

EDUCATION 2000

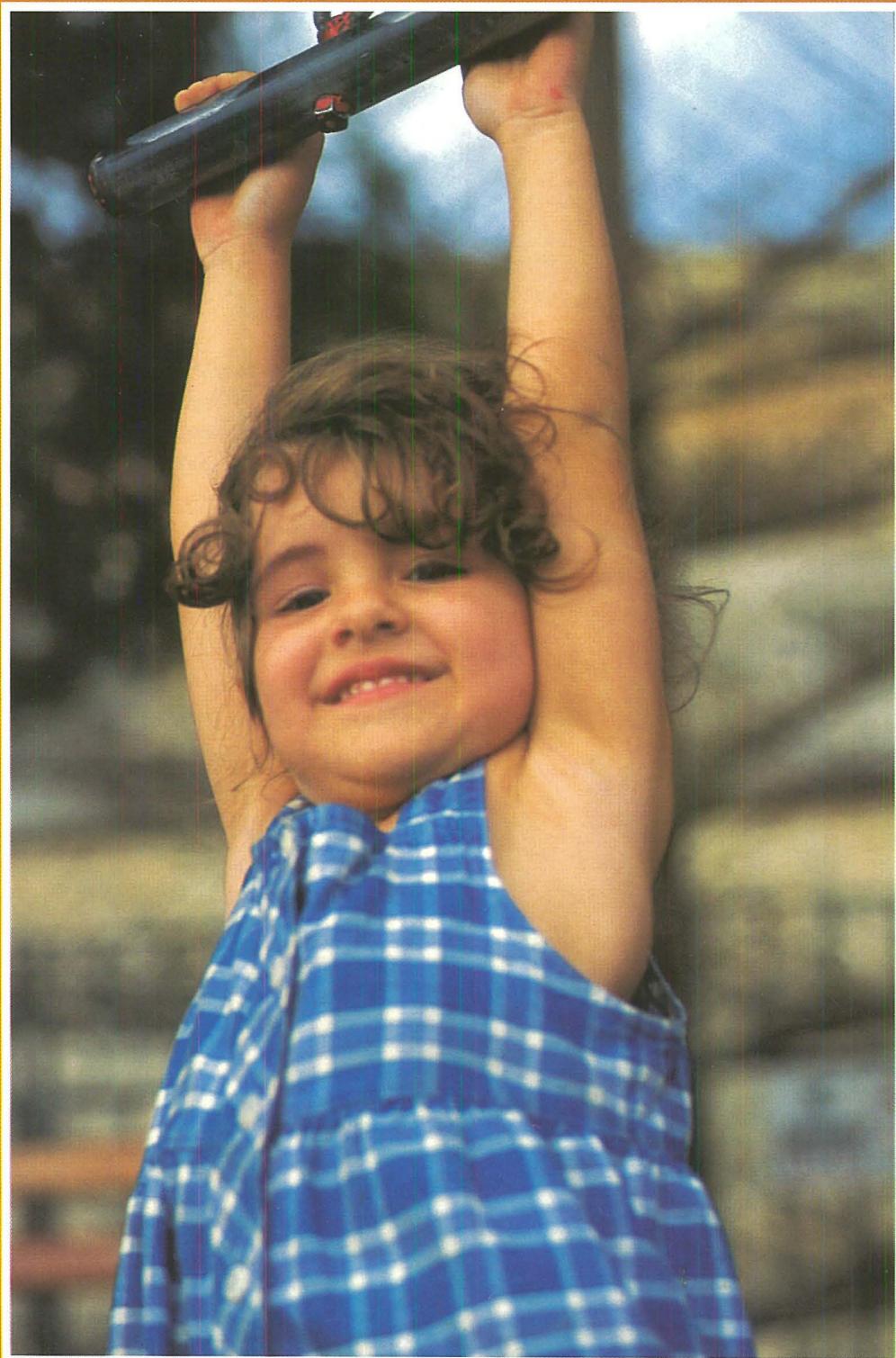
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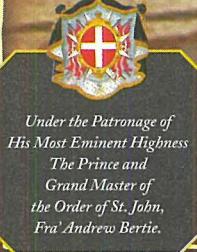


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by Paul Portelli, fourth year
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EDITORIAL

Charles Mifsud

The New National Minimum Curriculum



The start of the year 2000 has seen the publication of two very important documents for the development of education in Malta. The first document is the much-awaited

new National Minimum Curriculum for the 3 to 16 year age-group. This document is the fruit of many years of hard work and consultation. Colleagues from the Education Division and the Faculty of Education under the very able chairpersonship of **Ms Mary Vella**, Director for Curriculum, have been the main architects of this document. It lays the basis for some very important developments in the field of education in Malta. This work will have an impact on how we plan, design and implement our educational strategies for many years to come. Now the hard work of meeting the challenges laid out in the new NMC starts. This is a very important phase which will require the mobilisation of all the available expertise and resources.

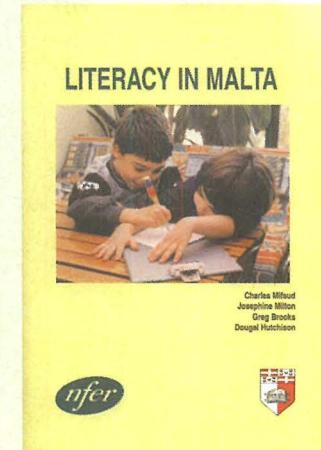
Areas like Quality Education, Inclusive Education, Diversity, Formative Assessment, the Development of Bilingualism, Parent Education, etc have been ear-marked for special consideration and action.



National Minimum Curriculum
Ministry of Education - Malta

The National Literacy Survey

Another very important development in the field of Education in Malta is the publication of the results of the 1999 National Literacy Survey of the Attainment of Year 2 Pupils. This document presents some very important basic scientific data in the very important area of the development of literacy. It represents many years of hard work and provides the basis for future research and development in this and other related areas in education. The publication of this document has given rise to extensive debate about standards in education and the many variables that are at play. Many areas need further investigation. Both the Education Division and the Faculty of Education, in conjunction with both state and private schools, are collaborating on remedial and intervention programmes, the further professional development of teachers and resource and material production. We are delighted that such an important project continues to receive the full support of many bodies like the Education Division, the Faculty of Education, the Libraries and Archives Department, the Malta Union of Teachers, the two major political parties, the Church, the media, both state and private schools, NGO's, Local Councils, etc.



New Chief Executive

We are very pleased to note that our colleague, **Mr Paul A. Attard**, who is a member of the Editorial Board of *Education 2000*, has been appointed Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Education and National Culture. While extending to his predecessor Mr Fredrick Fearne, our heartfelt gratitude for his contribution to educational development in Malta, we wish Mr Attard many years of intensive work in this field. Paul has many talents which will help him in his new and very demanding post as the chief executive of the largest Ministry in Malta. He has come through the echelons and has experience in almost every sector of the Maltese educational system. We are sure that his personal charm, experience with the media and capacity to relate very well with individuals and to prevail against all odds will prove to be very useful in the coming years.

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Visiting Historical Sites with School Children

Yosanne Vella

Teaching history outside the classroom has long been recognised as an important part of teaching history. During a conference on Maltese history teaching held in 1971 M.A. Agius explained how "Historical excursions can make Maltese History teaching more appealing to the students." (Williams and Vella Bonavita, 1974).

“So if not worksheets, what are children to do on site? There are several alternatives, in particular art and craft, and role-play”



YOSANNE VELLA B.Educ (Hons), M.A. (Lond), M.Phil (Lond), was a history teacher for a number of years in Malta and abroad. She is presently

an assistant lecturer in the Faculty of Education, University of Malta

But what happens on those occasions when students are taken out to learn about history by visiting actual historical sites and museums? Taking children out of school is hard work for teachers, the practical considerations can be overwhelming, there are privates to be booked, permission from heads and parents to be obtained and arrangements with museum staff to be made. Unfortunately, for a long time actually getting to the place, having a look around and bringing everybody safely back to school was all that occurred. Teachers sometimes made the effort to read a bit about the site beforehand and then impart this knowledge to the students, on a few occasions a tourist guide, who might happen to be around offered some information. Back at school, students were made to write an essay on their day or afternoon out of school on a history visit.

People involved in history teaching have long been aware that this is far from the best scenario for learning history outside the classroom. Having gone through so much trouble to organise the whole excursion it is such a pity for children to get so little out of it. Thus the famous, or should I say notorious, worksheet made its appearance! Teachers are encouraged to prepare work in the form of a worksheet for children to do on site. In many ways this is a step in the right direction. Now, rather than having thirty kids walking aimlessly about the place they have a list of questions to answer as they go round. Abroad various worksheets are available for sale, usually produced by the people in charge of the historical sites. In Malta, very often it is the teacher who must take the initiative herself and produce the sheets for her students. There have been attempts in the past, to create worksheets, sometimes called work directives, notably the set of Work Directives on various sites written by Michael Sant in the 1980s and lately the Maltese History Teachers' Association has been sporadically publishing ready prepared worksheets, in the form of booklets, on various museums and historical sites.

Worksheets are a useful tool for teachers to use with their students but from my experience I find that often the worksheets available tend to make the mistake of asking too many detailed questions which take a long

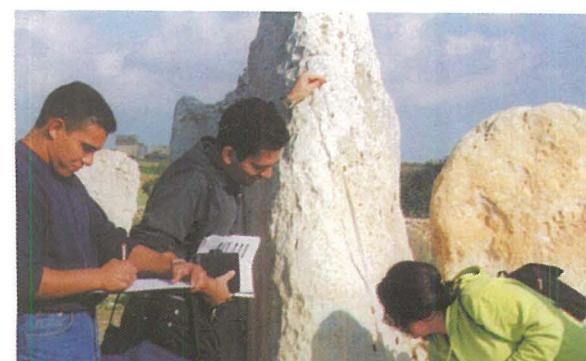


time to fill in. They also often require students to have a lot of historical background knowledge with the result that if the student does not know the information he or she is stuck. All this has the defeating purpose of making students frustrated and bored and the initial student enthusiasm and motivation for the history visit is lost. So if not worksheets, what are children to do on site? There are several alternatives, in particular activities which involve arts and crafts, and role-play.

