

Keynotes Speakers



Spaces for Inclusive Communities: Reflections on Contemporary Society



Andrew Azzopardi

Locating the debates around community is no easy task. The main discourses around community are countless (Mills, 2006). This presentation will weave what I consider to be some of the most significant, focal and complex debates that will contribute to the problematizing of contemporary discourses around community and its development. Whereas there are a number of compound discourses that are associated with the idea of community, a particularly important premise is that communities are interconnected.

Bio-note

Professor Andrew Azzopardi is Dean of the Faculty for Social Wellbeing and Head of the Department of Youth and Community Studies. His lecturing and research focus on inclusive education, sociology, critical pedagogy, disability politics, youth and community studies. He is a Member of the Editorial Panel of the highly acclaimed International Journal of Inclusive Education and has edited a special edition called *Creating Inclusive Communities*. He has contributed extensively in a number of other applauded journals. Azzopardi has published the following texts amongst other; *Understanding disability politics in Malta* (2009), *Young People in Gozo – A study 2* (2011) and *Roots to Inclusive Education – A Question of Wellbeing* (2012). He is the co-Editor of *Inclusive communities: A critical reader* (2012). Azzopardi has also edited *Youth: Responding to lives - An international reader* (2013) and *Perspectives on Wellbeing - A Reader* (2019).

A Bridge Too Far? Reflections on Theories in Educational Practice



Sandro Caruana

Praxis is a notion underlying several educational theories which has led to the development of different models of teacher education. Locally, this has also been one of the concepts discussed during the ‘masterisation’ of the teaching profession, by virtue of which pedagogical content knowledge builds on prior-achieved content knowledge. As teacher education in Malta was reformed, a number of unprecedented socio-economic developments created a scenario which, at policy-making level, led to further educational reforms including a drive towards vocational education and school-based assessment within increasingly diverse schools. In this presentation, I review these recent reforms and by referring to subject methodology and context knowledge. I argue that educational theories and their relevance for reflection and action are frequently sidelined, possibly in order to achieve immediate instrumental gains. This could have long-term effects on the teaching profession locally.

Bio-note

Professor Sandro Caruana is Professor of Italian Language Teaching Methodology. He is a former Dean of the Faculty of Education (2015-19) and a member of the Dept. of Languages & Humanities in Education. He holds courses on Italian language teaching and learning, Italian Linguistics, Sociolinguistics and intercultural communication. His other areas of interest include multilingualism, language attitudes, second language acquisition and the Romance element in Maltese. He has participated in international projects on intercultural communication and on language teaching, presented his works at several international conferences and was invited as keynote speaker on a number of occasions.

Blockchain: Dispelling the Myths and Understanding the Reality of the Blockchain Industry

James Catania



Despite the fact that blockchain is still in its infantile stage, this technological revolution will eventually become pervasive in all business processes throughout the globe. In this paper I argue that blockchain is a worthwhile investment in our future by highlighting not just its benefits, but also its drawbacks and the widespread hype and misconceptions that surround it. At this point in time, the biggest stumbling block for businesses and business processes is trust. As things stand, transferring or recording something of value cannot be done on a peer-to-peer level; you need to trust the parties you are transacting with to acknowledge receipt of transfer and then fulfil their end of the bargain. Since this is impossible to do in either private dealings or business landscape, the role of “trusted” third-parties - such as banks, notaries and payment gateways - becomes indispensable. So while it has been argued that certain blockchain applications - notably ‘bitcoin’ - provide the required trust between parties and therefore make the need for intermediaries redundant, in reality, the actual technology was designed to automate rather than eliminate. Malta currently has both a pro-blockchain political leadership and a holistic legislative framework which supports its growth and foreign investment; however, lack of support from non-governmental third parties and private industry has hindered progress in this area. In addition, the lack of organisational structure in legislative authorities has crippled the industry in the short term, resulting in the movement of a considerable number of foreign companies to more efficient and desirable destinations.

Bio-note

James Catania is a software engineer by profession and Malta’s leading expert on defence and security software, robotics and Blockchain technology. He was one of Malta’s Internet pioneers, developing e-business and e-commerce applications throughout his career. After working for IBM, HP and the United Nations amongst others, he held the position of CEO for two international companies. He holds two Masters degrees in Business Administration (Information Systems) and Computer Science. Currently, he is CEO and technical consultant for Intelliblock, the main Blockchain Solutions provider for the European market. His work has been cited by European Schoolnet and the European Commission.

Perchlorate Environmental Occurrences, Health effects, and Remediation Technologies



Baohua Gu

Perchlorate is a widespread pollutant in the environment. It can be produced naturally by atmospheric photochemical reactions or synthesized in large quantities for industrial, military, and pyrotechnic applications. Perchlorate can affect human thyroid function by interfering with iodide uptake and thus has significant public health ramifications. This presentation will provide the current state of science and technology with respect to the source and occurrence of perchlorate in natural environments, its risk assessment, and recent advances in treatment technologies to remove perchlorate from contaminated water. Although perchlorate is a powerful oxidant, it is highly soluble and stable in water and soil and can thus persist in the environment. The discussion will focus on various treatment technologies such as selective ion exchange, reverse osmosis, and biological reduction which can be used to remove perchlorate from contaminated water and thus to minimize its health risks to the public.

Bio-note

Professor Baohua Gu is a Corporate Fellow and Team Leader in Environmental Sciences Division at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, with a joint appointment as a Professor at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. He is a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), a fellow of the Geological Society of America (GSA), and author of over 250 publications. Gu received his Ph.D. from University of California, Berkeley and his research expertise includes biogeochemical transformation and transport of environmental pollutants, such as mercury, pyrotechnics (perchlorate), uranium, chlorinated organic compounds, soil organic carbon degradation and climate feedbacks. He currently serves as a regional editor for Environmental Engineering Science and advisor for environmental research programmes.

Resilience: Historical Background and Scientific Knowledge for an Open Debate towards Holistic Practice



Maurizio Indirli

The term ‘resilience’, appears in the works of several Latin authors. It entered medieval culture and went on to be used not only by intellectuals who contributed to the birth of the modern scientific method, but also by 19th century encyclopedists. Reference was made to it in Rankine’s definition of engineering, and it even permeated the fields of psychology, anthropology and ecology. The concept of resilience developed quickly and delved into socio-ecological systems, risk assessment, sustainability, and the adaptive capacity to cope with catastrophic scenarios. Nowadays resilience is mostly used by scientists and representatives of public/private organizations, albeit with increasing ambiguity.

This paper presents an excursus through the ages as well as a discussion on the current debates on the concept of resilience. Despite its increasing popularity, its problematic definition and usage highlights the need for further research on the matter. This discussion will try to rise above the current fragmentation of discourse since the fast progress of technology cannot be separated by a shared *Peripatetiké Scholé*; indeed all philosophical and scientific theories must be approached from a pluralistic and holistic practice. Finally, some nuclei of future research regarding resilience (*safety, robustness, adaptive capacity, sustainability, governance, anamnesis*) will be discussed and questioned while avoiding the need to propose a rigid framework.

