LS4VET Storyboard and Toolkit

INTELLECTUAL OUTCOME 3 **2020-1-HU01-KA202-078848**

LEAD PARTNER: UNIVERSITY OF MALTA

The third intellectual outcome of the project was the creation of the *LS4VET Storyboard and Toolkit,* developed to guide the piloting of the adaptation of Lesson Study for VET (LS4VET) by the LS4VET course (IO2) participants. The Storyboard and the digital Toolkit were designed based on the available literature about Lesson Study (LS) and the LS4VET Model (IO1), and finalised based on the outcome of this piloting.

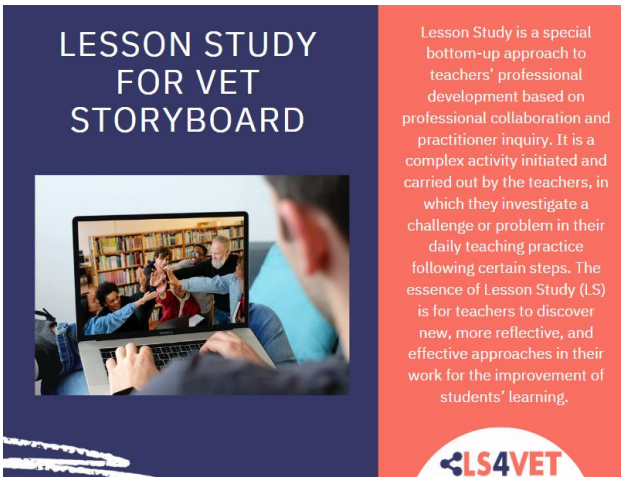
LS4VET

Lesson Study for VET

Teachers' collaboration for Improving the Quality of Vocational Education and Training

The LS4VET Storyboard

The *LS4VET Storyboard* was designed as an interactive Canva document published on the project website. The text is a shortened version of a very detailed description of all the tasks by LS participants and the related methods, outcomes, outputs (documents) and required templates, developed in the collaboration of all expert partners of the partnership. The Storyboard summarizes the main goals, participants, activities and outcomes of each step of a Lesson Study in an interactive format.



The LS4VET Toolkit

The LS4VET Toolkit was prepared by the LS4VET partnership with the objective to assist VET teachers to carry out a Lesson Study in their own school and to work towards its institutional embedding and sustainability. The Toolkit consists of three parts:

- A Guide for Facilitating Lesson Study
- Templates to assist VET teachers to carry out a Lesson Study, related to the goals and tasks of each LS step (12 documents)
- Templates for working towards the institutional embedding of LS4VET (2 documents)

The piloting of the LS4VET Model

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LS4VET Storyboard and Toolkit

The *LS4VET Storyboard and Toolkit* were developed by the partnership with the objective to assist VET teachers to do a Lesson Study in their own schools. Teachers from partner and other VET schools in the four partner countries carried out Lesson Studies based on the LS4VET Model (IO1), while participating in the LS4VET course (IO2), which incorporated the LS4VET Storyboard and Toolkit (IO3).

In Austria, 8 LS4VET-teams with 45 teachers from 29 vocational schools and 16 technical schools participated in the pilot. In the other three countries, the LS4VET-teams were typically made up of teachers from the same school. 7 LS4VET-teams with 34 teachers piloted the LS4VET Model in Hungary, 17 VET teachers in 6 LS4VET groups completed the LS4VET course in Malta, and 3 LS4VET teams with 21 VET teachers participated in the pilot in the Netherlands.

The pilots showed common features and differences which arise from the specific country context. Heterogeneity and boundary crossings were key characteristics of LS4VET teams, and we believe that this is one of the most challenging, but also a promising and unique feature of our adaptation of LS to VET.

Austria

Five out of the eight LS4VET teams participating in the main LS4VET course – which in Austria was implemented as part of a bachelor course - were heterogeneous in terms of gender. Seven groups consisted of VET teachers from different schools but all teams were homogeneous in terms of school types. With one exception all teams chose subject-focused research topics, and in half the teams the research lesson was implemented in a general subject (maths).

