Malta’s education system

EDS3207: Families, Communities, and the Educational System

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Main points

- The development of Malta’s education system
- Key struggles over education
- Main features of education in Malta
- Other education systems
- What shapes education systems
- What can be shaped
- The PISA report
The specificity of Malta
Educational development in Malta: a background

- 1592: *Collegium Melitense* set up by Jesuits
- 1796: first proposal for basic education for all
- 1798: Napoleon’s reforms
- 1850: Beginning of an education system
- 1880: Keenan report—the language question
- 1890’s: movement for VET
- 1930’s: first technical school
- 1946: compulsory education Ordinance
- 1966: setting up of MCAST
- 1970: secondary education for all
- 1972: setting up of trade schools
- 1986: massification of higher education
- 2000: setting up of MCAST
- 2005: College network
Struggles over education
Struggles over…

- What is education?
- Who is education for?
- What curriculum to teach?
- How to teach that curriculum?
- Where to teach?
- Who can teach?
- How to pay for education?

- Gender
- Class
- Ethnicity
- Race
- Religion
- Dis/ability
- Orientation
- Region
Some are good with their hands…

…others with their mind!
Systems can bring people together...
…or pull them apart
Shaping the colonial mind
Learning to be girls
Politics and the Church
Malta in and Europe

**Europedwards in education**

The setting up of a European Committee to direct standards of education in European Malta towards European standards is welcome indeed. It is through education that the younger generation are given a sense of purpose and, for Malta, this sense of purpose can only be the same as that of Europe.

The education system in Malta, for all its shortcomings, has served those islands well. The system has been broadly based on the English system by dint of the historic ties binding these islands with Britain. It is now a question of building on what we have, and what we have is based on one of the best systems in the world.

The nine education experts on the Committee (5 British, 2 Italian and one each from Belgium and France) have the possible addition of a German, provide a European pattern well suited to coping with the Malta situation and its needs, and are sure of fertile cooperation with Maltese educators who are keen to a great opportunity to match their brains with their European counterparts.

This matching of brains on a system of education is after all what is happening throughout Europe in evolving new projects for Community cooperation. In public education matters - a difficult process because it is in education, perhaps, where the mentality of national frontiers is usually at its strongest.

The coexistence of diplomas and qualifications for entry to higher education bring into sharp relief the whole education structure. From top to bottom, education in the lower levels one must continue to allow for peculiar local characteristics.

We Maltese have not been so "structurally nationalistic" in our education as other Europeans. Our very smallness has forced us to look outward rather than inwards. This is what Europeans in the modern community are trying to do as shown in a European conference held in Genoa in October 1971. One of the main themes that emerged from that conference was that whilst the Middle Ages achieved a certain European unity amongst universities in the 19th century introduced the era of the "Europe of nations". So in this respect Europe should try and go back to the Middle Ages! With a new look the inevitable updating of course!

Education, like the sands of time, can never stand still. All generations must have felt that there was an era of change. Without this urge for change no progress is possible. An International Commission on the Development of Education, set up by UNESCO last year, has just reported that education throughout the world is likely to change beyond recognition in the next generation.

In this Commission's views, education will start much earlier and it will never end for the concept of lifelong education is about to become a practical reality. Examinations will matter less as a way for they will be no means of assessing what people are learning at their own pace. First subjects and curricula are likely to go into the melting pot and schools as such places exclusively for children are threatened with extinction. All life, everywhere, will be big classrooms with each one of us his teacher. This is perfection; the end of the rigid school and not enough learning.

**The Way Ahead**

**Back to earth in 1972...**

HAVING seen that high ideals for education in the next generation, return to the present which happens to be also the beginning of a new scholastic year in Malta. Schools are still schools, staffed by teachers, run on fixed subjects, with textbooks promised by Government, not all yet delivered and leading to the inevitable examinations at the end of another year.