Bio-note

Dr Maurizio Indirli has penned more than 130 publications and holds a Ph.D. (Univ. of Trento) in Structural Engineering. He currently works at ENEA (the Italian National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and Sustainable Economic Development) and his responsibilities include the prevention of natural catastrophes, structural engineering, antiseismic innovative techniques, improvement of industrial plants, strategic construction/infrastructure, residential housing and cultural heritage. He was responsible for many projects regarding antiseismic improvement and archaeological heritage and has participated in several in situ investigations immediately following all great seismic events not just in Italy but also around the globe.

The Sharing Economy, Jobs and Skills



Tanya Sammut-Bonnici

The global economy is entering the third wave of information technology, characterized by interconnected platforms of people, objects and resources. The Internet of Things (IoT) as a technology-enabler of the Sharing Economy and its global platforms are due to grow exponentially in the next decade, placing demands on skills and changing the employment landscape. The demand for low-value-adding work will decrease as resources are used more effectively whilst the demand for information technology skills will continue to rise in order to meet the requirements of developing IoT products, software, apps, networks, cloud infrastructure, data management and information systems.

Bio-note

Professor Tanya Sammut-Bonnici is a Professor and Pro-Rector responsible for Strategic Planning and Enterprise at the University of Malta. She is also a Joint Editor of the Wiley Encyclopedia of Strategic Management. She held managerial and executive posts at ST Microelectronics, Vodafone, Melita Communications and APS Bank. Her academic research is published in journals such as the *International Journal of Management Reviews* and the *European Business Journal*. She is Associate Fellow at Warwick Business School and a founding member of the Partnership Development Forum. She has acted as Guest Editor of the *Management Research Review*, appointed as advisor to the EU Parliamentary Committee on Industry Research and Energy, and is a member of the EU Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection.

Conference Participants

Paper Presentation



Aesthetic Properties and their (non-)contribution to Artistic Value



■ Josette Attard

Discussions concerning aesthetic properties have been going on for over half a century. Frank Sibley was the first philosopher to write about and define certain aesthetic properties which are found in artworks in general. He was followed by other aestheticians such as Kendall Walton who continued to develop Sibley's ideas and theories. Ted Cohen and Peter Kivy joined this debate expressing some challenging ideas while other aestheticians introduced the concept of non-aesthetic properties in artworks.

Since contemporary aesthetic discussion, especially the field of analytic aesthetics, tends to be vague and sometimes also speculative, in this paper I intend to apply such theory to literary works and artistic objects. The aim of this research is to define some of the aesthetic properties in artworks and to establish the extent of their contribution to artistic value. This paper also explores the implications of the relation between aesthetic categories and artistic values leading to other values especially cognitive ones.

Bio-note

Dr Josette Attard is Senior Lecturer at the University of Malta Junior College and the University of Malta. She studied literature and literary theory at the University of Malta where she specialized in literary aesthetics for which she was awarded a Doctor of Philosophy. Her research interests are the philosophy of literature and literary aesthetics. Her main publications in this field include *L-Estetika Maltija – Antologija Kritika* (1997), and *Storja tal-Estetika Letterarja Maltija* (2011). She is a member of *The British Society of Aesthetics*, the *Società Italiana di estetica*, the *European Society of Aesthetics* and the *American Society of Aesthetics*. She also presented several papers in conferences and was twice awarded the National Book Prize.

Concrete Heritage: Challenges in Conservation



Ruben Paul Borg

The development of concrete in the 19th & 20th centuries led to new possibilities and advancement in construction. Concrete was exploited to address the post-war needs for faster and more economical construction. Significant reinforced concrete structures have become recognized as cultural heritage and since long term durability problems present conservation challenges; the understanding of failure mechanisms is fundamental for restoration. The diagnoses of historic structures, materials investigation, monitoring and assessment are important steps towards the understanding of deterioration and appraisal of concrete heritage. Long-term effects of conservation and repair also need to be considered. The assessment of concrete heritage is addressed through military and industrial heritage concrete structures in Malta, including coastal structures in aggressive environments. A methodology for appraisal is proposed taking into consideration materials and structural performance and degradation mechanisms.

Bio-note

Professor Ruben Paul Borg is an Architect & Civil Engineer and Senior Lecturer (Faculty for the Built Environment, University of Malta). He holds a B.E.&A.(Hons.) (Melit), a Specialisation Degree in Reinforced Concrete Structures (Politecnico di Milano) and a Ph.D. in Materials Engineering (University of Sheffield). He was appointed to various international organisations including CEN for Sustainable Construction & the Structural Eurocodes, International Federation for Structural Concrete and the International Initiative Sustainable Built Environment. He is principal investigator on international research projects in sustainable construction, advanced concrete and vulnerability of cultural heritage.

A Call for Parental Involvement in State Schools

Glorianne Borg Axisa



Parental Involvement (PI) in the education of children is an important element of effective education (Hornby, 2017). The setting of School Councils regulated by LEGAL NOTICE 135/1993 is one way to encourage PI in State Schools in Malta; however, the role of School Councils is fluid and participation has been decreasing. As a voluntary organisation, MAPSSS (Maltese Association of Parents of State School Students) aims to strengthen partnerships among parents, educators and policy makers. It also promotes a broader discussion on the role of the Councils. This paper provides an overview of the current PI based on Hornby's (2011) models from the perspective of the author's experience in her role as president of MAPSSS. The call for parental involvement comes from both policy makers and the parents themselves. However, whilst parents may be engaged in the education of their children, in practice, there are various gaps and barriers that hinder parental participation in the schooling of their children.

Bio-note

Dr Glorianne Borg Axisa was awarded a B.A. (Hons) from the University of Malta, and holds a Post Graduate Certificate in Education, a Master's Degree in Geography (Melit.) and a Ph.D. from UCL, London. Borg Axisa is Senior Lecturer and subject coordinator at the University of Malta Junior College. She also lectures Geography Education at the Faculty of Education, University of Malta. She is a co-founder and current president of MAPSSS (Maltese Association of Parents of State School Students) and has published a number of papers in international fora. Her research interests include Landscape Ecology, Geography Education, Global Education and Intercultural Education.

The Oedipus and Electra Complex in Italian Literature of the Late 19th Century



Christine Borg Farrugia

Italian narrative texts from various authors of the late 19th century assert the Oedipus complex theory that the child's obsession with the mother deems the father a rival insofar as he exemplifies castration. Authors such as Luigi Capuana, Edmondo De Amicis, Carlo Dossi and Mario Pratesi express this fear of losing the mother in autobiographical works which denote their seduction of the preferred parent. The Electra complex is prominent in Sibilla Aleramo's confession of her childhood obsession for her father. This psychoanalytical approach developed later in the 20th century because, as Luce Irigaray states, the daughter has always occupied a marginal role in society. The relationship between father and daughter is developed by Luigi Pirandello and Francesco Mastriani. Yet sometimes the mother manifests ambiguous behaviour (*Gli spostati* and *Tortura*) given that she no longer feels obliged by nature to love her offspring. These literary works epitomise the sheer significance of the parent-figure with respect to the child's psychological and social well-being.

