

# The process of mentoring and tutoring in lesson study in initial teacher training: two case studies

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – This paper focusses on the tutoring process developed by three teachers during the implementation of two lesson studies (LSs) by students of the Bachelor of in Primary Education as a methodological strategy to facilitate the reconstruction of the teachers' practical knowledge.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The study is set within the framework of qualitative research and the methodology adopted is borne out by the case study.

**Findings** – The analysis shows how an adequate process of tutoring and accompaniment during the design, development and evaluation of the LS assists students to reconstruct their practical knowledge through action and to reflect on their actions and to develop key professional competences for initial teacher training.

**Research limitations/implications** – This study was constrained by the need to develop a particular methodology of the study over a single four-month period, given that this type of process requires some quiet time for analysis and reflection. And the time that the tutors could make available due to the high ratio and the need to provide continuity to these processes to allow the students to consciously modify the tutors' lessons plans and incorporate this vision of being a teacher.

**Practical implications** – The paper advised to repeat the experience in successive courses, to accompany the students in order to analyse the educational value of LS and how educational value of LS affects the how the students reconstruct their practical knowledge.

**Originality/value** – This paper shows the strategies adopted to promote the reconstruction of practical knowledge in initial teacher training.

**Keywords** Lesson study, Higher education, Tutoring, Training strategies, Initial training, Qualitative research

**Paper type** Research paper

## 1. Preface

A teaching career begins with the commitment and responsibility to improve the lives of the people we teach. Their chosen career is complicated and full of pitfalls. This begs the question, how do we help them to face uncertain situations in their future as educators? To get to this point, throughout their initial education stage, teachers must adopt a didactic strategy in their subjects and students must be given the opportunity to be tutored and receive

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guidance throughout the process in order to encourage the reworking of their practical knowledge through analysis and reflection in and on their action (Barberi and Pantoja, 2020).

During initial teacher training, students must be very aware of the profession they will take up in the future, through a process of continuous reflection (Osorio, 2016) and interaction amongst peers, with the assistance of the teaching staff (Plantin, 2020). To this end, the lesson study (LS) methodology plays a fundamental role in improving pedagogical practices in the classroom through collaborative action research processes.

This article is a reflection on the tutoring process developed by three teachers during the implementation of the LS, and it shows how the students' progress in their learning process involved a great professional and emotional effort from the teachers. It represents a permanent guide to steer students during their training experience.

## 2. The lesson study and the accompaniment process

The LS methodology was first seen in Japan, born from the idea of teachers researching their own practice, with the premise of the concept of collaboration and shared knowledge (Elliott, 2015). Over the last few years, numerous experiences have shown how LS facilitates the reconstruction of practical teaching knowledge and the improvement of student learning as can be seen in the research developed by Calvo *et al.* (2021), Caparrós (2015), Del Río-Fernández (2020), Hevia *et al.* (2018), Mayorga *et al.* (2021) and Murata and Lee (2020).

LS considers student learning as the fundamental axis of teaching practice and “emphasises real and challenging educational objectives” (Braga *et al.*, 2018, p. 89) that encourage planning and reflection by both students and teachers. Likewise, the need to work collaboratively, sharing experiences and educational conceptions, promotes a favourable classroom climate in which to develop the teaching competences required in the initial training of teachers. During the development of LS, the analysis of practice and its subsequent questioning and planning highlight the divergence between what is taught and what is learnt and between what is done and what is said (Calvo *et al.*, 2021), revealing the theories proclaimed and the theories in use by students in initial teacher training (Argyris, 1993; Caparrós, 2015; Plantin, 2020). In this sense, the research conducted by Murata and Lee (2020) in different schools around the world points out how the tutoring process in LS reveals the student's thinking and places the foundation of the teaching/learning process at guiding and helping students in their process of reconstructing practical knowledge.

