a wider research project across the whole school which can then address change to the current professional development model with the introduction of lesson study.

Should you choose to participate, you will be one of the four teachers to engage and collaborate in the lesson study process. As a first step, you will be invited to take part in a semi-structured interview which should last between 30 – 40 minutes. This exercise will take place during the month of December 2024 and will be conducted online after school hours at a day and time convenient to you. For data collection purposes, the interview will be audio-recorded. However, if you feel uncomfortable with this, the recording can be omitted.

Next, after a short debriefing of what Lesson study entails, together with other three participants, you will discuss amongst you how to identify a common issue the students persistently struggle with during the lessons. The problem could be identified by observing each other present a lesson, or through a discussion or by going through the students' tasks. Finally, together, devise a lesson plan with the assistance (if required by your kind selves) of a knowledgeable professional. Please be aware that the lesson plan and any resources you create for this lesson will be credited to you, and you are free to use these plans and resources as you see fit. They will be considered your intellectual property. You will then deliver the collaboratively planned lesson to your class, act as an observer in the three lessons your colleagues will deliver and together, during the debriefing sessions, discuss the outcomes of the lessons and what was learned from the experience. At the end of the four-lesson cycle and debriefing sessions, (end April), you will be invited to an online final focus group where together you will give your feedback about the lesson study experience and share how it impacted your professional development. The date and time of this final online focus group will be agreed amongst your kind selves. The focus group should take 30 – 45 minutes.

Data will be gathered through anecdotal notes, minute taking and narratives during our weekly vertical meetings and during debriefing sessions. Some meetings might be audio recorded to provide accurate minute taking.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary; in other words, you are free to accept or refuse to participate, without needing to give a reason. Please rest assured that decision not to take part in this research will not impact you negatively in any way and I do not wish you to feel the pressure to participate because I am your assistant head. Should you wish to participate, you are also free to withdraw from the study at any time, without needing to provide any explanation and without any negative repercussions for you. Should you choose to withdraw, any data collected from you will be erased if this is technically possible (for example, before it is anonymised or published), unless erasure of data would render impossible or seriously impair achievement of the research objectives, in which case it shall be retained in an anonymised form.

Should you choose to participate, please note that there are no direct benefits to you. Your participation does not entail any known or anticipated risks. Since my role is dual, both as the researcher and as a participant, and taking in consideration my position in the school, a research guardian was appointed who will act as a middle person and serve as a liaison between your kind selves and myself if the need arises. In case any party wishes to voice any concerns or wishes about the study, the research guardian can facilitate.

Furthermore, from a research point of view, the importance of having a knowledgeable other (KO) to support the LS process is recognised as fundamental. To ensure that everyone involved feels comfortable and confident with this choice, the selection of the KO will be a collaborative process. We will discuss and consult with the other participants to identify a suitable individual who possesses expertise in the subject matter and whom the team feels comfortable working with. The selected KO will be available for consultation during the planning stages due to her/his expertise in the field. S/he would also be invited as an observer during each delivered lesson and will participate in the debriefing sessions following each of the four lessons. The role of the KO will be to help ensure that the study remains objective and free of bias.

Data Management

The data collected will be treated confidentially and protected by pseudonyms. This data will be stored on a secure One Drive on a safe device and only I and my two tutors will have access to it.

Please also note that, as a participant, you have the right under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and national legislation to access, rectify and where applicable ask for the data concerning you to be erased. All data collected will be stored in an anonymised form on and erased after the successful completion of the study, that is, end of September 2025. Your identity does not need to be revealed and will be protected by a pseudonym.

Participant’s consent

- I hereby declare to have read the information about the nature of the study, my involvement, and data management.
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study and my questions have been satisfactorily answered.
- I declare that I am 18 years or older.
- I understand that should I have any further queries, I can contact the researcher Tania Gauci Fenech at tania.gauci96@um.edu.mt or one of the two supervisors, Laura Formosa at lform01@um.edu.mt and James Calleja at james.j.calleja@um.edu.mt
- I agree to participate in this research study.

MARK ONLY IF APPLICABLE

- I agree to be identified in the research records.
- I agree to be identified in the research publications.

Participant’s name (in block)

Researcher’s name (in block)

Participant’ signature

Researcher’s signature

Date

Knowledgeable other

Dear Madam,

My name is Tania Gauci Fenech, and I am currently pursuing a Master's degree in Educational Leadership and Management at the University of Malta. I am conducting a research study for my thesis, titled "**Lesson Study as a Tool for Professional Development: A Case Study of Collaboration Between Teachers in the Upper Primary Years.**" This research is being supervised by Ms. Laura Formosa (lform01@um.edu.mt) and Dr James Calleja (james.j.calleja@um.edu.mt), both of whom can be contacted via their respective professional emails for further information or clarification.

This letter is an invitation for you to participate in this study. Below, you will find detailed information about the study and what your involvement would entail, should you decide to take part.

The aim of my study is to explore whether the Lesson Study model can serve as an effective tool for professional development within the school where I currently serve as Assistant Head of the Junior Sector. Additionally, I wish to investigate if this practice can foster collaboration among teachers. The school in question is an independent, co-educational institution. My plan is to invite four teachers from each grade in the Junior sector (Years 3 to 6) for an initial semi-structured interview to gather their experiences regarding the current professional development models in use at the school. The teacher participants will be invited for an online interview, afterschool hours, at a convenient day and time to them. The teacher participants will be made aware that the interviews will be recorded for documentation, however, if they wish that the interview is not recorded, their wishes will be respected. These interviews will be conducted in December 2024. Following this, the participants will be introduced to the Lesson Study process and invited to observe each other teaching a Maltese lesson. These observations will help the participants identify a common challenge they face while teaching the subject.

Subsequently, the four teachers will work together to design a Maltese lesson that addresses this shared issue. Each teacher will then deliver this lesson to their own class, while the remaining participants, as well as other guest observers such as classroom LSEs, observe. After each lesson, a debriefing session will take place where the observations will be discussed, and suggestions for improvement will be shared. The feedback gathered from these sessions will be used to refine the lesson for future delivery. At the final stage of the study, end April, the four participating teachers will take part in an online focus group where they will reflect on their experiences throughout the Lesson Study process and provide feedback on how it impacted their professional development and collaboration. The date and time of the meeting will be agreed upon by the teacher participants. The findings from this research may inform changes in the way professional development is approached in the Junior sector and potentially in the wider school context.

As a participant in this study, your role would be that of the Knowledgeable Other (KO). In the Lesson Study model, the KO provides expert guidance to participants, particularly on curriculum content or pedagogy. Given your position as an External Education Officer for Maltese in the primary sector, your expertise and impartial perspective would be invaluable. The teachers involved in the study may seek your advice during the planning stages of the Lesson Study. Furthermore, your presence as an observer during the delivery of the research lessons and your unbiased, objective feedback during the debriefing sessions will be essential to ensuring the validity and success of this study. Since both the teachers and I (in my dual role as both researcher and Assistant Head of the sector) are insiders, there is the potential for unintentional bias in our feedback and reflections, making your objective input even more critical.

To mitigate any possible conflicts of interest, a research guardian has been appointed. The research guardian will act as an intermediary between the participants and myself, should any concerns or issues arise. This ensures that all parties can communicate freely and comfortably throughout the study.

If you choose to participate, your identity will be protected by a pseudonym. While every effort will be made to ensure anonymity, it cannot be guaranteed and there remains a possibility that your identity could be inferred due to the limited number of External Education Officers specialising in Maltese at the primary level in Malta. Therefore, while we will take all reasonable steps to protect your anonymity, complete anonymity cannot be guaranteed and by signing the consent form, you are declaring that you are aware that any data shared is attributable and can be identifiable.

Any data collected throughout the study will be used exclusively for research purposes. This will include anecdotal notes, minutes from meetings, and narratives gathered during our weekly vertical meetings and debriefing sessions. Some sessions may be audio recorded to ensure accurate documentation. All data will be stored securely, and any identifying information will be anonymised to protect your privacy.

Please note that your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are free to accept or decline the invitation without providing a reason, and you may withdraw from the study at any time without facing any negative repercussions. Should you choose to withdraw, any data collected from your contributions will be erased, provided this is technically feasible (e.g., before anonymisation or publication). However, if erasing the data would significantly impair the research objectives, the data will be retained in an anonymised form.

While there are no direct personal benefits to your participation, your contributions will be invaluable to the success of this research. You also have the right, under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and national legislation, to access and rectify any data concerning you, or request its deletion. All data collected during the study will be erased following the successful completion of the research, anticipated to be by the end of September 2025.

A copy of this information sheet is provided for your reference. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at tania.gauci-fenech.96@um.edu.mt. Alternatively, you may contact my supervisor, Ms. Laura Formosa, or my co-supervisor, Dr James Calleja, via the contact details provided above or through the university's landline: +356 2340 3627.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Consent and Acknowledgment

I, the undersigned, have read and understood the information provided to me in this letter regarding the study titled **"Lesson Study as a Tool for Professional Development: A Case Study of Collaboration Between Teachers in the Upper Primary Years."** I have been informed about the nature and purpose of the research, the role I would play as a Knowledgeable Other, the potential risks, and my rights under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

I understand that:

- My participation is entirely voluntary, and I can withdraw at any time without consequence.
- My identity will be anonymised to the best of the researcher's ability, though complete anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

- Data collected from this study will be used for research purposes only and will be stored securely and in accordance with GDPR regulations.

- I have the right to access, rectify, and request the deletion of my data.

- The data will be erased after the successful completion of the study in September 2025.

By signing below, I confirm that I voluntarily agree to participate in this study and consent to the collection and use of my data as described in this letter.

Participant (Knowledgeable Other):

Name (in block letters): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher:

Tania Gauci Fenech tania.gauci-fenech.96@um.edu.mt

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Supervisors:

Ms. Laura Formosa l.form01@um.edu.mt

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Dr James Calleja james.j.calleja@um.edu.mt

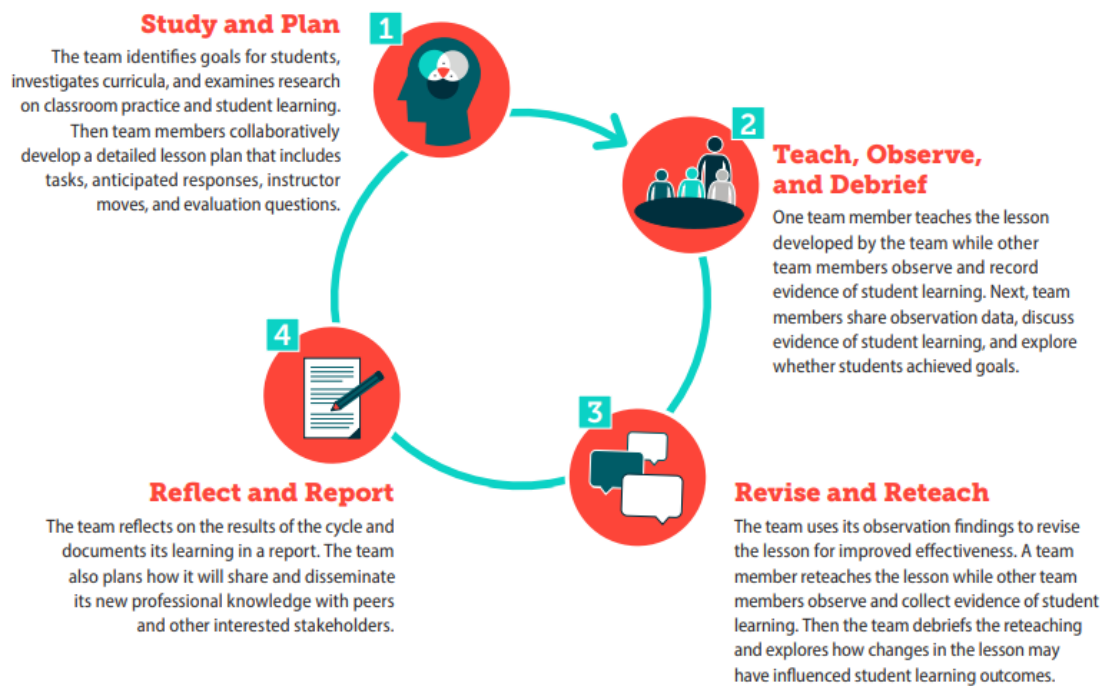
Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C: Semi-structured interview questions

- 1) Think of a recent professional development experience you participated in. What characteristics have you found useful and ultimately contributed to your class or year teaching?
- 2) Can you recall occasions when professional development days did not meet your expectations? What factors contributed to its ineffectiveness?
- 3) When you come across a teaching-related problem in your classroom, how do you tend to approach it?
- 4) How do you think professional development in our school could be better tailored to address the unique needs and challenges of teachers in different subject areas or year levels?
- 5) Lesson study comprises these stages:

Figure 1: Lesson Study Cycle



Would you be interested in learning more about Lesson study? Why?

Appendix D: Transcripts

Interviews – Lily

Thursday 20th March 2025

Tania: Good evening, Miss Lily. Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. The purpose of this interview is to gather your insights on the current professional development sessions offered at our school. Specifically, we aim to understand your perspectives on what has been effective and ineffective during these PD days, as well as what strategies have helped you overcome challenges within the school context. Your feedback will be invaluable in enhancing the design of future PD sessions, particularly in exploring the potential of Lesson Study (LS) as an effective professional development tool.

The interview is expected to last approximately 20 minutes. You are welcome to respond in either English or Maltese, depending on your preference. As agreed, this interview will be recorded for transcription purposes.

Question 1 - Think of a recent professional development experience you participated in. (If you want, I can give you some examples.)

What characteristics have you found useful and ultimately contributed to your class or grade teaching? (So, if you want, I can remind you).

Lily: No, no, it's okay. Mela, something recent that I can remember. A PD Day relating to the restorative practice where we are implementing circle time in our classrooms. This is the first time that I have been experiencing circle time in my class with my students.

And the outcome is actually a very positive one. Starting from the beginning of the week, Monday morning, when we do circle time with our students, they come in very excited. Monday morning is exciting for them because they come in and they are very happy to share what they have been through over the weekend.

And they all participate, and they all tell his or her part and how happy they were. And even, it's not just been a happy time, even if they have a low moment during their weekend, they're also expressing it and not shying away from saying it out loud in class. It's as if even the students have found a happy space for them to let go.

Tania: So, you found it useful to gain trust with the students?

Lily: Yes.

Tania: How did it contribute to the class or grade teaching?

Lily: Yes, because the children are more open to one another. They all understand one another. Something that if I may add, many times we're doing circle time in Maltese in the class.

So, this is also serving as a little bit as an add on to participate using their own native tongue, the children.

Tania: So, going back to the professional development that was delivered on that day, if you can remember, what made it engaging for you to use it in the classroom?

Lily: The fact that you can bring all the students together. None of them find it difficult or get shy from one another. It's as if they have found a link to communicate with one another.

Tania: How did it help you to implement it in class? That's what I'm asking.

Lily: It did help in this way because, for example, usually if I ask the question, I ask student A or student B. But then in the training, we were told that it's okay to let them flow with the conversation.

Tania: So (you appreciated) the practical tips?

Lily: So as their teacher, it has been teaching me to let go and take one step backwards and let them be part of the full conversation.

Tania: Question 2 - Can you recall occasions when professional development days did not meet your expectations? (I mean, it's very open, so don't worry about it. I mean, if you recall one, the one in maths, or the PD for English.)

Lily: Dyslexia.

Tania: Yes, the dyslexia one, for example.

Lily: Yes. I found the dyslexia one very repetitive and very boring. To me, it lacked a lot of, it lacked stimulating activities.

Tania: So, you learn when you're stimulated?

Lily: Yes. For example, I would love, (I think it would be ideal, I don't know, but this is how I see it), that for us to have a dyslexia friendly day and make it work, that our teachers are allowed to experience the frustration a student feels in the classroom.

Tania: So, making it authentic, making it real. Yes?

Lily: Timing us, like we time them. You know, you tell them, for example, you have 10 minutes to finish this task. Putting us in the situation, putting us in the boots of the student.

Tania: That's very interesting.

Lily: The only thing that was right about this dyslexia PD was the toolbox that we were given.

Tania: And why do you like the dyslexia kit? The toolbox, (the dyslexia toolbox).

Lily: Because, for example, when I first got hold of the coloured overlays, I thought, (you know, this is, I mean), one orange, one red, how to use them? But then I gave them to Student A to read, one of my students. And when she put it down, over her text, she said to me, “This looks better, you know, Miss Lily, to read.”

I mean, I'm seeing her face, telling, and looking at her and telling me, this is better to read.

Tania: So, you found it useful?

Lily: Yes, I did find it useful.

Tania: It wasn't just another accessory.

Lily: No.

Tania: But the actual PD Day, the dyslexia one, you said it was boring? It was boring because there was nothing to stimulate the teachers. What format is boring for you?

Lily: The format of a boring PD- I would have expected this to, (because the professionals who are experienced in dyslexia should have made us, you know), like feel more stimulated about getting the actual experience. Like, for example, doing activities to read with scrambled text. And hands-on workshops.

Giving us hands-on, I like hands-on things, you know, for me to understand better. I am like that.

Tania: You would have gained more because you're a more kinaesthetic learner, (sort of). You're not someone who sits down and just listens. You need to use your hands.

Lily: I need to feel this, you know, to experience. And had they put us to the test, like, for example, they would time us to give us a task to do. And they would say to us, you know, now do this within this time frame.

And imagine I am the student with dyslexia, and I need to experience, need to feel the frustration that these children may- that they do feel, actually.

Tania: And something similar, what you're saying, is that what we had experienced in Diversity Day, I don't know if you remember, that we had done, sort of part of Diversity Day, was the children go in and they see text, all scrambled up, and you try to read what it is.

Lily: Yes, something of the sort.

Tania: It's actually a text, how the dyslexic child is seeing it. So, like you said, you're putting yourself into the boots of these children.

Lily: Yes, into their own shoes, you know, and experience the reality of it, because it's okay for us from our side to tell them, you know, everyone, we have 10 minutes to finish this. Just imagine if somebody tells you, me, I'm talking about me.

Tania: Puts you in a situation, yes.

Lily: No, you have 10 minutes to finish.

Tania: I'm understanding what you're saying. Like, for example, I'm thinking about the maths PD that we had. Like, it is good when they actually put you to test.

So, if we're doing about the Bar model, you don't just lecture about it. You actually have a problem. Now, solve it.

Okay, how did we go about using the method? Where did we get stuck?

Lily: You see something like that. When we were doing maths, Miss Tania, we were in groups, you know. So, the group was full of, you know, strong people in the topic and not so strong people on the topic.

So, they (the strong ones) took the lead. Imagine if one was left alone, you know, to face this. It would be a little bit awkward.

Tania: So, you think it's good that when sort of there's a PD and they group you up and they give you a challenge.

Lily: Yes, I think this was a positive thing because after all isn't it the true meaning behind professional people, that they encourage each other and help each other out. The strength of one shouldn't be used to outshine another. On the contrary it should be used to encourage and to lead that person who may not be as bright or quick responsive as them (the ones who are strong) to see an outcome to the problem from a simpler perspective. So yes, to me it felt safe.

Having strong people in different aspects helps bring together solutions which can later on be implemented in classroom environments.

Yeah, even if they leave you on your own. So, not to make the person feel lower or, you know, any lesser, but so that the teacher actually feels what that student goes through at that moment. Because unfortunately, as teachers, I think we lack that.

We come all with, we are all out with these ideas, with that idea, this idea. Why don't we try this? Why don't we try that?

But at the end of the day, it is the student who has the actual problem.

Tania: Putting you in a position of empathy sort of.

Lily: Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.

Tania: I've never thought of this perspective.

Question 3 - When you come across a teaching related problem in your classroom, something that doesn't work for you, how do you tend to approach it?

Lily: At the moment, the most difficult thing for me is Malti with the students. Because for English, we have solutions. For Maths, you can practice on your own before and you sort of come prepared for the thing.

But in Malti, no matter what you do, I can't seem to find the right way. There's a struggle. I can't find the right path.

One thing I am trying to do, (and I do it in my class constantly), is something that one of my colleagues in a different grade taught me - the building up of sentences. I started doing it in September and I am still doing it. You know, half through the second term, I am still doing it.

Like, every week, I give them four sentences. I start off with one or two words and allow them to build them, to build them up.

Tania: So, when you have a difficulty, you feel comfortable asking a colleague for advice or a suggestion?

Lily: Yes, yes, I do, I do, actually. Yes, yes, yes.

Tania: And is it only sort of like; one particular teacher or your group of teachers in the grade or any other source or person you go to?

Lily: In the grade, I work really well with one of my colleagues. Yes. And apart from being a friend of mine, another teacher in a different grade, because she has much more experience than I do, I like to relate with her, you know, these things.

And if she tells me something, I do put it down to practice. I mean, it might not be exactly how she says it, or she might lead me to getting to the solution, and then I will think of adding something else. But yes, I don't mind asking because I believe that we should work as colleagues together.

Tania: So, you tend to ask for support?

Lily: Yes, I do, actually, I do.

Tania: How about resources, for example? I mean, do you look for resources or you prefer like an experienced person, you know?

Lily: Unfortunately, for Malti, we do not have a lot of resources to go about with. So, the resources we use, I am talking about my grade and my class, I create myself. I do share my resources with my colleagues of the same grade.

Whether they implement them or not, I don't know, but I do share them. And I try to make them simple, interesting, so that the student will sort of have something to cling onto and relate to.

Tania: So, before you said you share them, but you don't know if they are being used. So, there isn't much open communication about sharing of resources or of good practice?

Lily: Unfortunately, no, not really, no.

Tania: And it stems from characters, are the characters an issue? Or sort of it's the culture of the sector, of the school, of the grade?

Lily: The school has nothing to do with this, I think. I think it's more of the individuals that make up the group. I work very well with one of my colleagues in the same sector.

Although this colleague is very much younger than myself, he's just newly graduated.

Tania: But you're like-minded.

Lily: But we work on the same page, we work on the same level. We see things from the same perspective. I share my opinions, and I lay out the plan. I type the things and everything. And then he designs them up and brightens them to make them more appealing.

Tania: It's in the editing, so sort of, it's a team effort, between you two.

Lily: Yes, and we share among us, you know, these, if I do a resource, he does a different resource. So, you know, like, this week, we shared a maths resource. And I said to him, you know, I said, I had to find something for my class to understand this topic a little bit more.

I said, if you like, if you want, you can use them. And he told me, "Oh, yes, yes, yes, I am going to add them in the booklet that we use". So, both of us - jointly together.

Tania: Oh, you seem to be very like-minded, you two, sort of. What about the others? Apart from the characters, is there like a trait that does not allow them to share?

Lily: Unfortunately, they're all in there to criticise. They do nothing but criticise. But, I mean, I don't know if I am allowed to say this or not, you know.

They are sort of more trying to look out if I do any mistakes so that they can quickly point to find mine. And then theirs are full of mistakes. And, like, we had a week of maths where mistakes were just copied and pasted from last year.

And we only just found out, you know, so.

Tania: And maybe you feel that maybe when you suggest something new for them might be threatening?

Lily: No, when I said just something new, especially when it's got to do with Malti, a new approach to Malti to make the students feel a little bit more comfortable and create an environment for the students to talk a little bit more and so that their vocabulary flows. They're always on the defence, saying that this doesn't work, this doesn't work, this won't work.

They don't even try it. They don't even try it. But this year I've taken a different approach.

I'm not letting them, you know, like sort of break the barrier. If I say this goes, that has to go. Whether they like it or not, they have to do it. And they are doing them, so.

Tania: And what was the response?

Lily: To me, they said that they worked and it worked fine. I mean, some, they told me this to zip me up, shut me up. You cannot say.

I cannot say, but it worked for my students. It worked for another class because he came and told me and I was also able to take over my colleague's class.

And so, I kept on with the orals because it consisted of Malti orals. And it worked fine in my colleague's class too.

Tania: Question 4 - How do you think professional development in our school could be better tailored to address the unique needs and challenges of teachers in different subject areas or grade levels?

Lily: Personally, I like PD days because they open a window to a wider view of things. Some things which I may not know and with the purpose of PD Day, you start to get a little bit of a feel of something that you would like to implement in your class. However, sometimes I feel, I don't know if I'm going to explain this in the right words, but sometimes PD Day feels like a one size fits all.

And we're all different and we all encounter different students throughout the year and students change, their characters change throughout the year. And sometimes this PD Day, as I'm explaining it, one size for all, it does not work. So maybe if we could have workshops where we follow, we focus and follow different challenges, you know, so that each person is combined, for example, with a subject.

Tania: Okay, so for example, professional development targeting Maltese?

Lily: Or targeting maths, for example, problem solving using different strategies. Because, for example, in maths, what works for A doesn't work for B.

What works for B doesn't work for C. I have experienced in my classroom and I'm still experiencing now; I have some students who need to draw a problem.

Tania: Exactly, because we are all different learners.

Lily: Some are auditory. I have students in the same class, I have about three of them, who I write the problem on the board or numbers on the board, and they just blurt out the answer. Because they work it mentally.

Tania: They work it mentally.

Lily: And then what happens? The others who cannot do it that quick, look at them and feel inferior to them. But I always tell them, look, I have extra work prepared for those who go a bit faster.

Tania: Because you are teaching, obviously, a mixed ability classroom. So, you're saying that PD could be specifically targeting a subject. Or maybe, could it be that it targets a common problem in the grade, for example?

You find a common problem in the grade and...

Lily: Let's say English is a common problem. English, not the speaking, the writing, the short writing and the long writing task. We'd have a PD Day specifically for writing tasks.

Tania: But do you think that in one session, when you said the one fits all, the one that we have, for example, in July or the one that we're going to have now in April would be enough?

Lily: No. I was going to say that it would be ideal to have a follow up. And maybe as teachers, we could say, for example, like when we have Parents' Day, we'll have the one-to-one sessions with you or with Miss Claudia.

We would have one-to-one sessions to follow up this. Have you been implementing the strategies? Yes.

How? This way, this way. Look, you've wandered a bit further away from what we said.

Why did you choose that way? And in that way, being followed up is also beneficial to us. Sometimes we might see it as wasting time or we need this time to correct. But I think at the end of the day that this allows the teacher to be opinionated as well.

Tania: Yes, it's important, too. It is very important. To give some views, to give one view.

So, you think that there should be sort of a day of training and then a follow up? Do you think that just a follow up or maybe a series of, like, would you prefer like, for example, you have a trial time, you try it in your classroom and then you meet up again and sort of discuss with the trainer, for example. Listen, this is what I encountered in my class.

So, it's sort of either two or more sessions rather than one.

Lily: Because Miss Tania, not everyone requires the same training. Maybe I require training in this field and maybe you require training in that field. And then if it may all come together,

maybe we could have, (I don't know), and maybe this could also lead to integrating lessons as well.

For example, we could be taught how to integrate, for example, an English writing with science. And we're also having a continuation of our training. So, for example, it could be set up at the beginning of the year.

When we start the year, we're going to start focusing this year mainly on, for example, English writing. Let's see why our students, (because in reality, not all students are capable of doing an English writing). So, let's concentrate how we can improve this English writing.

So, we'll have a first session and then we'll have an implementation of the session. Maybe we'll have somebody to come and watch us in class and observe us, you know, and find our...

Tania: Yes, it's a full package.

Lily: And then the second PD Day will also be a PD Day about the writing tasks. And as teachers, we can provide and come up with the writing tasks that the children have done and we can evaluate... Sample of work, your experiences, your challenges that you met.

Tania: Yes.

Lily: And we can also say like, I've seen a difference between the first writing task, what we've implemented from PD Day to now.

Tania: Exactly. Thank you. The last question for you.

Have a look at the diagram please, there is a cycle.

Question 5 - Lesson study comprises these stages. First, you study and plan.

And if you remember, we studied and planned because first we identified like what the problem is. Then this one, we're going to do it. We're going to teach, observe and debrief.

And then after we do that, after we observe and discuss, maybe we say, OK, this thing needs to be revisited. We have to change it a bit here in the lesson plan. So that's sort of number three.

And then point four, we reflect about it, and you report and hopefully you will see student attainment. Would you be interested in learning more about lesson study and why is that?

Lily: Yes, I sincerely would be very much interested in learning about this. Because I think that lesson study is important. It is valuable because it promotes collaborative growth.

And when you get teachers who can work together, creating different methods, implementing them, joining them, it's like the proof of the pudding comes out. And with everybody's input. You can perfect it, sort of.

Yes, you can make it better. For example, I don't mind people observing me in my classroom, whatever the subject may be. And although I may tend to feel, (and this is hand on heart, the honest truth), a little bit nervous, sometimes more nervous than the actual children.

But I look forward to the outcome from my observer, whoever it may be, so that I can sit down and reflect and work out on how I can do it better. Yes, because I'm very open to new learning. Yes, I don't mind.

I mean, the fact that somebody with a lot more experience than me in the classroom can only give me ideas, can only pave the way better for me to tread on. I'm not asking somebody who comes out from nowhere to come and pave the way.

Tania: You're asking a professional.

Lily: Somebody who can come and say, look, listen, I am not very happy about this, because it doesn't always have to be good, the review of the observer. Or you can try this out a little bit more, or this you could have done it better, or this I would have eliminated, because sometimes you get a different idea from somebody outside your comfort zone, gives you that little bit of a wake-up call: "Listen, you've been working on this. You can't see. You're blind to it that it's not working". And then somebody from the outside pinpoints it and makes you...

Tania: I agree. I agree with you completely. The position in the classroom even makes a difference.