Craftwork on site can include model building, artifact making and painting. These activities promote teamwork where children can exchange ideas, rather than listening in silence whilst solemnly being shown around by an adult. Of course, whenever we take students on site it is absolutely essential that activities are prepared by the teacher beforehand.

History teachers might be afraid that a lot of energy would be directed towards the craft rather than towards learning history. However, when building a model children have to look very carefully before reproducing the building. They have to notice what is missing and why, observe the inside and take note of features, very often asking very relevant historical questions without being fully aware of this. Students are learning 'how to look' while fostering creativity, autonomy and a critical sense. Finally students can compare their own

continued on page 5







The end result was very encouraging. After drawing diagrams of Mnajdra from above and from the sides we produced two very different models of Mnajdra.

work alongside the original stimulus "This way the pupils who have produced them (the models) can reflect on the connections they have made and other pupils, who have not produced the work, can see if they can identify links and associations." (Stephens, 1994)

Our approach to history teaching should not be to encourage children to learn factual information about the past but rather help them to use their imagination to reconstruct historical accounts. This can be done through role-play where the aim is to "enable pupils themselves to gain a better understanding of the past by creating an environment in which they take on the persona of individuals from the past." (Fairclough, 1994) A historical site provides the perfect setting for students to empathise with people from the past.



So armed with this information I set off with a group of 20 B.Ed and PGCE history student teachers to Mnajdra and Hagar Qim to prepare activities and tasks for school children which besides being educational would also be enjoyable and practical. I prepared the tasks, while my BEd and PGCE students pretended

to be school children, at the same time being adults they were also on the look out for teacher concerns and considerations.



We immediately decided that groupwork would be best, therefore we divided ourselves into four groups and each group did a different activity. These consisted of model building, role-play, artwork, and creating a worksheet with a difference.

Encouraging end result

The end result was very encouraging. After drawing diagrams of Mnajdra from above and from the sides we produced two very different models of Mnajdra. Setting up this activity was not such a complicated matter as one might imagine. I just brought along two wooden boards, carpenter's glue and stones (we, of course did not touch any stones from Mnajdra itself!) Another group used watercolour and crayons to draw various different parts of the ancient ruin, some quite faithful reproductions others quite surreal. For the role play we sat quietly on the ground and tried to imagine being bronze age people arriving on the island and finding these deserted Neolithic temples and trying to figure out what to do with them, who might have built them and for what purpose. Finally we also created a worksheet. This consisted of a few questions which can be answered by going round Hagar Qim like for example finding temple ruins abandoned some metres away from the temple, measuring pillar and table altars and taking photos of the central niche, of the port-hole slabs etc. In a real life situation back in the classroom these pictures can then be developed and used to discuss the purpose and function of these artifacts.

After going through this experience we all agreed that such activities have a great educational potential and can easily be adapted for any historical site. With minimum preparation of resources and without any vast amount of historical knowledge school children can gain first hand experience in interpreting the historical evidence they encounter.

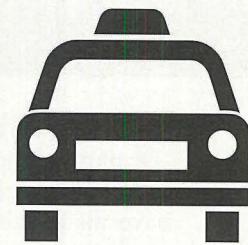
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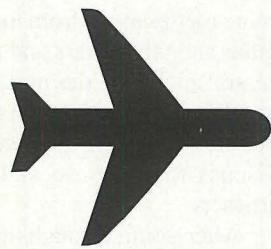




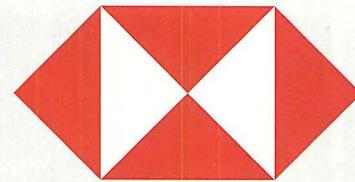
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Teaching for Democracy

Implications for Curriculum Development

Philip E. Said



For students, education for citizenship embraces both responsibilities and rights in the present and preparation for citizenship in adult life

The definition and development of citizenship education has been problematic for a number of reasons which may be summarized as follows:

- (a) the term 'citizenship' has not been in common use in schools;
- (b) citizenship has been confused with traditional lessons in civics;
- (c) education for citizenship is an area of particular political sensitivity;
- (d) absence of agreement about public virtues and the common good gives rise to various disputes about citizenship;
- (e) the curriculum does not define the term with clarity - only a "circular characterization" of the subject matter is evident.

Reasons like these render citizenship an essentially contested area of education. They often make teachers feel uncertain about the nature and aims of education for citizenship.

Understanding the nature of social issues and having a reasonable frame of mind about them are often attained when seen within a conceptual framework or a sociological model. The same may be said about the difficulty with the term citizenship and the ensuing citizenship education.

The model proposed by T.H. Marshall may help the way towards convergence in our understanding of citizenship and citizenship education. Marshall posits the concept of citizenship in the paradigm of 'social rights' which he defines as "the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and scrutiny to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society." (Mishra, 1991).

Marshall's conceptualization of citizenship involves three elements: civil, political and social. The social element implies (a) the capacity of citizenship in modern welfare societies to generate a direct sense of community membership based on loyalty to a civilization which is a common possession; (b) the extension of social security and the provision of services (healthcare, education, housing, employment, welfare benefits) as a means of conferring equality of status as citizens. The extension of security and provisions of services safeguard the capacity to participate more fully in society and to exercise more effectively civil and political rights.

Social citizenship, according to Marshall, is the key source of social integration. It strengthens the idea of 'social entitlements' to the country's goods and services. This is

safeguarded by the State when it provides the ground for all citizens to have equal opportunities to participate in citizenship.

Marshall's model of citizenship takes a social democratic stance based on the tripartite system of the welfare state, welfare society and citizen social entitlement.

Implications of Marshall's model

Marshall's theoretical framework drives home implications for citizenship education which are worth considering. First of all, it has provided a working description of citizenship which can elucidate the nature and objectives of citizenship education. Citizenship is not only about formal rights and duties but also about everyday participation in our society. It is crucially concerned with the attitudes, moral codes and values that inform behaviour. Citizenship education is an essential element in the preparation of young people for "the opportunities and responsibilities of adult life." (British Education Reform Act, 1988)

In December 1988, the House of Commons established a Commission on Citizenship which concerned itself with the meaning of citizenship, impediments to citizenship and ways of encouraging citizenship. Among its findings published in *ENCOURAGING CITIZENSHIP*, HMSO, 1990, one reads:

"The challenge to our society is to create conditions where all who wish can become involved, can understand and participate, can influence, persuade, campaign and whistleblow and, in the making of decisions, can work together for the mutual good."

The National Curriculum Council in England, in Curriculum Guidance 8: *EDUCATION FOR CITIZENSHIP* states that "Education for citizenship embraces both responsibilities and rights in the present and preparation for citizenship in adult life. It helps pupils by supporting them as they develop from dependent children into independent young people ... in a world undergoing rapid change."

The National Minimum Curriculum 2000 for pre-primary, primary and secondary education in Malta devotes a whole section on citizenship education in its second declared objective: *The Development of Citizens and the Democratic Environment* (Objective 2, pg.48). The proposal states that through their curricular experiences students are to acquire knowledge about the concept of democracy and the process of parliamentary democracy, develop the skills



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“**Experience of communities can begin with the immediate family and broadened to include the local and national community and, finally, a global dimension**”

The school has to provide contexts for the acquisition and development of knowledge, skills and attitudes which form the basis of citizenship education.

to evaluate constructively the policies of their school and community and eventually to actively participate in them, and cherish an attitude of respect of the fundamental rights of others and cultural diversity around them. Knowledge of democratic processes and institutions, investigative and participatory skills, attitudes of respect of rights and acceptance of differences are the essential ingredients of citizenship education. Of its nature, then, education for citizenship provides the space to “develop knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for exploring, making informed decisions and exercising responsibilities and rights in a democratic society.” (NCC, Curriculum Guidance 8)

Therefore **what kind of knowledge** is required?

That which enables pupils to understand

- how communities are organised, including political, legal and financial systems,
- how decisions are made,
- how individuals operate within communities,
- how power is distributed and exercised
- how change can be brought about and conflicts settled.

For this knowledge to have any worth it must be acquired in a relevant context, that is, through the study of issues of immediate concern to the child. Experience of communities can begin with the immediate family and broadened to include the local and national community and, finally, a global dimension.

What kind of skills?

Those skills which enable a person to play a full and effective part in a democratic society, that is,

- skills of finding out, analysing and assessing evidence,
- skills of communication and debate, critical listening, presenting and defending a case and persuasion,
- problem solving, decision making and making things happen,
- personal and social skills in organizing, planning and working with others.

Then, attitudes and values which underline democratic processes and form a basis for co-operation are required. These include:



- respect for others and concern for fairness and individual human rights,
- a willingness to listen to others' views, to negotiate and compromise,
- an interest in community affairs
- a willingness to consider problems with mutual respect,
- a sense of responsibility and concern for honesty, truth and justice.

The school has to provide contexts for the acquisition and development of knowledge, skills and attitudes which form the basis of citizenship education. The school can make this happen through:

The ethos of the school

It is important to identify the messages which the hidden curriculum conveys.

There should be harmony between what we teach directly and the way the school is managed, the system of organisation it employs, and the way staff relate to each other and their pupils. A concern for ethos involves identifying the personal qualities we wish to develop and ensuring that we provide the experiences which are most likely to promote them.

Democratic participation in the classroom

Teachers need to consider their own teaching styles and their own classroom practices against a scenario of democratic education set by a Council of Europe declaration:

“Democracy is best learned in a democratic setting where participation is encouraged, where views can be expressed openly and discussed, where there is fairness and justice...Schools and teachers should attempt to be positive towards all their pupils and recognize that all of their achievements are important - whether they be academic, artistic, musical, sporting or practical.” (*Education for Democratic Citizenship*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 1997).