Bio-note

Dr Christine Borg Farrugia is Area Coordinator for Languages at the University of Malta Junior College and Chairperson of the Scientific Committee of the Junior College Conference. She obtained her Ph.D. with a thesis entitled '*La rappresentazione dell'infanzia nella narrativa italiana del secondo Ottocento*'. For years she worked as a freelance translator with different language combinations that include Maltese, English, Italian, French, and Spanish. She participated in various workshops linked to her line of study organized by the Council of Europe and other foreign universities. She published papers related to her areas of interest which are namely childhood in the late 19th century, psychoanalysis and the Verismo movement in Naples.

Stress-Related Factors Affecting Teachers of Foreign Languages in Maltese State and Church Schools



■ **Matthew Borg/Sandro Caruana**

Teaching is a demanding profession and teacher stress is well documented both locally and internationally, with several findings indicating that teachers experience stress as a result of their work. This study is based on a Teachers' Stress Inventory (TSI) originally designed by Borg & Riding (1991) and used locally. The inventory has been adapted in order to align it to today's educational scenario and to relate specifically to the main sample of this work: 108 teachers of foreign languages in State and Church schools. Results reveal that stress affects these teachers' work, and that this is mainly related to having too much paperwork to complete and to the perceived low status of the teaching profession. Statistically significant differences emerge between the State and Church sector, especially in relation to the recognition of teachers' authority, the lack of which is deemed a source of stress especially in the public sector. Furthermore, there is a link between sustained stress levels and low job satisfaction. The quantitative results of the study are corroborated by the reflections of 12 teachers of Italian, the outcomes of which are analysed through thematic analysis.

Bio-note

Matthew Borg was awarded a Bachelor of Arts (Hons) summa cum laude in Italian by the University of Malta in 2017. He furthered his studies in the subject, by reading for a Master's in Teaching and Learning (2017-2019) at the Faculty of Education. His research focused on stress among teachers of foreign languages in local schools.

Professor Sandro Caruana is Professor of Italian Language Teaching Methodology and former Dean of the Faculty of Education, University of Malta. He holds courses on Italian language teaching and learning as well as on Italian General Linguistics and Sociolinguistics. His areas of interest include multilingualism, language attitudes, second language acquisition and the Romance element in Maltese. He has published his research in a number of international journals and edited volumes and has also participated in international projects on intercultural communication and on language teaching, presented his works at several international conferences and was invited as keynote speaker on a number of occasions.

Primary Children's Understanding and Relationship with Cartoon Characters: A Multimodal Praxis-Based Research Experience



George Cremona / Robert Attard

This paper will present the research outcomes of a two-year research venture conducted by Attard (2019) which links theory to classroom-based praxis. In brief, the first part of the paper will present a sound theoretical grounding based on international literature about primary school children's understanding and relationship with cartoon characters. Later, based on the critical theoretical literature review presented in the first part, the paper will link the outcomes to two levels of praxis. Initially, it presents how nine and ten-year-old children attending Maltese primary schools understand and relate to cartoon characters based on their everyday experiences. Then, to conclude, a set of practical classroom-oriented multimodal suggestions based on an original multimodal framework (Cremona, 2017) are proposed.

Bio-notes

Dr George Cremona is the Coordinator for German programmes offered by the Faculty of Education at the University of Malta. He lectures in German language teaching methodology and gives lectures about Multimodality. He also coordinates the Media Literacy VET Programmes of the Faculty of Education which he has been a member of since 2009. He has also been working on a research project series called 'Multimodality in Practice' since January 2012. This project aims to implement Multimodal concepts and theories in practice particularly in schools and through the media (i.e. radio and television programmes as well as the internet). For this, he was awarded the prestigious IGM national award in 2017.

Robert Attard is a postgraduate student who obtained his bachelor's degree in Biology and Chemistry (Honours) from the University of Malta. Currently, he is in his final year reading for a Master's degree in Teaching and Learning in Early Childhood and Primary Education. In his Master's dissertation, he conducted research which aimed at understanding how primary children understand and relate to cartoon characters and how such an understanding can contribute to practical educational implications. Recently, he was recruited as a primary teacher in the Education Sector within the Ministry for Education and Employment.

Theory, Praxis and Puppet Plays in Cervantes and Pirandello



Karl Chircop

Constantly throughout his literary career, the Italian writer Luigi Pirandello (1867-1936) had always seen in Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (1547-1616) a precursory inspiration of his own poetics. This paper delves into the complex nature of this literary influence, and particularly into the nature of the theoretical premonitions which Cervantes' *Don Quixote* has pragmatically bequeathed to Pirandello's oeuvre. After a brief glance at various testimonies on Cervantes enunciated by Pirandello himself during his lifetime, this study tackles the meaning of two emblematic passages in Pirandello's long essay *L'umorismo*, in which he traces the development of his very own poetics by linking it to Cervantes' comic element in *Don Quixote*. Finally, the paper will embark on a textual and thematic analysis of two emblematic puppet play episodes portrayed in *Don Quixote* and in Pirandello's novel *The Late Mattia Pascal*.

Bio-note

Dr Karl Chircop is Subject Coordinator for Foreign Languages and Senior Lecturer of Italian at Junior College. He also chairs the Organising Committee of the Junior College Conference. In 2010 he read for a Ph.D. in cotutelle with the universities of Malta and Tor Vergata (Rome). In 2015 he published his monograph *Maschere della Modernità: Joyce e Pirandello* (Franco Cesati, Florence). He is active in the editorial board of the *Mediterraneità Europea* section in the periodical *Sinestesieonline*. He is also co-editor of a new series of critical studies on the literature of migration entitled *In Between Spaces*. His research interests are Dante, Cervantes, Pirandello, Joyce, Kafka, Tabucchi, and Modernism.

Networked Learning: A Malleable Approach for Learning and Teaching in a Digitally Connected World



Maria Cutajar

Networked learning (NL) is a form of e-learning which emphasises the communication aspect of technology but keeps the focus strictly on learning in a technology-rich and connected world while simultaneously struggling to humanise itself and achieve sustainability in its uncertainty. This paper seeks to enable an understanding of NL by reviewing the theoretical underpinnings of this learning approach, and by reviewing related principles for guiding practice. A solid theoretical base featuring malleability for accommodating different learning and teaching situations will be discussed. NL methods are construed as inviting both disruption and continuity from traditional lecturing attitudes but above all, they encourage learning and teaching episodes as scenes of opportunity for personal and collective development current to the exigencies of the learning situation in place, space and time.

Bio-note

Dr Maria Cutajar was awarded a Ph.D. in e-Research and Technology Enhanced Learning by Lancaster University. She is a University of Malta lecturer affiliated with the Faculty of Education and also has assigned teaching duties at the Junior College. She teaches computing at Matriculation level and focuses on digital learning, teaching and development at post-graduate level. Her research interests broadly focus on the development of learning and teaching using networked technologies. Through research practice, she has also developed an interest in the theory and practice of phenomenography, qualitative research methods and research processes. She is also concerned with the experiencing and sense-making of contemporary networked technologies in situated practices.