We as teachers tend to stay in the front. Someone who stays at the back, like your LSE, can see something that you are completely oblivious about. So, an observer who comes from the outside can give you good feedback.

I agree.

Lily: When I was thinking about this question, I came to a conclusion that this also promotes continuous-based learning. Because in my opinion, when we're continuously building up on learning, it's not only beneficial for us as educators, but it's also beneficial to the children, to the students.

Tania: Continuous based learning?

By means of someone observing you and telling you – (you told me this yourself – observing you is not criticising you – it is trying to help you understand better how to better what you do).

Tania: Understanding your practice, celebrating your successes and if there is an area where you can improve. Sometimes even the awareness, you say next time I'll improve in it because you will give it more attention.

Lily: Yes, it is very important that we learn as we go along.

Tania: Ms. Lily, thank you.

Lily: Ms. Tania, thank you.

Interviews – Daisy

Friday 21st March 2025

Tania: Good evening, Miss Daisy. Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. The purpose of this interview is to gather your insights on the current professional development sessions offered at our school. Specifically, we aim to understand your perspectives on what has been effective and ineffective during these PD days, as well as what strategies have helped you overcome challenges within the school context. Your feedback will be invaluable in enhancing the design of future PD sessions, particularly in exploring the potential of Lesson Study (LS) as an effective professional development tool.

The interview is expected to last approximately 20 minutes. You are welcome to respond in either English or Maltese, depending on your preference. As agreed, this interview will be recorded for transcription purposes.

I'm going to start immediately by asking you think of a recent professional developing development experience you participated in. What characteristics have you found useful and ultimately contributed to your class or great teaching? If you can't remember, I can remind you some.

Daisy: The best one that I can think of is the inclusive classroom.

Tania: OK, the dyslexia one. All right. OK, you liked that.

Daisy: Yes, I liked it because it's adapting the lessons to meet the needs of the students because all students have different needs and it's never enough to know about these new strategies. Also, should every strategy have different keys to work on the language and positive reinforcement that we learn how to deal with children with different behaviour. Positive behaviour helps them to learn.

Tania: So, you liked the topics? Yes, because I know that this topic is very close to you. It is something that you are interested in and you are a teacher who tries to include a lot of children.

I suppose that such a topic really resonates with you. So what sort of PD do you find most useful? Was this because you liked the topic so it interested you? But let's say for example, if I tell you about the PD of maths, for example, did you find it useful? Did it contribute to the classroom?

Daisy: Yes, it did. Yes, I remember it clearly, but it wasn't enough in my opinion.

Tania: It wasn't?

Daisy: Rather than one day I would prefer it more like a program, a process.

Tania: OK, so it would not be fixed in days.

Daisy: Exactly. Rather than one in one day where you have to absorb everything in one day.

Tania: So how would you see it?

Daisy: A continuation. I mean for us this PD of maths was practically new so it was interesting, and we are implementing while teaching, obviously.

Tania: So, you would have preferred it as continuous training, yes? And like, if you had to continue it, how would you have continued it if it was up to you to decide?

Daisy: On how many days you mean?

Tania: Let's say Maths PD. So, you found it interesting, but one day was not enough.

Daisy: Exactly I would have gone deeper in the topic.

Tania: Pick an aspect of the topic and you have another PD ? Do you see it like a lecture style form? Do you like the training when it's like a lecture? How do you prefer them?

Daisy: Lecture style that includes hands on.

Tania: OK, can you share an example?

Daisy: Maybe just like a class of students you know and you have hands on activity like you would do with them, then one can implement it in the classroom rather than just listening and making notes.

Tania: Uh huh that would be part of the training.

Daisy: Of the talk exactly.

Tania: You don't just sit down.

Daisy: Just listen.

Tania: So, like in a Maths PD you have training first and then a session doing problem sums with the trainer.

Daisy: Something on those lines. We need more sessions like that.

Tania: You wanted similar sessions, yes. Do you recall another PD that was think really good because I'm trying to find the characteristics which make a really good PD. So, the topic obviously you said that the topic that is interesting to you, but you also mentioned that you wanted it hands on, and PD needs to be continuous. You already mentioned three important factors.

Daisy: Yes, yes, yes, yes. They're all important in my opinion and then it depends on the on the facilitator as well.

Tania: Yes, yes, you mean if the facilitator is not engaging, it makes a difference.

Daisy: Exactly, if the expert is not engaging enough.

Tania: If he's boring.

Daisy: If the talk does not have relevant reference to the classroom, if the content is not our age-group appropriate I mean – it is not relevant to us.

Tania: Can you think of one that was not relevant?

Daisy: The last one we had the one of the restorative practice.

Tania: I remember you telling me because you felt the content was repetitive.

Daisy: It was repetitive and the facilitator with all due respect, wasn't engaging enough for me. Maybe for someone else it was hands on but in my opinion, she was not. I mean, it was one fit one-size-fits-all.

Tania: OK. I also think that in that PD that you mentioned the venue was really bad.

Daisy: Yes, yes, yes, we were lost.

Tania: The venue was really bad, the sound was echoing and it did not help at all. The space was big. We felt lost.

Daisy: Truly, I don't see it for our age, this restorative practice.

Tania: Uh huh.

Daisy: Having circles so we discuss problems after the weekend - I don't leave the problems for Monday.

Tania: It's more than that, but, I can understand your point. You don't feel that it's relevant to you.

Daisy: I don't think it is.

Tania: I was going to ask you the second question, but I think you already answered it. I don't know if you want to delve more into it.

Can you recall occasions when professional development did not meet your expectations and what factors contributed to its ineffectiveness? 1. Not relevant to your interest or to your age group. Anything else?

Daisy: It is a bit one size fits all I feel.

Tania: You wish it to be tailor made more for your age group.

Daisy: And even as, as I said, the facilitator wasn't effective and the venue was not good.

Tania: Thank you. **When you come across a problem, a teacher related problem in your classroom, how do you tend to approach it?**

Daisy: If I have a struggle in teaching, first, I take a step back and try to understand, fully understand what the problem is. I ask my colleagues for advice as well.

Tania: So, you start by seeking support from the colleagues in your classroom?

Daisy: This is how I do it in my classroom. The problem is in my classroom so, I reach out to my colleagues in the classroom and we think together.

We brainstorm, what see what needs to be done, and then we will move from there. We take it step by step.

Tania: Let's say you don't have a class team or you don't reach a solution. What would you do if you have a problem?

Daisy: Then I go to my superiors. Most of the time, if I don't manage to solve it myself or with my colleagues, I must reach out for help, of course. So, because it depends on the problem, it depends how difficult it is for me to handle.

Tania: An academic problem? Exactly. I don't know. For example, you can't seem to make them understand what a fraction is. For example, Yes, the students keep forgetting.

Daisy: As I told you, I reach out to my colleagues, my class colleagues and then sometimes I wait. If it's not that urgent, I'll wait until planning session with my grade team. We share lots of this during our planning. But if it's urgent, I don't wait till planning sessions. We reach out. We see maybe they encountered the problem before me. They have other solutions, better solutions, maybe the experience that other teachers have and share experiences. Maybe they already passed through this or maybe there's something that we need to change if they are not engaged enough.

Tania: So first with your team first and then with your colleagues.

And if you can't solve the problem, you resort to SLT or maybe, some experts - people in school like our psychologist. And like, **if you had to think of professional development in our school, how would you tailor it better to meet the unique needs and challenges of teachers in different subject areas and in different grade levels?** If it was up to you how, how would you design it? If you have to do a dream PD, how would you do it?

Daisy: I think the best is to learn from teachers, the experiences that us teachers, as professionals go through and we can share experiences from one another.

Tania: Sharing good practices.

Daisy: Good practices exactly learn from one another's experience and the vertical meeting is I think, it's the best.

Tania: What do you like about the vertical meeting? Is it the fact that you're meeting with the other colleagues from other grades?

Daisy: because it's a scaffolding thing. You can combine the lessons according to what's coming in our grade. So, shall I add more or less work for the children to be prepared for our grade?

Tania: You can plan targets.

Daisy: And we'll build up on each other's grade. I love it. I love to learn from colleagues because we are working hands on for the children after all, rather than learning from a professional or a tutor or a university teacher.

But they're not hands on, I mean.

Tania: They're not in the classroom.

Daisy: They're not in the classroom with us.

Tania: And they don't know your reality. Yes.

Daisy: And today's reality is that there is change every year, I must say.

Tania: Yes, it does. It's very fluid. This year is very different from last year. The last year was different from the year before, after COVID time before COVID it is constantly changing. And how do you feel with them, do you feel comfortable? Do you feel that sometimes you shy to give an opinion, or do you feel that sometimes you are judged.

Daisy: Oh no, I don't feel that way because we have all different styles, we are all professionals in our own way. Maybe we can deliver the lessons differently. And like that way you can learn, we can learn from others and maybe they can, you know, learn something from me as well, although I'm not that experienced.

Tania: You have your baggage too. You can contribute too.

Daisy: No, I feel very comfortable working with my colleagues.

Tania: **Question 5 says lesson study comprises these stages.** So, the first one is study and plan. So, you're studying the situation, and you are understanding where I have a problem, you know, and planning is sort of, let's plan a lesson plan together.

It doesn't need to be a perfect lesson, but we try to make it as perfect as possible. So, we try to think about the questions we can ask for the higher achieving children, for the lower

achieving. And then in the second cycle, sort of, we are teaching it ourselves. We have our colleagues who are observing, not us, but they're observing the students and they're learning and then have a debriefing. Therefore, we're getting together and we're discussing, listen, what went right, what went wrong? What would we change? And in the third stage, sort of we're saying, OK, well, that part really works well, so let's keep it. But that part, maybe we can order it a bit. So, let's change it. And then obviously in the last part, you reflect about it, sort of how did it go? Sort of was it time wasted? Was it wait while you know? So obviously this is the lesson study, which you have already been part of once as an observer as well. And we did the lesson study with a colleague from your grade.

Would you be interested in learning more about lesson study? And why would you? If you, if you're interested, yes.

Daisy: Definitely, I would. It is collaborative, it is like a professional development, and the learning is from one another.

Tania: And working together.

Daisy: And working together. Yes, yes and learning from others experiences and focus on students' outcome as well.

I think it's very, very important and practical and hands on which I love. No, it's very interesting. I will definitely love to be involved in LS.

Tania: Is there anything else, a comment or opinion you would like to add

Daisy: Looking forward to having more of these studies, although I mean I know that they are a bit open and beyond our load because we have to fit in.

Tania: Uh huh. It takes a little bit of time and planning and scheduling, but I think it's a good.

Daisy: But then when you learn, when you learn something, you can practice it in your own class. Like last year we had with the grade colleague. Then this year I used it and this was a success.

Daisy: So, I'm looking forward for this year's as well

Tania: Thank you, Ms. Then I will stop the recording.

Interviews - Iris

Monday 24th March 2025

Tania: Good evening, Miss Iris. Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. The purpose of this interview is to gather your insights on the current professional development sessions offered at our school. Specifically, we aim to understand your perspectives on what has been effective and ineffective during these PD days, as well as what strategies have helped you overcome challenges within the school context. Your feedback will be invaluable in enhancing the design of future PD sessions, particularly in exploring the potential of Lesson Study (LS) as an effective professional development tool.

The interview is expected to last approximately 20 minutes. You are welcome to respond in either English or Maltese, depending on your preference. As agreed, this interview will be recorded for transcription purposes.

So, think of recent PDS that we have professional development exercise you participated in, what characteristics have you found useful and ultimately they contributed to class or grade teaching?

Iris: So, from the most recent ones, I like the ones that had to do with the project based learning because they are very informative, hands on. We get a lot of information about how to develop topics in the classroom and that really helps. And the fact that it's not done in school, it gives us more opportunity to kind of be more relaxed with each other, talk more with each other. There was a lot of opportunity to talk to each other. That was one of the best things, you know, apart from information, I really loved that you could talk to each other and discuss also, and this was recent as well, one of in one of our PDS, we had a session with the with one of the counsellors.

Tania: OK.

Iris: Each group of teachers had a session with a counsellor, and I felt that really helped all of us.

It ended up a very emotional session, but it ended up also as a well-being session for all teachers. We were from different grades and from different areas, we all started sharing our experiences, you know, and our good moments or good things and then the not so good things between us. I felt it was a very, very good session which helped all of us, you know, because we kind of understood that it's not me on my own. There are others who might have the same feelings.

Tania: So, what you are suggesting is that the best PDs are like the one of the project base, focused more on teaching and it give you give you the opportunity to talk to other teachers.

And did it help you the fact that it was not focused on just one day but extended on a number of days?

Iris: Yes, it helped.

Tania: Because if you remember, we had another session during your planning with the expert and then we had another one, yes?

Iris: It helped us to explore, you know, each other's ideas because when you are talking, you know, people start coming out with ideas and that helps. You would say to yourself, this never came to my mind. It's nice to do it in class. And yes, the fact that it got extended and there was also a lot of support I felt as well from everybody: from you and the head as well, you know.

Mr H as well, coming in and speaking to us, yes. The project-based learning - all the sessions that we had. I like those, yes.

Tania: And then you also found very helpful the well-being one because it's not helping you maybe on a professional level. Did I understand you well? It helped you understand each other as persons. Is that it?

Iris: It is a good way of feeling part of a group, you're part of a family, not on your own.

Tania: You're not just Miss Iris.

Iris: Miss Iris, you know the teacher. But there is Iris the person.

Tania: So, you don't feel that maybe PD day should be a mix between academic and emotional maybe?

Iris: Yes, yes, definitely. Because it gives you different insights of the people around you and how to approach even lessons and or projects.

Tania: And do you think that sort of any PD, maybe the Maths one, the PBL [project-based learning] one or the restorative practises, the one that we did recently, did you find them useful and did they contribute to your classroom practice? You're a very seasoned teacher, so do you feel that it improved you, it bettered you or not really?

Iris: Yes, sometimes yes, sometimes no. Like the ones that were with the project-based learning it helped me immensely. They were very well organised and when there are hands on follow up sessions, it's better.

Tania: Yes.

Iris: I recall the Maths PD. They gave us a lot of information, but they were not there for the planning sessions. The videos that you sent us were giving us information but without actually showing us how to really go about it in a practical way.

Tania: What would have helped?

Iris: Follow up workshops.

Tania: Where you actually sit down and work a problem, you're saying?

Iris: Discuss the problems, exactly.

Tania: Try it yourself.

Iris: From different grades, teachers working together.

Tania: How you other teachers approach it? And maybe you stop, you stumble, you make a mistake, you have the expert with you and tell him I got stuck here, how should I proceed?

Iris: Would you have any idea how we should go about it? How?

Tania: Exactly, yes.

Iris: How would you go about this since you have the expertise?

Tania: Exactly.

Iris: Especially when it comes to problem sums, you know, those sometimes require a lot of thinking. There is no problem with the drillings exercises but the problems especially I think in every area when we had follow-up workshops, it always helps to see things more clearly and gives us more ideas how to go about them in the class.

Tania: So, you are suggesting a session with the expert, where you can have a lot of information, but then you need to process; workshops or touch base planning sessions.

Iris: Yes

Tania: I understand. During the follow-up session, you tell the expert, "Listen, I encountered this problem. I did like this, but I got stuck there", you know, so then you have time to bounce it off. So, PD should be planned as a series of sessions.

Iris: Of things rather than one. A mix of everything of different sessions.

It's good to receive the information but then follow-ups are important. You know where we as teachers give our input and with the help of the experts, we give our input to each other and ask questions if we are not sure about something. It's always good and sometimes you find it even from your colleagues. You know, they would understand something that you haven't, and they might explain it to you in a better way.

Tania: Yes, it's true. Sometimes we're giving the same information, but you interpret it one way, I interpret it in another way. So, it's good that you're exposed to different ideas. It's true.

Iris: The Multi vertical sessions we had with each other; they were so good.

Tania: Yes, they were.

Iris: Very helpful. The vertical meetings, you know, are part of professional development.

Tania: Yes, they are helpful.

Iris: Definitely, the other colleagues showed me different ways of doing things, you know, that I have never, never thought about.

Tania: True, and **can you recall occasions when professional development this did not meet your expectations?** We already spoke about it a bit. What has contributed to its ineffectiveness? Why did it make it a bad pity sort of you? You already mentioned maths, can you think of another PD maybe?

Iris: Yes, we had PD days when the day was full of listening from different people talking. You know, the day was planned in a way that we only had to sit down and talk.

Respective of everything, even though we are mature, you get tired and yes, so at one point the information starts becoming, you know, unclear. It starts becoming unclear. You can't focus.

Tania: You cannot process the information properly.

Iris: Exactly, you know.

Tania: So, you are saying that it's OK to listen, but then you have to be active hands.

Iris: On making sessions, sessions should be how can I put it? You know they should be planned to have a listening and then followed by something that can be hands on.

Tania: Multi-sensitive, exactly a bit of everything.

Iris: From everything I can remember our PD days are a full day of, you know, just receiving information about different subjects, about different pupil needs like dyslexia, you know. It is too long, and you end up missing out on a lot of information because then you can't concentrate 100% on it. So, I agree, you know.

Tania: **When you came across teaching relating problem in your classroom, how do you tend to approach it?** You have a problem in your classroom. What do you do?

Iris: One of the things is I discuss with my colleagues, I do ask them, you know. I say "I couldn't work out this. How would you go about it?" Whatever the subject is, I do ask my colleagues because I find that usually what I haven't understood, they would know and what they don't know I would have understood. So, it's good to discuss between us and it's very helpful. I also like to research approaches and visual help, you know, and look up various teaching aids and visuals and materials to try and solve it in a different way. Sometimes, you know, talking to your colleagues, as I said at the beginning and asking them, I'm stuck in this.

Sometimes they come out with the help as well. They upload things. They will tell you: “Why don't you go to that site or use that link?” You know there are so many good things there that can help you in your approach.

Tania: They might see the problem you're in and while you don't see solution, they do. Since they see it from the outside, they see it differently.

Iris: Exactly, you know, even when we speak to you or Miss C, yes, you give us another different approach to it.

Tania: And I say as well, sometimes even to the LSE and the classroom assistant because they are the back eyes of our classroom and they see things different.

Iris: You are so right.

Tania: They might know how to scaffold learning better, for example. Yes, I agree with you.

Iris: LSEs have different training. So, they might go about solving the problems in your class, you know, in a different way.

They might give you a different method of dealing with it, because their training is different to teacher training. So, if you're an LSE, your training is how to deal with one child. So, they might give you, you know, efficient way of doing it, a different way of approaching it or how to break it up, as you said. So yes, very good resources as well that one should use. That's why we're A Team in the class.

Tania: Exactly, that's why you're a class team. And **how do you think professional development in our school could be better tailored to address the unique needs and challenges of teachers in different subject areas or grade levels?** So, what can we do better?

Iris: I would like more discussion sessions, especially the vertical ones.

Tania: The vertical ones, you like them.

Iris: But not only in the Junior School. I would like to sometimes meet the early years teachers, and I hear their opinions and they hear ours. Because sometimes I don't think we are aware of each other's good points and problems and practices, you know, and the problems we encounter, in each area, in each sector. And it would also be good for us to meet the senior sector as well sometimes because then they have another outlook on how things are happening in this school and we might, by listening to each other, we come to understand ourselves.

Tania: We are a whole school approach from the beginning to the end.

Iris: Exactly. I feel it's so important that we have a PD day here and there that gets us together, but not only in the team building activities because we did have those and those

are good and fun when we were put into different groups. But I'm also talking about discussing and, you know, the problems we might encounter, the good things that are being practised, but also what we can change and arrange to help each other across the whole school, across the the border. You know, because I have, and sometimes, and I would also like to have a session here and there with our specialists teachers, you know, could speak to them because I think it would also help to understand their outlooks.

Tania: The specialist teachers?

Iris: I think they can help and we never get to really meet them and have a good discussion, not when we have celebrations or at the end of the year celebration, but a really good session with them, you know, a discussion.

Tania: Session wise.

Iris: Yes.

Tania: Curriculum wise.

Iris: Exactly. Yes, I think they can.

Tania: So, you're thinking like, OK, like for example, how can a drama teacher help you when you are maths for example?

Iris: For example.

Tania: Or the music teacher.

Iris: They have different ideas. So yes, I would like those. I would really like.

Tania: To make sense to the student that they're connecting subjects together. So that makes really good sense.

Iris: It makes good sense.

I think it will help a lot. And we get to see each other, you know, in a different way, because sometimes I think you take ideas from each other. You know, we get to know each other in a better way, not just hi and hello. But we get to know each other on a deeper level.

Tania: I think you appreciate as well (because you have a full curriculum in the classroom) when you speak to the specialist teacher and she shares with you her planning of the curriculum and you realise there are similarities and overlap with your own teaching.

Iris: And how we can join forces in teaching, you know?

Tania: Join forces; I like that.

Iris: Together, join forces and do things together.

Tania: And support each other.

Iris: Support like the dance teacher could help us, you know, with or the music teacher could tell us, give us ideas how we can do my interesting movement breaks in the classroom in between lessons. Maybe they could suggest some kind of movement or some kind of song or you know what the percussion that we might use as a break in between each lesson for the children to feel to feel better.

Tania: But not only that. Even curriculum wise.

The music teacher, for example, she was telling them about the notes, the value of the notes. So, practically she was telling them about fractions. I forgot the technical word, but she was mentioning the full and half semi-quaver, semi, demi and they were all fractions. They were all fractions. So, imagine if you these teachers had the conversation and fractions would be introduced at the same time, while the music teacher is doing these music values. You know, it would make perfect sense.

Iris: I think we have a lot of potential, you know, readymade material, which is and sometimes I don't think we use it enough. We are the best resources, the teachers, but probably you don't realise it. We don't get the time to know how to use this talent properly, how to use each other's perspective, the time you know in the right way.

Tania: The time to explore each other, to discuss and see these overlaps.

Last question - So lesson study which comprises of these stages.

Iris: I read it, yes.

Tania: There's the first stage where you study and plan and it's usually where you find the problem that you commonly have as a grade or in this case as a subject and you design a very good, (doesn't need to be a perfect lesson), but a lesson that you think will improve practice. Then you teach it, you observe it and you're not observing there the teacher, but you're observing the learning that's happening and following is a debrief. This means you speak about it. What happened here? Are we happy about the outcome? You then you revise the lesson because that part didn't go very well. Mela, for the next lesson, let's try and change that a bit. And obviously that leads us to reflect if we effectively managed to make a difference.

Was it a waste of time? Was it not? **Would you be interested in learning more about the lesson study and its process and then if yes, why?**

Iris: Yes, I would because it involves collaboration and teamwork between us. It can help us to enhance the teaching experiences for the students because we are building a lesson together. We'll see what went well, what didn't go well. So, we will be building upon what didn't go well, you know, changing things and that will enhance teaching the experiences for our students. And I feel that by working together and collaborating, then it will empower you

personally as well. You know, you will learn more. You will have more ideas to work with in the classroom.

Tania: More confidence.

Iris: Yes increase confidence as a teacher.

As long as everybody understands that we're not criticising each other but just, you know, working on the lessons, then it should be very helpful.

Tania: I think the mindset is very important. I'm not here to judge you, I'm here to learn from you.

Iris: You know, as long as everybody gets the right idea that we are doing it together to help each other, to get better ideas, to get better teaching, teaching experiences to help the children more in class, then it should be yes, a very good experience to learn more about it, to explore. It should be a nice thing to explore, yes.

Tania: OK, Miss Iris, thank you very much. I don't know if you want anything else you would like to add.

Iris: **You're** welcome. Thank you.

Tania: So, I am going to stop the recording.

Iris: OK. All right. Thank you, Miss Tania. Good day.

Interviews – Rose

Tuesday 25th March 2025

Tania: Good evening, Miss Rose. Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. The purpose of this interview is to gather your insights on the current professional development sessions offered at our school. Specifically, we aim to understand your perspectives on what has been effective and ineffective during these PD days, as well as what strategies have helped you overcome challenges within the school context. Your feedback will be invaluable in enhancing the design of future PD sessions, particularly in exploring the potential of Lesson Study (LS) as an effective professional development tool.

The interview is expected to last approximately 20 minutes. You are welcome to respond in either English or Maltese, depending on your preference. As agreed, this interview will be recorded for transcription purposes.

Miss Rose, **think of a recent profession development exercise you participated in. What characteristics have you found useful and ultimately contributed to your class or great teaching?** If you want me to refresh your memory, maybe about the PD Days that we had, I can do that.

Rose: Don't worry, we went through them earlier on and I remember. I really liked a PD Day that was on more than one than one day. It was the one we did of Maths.

During this PD Day, the Maths educational officers came over and they were very, very well prepared. I think they gave us like an overview, a brief presentation. Then they, they helped us go through, I remember bar modelling step by step, giving us examples. We worked them out and then they worked them out with us. Eventually we were put into groups and we did a maths session. I forgot what it was. But I remember that it was really, really good the way they presented it, the way they guided us step by step. Even on another occasion when they came and they spoke to us about maths journaling that I found really interesting. And also, the way they were so open to share with us. They shared their PowerPoints very freely and I communicated with them twice and on both occasions, they were very, very, very helpful. Their openness to help us as well.

Tania: So, the continuous support continues through e-mail.

Rose: Exactly.

Tania: You knew that if you want, you could reach out for them.

Rose: At one point I remember I told her: “Can you give us some like bar modelling examples of previous years since our children were being introduced to it for the first time?” And she did.

She told me it's no problem and she had sent me to feed a lot of resources, and I remember with those resources I did some PowerPoints which really, really helped.

Tania: And the session itself, you liked it because it was not one time so.

Rose: They were very well prepared. They themselves were very well prepared. They helped you relate to it, they helped us. The presentation was good. The videos that they showed us were good. Then they were giving us example. Then they asked us to work out and we worked out with them, you know.

Tania: That is crucial. That they show you, they just don't tell you how to do it. They let you try it out.

And while you're doing it and you're finding difficulties; you have an expert to support you.

Rose: That's it, That's it.

Tania: And I think the fact that it was issued staggered helped. The first time it was an overview, and it was on the CPA approach and then it was on bar model and then next time it was journalling.

Rose: You are being supported throughout, you know, and it's not that just the one off. You are working on Maths throughout the year, it is not just in September and that's it. You know, you forget all about it or mostly you forget all about it. You end up having so many things to do. But if you have continuous support, then even you as a teacher, you know if you lag behind or you're slacking in one way or another, you revive it your commitment to that goal.

Tania: So, you're saying that professional development doesn't need to be linked to a day specifically?

Rose: Ideally, it's going throughout the year. Like we follow the SDP, you know, and we said we want to work on dyslexia. We're going to work on maths; we're going to work on this restorative practices. But throughout the year, we need more, more, more exposure to it basically, you know, more examples and even to do a bit of a postmortem. And I find that we rather than a postmortem, maybe not, that's not the right word. Evaluation, evaluation. OK, how are we doing? What problems are we encountering? You know as much.

Tania: True.

Rose: By identifying the problems, you can then, you know, solve them or reinvent and see how you go about it, you know?

Tania: Question 2 - OK, thank you. **Rose, can you recall occasions when professional development days did not meet your expectations?**

What factors contributed to its ineffectiveness?

Rose: I remember when we did of the restorative practice, (I like the idea of it: How do you feel?) I found two things basically. Once I remember when we were in the multipurpose hall. It was noisy. It was, you know, it's the location. The location wasn't helpful. I remember it was at the end of the day; I couldn't concentrate much. And also, the speaker I found, I remember asking her for something. She told me: "No, I do not share these with you. I do not share. You look; you look it up. You look it up!"

Tania: I see

Rose: Like, you know, she didn't share the videos or the PowerPoint. Nothing. She shared nothing, you know. So, I found that a bit, I don't know, unhelpful.

Tania: Anything else that maybe in the past you recall did not help the delivery of the PD?

Rose: No, I mean mostly that I recall like.

Tania: Nothing. OK, **when you come across a teaching related problem in your classroom, how do you tend to approach it?**

Rose: I try to identify what kind of problem it is. If you did, for example, am I teaching, you know, at a higher level than the children's level? Then when I know where the children are, then I need to, you know, go down and go back a few steps, you know, and take it slow - bit by bit. If it's a new topic that I am teaching and I realise that the children are not understanding again, I'll try to do it in another way. I try to find another way how to teach it. I also discuss with my colleagues, we have the planning sessions and I ask them: "How did your children find this topic? Was it difficult for them or was it just my class?"

Tania: Like that you gauge: "Was it me, was it?"

Rose: Was it our grade? Was it the topic itself which was too difficult? I mean, over the years I have, you know, I've experienced that I can tell certain topics, for example in maths, I know that they always, for example, topic of time, they always find it difficult, always, always, always even the most intelligent children. So, some topics I know beforehand that they're going to find them difficult. So again, you try to stick it as much as you can. And secondly, as I said, we discuss it, I discussed with the other colleagues as well. And I say, and I ask, OK, how did you do it? What did you do? You get ideas from one another.

Tania: You ask yourself - Is it maybe my teaching, the kids' level?

Rose: Right, like in teaching first you need to understand why did the children not understand this? Was it the time? Was the timing wrong? Was it, I don't know, the children

were over excited about something, so I need to redo it because they weren't ready for it. Was it the subject too difficult so I need to go back. You need to identify what actually happened and then move on from there.

Tania: So, your approach is mostly speaking to your colleagues.

Rose: Yes, and evaluation as well. I evaluate myself. OK, what have I done? What happened in the lesson? Why did the children not understand? Did I rush maybe too much? I evaluate a lot myself. I do a lot of self-reflection. I believe it helps a lot.