Such a democratic interaction between teacher and students provides an appropriate climate for effective learning about human rights and for the effective development of human rights attitudes.

The informal Curriculum

This provides further opportunities to exercise responsibility and to gain understanding of the community through, for example, a school council, team membership, residential visits, field work, organising clubs, theatre production, community involvement.

These opportunities gain to the individual:

“Education for citizenship can be achieved on two levels: (a) as a cross-curricular theme, (b) directly through the teaching / learning process of the Humanities”

INCLUSION acknowledges that special efforts are needed to ensure that everybody, irrespective of the diversity in abilities and opportunities, are guaranteed the right of equality as citizens who share common concerns for their national, European and global environments

- wider social contacts and interpersonal relations,
- ability to work in a team, to give and receive feedback and to relate to authority,
- increased flexibility of thought in a variety of situations,
- opportunities to see alternative solutions to problems,
- understanding of social structures,
- understanding the needs of others,
- new challenges for personal and social development.

Implications for the School Curriculum

Education for citizenship can be achieved on two levels: (a) as a cross-curricular theme, (b) directly through the teaching / learning process of the Humanities.

As a cross-curricular theme citizenship education enriches and gives coherence to the whole curriculum. But how are we to ensure citizenship education across the curriculum? We have to think carefully about management of this cross-curricular theme with the help of a process of MONITORING, EVALUATION and REVISION. This process has six attainment targets:

- 1) Identify what is to be taught
- 2) Identify how it is to be taught
- 3) Identify what is being done already
- 4) Identify what else needs to be done
- 5) Develop a co-ordinated policy
- 6) Implementation

This model of management can help teachers of the Humanities where components of citizenship education are dealt with explicitly by teachers and students. Teachers of History and Social Studies, for instance, can promote “a sense amongst citizens that they are members of an inter-generational community.” This implies instilling a strong sense of history, that is, “a strong sense of being members of an intergenerational community, stretching back indefinitely into the past, and stretching forward indefinitely into the future.” Through the teaching of History and Social Studies “citizens are encouraged to think of themselves as having a responsibility to protect a historical heritage, and to ensure that generations to come can also enjoy the benefits of the national patrimony.” (“Education for Democratic Citizenship” Conference - Council of Europe, Strasbourg, December 12, 1997).

Continuous evaluation of the school context

Citizenship is concerned with effective participation, communication and the exercise of rights couched in responsibility. This implies empowerment and access through informed attitudes and values, and training in skills. These must be developed through the

curriculum, through involvement in the life of the school and in the wider community. “The participation of citizens in their society is both a measure and a service of that society’s success” (Encouraging Citizenship, HMSO, 1990). School can evaluate this measure by continuously asking key questions like:

- How can a coherent whole curriculum view be developed in the school and extended into the community?
- How does a school create an ethos which best prepares its students for effective citizenship?
- How can the variety of experiences in education for citizenship be given coherence in the minds of teachers and pupils / students?
- How does a school maximise its links with the community?

At present Society is undergoing a historical shift from a “modern - industrial” era to a “post-modern / information” era. This shift requires a complete appreciation of our conception of the core competencies of citizenship and citizenship education. The conceptualisation of citizenship in a post-modern information society emphasises the skills and competencies for formal political participation and informal social networks. The aspect of social network implies that the traditional model of citizenship needs to be balanced by a range of new challenges facing today’s society - the challenges of (1) SOCIALIZATION where other agencies besides the family and the school have an influence on the socialisation process of children and young people, (2) MOTIVATION focusing on methods of motivating children and youth to get involved in the societal and political arena, (3) INCLUSION which acknowledges that special efforts are needed to ensure that everybody, irrespective of the diversity in abilities and opportunities, are guaranteed the right of equality as citizens who share common concerns for their national, European and global environments.

Society’s call for our response to these opportunities may have become more urgent in a new world order where time and space are shrinking through the challenges of globalisation and the new communication technologies.

Notes

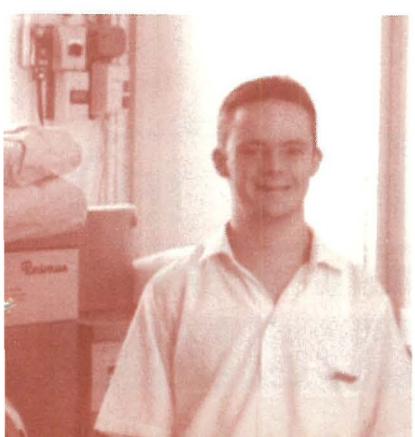
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LITERACY: a focus on the arts

Christopher Bezzina

More often than not when we use the term literacy we tend to think of reading, writing, grammar and spelling. Yet, we should not stop there. We need to expand the definition of what literacy means. Students read and interpret not just words on a page but also icons on a computer screen, images on TV, graphs and charts in newspapers and magazines. These different kinds of literacies need to be incorporated into classroom/school experiences.

66 A comprehensive, high-quality education that gives every student the arts literacy advantage by developing his/her skills in the four “Cs” – communication, culture, cognition and creativity 99



CHRISTOPHER BEZZINA,
Ph.D (Brunel), lectures in educational management at the University of Malta. He is the author of a number of scholarly articles published in international journals. He has also written a number of books about this subject. He is the president of MSEAM.

In this brief article I would like to focus on arts education and emphasise that by learning in and through the arts is essential to developing skills for our complex society. Hopefully it will encourage others to reflect on the matter and enter this debate.

Tomorrow's world will demand a quick mind. Focus. Discipline. Imagination. Grasp of the big picture. Attention to detail. Teamwork. How can we educate our children to thrive in such a world? Through the arts is one of the answers.

Tomorrow's workforce will need broad abilities which go beyond the technical. There will be a demand for people who are creative, analytical, disciplined and self-confident, people who can solve problems, communicate ideas, and be sensitive to the world around them. Hands-on participation in the arts is a proven way to help develop these abilities.

And what are young people learning when they learn the arts? Definitely they are using their minds in verbal and nonverbal ways. They communicate complex ideas in a variety of forms. They understand what someone else is trying to tell them in words, sounds or images. They imagine and explore new possibilities and work hard at making them happen. The arts also helps one to appreciate quality.

Making the case for arts literacy is only the means to a more important end, however. Providing a comprehensive, high-quality education that gives every student the arts literacy advantage by developing his/her skills in the four “Cs” – communication, culture, cognition and creativity – should be our aim.

This is not a goal that can be met through after-school programmes or even private lessons, valuable as these learning opportunities may be. Our schools must educate children to be fully literate, which in the 21st century will clearly include arts-derived knowledge. So, in the best of all possible worlds, every school would provide education in the arts in the same way that it provides education in reading and writing (and numeracy).

This is not to say that this is not happening

in our schools. I am sure that one does come across varied examples of the arts (Creative / Performing) taking place in the schools. Any developments that we may embark on should take into consideration such examples. However, I do believe that a national study should be first and foremost undertaken to assess the state of Arts Education in Malta, at the same time reflect the proposals of the National Curriculum in this regard and propose a framework and way forward for arts education.

Here it will suffice to mention that the Draft National Curriculum (March 1998) suggests that students ought to be engaged in arts learning for at least two lessons per week (i.e. 11/2 hours per week) of their time in school. This, unfortunately, goes down to one lesson per week in the upper forms – Form 3 to Form 5. There is no mention of what activities will take place at primary level. However, I'm confident that the final version of the National Curriculum will cater for this important dimension in a person's development.

This leads us to ask a series of questions which determine the eventual success or failure of any such programme. The following are but some of the questions that we may wish to address. Does our Education Division provide sufficient leadership for the arts programme? Do our school heads see the arts as a core school subject? Do we have strong arts teachers who continue to practice their art inside and outside the school? Are our community arts and cultural organisations actively present in the schools, including the use of school performing arts venues?

The following questions can be addressed at the school level:

- How much time each day and each week are children taught the arts?
- Are teachers trained in the arts?
- Do schools have curriculum and supplies for arts classes?
- Do other teachers work with arts specialists to plan joint lessons for students?
- Does the school have a policy for the Creative and Performing Arts as for other subjects?

For the first question, there is no one correct answer, but arts educators generally believe that if the arts are part of the core curriculum for pupils in the primary years, then pupils ought to be engaged in arts learning for at least 15% of their time in school. If you can answer yes to the remaining questions than you are on the right track and that your perseverance is paying dividends. If not, then you will need to insist on arts education and participate to make it thrive.

Group Assessment

Does gender composition of the group matter?

Grace Grima

This article provides a summary of the work presented in the monograph: Grima, G. (2000) *Group Assessment: exploring the influences of the group gender composition*. New Zealand: Ministry of Education.

“The discourse that continues to suggest that girls are disadvantaged in mixed gender settings needs to be questioned”



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Overview

In this article I give an outline of the National Education Monitoring Project and describe the position of the probe study within it. I then explain the design and method of the probe study. I also provide highlights from the results that directly answer the research questions set out. Finally, I discuss the implications of the findings of this study for educational practice.

New Zealand's National Education Monitoring Project

New Zealand's National Education Monitoring Project (NEMP) commenced in 1993 with the task of assessing and reporting on the achievement of New Zealand's school children in all areas of the school curriculum. Children are assessed at two class levels: at Year Four (ages 8-9) and Year Eight (ages 12-13). Different curriculum areas are assessed each year, over a four-year cycle. This four year cycle also incorporates the assessment of attitudes and several social skills.

The information for this national project that provides a snapshot of children's educational achievements at the two class levels is gathered from random samples of students chosen annually. The annual national samples containing 1,440 students at each of the two levels represent about three percent of the children at those levels in New Zealand schools. The students selected at each level are divided into three subgroups (A, B and C). The subgroups, which consist of 120 four-member groups, attempt different tasks, many of which are repeated at the two age levels.