This is the first year of the "new schools" that are expected to have 50 periods weekly. Do we want to see schools become merely the guardians of schoolchildren for 30 hours a week? Thirty hours of real teaching in a class of over 30 boys or girls at secondary level, is beyond the capability of even the best and the most conscientious of teachers.

These schools may prove too much for teachers to handle and education standards will suffer.

The girls' secondary school has no fewer than 1,940 students. The overloading is such that there are about 30 Form III classes, running out of the letters of the alphabet to be taught. There are Form III with a capital "A" and a Form III with a small "a". Confusing, maybe; but someone may argue, distinguishing between capital and small letters is an education in itself, even at secondary level.

Rooms formerly used as stores have had to be turned into classes and, what is worse, the number of girls in each class has gone up to about 35.
Components of a system

Non-formal education

Informal education

Formal education
Key features of Malta’s education system:

- Selective
- Exam-oriented
- Coverage vs mastery
- Centralised
- Non-state sector
- Transferability
- Academic drift
- Post-16 sector
- Drop-out rates
- Certification
Malta’s newest institution:

- Art and Design
- Building & Construction Engineering
- Business and Commerce
- Community Services
- Electrical & Electronics Engineering
- Information & Communication Technology
- Maritime
- Mechanical Engineering
Other institutions
New National Curriculum

An attempt in bringing about a paradigm shift in defining and attaining quality provision.
A College Network

1 Gozo College  
2 St Margaret's College  
3 St Benedict College  
4 St Gorg Preca College  
5 St Ignatius College  
6 St Clare's College  
7 Maria Regina College  
8 St Nicholas College  
9 Santa Tereza College  
10 St Thomas More

Special and Inclusive Education Network
What shapes education systems?

- History…
- Culture…
- Ideas / Trends…
- The economy…
- Politicians…
- Churches
- Unions…
- Inspirational leaders

- Supra-national organisations- IMF, EU
- Success and failure
- Policy networks
- Social Movements…
- Organised lobby groups…
- Parents?
- Students?
## Overall outcomes of education

### Output of institutions and institutional performance

- Overall outcomes of education
- Output of institutions and institutional performance
- Quality of instructional delivery
- Quality and distribution of knowledge and skills

### Policy Levers That shape Outcomes

- System-wide structures, resources and policies
- The learning environment at school
- Teaching and learning practices and classroom climate
- Individual attitudes, engagement and behaviour

### Antecedents that contextualise or constrain policy

- National educational, social and economic context
- Community and school characteristics
- Student learning conditions and teacher working conditions
- Background of the learners

### What can be shaped?

- Country or system
- Schools and other institutions
- Instructional settings
- Individual learner
Early selection and institutional stratification

- Low degree of stratification
- High degree of stratification

Countries:
- Finland
- Korea
- Japan
- Iceland
- Canada
- Ireland
- Sweden
- Spain
- Italy
- Poland
- Greece
- Portugal
- Luxembourg
- Denmark
- Austria
- Norway
- New Zealand
- Australia
- United Kingdom
- Belgium
- France
- United States
- Switzerland
- Czech Republic
- Germany
- Hungary
- Poland
- Spain
- Greece
- Portugal
- Luxembourg

Performance and Social equity matrix.
E.g. Learning environment and course offering

- High degree of autonomy
- Low degree of autonomy

% Variance between schools

- Finland: 11%
- Korea: 20%
- Japan: 9%
- Sweden: 7%
- Iceland: 76%
- Belgium: 76%
- Austria: 75%
- Norway: 75%
- United States: 75%
- Australia: 71%
- Germany: 75%
- Hungary: 71%
- Switzerland: 75%
- Denmark: 75%
- Spain: 76%
- Italy: 76%
- Poland: 76%
- Greece: 76%
- Portugal: 76%
- Luxembourg: 75%

$r = .51$
Student engagement in reading

- Highest engagement
- Lowest engagement
What difference will you make?