Tania: It does. It does.

You think professional development in our school could be better tailored?

Rose: Again, speaking to the teachers as we go along, not like in the beginning of the year when everyone is still in haze or at the end of the year when everyone wishes to go home. You know when the timing is important.

During the year, at the beginning of the year, we're all ready to start. At the end of the year, we're ready to go home. You know, I don't want to talk about anything else. So, it's during the year that we encounter these problems. I mean, you come to our planning sessions often. That is something really good because you're open to listen to what we're doing, given our problems can be turned into professional development days. If we're finding a problem with this, what can we do about it? For example, I have a lot of children this year that they don't hold their pens properly. It's a worry. But at the same time, you know, how do I intervene? How do I go about it? And I know it's wrong, but should I interfere?

Should I not interfere? And how should I interfere? So, problems like that crop up along the year, you know, as we go along. We also have, for example, something that I see for Maltese. I think we need to get someone to do some revision of Maltese rules. There are new teachers who need it. Those can be, you know, it could be a general thing for everyone, because I find that even some teachers struggle with spelling in Maltese to be honest. So, you could do it as a whole grade.

We're going to have two-hour session with someone and he's going to go through the spelling rules and what it is for us, you know, refreshing because it is something you need. There could be planning session dedicated to subject development for example. I think we all would benefit from it and subject oriented, and problem oriented as teachers encounter them along the year and we say - We're seeing this common in our grade.

Tania: Together, because there are obviously the ones that the sector must cater for, like the action plan.

Rose: Obviously there is the SDP.

Tania: As Grade 7, you are finding this particular problem in Maths, and you tackle that PD session during your planning time or through your vertical meetings too. So, you're saying in Maltese we always suffer for, for example, we need to revisit the rules. And then there are the class problems like the ones that you mentioned a specifically in your class you try to solve the problem with the help of SLT.

Rose: So, for the class problems I do not expect a whole day dedicated to me. We as teachers will come to you with these problems. But if you see a common thread, listen, we've been hearing this from many teachers. You know, a lot of children are coming up this problem. What can we do about it?

I mean, there are so many, so many problems say that we face.

Tania: What you spoke about before is interesting, this sort of professional development. You know that we are located days for our PD and we do try to fit in, you know. It's very difficult because there is like a stipulated time between students and teacher. There's a stipulated time by the government that you have to respect, you know. So, for us, those few days that we have in September are gold.

Rose: Yes, and we know that we try. They're important, but you're setting the tune for the year. I know I am expected to be listening a lot in September during our PD, you know what I mean. But along the year, you know, if there's more communication and you know, you respond to our problems, it as if even us, as teachers, we feel that we're being heard, you know what our problems are.

Tania: For example, this year we had for example the one of the PBL.

Rose: We did.

Tania: We did try to for example, at the beginning of the year we, we started off with everyone like a lecture style sort of and now Mr H...

Rose: Now. Now he's coming to our planning.

Tania: And then from the planning, you start a sort of communication, listen, you want to bounce your ideas, you want to check in with him.

Rose: That's what that you know, yes, a lot, because as we're saying, there was first the lecture style, then the small group as a grade, you know what we are going would like to do and monitor what we're doing it. So yes, that's great.

Tania: You need support when you're practically doing it, that is where you encounter the problems.

So, last question - lesson study comprises these stages. There is the study and the planning. So obviously you study and like that you see where the problem lies. And then, there is the

problem identified and there's a commonality between us. Let's try and do something then. Then you plan the intervention, what can we do to make it better? It's not designed to make a perfect lesson, obviously, because it can never be 100% perfect. But the idea is that from it we learn, you know, and then obviously the teacher teaches it. It's important that we're not passing judgement on the teacher because that's very sort of you put the teacher in an awkward position. We're not judging her how she teaches her style. We're judging how the, the students are learning.

Obviously, you observe the planned lesson, and later there's the debrief, which is like a discussion - what went well, what did not went well. And then obviously you revise and you reteach because you change a little bit of things. And then the last thing, as you said, well, reflection is very important. And so, where are we now? Sort of did we improve? Did we see student achievement or motivation at least?

Would, would you be interested in learning about LS?

Rose: I would. When you stop and reflect and when you discuss, you're always going to learn. You're always going to learn. Very often we go through one lesson after the other. I mean, we're so busy with so many things that you won't have time for these things. But when you actually do, you realise that you will learn. And even we learn from one another a lot. Yeah, that's very important. I mean, something that we can do also.

So, something I think that we used to do is sharing of good practice, which is really nice because that is something you're not telling the other teachers to do this or that. No, you're saying to them: Listen, I did this and it really worked.

I did this and it's really (I'm not saying this is the cure for all), but it worked. But when you hear other teachers recommending that practice you believe them. So, you're literally sharing of good practice. You're sharing something that you did. This is a good idea for a PD day.

Tania: I think so, yes, I think it would be.

Rose: Really good. Nice.

Tania: Because there are very good practices in the school and sometimes we keep them to ourselves and instead we should celebrate them and share them. What problem is that sometimes not all teachers are willing to share or they feel they're in the spotlight

Rose: Always. There's always that one, you know that.

Tania: Small paces; we will get there. At the beginning, lesson observation was a treat to most teachers. Now everyone got used to it. I mean, we're not there to, sort of, judge. We could just go to observe and to see if the students are learning. But I think some teachers see it as putting US is sort of a subject of judgement in front of the others. But it is not the case.

Rose: Yes, sharing good practice is different. Lesson study, to be honest can be more judgmental because you are actually teaching and directing while your colleagues are seeing you teach so that that is a bit you know, judgmental I see it.

Tania: That is what I, I would like to stress. We're not judging Miss Rose how well she's teaching the lesson. We are judging how effective the lesson we planned together is.

Rose: Yes, yes, I understand. And we should be able to do that, you know, if we are respectful enough and we are already feeling we all respect one another, so.

Tania: I don't know if you need if you would like to add anything else in general.

Rose: That's all.

Tania: I told you I'm not going to take longer than 20 minutes. Thank you very much.

Rose: Thank you.

Appendix E: Maltese transcripts of Debriefing sessions

Lesson study 1 – Debriefing

Il-Ħamis 3^{ta} April 2025

Parteċipanti – Daisy, Iris, Lily, Rose, Violet and Tania.

Tania: Ok, ha nibdew minnek, ok? Lily

Lily: Tajjeb, tajjeb. Mela.

Tania: Kif tħossok li morna?

Lily: Lfhimni, in ġenerali naħseb li mhux hażin, tajjeb? Hija attivita` li lit- tfal togħgobhom. Għaliex mhux jaraw stampa per eżempju fuq l-interactive whiteboard u kulhadd jirripeti l-istess haġa. Jiena għalija togħgobni, din l-haġa li jmissu l-affarijiet u jkollhom xi haġa li jaraw quddiemhom li hija differenti minn stampa statika li ma tiċċaqlaqx, tgħinhom iktar jippruvaw jikkellmu bil-Malti. U l-fatt li nippruvaw nżommu 40 minuta fejn id-diskors huwa kollu bil-Malti hija xi haġa kbira għalihom. Nippruvaw kemm nistgħu nżommu bil-Malti biex it-tfal ikunu jistgħu jkomplu jipprattikaw il-lingwa.

Fuq kollox dan huwa l-ilsien tagħna. Personalment naħseb jiena għalija li morna tajjeb. Lfhem, m' aħniex 100% imma qatt ma tkun 100%.

Tania: Għenek li taħsab fuq d-domandi li ppreparajna?

Lily: Iva, d-domandi importanti għax inkella t-tfal ma jkomplux. Minn klassi ta' 22 ikollok erbgħa jew hamsa li jkunu kapaċi jagħmluha sentenza. Imma oħrajn trid tgħidilhom l-mistoqsija u tibdihom r-risposta biex inti lihom tħallihom ikollom ċans għall-aħħar kelma jew l-aħħar żewg kelmiet. Għax kif rajtu ma tantx hemm tfal li kapaċi jagħmluha s-sentenza kollha, sħiħa.

Imma ġieli jagħmluha s-sentenza, imma t-tfal kollha jippruvaw. It-tfal juruk li qed jippruvaw. Qed jippruvaw hafna. Qed joħorġu mill-post l-iktar komdu għalihom fejn jikkellmu bil-ingliż, anki per eżempju llum innutajt li għal ċertu studenti li dejjem jikkellmu bl-ingliż, illum kif qalu kelma bil-ingliż, wafqu u hasbu xi jridu jgħidu bil-Malti.

Daisy: Jiena hadt gost, interessanti kienet il-lezzjoni. Jiena naf ftit mit-tfal u ovvjament kienu miegħi sentejn ilu, fejn sentejn ilu fil-grade kienet diffiċli għalihom jgħidu kelma u llum rajthom jikkellmu anki jagħmlu struttura ta' sentenza per eżempju kjen hemm tifla minnhom għamlitha vera lanqas ridt nemmen li l-istess tifla. Tiskanta meta jiġu esposti għal-lingwa kemm tagħmel differenza. Kibru wkoll għax sentejn jagħmlu differenza kbira.

Lily: Iva, sentejn tagħmel differenza kbira.

Daisy: Kienet interessanti għax xi haġa li jarawha kuljum. L-ikel hu xi haġa li jaraw kuljum allura aktar familjari.

Tania: Is-sugġett jgħinek.

Daisy: Familjari. Ovjament meta se nsemmu tan-nanna – *Tan-nanna ħelu manna* – għoġbitni prosit.

Lily: Grazi

Iris: Iva jiena ħadt gost narhom. L-ewwel nett għax rajthom entuzijasti. Kollha pruvaw jgħidu dik ix-xi haġa mqarr kelma waħda u dak l-entuzjazmu vera għoġobni. Dehru li qed jieħdu pjaċir fil-lezzjoni u bl-affarijiet li bdew jsibu fil kaxxa. Dehru ukoll li mqarr jgħidu kelma waħda, imma li qed jieħdu sehem.

Tania: L- attitude.

Iris: Iva, l-attitudni vera positiva. IL-lezzjoni ħarget vera positiva. U rajthom it-tfal li vera xtaqu jikkontribuxxu.

Tania: Jikkontribuxxu.

Iris: Jikkontribuxxu, vera bdew jippruvaw.

Tania: X'taħseb Rose?

Rose: Dehru li kellhom il-vokabularju li qed jitgħallmu din is-sena jigifieri **ħwawar, ħabaq**, dak żgur li ma kinux jafuh imkien iehor, deher li għallimtulhom inti, dehru li tgħallmu u qed juzawh u hija xi haġa sabiha għax mhux qed nirriciklaw l-erba` kelmiet li nafu imma aħna għallimnihom xi haġa u issa qed juzawha u għaliya dik, a big star to you. Għamilt pass 'l quddiem.

Lily: Thank you, grazi. Jiena ppruvajt li dan t-tieni term ħabba li kellna anke t-tema tal-open day, it-tema tal-ikel, it-tfal kienu jafu li t-tema ġejja b-ikel, anke l-komprensjonijiet u l-fehim mis-smiġħ kienu kollha immirati lejn dawn l-affarijiet.

Rose: Trid tesponhjom għal dawn l-affarijiet, through different means.

Lily: Il-biċċa hi din – li fil-Malti m'għandniex ħafna riżorsi tal-Malti. Per eżempju jekk tidhol tal-inġliż fuq s-sites, issib kemm trid. Tal-malti m'għandniex dawk il-riżorsi u allura rridu noħolquhom aħna – nagħmlu l-kitbiet, il-poeziji, biex it-tfal żammenihom, jigifieri kien term kważi komplut fuq hekk.

Rose: Trid tesponihom b'modi differenti għax huma jassorbu.

Tania: Qisha kienet concentrated effort li kulhadd ikun fuq it-tema. Ghax ahna kien hemm il-pretasking u parti mis-suċċess kien li kien hemm il-progrett tal-PBL.

Lily: Il-project based learning jgħin hafna.

Tania: li hadna mill ingliz, li hadna mis science!

Lily: Ghena hafna l PBL biex nghaqqdu kollox flimkien.

Tania: Ahna kellna nsegwu ir-rubrik, sewwa u l ahhar wahda issemi l-irwol tal-ghalliema bl-interventi u domandi tagħha. Jien għalija int kont pivotol. Inti anki b' kelma wahda li qalu t tfal kont kapaċi tibni storja jew tillinkja ma' xi episodji li għaddew minnu. Inti kont il-ħin kollu on the go. Il-parti tiegħek kienet essenzjali, kont attiva daqshom. Inti ħdimt daqshom. Ahna dejjem ngħidu li t-tfal biex jitgħallmu huma jridu jaħdmu, pero jien rajtek li inti għamilt sforz magħhom, daqshom, biex iżomm il-momentum. Inti għamilt 40 minuta ma waqftx.

Lily: Jien għalija din hi xi haġa regolari. Tliet darbiet fil-gimgha nwarrab xi haġa u nżomm id-diskors. Jien fil-klassi tiegħi mdorrijin nagħmlu dawn l-eżercizzji.

Daisy: Int trid tqis li dawn m'humieq esposti, dawn id-dar ma jitekllmux hliet Ingliz. Il-ftit li jisimgħu Malti l-iskola. Is-sajf ma jgħinx,

Violet: Ghidtu diġa hafna affarijiet u jien naqbel ma' kollha. Il-lezzjoni kienet tajba hafna ghax biex iżomm klassi 40 minuta shaħ, meta nafu li l-Malti mhix il-lingwa nattivha tagħhom, hija xi haġa kbira, jgħifieri prosit.

Il-bidu kien b'saħħtu hafna, l-użu tar-realja, l-użu tal-oġġetti vera naħseb li halla l-impatt. U naħseb apparti dik, ir-rizorsa li kienet effettiva, kif kienu qegħdin jgħidu, kienet int. Inti kont l-iktar rizorsa effettiva. Forsi m' għandniex daqshekk rizorsi fil-Malti. Imma fejn jidħol t-taħdit, l-ikbar rizorsa huwa l-għalliem innifsu. Inti kont dak il-ħin kollu, jekk per eżempju, jekk qaluha hażina specialment fejn kienet tidħol konjugazzjoni kont qed tikkoregħom. U tikkoregħom issa, u t-terg tikkoregħi dak it-tense wara. Jissimagħha, jissimagħha, jissimagħham – fl-ahhar, ha jibdew jidraw. U fil-fatt, fl-ahhar tal-lezzjoni, żbalji fil-konjugazzjoni ċerti tfal, bdew jikkoregħom wahdom.

Xi haġa oħra, forsi, b'dik l-lezzjoni li għamilt qabel, li jidhru li kienu ppreparati tajjeb bil-vokabolarju, u l-project-based approach, l-approach tematiku, jidher li qed jaħdem hafna, għaliex kienu ppreparati anki b'vokabolarju marbut max-xjenza bħal **vitamini, minerali**, jgħifieri qed jitransferixxu anki mis-sugġett tax-xjenza għas-sugġett tal-malti. Forsi, itihom ffit għajnunha, biex ma nibqgħux fuq vokabolarju biss. Inti għamiltha b'mod spontanju, kienet tajba u ibda għamilha. Imma ittihom ukoll, per eżempju, flok dejjem jgħid "**Jiena nħobb njekol**" jgħid "**Jiena nippreferi njekol**", **L-ikel favorit tiegħi huwa...**" Biex inti tespandi ir-repertoire ta' kif wiehed jesprimi ruħu.

Għoġbitni hafna l-espressjoni spontanja, (u għalhekk l- aqwa riżorsa hija l-għalliema) x'hin hadt l-okkazjoni ta' **jinzilli għasel** jew **tan- nanna helu manna**. Kont forsi nagħfas naqra iktar fuqhom u norihom kif jintuzaw f'kuntest.

L-aħħar haġa li rajt meta kont qed indur il-lesson plan hija fejn hemm l-assessjar. Inti fl-aħħar kellek ippreparata u għamiltha, inti bdejt tistaqsihom biex tara fehmu, x'inhil differenza bejn l-ikel proċessat u l-ikel frisk, u li l-frisk huma aħjar minn dak ipproċessat. Dan huwa tajjeb pero qed tassessja l- kontenut. Issa aħna hawn hekk qed nassessjaw il- lingwa. Mela jiena bħala assessment task, kont nistaqsihom per eżempju, **“Għiduli haġa waħda ġdida li tgħallimtu llum fit-taħdit tal-Malti.”**

U forsi jkun hemm xi hadd li jgħid -

“tgħallimt ngħid “jinzilli għasel.” “Tgħallimt ngħid - brunġiela, għax kont insejt imma tgħallimt il-kelma brunġiela, xhin inti kkorreġejtni.”

Tania: Ngħaqqdu l- Lo's mal-Assessjar halli tkun full cycle.

Violet: Biex inti tiċċekkja verament li kont qed tgħallimhom jithaddtu, mela issa iġbor l-evidenza ta' x'tgħallmu minn dak it-taħdit li għamilna fil-lezzjoni.

Tania: Mela għal darb'oħra din aħna se nirrangawha. Jigifieri li Lo's tagħmel sens li nillinkjawhom fl-aħħar mal-assesjar.

Violet: LO huwa l-punt tat-tluq imma huma wkoll il-punt tal-wasla. Niċċekjaw jekk wasalniex jew le billi nagħmlu din l-attivitá ` zghira tal-assesjar.

Tania: Tal-assesjar mhux tal-konkluzjoni?

Violet: Tista` idahhalha ukoll fl-aħħar nett nett, tgħid ha ndaħhal ftit kitba. Taqbad il-white boards zghar u jiktbulu u juruk. Inti ma ddumx. Imbagħad skont il-hin li se jkollok. U tiġbor l-evidenza b'dak il-mod.

Tania: U jien ha nikkumenta haġa oħra wkoll. Il-PPT eżatt ma tantx zuawha.

Iris/Daisy: Naħseb li tant sar pretasking tajjeb li ma kienx hemm bżonnha.

Violet: Pero importanti li r-riżorsa prinċipali fit-taħdit tibqa' l-għalliema. Tista' jkollok riżorsa oħra bħal whiteboard pero l-għalliema tibqa' r-riżorsa prinċipali li tinteraġixxi mat- tfal il-hin kollu, il-pass kajman ta' kif tkellimt mat-tfal mingħajr ma tkun mgħaġġla hafna, li jifhmuk. Dak huwa tajjeb hafna. U fl-ebda hin ma hassewhom intimidati li jtkellmu.

Jien inzertajt ma' grupp ta' studenti li kienu ftit kwieti. Imma malli tmur titkellem magħhom (l-għalliema) fl-ebda hin ma kien hemm rezistenza li jtkellmu. It-tfal kienu engaged.

Daisy: Anki meta tqis li kien hemm aħna...

Violet: u lanqas ma ddejqu li jiżbaljaw, u dik hija important għax inti meta tagħmel żball u tikkoreġik l-għalliema, u xi kultant bdew jikkoreġu lilhom infushom, dik hija healthy ħafna.

Tania: Dik hija l kultura tal-klassi. Ovvjament nixtiequha l-kultura tas-settur u tal-iskola li aħna dejjem nisfquhom u ngħidulhom li jekk ma tkunx l-iskola l-post fejn tagħmel żball, fejn se jkun dan il-post? L-iskola hija safe place fejn tiegħu żball u ma niddejqux minn xulxin, nikkoreġu lil xulxin, aħna ħafna drabi bħala teachers niegħdu żball attaposta biex nuruhom li it's ok to do a mistake.

Violet: Jekk mhux se jisimgħu l-għalliema titkellem bil-Malti, jekk ma tkunx ir-role model hi?

Tania: Aħna hallejna l-powerpoint, halli tkun safe net peress li nixtiequ li kull student jirnexxi, allura forsi jkun hemm xi ħadd ma jridx jgħid kelma b'xejn, jaf li għandu dik is- safety ta' fuq l-interactive white board. Għandu kif jibda s-sentenza. Fil-kas ta' Lily ma juzawhiex, pero Lily she is very supportive, riżorsa kbira fil-klassi.

Violet: Ir-rabta l-hin kollu ma' dak li sar qabel, il-project-based approach kien qed jaħdem ħafna. Jiena kieku forsi nissugerixxi tmorru oltre – xhin tidraw bil-project based approach – tibdew tħaddmu l-CLIL - Content, language, integrated learning - jiġifieri per eżempju inti tagħmel il-lezzjoni tax-xjenza bil-malti. Mela inti qed tagħmel il-lezzjoni tax-xjenza u waqt il-lezzjoni qed jitgħallmu kliem bħal **vitamini, minerali**. Ovvjament tuża livell tal-lingwa li t'fal se jifhmuk, li l kuncetti xjentifiċi se jaslu xorta, imma ssir bil-malti.

Rose: Naqra tqila għalina. Li nużaw termini matematiku iva.

Violet: CLIL – dan jintuża ħafna fil-Foreign Language Teaching imma biex issir prassi jew Prattika naqra diffiċli, pero` nistgħu ngħidu darba fit-term, nidentifikaw lezzjoni tax-xjenza u ha nipprova li t-tfal ikollhom ħin ieħor fejn huma esposti għall-Malti! Forsi fejn il- kontenut xjentifiku ma jkunx daqshekk tqil.

Tania: U le... nistgħu nagħmluha fl-lezzjonijiet oħra bħal religion jew humanities.

Violet: Tista'. Speċjalment fejn għandek sugġetti relatati ma' Malta.

Iris: Aħna għandna hekk. Il-humanities parti minnu bil-Malti.

Violet: Iva... mela hemm hekk int għandek sors fejn inti tista' tgħallimhom ħafna vokabularju.

Tania: li jiġrilek Violet huwa li bħala għalliema tgħejja ħafna. Għax non stop, exhausting, li inti l- hin kollu trid tagħti l-input. Output ikollok ftit, pero` kif qed tgħid, trid tipprova. Tibda bi ftit.

Violet: Jien għalhekk qed ngħid. La darba tissodaw fil-PBL, li jidher li qed jaħdem tajjeb, the next step tkun CLIL.

Tania: Il-PBL huwa t-tieni sena fir-4 u l- 5 sena, l ewwel sena fis-6 u 7 sena. Jidher li qed jimxi sew pero huwa hafna xoghol fuq l-għalliema.

Lily: U vera huma hafna xoghol fuq l-għalliema. Biex iġġib kollox flimkien din il-biċċa xoghol, ghax issa li qed iġġibni fiha, jien stajt din it-taħdita nqabbada ma' Marsaxlokk per eżempju. Stajt faċilment ngħaqqada mal-humanities. Imma hemm hafna u hafna opportunitajiet.

Violet: Tipprova xi haġa żgħira, tibda ffit u mhux tiġi mposta mill-iskola – isma' trid tibda tagħmel il-CLIL. Tgħid naf biha, għandi l PBL għaddej u min irid jippruvha. Il-Clil tifrunkalek il-hin ukoll.

Tania: Irridu insemmu li dawn huma l-erba' teachers li jieħdu hsieb il-Malti – huma s- subject coordinators. U għandhom dak l-entuzjażmu u l-passjoni extra li forsi haddiehor m'għandux. Jiġifieri dak huwa fattur ieħor. Jien naf kif jaħdmu dawn it -eachers pero mhux kollha bħalhom. Hemm min għadu juża' it-translation, ghax jaqtgħu qalbhom, ghax jgħejjew.

Violet: It-translation hija l-agħar haġa.

Hemm studji li jgħidulek li biex titgħallem kelma trid tiltaqa' magħha seba' darbiet.

Issa jekk qed tittraduċi, din l-opportunita` se nitilfuha.

Rose: Huma mdorrijin li l-lezzjoni tal-kitba mhix translation lesson. (Ms, how do I say this?)

Translation lesson m'huma se jitgħallmu xejn, u int bħala għalliema se tgħejja. Ġlieda mat-tfal biex ma tkunx translation lesson. Jien ngħidilhom – ***“se nagħżlu sentenzi qosra u hfief.”***

Violet: Issa din il-lezzjoni li rajt illum jien tat-taħdit, qed tifrex is-sodda biex fil-kitba, it- tfal jmexxu. Hemm l-ideat, il-verbi, l-istruttura tas-sentenza. Jiġifieri araw kemm huma importanti l-lezzjonijiet tat-taħdit.

Tania: Imbagħad hemm il-kreattività` li t-tfal tagħna għandhom.

Violet: U hemm ċerta kilba għan-knowledge wkoll.

Tania: Violet, jien naħseb nerggħu nduru r-rubrik? Tajjeb li qsamniehom fi gruppi? (għall-osservaturi?)

Violet: Jien naħseb li kienet idea tajjeb ghax kulhadd jiffoka fuq grupp partikolari.

Tania: Fil-karti tal-osservaturi għal darb' oħra, nħallu iva u le barra, u nħallu biss il-kumment.

Violet: Vera apprezzajt li x'hin spiċċat il-lezzjoni it-tfal ġew jistaqsuk xi haġa u użaw il- Malti. Kemm hu tajjeb li bħala skola nużaw mumentu bħal dawn, bħal istruzzjonijiet fil- kuratur, greetings isiru bil-Malti. It-tfal qed jaraw l-għalliema tużhom.

Iris: Pero` dik tiddependi hafna mill-għalliema. Jekk tħoss il-Malti huwa parti minnek se tużah. Jien nistaqsihom bil-Malti.

Rose: Darba konna hdimna fuq posters bil-Malti.

Tania: Biex taħdem trid tkun parti minn action plan u naqbd u fuq haġa haġa. Ikun hemm direzzjoni.

Lesson study 2 - Debriefing

It-Tnejn 5^{ta'} Mejju 2025

Parteċipanti – Tania, Lily, Rose, Daisy, Iris and Violet

Tania: Miss Iris, kif tħossok li marret il-lezzjoni?

Iris: Sodisfatta bilfatt li fil-bidu tas-sena kien hemm tfal li kieku ħarġu quddiemkom kienu jbaxxu rashom. Li rajt sabiħ fihom illum kien li kienu entużjasti li ħarġu barra u bdew jgħidu xi ħaġa, mqar kelma. L-iktar tfal li joqogħdu lura xtaqu li joħorgu hemm hekk u jgħidu xi ħaġa u jitkellmu, dwar dak li għamlu.

Tania: U fil fatt l-aħħar tlieta li kellek dawk huma l-iktar bagħtuti.

Iris: Ħa nispejga l-aħħar 3 itfal. W**** huwa autistic, A***** giet mill-Ingilterra, hija l- sena tagħha Malta u E*** m'għandu għajnuna ta' xejn, ma jgħinuhx id-dar. Pero ħadt gost li xorta riedu joħorgu, u jagħmluha bħall-oħrajn, jagħmlu li jafu.

Tania: Fehmuk naqra.

Iris: W**** l-iktar wiehed li jaf u jifhmek bil-Malti. Pero' imbagħad E*** u A***** alumenu rajthom li f'sena bdew jifhmuni x'jiena qed ngħidilhom. Avolja ma setgħux jgħidu l-kliem kif bdew jgħiduh l-oħrajn.

Tania: Kien hemm affarijiet li forsi xtaqt li marru aħjar?

Iris: Inkun nixtieq li jgħidu iktar sentenzi imma mhux kollha naslu għas-sentenzi. Kien hemm minnhom li mxew 'l quddiem u jagħmlu sentenza ħafifa 'l hemm u 'l hawn. U kieku naslu sa l- aħħar tas-sena li jkunu iktar kapaċi jgħidu affarijiet bla għajnuna, kienet tkun aħjar.

Imma, almenu naf li għalkemm għinthom huma għamlu l-almu tagħhom biex jippruvaw jaslu. Jien għalhekk ħadt pjaċir għax dawk hemm minnhom li fil-bidu tas-sena, ibqa' ċert li mhux se joħorgulek. Imma darba meta spjegajthom il-gimgha l-oħra x'se jagħmlu, kollha riedu joħorgu jispjegaw x'għamlu. Kollha riedu jgħidu xi ħaġa u għamluha b'entużjażmu.

Għamilthom jaħdmu flimkien biex jħossu kuraġġ b'xulxin. M'għamilthom fi gruppi kbar ħalli ma jhawdux lil xulxin. Ħallejtilhom l-għażla kienet f'idejhom, ma' min se jaħdmu. Ma qgħadtx ngħid xi ħadd tajjeb u xi ħadd ħażin, għax innutajt li gimgha l-oħra huma u jaħdmu, irrespitivament kinux tajbin jew le, kollha bdew jgħinu lil xulxin.

Tania: Nahseb li dan punt importanti fil-Malti. Għax aħna s-soltu, meta għamilt Lesson studies oħra, nigrupjaw iċ-ċelenging children, dawk li jkunu bravi, nagħmluhom flimkien,

halli jimbuttaw lil xulxin. Għax hekk tipperjah ma' xi hadd li jkun naqra iktar batut, then he takes over. Imma naħseb, Rose kienet insistit hafna tiftakar fuqha?

Rose: Jiena mill-esperienza tiegħi li meta nħallihom jagħzlu l-gruppi huma, jkun xi jkun, Malti, Inġliż, ikun xi jkun, jaħdmu iktar. Għax ikun qishom hbieb, għinu lil xulxin, aktar milli niprova ninponi gruppi jiena. Għax hafna drabi jew ma jridux ikunu ma' dik jew mal-iehor, jagħzlu huma jaħdmu iktar. Issa forsi fis-sena li ngħallem jiena, forsi iż-żgħar differenti, imma qed inħallihom jaħdmu huma.