The assessments take place over two five-week periods between August and November and are conducted by experienced teachers, who are selected from a national pool of applicants to carry out the assessments for one period. The teachers attend a week of specialist training led by the NEMP staff. The training takes place just before the assessment period commences.

The teachers then work in pairs throughout the assessment period. In each school the assessments are spread over one week, and each student participates in about four hours of assessment activities during that week.

The assessment activities include:

- one-to-one tasks, where each student works individually with a teacher.
- station tasks, where four students work independently, moving around a series of stations where tasks have been set up.
- group tasks, where four students work collaboratively on the same task.

Participation in the one-to-one and the group tasks is recorded on videotape for subsequent analysis of both processes and products.

The Case for Group Assessment

NEMP is one of the few large assessment projects that has taken up the challenge of assessing what children can do in groups as well as individually. The literature suggests a number of reasons for incorporating group assessment into performance assessment settings. These include the need to:

- link assessment more closely to the growing emphasis on small-group collaboration and co-operation in classroom instruction (Linn, 1993; Webb, 1995)
- send out a message to educators about the importance of group collaboration in classroom instruction (Wise & Behuniak, 1993, cited in Webb, 1993).
- provide authentic assessment that involves complex problems in realistic conditions (Crooks & Flockton, 1994; Webb, 1993)
- provide a milieu within which to measure interpersonal skills that relate to the social goals of education (Crooks & Flockton, 1994; Webb, 1993, 1997)
- make it possible to assess group productivity and effectiveness (Webb, 1993, 1997).

It was still unclear up to this point whether any type of group composition was advantageous over others in situations involving true group tasks (i.e. those tasks that require the group members to make use of their particular skills and resources in order to complete the tasks). Webb (1995) suggested that “certain groups may be unfair if they do not give students equal access to favourable group processes” (249). She advocated the need for research that “explores the effects of varying group compositions on processes and outcomes of assessments for different types of tasks to determine when and whether the group composition is a source of bias (225). My probe study responded to that need.

The Probe Study

Given that NEMP involves a relatively large number of groups working on the same tasks and that the process is being video-recorded, the probe study provided a valuable opportunity to analyse the extent to which gender composition of a group influences the group's experience. Although the probe study focuses on the gender composition of groups, it acknowledges that the group experience may be influenced by several other structural factors, such as group size, student characteristics (e.g. age, personality, ability and ethnicity) and group ability composition (i.e. whether the groups are homogeneous or include students with a combination of two or three ability levels).

The study evaluated the extent to which groups with different gender compositions - four boys (4b), 3 boys 1 girl (3b1g), 2 boys 2 girls (2b2g), 1 boy 3 girls (1b3g) and 4 girls (4g) - provided boys and

girls with a similarly productive and enjoyable experience during three tasks from different curriculum areas. The analyses focused on these dependent variables: individual participation, group interaction, co-operation and conflict as well as the group products. The independent variables were the five types of group gender compositions, the two age levels of the students and the different nature of the three tasks.

The tasks analysed in this study were the following NEMP tasks:

- A science task called *Separating Mixtures* where the children first discussed and then carried out an experiment, which involved separating a mixture, made up of flour, paperclips, polystyrene balls and ball bearings.
- A language task called *Question Time* where the children first brainstormed questions they could ask police officers and then chose the six that they would ask as a group and justified their choices.
- A technology task called *Space Game* where the children first played a board game called *Planet Fero* and then discussed ways of improving and marketing the game in two separate discussions. In each discussion, they chose and reported their best four ideas.

The study also investigated how New Zealand children felt about working in groups with different gender compositions by means of a questionnaire. A post-task evaluation was also carried out in order to compare the children's views on one particular NEMP experience in the different group types. Finally, a small number of children were interviewed to gain further insight into their perspectives on group work and explore their interpretations of the events that occurred during one group task.



The Research Questions

The probe study addressed the following questions:

1. Does the task involvement of boys and girls differ according to the gender composition of the group? Does it change with the children's age level and the nature of the tasks?
2. What is the relationship between the group gender composition and the levels of interaction, co-operation and conflict within groups? Do these levels remain consistent across the two age levels and across the different tasks?
3. What is the relationship between the group gender composition and task achievement? Does this relationship change with the children's age level and the nature of the tasks?
4. How do Year Four and Year Eight children feel about working in groups with different gender compositions?
5. Do the children's evaluations of their NEMP group experience vary across group types? Are these differences affected by the nature of the tasks?

Research Methods

The research methods used in the study included videotaped recordings, a questionnaire and interviews as well as the groups' achievement records.

Videotaped recordings

The choice of techniques for analysing group processes includes categories, checklists, rating scales and narrative accounts. I did some trial work using both categories and checklists but found both techniques unsatisfactory. Consequently I developed a structured observation schedule using rating scales and narrative accounts. As tools, the narrative accounts and the rating scales complemented each other because the former needed to be recorded while viewing the tape whereas the latter needed to be completed after the viewing.

The video analysis

I originally planned to have, for each of the three tasks, ten groups of each of the five group types (4b, 3b1g, 2b2g, 1b3g, 4g) at both Year Four and Year Eight. However, as a result of the random sampling technique used in NEMP, it was rare to have ten same gender groups of boys and of girls. Therefore, when the number of groups available was less than ten, I included all the groups. When there were more than ten groups, I used systematic sampling to make my selection.

A computerised database for each of the three observation schedules was created using Filemaker Pro (Claris, 1995) and Cvvideo (Envisionology, 1993). The videos were analysed in the order of the NEMP classification numbers rather than according to their group gender composition, thus reducing the possibility of developing a bias in relation to particular group types.

For each task, I chose video exemplars and developed descriptors for the levels of the rating scales during the initial viewing and then checked the coding of the sample of tapes during a second viewing. I viewed the tapes twice more, once starting with the Year Four tapes and once starting with the Year Eight tapes to ensure that I was as consistent

as possible in similarly coding the tapes at the two age levels. In total, I spent, 1,100 hours conducting the video analysis.

The questionnaires

In order to explore how children feel about working in groups with different gender compositions generally and how they felt during one of the NEMP group experiences in particular, I used a questionnaire with all the students who participated in NEMP in 1996. This tool served as a self-report for the children. With the older age group the questionnaire was self-administered (i.e. the students read the questions and marked their answers). For the younger age group, one teacher administrator read the questions (and the answers when these included words) to a group of four children. The children then marked their own answers on their sheet. There was a hundred percent return of the questionnaires that had been completed (i.e. 94% of the national sample participating in NEMP in 1996). In total, 2,716 questionnaires were analysed.

The interviews

Working within the time constraints of a national project, my schedule allowed me to interview the 23 eight-year-olds that were randomly selected to participate in the NEMP assessments in the Dunedin city area in 1996. I interviewed the children in a one-off situation on the school premises at times during the assessment week when they were not involved in other activities relating to NEMP. I used two interviewing techniques: the structured interview and a type of focused interview called stimulated recall. I found both techniques to be appropriate in a one-off interview situation. In this article however, I only present responses from the segment of the structured interview that relate to the final research question that is addressed.

The achievement records

The achievement records were used to analyse the products of groups with different gender compositions. Marking schedules for the three tasks were developed by NEMP and used by the teacher markers who were involved in marking the tasks.

Highlights from Results

Participation within the five group types

- Overall, the video analysis did not identify any group types that had higher participation levels consistently across the three tasks.
- Especially at Year Four, there was a tendency for the minority student in the 3b1g and the 1b3g group types to participate less than the other group members and/or to participate less than members of their gender group working in other group settings. At the same time, the minority student tended to become highly involved in the organisation aspect of the group task.
- At Year Eight, both boys and girls, participated less in the 2b2g groups than in the other group types.
- There was no indication at either Year Four or Year Eight that girls were disadvantaged in the mixed gender groups compared to boys. And there was no evidence of domination by boys in the mixed gender groups across the three tasks.

Group processes within the five group types

Interaction

- Overall, across the two age groups, the 4b groups were observed to interact the most.

Co-operation

- The older groups co-operated more than the younger ones in all of the group types.

- The 4g groups had the highest co-operation mean at both Year Four and Year Eight. However, there was no indication that the same gender groups co-operated more than the mixed gender groups.

- The 3b1g groups stood out as the groups that experienced most difficulty working together in several activities at Year Four.

Conflict

- Conflict was more common in the Year Four groups than in the Year Eight groups.

- Overall, conflict was present almost evenly in all of the group types at both age levels.

- In general, the 4g groups tended to get highly involved in conflict during verbal activities whereas the 4b groups tended to become highly involved in conflict in activities when they were doing something physical (carrying out an experiment, playing a board game).

Overall, the analysis of the relationship between the group gender composition and levels of interaction, co-operation and conflict showed that the experiences were relatively similar across the different group types. Certainly, there were no clear divisions between the experience in the same gender and the mixed gender groups. In general, it was one group type that stood out in the different analyses.

Joint products of the five group types

- At Year Four, achievement on the group product was lower in the same gender groups than in the mixed gender groups.

- In the Year Eight, there was no pattern that clearly separated out the same gender and the mixed gender groups.

- Only the 1b3g groups scored higher than the average mean score at both ages.

- Achievement in the different group types appeared to be influenced at times by the subject area (e.g. the 4g groups scored higher than the average

mean score on the language task at both age groups), the task content (e.g. at Year Four the 4g groups scored higher than the average mean score in the language task and lower than the average mean score in both of the discussions of the technology task) and the age group (e.g. the 4g groups scored higher than the average mean score in the experiment of the science task at Year Four and lower than the average mean score in the same activity at Year Eight).

- Analyses of the relationship between group achievement and interaction, co-operation and conflict did not yield consistent results across the three tasks and at the two age levels. The most common pattern found was a negative relationship between group conflict and achievement.