Another noteworthy aspect of LS is the active role played by the student in their learning and the need to contrast and share educational experiences in order to generate new perspectives that improve education. All of this takes place in an environment of shared reflection and analysis, where tutoring plays an essential role. The teacher is a guide in the construction and deconstruction of the student's practical knowledge, in a process of cognitive, emotional, and social accompaniment that encourages criticism and reflection on the procedures carried out during LS in an educational scenario where reflection in action transforms reality and practices (Barberi and Pantoja, 2020). In other words, tutoring that causes the elaboration and reconstruction of professional knowledge, from a realistic approach when working with real situations, promoting the autonomy and professional development of the student in a cooperative workspace.

The tutoring carried out during LS is fundamental and the teacher must be trained in developing tutorial work from a constructivist approach (Comfort and McMahon, 2014), focussed on students and research (Brand and Moore, 2011), in which the teaching staff leads the way from the example, the dialogue, the questioning, the continuous reflection, etc. An accompaniment that confronts the student with his/her previous beliefs, i.e. a tutoring session, shows them the path to follow in their learning and reaffirms, in turn, their practical knowledge (Rodríguez and Soto, 2020). As Soto *et al.* (2021) point out, the tutor's work in the

development of LS must consider three aspects: immersing students in this methodology so that they take ownership of it, facilitating cooperative work and creating a favourable climate for participation and dialogue. In other words, the student builds his/her practical knowledge by enriching his or her ideas about learning and teaching and showing an open and critical attitude towards deeper knowledge (Vries and Uffen, 2020), with the support and guidance of the teacher.

In initial training, the LS tutoring process, therefore, becomes a permanent cognitive accompaniment as well as an emotional support during all the phases of the design, development and evaluation of the didactic proposals (Sepúlveda and García, 2020). In this accompaniment, Peña and Serván (2022) highlight the qualities as follows:

- (1) The creation of a context that facilitates learning and reconstruction of practical knowledge based on responsibility and commitment;
- (2) The promotion of a pedagogical climate of trust;
- (3) The development of cooperative work;
- (4) The stimulation of meaningful learning through the interdisciplinary nature of knowledge and continuous reflection in and on action and
- (5) The educational evaluation of learning, with special attention to “learning to learn”.

Taking these elements into account, the teacher who tutors the LS becomes an understanding guide with whom you have built close ties and who helps students to interpret their learning in a practical way but nevertheless, closely related to the theoretical aspects of the subjects. In this sense, according to Soto (2022, p. 133), the tutor in initial teacher training should:

- (1) Take ownership of and clearly express the sense of the process, as well as the necessary comments in each of the phases.
- (2) Advise in the design phase on resources or methods that may be useful, give feedback on the group’s research proposal and observe during the lesson.
- (3) Guide the discussions and reflections in the learning process without allowing the person responsible for the lesson to be criticised; the lesson is a design developed by the group and therefore belongs to the group, and it is in the attitude, activity and interaction of the learner that the meaning of the lesson is to be sought.
- (4) Stimulate the analysis of the special characteristics of the LS developed, encouraging the meta-reflection of the students on their own considerations and actions in order to move from low-level observations and reflections to meaningful reflections on the lesson.

In short, the teacher tutoring LS becomes a critical friend, who invites students to overcome the school culture they have experienced (in most cases, of a traditional nature), leading them towards an educational transformation which is based on intrinsic motivation, trust, responsibility, action and cooperation. In this way, the tutoring process develops as an almost infinite loop of reflection-action-reflection (Soto, 2022), developing a close relationship between tutoring and the reconstruction of the student’s practical knowledge. Murata and Lee (2020) show this link by demonstrating how an LS encourages the teacher to reconstruct and analyse his or her own teaching whilst offering a great opportunity for professional and personal development.

### 3. Research design

The study presented here is part of the R&D Project: “Lesson Study, school and university: investigating the reconstruction of practical knowledge in initial teacher training”. It has been

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carried out through qualitative research and specifically by using a case study methodology during the academic year 2018–2019, with students of the 1st degree in primary education in two different contexts (C6 and C7) in the Faculty of Education Sciences of the University of Malaga. The research design was characterised by the systematisation of the LS process and its seven phases in which the students of both groups worked in collaboration with the teachers. In addition, two focus groups were formed where data were collected in a more systematic way, each group consisting of six students. The data were collected in 15 working sessions in each of the groups.