Li ma nħallihomx jagħzlu huma hu meta jaħdmu in pairs; meta nagħmilhom pari, inkella ma taħdimx. Jiġifieri fil-klassi, imbagħad jien inbiddel kif irrid jien. Imma meta nħallihom gruppi, jagħzlu huma.

Lily: Jien għoġbitni hafna, li dan għadhom tfal żgħar u l-Malti għalihom qisna qed nitkellmu lingwa barranija, imma dehru entuzjasti, it-tfal dehru li jridu. Dak li nixtiequ aħna huwa hafna differenti milli jagħtuna huma. Aħna nisperaw li jkollna sentenzi shaħ, sentenzi perfetti, il-verb qiegħed f'postu imma sfortunatament le. Pero' bl-għajnuna ta' Ms Iris kienet kontinwa, il-ħin kollu, konsistenti u dik tgħinhom hafna lit-tfal.

Rose: le, urew hafna interess it-tfal. Deher li kien hemm vokabularju li tgħallmu ukoll. Jiġifieri nistab ċerta li tgħallmuh din is-sena u li pruwaw jużawh. Jiġifieri dik importanti ukoll. Li qed jitgħallmu.

Lily: U huma kienu qed jistennew li l-għalliema tagħhom tkun hemm, il-ħin kollu. Li qed tipromptjohom.

Iris: Iva ikunu jriduha dik in-naqra, li tkun hdejhom.

Daisy: Jien rajt idea tajba li għamlu l-ħendawt qabel u b'hekk għenithom għax meta tara viżwali tiftakar il-vokabularju iżjed. Kif tgħid Rose il-vokabolari tgħallmuh, dehru li tgħallmu.

U naf li kien hemm tfal li kienu miegħi qabel, li kienu jirrifjutaw . Letteralment kienu jirrifjutaw u ħadt pjaċir narhom li pruwaw, diffiċli jagħmlu sentenza veru, imma għalinqas fehmuk u pruwaw. Dan huwa sinjal tajjeb li ħadu interess.

Iris: Qisu bhala preparazzjoni għalija ukoll hi, li ilna li bdejna, li fil brejk induruhom u nistaqsihom: "X'għandek fil-kaxxa tal-ikel illum?" Issa saru jiġu u jgħiduli: "Nista ngħidlek x għandi illum fil-kaxxa tal-ikel? Qabel ma nstaqsi jien, jgħiduli u jgħiduha bil-Malti. Tant dahlet go fihom li nsaqsi fuq il-kaxxa tal-ikel bil-Malti, li bil-Malti jsaqsi.

Kulhadd: Ir-repetizzjoni hux vera!

Tania: Din hija il-konessjoni mar-rejalja. Tagħmel sens għax xi haġa li qed jarawha, imissuha ta' kuljum. Jien ħadt gost għax dehru li kienu preparati fil-vokabolari jiġifieri tgħallmuh sew. Jien forsi xi haġa li kont imbiddel jien, int kont qed tuża hafna prompts. Qisek tagħtihom hafna mis-sentenza. Ma nafx kieku forsi tistaqsihom.

Iris: Ittihom il-bidu tas-sentenza!

Tania: Jew inkella jekk itihom is-sentenza, (xi kultant ikollok tagħtihom is-sentenza), forsi kont jgħiegħluhom jirrepetuha. Biex tgħinu fil-binja tal-istruttura tas-sentenza għax il-vokabularju kienu jafuh. Anki dawk li ma tantx jafu Malti bdew jgħidu kliem. Jigifieri kliem qalu imma sentenza bagħtew.

Rose: iva li jirrepetu – “Jiena nħobb il-meraq tal-laring.” Ħalli ma jgħiduilekx, imma biex tħegghom jgħaqqdu sentenza bi tliet kelmiet.

Tania: Taqbad 2 sentence starters bħal: “Jien nħobb jew Jiena nippreferi” u qisek dejjem tħambaq fuqhom.

Violet: Jiena naf li l Year 4 mhixieq sena faċli għax jibdew isiru konxji meta jieħdu żball u jindunaw li ma jafux jikkellmu jigifieri rridu nżommuha f’moħħna. Fejn jidhol il-livell ta’vokabularju, naħseb għandhom vokabularju fejn tidhol it-tema, li huwa vast biżżejjed. Li innuttajt ukoll li ma kienx qed jigi pprattikat il-vokabularju biss, imma kienu qed jiprattikaw, (xi haġa li it-tfal li ma jikkellmux il-Malti jbagħtu fiha – kien għad hemm ftit qed jagħmlu l- iżball imma la darba qed jisimgħu se tgħin) li jgħidu “tal-frawli, tal-banana”. Ġeneralment l-artiklu u l-particella jaqbżuh, imorru mal-ewwel għan-nom. Imma il-fatt li qed jisimgħuh il-ħin kollu, dik l-istruttura, kien hemm ħafna li qed juzawha tajjeb, oħrajn li għadhom qed jagħmlu l- iżball, pero’ ma ninkwetax għax la darba qed jisimgħu oħrajn u hemm repetizzjoni xi darba se juzawha huma wkoll.

Kif qalet Tania, kieku jien kont intihom frażijiet, bħal ma tajniehom il-vokabularju. B’hekk jaċċessaw it-taħdita. Nagħtihom frażijiet żgħar per eżempju “Għazilt li ngħib miegħi l-iskola... Għazilt li npoġġi fil-kaxxa tal-ikel... Jien nippreferi... B’hekk intuhom il-kliem għaqqiedi u l-kliem tal-bidu.

Mela apparti il-vokabularju nagħmel set ta’ kliem għaqqiedi u sett ta’ bidu ta’sentenza.

Suġġeriment – Xi haġa li tgħin, isiru recordings qosra, anki bejn 2 LSEs li jagħmlu it-taħdita fuq il-kaxxa tal-ikel. Tiġi mudell u juruhom l-użu ta’ dan il-kliem għaqqiedi u l-bidu tas-sentenzi. Lċ-ċeling, kollha qbilna, li jgħaqqdu is-sentenzi. Huma vokabularju għandhom, l-artiklu bil-particella għandhom, issa il-pass li jmiss huwa daqsxejn diffiċli u għalhekk irridu ngħinuhom jaċċessaw it-taħdit.

Mil-bqija it-tfal kienu interesati, kienu motivati, il-lesson kienet pjuttost twila u diffiċli jzommu l-attenzjoni jigifieri li baqghu attenti kien sinjal tajjeb. Għax mhux faċli tibqa tisma. U aħna dak l exposure irridu – li it-tfal jisimgħu.

Tania: Iris, tgħinhom ukoll izommu l-attenzjoni billi tesigi li d-desks tagħhom ikunu clear, ħalli ma jkunx hemm distrazzjonijiet. Anki ċerti rutini tal-klassi li għandha jgħinu – eżempju jixorbu qabel jew wara l-lezjoni ħalli l-attenzjoni tibqa hemm.

Iris: Jien fil-lezzjoni ngħidihom nieqfu ftit minuti u jkollhom djarju antik u joqgħodu jpingu, min jixrob, min imur il-kamra tal-banju, jien nagħmel xi haġa....ikunu dawkl 4/5 minuti bejn kull lesson jkunu jafu li hemm break żgħir u wara nergu nibda lezzjoni oħra.

U l-haġa ta "Nirrispettaw lil xulxin" ilha għaddejja mill-bidu tas-sena. Jekk int trid li haddieħor jisingħek, mela int trid tisma lilu ukoll.

Violet: Dik hija waħda mill-kisbiet tat-tgħallim tat-taħdit. Nuri rispett li min qed jittellem. Importanti li jisingħu għax hemm ikunu esposti għal-lingwa. Ahna nafu li x'aktarx l-unika Malti li qed jisma' huwa fl-iskola.

Tania: Ahna ma kellniex çans niltaqgħu mill-aħħar darba li ltaqjna kollha flimkien, iltaqgħu Rose, Iris u Daisy u għamlu r-riflessjoni.....għax kieku kienet tkun idea tajba li ma' din il-lesson nillinkjaw l-assessjar mal-kisbiet kif kienet issugheriet Violet wara l-ewwel Lesson study.

Rose: Jien għal-lezzjoni li jmiss ippjanat li fl-aħħar tal-lezzjoni ikolli board, u jiktbu l-frazi li tgħallmu. Issa naraw kif se taħdem, għax jien is-soltu l-lezzjoni nispiçça billi jgħiduli kemm għogħbithom il-lezzjoni mill-wieħed sa hamsa. Kemm tħossok kunfidenti li tgħallimtha din il lezzjoni u jurini bis-swaba.'

Violet: Il-lezzjoni minnha nnifisha kienet qed tassessja pero' biex fl-aħħar tigbor dik l-evidenza.

Tania: Jiena nifihma lil Iris li qasmithom fi gruppi zgħar pero' jiena nibda ninkwieta li jkun hemm hafna repetizzjoni.

Iris: Iva, vera jkollok.

Tania: Għax huma dak li hu vokabularju tgħallmuh sew, imma xorta limitati. Huma kienu bravi hafna, użawh u semgħu, pero' tħossha l-element ta' repetizzjoni.

Violet, inti peress li tidhol f'hafna skejjel, għandek xi suggeriment li tista' tagħtini dwar dan?

Violet: Ara,ha nkun sinciera. Jiena qatt ma dħalt go skejjel tal-istat u teacher għamlet 40 minuta tagħmel lesson bħal din. Prosit tassew. Jien għalhekk xtaqt il kollegi jiġu jaraw għax l-effort li qegħdin tagħmlu huwa kbir. Jiena li naf is-sitwazzjoni tal -skola. Nista' nifhimkom.

Rose: Inti tengeġja mat-tfal ukoll ta! Jekk joqogħdu kwarta, tagħmel kwarta.

Violet: Li tista' biex tvarjalhom daqsxejn, forsi ftit mill-presentations flok kaxxa tal-ikel tal-iskola tkun il-qoffa tal-piknik per eżempju. Biex tvarjalhom ftit, għax it-tnejn jittellem fuq l-ikel. Tgħidilhom issa mhux se imorru l-iskola imma se jrin piknik jew ġurnata il-baħar. Tbidel naqra is-setting, tiprepara slide li tirrapresenta dak is-setting.

Rose: U tista tagħmel follow up activity ukoll. Mela din step 1, il-kaxxa tal-ikel u follow up tagħha tkun setting oħra.

Violet: Iva ukoll iżda peress li Tania ikkumentat fuq ir-repetizzjoni, setting differenti jistgħu jghinu.

Rose: Tista' ukoll il-lesson tagħmilha ftit ftit.

Tania: Kieku jien ukoll hekk kont nagħmel. Kont ngħid għandi daqstant gruppi, nagħmel nofshom ġurnata u n-nofs l-ieħor ġurnata oħra.

Iris: Apparti dan, il-ħaġa ma waqfietx hawn. Mela l-ewwel bnejna il-vokabularju – kellna il-vizwali, il-PPT– nitkellmu waqt il-brejk (X'għandek fil-kaxxa tal-ikel?), issa illum kellna il-qofol tat-taħdit. Issa l-ispunti li tajtna inti, nimxi fuqhom fil-kitba. Infatti zidtha fil-pjan tal-ħidma din li jiktbu imqar żewġ jew tlett sentenzi fuq li għidna. Issa nżid u nvarja: inti fil-basket tal-piknik kieku x' tiegħu?

Violet: U forsi tista' tiegħu l-okkazzjoni li tagħtihom il-linking words għax dawn joqogħdu għall-kitba ukoll.

Iris: Nagħtihom kliem bħal – Jien nippreferi... niegħu miegħi l-insalata tar-ross... flok nagħmluha il- kaxxa tal-iskola nvarjawha.

Tania: Għax aħna fejn jiġi għall-vokabularju, it-tfal kapaċi. Imma fl-espressjoni neħlu. Neħlu – how to string a sentence. Always. The crux is there. Jiġifieri il-mudelli importanti.

Violet: Importanti li jisimgħu d-djalogi (konversazzjoni bejn l-LSEs) u mbagħad iġġegħlhom jinnutaw x'semgħu jew tirrepeti xi sentenza ħalli naraw x'ħareġ mis-smiġħ mid-djalogu.

“X'kelma qed tuża? Kieku kif tużaha? Użali fit-taħdit? B'hekk inkunu tlaqna mis-smiġħ, iġġegħlhom jinnutaw affarijiet sempliċi ħalli imbagħad fit-taħdita, jużawhom. Huwa l-istess mod ta' kif aħna nitgħallmu l-lingwa nattivna li mhix nattivna għalihom. Inti l-ewwel tisma, wara timita, tirraġa fejn hemm bżonn sakemm fl aħħar tkun kunfidenti titkellem. Jiġifieri anki dawn il-kliem għaqqiedi, il-kliem kif tibda sentenza jistgħu joħorġu mis-smiġħ, mil-mudelli tas-smiġħ.

Lesson Study 3 - Debriefing

Il-Ħamis 8^{ta} Mejju 2025

Parteċipanti – Rose, Daisy, Iris, Lily, Violet and Tania.

Tania: Ha nibdew minnek Ms Rose. Kif morna?

Rose: Din jiġifieri bdejna l-gimġha l-oħra. Din tar-resturant għamilnieha l-gimġha l-oħra. Nibda bil-mod, nagħmel ftit ftit kuljum.

Dehru li qed jieħdu gost, jiġifieri bdejt nagħmilha kienu qed jieħdu gost. Ħadt gost għax kien hemm tfal li fil-bidu tas-sena ċerti tfal ma kinux jgħidu kelma waħda, per eżempju tifel partikolari kien jaqbd u l-anxiety attacks għax għandna l-Malti, kien jibki, ma ridtx jidhol għal-lezzjoni, illum rajtu tela' jaqra. Kien hemm tifel ieħor, l-istess kien jibki, ma jridx jiġi l-iskola għax Malti ma jafx. għalhekk inħallilhom dik li jaqraw għax jekk ma jridux jirkellmu għalinqas hemm xi haġa li jistgħu jaqraw. Ħalli b' hekk ma jippanikjawx. Għandi tifel ieħor li jibki u ma jrid jagħmel xejn fil Malti, dal-aħħar qed jirkellem ftit fil-klassi. Għandi tifla li taħrabli mill-klassi u kif rajtu ma pparticipat xejn. Fi group work ma taħdimx allura I choose my battles u nħalliha. Imma again, over the year rajt improvement min-naħa tagħha.

L-għan tiegħi hekk kien - li ngħallimhom xi haġa, niprattikawa u forsi jitolqu weħidhom eventualment. Bħal dejjem se jkollok min se jitleq u min se jirkhallim xi haġa u oħrajn li tgħallmu ftit imma jiena kuntenta bihom.

Tania: Ms. Daisy?

Daisy: Mela kif tafu, kien hemm tfal li jien għallimthom fi grade * u rajt kambjament. Filli ma jirkellmux u filli kunfidenti, anki li ħarġu quddiemna, ma jafuniex kollha, jafu xi wħud minna. U innutajt kemm ħassewhom kburin, dehru engaged ħafna, u dehru jafu x'inhuma qed jgħidu.

Li nnotajt li forsi kien hemm ftit li l-maskil u l-feminil hawduh. Kien hemm min ikkoreġa lilunifsu. Anki meta bdew jgħidu "mejda għall-erbgha" u ndunaw li kienu ħamsa ikkoreġew lilhom ninfushom. Jiġifieri jafu x'qed jgħidu. Mhux just tgħallmuha għax kellhom jirkhallmuha.

Għogbitni anki li kellhom l-powerpoint tidher, kien hemm minn irrefera għaliha, kien hemm min ma rreferiex ukoll. Min kien kunfidenti fil-Malti, ħassu komdu jirkellem.

Għogbitni ħafna, prosit. U dehret kemm ħdimt tajjeb, prosit.

Tania: Lily?

Lily: Mela jien naħseb li kienet attivita` vera sabiħa u tajba.

It-tfal kienu engaged il-ħin kollu u jekk mhux il-klassi kollha, il-magħġoranza tat-tfal kienu ħerqana jgħollu idejhom u jridu jipparteċipaw.

Kif qalet Ms. Daisy, kien hemm min, jien innutajt ukoll, li korreġew lillhom nfushom, bħal meta ninutaw li ma jitmux. Xi ħaġa li għoġbitni kienet li għalkemm inti kont hemm prezenti – l-ewwel nett jien nammira ħafna t-tonalita tal-viċi tiegħek – kif jirnexxilek iżommha baxxa.

Għalkemm inti kont hemm, u huma jafu li int kont hemm, ma kontx dominanti fuqhom li l-ħin kollu ittihom il gwida tas-sentenzi. U xi ħaġa li qaltilna Violet l-aħħar darba, vera proset li poġġejtha fil-prattika għax illum rajniha, vera kif tiġbor kollox flimkien. Jien għaliha fil-fatt hekk ktibt, il-biċċa tal-aħħar kienet xi ħaġa li għalqitha kompletament.

Proset, Rose.

Tania: Ms Iris?

Iris: Jien se nkompli fuq li qalet Lily, infatti hekk ktibt ukoll, il-konklużjoni vera għoġbitni. U hadt idea minnha ta' x' tista tagħmel biex tagħlaq il-lezzjoni.

Rose: Jien ir-*Rate yourself* nuzaha ħafna. Eżempju bħal issa qed nagħmlu Maths – “Kif ħassejtukom li mortu?” 5 jew 4 għal bidu, imbagħad bil-mod matul il gimgħa ir-rating jinbidel. Nghidilhom “Qed taraw li bil-mod il-mod qed inħossuna aħjar? Fil-bidu tal-gimgħa konna naqra shaky u issa qed nifhmu iktar. Ir-rating tgħin lilhom u lili ukoll.

Iris: Iva tgħinhom jaħsbu, tgħinhom jikkritikaw – x'inhu tajjeb u x'inhu ħazin, kif qed iħossuhom. Jien vera għoġbitni.

Għohobni ukoll il-gruppi u l-fatt kif imxew minn grupp għal ieħor.

Rose: Jien ngħid li lezzjoni ta' 40 minuta trid naqra group work – ma jistax ikun il-lezzjoni tkun idur miegħi biss. L ewwel nett ma nkunx irrid li tkun teacher centred, u anki huma jieħdu gost. Allura nagħtihom ftit ħin jiprattikaw bejniethom, u nara ċerta dinamika, eżempju tifla partikolari fil-klassi ma għollietx idejha biex tipparteċipa avolja naf li titkellem bil-Malti, pero` fil-grupp imbagħad tkellmet. Fi grupp zġħir hemm iktar ċans li dak li s-soltu ma jitmux se jitmux. Dik tgħinhom ukoll.

Iris: Iva għoġbitni ħafna kif bdew jimxu minn group għall-ieħor u l-idea tar-restoranti varjati.

Rose: Kollox minn għandhom ta. Ghidtilhom bl-idea tar-restoranti u huma ħarġu bihom. Għażluhom huma, kitbuhom bil-Malti, qgħadna naqrawhom.

Iris: Naħseb li jista' jkun ukoll li huma peress li huma ta Grade *, l-ideat joħorġu malajr ukoll. Għax tagħna bħalissa, biex toħroġilhom idea, il-bogħod għadna, il-fatt li ħarġu jitmux ukoll xi ħaġa kbira. Hemm tara kemm id-differenza fl-eta` tgħallem. Innutajta qabel ukoll – il fatt li jkunu kemm xejn ikbar fl-eta` jħossuhom ikbar.

Violet: Mela ovjament, jiena se nibda mill-premessa li t-tfal ma nafhomx avolja nista nimmaġina l-livell pero` ma nkunx naf id-dinamika tal-istudenti individwali jiġifieri ċerta li Rose, meta kienet qed tipjana il-lesson, kellha f moħħha l-istudenti varji li għandha fil-klassi. Issa, huma grade * allura jiena din id-darba, forsi iktar mid-darbi l-oħra, ħarist lejn l-lesson plan u lejn l-kisba mit-tagħlim.

Qisni tlaqt minn hemm. Qabel ġejt għidt ha nara, ġibt dik l-kisba f' moħħi u ha nara kif se tintlaħaq. Dak kien eżerċizzju li anki ridt nagħmel għalia nnifsi. Issa, xi ħaġa per eżempju, li għoġbitni ħafna kienet il-mod, (vera li l focus kien it-taħdit), imma kif irbatt l-erba' hiliyet tal-lingwa flimkien. Mela, inti użajt il-qari biex tgħin hom jaccessaw t-taħdit. Użajtu wkoll b' mod gwidat. L-slides li kellek fil-presentation kienu dejjem qed jibnu, dejjem isiru naqra iktar tqal biex jithadtu.

Imbagħad innotajt ukoll, li l-menu kienu kitbuh huma. Mela int użajt għodod tal-kitba biex toħloq attivita` oħra (li kienet autentika u sabiħa ħafna tar-ristoranti) u allura huma qed jaraw il-ħila tal-kitba imħaddma wkoll. Waqt l- attivita` fil-gruppi, kien qed ikun hemm ukoll is-smiġħ għax biex jirrispondu lil xulxin, kienu qegħdin jisimġħu.

Jiġifieri kellek l-integrazzjoni pedaġoġika tal-erba' hiliyet tal-lingwa flimkien u dik hija ta' min japprezzaha.

Issa, li nixtieq nikkummenta fuqu huwa, (se nerga' mmur għall-kisba mit-tagħlim) – Inħaddem strategiji varji ta' kif infassal mistoqsijiet ċari.

It-tfal kienu qegħdin jagħmluhom l-mistoqsijiet u kienu qegħdin jagħmluhom tajjeb.

Imma irridu noqogħdu daqsxejn attenti biex il-focus, (jekk il-focus tal-lezzjoni kien it-taħdit), jonqos minn fuq il-qari u jizdied iktar fuq il-taħdit. Jiġifieri next step, kieku kellek tagħmel build-up fuqha din il-lezzjoni huwa li toħloq sitwazzjoni awtentika oħra, fejn inti telimina kemm jista' jkun, il-vizwal tal-qari. Għax imbagħad qed nagħmlu qari jew taħdit?

Il-kisba tgħid - inħaddem strategiji. Il-mistoqsijiet għamluhom huma, nifhem li ma ha ċari, għamluhomx ċari għax donnhom għadhom ma wasslux sa dan il punt, imma din hija work in progress. Nimmaġina issa se tkompli tibni fuqha u issa l-emfasi se jsir fuq il-parti tal-kisba.

Imbagħad għoġbitni ħafna l-attivita` tal-istilel (ir-rating), għaliex inti lqgħatt żewġ għasafar b'ġebla waħda - Apparti li kont qed tiġbor evidenza tal-tagħlim, kienu qed jippratikaw n-numri fit-taħdit, f' situazzjoni awtentika.

Rose: Jien dik nagħmilha ukoll biex żgur kulhadd ikun qal xi ħaġa. Inkun żgurha li ħadd ma ħarabli.

Violet: Jien it-tfal ma nafhomx kif tafhom inti. Per eżempju, meta jkunu qed jaraw minn fuq il- PPT, tfakarhom daqsxejn, li nagħmluha awtentika. Eżempju kien hemm żewġ subien li ħarġu jipprezentaw, u għax il-PPT fl-eżempju kien fil-femminil komplew fil-femminil flok fil-maskil.

Rose: Iva jagħmulha u niġbdilhom l-attenzjoni.

Violet: Iva, tagħmel l-enfasi li llum l-iskop huwa it-taħdit. Kellek slide kbira u sabiħa tfakkarhom l-oġġettiv tal-lezzjoni, li tiġbdilhom l-attenzjoni fuqha. Tgħidilhom jekk l-eżempju fil-femminil imma intom subien, mela t-taħdita fil-maskil trid tkun. Kwazi kwazi tagħmilhom apposta ħalli jħaddmu moħħhom u jiprattikaw.

Mill-bqija kienet lezzjoni eċċellenti, ir-rabta bejn il-kisbiet tal-lingwa kienet eċċezjonali. Dik biss – għamel distinzjoni fil-focus – taħdit jew qari? Ma jispiċċawx jaqraw flok jitkellmu.

Rose: Iva eżatt. Jien l-għan tiegħi kien li naqraw u niprattikaw. Imbagħad nibda ineħhi mill-għajjnuna....infatti fl-islides l-għajjnuna bdiet dejjem tonqos. Eventwalment inkun nixtieqhom jitolqu wehidhom.

Violet: Issa forsi next lesson, il-focus tkun din. Terġa' tibda milli jafu, li għamilt illum, u toħolqilhom attivita` ` fejn jistgħu joħolqu strategiji ta' kif il-mistoqsija jagħmulha. Fil-fatt illum kien hemm tifla li bidlitha ftit il-mistoqsija, l-oħrajn kienu kollha qed isewgwu l-mudell. Il-fatt li bidlitha, anki aħna, smajniha iktar sabiħa, iktar awtentika.

Tania: Mela, jien vera għoġbitni l-lezzjoni u ma nafx kif tar il-ħin....it-tfal tant kienu entużjasti! Għoġbitni hafna kif kienet scaffolded – ħadt l -spunt mingħand Violet li kienet issuggerit li nirrikordjaw 2 LSEs f'konversazzjoni.

Violet: Rose għamlitha bil-qari, kieku kif issuggerajt jien kienet tkun bl-ismigh.

Tania: Pero` nahseb li l-lezzjoni irnexxiet daqshekk għax it-tfal hassewhom safe. Il-fatt li Rose tathom il-mudell shiħ, imbagħad bdiet tneħhiluhom naqra naqra, u fl-aħħar “Ejja ħa naraw min se jipprova jagħmel konversazzjoni qasira!” Jiġifieri dan kollu iġin biex it-tfal iħossuhom safe, that I can take a risk.

Rose: Infatti prattikajna kull scenario. Aghmilna jumejn fuq kull wahda.

Tania: Jiġifieri din il-varjazjoni tal-istess mudell ħadmet. U fl-ebda ħin ma kont boring.

Kulhadd ħa sehem. Entużjażmu jien rajtu m'għola s- smewwiet. Jien naf it-tfal li jafu jitkellmu l Malti f' din il-klassi u naf it-tfal li ma jitkellmux Malti f'din il klassi. Pero` l-engagement ta' kulhadd kien hemm. Ħadt gost hafna nisma' frazijiet u sentenzi shaħ. Għamlu djalogu – it-tfal vera ppruvaw. Is-self assessment – mill-wieħed sa ħamsa (1r-ratings) għoġbitni ukoll. Għoġbitni li int Rose bdejt tipromptjhom li jkunu kunfidenti li jixtru jew li jordnaw u kemm inti DEJEM tinsisti fuq is-sentenza shiħa. Għoġbithom li tgħinuhom fil-varjazjoni tal-vokabularju – infatti eżempju li ġibt int, intuża iktar tard minn tifla. Tajthom vokabularju ġdid ukoll. Kienet vera student centred.

Kemm qed nitgħallmu minn xulxin!

Hemm xi ħaġa oħra li tridu żżidu?

Daisy: Li nnutajt hu tifel minnhom iddeċida li ma jridx deżerta u l-ieħor ġibidlu l-attenzjoni. U l- ewwel tifel ikkonferma li ma riedx deżerta. Din turi kemm verament jafu x'inhuma jgħidu.

Violet: Ir-role play daħħlu fiha. Li tista' tagħmel, spunt għall-attivit` oħra, li tgħidilhom jimmaginaw qegħdin ġo restaurant u l-ikel huwa kollu hażin. Kif se jgergru?

Rose: Iva eżempju l-ikel kiesaħ. Kif se ngħidu li tar-restaurant?

Violet: Jidħol iktar vokabularju.

Tania: U meta tbiddel is-situazzjoni tista' ddaħħal naqra umoriżmu ukoll.

Violet: Dejjem f'ambitu ta' sitwazzjoni reali – għax dawn huma kollha episodji li jistgħu jiġru verament.

Tania: Dejjem mar-realia.

Rose: U huma għalhekk jidħlu fiha....għax sitwazzjoni Prattika....jafu li fil-ħajja għad jiġu bżonnha. Anki meta nkunu qed niprattikaw huma jkunu jridu jdaħħlu l-esperjenzi tagħhom. Jibdew jgħidulek “How do you say this in Maltese?” Jien ninsisti li translations ma nagħmlux.

Iris: U dik hi – għax biex toħroġhom mill-comfort zone, diffiċli għax huma m'għandhomx il-vokabularju.

Rose: Għalhekk jien inkun irrid ngħallimhom u niprattikaw. Issa min jippratika u jitlaq u min jippratika u jimxi ftit imma għal inqas qed ngħallimhom xi haġa.

Lesson Study 4 - Debriefing session

L-Erbgħa 21^{ta'} Mejju 2025

Parteċipanti – Daisy, Rose, Iris, Lily, Violet and Tania

Tania: Mela Ms. Daisy, se nibdew bik ta!

Daisy: Meta tqis minn fejn bdejna, rajna progress. Ovjament għadhom Grade *, għadna lura, imma għalinqas, tgħallmu xi haġa żgħur. Issa meta jiġu biex jitkellmu hija l-aħħar stage, l-opinjoni tiegħi, anki li niktbu tiġi qabel id-diskors.

Hemmi min jippratikah id-dari il-Malti, jisimgħu, allura ikollu aktar vokabularju imma bħal dawn hawn ftit, toghodhom fuq id waħda. Imma in ġenerali naħseb ma morniex daqshekk hażin.

Tania: Imma naħseb l-istrategies li inti għamiet... użajt l-leħhiet, deher li kien hemm ċerta drilling.