Spectral Graph Theory – From Practice to Theory

Alexander Farrugia



Graph theory is an area of mathematics that studies networks, or graphs. It arose from the need to analyse many diverse network-like structures such as road networks, molecules, the Internet, social networks and electrical networks. In spectral graph theory – a branch of graph theory – matrices are constructed from such graphs and analysed from the point of view of their so-called eigenvalues and eigenvectors. The first practical need for studying graph eigenvalues was in quantum chemistry in the fifties, a process which led to the field of chemical graph theory. Subsequently, spectral graph theory was applied to other areas of study such as the P versus NP problem in the field of computational complexity, internet search, network centrality measures and control theory. This paper delves into the journey of how the practical needs of quantum chemistry required the creation of a more abstract theory – spectral graph theory – and how this area of study later benefitted other scientific fields.

Bio-note

Dr Alexander Farrugia was awarded a Ph.D. in Mathematics by the University of Malta in 2016. He is a senior lecturer at the University of Malta, Junior College and a part-time lecturer at the same university. His areas of expertise include algebraic and spectral graph theory applied to control theory, molecular chemistry and, more recently, to the study of cospectral graphs. His research led to him publishing several papers in prestigious journals and to being included in the editorial teams of two journals. He is also a Quora writer with a substantial following, where he writes primarily about mathematics, and occasionally contributes articles on mathematics in local newspapers including *The Sunday Times*.

Students' Attitudes and Motivation during A-level Chemistry Practical Work. Exploring and Addressing the Needs to Enhance the Chemistry Students' Laboratory Experience



Mario Fenech Caruana

Laboratory work usually forms an integral part of sixth form chemistry curricula. Research suggests that students' attitudes are influenced positively with experimental work. Other sources indicate that students lose interest once deprived of the chance to perform hands-on activities during chemistry studies. There are certainly different factors at play which determine the students' engagement in chemistry through laboratory activities and these need to be investigated when evaluating the laboratory experience of post-secondary chemistry students. The idea of this study is to collect data from students studying (or who have just studied) A-level chemistry in order to understand better the students' perspectives on their involvement, motivation and any issues encountered during chemistry laboratory practice. The author intends to analyse the students' voices and consider any findings to make recommendations on ways to enhance the practical component of A-level chemistry in Malta.

Bio-note

Dr Mario Fenech Caruana, B.Pharm.Tech.(Hons.), P.G.C.E., M.Sc. (Env. Health) (Melit.), Ph.D. (York), M.R.S.C., is a Senior Lecturer II in the Department of Chemistry at the University of Malta Junior College. He has been lecturing chemistry since 1988 and was involved in research activity both at the University of Malta and at the University of York, from where he was awarded a Ph.D. in 2016 for research on the introduction of green and sustainable chemistry in pre-university curricula. He also lectured environmental health at the University of Malta and had brief stints as a laboratory analyst and as a quality control manager in the food industry. He is a full member of the Royal Society of Chemistry.

Parents Know Best – An Examination of Parent Perceptions and Subsequent Proposals for a More Efficient Bilingual Education Experience in the Primary Years Cycle



Romina Frendo

In light of Mayo's definition of 'praxis' (Mayo, 2018) which posits that it involves a critical evaluation of a concept through the adoption of impartiality and consequently seeks to bring about change as necessary, this paper evaluates the results of a large scale quantitative survey with 1318 parents whose children attended Grade V - the penultimate class in the primary years' educational cycle. The paper examines these respondents' perceptions on current Maltese and English language practices in their children's classrooms and presents what parents perceive as possible solutions towards improving the quality of bilingual education experience for young learners.

Bio-note

Dr Romina Frendo is Lecturer at the University of Malta Junior College, where she has been teaching English language, literature and linguistics since 2008. She is currently a member on the Committee for Language Policy for the Junior Years. After reading for a BA (Hons.) degree in English at the University of Malta, she was awarded an M.A. (with Distinction) in 2004. Her research had focussed on the possibility of introducing immersion programmes in the Maltese education system. In 2010 she was awarded a Malta Government Scholarship to further her studies and in 2018 she was awarded a Ph.D. for her research on 'Bilingualism in Grade V Maltese Primary Schools – A Sociolinguistic Perspective.

Gramsci's *Philosophy of Praxis*



Joseph Gravina

Gramsci's *Philosophy of Praxis* was an attempt to present Marxism as a philosophy promoting the inter-definable relation between theory and practice. There was no practice without theory; every man was an intellectual. Marx's *Thesis XI* – change the world (act) more than interpret it (think) – did not repudiate philosophy; it re-affirmed the unity between theory and practice. This characterized the intellectual project of the *Prison Notebooks* as the way ahead for the political affirmation of the working class. Praxis became a pedagogical concern: consciousness-raising (theory/subject) in a dialectic, rather than dualistic relation with practice (reality/object). Enriched by other concepts – structure-superstructure, historic bloc (intellectuals and class) – Gramsci's praxis was also an attempt to prevent Marx's *historical materialist* political economy from morphing into metaphysics (Croce), and its practice into the 'causal', 'law-like' connections of vulgar materialism (Bukharin). Respecting the strictures of historical 'translatability', praxis will finally be adopted to discuss the 1970s and their aftermath in Malta.

Bio-note

Dr Joseph Gravina is a University of Malta lecturer employed within the Systems of Knowledge department at the Junior College. His research interests focus on Antonio Gramsci's writings. He has written Gramscian analyses of Don Lorenzo Milani's work in Barbiana; adopted his concept of passive revolution for its contribution to the study of 'peace' and the study of economic development and education in the history of post-Risorgimento Italy. He elaborated Althusserian concepts to write about the Malta Labour Party's cultural politics during the 1970s and 1980s. Other research interests include the study of human rights education and the comparative study of industrialisation, social reproduction and education. He has also contributed to edited works and peer-reviewed journals.

Developing Critical Reading Skills – Theories and Practices



■ **Monika Kusiak-Pisowacka**

The aim of the presentation is to discuss teaching critical reading skills, particularly in a foreign language context. The talk will consist of two parts: theoretical and empirical. In the first part, the theoretical considerations underpinning this aspect of reading will be discussed. Two theoretical perspectives will be focussed on: a psycholinguistic-cognitive orientation, which views reading as a mental process during which the reader constructs his own representation of the text and a socio-cultural orientation, which emphasizes the importance of varied social and historical contexts in text production and text reception. Within each theory, practical possibilities to develop critical reading skills will be explored. The practical part of the talk focusses on the results of a small-scale course book evaluation study. Examples of didactic materials and teaching activities offered in a selection of course books for EFL learners will be presented.

Bio-note

■ **Professor Monika Kusiak-Pisowacka** is Associate Professor of English at the Jagiellonian University of Cracow, Poland. At present she is head of the Applied Linguistics Section in the Institute of English Studies. She teaches Research Methods courses and teacher training classes. Her research revolves around cross-linguistic issues, reading comprehension skills, intercultural communication and teacher education. Her publications include academic articles, handbooks for teachers and course books for FL learners. Her recent books are *Reading comprehension in Polish and English: Evidence from an introspective study* (2013) and *Educational role of language skills* (2018).