Team members collaborated with each other and with the knowledgeable others (facilitators) online. Where teams came from geographically close schools, face-to-face meetings were also more common. The main challenge for the participants was time management. Teachers worked effectively on designing a Lesson Study Research Lesson (LS-RL). However, in very diverse teams, the teachers whose classes would participate in the process and the experts for the actual LS-RL usually took the lead in planning. None of the Austrian pilots involved industry experts. However, in the second pilot, one team collaborated with an expert in their focus area, still a colleague from their school.

As regards sustainability, participants in the first pilot reported that, as a departmental initiative limited to one subject area, LS appears suitable for bringing the culture of lesson observation to a higher level, within the

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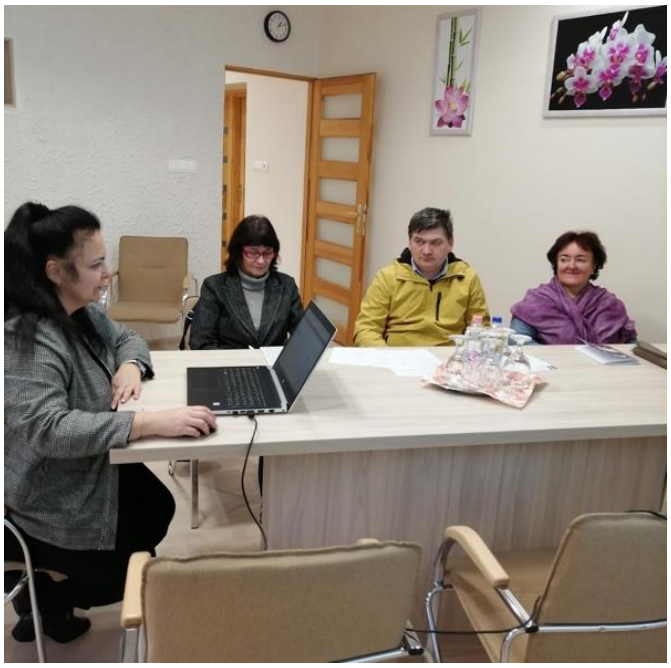
school and within the subject area. Hence, it is seen as something that needs to be ongoing and undertaken as a school-wide approach to teacher professional development.

Hungary

All eight Hungarian LS4VET teams were heterogeneous and involved at least one general subject teacher and one vocational subject teacher. There were teams with teachers of the theory and the practice of the same vocation, and also teams with two or more teachers of different vocations. Several teams were formed of teachers of different subjects who nevertheless had one thing in common: they all taught the same class/group of students whom they chose to work with in their Lesson Study. Five of the eight teams chose a more general pedagogical issue for their LS research lesson, even if with one exception all were implemented in a vocational subject.

Most teams reported effective collaboration within their own group, especially when tasks were clearly and evenly distributed among team members at the very beginning. They also managed to have regular personal (online or offline) meetings and discussions. The e-tutors gave them regular feedback online. Many VET teachers recognized added values in collaborating with teachers who teach subjects different from theirs. Moreover, it appears that the support of the school leadership was vital to the team's collaboration. It was especially conducive when a school leader participated in the LS as a team member.



Involving knowledgeable others (KOs) was often a challenge for the Hungarian teams and most involved in their LS internal KOs, such as teacher colleagues who also worked in the industry (KO from industry) and the school psychologist or a special education teacher (KO from the educational field).

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Three of the eight Hungarian teams explicitly announced that they were deeply devoted to do Lesson Study again. One team was formed from members of the quality management team in their school, and they intend to integrate Lesson Study into their quality management system. Five of the eight teams from four schools completed Module 4 of the LS4VET course and prepared a sustainability plan for LS4VET for their school.

Malta

In general, the LS4VET teams were homogeneous and made up of teachers of the same subject area and teaching within the same school. In two cases, groups were made up of different educators – one with an education officer (EO) and another a head of department and an EO. For all Maltese teams, the main issue of their LS was to bridge vocational theory and practice.

The teams worked well and although their main issue was finding a common time-slot to meet, they still managed to even if in most cases this was done after school hours. It was evident to the LS facilitators that the educators involved in each LS team enjoyed the collaboration and the opportunity to share teaching ideas, insights and classroom experiences. For all teams, this was their first opportunity where they were engaged in collaboratively planning, teaching and evaluating a lesson. Five of the six LS teams did not involve an external knowledgeable other from the industry. The reasons for this being: (1) one of the teachers in the team had experience and worked in the industry; and (2) within the LS timeframe, the team did not manage to identify one.