Daisy: Iva, bil-fors hux! Dik l-eta, bil-fors li tagħmel id-drilling. Kellna qisu lezzjoni fil-ġimgħa fuq hekk. Konna nagħmlu lezzjoni fil-ġimgħa u naraw x'tgħallmu minna. Illum, l-inqas darba li tkellmu nista ngħid. Ovvjamenta kien hemm il-presenza tal-adulti avolja avzajthom. Imma ma rridx naghmilhom bi kbira hafna ovjament. Imma l-inqas darba li tkellmu. Fil-lezzjoni normali jitkellmu aktar. Naħseb iħossuhom aktar kunfidenti.

Tania: Forsi is-sugġett?

Daisy: Is-sugġett ma kienx hafif, imma tiskanta, kienu jgħiduli “Nhar ta’ Tnejn, l-mama `sajret imqarrun, n-nanna sajret ross il-forn”. Issa jekk hux kumbinazzjoni jew kienux għiduli jekk biex joghgbuni...!

Rose: Kienu qed jagħmlu connection.

Daisy: Iva, haduha magħhom id-dar żgħur. Mill-feedback li kelli. Kien hemm minnhom qatt ma daqu imqaret u ġegħlthom jixtru l-imqaret, U jduquhom, taf kif? Hemm min ma jsajjarx ikel Malti id-dar, eżempju L***, qattli li d-dar, ommha sajjari ikel Pollak, allura tkun qed tistenna li tmur għand in-nanna, għax in-nanna sajjar ikel Malti.

Tania: Tidher li l-element li kellna kollha in common kienet it-tema li kienet interessanti għalihom.

Daisy: Iva kienet.

Tania: U kif qed tghid Rose jaghmlu din il-connection. Jien, ma nafx hux minhabba din il lesson study, imma qisu hadd ma kien imdejjaq, jew ma ridtx jipparteċipa, la gdiedem ma kien hemm....

Daisy: Le, le, hadu gost. Illum kienu tense, ha ngħid il-verità, ghax li ġejja Ms Tania... u jien ghidtilhom li se jkun hemm teacher mill-università. Allura, kienu naqra tense. Ilhom minn dalghodu jistennew x hin ġejjin it-teachers.

Tania: Qagħdu imma eh!

Daisy: Iva, ta. U issaportjaw lil xulxin. Iggustajthom. Anki waqt il-lezzjoni. Kienu attenti.

Iris: Iva kienu attenti.

Daisy: S*** qadgħet attentat, H*** diffiċli titkellem, E*** Pero` nhoss li tghallmu.

Tania: Avolja kien hemm ir-repetizzjoni...imma baqghu attenti. Proset. Inti Ms Lily?

Lily: Jiena naħseb li l-ewwel darba li rajt studenti zgħar f' lezzjoni bħal din. Jiena għalija kienet lezzjoni organizzata, vera kien hemm id-drilling, pero` nimmagina għal dik l eta trid ċertu element ta drilling. Imma kienu hemm fil-klassi u kollha riedu jgħidu xi haġa. Ovvjament, mhux kulhadd jitkellem, jġigifieri meta jkollna klassi li kollha jitekellmu u kollha jitekellmu sew, nistgħu ndoqqu l- qniepen.

Imma il-fatta li tghajthom il-leħhiet, qagħdu jaraw u jmissu b'idejhom, jaraw l-istampi, iktar ghenithom biex ikomplu mas-sugġett tat-tema. Inti komplejt jġigifieri ma hallejthomx jieqfu u ovvjament ta din l-eta l-input kontinwu tat-teacher jagħmel differenza kbira. Jiena naħseb li kienet lezzjoni interessanti u li t-tfal hadu gost, għal kemm kienu naqra mistħija, hadu gost, ma iddejqu xejn.

Rose: It-tfal pruvaw, anke il-mistħijin, xorta pruvaw ukoll, which is important. Ikollna kull sena tfal li ma jifthux hałqhom, u dik problema u l fatt li kulhadd kellu iċ-ċans li jitkellem, hadd ma jidħak b'hadd. Jigifieri dik importanti li huma jhossuhom komdi li jitekellmu.

Tania: U irreferew għal powerpoints, għal mistoqsijiet; din referenza.

Daisy: Iva u kien hemm min qalli jistax jirrepeti waraja. Ngħidha jiena u jirrepetu waraja.

Hemm min sa dalghodu stess. Żewg itfal qaluli qed nibza nitkellem ghax se jkun hemm Ms. Tania, jistghux ngħid jiena u huma jirrepetu.

Rose: Tajjeb, ara inti trid itihom is-safety net importanti dik...

Daisy: Konna għamilniha il-PPT ukoll. Rajniha iktar minn darba.... imma minhabba l-vokabularju preferejt naqrawha ftit qabel.

Rose: Ħafna drabi tkun biża ta. Huma imsieken m'humieq esposti għall-Malti, allura uhud minnhom ikunu diġa qed jistragiljaw fl-English, fil-Maths u fil-ħbiberiji u fid-dinja tal-iskola,

li mhix faċċli speċjalment għaż-żghar tagħkom, jiġifieri imbagħad hemm il-Malti wkoll. Allura meta jkun hemm dik is-safety net naraha li tgħinhom ħafna.

Iris: Jien għoġbuni ħafna il-leħniet għax qasmuhom huma, qajmu l -nteress. Bħala sugġett ukoll, innutajt li ħafna minnhom għamlu konnessjoni għax jew jieklu dan l-ikel id-dar jew għand in- nanna, allura setghu jagħrfu l-esperjenza tagħhom fil-ħajja ta'kuljum. Il-fatt li Daisy jirnexxilha toħroġ xi ħaġa minn kull wieħed u waħda minnhom hija tragward.

Daisy: Li jifhmu jifhmu. Imma meta jiġu biex jithadtu, dik ħaġa oħra. Ibsa.

Iris: Jiena nirrealizza din ukoll fil-klassi tiegħi. Wasalna f'punt li issa jifhmu, imma biex joħroġ il- kliem...

Daisy: Jien ġieli nuża il-Malti mhux waqt il-lezzjoni tal-Malti. Għal bidu kienu jgħiduli “But this is not a Maltese lesson!” Issa lanqas għadhom jgħiduli hekk.

Tania: Tidher li tagħmilha din il-ħaġa. Waqt li kienu qed jieklu, ma kienux qed jgħidu vokabularju biss, kienu qed iżiedu l-artiklu wkoll, il-pronom ukoll.

Iris: U huma fl-aħħar jaqbdu li l-Malti huwa sabiħ u importanti. Jekk tużah ftit kuljum jibdwu jagħmlu bħalek. Illum il-ġurnata, ilna mill-ewwel term, W*** la darba qabadha, jekk nitkellem bl-Ingliż jgħidli “Bil-Malti.” Issa sar qed jogħġbu.

Rose: Il-konsistenza u repetizzjoni. It-tfal iridu ħafna repetizzjoni, l-istess ħaġa tagħmilha b'modi differenti. Biex ma jkunux boring imbagħad li jiddejjqu imma il-konsistenza u r-repetizzjoni they are key.

Iris: U turihom heġġa.

Daisy: Iva, per eżempju, din “Tan-nanna ħelu manna” l-ewwel li ħarġet biha kienet L***. Imbagħad staqsew x'inhom manna, allura fittixna flimkien. Sibna il-video u rawh u daqshekk tghallmuha.

Violet: L-ghajnuniet kienu tajbin ħafna jiġifieri l-lezzjoni kienet strutturata ħafna. Kif kienu l-mistoqsijiet, l-ghajnuna tal-leħniet – jiġifieri bħala struttura tal-lezzjoni ma setatx kienet aħjar. It-tfal bil-limitazzjonijiet tagħhom, li huma żgħar, ma urewx resistenza, kollha xtaqu jippartecipaw, u riedu wkoll li jsimgħu lil kulhadd li iparteċipa. Bdew ifakkruk lil min insejt isaqsi. Forsi m' għandiex x'taqsam mal-lezzjoni imma se insemija, f'din l-eta jaqbdu ħafna il-lingwagg li ma jkunx mgħallim għax huma jaqbdu ħafna dawn l-istrutturi ta' sentenzi li aħna mhux bil-fors ngħallmuhom waqt il-lezzjoni u dak huwa fejn huma jitgħallmu l- iktar. Jiġifieri jintuża Malti barra mill-lezzjoni tal-Malti ngħidilkom jiena, ikun effettiv, anzi d-doppju minn lezzjoni li inti tkun għamilt tlett kwarti biex it-tfal jikkellmu. Jiġifieri anki istruzzjonijiet - forsi fil-kurritur sejin il-librerija – “Oqghodu wara xulxin”, flokk “stay in-line.” Jiġifieri affarijiet żgħar, istruzzjonijiet li tismagħhom illum u tismagħhom, l-istudenti they transfer. Jiġifieri dak li tghallmu f dan il-kuntest, it-tfal, kapaċi, jittrasferjawh f'kuntest ieħor. U l-espresjonijiet, “Tan-nanna ħenu manna”, jaqbdhom. Mela, nużaw l-espresjonijiet

maltin aħna anki f' situazzjonijiet li mhumiex fil-lezzjoni tal-Malti, ħa jagħmluhom tagħhom u tiskanta kemm jużawhom f' situazzjonijiet differenti.

Parentezi pero` xtaqt nikkumenta fuqha.

Li għoġbitni ukoll li ma bżajtx mill-varjeta. Jiena fil-bidu x'hin kont qed taqra dawk il-ħafna slides, bżajt imma, hi ta min jammira. X'hin sabu ruħhom bil-leħniet quddiemhom l-għażla kienet varjata. U min għażel hekk, u min għażel hekk jiġifieri.....

Daisy: U ma nafx innutajtux. Ħin minnhom G***** staqsa lin N*** li m'għażielx l-istess bħal ma għażel il-bieraħ. Kellhom iċ-ċans li jbiddu.

Violet: Jiġifieri kienet ta min jammira li ma bżajtx tatihom il-varjeta. Forsi kieku jien personalment kont nagħmel ħazin, kont innaqqas imma naħseb li int għamilt tajjeb.

Forsi dik tal-bidu, forsi stajt involvejt it-tfal.

Daisy: Fil-qari tal-slides?

Violet: Mhux kollha ta.

Tania: Iddiskutejniha ta (fil-vertical meeting) imma għidna se tiġi twila wisq.

Violet: Iva, imma forsi tqabbad xi wiehed jew tnejn għall-involvement.

L-aħħar mistoqsija kienet tajba tal-assessment for learning, kienet x'tgħallimt.

Li forsi nista nagħti suġġeriment, forsi għall-lezzjoni li jmiss, huma kienu qed jikkellmu fl-ewwel persuna - Jiena nħobb. Forsi jsir esercizzju fejn jintuza l-maskil u l-femminil, u tintuza t-tielet persuna għax it-tendenza hija li tintuza l-ewwel persuna. Jibqawlek sal-grade 5 jużawlek l-ewwel persuna. Allura forsi ikollok attivita fi group fejn toħrog tifel u tifel u jkun hemm dialogu bejnithom. "Għidli x'taħseb li jħobb John u għidli x'taħseb li tħobb Marija". Ħalli b'hekk naqtaw in-Ninu Toninu u niprattikaw il-konjugazzjoni fil-prattika. Jiġifieri il-pass li jmiss issa huma li nimxu mill-ewwel persuna singular u ngħaddu għal-maskil u l-femminil, imbagħad li jmiss ikun il-persuni tal-plural; mill-istess kument, mill-istess tema tal-ikel u suġġerimenti tagħkom.

Daisy: L-esposizzjoni li kellhom kienet – "Il-mama` taf issajjar, il-papa` jaf issajjar..."

Violet: Vera prosit, lezzjonijiet vera tajbin, vera strutturati, it-tfal qed jidhru motivated, ma jidher li hemm ebda resistenza f'kull klassi imma issa sta għalina (għalhekk għidtlek ammirajtek bil-varjeta), li jkollna l-kurraġ, biex il-level fejn tidhol konjugazzjoni nimxu minn dak l-aspett. Qed nitkellem mill-esperjenza għax kif jesprimu ruħhom fit-taħdit se jirrifletti fil-kitba. Naħseb mis- snin iż-żgħar, jekk l-għalliema jesperimentaw iktar, ma jibqawx fuq ċerti persuni, jgħin il-verbi wkoll.

Rose: Anki per eżempju jien ġieli nagħmiillhom, ikunu pairs, u jsaqsu lil xulxin, “Inti xi thobb?” U wara jghiduli xi thobb K****. “K*** thobb...”

Violet: Eserożju tajjeb hafna li nissugerixxi hu: intom kellkom kollha lezzjonijiet tajbin. Kulhadd jaqbad il-lezzjoni tiegħu u joħodha fuq livell daqsxejn għola.

Rose: Tagħna kienet dialogu. Qagħdu in pairs, kitbu d-djalogu tagħhom u irreċtawha quddiem il- klassi.

Violet: Dawn huma il-kummenti tiegħi, mill-bqija il-kunfidenza hija dik li hi. Jekk qed tghid li fil-lezzjonijiet l-oħra urew iktar kunfidenza...

Daisy: Le illum kienu tense.

Violet: Jifhmuk jiġifieri! Id-djalogu miegħek dejjem kienu qegħdin isegwuh, id-domandi kienu tajbin u l-għajnuniet għenuhom biex min m’għandux kunfidenza jkollu dik ix-xi haġa ma fejn jaqbad. Għax jekk jtilfu l-kunfidenza imbagħad nitilfu kolloxx u ma nagħmlu xejn.

Jiġifieri il-gwida trid tibqa hemm hekk. Imma imbagħad irid ikollok dik in-naqra kuraġġ, imqar għal dawk li jifilhu iktar, għaliex ahna xi kultant fis-sistemi edukattivi tagħna, ninsew il-bravi. Ċerta li f’kull klassi issib dak il wieħed jew tnejn li jmexxu. Dawk tajjeb li ma jintilfux.

Tania: Qisna ahna bejnitna, u jien partikolarment, peress li jien kritika tiegħi innifsi u naqra iktar perfetta, ngħidu, dawn it-tfal ma jafux, dawn it-tfal ma jridux, dawn it-tfal għandhom attitudni. Pero` meta dħalt fl-erbġha klassijiet, resistenza ffit jew xejn ma kien hemm. Jiġifieri dawn it-tfal, naħseb li fl-aħħar mill-aħħar kollha jridu jitgħallmu.

Rose: Dejjem tara dak li hu mistenni u dak li jiproduċu. Għax it-tfal tagħna ġejjin minn familji jitekallmu bl-Ingliż u l-livell mistenni huwa ta’xi hadd li jitekallmu Malti nattiv. Il-gap hija kbira. L-istruggle ta’kull teacher hi li trid tlaħħaqhom hemm meta taf li qegħdin hawn.

Kulhadd: Vera!

Violet: Pero` jien nemmen li bil-mod tagħhom, la jkun faċċli għall-għalliema u lanqas għalihom, b’ xi mod jaslu. Ahna naħsbu li huma mħumiex qed jitgħallmu pero` in the long run, ikunu hađu. Taqtawx qalbkom. Kultant ma juruniex kemm verament tgħallmu.

Tania: Ahna fil-posizzjoni tagħna tinkwetana meta naraw it-teachers ibagħtu biex jgħallmu u joħduha minn saħħithom.

Daisy: Tad-dar ma jgħinix.

Violet: Qed taħdem kontra il-kurrent.

Daisy: Il-Malti għalihom mhux priorita.

Violet: Iva imma sakemm jiġu fis-senior school, imbagħad il-Malti jsir priorita.

Rose: U jipretendu li jsiru l-mirakli.

Appendix F: Translations to English – Debriefs

Lesson study 1 – Debriefing

Thursday 3rd April 2025

Participants – Daisy, Iris, Lily, Rose, Violet and Tania

Tania: OK, let us start with you, OK? Lily?

Lily: Good, good.

Tania: How do you feel about the lesson?

Lily: So, in general, not so bad, I would say well. It is an activity that the children like. Because they do not see a picture, for example on the interactive whiteboard, and everyone repeats the same thing. I love that they have a tangible object they can touch, they are saying something about something they see in front of them which is different from a static picture that does not move. This helps them to try to speak Maltese more. And the fact, we try to keep them engaged for 40 minutes during which all the speech is in Maltese which is great for them. We try as much as we can keep keeping the dialogue in Maltese so that children can continue to practice the language.

And this is our native tongue. I personally think that we have done well. We can never get it a100%.

Tania: Did the questions we prepared in the lesson plan help you?

Lily: Yes, the questions are important because otherwise the children will not continue the conversation. From a class of twenty-two, you will have four or five able to make a sentence. But for the rest, you need to ask them the question and present them with most of the response so that you give them a chance to contribute with one final word or the last final two words. Because as you have seen, there are few children who are able to make the whole complete sentence.

But sometimes they do construct sentences correctly. All children try. They are showing the will to try. They are trying hard. They are leaving their most comfortable place where they speak English, even today I noticed that for certain students who always speak English, today as they thought a word in English, they paused and thought how they need to say it in Maltese.

Daisy: I enjoyed the lesson; it was an interesting lesson. I know some of the children and obviously they were with me two years ago, where two years ago in grade ? it was difficult for them to say a word and today you see them speak. Even making a sentence structure, for example. There was a girl, she impressed me. It is surprising when they are exposed to the language how much difference it makes. They have also grown because two years make a significant difference.

Lily: Yes, two years make a big difference.

Daisy: It was interesting because they were talking about something they encounter every day. Food is something they see every day, so they are more familiar with the topic.

Tania: The choice of topic helps too.

Daisy: It is familiar speech. Obviously when the children mentioned the grandmother idiom– *Tan-nanna helu manna* – Well done!

Lily: Thank you.

Iris: Yes, I enjoyed seeing them. First, I saw them enthusiastic. They all tried to say something in Maltese, at least one word and that enthusiasm I really liked. They were enjoying the lesson and the things they had prepared in the box. Some said one word; however, they participated; they took part.

Tania: The attitude.

Iris: Yes, the students' attitude was positive. The lesson came out positive. And I saw the children are really wanting to contribute.

Tania: They contributed!

Iris: Yes, they did, they truly tried.

Tania: What do you say, Rose?

Rose: They had the vocabulary they are learning this year, words like **hwawar** and **habaq**. They definitely did not know them before, they taught these words, they learned and are using them and it is something beautiful because we are not recycling the same four words, we know but they are using new vocabulary you have taught them. A big star to you. A big step forward.

Lily: Thank you, thank you. I tried hard this second term because we also had the theme of open day, the theme is food, the children knew that the theme comes with food, even comprehensions and listening comprehension were sourced from this theme.

Rose: You must expose yourself to these things, through different means.

Lily: The thing is this – that in Maltese we do not have many resources. For example, if you look for sites on the English language, one will find how much one wants. We do not have those resources and therefore we need to create them – we make writings, poems, so that the children keep on learning, so this term is almost complete.

Rose: You must expose them in different ways, so they absorb the language.

Tania: It was like a concentrated effort where everything was focused on the theme. Because there was pre-tasking and part of success was that there was the PBL project as well.

Lily: The project-based learning was helpful.

Tania: We cross curricular the English and the science...

Lily: The PBL got everything together.

Tania: We had to follow the rubric thoroughly and the last question deals with the role of teachers with interventions and questions. For me, you [Lily] were pivotal. Even with one word that the children said you were able to build a story or link with some episodes they experienced. You were all the time on the go. Your part was essential, you were as active as they were. You worked as much as they did. We always say that students need be challenged to learn, but I have seen you have made that effort with them, as much as they did, because you kept the momentum. You did not stop for the whole 40 minutes.

Lily: For me this is something regular. Three times a week I set aside time from other lessons, and I concentrate on speaking activities. The students got used to this routine.

Daisy: You must consider that these students are not exposed, in their homes they do not speak English. They are exposed to the Maltese language only at school. Summer does not help us.

Violet: You have already said most of the things and I agree with all. The lesson was very good because keeping a class for 40 minutes in Maltese conversation is not a joke, when we know that Maltese is not their native language, it is something great, that is, well done!

The start was strong, the use of realia, the use of real objects I think left the impact and I think apart from that, the resource that was very effective, as they were saying, is you. You were the most effective resource. We may have little resources in Maltese. But when it comes to speech, the greatest resource is the teacher herself. You used the time to correct, if, for example, if they used the verb incorrectly, you were correcting them. And you correct them now, and you emphasise the tense again. Listen to now, listen to again, and again – finally, they will learn. And in fact, at the end of the lesson, the conjugation of verbs of certain children began to improve.

Something else, perhaps, which you did in the lesson and which seem to have been well prepared in terms of vocabulary, and the project-based approach, the thematic approach, seems to be working very well, because they were prepared even with vocabulary linked to science such as **vitamini, minerali**, meaning they are also transferring from the subject of science to the subject of Maltese. Perhaps, give them some help, so you do not concentrate on the vocabulary only. You did it spontaneously, it was good and continue doing it. But I would also give them other sentence structures to follow, for example, instead of always saying **“Jiena nħobb niekol (I love to eat)”** the student can say **“Jiena nippreferi niekol (I prefer to eat), L-ikel favorit tiegħi huwa... (My favourite food is ...)”** In this way, you expand the repertoire of how to express oneself.

I was very pleased with the spontaneous expression, and this is why the best resource remains the teacher, when you took the opportunity of introducing the idiom- **jinżilli għasel jew tan-nanna ħelu manna**. I might have maybe elaborated a bit more on such expressions and on what situations they might be used in context.

The last thing I want to comment on is the assessment part of the lesson plan. In the last part you had prepared questions to ask them about their views, what is the difference between the processed and fresh food, and that the fresh option is better than the processed one. This is good but here you are only assessing the content. We are now assessing the speaking part of the language here. So as an assessment task, I would ask them for example, **“Tell me one new thing you have learned today in your Maltese speaking lesson!”**

And perhaps one student will say –

“Today I learnt to say jinżilli għasel!”

“I learnt the word – brugila -because I had forgotten it but you reminded me of it”

Tania: We combine the LOs with the assessment, so it is a full cycle.

Violet: So, you really check that you are fulfilling the LO, now you need to gather the evidence of what they have learned in the lesson.

Tania: So, for the next lesson we will amend this. It makes sense that the LOs are linked at the end with the assessment.

Violet: The LO is the starting point, but it is also the arrival point. We check whether successfully implemented the LO by conducting this small assessment activity.

Tania: In the assessment part not in the conclusion?

Violet: You can also insert it at the end, with a small writing task. The students pick up the small whiteboards and they can write and show you what they have learnt today. This is according to the time you have. And you gather the evidence in this way.

Tania: I will also comment on another thing. The PPT was not actually used.

Iris/Daisy: I think it was not used because the pre-tasking was so well made that it was unnecessary.

Violet: But it is important that the main resource for speaking activities remains the teacher. You may have other resources such as a whiteboard but this, the teacher remains the main resource to interact with children all the time. The slow pace of speaking with children, without being very quick, so that everyone will understand you. That is particularly good. And at no time did they feel intimidated to speak.

I came across a group of students who were quiet. But as soon as the teacher went to speak with them, at no time was there any resistance to speaking. The children were engaged.

Daisy: Even when you consider that we were there observing...

Violet: And neither do they bother to make mistakes, and that is important because when you make mistakes and correct them, and sometimes they correct themselves, that is healthy.

Tania: That is the class culture. Obviously, we want this type of culture for the sector and the school. We always embrace and tell them that if it is not school the place where you make mistakes, where is this place? School is a safe place where we make mistakes in front of each other, we correct each other, many times we as teachers make mistakes on purpose to show them it is OK to do a mistake.

Violet: If you will not have the teacher speaking Maltese, then who will role model it?

Tania: We left the PowerPoint on the IWB since we want every student to succeed, so if there might be a student who does not want to say a word in Maltese, knowing that he has that safety on the interactive white board with a starting sentence, we would encourage him. In this case, the PPT was not used but Lily is very supportive, she is a great resource in the class.

Violet: The link was always with the lessons that happened before, the project-based approach is working very well for you. I would perhaps suggest going beyond – when you feel steady with the project-based approach – then you could move on to CLIL – content, language, integrated learning – that is to say, you make the lesson of science in Maltese. So, you are doing a science lesson and during the lesson use words such as *vitamini, minerali* are being taught. Obviously, you use a language level that children will understand, scientific concepts that are easy and can be done in Maltese.

Rose: It is a bit difficult for us. Using mathematical terminology, yes.

Violet: CLIL – this is widely used in foreign language teaching but not for the school to become a practice. We can however say once in a term, I can identify a lesson of science

and try it out with the children, so they are exposed to another lesson of Maltese. Where scientific content is not so difficult.

Tania: We can do this in other lessons such as religion or humanities.

Violet: You can. Especially if you have subjects related to Malta.

Iris: Our grade does that. The humanities, we have part of it in Maltese.

Violet: Yes... so there you have another source where you can teach them a lot of vocabulary.

Tania: What happens Violet is that, as teachers, it becomes exhausting. Because it is nonstop, that all time you must give continuous input. You have a little output, but as you are saying, you must try. It starts in small doses.

Violet: I am therefore saying. Once you establish yourself in PBL, which is working well, the next step will be CLIL.

Tania: The PBL action plan is in its second year in Grade 4s and Grade 5s, it is in the first year in Grade 6 and Grade 7. It is doing well but it is a lot of work on teachers.

Lily: It really is a lot of work for the teachers. To bring everything together on this task, because now that you mention it, I could have been able to connect this task to the Marsaxlokk Humanities for example. I could have merged it with humanities. But there are many opportunities.

Violet: Try something small, start a bit and not as mandatory by the school – you can experiment a bit with CLIL. Now that you know about it, and PBL is doing well, you may want to try it. CLIL saves you time too.

Tania: We must mention that these are the four teachers who take care of the Maltese language – they are subject coordinators. And they have that enthusiasm and extra passion that others may not have. That is another factor. I know how these teachers work but not all the other teachers give this same output. There are those who still use translation in their Maltese lessons because they give up, because they get tired trying.

Violet: Translation is the worst thing to do when teaching a new language.

There are studies that tell you that to learn a word you need to encounter it in seven different contexts.

Now when one translates, we lose this opportunity.

Rose: The students are accustomed to translation during the creative writing lesson (Ms., how do I say this?)

During Translation, they learn nothing. The teacher struggles with children not to have a translation lesson. I tell them – **“Let’s choose short and easier sentences.”**

Violet: Now this lesson I have seen today is paving the way for the creative writing lesson. They now have the ideas, the verbs, the structure of the sentence. In other words, see how important the speaking lessons are.

Tania: Then there is the creativity our children have.

Violet: And there is a certain yearning for knowledge as well.

Tania: What do you think about the rubric? Should we group the students? (for observers?)

Violet: I think it was a clever idea because everyone focuses on a particular group.

Tania: In the observer sheets, for next time, we leave yes and no out, leaving only the comment.

Violet: I really appreciated when the lesson ended, the children came asking you something and they continued using Maltese. How good it is that as a school we use such moments, such as, greetings in the corridor, instructions are said in Maltese. Children will start using them if their teachers are role modelling them.

Iris: But that depends on the teachers. If you feel the Maltese is part of you, you will use it. I question them in Maltese.

Rose: Once we worked on posters in Maltese.

Tania: For this to work it needs to be part of an action plan and we concentrate on one thing at a time. This will give directions.

Lesson Study 2 - Debriefing

Monday, 5th May 2025

Participants – Tania, Lily, Rose, Daisy, Iris, and Violet

Tania: Miss Iris, how do you feel the lesson went?

Iris: I'm happy because, at the beginning of the year, there were children who, if they had been asked to go in front of you, would have lowered their heads. What I found beautiful today was that they were excited to go out and even said something, even just a word. The children who usually hold back really wanted to go out and say something, talk about what they did.

Tania: And in fact, the last three who came to present, those were the most reluctant.

Iris: Let me explain the last three children. W**** is autistic, A***** came from England, this is her first year in Malta, and E*** doesn't get any help at home, they don't support him at home. But I was pleased that they still wanted to have a go, and present just like the others, they do what they know.

Tania: They did understand a little bit.

Iris: W**** is the one who knows the most and understands me in Maltese. But then I saw E*** and A***** and am pleased that after a year of exposure, they started to understand what I was saying to them. Although they couldn't say the words as the others did.

Tania: Were there things you wished had gone better?

Iris: I would have liked them to say more sentences, but not everyone managed to get to sentences. Some moved forward and made simple sentences here and there. If they could get to the end of the year and be able to say sentences without help, that would have been better.

But, at least I know that although I helped them, they did their best to try to reach that goal. I was happy because some of them, at the beginning of the year, you could be sure they wouldn't speak. But this time, when I explained last week what they would do, all of them wanted to go out and explain what they did. They all wanted to say something, and they did it with enthusiasm.

I made them work together to be encouraged by each other. I didn't make them in big groups so they wouldn't confuse each other. I gave them the choice to decide with whom to work. I didn't say who was good or bad because I noticed that last week, as they worked, regardless of whether they were good or not, they all started helping each other.

Tania: I think this is an important point in Maltese. Because normally, when I've done other Lesson Studies, we grouped the challenging children, those who were good, we put them together so they would push each other. You pair them with someone who might be a bit weaker, they take over. But I think Rose insisted a lot on this aspect, did you reflect on this?

Rose: From my experience, when I let them choose the groups, whether in Maltese, English, or whatever, they work better. Because it's like they are friends, they help each other, more than if I try to impose the groups. Because often, they don't want to be with one or another, but when they choose, they work better. Now, maybe in the year I teach, maybe the younger ones are different, but I let them work together.