OAR@UM and Open Access in Malta: Five Years On



Martin Lochman

The paper looks at the development of Open Access in Malta over the course of the past five years. Aside from providing a chronological overview of key activities undertaken within the above specified period with the goal of turning the underlying theoretical principles of OA into practice, it puts an emphasis on OAR@UM, the University of Malta Institutional Repository as the backbone of OA in the Maltese Islands. The paper provides a direct link between the technological expansion of the Repository and its growing importance to the local and worldwide academic community, while identifying and discussing the key aspects of its success and charting the future course of local OA solutions.

Bio-note

Martin Lochman is an Assistant Librarian at the Outreach Department of the University of Malta Library. His work is mainly focused on promoting Library services, conducting training sessions on HyDi and RefWorks and working with OAR@UM. His main areas of interest include Open Access, institutional repositories and OAI service providers. He has published several articles on digital libraries and OAI service providers in Ikaros – the Electronic Journal on Information Society and on the De Gruyter blog Openscience.com. Mr Lochman holds a MSc in Library and Information Science (magna cum laude) as well as a BSc in Media Studies, both obtained at Charles University in Prague.

Making Disabled People's Voices Vulnerable

 Liliana Marić



This paper attempts to show my personal praxis from theory to practice by utilising research findings and transforming them into creative writing while contributing to discourse in the fields of critical disability studies and inclusive education. Twelve semi-structured interviews were carried out with young disabled adults with different physical and/or sensorial disabilities who followed or were following courses at further and higher education levels. Research findings that show experiences of disabled persons living day to day, are presented in short poems to reveal their struggles which are taken for granted. The evidence espoused that inclusive education is a process as well as a way of living. The discussion unveils how society makes the voices of disabled persons disempowered and vulnerable. The contribution of this paper is to create awareness about the dire need for social praxis in fostering emancipation and social justice from a rights-based standpoint in favour of disabled people.

Bio-note

Dr Liliana Marić has taught at secondary, post-secondary and tertiary levels. She teaches Home Economics at the University of Malta, Junior College. At University, she delivered lectures on inclusive education, teaching strategies and narrative inquiry. She was a tutor in practice placement of Learning Support Assistants as well as a member of dissertation examining boards related to disability, Home Economics and inclusive education. Marić's Ph.D. thesis focused on the experience of inclusive education of disabled persons with physical and sensory impairment at further and higher education levels. Her interests lie in researching and contributing to the field of inclusive education.

Towards Better Protection of Twentieth Century Architecture in Malta



Sandra Mifsud Bonnici

This paper attempts to highlight the need to promote more awareness of the value of twentieth century buildings in Malta and to intensify their protection. What to keep and maintain is debatable and depends on which philosophies of restoration are adopted. Heritage protection institutions, such as ICONOMOS, UNESCO and the Council of Europe afford the same protection to modern architecture previously reserved for much older buildings. In Malta the legal framework has long been set up to protect the architectural heritage that has been classified and scheduled according to the guidelines of these institutions but the emphasis is on pre-1920's buildings. Unless the list is updated regularly to include examples of architecture of later periods, there is the risk of losing these in the frenzy of the rapid development occurring at present. Educating citizens to value these and even any architectural features and interior décor inspired by this period, should hopefully lead to a higher level of protection. As an example, the lens will be focused on the Gian Frangisk Abela Junior College.

Bio-note

Sandra Mifsud Bonnici B.Pharm.(Hons), B.A.(Socio-legal Studies), L.P., M.A.(Baroque Studies) is a Senior Lecturer in Systems of Knowledge at Gan Frangisk Abela Junior College, University of Malta and also a Visiting Assistant Lecturer at the Department of Pharmacy, in the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery, at the same University.

A Shift of Traditional Teaching towards Information Communication Teaching in Public/Private Teaching and Learning in Pakistan



■ **Muhammad Nawaz**

This paper explores teaching and learning scenarios in Pakistan's public and private colleges. Although Information & Communications Technology (ICT) has become an integral part of modern curricula, the unavailability of computers in some colleges makes it harder for students to follow a unified curriculum that uses ICT. Our quantitative and qualitative research reveals that ICT is beneficial to students as well as teachers; not only do students perform better and develop a greater interest in their subjects, teachers' perceptions of modern teaching methods also improve considerably. Our results also show that students in colleges with sufficient funds for ICT use, develop a better learning curve than their counterparts in poorly funded schools. ICT use decreases lecture preparation time and enables teachers to involve their students in more effective teaching processes. Therefore, regardless of the initial budgetary issues, if ICT is incorporated in classrooms, it will create students who will go on to become integral members of society.

Bio-notes

■ **Muhammad Nawaz** is a lecturer at Superior College Lahore. He was previously employed as senior lecturer within the Department of Computer Studies at Global College Lahore for two years. Due to his commitment to innovative teaching strategies, he got the chance to work in a collaborative environment by offering online classes to highly motivated students. His academic research interests & publications focus on integrated teaching of IT. He presented papers at the ADVED'18 Turkey & INTESS'19 Dubai conferences which provided an opportunity for educators & students to discuss & exchange ideas on issues, trends, & developments in IT.

Avoiding the Pheidippides Effect: How Theories Contribute to Endurance Trail Practice



Nadia Portelli

Ultra trail racing is an extreme endurance sport where athletes run incredible distances in harsh environments. It is a painful journey of muscle and mental fatigue, myalgia, injuries, sleep deprivation, gastrointestinal distress and altitude problems.

Endurance running can be described as the struggle to continue against a mounting desire to stop. Theories give different perspectives on endurance practice. Some constructs posit the body as a machine where the heart limits endurance while others believe that the brain is central and acts as a safety mechanism when our limits are approached, before catastrophe strikes. Other theories have proved that fatigue is a subjective emotion and it is the perception of effort and response inhibition which are crucial to endurance. This paper looks into the main theories related to endurance practice and tries to identify which construct best explains endurance success in ultra trail running.

Bio-note

Nadia Portelli is Senior Lecturer at the University of Malta Junior College. She has been teaching Physics for the past 28 years. During the past years she has participated in various Erasmus+ projects, including InterAct for Inclusion and Tolerance which saw the participation of various European countries. Portelli started her running career 29 years ago and has participated in road races locally and abroad. These past years, she has competed successfully, in some of the most prestigious mountain ultra trails. This year she will be participating in Ultra Trail du Mont Blanc (UTMB), a 171km race with an elevation gain of 10000m, around the Mont Blanc massif during the Ultra Trail World Summit.

Seamus Heaney as Unruly Practitioner of the Sonnet



Janice Sant Balzan

In 'The Law of Genre' Jacques Derrida argues that the notion of genre is made possible through an a priori counter-law of 'impurity'. Rather than focusing on the properties that are fundamental to the genre, Derrida turns his attention to instances that defy the rules that govern a genre. In his view such instances of impurity serve to strengthen rather than weaken the law of genre. In a similar vein, Maurice Blanchot argues that 'it is the exception alone that reveals to us this "law" from which it also constitutes the unusual and necessary deviation. It seems that we could never recognise the rule except by the exception that abolishes it'. The practitioner's deviation from the norm is thus essential not only for the process of theorisation of a genre, but also for its continued existence. Focusing on one of the most long-standing genres within the literary tradition, this paper explores the vital tension between theory and practice in the sonnet genre by analysing a number of Seamus Heaney's unruly sonnets.