Data collection began in February and concluded in June. As already predicted in the development of LS, two drafts of the proposal are included: the one that was the initial design and a second one that was enhanced after carrying out an evaluation of the experiment, which provided an opportunity to contrast, reflect and cooperate. The proposal designed by the university students consisted of 2 didactic workshops that they developed with two groups of about 50 schoolchildren each, aged 8 and 10, respectively, who came to the university on the days agreed upon to develop the four experimental lessons. This design was based at all times on the learning acquired and reflections made on the contents of the subject of general didactics.

During the first phase, after studying and analysing the needs of schools where lessons were going to be developed, the trainees selected the topic for the experimental lesson, putting forward a proposal in which they tried to address the development of the key competences that the school as an educational space should work on and develop in pupils, i.e. the ability to think, reflect, be autonomous and learn to coexist in an increasingly heterogeneous society (Pérez Gómez, 2012). The second phase focussed on the cooperative design of workshops, which dealt with emotional competences and also with the ability to work cooperatively. Phase 3 comprised the implementation of the first experimental lesson, where the roles of observers and teachers of the children in the schools were allocated. In addition, this phase included the design of resources for observation and data collection for this experimental lesson. Phase 4 involved the analysis and redesign of the first experimental lesson based on the evaluation carried out. The improved proposal, the result of the previous phase, was implemented again in a second experimental lesson (Phase 6), which saw a rotation of the roles previously assumed by the university students, with observers swapping roles with the teachers and vice versa. The LS cycle ends with the dissemination of the experience in an extended context (Phase 7).

The instruments used to collect the information were semi-structured interviews with the students, both individually and in groups, and with the participating teachers (Table 1), observations throughout the different phases of the LS (Table 2) and documentation considered relevant (Table 3) to contrast and analyse the learning throughout the tutoring and accompaniment carried out. The analysis and categorisation of the information is developed on the basis of the seven phases of LS, which allows for the elaboration of emerging categories throughout the research.

#### 4. Results analysis

In both case studies (C6 and C7), teacher tutoring has proved to be an indispensable element in the process of designing and implementing the LS by students. This comes with the proviso that it must have been developed with the explicit intention of accompanying the students and advising them throughout the experience of reconstructing their thinking/practical knowledge and helping them to establish a balance between this accompaniment and the development of their autonomous work. From this point of view, in the tutoring process, the students have been made to reflect continuously (both individually and cooperatively), and they have tried to avoid:

Giving immediate answers because, very often, they set out to solve the problem immediately, so I always invited them to think, to ask questions. I asked them questions: what do you think, is it better to be focused from the beginning, what do you think, what have you analysed, what are the needs detected, what can you do about these needs? You can contribute with our workshop to improve the issue we have identified (EID, 6'10", C6).

This process of accompaniment and counselling has taken place in both studios in a close and warm manner, always trying to establish a climate of trust in the classroom when interacting with students as one of the participating students emphasises:

M. was like another student in class, and everyone knew we could count on her at any time, she does not belong to that hierarchy in class determining that anyone else could only approach her to ask something about class, but for anything; everybody knew we could rely on her at any time (EIA, 11'48", C6).

**Table 1.**

Group and individual interviews C6 and C7

		Key words	C6	C7
Interviews	5 Group interviews with students	EGA	20th March 27th March 06th June	18th March 12th June
	4 Individual interviews with students Lesson Clara (C6), A2-N (C7)	EIA	03rd April 02nd July	20th March 12th June
	2 Individual interviews with teachers	EID	15th October	30th October

**Source(s):** Own creation

**Table 2.**

Observations made for C6 and C7 in small and large groups

		Key words	C6	C7
Observations	First (definition of the focus/objectives of the LS)	DO (Observation diary)	15th March 05th April 26th April 10th May 17th May 24th May	26th March/1st April/9th April 2nd May 6th May 15th May 16th May 21st May 30th May/3rd June
	Second (cooperative design of the proposal)			
	Third (cooperative design of the study)			
	Fourth (1st experimentation)			
	Fifth (discussion and analysis of the experimentation)			
	Sixth (2nd experimentation)			
	Seventh (final work exhibition)			