I don't let them choose friends when they work in pairs. Then I make them pairs, otherwise, it doesn't work. So, in the class, I then change as I want. But when I do group work, they choose.

Lily: I really liked it. Even though they are young children, and Maltese for them feels like we're speaking a foreign language, they seemed enthusiastic. The children seemed to want to participate. What we want is often very different from what they give us. We hope for full sentences, perfect sentences, with the verb in its place, but unfortunately, no. But with Ms. Iris's continuous support, she was consistent all the time, and that helped the children a lot.

Rose: Yes, they showed a lot of interest. It seemed they also learned vocabulary. I'm sure they learned this year, and they tried to use it. That's also important – that they are learning.

Lily: And they were expecting their teacher to be there all the time, prompting them.

Iris: Yes, they want that little bit, to have someone beside them.

Daisy: I thought it was a good idea that they made the handouts in the pre-tasking, as it helped them because when you see visuals, you remember the vocabulary more. As Rose said, they learned the vocabulary, and it seemed they learned it. And I know there were children who were with me before, who refused. They literally refused, and I was happy to see them trying. It's difficult to form a proper sentence, but at least they understood and tried. This is a good sign that they took an interest.

Iris: It's like a preparation for me too, because since we started, during the break, I ask them: "What do you have in your lunchbox today?" Now they come and tell me: "Can I tell you what's in my lunchbox today?" Before I ask, they tell me, and they say it in Maltese. It's so ingrained in them that I ask them about the lunchbox in Maltese, and they ask me in Maltese.

Everyone: Repetition, it's true!

Tania: This is the connection with reality. It makes sense because it's something they see, they touch every day. I enjoyed it because they seemed prepared with the vocabulary, meaning they learned it well. Maybe something I would change is, you were using many

prompts. It's like you were giving them a lot of the sentence. I don't know, maybe you could ask them.

Iris: I gave them the beginning of the sentence!

Tania: Or else, if you give them the sentence (sometimes you might give them the sentence), maybe you could get them to repeat it. To help them build the sentence structure, because they knew the vocabulary. Even those who don't know Maltese very well started saying words. I mean, they said words, but the sentence was incomplete.

Rose: Yes, they should repeat – “I like orange juice.” Let them not say it to you, but to encourage them to form a sentence with three words.

Tania: Take two sentence starters, like: “Jiena nħobb” or “Jiena nipreferi” and always focus on them.

Violet: I know that Year * isn't an easy year because they start becoming aware when they make a mistake and realise they can't speak. So, we need to keep that in mind. When it comes to the level of vocabulary, I think they have enough vocabulary related to the theme, which is broad enough. What I also noticed is that they weren't just practicing vocabulary, but they were practising (something that children who don't speak Maltese still do – there are still a few mistakes, but as they hear it, it will help) saying “tal-frawli, tal-banana.” Generally, they skip the article and particle and go straight to the noun. But the fact that they are hearing it all the time, that structure, many are using it correctly, others are still making mistakes, but I'm not worried because as long as they are hearing others, and there's repetition, they will use it too.

As Tania said, if I were you, I would give them phrases like we did with the vocabulary. This way, they can access the conversation. Give them small phrases, for example: “Għażilt li nġib miegħi l-iskola...”, “Għażilt li npoġġi fil-kaxxa tal-ikel...”, “Jiena nipreferi...” This way, you're giving them joining words and sentence starters.

So, apart from the vocabulary, I would create a set of joining words and a set of sentence starters.

Suggestion – Something that helps; short recordings, even between two LSEs who are doing a conversation on the lunchbox. They can model and show them the use of these joining words and sentence starters. The challenge, we all agree, is joining the sentences. They have vocabulary, they have the article with the particle, now the next step is a bit difficult, so we need to help them access the conversation.

For the rest, the children were interested, they were motivated, the lesson was quite long, and it's difficult to keep their attention. So, the fact that they stayed attentive was a good sign. Because it's not easy to listen. And that's the exposure we need – for the children to listen.

Tania: Iris, you also help them keep their attention by insisting that their desks are clear, so there are no distractions. Also, certain class routines that help – for example, drinking before or after the lesson, so their attention stays focused.

Iris: In the lesson, I tell them to stop for a few minutes, and they have an old diary and sit to draw, some drink, some go to the bathroom, I do something... those 4/5 minutes between each lesson, they know there's a little break, and then we start another lesson.

And the whole “We respect each other” has been going on since the beginning of the year. If you want someone else to listen to you, then you need to listen to them too.

Violet: That's one of the learning outcomes of speaking. I show respect to whoever is speaking. It's important for them to hear because that's when they are exposed to the language. We know that, most likely, the only Maltese they hear is at school.

Tania: We haven't had a chance to meet since the last time we all met together. Rose, Iris, and Daisy met and did the reflection... because it would have been a good idea to link this lesson to the assessment with the achievements, as Violet suggested after the first Lesson Study.

Rose: For the next lesson, I plan to use the mini whiteboard at the end of the lesson, and they will write the phrases they learned. Now we'll see how it works because usually, at the end of the lesson, they rate the lesson from one to five. How confident do you feel about learning in this lesson? and they show me with their fingers.

Violet: The lesson itself was assessed, but to gather that evidence at the end.

Tania: I understand from Iris that she divided them into small groups, but I start to worry that there's too much repetition.

Iris: Yes, you really have that.

Tania: Because they know the vocabulary well, but they are still limited. They were very good, they used it, they heard it, but you still feel the element of repetition. Violet, since you work in many schools, do you have any suggestions you could give us about this?

Violet: Look, I'll be honest. I've never entered a state school where the teacher spends 40 minutes doing a lesson like this. Well done! That's why I wanted my colleagues to come and see because the effort you are putting in is huge. I understand the situation at school. I can relate to you.

Rose: You also gauge with the children's attention span! If they can give you 15 minutes, your lesson is 15 minutes.

Violet: What you can do to vary it a bit, maybe instead of the lunchbox, you could have a picnic basket, for example. Just to change it a little, because both are talking about food. You could tell them, now we're not going to school but we're going on a picnic or a day at the beach. Change the setting a bit, prepare a slide that represents that setting.

Rose: And you can also do a follow-up activity. So, this is step 1, the lunchbox, and the follow-up would be another setting.

Violet: Yes, but since Tania commented on the repetition, a different setting could help.

Rose: You could also divide the groups into lessons not lesson.

Tania: If I were you, I would do that too. I would say, I have this many groups, I would do half of them one day, and the other half another day.

Iris: Apart from that, this lesson does not stop here. First, we built the vocabulary – we had the visuals, the PPT – we talked during the break (What do you have in your lunchbox?), today we had the peak of the conversation. Now, the points you gave us, I'll continue with them in the writing. In fact, I added to the lesson plan, that they write at least two or three sentences about what we've discussed. Now I'll add and vary it: "If you were in the picnic basket, what food items would you take?"

Violet: And maybe you could take the opportunity to give them these linking words because they also help with writing.

Iris: Give them words like – "Nipreferi..." "Nieħu miegħi l-insalata tar-ross..." instead of making it about the lunchbox, I'll vary it.

Tania: Because when it comes to vocabulary, the children are capable, and you gave them that exposure. But in sentence structure, we get stuck. Everytime – how to string a sentence. Always. The crux is there. That means the models are important.

Violet: It's important that they listen to the dialogues (conversations between the LSEs) and then get them to notice what they heard or repeat a sentence to see what came out from the listening through the dialogue. "What word are you using? How would you use it? Can you use it in a conversation?" By doing this, we'll get them from listening to noticing simple things so that later in conversation, they can use them. It's the same way we learn the native language that's not native for them. First, they listen, then imitate, then adjust where necessary until they confidently speak at the end. That means even these joining words, the words to start a sentence, can come from listening, from listening models.

Lesson Study 3 - Debriefing

Thursday, 8th May 2025

Participants – Rose, Daisy, Iris, Lily, Violet, and Tania.

Tania: Let's start with you, Ms. Rose. How did it go?

Rose: We started preparing for this oral practice from last week. The one about the restaurant, I did it last week. I start slowly, do a little bit each day.

They seemed to be enjoying it. I started doing it, and they were enjoying it. I was happy because there were children who, at the start of the year, certain children wouldn't say a word. For example, a particular boy used to have anxiety attacks because we have Maltese, he would cry, didn't want to join the lesson. Today I saw him reading. There was another boy, the same, he would cry, didn't want to come to school because he didn't know Maltese. That's why I let them read because if they didn't want to talk, at least there's something they could read. This way, they wouldn't panic. I have another boy who cries and doesn't want to do anything in Maltese, but lately, he's been talking a little in class. I have a girl who runs away from the class, and she didn't participate at all. She doesn't work in group work, so I choose my battles and leave her. But again, over the year, I saw improvement from her side.

My goal was, if anything, to teach them something, practice it, and maybe they'll eventually talk independently. Like always, you'll have some who can confidently do it and some who still need prompts, and others who learned a little, but I'm happy with them.

Tania: Ms. Daisy?

Daisy: So, as you know, there were children I taught in Grade * and I saw a change. Some who didn't speak and were confident, even going up in front of us, not all of them knew us, but some did. I noticed how proud they felt, they seemed very engaged, and they seemed to know what they were saying.

What I noticed was that maybe a few mixed masculine and feminine terms. Some corrected themselves. Even when they started saying "mejda għall-erbħa" (table for four), and realised it was five, they corrected themselves. That means they knew what they were saying, not just learning it because they had to.

I also liked that they had the PowerPoint visible, some referred to it, some didn't. Those who were confident in Maltese felt comfortable speaking.

I was really impressed, well done. And it showed how well you worked, great job.

Tania: Lily?

Lily: I think it was a really beautiful and good activity.

The children were engaged the whole time, and if not the whole class, the majority of the children were eager to raise their hands and wanted to participate.

As Ms. Daisy said, there were some who, I also noticed, corrected themselves, like when we noticed they weren't speaking. Something I liked was that although you were present – (I really admire the tone of your voice) – how you managed to keep it low tone.

Even though you were there, and they knew you were there, you weren't dominant over them, always giving them the sentence guide. And something Violet told us last time, you really put it into practice today because I saw it, how you managed to bring everything together. For me, in fact, the last part really closed it completely.

Well done, Rose.

Tania: Ms. Iris?

Iris: I'll continue on from what Lily said, in fact, I wrote down that I really liked the conclusion. And I got an idea from it about what I can do to close the lesson.

Rose: I use "Rate yourself" a lot. For example, now we're doing Maths – "How did you feel you did?" 5 or 4 at the start, then slowly, during the week, the rating changes. I tell them, "Can you see that slowly, we're feeling better? At the start of the week, we were a bit shaky, and now we understand more." The rating helps them and me as well.

Iris: Yes, it helps them think, helps them critique – what's good and what's bad, how they're feeling about their learning. I really liked it. I also liked the groups and how they moved from one group to another.

Rose: I say that a 40-minute lesson needs a little bit of group work – it can't just be a lesson with me only. First of all, I don't want it to be teacher-centred, and they enjoy it too. So I give them a bit of time to practice with each other, and I see a certain dynamic, for example, a particular girl in the class didn't raise her hand to participate even though I know she speaks in Maltese, but in the group, she spoke. In a smaller group, there's more chance that someone who usually doesn't speak will speak. That also helps them.

Iris: Yes, I really liked how they started moving from group to group and the idea of varied restaurants.

Rose: Everything from them. I told them about the idea of restaurants, and they came up with it. They chose it, wrote it in Maltese, and we read them.

Iris: I think it could also be that, because they are Grade *, the ideas come out quickly. Because for us right now, to get an idea out, we're still working on it. The fact that they came out and spoke was also something big. You can see how much the age difference matters in learning. I noticed earlier – the fact that they're a bit older, they feel more mature.

Violet: So obviously, I'll start from the premise that I don't know the children, although I can imagine their level, but I wouldn't know the dynamics of the individual students. That means, I'm certain Rose, when planning the lesson, had the various students in mind. Now, they're Grade * so this time, maybe more than other times, I looked at the lesson plan and at the learning objectives.

So that is my starting point. I said, I'll put the learning objective as my lens as see how it was reached. That was an exercise I also wanted to do for myself. Now, something I really liked was the way, (true, the focus was on speaking), but how you tied the four language skills together. So, you used reading to help them access speaking. You also used it in a guided way. The slides you had in the presentation were always building blocks, always getting a bit more challenging for them as the prompts were taken away.

Then I also noticed, they wrote the menu themselves. So, you used writing tools to create another activity (which was authentic and really nice about the restaurants), and the students saw this learning objective in action as well. During the group activity, there was also listening, because to respond to each other, they were listening.

This means you had the pedagogical integration of the four language skills together, and that's something to appreciate.

Now, what I'd like to comment on, (I'll go back to the learning objective) – I use various strategies for how to frame clear questions - the children were creating the questions, and they were doing them well.

But we need to be a bit careful that the focus (if the focus of the lesson is speaking) doesn't shift to reading and decrease from speaking. The next step, if you were to build up this lesson, would be to create another authentic situation where you eliminate as much as possible the visual of reading. Because after all, are we doing a lesson of reading or speaking?

The learning objective states – I used strategies.

The children asked the questions, I understand they felt unclear about them, but it seems they still haven't reached this point yet, but this is a work in progress. I imagine now you'll continue building on this, and now the emphasis will be on finding strategies.

Then, I really liked the star activity (the rating), because you killed two birds with one stone – apart from collecting evidence of learning, the students were practising numbers in speaking, in an authentic situation.

Rose: I also do that to make sure everyone says something. I make sure no one is left out.

Violet: I don't know the children as well as you do. For example, when they were looking at the PPT, remind them to make it authentic. For example, there were two boys who went up

to present, and because the PPT slide had an example in the feminine, they continued in the feminine instead of the masculine.

Rose: Yes, I'll do that and draw their attention to it.

Violet: Yes, you emphasise that today the focus is on speaking. You had a big and beautiful slide, reminding them of the objective of the lesson, drawing their attention to it. You tell them, if the example is feminine, but you're boys, then the dialogue should be in the masculine. Thinking about it, I would almost do it on purpose to get them thinking and practicing.

For the rest, it was an excellent lesson, the connection between the language skills was exceptional. That's just it – make a distinction in focus – speaking or reading? Otherwise, they'll end up reading instead of speaking.

Rose: Yes, exactly. My goal was to read and practice. Then I start removing the support I prepare... in fact, in the slides, that prompting starts decreasing slide after slide. Eventually, I want them to leave independently.

Violet: Now maybe in the next lesson, the focus will be this. You'll start with what they know, what you did today, and create an activity where they can create strategies for how they would do the question. In fact, today there was a girl who slightly changed the question, the others were all following the model. The fact that she changed it, even we heard it more beautifully, more authentically.

Tania: So, I really liked the lesson, and I don't know how time flew... the children were so enthusiastic! I really liked how it was scaffolded – you took the point from Violet who last time suggested that we record 2 LSEs in a conversation to provide them with a model.

Violet: Rose did it with reading, if it had been like I suggested, it would have been with listening model.

Tania: But I think the lesson worked so well because the children felt safe. The fact that Rose gave them the full model, then gradually started removing it, and at the end said, "Let's see who will try to have a short conversation!" That means all this scaffolding helps the children feel safe, that they can take a risk.

Rose: In fact, we practiced every scenario. We did two days on each one.

Tania: So, this variation of the same model worked. And at no time was it boring. Everyone participated. Their enthusiasm was sky high. I know the children who can speak Maltese in this class, and I know the children who don't speak Maltese in this class. But everyone was very engaged. I really enjoyed hearing complete phrases and sentences. They made dialogues – the children really tried. The self-assessment – from one to five (the ratings) also impressed me. I liked that you, Rose, started prompting them to be confident to buy or order, and how you always insist on full sentences. I liked that you helped them with vocabulary

variation – in fact, the example you gave was later used by a girl. You gave them new vocabulary as well. It was student-centred.

How much we are learning from each other!

Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Daisy: What I noticed is that a boy decided not to choose dessert, and the other drew his attention. And the first boy confirmed he didn't want dessert. This shows how much they really know what they are saying.

Violet: The role play engaged them. Something you could do, a point for another activity, is to tell them to imagine they're in a restaurant, and all the food is bad. How would they complain?

Rose: Yes, for example, cold food. How would we forward our complaints to the restaurant staff?

Violet: That brings in more vocabulary.

Tania: And when you change the situation, you could add a little humour too.

Violet: Always in the context of a real situation – because these are all scenarios that could actually happen.

Tania: Always with realia.

Rose: And that's why they get into it... because it's a practical situation... they know it will be useful in real life. Even when we're practising, they want to add their own experiences. They start telling you, "How do you say this in Maltese?" I insist that we don't do translations.

Iris: And that's it – because to get them out of their comfort zone is difficult because they don't have the vocabulary; especially the younger students.

Rose: That's why I want to teach them new vocabulary and phrases and practice them. Now, some need practice and they can continue independently, and some practice and learn a little bit, but at least I'm teaching them something.

Lesson Study 4 - Debriefing session

Wednesday, 21st May 2025

Participants – Daisy, Rose, Iris, Lily, Violet, and Tania

Tania: So, Ms. Daisy, let's start with you!

Daisy: When you consider where we started, we saw progress. Obviously, they are still Grade *, we are still behind, but at least they learned something for sure. Now, where oracy is involved, that's the last stage they master. In my opinion, writing comes before speaking.

Some practice Maltese at home, they hear the language, so they have more vocabulary. But we have few students of this kind, you could count them on one hand. But in general, I don't think we did that badly.

Tania: I think the strategies you used... you used the prompts, it seemed there was some drilling.

Daisy: Yes, one had to! At that age, you really have to do some drilling. We had a lesson every week on this. We would have a lesson every week and see what we learned from it. Today, I can say the children did the least amount of talking. Obviously, there was the presence of the adults even though I helped them. But I didn't want to make it too big a deal, obviously. But it was the least amount of speaking they did. In a normal lesson, they speak more. I think they feel more confident.

Tania: Maybe it was the subject?

Daisy: The subject wasn't easy, but surprisingly, they would say, "Nhar ta' Tnejn, l-mama `sajret imqarrun, n-nanna sajret ross il-forn". Now, whether it was a coincidence or whether they were saying it to please me...!

Rose: They were making connections.

Daisy: Yes, they took it home their learning. From the feedback I had, some of them had never tasted imqaret, and I made them buy imqaret, and they tasted them. You know how? Some don't cook Maltese food at home, like L***, she told me that at home, her mum cooks Polish food, so she would visit her grandmother's because her grandmother cooks Maltese food.

Tania: It seems the common element we all had was the theme, which was interesting for them.

Daisy: Yes, it was.

Tania: And as Rose said, they made this connection. I don't know if it's because of this lesson study, but it seems like no one was upset or didn't want to participate. There was no resistance...

Daisy: No, no, they enjoyed it. Today they were tense, to tell the truth, because Ms. Tania is present... and I told them there would be a teacher from the university. So, they were a bit tense. They had been waiting since this morning for the teachers to visit their class.

Tania: But they stayed, right?

Daisy: Yes, they did. And they supported each other. I liked them. Even during the lesson, they were attentive.

Iris: Yes, they were attentive.

Daisy: S*** was attentive, H*** finds it hard to speak, E***... But I feel they learned.

Tania: Although there was repetition... but they stayed attentive. Well done. Ms. Lily?

Lily: I think it was the first time I saw young students in such a lesson. For me, it was an organised lesson, there was definitely drilling, but I imagine for that age, you need some drilling. But they were there in class, and all of them wanted to say something. Obviously, not everyone spoke. When we'll have a class where everyone speaks Maltese and speaks it well, we can ring the bells.

But the fact that you gave them prompts, they observed and felt the visuals with their hands, they saw the pictures, it helped them continue with the subject of the theme. You kept going, meaning you didn't let them stop, and of course, at this age, the teacher's continuous input makes a big difference. I think it was an interesting lesson, and the children enjoyed it, even though they were a bit shy, they still enjoyed it, they didn't get frustrated.

Rose: The children tried, even the shy ones, they still tried too, which is important. We always have children who don't open their mouths, and that's a problem, and the fact that everyone had the chance to speak, no one laughed at anyone. That means it's important that they feel comfortable speaking.

Tania: And they referred to the PowerPoint, to the questions; this was a reference.

Daisy: Yes, and some asked me if they can repeat after me. I say it, and they repeat after me. Some, even this morning, two children told me they were afraid to speak because Ms. Tania would be there, they couldn't say it, and they repeat after me.

Rose: Good, you see, you need to give them that safety net, that's important...

Daisy: We also did the PowerPoint. I showed it to them more than once... but because of the vocabulary, I preferred to read it a little beforehand.

Rose: Often, it's a fear. They aren't exposed to Maltese, so some of them face difficulties with English, or with Maths, or with friendships, or in the world of school, which is not easy, especially for your younger ones, and then, there is Maltese too. So, when there's that safety net, I think that it really helps them.

Iris: I really liked the prompts because they shared them between them, they raised interest. I also noticed that many of them made connections because either they eat that food at home or at their grandmother's, so they could recognise their everyday experience. The fact that Daisy manages to get something out of each one of them is a great achievement.

Daisy: They understand, they understand. But when it comes to speaking, that's another matter. It's tough for them.

Iris: I realise this too in my class. We've reached a point where now they understand, but to get the words out...

Daisy: I sometimes use Maltese outside of Maltese lessons. At first, they would say to me, "But this isn't a Maltese lesson!" Now they don't say that anymore.

Tania: I could see that you are using this practice. When they were eating, they weren't just saying vocabulary, they were also adding the article and the pronoun.

Iris: And in the end, they do understand that Maltese is beautiful and important. If you use it a little every day, they'll start doing it like you. Since the first term, W***, if I speak in English, he tells me, "Bil-Malti" Now, he likes Maltese.

Rose: Consistency and repetition. Children really need repetition, the same thing done in different ways. So, it's not boring and they don't get frustrated, but consistency and repetition are key.

Iris: And show them enthusiasm.

Daisy: Yes, for example, this "Tan-nanna ħelu manna", the first one to say it was L***. Then they asked what manna is, so we searched for it together. We found the video and watched it, and that's how they learned it.

Violet: The prompts were really good, the lesson was really well-structured. The questions, the help from the prompts – as the structure of the lesson, it couldn't have been better. The children, with their limitations, being small, didn't show any resistance. They all wanted to participate, and they also wanted to hear everyone who participated. They even reminded you if you missed asking someone.

Maybe it doesn't relate to the lesson, but I'll mention it.

At this age, they gain a lot of language that isn't explicitly taught because they learn a lot of these sentence structures we don't always teach them in the lesson, and that's where they

learn the most. This means, using Maltese outside of the Maltese lesson, I can assure you, is more effective, even double what you'd do in a lesson where you take three-quarter for an oracy lesson. I mean, even instructions – maybe in the corridor, when they're going to the library – “Oqghodu wara xulxin,” instead of saying it in English - “Stay in line.” So, small things, instructions they hear today, and they hear them again tomorrow, the students transfer them. What they learned in this context, the children can transfer to another context. And the expressions, “Tan-nanna helu manna,” they absorb them. So, we use Maltese expressions even in situations that are not in the Maltese lesson, they'll make them their own, and it's amazing how they use them in different situations.

Parenthesis, but I wanted to comment on it.

What I liked about this lesson is that you were not afraid of using variation. At the beginning, when I was reading those many slides, I was afraid of the heavy content, but now, it's worth admiring. When they found themselves with the prompts in front of them, the choice was varied. Some chose this prompt, and others chose that prompt...!

Daisy: I don't know if you noticed. At one point, G***** asked N*** why he didn't choose the same prompt as he did yesterday. It is because they had the chance to change.

Violet: So, it was worth admiring that you were not afraid to give them the variation of vocabulary. Maybe I personally would have done wrong by limiting it, but I think you did well.

Maybe at the start, I would have involved the children.

Daisy: In reading the slides?

Violet: Not all of them.

Tania: We discussed it (in the vertical meeting) but we said it would be too long then (time-wise).

Violet: Yes but maybe pick one or two students for involvement.

The last question was a good one for assessment for learning, it was “What did you learn?”

Maybe I can give a suggestion, for the next lesson, they were speaking in the first person – “Jiena nhobb.” Maybe you could do an exercise where masculine and feminine are used, and the third person is used, because the tendency is to use always the first person. They'll keep using the first person until Grade 5. So maybe you could have a group activity where a boy and a girl come up and there's dialogue between them: “Tell me what you think John likes and tell me what you think Maria likes.” That way, we can limit using Ninu Toninu and practice the conjugation in practice. So, the next step is to move from the first person singular to masculine and feminine, then next will be plural persons; from the same context, from the same food theme, and your suggestions.

Daisy: The exposure they had was – “Il-mama` taf issajjar, il-papa` jaf issajjar...”.

Violet: Really well done, really good lessons, really structured, the children seem motivated, there’s no resistance in any class, but now it’s up to us (that’s why I praised you for the variation of vocabulary), we need the courage to move to the level where conjugation is concerned. I speak from experience because how they express themselves in speaking will reflect in writing. I think from the younger years, if teachers experiment more, they won’t stick to certain conjugations, it will also help the verbs.

Rose: Also, for example, I sometimes do this with them, they pair up, and ask each other, “What do you like?” Then they tell me what K**** likes. “K*** likes...”

Violet: A really good exercise I suggest is: you all had good lessons. Everyone takes their lesson and brings it to a slightly higher level.

Rose: Ours was a dialogue. They sat in pairs, wrote their dialogue, and performed it in front of the class.

Violet: These are my comments, otherwise, confidence is as it is. If you’re saying that in the other lessons, they showed more confidence...

Daisy: No, today they were tense.

Violet: I understand you! They always followed the dialogue with you, the questions were good, and the prompts helped them so that those without confidence could find something to grab onto. Because if they lose confidence, we lose everything, and nothing happens.

The teacher’s guidance needs to stay there. But then you as teachers need that little bit of courage, at least for those who are highflyers, because sometimes in our education systems, we forget about the talented students. I’m sure in every class, you find that one or two, who are high achievers. We cannot lose them in the process.

Tania: It seems like we’re on the same page, and I especially, because I’m a bit more critical of myself and a little more perfectionist, I’d say, these children don’t know Maltese, these children don’t want to learn Maltese, these children have an attitude towards the language. But when I entered all four classes, there was little or no resistance. That means these children, I think, in the end, all of them want to learn.

Rose: You always see what’s expected and what they produce. Because our children come from families who speak English, and the expected level is of someone who speaks native Maltese. The gap is huge. Every teacher’s struggle is that they must bring them up to a high level when in actual fact, they have a very low level.

Everyone: True!

Violet: But I believe that in their own way, it won't be easy for the teachers or for them, but somehow, they'll get there. We think they're not learning, but in the long run, they'll have learned. Don't lose heart. Sometimes they don't show us how much they've really learned.

Tania: In our position, it worries us when we see teachers burning out trying to teach and take it all on themselves.

Daisy: They don't get help at home.

Violet: We are working against the current.

Daisy: Maltese is not a priority for them.

Violet: Yes, but by the time they reach senior school, Maltese will become a priority.

Rose: And then, they expect miracles to happen.

Appendix G: Focus Group Questions

Final Focus Group (26th May 2025)

Question 1 – What we experienced together during this cycle of lesson studies is Professional Development.

What is your experience of it?

Question 2 – What were challenges that we encountered during the lesson study cycles?

Question 3 – Would you do Lesson Study again if you had the opportunity?

Question 4 – Any further comments?

Appendix H: Transcript of Focus Group Conversation

Final focus group feedback

It-Tnejn 26^{ta'} Mejju 2025

Parteċipanti – Lily, Rose, Iris and Tania

Assenti – Daisy

Tania: Ok, Mela. Dawn ftit domandi halli naraw l-esperjenza tagħna kif kienet.

L-ewwel domanda - What we have experienced together during this lesson study is professional development. What is your experience of it?

Tistgħu titkellmu bl-Ingliż, tistgħu titkellmu bil-Malti.

X'esperjenza kellkom f'din il-Lesson Study?

Ms. Lily?

Lily: Jiena naħseb li tul dawn l-erbgha gimghat li poġgejna fil-prattika dak li ilna li bdejna, rajna aspetti differenti ta' kif it-tfal jistgħu jitgħallmu u l-benefiċċju li jieħdu t-tfal minn meta ngħallmu - bil-viżwali, bil-reali, bħal meta kellna - meta għamilt l-lezzjoni jiena bl-affarijiet li setgħu imissu. Il-lezzjoni li per eżempju għamlet Rose, meta tegħlat l-PowerPoint. Il-lezzjoni li għamilt inti, (Iris), il-lezzjoni li għamlet Daisy bil-leħniet, kif kull haġa hija pass li jimxi wieħed fuq l-iehor biex ngħinu l-istudenti fil-livelli differenti jitgħallmu naqra iktar fil-lingwa, fis-sugġett li tant ibagħtu fih.

Tania: L-esperjenza tiegħek Rose, please.

Rose: It is long and laborious, fih ix-xogħol – biex tiltaqa', biex titkellem, u taħdem u tipruva – but the end result huwa sabiħ. Għax anki l-fatt li tmur għand xulxin u tara t-talenti tagħna, dak li tkun iddiskutejt tarah fil-prattika, jiġifieri fl-aħħar, the end result hu sabiħ – kemm għalina bħala għalliema għax tgħallimna hafna minn għand xulxin u kemm għat-tfal. Dak l-effort li konna għamilna flimkien. Kienu kollha lezzjonijiet sbieħ. Kienu kollha suċċess. Lezzjonijiet fejn it-tfal tgħallmu.