Bio-note

Dr Janice Sant Balzan obtained her Ph.D. at the Centre for Critical and Cultural Theory at Cardiff University in 2017. She is a lecturer of English at the Junior College. Her recent publications include 'Uncanny Reversals: Paul Celan's Counterpoetics' (April 2017), published in the peer-reviewed journal *CounterText*. Her main areas of interest are contemporary poetry and fiction, theories of poetry and the emerging field of slow aesthetics in the humanities.

Assuring High Quality Teaching in Higher Education: a Challenge and a Possibility



Juanita Sapiano

The relationship between the lecturer and the student in a Higher Education classroom is a complex one. The roles expected from the main stakeholders in the teaching-learning process at this level are equally intricate. Hence, it is not surprising that a number of factors could be affecting the quality of teaching taking place.

While keeping in mind that the assessment of the quality of teaching is not an easy task, the paper aims to outline the factors which could be impinging on the quality of teaching in Higher Education, raise awareness of, and make suggestions on how the quality of teaching at this level could be enhanced by encouraging practices that can be used in the classroom. The final aim is to raise awareness on how students could be assured that the quality of teaching at this level is high.

The main stakeholders considered are students and lecturers since they are the protagonists of the teaching-learning environment in the classroom. As a reflective practitioner continuously seeking answers to the many questions which arise whilst lecturing, my observations and suggestions are based on classroom practices put into action, literature, as well as my experience as an educator.

Bio-note

Juanita Sapiano graduated B.A.(Gen) in English and Psychology at the University of Malta and M.A (Applied Linguistics and TESOL) at the University of Leicester. She is currently a Senior Lecturer in the English Department at the University of Malta Junior College and a member on the Junior College Quality Assurance board. Her main area of interest is the teaching and learning of English as a Second Language (L2). Ms Sapiano has been teaching English for 22 years. Between 2011 and 2014 she also held the role of Deputy Head in charge of curriculum in a Church Secondary School. She has also held seminars and lectures for teachers on the teaching of English as a L2. Recently, she has been conducting research on the value and effectiveness of feedback in the classroom.

Social Capital, Health and Place: The Two Sides of the Same Coin



Bernadine Satariano

Research on social capital, health and place has increasingly expanded, however relatively little research has explored how social capital can impact health in both positive as well as negative manners within a place. There is a general understanding that features of social cohesion, bonding, reciprocity ties and trust operating within a neighbourhood environment all help to increase positive health and wellbeing. Yet, very few studies analyse how the theory of social capital in practice, has its risks and can be damaging for the health and wellbeing of individuals. Through qualitative in-depth interviews, this study explores how for some groups of individuals, social capital is truly beneficial for individuals' health and wellbeing and argues that it may not always be the case that a deprived neighbourhood suffers from low social cohesion. However, this study also highlights how these same features of social capital can exert negative effects through features of social exclusion, reporting, jealousy and anti-social behaviour.

Bio-note

Dr Bernadine Satariano B.A. (Hons.) (Melit.), P.G.C.E. (Melit.), M.A. (Melit.), Ph.D. (Dunelm) and Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society (F.R.G.S.) is a Lecturer in Geography. Her main area of interest explores how important place is for human health. Her research focuses on socio-geographical processes related to inequalities in health and wellbeing within a Maltese context. She presented some of her research studies at the University of Portsmouth, Durham University, Paris Nanterre University, University of San Francisco, University of Angers and Cardiff University.

Rail, Rivers, Road or Air: Which Infrastructure Promotes Growth in China?



Jack Strauss

The relationship between growth in transportation and economic output across Chinese provinces from 2005-2014 will be examined in this paper. Panel GMM methods evaluate the impact of changes in air, conventional rail, HSR, roads, and waterways turnover volume on provincial output growth. GMM estimates demonstrate that rail and roads significantly affect economic growth; rail's impact is particularly significant and robust across econometric specifications as well as different regions in China and its estimates are economically large for agriculture and manufacturing output. Out-of-sample GMM forecasts show that road and rail substantially reduce forecast error of provincial GDP growth. In contrast, air, HSR and water usage do not contribute to economic growth. Impulse response and variance decompositions indicate that rail and roads considerably affect GDP growth across China, and there is bi-causality between transportation and economic growth. Cost-benefit analysis highlights that the benefit of roads, and particularly rail, outweigh the costs of infrastructure spending.

Bio-note

Dr Jack Strauss has extensive forecasting experience including over four dozen publications using advanced statistical methods in the top journals in Finance, Econometrics and Economics. These include the *Journal of Finance*, *Review of Financial Studies*, *Review of Finance*, *Journal of Portfolio Management*, *Journal of Applied Econometrics*, *Journal of Forecasting*, *International Journal of Forecasting*, *Econometric Reviews*, *Review of International Economics*, *Journal of International Money and Finance*, *Journal of Urban Economics*, *Journal of Macroeconomics* and *Economic Letters*. He has consulted for the Central Bank of Azerbaijan, Egypt, Indonesia and Ukraine.

Praxis in the Digital Age: What Would Paulo Freire think of e-learning?



Joseph Vancell

The increased use of e-learning is often considered as challenging and damaging by adult educators and educators committed to critical pedagogy. Their greatest inspiration is often Paulo Freire who developed his philosophy of education in the pre-digital era. Freire, however, did urge educators to use technology in their projects but stated that they must be critically aware of its political implications. The use of technology in education is not a politically neutral process and can work in favour, or against, the domestication of learners. Online projects that adopt 'banking' approaches of knowledge delivery are not conducive to liberatory practices. This paper will first look at Freire's philosophy, including his conceptualization of praxis, and its relevance to networked internet-enabled learning. The author will then attempt to construct a critical pedagogy of e-learning by mediating between Freire's concepts and the Community of Inquiry model.

Bio-note

Dr Joseph Vancell is currently a resident Senior Research Fellow at the School of Education and Social Sciences of the Faculty of Arts, Cultures and Education at the University of Hull, United Kingdom. There, through a Reach High Post-Doctoral scholarship, he is investigating the potential of e-learning programmes for workers in Malta.

From Democratic Theory to Dictatorial Practice



Mary Grace Vella

In theory, democracy is the “rule of the people by the people and for the people” (Abraham Lincoln, 1863). In practice, “democracy substitutes election by the incompetent many for appointment by the corrupt few” (George Bernard Shaw, 1903). This paper addresses the gap between democratic theory and practice by examining the processes through which the theoretical ideals of active citizenship in a democracy are despoiled to dictatorial practices, typified by regimes of democratic dictatorship arising from the authoritarian rule of representative forms of democracy, to regimes of dictatorial democracy arising from the totalitarian rule of global neo-liberal capitalism. Despite the hegemonic power of these kleptocratic and corporatocratic regimes on both a local and global level, the praxis of radical democracy through “playful political practice that is not bound by rigid structures” (Epstein 1996: 128) offers a glimpse of hope for democratising democracy by closing the gap between theory and practice.