Children's perspectives on group gender composition

- At both ages, boys and girls generally felt least positive about working in a group with members of the other gender only. The children talked about discomfort, insecurity, peer pressure and a lack of mixed gender friendships.
- At Year Four, both boys and girls enjoyed working in same gender groups the most. Boys as well as girls talked about fraternity and collegiality amongst members of their gender group.
- At Year Eight, boys and girls responded equally favourably to same gender and mixed gender groups with two boys and two girls.
- At both ages, girls responded more favourably than boys did to the idea of working in mixed gender groups with equal numbers of boys and girls.

Children's post-task evaluations

- Both boys and girls, at both ages, liked their NEMP group placement the least in the group type where they were outnumbered.
- Overall, boys in the 1b3g groups seemed less positive about their experience than boys who were placed in the other group types.
- Boys enjoyed their experience in same gender groups more than girls.
- Girls placed in same gender groups were not more positive about their group experience than those placed in mixed gender groups.

Implications for Practice

- Overall, the study showed that the gender composition of a group is not a salient factor in children's task groups where they have the opportunity to focus on a shared goal. The goal became an important uniting factor, which overrides and reduces the salience of gender issues. This study concludes that individual differences between children are more important than gender in determining their contribution to and participation in group work.

- The study also shows that the discourse that continues to suggest that girls are disadvantaged in mixed gender settings needs to be questioned. On many occasions I found that it was boys who were left out or sidelined in mixed gender groups. Teachers should not assume that this does not happen and neither should they assume that boys always dominate in mixed gender settings. Overall, the

findings of this study challenge the almost stereotypical belief that boys and girls cannot work together effectively.

- This study shows that having equal numbers of boys and girls in a group does not necessarily result in an equitable experience, nor does this structure protect group members (boys as well as girls) from becoming sidelined in the activity.

- Moreover, this study also shows that children's experiences in same gender groups are not necessarily more equitable than in the mixed gender groups, nor are they consistently more productive, especially for girls. This finding strongly challenges the belief that the behavioural problems observed in mixed gender groups in particular, and co-educational schooling in general, cease to exist when boys and girls are placed in separate groups and/or settings.

- Despite the finding that group gender composition had little effect on children's behaviour and achievement in small groups, there were differences in the children's attitudes towards working in groups with different gender compositions. The questionnaire and interview data showed that at both age levels a large number of children perceived the outnumbered student in a gender-imbalanced group to be disadvantaged. Although the data obtained from observing the different tasks at the two age levels did not consistently back up this perception, teachers need to be careful that they do not prematurely and regularly place students in a group situation where they are outnumbered. This does not mean that teachers should always avoid such placements, but rather that they should implement them gradually and carefully and provide the children with adequate support. Moreover, these placements should be complemented with experiences in other settings in which children initially feel more comfortable (i.e., same-gender and gender-balanced groups). The goal is to ensure that children have opportunities to develop a positive attitude towards all forms of group work and the necessary skills to function effectively when they are the only boy or girl in a group. This gradual process, well supported, should enable children to get accustomed to working in all possible group situations.

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What teachers think about Learner Autonomy

George Camilleri

66 How much 'power' is the teacher willing to 'concede' to the learner, in an attempt to enhance the learning process? 99



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Readers will not be blamed for sneering at the pretentiousness of the title of this article. Who can claim to pontificate on what teachers think about Learner Autonomy? Which teachers did one have in mind? What areas of autonomous learning were in focus? What sort of tools were used to find out views and figures? The notion of anyone being able to come up with some sort of reliable conclusions about this controversial area of educational practice seems to be quite a tall order.

A small group of educators assembled on a cool spring day at the European Centre of Modern Languages in Graz decided to give it a try. On that day the group decided to set up a project which sought to find out what teachers across a number of European countries think about this important pedagogical issue. By establishing the premise that there are areas of learner autonomy which attract more support than others from teachers, and by sharing a common professional curiosity to find which areas attracted which support, the group was amply motivated to spend the best part of two years trying to find out the answers.

The participating countries were Malta, Poland, Belorussia, the Netherlands, Slovenia and Estonia. Malta had two representatives in the team: Dr Antoinette Camilleri and the author. After I was nominated Co-ordinator, the necessary parameters, action plan and time-frames were articulated and agreed upon and the project set off from there. Each member of the project had to distribute 50 copies of a detailed questionnaire to practising teachers. The results were to be recorded as quantitative and qualitative data, and later interpreted by the members. The project thus took the form of a descriptive research exercise that was bound to throw more light on teachers' attitudes to an important area of our profession. The conclusion of the project was to be the final report, and this was subsequently published earlier this year by the ECML authorities through the Council of Europe.

Findings of the project

That, in a nutshell, was the history of the project, but what about the actual findings? What follows is a brief overview of what the writers—Irene Dogsa [Slovenia], Thom Dousma [the Netherlands], Antoinette Camilleri [Malta Group 2], and the undersigned [Malta Group 1] thought of the results.

The basic premise of the project was confirmed by the results: *teacher support is*

not given evenly to the various areas of Learner Autonomy as represented by the questions. This finding is important because it could help reveal, in a setting where learner autonomy is already being implemented, why there has been more success in given areas of autonomous learning than in others. It goes without saying that teachers' attitudes is an important variable in any educational project and is likely to have a critical bearing on its successful outcome. In this respect, it would be useful if in future a research exercise was undertaken to compare these findings with an evaluation of an ongoing project involving the implementation of learner autonomy to find out if there is any correlation between teachers' attitudes and outcomes.

The areas of Learner Autonomy which attracted most support from teachers appear in the table below, which is lifted directly from the published report. The letters/figures in the left-hand column correspond to the questions set in the questionnaire:

Q3C	<i>selecting realia</i>
Q7A	<i>deciding on position of desks</i>
Q7B	<i>deciding on the seating of students</i>
Q8A	<i>deciding on the record-keeping of work done</i>
Q11	<i>encouraging learners to find their own explanations to classroom tasks</i>
Q12	<i>encouraging learners to find out learning procedures by themselves</i>
Q13A	<i>encouraging learners to assess themselves on a weekly basis</i>
Q13B	<i>encouraging learners to assess themselves on a monthly basis.</i>

The global view: Table showing areas of strongest support

It appears clearly that these cover quite a wide range of classroom issues, such as materials, method, assessment and classroom management. Teacher support thus does not appear to be confined to any particular area of teaching and learning, though there are variations in the degree of support. This is good news for the educational planner engaged in

the implementation of Learner Autonomy—the mental climate of teachers appears to be conducive to giving more space for decision-making to the learner.

According to the survey, the areas of least support appear in the table below:

Q3A	<i>selecting textbooks</i>
Q4A	<i>deciding on time of the lesson</i>
Q4B	<i>deciding on place of the lesson</i>

66 Teachers may feel themselves incapable of initiating any innovations or changes in areas of the classroom experience unless there are drastic changes in the way schools or education systems are run 99

The global view: Table showing areas of resistance

These responses appear to be much more homogeneous than those which speak in favour. Selecting textbooks and deciding on the time and place of the lesson are in many countries the traditional domains of the school system within which teachers and learners operate. Thus, teachers may feel themselves incapable of initiating any innovations or changes in these areas of the classroom experience unless there are drastic changes in the way schools or education systems are run. This is very much the case in centralised education systems, where, for example, texts are prescribed by the central authority, and in schools where the availability of space and resources is extremely strained. In Malta, there are already indications that, in the light of the NMC, things are changing; a less centralised educational system will no doubt bring along changing attitudes in teachers and learners alike.

The questionnaire was designed in such a way as to cover most if not all of the areas of what I call the 'classroom experience', in other words, all those 'events' which take place in class during a given lesson that have a direct bearing on the learning process. These include decisions on objectives, materials, assessment and classroom management.

Indeed, the underlying questions posed by the questionnaire were critical. More or less these were: How much 'power' is the teacher willing to 'concede' to the learner, in an attempt to enhance the learning process? And how beneficial does s/he think it would be? How feasible would it be, given the immediate school or administrative context? The following was one of the questions that appeared in the questionnaire:

5

How much should the learner be involved in decisions on the **methodology** of the lesson?

5A individual/pair/group work
 5B use of materials
 5C type of classroom activities
 5D type of homework activities

0	1	2	3	4
0	1	2	3	4
0	1	2	3	4
0	1	2	3	4

The figures on the right correspond to the following degrees of agreement: 0 = not at all; 1 = little; 2 = partly; 3 = much; 4 = very much. Respondents had to tick the right box for each question.



What practical use do the research results have?

Primarily, the project was targeted at educational planners who are working or who intend to work on learner autonomy. Like many other valid educational initiatives, the crunch comes in the implementation process. The results have revealed which particular areas of learner autonomy attract most support from teachers. Wouldn't it be commonsensical for decision-makers to start off from such areas where there seems to be most consensus among teachers about usefulness and practicality? At the same time, it would be equally profitable for planners to examine those areas where there seems to be most resistance or scepticism among teachers, in order to prepare adequate strategies for their implementation, or even conduct further research into the issues.

It is not possible to go into further detail about the findings. The raw data is available in tabular and graphic formats in the appendices of the publication, so readers can make their own interpretations of the figures. What is equally interesting is the myriad of qualitative data produced by the questionnaire, since respondents were also invited to make brief comments on each question. These comments yield an insight into the 'viewscape', if I may coin the word, of practising teachers across the countries that participated in the survey, and may clarify why they answered particular questions in a particular way.

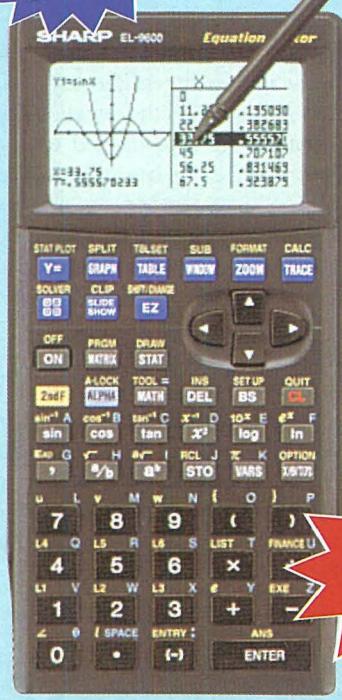
The whole project was a learning experience for me personally and, I believe, for the rest of the project team. It has helped us to reflect further on this important educational issue, and we feel that we are now better informed to deal with it in future. We hope those who make use of the findings will benefit in like manner.