**Source(s):** Own creation

**Table 3.**

Documentation gathered

Final project lesson cooperative	P.F	"Student work"
Subject guide	G.A	
Practical LS teacher's guide	G.LD	
Individual assignment "student lesson"	T.CL	
Graphic public presentation of the workshop	E	

**Source(s):** Own creation

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Therefore, the role of the teachers was to guide and facilitate the learning process in which the different groups were immersed, respectfully influencing the reconstruction of their own thinking whilst at the same time sharing, through questioning, inquiry and reflective processes throughout the development of all the phases of LS experienced by the students, which are detailed below.

#### *4.1 Phase 1. Approaching school contexts, defining the problem and the focus of intervention*

The tutoring of the LS in this phase involved accompanying the students in overcoming their initial disorientation and confusion, as it was the first time they were faced with this type of work. To facilitate this accompaniment, as well as the process of designing and developing the LS, the teachers prepared detailed guides on the LS and the resources to be used, which were explained and made available to the students at the beginning of the process. This was a very positive aspect for the last group, especially in the first phase, which is when they showed the most confusion, given the novelty that this type of work presented to them. In this sense, although at the beginning the tutoring process was more structured, it also allowed the students to situate themselves in the conceptual and methodological framework of LS and to progressively clarify the task and its educational meaning.

To this end, the LS tutoring process began with the conceptualisation and in-depth questioning of teaching practice within the framework of this methodology and continued along the lines of deconstructing the stereotypes and beliefs about the teaching function that the students brought with them.

#### *4.2 Phase 2. Cooperative design of the proposal*

In this phase, the tutoring provided by the teachers was a key aspect in the design of the LS, insofar as the pupils felt discouraged and insecure from time to time. The teachers continued to provide guidance to ensure that the pupils did not lose their motivation and commitment to the task.

Throughout the process, the teachers' tutoring was focussed on the students' understanding regarding the practice of professional teaching. This is understood to be a complex task, which needs to be approached from a creative and contextualised point of view. The aim of this exercise was to provide situational responses to social and educational demands. In this sense, the students took an active part in the cooperative design of their proposals, reflecting on the objectives, educational competences, educational content, methodological and organisational aspects, assessment strategies and the role of teachers. In this design, some limitations were shown by the students in case study C6, because they found it more difficult due to lack of cooperative working skills.

In both case studies, debates and reflections on the educational dilemmas of the teaching profession came to the fore. This led to an understanding that professional practice does not involve applying pre-defined or pre-established solutions, but that we must embrace reality, where teachers must bring into play emotional as well as cognitive and procedural aspects in their professional practice in a contextualised way.

The teachers have developed the tutoring process and have tried to offer a vivid, real and lived-through example of the theoretical-practical concepts that were the topic of conversation during the experience. They have had first-hand experience of living and developing the concept of reflective teaching and emphasising the impact of research on their own practice and cooperative work:

If we want them to investigate, reflect, stop and think, they have to see it in you as an example. And if you want them to work cooperatively, they also have to see it in you. In other words, you can't give them a discourse that doesn't correspond to your practice (EID, DO: 31/10/2019, C7).

From this point of view, teachers have also emphasised the role of educators as agents of change, conceiving them as critical and transformative intellectuals (Hargreaves and Hopkins, 1991; Schön, 1992), in a contextualised way in these times of uncertainty, complexity and perplexity abound nowadays (Pérez, 2019).

In short, the personae of the reflective teacher and researcher that the teachers have introduced and developed have made educational theory evolve through classroom experimentation. This has grown our knowledge as to how to put learning theory into practice in real experimental contexts as a pedagogical tool for the development of school curricula. In class, this provides much food for thought for students, with the objective of constructing sound reasoning.