Tania: Miss Iris?

Iris: Ogħgobni l-fatt li dawn l-esperjenzi ħadt aktar idea ta' kif nista' nagħmel lezzjoni tal-Malti speċjalment it-taħdit. Rajt ukoll kif b' hafna Prattika u għajnuna u drilling, it-tfal jaslu. Issa hemm min wasal għas-sentenzi u hemm min wasal għall-kliem, imma alumenu kollha għal ċerta livell.

U huma stess jindunaw. Jiena rajt bil-mod kif huma stess iħossuhom kuntenti, li ħadu xi haġa, ‘Ara għamilt xi haġa, tkellimt!’

Tania: Aħna xi kultant nużaw blanket statements. Per eżempju, it-tfal tagħna fil-Malti mhux kapaci, jew fil-Malti dawn ma jaslux, jew inkella fil-Malti t-tfal tagħna m’għandom interess, jew m’għandhomx attitudni. U nahseb, kif ittekljajniha, kif għidt inti Lily, li użajna kollha l-istess tema, użajna kollha viżwali, ħadna ħafna on board dak li qaltilna Violet, per eżempju nirrepetu ċerti mudelli, noqgħodu attenti kif nassessjaw, it-tip ta’domandi li nsaqsu, l-interventions li nagħmlu.

Jien rajt tfal jitgħallmu.

U ftit li xejn rajt attitudni. Nahseb dik kienet xi haġa sabiħa u speċjali u nispera li minn din kollha ħa nieħdu xi haġa li tiġi transmitted to the next year. Għax qisu dik il-ħaġa li nibdew from scratch every year, it’s very disheartening. Ux vera?

It-tieni domanda – Forsi xi challenges l-rajna fija din il lesson study?

Iris: Trid ħafna ħsieb.

Tania: Parti mill-proċess ta’Lesson study hija ir-riċerka.

Dejqukom, per eżempju li kien hemm Violet?

Kulhadd: Lanqas xejn.

Rose: Kienet ta’ għajjnuna kbira. Kienet posittiva ħafna magħna.

Tania: Fetthitilna ghajnejna fuq ħafna affarijiet.

Iris: Jien fl-ebda mument ma ħassejt li fit-team li konna xi hadd kien qed jimponi, mill-għalliema jew inti jew Violet, li xi hadd qed jħares lejn xi hadd biex...

Tania: Fil-bidu kont qed tħossok hekk Iris?

Iris: Fil-bidu, ħsibt u għidt “Ħa nara x’gej!” Fil-bidu kont naqra xettika. Imma imbagħad meta bdew jagħmlu l-lezzjonijiet, niltaqgħu u nitkellmu...tibda tħossok komda.

Kulhadd: Dik important li hadd ma jiggudika.

Tania: U li tidhol din l-ideja li int se tidhol [fil-klass] biex titgħallem u to improve your practice.

Xi haġa oħra li rajtu challenging?

Lily: Jiena li kien hemm Violet magħna ma dejqitni xejn, li dħalna fil-klassijiet ukoll – ma fiha xejn x’titlef minna, anzi titgħallem – imma kif qalet Rose – trid ħafna ħin biex tiprepara, ma tistax taqbad tidhol u tagħmel il-lezzjoni. Jekk ma jkollokx naqra bażi ta’ kif se tmexxi l-lezzjoni, ma nahsibx li tirnexxi daqshekk faċċli.

Tania: Imma issa li esperjenzajta, (ovjament m’ahniex esperti f’Lesson Study), imma kieku kellek terġa tagħmila, tagħmilha?

Lily: Nagħmilha u nżid l-affarijiet. Jien kont l-ewwel waħda li għamiltha (lesson study 1). Jien oġġbitni kif tistaqsi t-tfal, per eżempju, x’tgħallimtu minn din? X’hadtu mill-lezzjoni?

Tania: L-assessment.

Lily: Iva. Diġa ktibtha fuq il-planning tiegħi għas-sena d-dieħla għax irrid nibda nagħmilha. Dik tal- assessment; jien inkellimha lil Rose u kienet qalti li tagħmilha pero` jiena dejjem ħsibt li tagħmilha fuq handout imma Rose tagħmilha wara kull lezzjoni (b’mod orali). Meta tispicċa l Maths tistaqsihom. U idea tajba li tistaqsihom: ‘Isma int x’tgħallimtu minna din il-bicċa tax-xogħol? Int x’hadt minn din il-lezzjoni?’ Għax jien ġieli nagħmel 3/4 lezzjonijiet inħambaq fuq l- istess haġa u meta tgħaddi gimgħa, jew tnejn u nerga mmur lura biex nara x’jiftakru, staqsieni ghoxrin!

Rose: Iva jien insaqsihom, ‘How confident do you feel?’ Minn hemm hekk tieħu ideja. Ideja f’xhiex inhuma.

Tania: L- assessment hux?

Lily: Jiġifieri dik hija ideja li jiena żgur se ngorrha miegħi on board għas-sena d-dieħla jekk il-Bambin jrid.

Rose: It is empowering as well. Għalihom ukoll. Per eżempju, meta jkollna l-long division fil-Maths (dik il-lezzjoni dejjem ikollna l-biki) ngħidilhom ‘Din l-ewwel lezzjoni, at the end of the lesson, kif tħossok?’ Issa by the end of the week you will understand better. Fil-bidu kont qed tifhem ftit jew ma kontx qed tifhem, issa qed tħossok aħjar, tifhem ferm aħjar. By practice, you can get better.

Tania: U f’dawn il-lezzjonijiet, f’kollha rajnihom. Violet hekk qalti – erbgħa karattri differenti, they tackled it all differently, and they were all a success in their own way so that is very empowering for the students, empowering for you, that you are making a difference.

Li għamilna din il-lesson study huwa differenti u partikolari għax aħna għamilniha vertical. Li kien hemm jgħaqqadna kienet it-tema, u l-approach, għax il-kontenut ta’kulhadd kien differenti. L- approach kulhadd prova jkun iktar child centred, kulhadd żam il-vizwali għaddejja u kulhadd iżomm f’moħħu – ‘How to engage the child’. Issa lesson study, is-soltu ssir across, eżempju grade 5s ħa taqbd u ma problema u tagħmlu fuha. U tgħid tagħmel waħda f’sena, tgħid ħa naqbad xi haġa (problema) li vera qed idejjaqni, eżempju fil-Maths, u dik qatt ma jgħibuha t-tfal, u tgħidu ‘Ejja ħa naqbd dan il-serje ta’planning sessions u se niddedikaw parti minnha li nitkellmu fuq din (il problema).

Domanda: Tarakhom tagħmluha din?

Rose: Din kwistjoni ta'kemm għandek teachers on board?

Tania: Dik dejjem.

Rose: Kemm hemm mit-teachers tal-grade tiegħek on board. Jekk it-teachers kollha jkunu on board mela le, anzi sabiha hafna għax tkun within your grade u tkun problema komuni. Jiġifieri jekk kulhadd ikun on board....

Tania: Għax aħna l-ikbar problema li nsibu bhala PD, li l-PD tagħna tant huma ikkoncentrati fi ftit granet, li m'għandniex biżżejjed. Idejalment ikollok hafna iktar.

Rose: Trid spazju bejn waħda u oħra.

Tania: Ikollok bżonn waħda f'xahar. Imma din il-ħaġa aħna m'għandniex. Għalhekk, aħna għandna 5/6 ijiem fis-sena li m'huma xejn. U tiprova iddaħħal kollox – hafna drabi tispicča PD li mhux effikaċi kif spjegajtu intom – li npoġġukhom bil-qeghda u tridu tisimgħu. Din (Lesson Study) hija PD differenti.

Iris: Imma ejja niehdu eżempju ta'PD – eżempju tad-dyslexia. Jgħidulek ċerta affarijjet fuq id- dyslexia imma dawn il-linji gwida immirata in general għax imbagħad it-tfal iduru magħha b'modi differenti.

Tania: Għalhekk din hija PD idejali għax x'tagħmel lesson study? Taqbad problema li int kellek u l-kollegi tiegħek għandhom, li inti vera interessata ssib soluzzjoni għax din fil-klassi qed tkissrek, u flimkien titekiljawha. Jiġifieri this has to do with you and your children. U mhix qeghda magħluqa fuq ġurnata, minn gimgħa għal gimgħa, indumu kemm iridu aħna (m'hemmx għalfejn 4 darbiet) sakemm fl-aħhar tkun kuntenta bir-riżultat. Tgħid 'Now we nailed it' ħa nbiddel jekk u se jkolli dar-riżultat.

Lily: Jien naħseb li hekk għanda tkun l-PD Day tagħna. Mhux naqbuha mit-8.00 sas 2.00, nitilqu 'l barra u tieqaf hemm.

Rose: Irid ikun hemm follow up.

Lily: Għax per eżempju kif semmiet Iris meta semmejt id-dyslexia, x'tgħallimna?

Iris: Iktar kważi kważi xi drabi jgħallmuk it-tfal fil-klassi għax tgħid ara kif sabu soluzzjoni. 'Isma, ara kif ħargu għalija it-tfal!' mela għax ħassewhom kunfidenti, ħadd ma baxxa rasu jew ma jitkelliemx kif jagħmlu is-soltu. Vera li jkollok professional development b'esperti li jiġu jgħidulek l-affarijjet pero` l-affarijjet li tarhom fil-klassi...differenti l-istorja.

Tania: Jiġifieri tarawha lesson study taħdem fis-settur?

Kulhadd: Iva

Tania: Eventwalment sabiħ kieku l-iskola kollha tagħmilha.

Iris: Kieku l-kollegi tiegħi l-oħra, kieku raw l-affarijiet isiru, kieku daħħlu f'kull klassi, kieku kienet tgħina hafna fil-Malti. Speċjalment fit-taħdit – kienu jieħdu idejat.

Tania: Ahna ovvjament intom ma kellhomx training ta x'inhil lesson study. Qisu along the way bdejtu titgħallmu x'inhil. Kieku jkun hemm PD ġenerali, nsiru nafu x'inhil din il-lesson study, ideally inkunu all for it! Bhalkom, intom kontu willing to try. Fil-bidu kien hemm naqra xettizizmu, pero` pruvajtu. You're willing to try.

Jista' jkun li tkun a good tool...

Rose: Nipruvaw hux. Nistgħu ngħidu din is-sena tkun waħda minnha. Dis-sena nintruduċuwa fil- PD, imbagħad ikun hemm fil-planning niddiskutuwa u ngħidu x'se nagħmlu, u tiġi iffollowjata. Nistgħu nużaw il-planning sessions.

Tania: Xi kummenti oħra li forsi xtaqtu iżziedu?

Iris: Kienet esperjenza positiva.

Rose u Lily: Anki jien.

Lily: U naħseb tkun ideja tajba li kieku l-ghalliema l-oħra, li jidħlu fil-klassijiet, jgħaddu minnha din.

Rose: Sabiha hux. Titgħallem żgħur. Ghax inti bhala teacher dejjem magħluqa fil-klassi tiegħek u il-fatt li jkollok esperjenzi oħra...Ahna konna naqsmu good practice ma'skejjel independenti oħra u kienet sabiha wkoll.

Tania: Sharing of good practice.

Rose: Ghax inti m'intiex timponi. 'Isma din hadmet'. Imbagħad tiġi int u tghidli: 'Jien għamilt hekk'. Jiena qatt ma tkun għadditli mir-rasi li nagħmel hekk.

Tania: Jien nixtieq indaħhala fl-aħhar PD Day din l-esperjenza. Nixtieq nixxerja din il-lesson study tagħna mal-kollegi – is-suċċess u n-negative tagħha ukoll; naħseb importanti li nixxerjaw magħhom. Jien għalija nħoss li kien suċċess. At the end of the day, dejjem tara l-istudent x'igwadanja. Jien naħseb li gwadanjaw hafna. Haddt gost nara it-tfal jipartecipaw u mghandhomx dik l-attitudni għal-Malti. Naħseb dik għalina diġa` konkwista. Jigifieri with your permission I will share it with colleagues.

Lily: Share bil-qalb kollha pero` diġa` nafu hafna minnhom l-outcome x'se jkun! Mhux kulhadd għandu din il-grinta u din l-inizjattiva li jagħmilha. Unfortunately.

Iris: U trid tkun cara li hadd ma qiegħed hemm biex imaqdar u jigġudika. Imma biex naraw il-positiv ta'xulxin.

Tania: Imma li qalet Lily huwa verita`. Intom kontu ċ-ċampions tal-Malti. Jien naf li l-erbgha li intom thobbu l-Malti. Dik l-ewwel ostaklu eliminat li intom tidhlu għalija għax tridu, fuq sugġett li vera thobbu.

Lily: Imma seta' kien sugġett ieħor Tania. Ma naħsibx li fil-grade qegħdin team li jista' jagħmilha.

Tania: Imma din dejjem hekk ta, Lily. Inti tibda miċ-ċampions li jidhlu għaliha, ikun hemm min ikun kurjuż u jidhol għaliha u jkun hemm min jirresistiha. Issa jista' jkun li dak li jirresistiha maż-żmien jiġġonja, u se jkun hemm min qatt ma jkun irid jaf. Imma int minħabba dak, ma tgħidx mhu se nagħmel xejn. Kieku ikollna 100% win kieku sewwa ħafna.

Iris: L-aqwa li jaraw il positiv.

Tania: Jien ilni f'din il-pożizzjoni 4 years. Bħala settur, jien rajtkom tinbidlu ħafna. Qabel kontu iktar segregati fil-klassijiet tagħkom, issa hemm more openness li tagħtu opinjoni, tagħtu feedback, tixxerjaw, tiproponu, l-affarijiet tixtiequhom aħjar. I am seeing that shift. Ma nafx. Are you seeing and feeling it? I could be wrong but I feel that it is improving. Kulhadd? Le. Pero dejjem nipruvaw.

Il-kontribuzzjoni ta' Daisy's għall-konversazzjoni fil- Focus Group (26^{ta} Meju 2025)

L-ewwel domandi

L-ewwel misoqsija kienet l-esperjenza. Jiena nqis li kelli esperjenza sabiħa u pozittiva kemm għall-istudenti u kif ukoll għalina. Kienet ta'benefiċċju kbir. Jiena din kienet t-tieni lesson study li għamilt, bħal ma taf inti, għamilt lesson study tal-Maths u kienet horizontal li hija tajba ukoll. Min din, il-vertikali tgħallimt ħafna, għax ovvjament s-sugġett, kif għidt inti, kien hemm t-tema li kienet l-istess u kollha ittekiljajniha skont t-tfal, l-eta` tat-tfal li kellna.

Jien li ngħallem grade * rajt anki t-tfal li kienu miegħi, li rajthom għamlu progress kbir mal-għalliema l-oħra. Jiġifieri għalija personali kienet ta'benefiċċju kbir. Tgħallimt ħafna u rajt l-istudenti jitgħallmu.

Fil-kas tas-sena tiegħi, ir-repetizzjoni kif qaltilna Ms. Violet. Ħadt ħafna on board il-kritika konstruttiva li kellna wara kull lezzjoni meta konna niltaqgħu u kulhadd jgħid x'ħass li mar tajjeb u le (għax minn hemm titgħallem u dejjem ittejjeb). L-istudenti ħadu gost ukoll u meta inti tara li t-tfal qed jieħdu gost, mingħajr ma trid inti tagħti iktar input għax tara l-feedback there and then.

It-tieni domanda

Challenges kif semgħew sħabi - il-ħin – għax ma kellniex lila biss jiġifieri il-lezzjonijiet tal-Malti baqgħu għaddejjin. U din kellna, b' xi mod insibu ħin biex nagħmluha ukoll.

Imma in ġenerali nara li plus biss kien fija. Minus, ma tantx tikkonsidra l-hin limitat li kellna. Naħseb li kull klassi kienet suċċess.

It-tielet domanda

Smajtek isemmi l-PD days.

Jien naħseb haġa waħda ma qbiltx miegħek, jekk tippermettili. Sitt ijiem f 'sena, jekk ikunu pjanati tajjeb u jkollna minnhom in-house, li nitgħallmu minn xulxin, naħseb tkun ta' beneficiċċju iktar min meta ngħibu xi hadd li ma jkunx familjari ħafna mal-iskola tagħna u jkun repetitiv. Din ġrat kemm-il darba.

Meta jkollu xi hadd li qiegħed hands on, bħal ma konna aħna u tista' taqsam l-esperjenza tiegħek naħseb, l-opinjoni tiegħi, li titgħallem iktar u sitt ijiem m'humieq ftit lanqas. Dejjem jekk ikun ta'interess.

Issa naqbel miegħek ħafna, li mhux kulhadd se jieħu gost li jkollu xi hadd jiġi jarah jgħallem l-lezzjoni. Jiena, għal bidu ħsibt li ħa nkun daqsxejn skomda. Anki li nidhol fil-klassijiet ta' ħaddiehor, mhux li jidhlu f'tiegħi biss.

Imma imbagħad meta sirt nafhom il-kollegi, ovvjament vertikali li ma tkunx taf il-kollegi daqs meta tkun taf dawki li taħdem ma tal-istess grade tiegħek, anzi, ħassejtni komda anki meta wehilt biex nippjana l-lezzjoni u staqsejt, bħal ma għamlu huma: 'X'nista nagħmel biex ikolli rizzultat aħjar?' U ħassejtni komda ħafna ħafna, jkolli nerga nagħmila, nerga nagħmila 100%.

Ma nafx jekk staqsejtx affarijiet oħra imma naħseb li dak kien kollu.

Nirringrazzjak tal-opportunita` li tajtni, u nispera li jkonna opportunita` oħra bħal din.

Appendix I: Translation to English – Focus Group Conversation

Final Focus Group Feedback (26th May 2025)

Participants – Lily, Rose, Iris, and Tania

Absent – Daisy

Tania: Ok, let's start with a few questions to reflect on our experience.

Question 1 - What we have experienced together during this lesson study is professional development. What is your experience of it?

You can speak in English, or you can speak in Maltese.

What has your experience been like in this Lesson Study?

Ms. Lily?

Lily: I think that throughout these four weeks, when we applied what we had started together, we saw different aspects of how children can learn and the benefits the children get from our teaching — using visuals, real-world connections, like when I did the lesson with things they could touch. The lesson Rose did when she used PowerPoint. The lesson you (Iris) did, the lesson Daisy did with the flash cards. You realise how everything is a step that leads to another step, helping students at different levels learn a little more in this language, in this subject they struggle so much in.

Tania: Your experience, Rose, please.

Rose: It is long and laborious, it is hard work - to organise meetings, to discuss, to work together and to trial - but the end result is beautiful. Because even the fact that you go to each other and see our talents, what you discussed, you see it in practice, meaning in the end, the result is beautiful - not just for us as teachers because we learned a lot from each other, but also for the children. That effort we made together. All the lessons were beautiful. They were all successes. Lessons where the children learned.

Tania: Ms. Iris?

Iris: I liked the fact that through these experiences, I gained a better idea of how I can teach a Maltese lesson, especially speaking. I also saw how, with a lot of practice, support, and drilling, the children make progress. Now, some have reached a level where they can construct and say sentences and others can say words, but they all reached a certain level. And they themselves realise it. I saw how they feel happy that they achieved, that they learnt, 'Look, I managed, I spoke!'

Tania: Sometimes we use blanket statements. For example, we say our students are not capable in Maltese, or these children won't reach the level in Maltese, or that our students aren't interested or don't have a right attitude. And I think, as you mentioned Lily, we all used the same theme, we all used visuals, we took a lot on board Violet's suggestions, for example, repeating certain models, being mindful of how we assess, the types of question we ask, and the interventions we make.

I saw children learning.

And I did not see any attitude problems. I think that was something beautiful and special, and I hope that from this, we can take something that gets transmitted to the next year. Because it seems like we start from scratch every year, and that's very disheartening. Isn't it?

Question 2 – Perhaps some challenges we encountered in this lesson study?

Iris: It requires a lot of thinking.

Tania: That is part of the Lesson Study process, the research. Did you feel, for example, that Violet was a burden?

Everyone: Not at all.

Rose: She was a huge help. She was very positive with her comments.

Tania: She opened our eyes to a lot of things.

Iris: At no point did I feel that in the team, anyone was imposing, whether from the teachers, you (Tania), or Violet.

Tania: Did you feel that way in the beginning, Iris?

Iris: At first, I thought, "Let's see what's coming!" At the beginning, I was a bit sceptical. But then, when we started doing the lessons, meeting, and talking... you start feeling comfortable.

Everyone: That's important, that no one judges anyone.

Tania: There needs to be this understanding that you enter the class to learn and improve your practice. Anything else you found challenging?

Lily: For me, having Violet with us didn't bother me at all, the fact that we went into the classes as well was fine - there was nothing to lose, in fact, you learn - but, as Rose said, it takes a lot of time to prepare. You can't just stand unprepared and do the lesson. If you don't the design of the lesson, I don't think it would have been a success.

Tania: But now that you've experienced it (obviously, we're not experts in Lesson Study), would you do it again?

Lily: I would do it and add more things. I was the first one to do it (lesson study 1). I liked how one gets feedback from the children, for example, what did you learn from this? What did you get from this lesson?

Tania: The assessment?

Lily: Yes. I have already written it in my planning for next year because I want to start doing it. That assessment part: I talked to Rose, and she told me she does it, but I always thought that it involves paperwork. But Rose does it orally after every lesson. After the Maths lesson, for example, she asks them. And it's a good idea to ask them: 'So, what did you learn from today's lesson? What did you take from this lesson?' Because I sometimes do 3 or 4 lessons focusing on the same thing and then after a week or two, I go back to see what they remember. And no response!

Rose: Yes, I ask them, 'How confident do you feel?' From there, you get an idea. An idea of where they are.

Tania: The assessment, right?

Lily: That's an idea I'm sure I'll take on board for next year, God willing!

Rose: It's empowering as well. For them too. For example, when we have long division in Maths (that lesson we always have tears), I tell them, "This is the first lesson, at the end of the lesson, how do you feel?" Now, by the end of the week, you will understand better. At first, you might understand a little or not at all, but now you feel better, you understand much better.' By practicing, you can get better.

Tania: And in these lessons, in all of them, we saw this. Violet gave me this feedback - she said that you have four different characters, you all tackled it all differently, and they were all a success in their own way. So, that is very empowering for the students, empowering for you, that you are making a difference.

What we did in this lesson study is different and special because we did it vertically. What we had in common was the theme and the approach, because everyone's content was different. In the approach everyone tried to be more child-centred, everyone kept the visuals going, and everyone kept in mind - 'How to engage the child.' Now, a lesson study is usually done across a grade, for example, Grade 5s tackle a problem and work on it. And you say, we'll do one a year, and you pick something (a problem) that really bothers you, for example, in Maths, and the children always struggle in. And you say, 'Let's take this series of planning sessions and dedicate part of it to discussing this (the problem).'

Question: Would you do this again?

Rose: It depends on how many teachers are on board.

Tania: Always.

Rose: How many of your grade teachers are on board? If all the teachers are on board, it would be beautiful because it would be within your grade and would have a common problem to solve. If everyone is on board...

Tania: Because the biggest problem we face with PD is that our PD days are few and sparse, we don't have enough time. Ideally, we would have much more.

Rose: You need time to process between one and another.

Tania: You would need one every month. But we don't have that. We have 5/6 days a year, which is nothing. And you try to fit everything in – a lot of times it ends up being PD that isn't as effective, as you explained earlier, where you sit them down and they just listen. This (Lesson Study) is different PD.

Iris: But let's take an example of PD – for example, dyslexia. They tell you certain things about dyslexia, but these guidelines are aimed at general things because then the children approach it in different ways.

Tania: That's why this is an ideal PD because what does lesson study do? You pick a problem you have, and your colleagues have, that you are really interested in solving because it's disheartening you in the class, and together you tackle it. This has to do with you and your children. And it's not concentrated on a day but from week to week, you take as long as you need, and at the end, you'll be happy with the result. You say, "Now we nailed it, I'll change this aspect, and I'll have the result I want".

Lily: I think that's how our PD should be. Not stuck from 8:00 to 2:00, you go out and it stops there.

Rose: There must be a follow-up.

Lily: Because, for example, as Iris mentioned when talking about dyslexia, what did we learn from that?

Iris: Frequently it's the children in class who teach you because you say: 'Look how they found the solution! Look, how the children went about it!' Because they felt confident, no one disengaged or stayed silent like they usually do. It's true that having professional development means having experts coming to tell you things, but what you see in class practice... that is a different story.

Tania: So, do you see lesson study working in the sector?

Everyone: Yes.

Tania: Eventually, it would be great if the whole school did it.

Iris: If my other colleagues saw this process, if they came into every class to observe, it would have helped us a lot in Maltese, especially with how to tackle speaking - they would get new ideas.

Tania: Obviously, you didn't have any training on lesson study. You learned along the way. If there was a general PD, we would know what lesson study is, ideally, we would be all for it! Like you, you were willing to try. In the beginning, there was some scepticism, but you tried. You were willing to try.

It (lesson study) could be a good tool...

Rose: We can try it. We could say, this year, it would be one of us leading. We could introduce it in PD Day, then we'll have it in the planning sessions, discuss it, and see what we'll do next, and it will be followed up. We can use the planning sessions.

Tania: Any other comments you'd like to add?

Iris: It was a positive experience.

Rose and Lily: Us too.

Lily: And I think it would be a good idea if the other teachers would experience going into the classrooms.

Rose: It's beautiful. You really learn. Because as a teacher, you're always isolated in your own classroom, and the fact that you get other experiences... We also used to share good practices with other independent schools, and that was beautiful as well.

Tania: Sharing good practice.

Rose: Because you're not imposing. 'Look, this worked.' Then you come and say, 'I did it this this.' I would never have thought of doing it like that. So, you get ideas.

Tania: I'd like to include this experience in the final PD Day. I'd like to share this lesson study with colleagues - the successes and its negatives too; I think it's important to share it with them. For me, I feel it was a success. At the end of the day, you always must see how the student benefited. I think they gained a lot. I enjoyed seeing the children participate and not have an attitude towards Maltese. I think that's already a victory for us. With your permission, I will share it with colleagues.

Lily: Share it wholeheartedly, but we already know the outcome! Not everyone has this grit and initiative to do it. Unfortunately!

Iris: And you have to be clear that no one is there to judge or criticise. But to see the positivity in each other.

Tania: But what Lily said is true. You start with the champions who are willing to join, there will be some who are curious and will join too, and there will be some who resist it. Now, it's possible that those who resist it will be convinced to join overtime, and there will be some who never want to take part. But because of that, we don't say, "I'm not going to do anything." If we had 100% win, that would be ideal.

Iris: The best thing is to see the positive.

Tania: I've been in this position for 4 years. As a sector, I've seen you change a lot. Before, you were more segregated in your classrooms, but now there's more openness where you give opinions, give feedback, share, propose, and want things to improve. I'm seeing that shift. I don't know. Are you seeing and feeling it? I could be wrong, but I feel it's improving. Do I see this in everyone? No. But we don't give up.

Daisy's Input in Focus Group (26th May 2025)

Question 1

The first question was about the experience.

I consider it a beautiful and positive experience, both for the students and for us. It was of great benefit. This was my second lesson study, as you know, I did a Maths lesson study, which was horizontal, and that was good too. From this, the vertical one, I learned a lot, because obviously, the subject, as you said, had the same theme, and we all applied it according to the children, the age group we had. Teaching Grade * I also saw the students I had, who I saw made great progress with the other teachers. For me personally, it was a huge benefit. I learned a lot and saw the students learning. In the case of my class, the repetition, as Ms. Violet mentioned, was imperative. I took a lot on board from the constructive criticism we had after every lesson when we met, and everyone said what went well and what didn't (because even from the failures you learn and always improve). The students enjoyed it too, and when you see that the children are enjoying it, you instinctively give much more input because you see the feedback right there and then.

Question 2

Challenges, as my colleagues said - time - because we didn't have just that lesson, meaning the Maltese lessons were still going on. And we had to find a way to make time for it too. But in general, I see it as a plus for me. The minus would be the limited time we had. I think every lesson was a success.

Question 3

I heard you mention PD days. I think there's one thing I don't agree with you, if you allow me to share my opinion. Six days a year, if they are well planned and we have some of them in-house, where we learn from each other, I think that would be more beneficial than bringing in someone who is not very familiar with our school and is repetitive. This has happened

many times. When you have someone who is hands-on, like we were, and you can share your experience, I think, in my opinion, you learn more, and six days are not at all too few. Always if it's of interest.

Now I agree with you a lot that not everyone will enjoy having someone come in to observe the lesson. I, at first, thought I would feel a bit uncomfortable. Even going into other people's classes, not just having them come into mine. But then, when I got to know my colleagues, (obviously vertically, you don't know your colleagues as well as when you know those who work with you in the same grade). In fact, I felt comfortable even asking about the plan of the lesson. I asked just like they asked: 'What can I do to get a better result?' And I felt very, very comfortable. I would do it again, knowing I'd do it again, I'd do it 100%.

I don't know if I answered everything, but I think that was it.

Thank you for the opportunity you gave me, and I hope there will be another opportunity like this.