*The Writer has recently co-ordinated a European research project on Learner Autonomy the findings of which, **Learner Autonomy: The Teachers' Views**, have just been published by the Council of Europe. Anyone interested in acquiring a copy should contact the writer at george.camilleri@magnet.mt*

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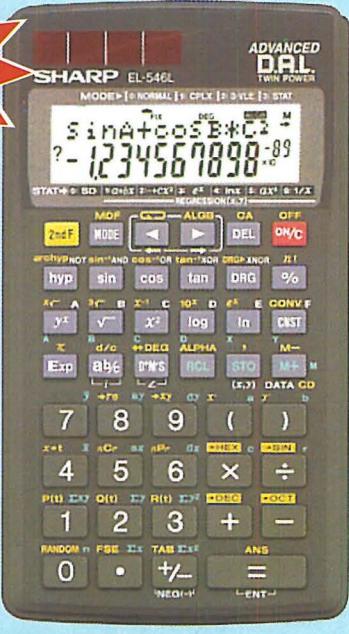
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MEDIA WORKSTATION

Using cartoons and comics in lessons

Görg Mallia

“The best resources are culled from the world of the learners themselves, as these can be used to bridge the gap between outside and inside the classroom”

The teacher's store of resources is not unlimited, but there is more than enough to go round, depending on the resourcefulness of those who look for teaching aids in all walks of life and not just in the obvious books and resource centres.

The best resources are culled from the world of the learners themselves, as these can be used to bridge the gap between outside and inside the classroom. Children often make a very clear cut distinction between what happens in their “real life” and their “school” life. Teaching methodologies that harp too much on the academic tends to corroborate this artificial division. Even homework is considered by young students to be an extension of the “school”, separated by a wall of attitude from, say, watching animated cartoons on television or going out to play with friends.

The closer the teacher brings the two worlds together, the better the chances of negating an attitude regarding school that hinders enjoyment and, as a direct consequence, learning.

young children is that of cartoons. Their participation is colourful and direct, painting a picture of reality with broad but simple brushstrokes that have their own codes - simpler than language codes and the more complex visuals of photo-realism, but nonetheless ones that need to be learnt.

Gombrich (1960), speaking of the pioneer comic artist Rodolphe Töpffer (1799-1846), describes the line drawing of the cartoon as “purely conventional symbolism. For that very reason it is immediately intelligible to a child, who might have difficulty in disentangling a naturalist painting.” (p.286). The gaps in between the lines are filled in by the mind of the seer, what can be described as *closure*: “when the eye completes a line or curve in order to form a familiar shape” (Arntson, 1998, p.77). A reading of what Gestalt psychology says about the matter is worth the resourceful teacher's while. Simplification in design in visual perception is also directly related. Arnheim (1974) is, of course, suggested reading in this area.

What is important is that “the cartoonist radically “levels” what we usually see in our perceptual field. ... Even the outline is usually simplified, with the cartoonist dropping needless objects and details. If possible, the cartoonist does not use two lines where one

The language of cartoons

A very important presence in the life of

The Marvel cast of superhero characters. Ever since the beginning of the 1960's, the American company Marvel Comics, under the leadership of Stan Lee, has created a Universe populated with “superheroes with human problems”. Foremost among their characters is Spiderman.



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66 We have fed the cognitive domain for too long and only that. We need to start thinking of the affective domain and ways of reaching the former through it 99

What is important to the teacher is to know that Batman, Spiderman, Tom and Jerry, Bugs Bunny, Snoopy and quite a few others are already known to students

line will do." (Harrison, 1981, p.57).

So reality is simplified. Happenings caricatured. The simplicity communicates directly, and the caricature cues perfectly the point to be made.

For most children, cartoons are animated. They do understand that there are also static cartoons, panels and strips, but the animated cartoons, closely associated as they are with television, are what really attract them. The exceptions that prove the rule are comic strips about characters that eventually found themselves on the small screen - characters like those in Charles Shulz's *Peanuts*, and Jim Davis' *Garfield*. The same can be said for the inverse, i.e. animated cartoons done as static strips, as in the case of most of Disney's more popular characters, like Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck and the others.

Even so, it must be admitted, that comics are not as followed by children as they used to be, say, twenty years ago. The most popular comics coming to Malta from Britain (*The Beano*, *The Dandy*, and others from the Dundee firm of D. C. Thomson) only sell a fraction of what they used to, and this slump in children's comics sales seems to be an international one ... inversely proportional, I might add, to a skyrocketing in the sales of comics for adults. Gone are the days when comics "were guaranteed to be non-serious literature, specially suited to children" (Barker, 1989, p.8). There are similarities in the language of both the adult and the juvenile comic, but the great distinction lies in subject matter and treatment (Mallia, 1997). Comics that are still extensively followed, if only for their links with

merchandising and, again, the screen both small and silver, are superhero comics, and these mostly by older children.

Using cartoons in lessons

What is important to the teacher is to know that Batman (D.C. Comics), Spiderman (Marvel Comics), Tom and Jerry (MGM), Bugs Bunny (Warner Bros.), Snoopy (United Features Syndicate) and quite a few others are already known to students. Much better known, I might add, than real live people, or even fictitious ones developed in verbal and not visual print. Any lesson in which these characters and their stories (be they print or animation) are used is likely to draw more attention and responding than one which uses textbook or rote characters created for the occasion.

We have fed the cognitive domain for too long and only that. We need to start thinking of the affective domain and ways of reaching the former through it. Not that (for example) comics should be relegated purely to the affective side of the learning fence as seems to be indicated by textbook designers like Hartley (1994). "Clearly the affective role of instructions is to the fore in comic strips: their aim being to attract and motivate less-able learners." (p.87). Research I carried out some years back indicated that comics can be as effective in the cognitive domain as in the affective, and subjects can be taught through the use of the comics format just as well as through an illustrated textbook, and decidedly better than through non-illustrated textbooks (Mallia, 1994).

So how can cartoons and comics be used in lessons, and should their use be relegated to well-known characters from the genre?

To answer the second first: no. Depending on the subject being taught, cartoon resources can be found. For example, historical detail and happenings can be "lived" by the student from the biased point of view of the cartoonist who commented on the times being studied. Logically, the teacher needs to do his/her groundwork with the students before they are exposed to the cartoons, but once students know what to expect regarding bias and context, the cartoon should prove a stimulating as well as mnemonic resource. A number of dissertations have been written by Education undergraduates over the past years that can offer the teacher a number of ways of utilising cartoons in history teaching. Among these one can mention Azzopardi (1995) and Deguara (1997). Copies of these and the useful workbooks they present as part of their research can be found in the Melitensia section of the University of Malta library.



The DC comics stable of superhero characters, including the first popular superhero, Superman (here in his latest incarnation), and such stalwarts of the genre as Batman, Wonder Woman, Flash, Aquaman and Green Lantern.

© DC Comics Inc.



Political cartoons are also extremely useful as ways of educating youngsters about the workings of society. "They, at their best, encapsulate some very complex issues, different viewpoints and some of the contradictions which are a real part of many situations. Political cartoons do not simply take sides, they offer a challenge to us all." (Regan, Sinclair & Turner, 1988, p.4).

Comics and animated cartoons can carry language, as well as stimulus to thought and conversation in their narrative and development. Both have been used professionally in the past as means to an information-oriented end ... even negative ends, Cuban intellectuals accused Walt Disney of using Donald Duck as a way to instill imperialism into the minds of non-Americans (Dorfman & Mattelart, 1971). Disney also has shorts on the basic concepts of mathematics, and Warner Bros have even outlined economics in a Sylvester short. The large comics companies of America have lent both their characters and comic books in aid of social awareness campaigns (smoking, drugs, child abuse, etc.). All have been very effective, which just goes to show what a powerful tool comics and cartoons can be in the hands of the teacher who can tailor the product to his or her own (as well as the students') needs.

In this brief paper, I have

only spoken about the potential inherent in cartoons and comics to be used as part of lessons. I have not gone into many details as to how individual lessons can use comics and cartoons. I have no doubt that resourceful teachers can think of a number of ways of doing so ... once they have convinced themselves of the worth of this resource.

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TEACHING AND ASSESSING YOUNG LEARNERS OF EFL

edited by
Charles Mifsud & Gorġ Mallia

Throughout these last few years there has been considerable interest in the area of Teaching English to Young Learners. Especially so as in a number of countries, like those of Eastern Europe, English has taken the place of other foreign languages. Many countries have introduced the teaching of English as an additional language from an early age. Also, much thought has been given to the issue of assessment in the specialist area.

This edited collection brings together a number of articles by an international set of leading academics and practitioners in the fields of Teaching English to Young Learners and related assessment procedures. This collection reports on both research and methodological innovations in this very important field. The need of such a book has been felt for a very long time. A number of English language teacher education institutions in countries like the UK, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, U.S.A., Hong Kong, Singapore, a number of Eastern European, African and Asian countries, etc., have already expressed their interest in putting this text-book on the highly recommended reading list of a number of their courses.

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Automated Flash Cards with Print Shop Ensemble III

Norman C. Borg

Introduction

Print Shop Ensemble III is the perfect tool for creating flashcards. The easiest way of doing this is to create a Signs/Posters project, landscape-oriented, and include two words within simple Mini-borders. This means that you can create two reasonably-sized flashcards (each of approximately 25 by 9 cm) with one A4 sheet. Mounted on cardboard these can be very effective in the classroom.

The best bet is to create the words by using the Headline object rather than the Text Block, for a number of reasons. In particular, the Headline object enables you to create quite thick letters which can be easily read from the back of the class. These can also be outlined and given varied inside colours.