Bio-note

Dr Mary Grace Vella, a probation and social inclusion officer by profession, is Senior Lecturer of Systems of Knowledge at the University of Malta Junior College and a Visiting Lecturer at the Faculty of Arts and Faculty for Social Well-being at the University of Malta. She has a long history of activism in civil society organizations dealing with humanitarian, environmental and animal rights issues and is a member of the National Observatory for Living with Dignity within the Malta Foundation for the Well-being of Society.

How Effective is Our Feedback? Feeding Forward and Self-Regulation



Stephanie Xerri Agius

This paper presents research on feedback theories and practices, showcasing both traditional and innovative methodologies. New directions in giving and receiving feedback are analysed, with an emphasis on multimodal methods that target diverse learning styles. The research recommends techniques that maximize the benefits and attributes of feedback, which goes beyond looking back at students' work, but feeds forward to their future production. Other foci involve honing interactivity and dialogue-building between educators and students, enhancing student autonomy, and promoting student ownership of feedback, leading up to self-regulation. Overall, this paper aims to prioritise feedback practices among stakeholders working within different disciplines, whilst recommending research-driven strategies that can be implemented at different stages, from secondary school to post-graduate level of education.

Bio-note

Dr Stephanie Xerri Agius teaches English at the University of Malta Junior College. She holds postgraduate degrees in English and Applied Linguistics, as well as a Ph.D. in Education from the University of Leicester. She has been teaching English language and literature for over 15 years. Stephanie has delivered talks, workshops, and seminars, both locally and abroad. Her research interests and publications include and are related to feedback practices, learner engagement, teaching literature, and material creation.

Generalisation – Graphs and Colourings



Christina Zarb

The interaction between practice and theory in mathematics is a central theme. Many mathematical structures and theories result from the formalisation of a real problem. Graph Theory is rich in such examples. The graph structure itself was formalised by Leonard Euler in the quest to solve the problem of the Bridges of Königsberg. Once a structure is formalised and results are proven, the mathematician seeks to generalise. This may be considered as one of the main praxis in mathematics. The idea of generalisation will be illustrated through graph colouring. This concept also results from a classic problem; in which it is well known by topographers that four colours suffice to colour any map in such a way so that no countries sharing a border receive the same colour. The proof of this theorem eluded mathematicians for centuries and was proven in 1976. Generalisation of graphs to hypergraphs and variations on the colouring theme will be discussed, together with an analysis of applications in other disciplines.

Bio-note

Dr Christina Zarb is a Mathematics lecturer at the Junior College, University of Malta, where she has been teaching for seven years. She previously taught in other Higher Education Institutions including MCAST and St. Martins Institute. She is also a casual lecturer at the University of Malta. Christina has a Bachelor's degree in Mathematics and Computer Science, as well as a Master's degree and Ph.D. in Mathematics, all conferred by the University of Malta. Her area of specialisation is Graph Theory and Combinatorics. She has taught mathematics at various levels, starting from secondary school up to post-graduate level and is very interested in the transition process between the different levels of education, particularly in mathematics.

Conference Participants

Poster Presentation



Analysis of the Discrimination Index of Final Biology Examinations in Malta



■ Marthese Azzopardi/Carmel Azzopardi

Item analysis is a range of statistics that helps to determine the effectiveness of individual items in an examination. It also plays an important role in contributing to the fairness of the examination as it helps to identify content areas that may be problematic for students. The validity and reliability of an examination ultimately depend on the characteristics of the items being analysed. Item analysis permits a high reliability and validity to be built into a test in advance. Discrimination index is a part of item analysis that measures the difference in levels of item difficulty between groups of students with different levels of knowledge. A highly discriminating item indicates that students who obtained high test scores got the item correct, whereas those who obtained low test scores got the item incorrect. The objective of our study is to calculate the discrimination indices of Advanced Level Biology final examinations at a public post-secondary institution in Malta. We were motivated to analyse the discrimination index to allow paper setters to utilise, substitute or revise items when designing future examinations.

Bio-notes

Dr Marthese Azzopardi is Senior Lecturer with the Department of Biology at the University of Malta, Junior College. In 1988 she graduated B.Ed. (Hons.) in Biology and Chemistry, M.Sc. in 1996, Diploma in Education (Administration & Management) in 2001 and obtained her doctorate in 2009 from the University of Malta. She has been teaching Biology for the past 30 years. She has designed and created slide presentations and has also published and presented findings from her research at a number of conferences over the past years; the latest one being '*The Statistical Analysis and Evaluation of Final Advanced Level Biology Advanced Level topics.*'

Carmel Azzopardi is Senior Lecturer at the Department of Physics at the University of Malta, Junior College. He was awarded a B.Ed. (Hons.) in Physics and Maths in 1991, a Diploma in IT in 2000 and M.IT in 2008. He has been teaching physics since 1991 at all levels in various schools and is the author of '*Mathematical Requirements for Advanced and Intermediate Level Physics*'. He presented a number of papers including '*The impact of teaching style and FCI gain on the performance in mechanics test*' and '*Diagnosis of misconceptions about Force and Motion held by first-year post-secondary students.*'

Multi-Disciplinary Research in Psychiatry: The Ethics of Capacity



**Luana Mifsud Buhagiar/Kristina Vella/Anton Grech
Anthony Serracino Inglott/Godfrey LaFerla**

Ethics approval was granted to recruit outpatients in an antidepressant pharmacogenetics study, in liaison with multiple hospital departments. The Malta Mental Health Act requires that capacity is certified by an independent specialist (IS). Is this safeguarding vulnerable patients or creating orphan populations by amplifying distress? Patients (40) were briefed by their clinician; 36 patients agreed to meet an IS and 24 attended. The IS shadowed procedure in which all subjects gave informed consent. Unease was evident in patients, cognisant that their capacity required third-party verification. In 11 patients (46%), genotyping identified irregular metabolism that may affect therapy outcomes. Subjecting prospective participants to assessments that can trigger institutionalisation fear, may hinder reliable data collection and delay translational research. Healthcare professionals may be trained to evaluate decision-making impairment as an ongoing appraisal of their patients' capacity.

Bio-notes

Luana Mifsud Buhagiar, a pharmacist by profession, is reading for a PhD at the University of Malta, by research on analytical, clinical and regulatory implications of pharmacogenetics in psychiatry.

Kristina Vella is Senior Pharmacist within the Advanced Scientific Initiatives Directorate at the Malta Medicines Authority, which aims to spearhead innovative research, with multi-disciplinary collaborations in Malta and beyond.

Anton Grech, Chairman of the Department of Psychiatry at Mater Dei Hospital, drives the clinical aspect of research in mental disorders.

Professor Anthony Serracino Inglott is Professor within the Department of Pharmacy.

Professor Godfrey LaFerla is Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery, at the University of Malta. His focus is on empowering the integration of academic, regulatory and analytical perspectives in research through the supervision of the study's design and implementation.