To this end, the teachers involved in the study have used a wide range of methodological strategies, with the aim of establishing a theoretical–practical relationship throughout the process in the light of the fundamental content of the subjects involved. This was always done within a permanent dialogue of critical and reflective enquiry when undergoing the process of designing and developing the LSs. In this process, several debates and reflections were shared with and put forward by both large and small groups. This prompted contrast and reflection through evocative questions and provided many concrete examples of real educational practices. These allowed students to question many of the behaviours, attitudes, values and emotions they held previously. Also, they re-evaluated the attitudes, values and emotions they had about educational reality and the teaching profession. This allowed them to deconstruct the automatic processes related to their practical knowledge and progressively build their pedagogical thinking as stated by the teachers in case study C7:

It is important for them to be able to analyse their previous conceptions of what we were working on in class and then to have the opportunity to reformulate these conceptions based on what we were seeing and the experience they were having (EID, DO: 31/10/2019, C7).

In both case studies, the teachers provided the students with the necessary tools to develop a culture of cooperation and helped them to break with the previous structures of individualised work that were ingrained in their minds. This fact has been presented as a common characteristic. The subjects were first year students working towards a degree in primary education. It was, therefore, a priority for them to *learn to cooperate*.

#### 4.3 Phase 3. First experimental lesson

As part of this stage, and most obviously after the first experimental lesson, the students were given the opportunity to learn how to conduct a fairly elaborate discussion based on cooperation. All of the students stated their own proclaimed theories, but it soon became evident that these did not fit with their own ideas as seen from their behaviour and attitudes when designing and developing LS cooperatively and to play the role of a teacher with the children who visited us as this teacher tells us:

I wanted them to understand that everyone has a contribution to make and that, in a co-operative group, everyone works together, and somehow, I saw that they were excluding people. So, on the one hand, in class they were told at length about the importance of equality, equity, inclusion . . . , and, on the other hand, they followed the theory but did not put it into practice (EID, DO: 31/10/2019, C7).

Having spotted the issue, the tutoring process was reevaluated to promote a culture of cooperation in the classroom and in each small group, putting into action strategies of active listening, debate, dialogue and contrast. They aimed to reach an agreement in a democratic, consensual and respectful way. This learning experience proved to be another of the key elements during the LS tutoring process as it motivated students to become aware of the importance of cooperative work among peers:

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Because, when a group is cooperative, they have to help each other. They don't blame each other and they are inclusive. All types of students work together in class and, if we want to promote inclusion, this is where they have to learn it. And they must also understand that being a teacher means collaborating with others, because they won't be able to pick and choose their future colleagues, so they have to learn to get on, to respect the others and their differences (EID, DO: 31/10/2010, C7).

#### *4.4 Phase 4. Reflection and analysis. Reformulation*

The tutoring in this phase addressed the whirlwind of emotions that the students were going through. They were going through mixed emotions joy, sadness, fear and insecurity all at the same time. Thanks to the guidance from the teachers who provided invaluable cooperation and support, teaching staff were more aware of the issues encountered by the students. In addition, the designs of their didactic proposals were enhanced, in particular their formative experience as a students was improved This encouraged them to break down the individualistic work culture that was in place when they first started their training, and they have now abandoned their previous pre-conceived ideas regarding teaching-learning processes, school and education, through LS: "With the Lesson Study they realise that they have to break with the individualistic and competitive culture with which they usually enter initial training" (EID, OD: 31/10/2019, C7).

On the other hand, the tutoring process and guidance provided as part of this process of reflection and analysis of the LS has also turned into an interesting professional development opportunity for the teachers themselves, as it has offered them attractive opportunities for reflection on the teaching-learning process from a cooperative point of view, encouraging them to make proposals for improvement in future years:

I think that, after going through this project, which this year has been completed with the group study, it has allowed us and them to become more aware of the importance of working from this perspective. We have perceived the tools that the students have within their reach to continue working along these lines but introducing improvements for next year so this can be turned around. Our philosophy remains the same: to break away from fragmentation and to focus on collaborative culture, creativity, emotions, etc., but introducing improvements based on the experience we have had this year, such as dedicating more time for them to see what cooperative work is (EID, DO: 31/10/2019, C7).

#### *4.5 Phases 5 and 6. Second experimental lesson and analysis*

In these stages of their study, students experienced feelings of satisfaction, as they were able to redirect their initial designs and rework them from a more co-operative perspective and anchor them in their educational purposes.