“Print Shop Ensemble III is the perfect tool for creating flashcards”

Introduction

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A Practical Example

A problem may arise if you have a large number of flashcards which need to be created: for example, a set of the calendar months, opposites, a series of verbs, adjectives or vocabulary words related to one particular topic. The above set-up would require a set of six sheets for the calendar months alone, for instance. Does that mean that you will have to create six separate files on disk, each one with two particular month names? Not necessarily. *PSE3* has a mail-merging facility which can reduce the whole operation to just one file.

Let us stick to the calendar months example for clarity's sake. All you need to do to create all twelve flashcards is one single Sign/Poster

project containing two flashcards. Create a mail-merging list with all the twelve month names, and instruct *PSE3* to do all the hard work, i.e. print the same Sign/Poster six times, each time with different month names on the flashcards. This is very simple to achieve once you know where to look and what to do. It will definitely save a lot of work on the teacher's part.

Creating a Mail-merge List

Run *PSE3*. Select Signs/Posters, Start from Scratch and a Wide orientation. For Backdrops, select a blank page with No Layout.

You should now have a landscape-oriented blank page. But before proceeding with the creation of the flashcards themselves, we should first create a Name List File. This is a list containing all the twelve month names, so that *PSE3* will be able to read it and create the flashcards automatically later on.

From the Menu bar, select Extras, Edit Custom List. You will see a new requester. From the File menu, select New.

Among a number of things you will now see a line reading Filename: Untitled.LAB. Below this are a number of text boxes marked Line 1, 2, etc. Click on the Line 1 text field, and type in January. Hit the tab key to move to the Line 2 text field. Here, type in February. Click the Add Entry button.

The text fields will now be blank. This is because the first entry (containing two month

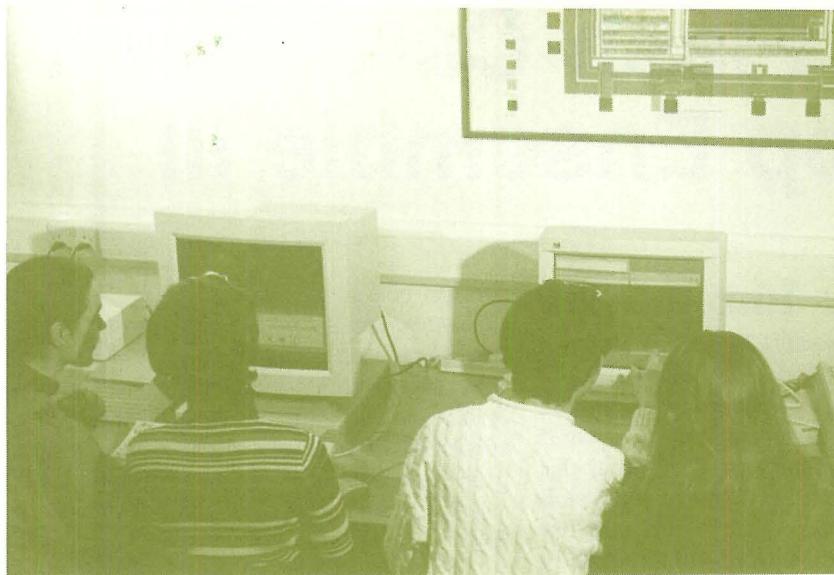


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University of Malta.

January

February

The flashcards may look something like this. Note that since we are using the Headline object, words are stretched accordingly to fit the fixed size. This is ideal for automatic insertion through mail-merge.



University of Malta Communications Office

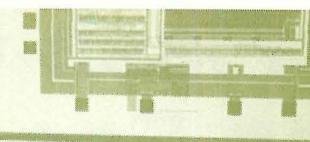
names) is now in memory, and *PSE3* is prompting you to enter the data for the next entry. In Line 1, type in March, and in Line 2 type April. Click the Add Entry button again, and repeat the operation until all month names have been entered, two per Entry. This last detail is important because we plan to put two flashcards on every A4 sheet. Because of this, we are not going to need the rest of the lines in each of the entries.

When you have finished entering all the months, click the arrow on the right of the Custom List Entry field. You will find a list of six entries, denoted by the first line of each. This confirms that you have entered all the data. We now need to save the list.

From the file menu, click Save As, name the file (ex. Monthnames) and click OK. The list is now ready to be used by *PSE3*.

Creating and Printing the Flashcards

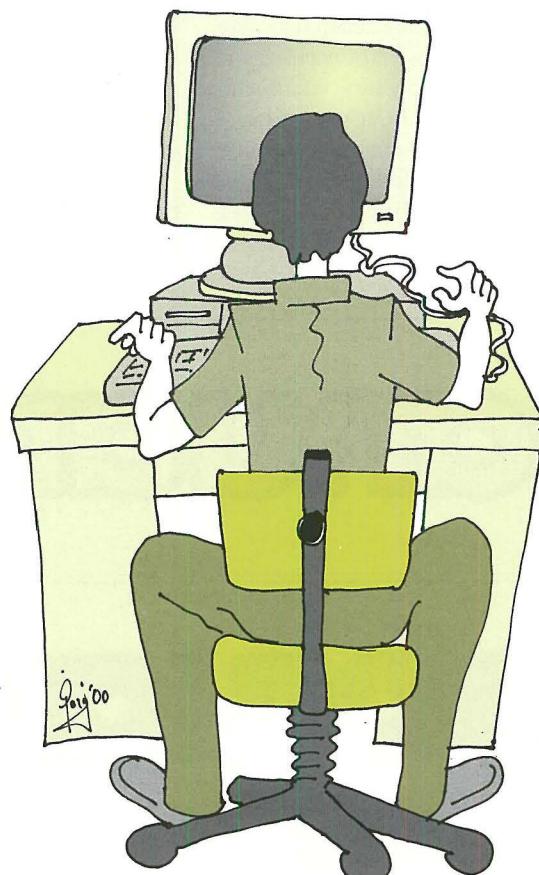
Now that the list is complete, we can proceed in creating the template which will determine the settings of the flashcards. Create a Mini-border by selecting Object, Add, Mini-Border. This will create a Mini-border placeholder at the centre of the page. Double-click it to select



the type of border you need. In our case, a Thin Border should suffice. Resize the border so that it fills up the whole width of the page and approximately half the height. Move it to the upper half of the page.

Create a Headline (Object - Add - Headline). Move it approximately to the centre of the Mini-border, and resize it to take up the space within the border.

Double click to edit it. Select a clear, sans-serif font (one without any embellishments, like Malta, Maltv, Moderne, Arial Black, etc). Set it to Bold. Select Effect 2 and click on Customise. In the new requester, select Thick Outline. Select a text colour other than white and click OK.



Now we will enter the text required. Instead of typing in the text ourselves, we will instruct *PSE3* to find the Custom List we have just saved with the month names, and take the words from there. To do this, click on the button List Merge. Select Line 1. You will note that the first month of the year has appeared automatically on the page.

Now we will repeat the same operation for the second flashcard, on the bottom half of the page. This is much easier to do. On the Edit menu, select Select All. All objects on the page will be highlighted. Again, select Edit and Duplicate. A second copy of all objects will now appear. While they are all still highlighted, drag them down to the lower half of the page. Make sure to drag down all the objects together.

Double click away from the page to deselect all objects. Double click on the Headline in the lower half of the page. Click the List Merge button and select Line 2. The second month of the year should now appear on the second flashcard.

Save your work. The whole operation is now finished. Note that you have only created one Sign/Poster (i.e. one page). When you print the document, though, *PSE3* will print six sheets, and every sheet will have a different pair of flashcards.

There are some points you need to keep in mind. If you load the file during a different session and you use the merge list for other sets of words, you must make sure that you print the right set. Before printing anything, from the Menu go to Extras, Edit Custom List, File, Open and load the required file (ex. Monthnames.LAB). In this way you will make sure that *PSE3* will print the list you really want (by default, *PSE3* will automatically reload the last merge list accessed).

Should you want to print only a selection of the list in the file, go to the File menu and select Print. Click on the List Entries button. From the list offered, select the items you want printed by holding CTRL and click on each selection. Click OK and again OK. In this way *PSE3* will print only the selected flashcards.

Conclusion

A note about *Print Shop Premier 5*. Although the above still can be done with *Premier* unfortunately there is no way of using the mail merge facility within the Headline object. I cannot understand why this feature has been overlooked. The only place where you can use merge lists within *PSP5* is in Text Blocks. Although this may be satisfactory, Text Blocks do not have the wider range of effects supported by Headlines and the end results may not appear that attractive.

The *Print Shop* files of the project discussed in this article can be downloaded from
<http://www.geocities.com/norcomm99/>

Malta Section of the European Association of Teachers (AEDE)

'Association Europene des Enseignants'

The European Association of Teachers (AEDE) was founded on the 8th July 1956 in Paris. The main purpose of the association is to group teachers and those working in the world of education who want to contribute and cooperate in the integration of Europe and to promotion European ideals. AEDE's members are spread all over Europe and are grouped in more than twenty national sections.

The Association's statute was approved at the European Congress at Luxembourg (1961). For many years AEDE has been striving, through its' members actions, to give a "European dimension" to Education.

Aims and Means of Action of AEDE

The main aims of the association are: To deepen, in the world of education, the knowledge of all the mechanisms of the European structures, within the political, economical, social and cultural spheres, in order to encourage a common European behaviour. It also aims to be a network of European contacts, ideas and activities, working towards giving the younger generations an education that will

equip them to grow into a European society capable of tackling with clear heads and stout hearts the formidable and complex problems that it will have to resolve.

To do this the Association works, by using appropriate means to bring about an increased awareness of the foundations and the common features of European cultures, so inculcating in young people a desire to live together in a democratic and multicultural society. AEDE works to develop these objectives in all members of the world of education and all environments where action can serve to spread the notion of a real European citizenship, with the inherent values of responsibilities and consciousness of rights and duties.