Dwarna: A Blockchain Solution for Dynamic Consent in Biobanking



Nicholas Mamo/Maria Desira/Gillian M Martin/Jean-Paul Ebejer

In the context of biobanking, dynamic consent gives individuals access to information and the control to determine how and where their biospecimens and data should be used in genomic research. *Dwarna* is a web portal that acts as a hub for the Malta Biobank, connecting biobankers, researchers, research partners and members of the general public. The portal stores research partners' consent in a blockchain to create an immutable audit trail of research partners' consent. *Dwarna's* structure also presents a solution to the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)'s right to erasure - a right that is seemingly incompatible with the blockchain model. *Dwarna's* transparent structure increases trustworthiness in the biobanking process by giving research partners more control over which research studies they participate in, by facilitating the withdrawal of consent and by making it possible to request that the biospecimen and associated data are destroyed.

Bio-notes

Nicholas Mamo graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Artificial Intelligence from the University of Malta, where he is currently also reading for a Master of Science in Artificial Intelligence. He is currently working as a Research Support Officer at the Centre for Molecular Medicine and Biobanking.

Maria Desira is a sociology graduate who is currently reading for a Master of Arts in Sociology at the University of Malta. She is concurrently working as a Research Support Officer at the Centre for Molecular Medicine and Biobanking.

Dr Gillian M Martin is a senior lecturer in the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Arts, and her key areas of academic interest are Sociology of Health and Illness, and Sociology of the Body. She has a doctorate in Medical Sociology from the University of Manchester.

Dr Jean-Paul Ebejer is a lecturer at the Centre for Molecular Medicine and Biobanking at the University of Malta. He holds an M.Sc. degree in Bioinformatics and Theoretical Systems Biology from Imperial College (London) and a D.Phil. in Structural Bioinformatics and Computer-Aided Drug Design from the University of Oxford. His research focuses on Bioinformatics, Machine Learning, Data Science, Big Data and Computational Drug Design.

Redefine the Role of Project Leader for Achieving a Better Project Result



János Varga/Ágnes Csiszárík-Kocsir

1970 was a very important milestone for globalisation. International companies around the world spread rapidly and made their global operations more complex. Companies have rightly demanded a management area that is able to manage complex tasks more efficiently. Project management has appeared in the operation of organisations that could not have been more effective in people-to-people collaboration, given that projects typically involve people (project teams and project managers). An effective project manager has become imperative for a project's success, because without appropriate project management practice, a team's work cannot be effectively coordinated. So what kind of person should an effective project manager be? What should a good project manager know today? These questions are covered by this study which attempts to summarise the criteria that defines a good project manager.

Bio-notes

Dr János Varga is Assistant Professor of Economics at the Óbuda University and Deputy Head of the Institute of Economics and Social Sciences and holds a doctorate in Management and Business Administration. He has lectured on the different fields of management since 2010. His research focused on the competitiveness of economic participants, competitiveness of firms and nations, change management as well as quality of leadership. He is a visiting professor in European universities and participates in national and international scientific organisations.

Dr Ágnes Csiszárík-Kocsir is Associate Professor of Finances at the Óbuda University, and Head of the Institute of Economics and Social Sciences. She was awarded a doctorate in Management and Business Administration which she continued to research as a postdoctoral scholar. Her research fields are SME financing, project management practice and financial literacy. She is a visiting professor in Romania and, as from this year, also Poland. She has more than 250 national and international publications, articles as well as conference proceedings. Dr Csiszárík-Kocsir has helped in organizing more than 30 conferences, and is a member of the editorial boards in 5 national and international journals.

Own Capital to Credit - the Financial Practice of the SME Project in Hungary



■ **Ágnes Csiszárík-Kocsir/János Varga**

The project as action is fundamental in the 21st century. Without a project, no company can be imagined. Growth is the fundamental interest of every organization and the most obvious way to do this is to start successful projects that also end successfully. Projects allow for corporate value growth and qualitative progress in time. Larger companies are at the forefront of project management, following the best practices that can be copied by the SME sector. Many tools and literature are available for project management, but in many cases success does not depend solely on methodology. In order for a project to be truly successful, attention should always be paid to the evolution of the three baselines from initiation to closure. However, the cost of these baselines, particularly how and to what extent projects can be financed is of paramount importance. The aim of the study is to present the financing practices of the Hungarian SME project based on the results of research, highlighting the most favoured sources - as well as the rejected ones - based on the opinions of companies that participated in the study.

Bio-notes

Dr János Varga is Assistant Professor of Economics at the Óbuda University and Deputy Head of the Institute of Economics and Social Sciences and holds a doctorate in Management and Business Administration. He has lectured on the different fields of management since 2010. His research focused on the competitiveness of economic participants, competitiveness of firms and nations, change management as well as quality of leadership. He is a visiting professor in European universities and participates in national and international scientific organisations.

Dr Ágnes Csiszárík-Kocsir is Associate Professor of Finances at the Óbuda University, and Head of the Institute of Economics and Social Sciences. She was awarded a doctorate in Management and Business Administration which she continued to research as a postdoctoral scholar. Her research fields are SME financing, project management practice and financial literacy. She is a visiting professor in Romania and, as from this year, also Poland. She has more than 250 national and international publications, articles as well as conference proceedings. Dr Csiszárík-Kocsir has helped in organizing more than 30 conferences, and is a member of the editorial boards in 5 national and international journals.

Energy Acquisition and Project Finance - Priorities in the Past and Now



Ágnes Csiszárík-Kocsir/Ferenc Molnár

Project financing is a relatively new, yet special branch of financial instruments. It is a special financial tool for projects that can finance large-scale, strategic investments. High leverage is a preferred form of financing, as it can also be a source of expensive, cost-effective projects. Project investment is considered to be a priority area for energy investment due to its strategic importance, its secure return and its stable price. The aim of the study is to examine the development of project financing globally as well as within the EMEA region, with particular emphasis on energy investments, including recent trends.

Bio-notes

Dr Ágnes Csiszárík-Kocsir is Associate Professor of Finances at the Óbuda University, and Head of the Institute of Economics and Social Sciences. She was awarded a doctorate in Management and Business Administration which she continued to research as a postdoctoral scholar. Her research fields are SME financing, project management practice and financial literacy. She is a visiting professor in Romania and, as from this year, also Poland. She has more than 250 national and international publications, articles as well as conference proceedings. Dr Csiszárík-Kocsir has helped in organizing more than 30 conferences, and is a member of the editorial boards in 5 national and international journals.

Ferenc Molnár has worked as a Renewable Energy Production Manager at MVM Group (Hungarian Power Company) for the past 32 years and is responsible for the preparation and implementation of power plant investments. He graduated as electrical engineer and an economist and has commenced his Ph.D. studies at Óbuda Universities Doctoral School for Safety and Security Sciences. He was the project manager of Paks Nuclear Power Plant working on time extension and currently works as project manager of the two biggest Hungarian photovoltaic power plants. His main research interest is the technical and economical aspect of carbon free energy sources.



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