

# SFDN 2023 CONFERENCE: “Going further together”

**TITLE:** Building bridges, not admiring from afar. How Swiss faculty developers create disciplinary relevance for generic pedagogy.

**Author:** Karin Brown.

## Abstract

Educational developers have long been considered brokers (Pilkington, 2016) between different stakeholder groups at universities. In addition, they make connections in more abstract ways, such as between general pedagogy (how teaching and learning works) and the disciplinary contexts that the lecturers, with whom they work, are teaching within.

Evidence is mounting that subject-specific pedagogical training may be more effective than general pedagogical training (Bostock, 2022; Geertsema, 2021), however the general approach appears to remain the primary way faculty are taught. There will be practical reasons for this however faculty developers will have developed strategies for 'bridging the gap' between generic content and the specific discipline or subject specificities of the individual lecturers in their courses. The concept of 'transfer' (Feixas, et al. n.d.) offers insight into the factors that help or hinder course participants apply what is learned in the course to their specific teaching context. However, what this looks like in academic development practice, is largely absent from the literature.

This scholarly discussion is based on qualitative data collected from three focus groups with Swiss Faculty Developers (defined as academic developers who run professional development courses in teaching for Swiss university lecturers) in 2022 and 2023. The data reveals the specific strategies that they use for 'creating a bridge' between general pedagogy and the personal teaching context of the teacher.