#### *4.6 Phase 7. Dissemination in an extended context*

The LS culminated in a celebration of learning in an extended context, making use of graphics and re-evaluating the entire process everybody went through. After this final evaluation, both case studies led to the findings as follows: in relation to the initial training of teachers and the reconstruction of their practical knowledge, suggesting the need for all or a majority of teachers in the degree studies to incorporate this vision into their educational practice to allow for continuity in the initial training process:

If it were an annual subject, they would have internalised it better, because everything is concentrated in one term and they come from a very different first term. So, they get to the second term and the interdisciplinary work is already a shock to them, as well as the cooperative work, and they don't know what to do. It's not really their problem (EID, DO: 31/10/2019, C7).



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The four-month period is an excessively short period to engender an in-depth reconstruction of the students' initial approaches and to accompany their process, as the number of hours provided both for classes in their different groupings and for tutorials are clearly insufficient. This fact has triggered feelings of unease and concern for the teachers, who have tried to find strategies, such as the assembly, so that both the groups involved in LS and the rest of the groups in the classroom do not become disorientated, especially in the case of C6, where there was only one teacher in the classroom:

In the assembly, for example, in addition to the meetings we had among ourselves, you saw how the other groups were doing, how they were approaching it, well, you compared it with your own work, which was going badly, but well, what approach do we want to follow, how are the others taking it, are we taking it along the line we have to take? Because it's true that M., with the number of people we are, he couldn't see all of us, it was impossible. So, we did have the opportunity in the assembly to talk about our own project, about how we are going to approach it, one person told me how we could do it better, I said what I thought was more or less right (EIA, 15'40", C6).

In the tutoring process, the teachers also demonstrated the improvement that this type of experience can bring not only to the learning tools to be developed and, consequently, to professional progression itself, but also to initial teacher training curricula, establishing the reciprocal relationship that exists between teacher training and curriculum evolution.

The tutoring process of the LS has allowed the teachers to make a break from compartmentalisation and the technocracy of the curriculum. This was more evident in case study C7, where the teachers have also participated in an interdisciplinary project together with the LS and, in addition, have developed their tutoring role as a pedagogical partner, relying on each other's strengths. This required an important effort on their part to ensure optimal coordination as teachers were sharing the same classroom and the same class group at the same time:

For me, this way of working has made my teaching job easier because it has facilitated my work, although I am working twice the hours I used to, but it is a great support. In this sense, I don't quantify the work in hours, which are very many, but I go by the accompaniment and emotional support that being a teaching partner in the same classroom means for my own professional development and my task as a teacher, always respecting each other (EID, DO: 31/10/2019, C7).

However, as the teachers are always willing to co-ordinate their work, it has become evident in both case studies that the high number of students (more than 80) makes the tutoring process of the LSs difficult:

A class of eighty students generates many difficulties for the teaching staff when tutoring so many groups. We have been overwhelmed by the number of hours required because we always tried to give feedback to all the groups not only in class, but also through the wiki, returning the detailed revision comments to each group on paper (EID, DO: 31-10-2019, C7).

In general, in my opinion, on the one hand it has been a very interesting process, but also very difficult: it has allowed us to rethink the training of the future primary school teacher, in an active way, linking practical theory with a cooperative methodology (EID, 1'27", C6).

The number of students, therefore, has had an impact on the tutoring approach adopted in terms of the relationship established with the students, the time devoted to each classroom group and to the group that has carried out the LS and on the skills to be developed, which is highlighted in particular in case study C6 as only one teacher has carried out this tutoring process:

The issue that I had and which has affected the entire development of LS lay in the sheer number of students and being able to tutor so many groups. LS requires 12 groups to work very closely and step by step, rethinking, constantly reflecting on what we are doing and the meaning of what we are

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doing, etc. This takes up a lot of time and as there are so many students, it has been very difficult for me, especially in terms of follow-up (EID, 1'27", C6).