Appendix J: Data Code Table

Data Excerpt	Source & Stage	Theme	Subtheme
Location wasn't helpful... it was noisy... I couldn't concentrate... speaker didn't share videos or PowerPoint.	6. INTV – Rose	Collaboration and Peer learning	Affective- relational role of venue
Not done in school... we were more relaxed with each other... opportunity to talk to each other.	2. INTV – Iris	Collaboration and Peer learning	Affective-relational role of venue
Specialist teachers can give ideas... join forces together... music, drama, maths interlinked.	12. INTV – Iris	Collaboration and Peer learning	Interdisciplinary collaboration
Cross-curricular... PBL got everything together.	9. DB1 – Tania/Lily	Collaboration and Peer learning	Interdisciplinary collaboration
I mean, some, they told me this to zip me up, shut me up. You cannot say.	30. INTV – Lily	Collaboration and peer learning	Challenge – closed communication
In the grade, I work really well with one of my colleagues, another teacher in a different grade, because she has much more experience than I do. I like to relate with her.	21. INTV – Lily	Collaboration and Peer learning	Open communication and Peer consultation
If we don't manage... we reach out to SLT... depends on difficulty.	7. INTV – Daisy	Collaboration and Peer consultation	Open communication and peer consultation
We work on the same page, we work on the same level. We see things from the same perspective. I share my opinions and I lay out the plan.	26. INTV – Lily	Collaboration and peer learning	Open communication and peer consultation
Ask: was it difficult for them or just my class?	8. INTV – Rose	Collaboration and Peer learning	Open communication and Peer consultation
We share lots during planning... if urgent, I don't wait.	8. INTV – Daisy	Collaboration and Peer Learning	Open communication and peer consultation
Discuss with my colleagues... what I haven't understood, they might	8. INTV – Iris	Collaboration and Peer learning	Open communication and Peer consultation
I made them work together... I gave them the choice to decide with whom to work.	2. DB2 - Iris	Collaboration and Peer learning	Open communication and peer consultation
When I let them choose the groups... they work better... they help each other.	3. DB2 - Rose	Collaboration and Peer learning	Open communication and peer consultation
I take a step back... I ask my colleagues... we brainstorm together.	6. INTV – Daisy	Collaboration and Peer Learning	Shared problem solving

It is long and laborious...but the end result is beautiful. You go each other...see out talents... we learned a lot from each other.	2. FG - Rose	Collaboration and Peer learning	Shared problem solving
If all the teachers are on board, it would be beautiful...you'd have a common problem to solve.	10. FG - Rose	Collaboration and Peer learning	Shared problem solving
If my other colleagues saw this process... it would have helped us a lot in Maltese...	15. FG - Iris	Collaboration and Peer learning	Shared problem solving and Vertical meetings (cross year collaboration)
We were in groups, strong people in the topic and not so strong people on the topic. So they took the lead. Imagine if one was left alone... to face this. It would be a little awkward.	17. INTV – Lily	Collaboration and Peer learning	Sharing problem solving
Best is to learn from teachers... share experiences... vertical grade is best.	9. INTV – Daisy	Collaboration and Peer learning	Vertical meetings
Would like more vertical meetings... even with early years and senior sector	11. INTV – Iris	Collaboration and Peer learning	Vertical meetings
This was my second lesson study... from this vertical one I learned a lot... we all applied it according to the children.	21. FR.- Daisy	Collaboration and peer learning	Vertical meetings (cross year collaboration)
Support from SLT... Mr H coming in and speaking to us	5. INTV – Iris	Community of learners	Feeling valued in the community
We feel we're being heard	19. INTV – Rose	Community of learners	Feeling valued within the community
We keep good practices to ourselves... we should celebrate them and share	20. INTV – Rose	Community of learners	Feeling valued within the community
We need an action plan... not all teachers have same motivation.	17. DB1 - Tania	Community of learners	Feeling valued within the community
I've never entered a state school where the teacher spends 40 mins like this... well done!	18. DB2 - Violet	Community of learners	Feeling valued within the community
The strength of one shouldn't be used to outshine another... it should be used to encourage that person... to see an outcome to the problem from a simpler perspective. To me it felt safe.	18. INTV – Lily	Community of learners Or Psychological safety	Leveraging internal expertise OR Safe space
Having strong people in different aspects helps bring together solutions which can later on be implemented in classroom environments	19. INTV – Lily	Community of learners	Leveraging internal expertise

We should share good practices... 'I did this and it really worked.'	16. INTV – Rose	Community of Learners	Leveraging internal expertise
Even LSEs... different training... can offer alternative solutions.	10. INTV – Iris	Community of learners	Leveraging internal expertise
We have a lot of potential... best resources are the teachers... but we don't have time together	13. INTV – Iris	Community of learners	Leveraging internal expertise
We all used visuals, we took a lot on board from Violet's suggestions... being mindful of how we assess...	4. FG - Tania	Community of learners	Leveraging internal expertise
Six days a year, if they are well planned and... in-house... would be more beneficial than bringing someone unfamiliar with our school.	24. FR.- Daisy	Community of learners	Leveraging internal expertise
Try this out...you could have done it better... I would have eliminated that... a wake up call... Somebody from the outside pinpoints it...	44 INTV – Lily	Community of learners	Reciprocal learning between peers
We learn from each other a lot... that's very important.	18. INTV – Rose	Community of learners	Reciprocal learning between peers
I got an idea from it about what I can do to close the lesson.	6. DB3 - Iris	Community of learners	Reciprocal learning between peers
How much we are learning from each other!	15. DB3 - Tania	Community of learners	Reciprocal learning between peers
We're all professionals... maybe we deliver differently... but we learn from each other.	12. INTV – Daisy	Community of learners	Reciprocal learning between peers
That assessment part... I talked to Rose... I always thought that it involves paperwork. But Rose does it orally... I'll take that on board next year.	7. FG - Lily	Community of learners	Reciprocal learning between peers
If she tells me something, I do put it down to practice. We work as colleagues together	22. INTV – Lily	Community of learners	Role modelling
The fact that somebody with a lot more experience than me in the classroom can only given me ideas, can only pave the way better for me to tread on.	43 INTV – Lily	Community of Learners	Role modelling
It's a scaffolding thing... you see someone else's targets... I love it.	10. INTV – Daisy	Community of learners	Role modelling
Children came after lesson using Maltese... even in corridor.	14. DB1 - Violet	Community of learners	Role modelling
We respect each other... if you want someone to listen to you, you must listen to them too.	11. DB 2 - Iris	Community of learners	Role modelling

This is one of the learning outcomes of speaking — I show respect to whoever is speaking.	12. DB 2 - Violet	Community of learners	Role modelling
They reminded you if you missed someone... they wanted to hear everyone.	10. DB4 - Violet	Community of learners	Role modelling
It would be a good idea if the other teachers would experience going into the classrooms... You really learn.	17. FG- Lily	Community of learners	Role modelling
Whether they implement [the resources] or not, I don't know, but I do share them.	24. INTV - Lily	Community of learners	Teachers as central instructional tools
Sometimes your colleagues explain it better than the expert	9A INTV - Iris	Community of Learners	Teachers as central instructional tools
The teacher was the most effective resource... correcting, modelling...	8. DB1 - Violet	Community of learners	Teachers as central instructional tools
I sincerely would be very much interested in learning about this. Because I think that lesson study is important. It is valuable because it promotes collaborative proof growth. And when you get teachers who can work together, creating different methods, implement them, joining them...everybody's input.	41 INTV - Lily	Impact of LS	Professional learning through collaboration
Lesson Study... you stop, reflect, and you learn	17. INTV - Rose	Impact of LS	Professional learning through collaboration
Definitely... collaborative professional development... learning from others.	13. INTV - Daisy	Impact of LS	Professional learning through collaboration
Focus on students' outcomes... practical application... hands on.	14. INTV - Daisy	Impact of LS	Professional learning through collaboration
It will enhance the teaching experience for students... better ideas... more confidence.	15. INTV - Iris	Impact of LS	Professional learning through collaboration
I would do it again, knowing I'd do it again, I'd do it 100%.	26. FR.- Daisy	Impact of LS	Professional learning through collaboration
Two years ago... difficult to say a word... today you see them speak.	3. DB1 - Daisy	Impact of LS	Student Progress
They were taught these words... using new vocab... a big step forward.	6. DB1 - Rose	Impact of LS	Student progress
Lesson paves the way for creative writing... they now have the ideas.	13. DB1 - Violet	Impact of LS	Student progress
At the beginning of the year... they would have lowered their heads... now they're excited to go out and even said something.	1.DB2 - Iris	Impact of LS	Student Progress

They learned vocabulary... they tried to use it	5. DB2 - Rose	Impact of LS	Student progress
Some corrected themselves... realised it was five instead of four... that means they knew what they were saying.	3. DB3 - Daisy	Impact of LS	Student progress
During the break, I ask them what's in their lunchbox... now they come and tell me in Maltese.	7. DB2 - Iris	Impact of LS	Student Progress
You could change the setting... instead of lunchbox, use a picnic basket.	13. DB 2 Violet	Impact of LS OR Community of learners	Student Progress OR Reciprocal peer learning
Before we even started writing... we wrote sentences together... we wrote them on the board.	19. DB 2 - Iris	Impact of LS	Student progress
It's better when they contribute orally and we write it together.	20. DB2 - Iris	Impact of LS	Student Progress
That's where the teachers came in – using visuals helped the children understand what they were saying	22. DB2 - Tania	Impact of LS	Student progress
Make sure the dialogue fits the gender of the speaker.	13. DB3 - Violet	Impact of LS	Student Progress
The boy confirmed he didn't want dessert... this shows how much they know what they are saying.	16. DB3- Daisy	Impact of LS	Student progress
I want to teach them new vocabulary and phrases and practice them.	20. DB3 - Rose	Impact of LS	Student progress
Some asked if they could repeat after me... they were afraid to speak because Ms Camille would be there.	4. DB4 – Daisy	Impact of LS	Student progress
They're not exposed to Maltese... friendships, school, it's not easy.	5. DB4 – Rose	Impact of LS	Student progress
The fact that Daisy manages to get something out of each one of them is a great achievement.	6. DB4 – Iris	Impact of LS	Student progress
At first they'd say, 'But this isn't a Maltese lesson!' – now they don't.	7. DB4 – Daisy	Impact of LS	Student progress
At the end of the day, you always must see how the student benefited... I enjoyed seeing the children participate.	18. FG - Tania	Impact of LS	Student progress
This lesson does not stop here... I'll continue with them in writing.	14. DB2 Iris	Impact of LS Or Teacher Agency	Student Progress OR Teachers as key learning assets
CLIL... science in Maltese... choose easy content and try	15. DB1 - Violet	Practical and Relevant PD	CLIL and cross curricular links
CLIL saves you time... use existing vocab... connects to other lessons.	16. DB1 - Violet	Practical and Relevant PD	CLIL and cross curricular links
When I first got hold of the coloured overlays...then I gave them to	12.	Practical and relevant PD	Context responsive and differentiated PD

Student A to read, 'This looks better, you know Miss Lily to read'. I'm seeing her face, telling me... this is better to read.	INTV – Lily		
We are not just teaching content – we're building their confidence to speak and think in Maltese	26. DB2 - Tania	Practical and relevant PD	Context responsive and differentiated PD
PD days could be subject-oriented or based on shared problems.	15. INTV – Rose	Practical and relevant PD	Context responsive and Differentiated PD
Let's take an example of PD... they tell you certain things about dyslexia, but these guidelines are aimed at general things...	12. FG - Iris	Practical and Relevant PD	Context responsive and differentiated PD
The only thing that was right about this dyslexia PD was the toolbox that we were given.	11. INTV – Lily	Practical and relevant PD	Context- responsive and differentiated PD
I found the dyslexia one very repetitive and very boring... it lacked a lot of stimulating activities.	8. INTV – Lily	Practical and relevant PD	Context-responsive and Differentiated PD
PD day feels like a one size fits all.	32. INTV – Lily	Practical and relevant PD	Context-responsive and Differentiated PD
If we could have workshops where we follow, we focus and follow different challenges, so that each person is combined with a subject.	33. INTV – Lily	Practical and relevant PD	Context-responsive and Differentiated PD
Not everyone required the same training.	37 INTV – Lily	Practical and relevant PD	Context-responsive and Differentiated PD
The PD day... Maths HODs... very, very well prepared... overview, brief presentation... bar modelling step by step... examples... we worked them out together.	1. INTV – Rose	Practical and relevant PD	Context-responsive and Differentiated PD
Maths journaling... found really interesting... they shared their PowerPoints very freely... very helpful.	2. INTV – Rose	Practical and relevant PD	Context-responsive and Differentiated PD
I liked it because it's adapting the lessons to meet the needs of the students.	1. INTV – Daisy	Practical and relevant PD	Context-responsive and Differentiated PD
Repetitive... one-size-fits-all... not for my grade... we felt lost.	5. INTV – Daisy	Practical and relevant PD	Context-responsive and Differentiated PD
We saw different aspects of how children can learn and the benefits... you realise how everything is a step that leads to another step... helping students at different levels learn a little more...	1.FG - Lily	Practical and relevant PD	Context-responsive and Differentiated PD
You tied the four language skills together.	10. DB3 - Violet	Practical and relevant PD	Contextual and experiential pedagogy

Imagine all the food is bad... how would they complain?	17. DB3 - Violet	Practical and relevant PD	Contextual and experiential pedagogy
Use Maltese outside of the Maltese lesson... 'Oqgħodu wara xulxin'...	11. DB4 - Violet	Practical and relevant PD	Contextual and Experiential pedagogy
The last question was a good one for assessment: 'What did you learn?'	12. DB4 - Violet	Practical and relevant PD	Contextual and experiential pedagogy
Usually... I ask student A or student B. But then in the training, we were told that it's okay to let them flow with the conversation.	6. INTV - Lily	Practical and relevant PD	Translating learning into classroom practice
Give them sentence starters...linking words to help them writing.	15. DB2 - Violet	Practical and relevant PD	Translating learning into classroom practice
It has been teaching me to let go and take one step backwards and let them be part of the full conversation.	7. INTV - Lily	Practical and relevant PD	Translating learning into classroom practice
They have a tangible object they can touch... different from a static picture... helps them speak Maltese more.	1. DB1 - Lily	Practical and relevant PD	Translating learning into classroom practice
The handouts helped... when you see visuals, you remember the vocabulary more.	6. DB2 - Daisy	Practical and relevant PD	Translating learning into classroom practice
Listen to dialogues... then get them to notice and use what they heard.	17. DB2 - Violet	Practical and relevant PD	Translating learning into classroom practice
Rate yourself... 5 or 4... slowly we're feeling better.	7. DB3 - Rose	Practical and relevant PD	Translating learning into classroom practice
You killed two birds with one stone - they practised numbers and showed learning.	12. DB3 - Violet	Practical and relevant PD	Translating learning into classroom practice
The fact that you can bring all the students together... a link to communicate with one another.	5. INTV - Lily	Practical and relevant PD	Active and participatory professional learning
I think it would be ideal... for us to have a dyslexia friendly day and make it work, that our teachers are allowed to experience the frustration a student feels in the classroom	9. INTV - Lily	Practical and relevant PD	Active and participatory professional learning
Putting you in the situation, putting you in the boots of the student	10. INTV - Lily	Practical and relevant PD	Active and participatory professional learning
More stimulated about getting the actual experience. Like for example, doing activities to read with scrambled text and hands on workshops	14. INTV - Lily	Practical and relevant PD	Active and participatory professional learning
I need to feel this, you know, to experience	15. INTV - Lily	Practical and relevant PD	Active and participatory professional learning

It is good when they actually put you to test.	16. INTV – Lily	Practical and relevant PD	Active and participatory professional learning
I like PD days because they open a window to a wider view of things.	31. INTV – Lily	Practical and relevant PD	Active and participatory professional learning
They helped you to relate with the problem... guided us step by step... showed videos... gave examples.	3. INTV – Rose	Practical and relevant PD	Active and participatory professional learning
Lecture that includes hands-on... we are like the students... implement it in the classroom.	3. INTV – Daisy	Practical and relevant PD	Active and participatory professional learning
It depends on the facilitator... if not engaging enough...	4. INTV – Daisy	Practical and relevant PD	Active and participatory professional learning
I liked the ones that had to do with the project-based learning... very informative, hands-on... helped develop topics in the classroom.	1. INTV – Iris	Practical and relevant PD	Active and participatory professional learning
Some sessions... only giving us information without showing how... what helps is follow-up workshops	6. INTV – Iris	Practical and relevant PD	Active and participatory professional learning
PDs... where you only sit and listen... information becomes unclear.	7. INTV – Iris	Practical and relevant PD	Active and participatory professional learning
“I think that’s how our PD should be. Not stuck from 8:00 to 2:00... you go out and it stops there.”	13. FG - Lily	Practical and relevant PD	Active and participatory professional learning
Translation is the worst thing... students learn nothing.	18. DB1 - Violet	Practical and relevant PD	Active and participatory professional learning
“It wasn’t enough... rather than one day... it would be like a programme.”	2. INTV – Daisy	Practical and relevant PD	Follow – up and Continuity in PD
Boring PD	13. INTV – Lily	Practical and relevant PD	Follow up and continuity in PD
LS... promotes continuous based learning	45 INTV – Lily	Practical and relevant PD	Follow up and continuity in PD
You revive your commitment to it.	4. INTV – Rose	Practical and relevant PD	Follow up and continuity in PD
If you have continuous support... not just in September... then you revive your commitment.	5. INTV – Rose	Practical and relevant PD	Follow up and continuity in PD
When it’s extended... it helps us to explore each other’s ideas.	4. INTV – Iris	Practical and relevant PD	Follow up and continuity in PD
You had a big and beautiful slide, reminding them of the objective of the lesson.	11. DB3 - Violet	Practical and relevant PD	Follow up and continuity in PD
The biggest problem we face with PD is that our PD days are few and sparse... This (Lesson Study) is different PD.	11. FG - Tania	Practical and relevant PD	Follow up and continuity in PD

We could introduce it in PD day...discuss it, and see what we'll do next...followed up. We can use the planning sessions.	16. FG - Rose	Practical and relevant PD	Follow up and continuity in PD
Challenges... time... because we didn't have just that lesson... we had to find a way to make time...	23. FR.- Daisy	Practical and relevant PD	Follow up and continuity in PD
It would be ideal to have a follow up...we'll have the one -to- one session with you or with Ms Claudia...have you been implementing the strategies?... Look you've wandered a bit further away from what we said.	36 INTV – Lily	Practical and relevant Pd	Follow-up and continuity in PD
We'll have a first session and then we'll have an implementation of the session. Maybe we'll have somebody to come and watch us in class and observe us.	38 INTV – Lily	Practical and relevant PD	Follow-up and continuity in PD
Speaking to teachers as we go along... not just at the beginning or end of the year.	11. INTV – Rose	Practical and relevant PD	Follow-up and continuity in PD
Children need repetition... the same thing in different ways.	8. DB4 – Rose	Practical and relevant PD	Follow-up and continuity in PD
What works for A doesn't work for B.	34. INTV – Lily	Practical and relevant PD	Learning opportunities, Differentiated PD.
We'd have a PD day specifically for writing tasks.	35. INTV – Lily	Practical and relevant PD	Subject oriented
We need someone to do revision of Maltese rules... could be general for everyone.	14. INTV – Rose	Practical and relevant PD	Subject oriented
It's as if even the students have found a happy space for them to go.	2. INTV – Lily	Psychological safety	Safe space (students)
Certain children wouldn't say a word... used to have anxiety attacks... today I saw him reading.	1. DB 3 - Rose	Psychological safety	Safe space (students)
Planning sessions... good because you're open to listen to what we're doing.	12. INTV – Rose	Psychological safety	Safe space (teachers)
They want that little bit... someone beside them.	9. DB 2 - Iris	Psychological safety	Safe space (students)
School is a safe place to make mistakes... even we model them.	12. DB1 - Tania	Psychological safety	Safe space (students)
They enjoyed it... today they were tense... they had been waiting since this morning.	2. DB4 – Daisy	Psychological safety	Safe space (students)
Everyone had the chance to speak... no one laughed at anyone.	3. DB4 – Rose	Psychological safety	Safe space (teachers)

The lesson was well structured... with prompts and questions... no resistance.	9. DB4 – Violet	Psychological safety	Safe space (students)
I, at first, thought I would feel a bit uncomfortable... but then, when I got to know my colleagues... I felt very, very comfortable.	25. FR.- Daisy	Psychological Safety	Safe space (teachers)
Session with a counsellor... became a well-being session... we understood it's not me on my own.	3. INTV – Iris	Psychological safety	Trust based culture
It will empower you personally... more confidence... not criticising each other	14. INTV – Iris	Psychological safety	Trust based culture
It's good that we are supporting each other ... it's not a competition	28. DB2 - Lily	Psychological safety	Trust based culture
Lesson study is more like that to be honest	21. INTV - Rose	Psychological Safety	Trust based culture (non-judgmental peer feedback)
At first, I was a bit sceptical... but when we started meeting and talking... you start feeling comfortable.	5. FG - Iris	Psychological safety	Trust based culture (non-judgmental peer feedback)
Children are more open to one another.	3. INTV – Lily	Psychological safety	Trust-based culture
I think it's more of the individuals that make up the group.	25. INTV – Lily	Psychological Safety	Trust-based culture (non-judgmental peer feedback)
Unfortunately they're all in there to criticise. They are ...more trying to look out if I do any mistakes.	27. INTV – Lily	Psychological Safety	Trust-based culture (non-judgmental peer feedback)
They're always on the defence, saying that this doesn't work.	28. INTV – Lily	Psychological Safety	Trust-based culture (non-judgmental peer feedback)
Some topics I know beforehand are going to be difficult... you try to stagger it.	9. INTV – Rose	Reflection in practice	Sustained and ongoing reflection
We worked with SE... then this year I used it... it worked.	16. INTV – Daisy	Reflection in Practice	Sustained and ongoing reflection
I've seen a difference between the first writing task, what we've implemented from PD day to now.	40 INTV – Lily	Reflection in practice	Planning future action
We need to remind ourselves to slow down... to let them process what they want to say	25. DB2 - Violet	Reflection in practice	Planning future action
I have already written it in my planning for next year because I want to start doing it. That assessment part ... I'm sure I'll take on board for next year, God willing!"	FG - Lily	Reflection in practice	Planning future action

This (Lesson Study) is an ideal PD ... you pick a problem you have, and your colleagues have ... together you tackle it ... you say, 'Now we nailed it, I'll change this aspect, and I'll have the result I want.'	FG - Tania	Reflection in practice	Planning future action
We could say, this year, it would be one of us leading. We could introduce it in PD Day, then we'll have it in the planning sessions, discuss it, and see what we'll do next, and it will be followed up.	FG - Rose	Reflection in practice	Planning future action
Assessing language... ask: what did you learn today?	11. DB1 - Violet	Reflection in Practice	Peer feedback and observation
I wouldn't have realised that without observing you – it made me reflect on my own lesson.	27. DB 2 - Daisy	Reflection in Practice	Peer feedback and observation
You really put into practice what Violet told us last time.	5. DB3 - Lily	Reflection in practice	Peer feedback and observation
I took a lot on board from the constructive criticism... because even from the failures you learn and always improve.	22. FR.- Daisy	Reflection in practice	Peer feedback and observation
It's always how to string a sentence... that's where we get stuck.	16 DB2 - Tania	Reflection in Practice	Peer observation and feedback
We're working against the current... they don't get help at home.	16. DB4 - Daisy	Reflection in practice	Peer reflection and observation
We always expect miracles... the gap is huge.	17. DB4 - Rose	Reflection in practice	Peer reflection and observation
Should we group students for observation? ... Focusing on one group helped	19. DB1 - Tania/ Violet	Reflection in practice	Refining LS observation tools
I look forward to the outcome from my observer. I can sit down and reflect and work out on how I can do it better. I'm very open to new learning.	42 INTV - Lily	Reflection in practice	Self-reflection
"Evaluate myself... what happened in the lesson... did I rush?"	10. INTV- Rose	Reflection in practice	Self-reflection
I do a lot of self-reflection I believe it helps a lot	10a INTV - Rose	Reflection in practice	Self-reflection
This showed me that even the quiet ones will contribute if you give them time and space.	24. DB2 - Iris	Reflection in practice	Self-reflection
Spontaneous expression... use of idioms... was good.	10. DB1 - Violet	Student engagement	Cognitive engagement
Even when we're practising, they want to add their own experiences.	19. DB3 - Rose	Student engagement	Cognitive engagement

I tell them, 'How confident do you feel?' ... By practicing, you can get better.	8. FG - Rose	Student engagement	Cognitive engagement
They were enthusiastic... attitude was positive... they contributed.	5. DB1 - Iris	Student engagement	Emotional engagement
We do circle time with our students, they come in very excited.	1. INTV - Lily	Student Engagement	Emotional engagement and participation
I tell them to stop... 5 minutes break... then we start again.	10. DB 2 - Iris	Student engagement	Emotional engagement and participation
Everyone participated. Their enthusiasm was sky high.	14. DB3 - Tania	Student engagement	Emotional engagement and participation
With a lot of practice, support, and drilling, the children make progress... they feel happy that they achieved...	3. FG - Iris	Student engagement	Emotional engagement and participation
The topic helps... Food is something they see every day.	4. DB1 - Daisy	Student engagement	Motivation driven by topic relevance
This is the connection with reality... they touch it every day."	8. DB2 - Tania	Student engagement	Motivation driven by topic relevance
They chose it, wrote it in Maltese, and we read them.	9. DB3 - Rose	Student Engagement	Motivation driven by topic relevance
That's why they get into it... because it's a practical situation.	18. DB3 - Rose	Student engagement	Motivation driven by topic relevance
Some of them had never tasted <i>imqaret</i> ... I made them buy and taste them.	1. DB4 - Daisy	Student Engagement	Motivation driven by topic relevance
At one point, G. asked N. why he didn't choose the same prompt...	18. DB4 - Daisy	Student Engagement	Motivation driven by topic relevance
Frequently it's the children in class who teach you... because they felt confident, no one disengaged...	14. FG - Iris	Student engagement	Motivation driven by topic relevance
Although it's a bit over and above... we fit it in.	15. INTV - Daisy	Teacher Agency	Advocating change or navigating constraints
Share it wholeheartedly, but we already know the outcome! Not everyone has this grit and initiative to do it.	19. FG - Lily	Teacher agency	Advocating change or navigating constraints
You start with the champions who are willing to join... some will resist. But because of that, we don't say, 'I'm not going to do anything.'	20. FG - Tania	Teacher agency	Advocating change or navigating constraints
But this year, I've taken a different approach... if I say this goes, that has to go. Whether they like it or not, they have to do it.	29. INTV - Lily	Teacher agency	Advocation change or navigating constraints
In Maltese we do not have many resources... we need to create them.	7. DB1 - Lily	Teacher Agency	Challenge - Creating own resources

Resources... I create myself. I do share my resources with my colleagues of the same grade.	23. INTV – Lily	Teacher Agency	Creating own resources
I have a lot of children who don't hold their pens properly... Grade 7... how do I intervene?	13. INTV – Rose	Teacher agency	Tailoring PD to own class
Also like to research approaches and visual help	9. INTV – Iris	Teacher agency	Tailoring PD to student needs
This is also serving as a little bit as an add on, to participate using their own native tongue, the children	4. INTV – Lily	Teacher Agency	Tailoring strategies to student needs
But in Malti, no matter what you do, I can't seem to find the right way. There's a struggle.	20. INTV – Lily	Teacher agency	Tailoring strategies to student needs
Try to identify what kind of problem it is... adjust teaching level... try another way... discuss with colleagues.	7. INTV – Rose	Teacher Agency	Tailoring strategies to student needs
The questions are important... you give them a chance to contribute.	2. DB 1 - Lily	Teacher Agency	Tailoring strategies to student needs
When they help each other...when they are motivated...you can build on that.	21. DB2 - Rose	Teacher agency	Tailoring strategies to student needs
I choose my battles and leave her... but over the year, I saw improvement.	2. DB3 - Rose	Teacher agency	Tailoring strategies to student needs
You need that little bit of courage... we forget about the talented students.	14. DB4 – Violet	Teacher agency	Tailoring strategies to student needs
I sometimes pair them up... 'Tell me what K*** likes'...	15. DB4 –Rose	Teacher Agency	Tailoring strategies to student needs
You can't just stand unprepared and do the lesson... if you don't do the design of the lesson, I don't think it would have been a success.	6. FG - Lily	Teacher Agency	Tailoring strategies to student needs
They're not in the classroom... they don't know your reality.	11. INTV – Daisy	Teacher Agency	Teachers as key learning assets
Our grade does that... part of it in Maltese	20 DB1 -Iris	Teacher agency	Teachers as key learning assets
We all took part in the planning... the sharing gave me ideas I hadn't thought of	23. DB2 - Tania	Teacher agency	Valuing teacher voice and professional judgment
The tendency is to always use the first person... maybe next time, third person.	13. DB4 – Violet	Teacher agency	Valuing teacher voice and professional judgment
Although you were present... you weren't dominant... always giving them the sentence guide.	4. DB3 - Lily	Teacher agency	Valuing teacher voice and professional judgment
In a smaller group, there's more chance that someone who usually doesn't speak will speak.	8. DB3 - Rose	Teacher Agency	Valuing teacher voice and professional judgment

Violet said... you all tackled it all differently, and they were all a success in their own way.	9. FG - Tania	Teacher Agency	Valuing teacher voice and professional judgment
We hope for full sentences... but Ms Iris's continuous support helped the children a lot.	4. DB2 - Lily	Teacher agenda	Valuing teacher voice and professional judgment
Teachers can provide and come up with the writing tasks that the children have done and we can evaluate... sample of work, your experiences, the challenges that you met...	39 INTV - Lily	Teacher agenda	Valuing teacher voice and professional judgment