For two of the six lesson studies, it seems that there are possibilities that lesson study is continued beyond the project. For example, at ITS there are currently talks and plans to continue on the work done (i.e. two lesson studies, including one during the piloting stage) to offer LS to other educators. One idea is to use LS with new teachers as a way to help them understand better the context of teaching in the tourism industry.

The Netherlands

The three Dutch LS4VET teams at the partner VET institution - a large regional centre with many VET schools - were heterogeneous in terms of the teachers' own discipline.

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All the teams chose rather general topics for their Lesson Study that could be generalised across VET programs. Given the depth of teachers' research, the novelty of LS4VET for them and the still experimental nature of the implementation it is hardly unsurprising they reported they were sometimes challenged by the LS4VET process. As far as collaboration and boundary crossing goes, however, participants were very enthusiastic and appreciated the opportunity to work together and learn from colleagues from different disciplines and institutions. Although institutions in VET in the Netherlands typically have close ties with their occupational fields, the LS4VET teams did not involve a knowledgeable other from one of their fields.

As regards sustainability, Landstede in collaboration with Windesheim (UAS in Zwolle) planned to integrate LS4VET as part of the (mandatory) didactical certification for new VET teachers. Teachers will need time for PD, and when there is a budget for that, it should be allocated to LS specifically. This may very well happen since the research group on professional development at Landstede, VET college and partner in this project, is enthusiastic about it as well and looking for further professional learning opportunities.

Conclusions

The LS4VET teams were all heterogeneous in terms of teachers' discipline in Austria, Hungary and the Netherlands, but homogenous in Malta where the initial heterogeneous composition of some teams did not seem to work. One of the main challenges for all LS4VET teams in the four collaborating countries was to choose a focus for their Lesson Study that is relevant, important, and useful for all team members who often taught very different subjects. The decisions made by the teams were, however, somewhat different in the four countries.

The starting point of choosing a research goal for LS in all four countries was – as typical in LS in general – an issue the teachers or their students were struggling with in their teaching and learning. The most frequent main issues were linking vocation-specific cognitive skills to practical skills (bridging theory and practice), effective group work and enhancing student engagement in the learning process.

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The heterogeneity of the LS4VET teams was not only a challenge but – just as it was intended by our LS4VET Model – it was also the most fruitful and promising aspect of Lesson Study for VET for the teams in our project in terms of teacher learning. Most VET teachers appreciated the opportunity to work together with colleagues they have never collaborated professionally with. This gave them new perspectives, made them reflect on their own teaching, and it also improved their own collaboration skills and increased group cohesion. Most VET teams named scheduling problems and finding the time for collaboration as the biggest barriers in their LS. Involving knowledgeable others (KOs) was a challenge for many teams, especially KOs from industry, and the few teams who had them typically collaborated with colleagues who both teach in their school and work in the vocation taught. Most teams, however, consulted KOs from the academic field of education.

Sustainability of LS4VET

As regards the sustainability of LS for VET in the four partner countries, this depends on whether:

- L4VET team members will continue to do LS by themselves in their schools,
- LS will be systematically introduced in schools for other teachers as well, embedded as a school practice, and
- there is an opportunity for LS4VET to be promoted at the system level, by national policy-makers.

Our experiences in the four partner countries are also mixed in this respect, but there are some promising developments in all countries.

Budapest Partner Meeting

The 7th project meeting was held on 2-3 June, 2023 in Budapest (Hungary), organized by the coordinator ELTE. On the first day, the partners participated in the LS4VET final conference at ELTE, sharing their experiences with LS4VET with the more than 50 Hungarian VET teachers, school leaders, teacher educators and policy-makers. In the afternoon, they visited a Hungarian VET school where the vice president of the Hungarian National Office of Vocational Education and Adult Learning as well as the vice principal gave to them presentations about VET in Hungary and the visited school. On the second day, the partners discussed the final project tasks and future plans for collaboration.

See the project website for more information.

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