This fact has undoubtedly posed a great challenge for the teachers throughout the experience, so that their dedication, in both case studies, has been very intense throughout the process, given the fact that it took up many hours of work as they already stated, "We have had to dedicate many hours of work to it" (EID, DO: 31/10/2019, C7). In addition, it is clear that training teachers require smaller groups in order to establish a more personalised tutoring experience.

However, despite these difficulties, the teachers rated the experience as a very satisfactory and important learning opportunity for both themselves and the students, thus highlighting the validity of LS in initial training and the reconstruction of practical teacher thinking:

For a teacher, to realise that they have to think, analyse, consider the context, design and develop the proposal, evaluate what they have done and, from there, propose improvements [. . .], and all of this in a cooperative way, for me is something fundamental and implies the development of professional competences (EID, DO: 31/10/2019, C7).

## 5. Discussion and conclusions

The research has encouraged the discussion of the relationship between practical knowledge that is understood as the knowledge that teachers use in their usual classroom practice (through unconscious theories in use) and practical thinking, which are made up of explicit theories that are used consciously to justify educational practice (Soto *et al.*, 2015, 2021).

Likewise, the importance of the student tutoring process for the reconstruction of their practical knowledge has been highlighted, which is based on an approach of personalised, close, critical and respectful teaching. To this end, the teachers have developed a permanent accompaniment during the process of design, progress and evaluation of the LS by the students, offering an attitude of listening and empathy with their emotional frame of mind and trying to instil positivity and enthusiasm during the process, as well as confidence in themselves and in their important work with children from collaborating schools.

In the tutoring process, it is emphasised that being an education professional goes beyond discourse or abstract theory: critical and situated thinking must also be developed in and about educational practice, experimenting in real contexts and rethinking ourselves as teachers in an infinite loop of experimentation of theory and theorisation of practice (Soto, 2022).

To the development of this critical, reflective and situated thinking, we can add the relevance of its cooperative nature, with students investigating the practical repercussions of their methodological designs to improve the learning of who forms the subject of the study? The children they will be teaching. Therefore, LS methodology enhances educational practices in university classrooms and facilitates the development of critical and reflective thinking in both students and teachers, as well as stimulating cooperative participation in the teaching-learning processes (Sepúlveda and García, 2020).

This is a key aspect of LS: immersing students in a conscious break with the individualistic culture with which they enter university whilst at the same time establishing interesting networks between university and school classrooms. This requires a permanent predisposition towards research and reflection on behalf of both the university students and teachers who tutor them. Bjuland and Helgevold (2018) show us the role of the teacher as a facilitator and expert, who guides and challenges students to reflect on their own practice, which has been captured by the evidence of students expressing the importance of being tutored by teachers in their learning process and provide them with the spaces and times to carry out integrated and facilitating tutoring (Álvarez and Álvarez, 2015; Naesheim-Bjorkvik *et al.*, 2019; Shuilleabhain and Bjuland, 2019).

In this sense, we consider that the reflective teacher approach (Elliott, 2015) is revitalised with LS, giving it a more social and emotional perspective. From this viewpoint, the LS has meant not only a strategy for improving educational practice, but also a strengthening of the university classroom as a teaching and research community (Soto *et al.*, 2015, 2021), making the students' learning processes more visible, as well as the tutoring processes of the teaching staff, from a cooperative and mutually supportive point of view.

Although, as stated before, the high number of students affects the process of LS tutoring, it should be noted that this process is more satisfactory from the particular perspective of accompaniment and collaboration that has also been established between the tutors themselves.

In short, it is clear that the experience presented here has made it possible to establish the importance of students participating in their own learning and the need for planned, close and collaborative tutoring (Torres *et al.*, 2020). Developing personalised and critical tutoring has been the impetus for situated learning from a collaborative methodological perspective in which research and the subsequent reconstruction of practice facilitates the development of teaching competences as indicated by González *et al.* (2021) and Wood (2020).

This leads us to consider the need to establish future lines of research on this methodology, moving towards a perspective of interdisciplinary work in the curricula of initial teacher training and giving continuity to this type of work on LS throughout the different years of training of students to provide them with the necessary tools to teach in an increasingly uncertain and changing educational future (Pérez, 2019).

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#### **Further reading**

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