The Association aims at conducting its action within the framework of the world of education by multiple and varied initiatives such as: groups of studies and reflection, the use of every means of communication and diffusion, the organisation of meetings, symposia, seminars and contacts, and any other means conducive to promotion of the aims of the association.

Malta Section of AEDE

The ball was set rolling by Mr. Joseph M. Sammut, Director Planning and Development, who was invited to attend the AEDE European Committee Meeting, held in Brussels in February 1999. After returning from Brussels, a group of educators met regularly in order to plan out a strategy for the launching of the AEDE - Malta Section and also to draw up a Draft Statute. A meeting was held in November 1999 for all interested teachers. During the meeting the statute of the Malta Section was approved and a committee made up Frans Borg, John Busuttil, Angelo Farrugia, Joseph Giordmaina, Saviour Grech, Salvu Saliba, Sandro Spiteri, Anne Marie Coleiro and Jill Kirkstadt was set up.

Contact with the AEDE - European Committee has been established. During a meeting with Mr. Nahilout and Mr Benoit Guilleaume President and Secretary General respectively of the AEDE - European Committee, which took place on the 17th September 1999 in Strasbourg it was decided

that the setting up the of the official local section of AEDE can come about only at the next AEDE Congress which is due in 2001.

Initiatives by AEDE-Malta

Although still in its embryonic stage the Malta AEDE has already started to benefit from the AEDE - European Committee's initiatives. In fact two students, who attend the Sir M.A. Refalo Centre for Further Studies took part in the Youth Parliament of the European Union that took place in Strasbourg 17 - 18 September 1999. The section has also been invited to send two delegates to a Seminar which will take place in Brussels May 2000 during which Education and Culture DG officials will be explaining the funding and working modalities of the new SOCRATES II programmes.

A delegation made up of Mr Frans Borg and Saviour Grech President and Secretary respectively of the Malta section has traveled to Brussels and participated in this year's AEDE - European Committee meetings. Besides further strengthening the links with the AEDE - European Committee, the meeting provided the opportunity to explore further how Maltese educators can benefit from their participation in AEDE. As a result of contacts made during the meeting, a Maltese School has already been invited by an Austrian School to participate in an 'In lingua' project. Further collaboration is expected to materialize in the near future. Plans are in hand to organise a Seminar during which the introduction of European Studies in the Maltese Secondary School Sector will be discussed.

Teachers who are interested in becoming members of AEDE - Malta section can write to:

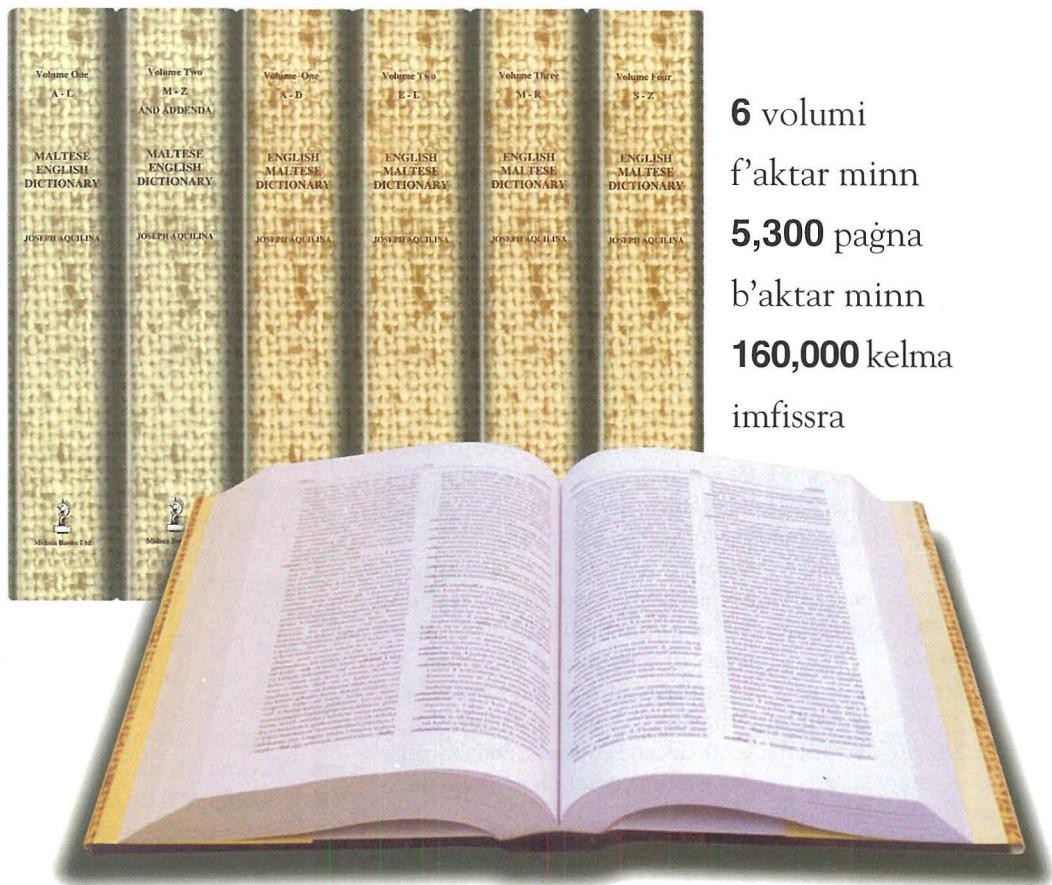
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Website: <http://www.educ.um.edu.mt/>
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Il-Ktieb tal-Millennju

MALTESE-ENGLISH DICTIONARY ENGLISH-MALTESE DICTIONARY

Professur Ĝužè Aquilina



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"L-English-Maltese Dictionary flimkien mal-Maltese-English Dictionary, pubblikat fl-1990, hu l-frott ta' esperjenza xjentifika akkwistata tul medda ta' snin u xogħol. Hu l-aqwa xogħol li lsien modern jista' jkollu."

David Cohen, Professur fl-Université à Sorbonne à Ecole des Hautes Etudes, Franza

Ikseb success fil-Malti

HUDU ISSA – HALLAS BIN-NIFS

Flimkien mal-ġenituri tiegħek imla l-formola ta' hawn taħbi biex takkwista dan id-Dizzjunarju meqjuż bħala l-akbar kapulavur fil-lingwa Maltija u ibgħatha lill-Midsea Books Ltd., Triq il-Karmelitani, Sta Venera HMR16 jew ċempel 497046, fax 496904



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Nru. Karta ta' l-Identità

* Il-kotba b'xejn jingħażlu minn lista spċċifika tal-Klabb Kotba Maltin

10 kotba b'xejn*
ma' kull ordni għad-Dizzjunarju

Lejn aġenda Anti-Razzista fl-edukazzjoni

Carmel Borg

Il-mewġa qawwija ta' preġudizzju razzjali li ħakmet 'il-pajjiż f'dawn l-ahhar ġimġħat hasdet u nikket lil kull min qiegħed jahdem biex il-membri ta' din is-soċjetà jiżviluppaw l-attitudnijiet u l-ħiliet neċċesarji biex ikunu jistgħu jgħixu ahjar f'pajjiż li kull ma jmur qiegħed isir aktar multikulturali. L-aktar elementi li spikkaw f'dawn il-ġimġħat ta' manifestazzjoni razzista huma l-injoranza kulturali, in-nuqqas kbir ta' informazzjoni, il-pružunzjoni u l-arroganza ta' min jaf li jista' jirbah il-qlub u jhaddar lin-nies billi jiżola kulturi partikolari u jiġġenera klima ta' stmerrija u biża madwarhom. Sfortunatament, l-iskuża tal-libertà tal-kelma, in-nuqqas ta' sofistikazzjoni politika ta' min jikkontrolla l-midja u l-ġħatx li għandha l-midja għas-sensazzjonaliżmu, qiegħdin joffru infrastruttura kulturali li tiffaċilita din l-attività anti-soċjali. L-aċċess faċċi għall-mezzi ta' komunikazzjoni popolari, imżewġa ma' sistema legali li ma tipproteġix biżżejjed lill-vittmi tar-razziżmu, tiftah it-triq beraħ biex id-diskors razzist isir diskors ċeġemoniku. Quddiem din l-isfida l-awtoritajiet Ċivili u tal-Knisja għandhom l-obbligu morali u etiku li b'mod attiv jirreżistu l-istratgeġja razzista. Is-sistema edukattiva hija waħda mill-istituzzjonijiet tas-soċjetà ċivili fejn l-Istat u l-Knisja jistgħu jirreżistu r-razziżmu. Permezz ta' programmi edukattivi mibnija fuq l-affermazzjoni u ċ-ċelebrazzjoni tad-diversità, l-Istat u l-Knisja jistgħu joholqu strategija kontro-ċeġemonika maħsuba biex l-istudenti żgħar, żgħażaq u adulti jipperswadu lilhom infuħhom li l-konfliett kulturali m'huxiex fl-ahjar interessa tal-komunità Maltija.



CARMEL BORG Ph.D.
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Nifħmu t-Terminlogija

Wahda mill-karatteristiċi ewlenin tad-diskussjonijiet u l-kitbiet riċenti dwar ir-razziżmu kienet il-kunfużjoni fit-terminologija u n-nuqqas ta' għarfien tal-kumplessità kunċettwali tas-suġġett. Hafna mill-protagonisti tad-dibattitu lokali dwar ir-razziżmu urew li m'għandhomx ħakma tajba tal-lingwaġġ normalment użat minn analisti, teoristi, politici ppreparati sew, ġurnalisti ta' stoffa u attivist i li qiegħdin jikkumbattu din il-forma ta' oppressjoni. Hekk, per eżempju, il-fit kienu kapaċi jiddistingu bejn razziżmu u etniċità. Barra minn hekk, il-kelma diskriminazzjoni ntużat b'mod laxk u simplistiku. Minħabba f'hekk, id-dibattitu tilef il-kumplessità tal-kunċett ta' diskriminazzjoni li jinkludi, fost hwejjeq ohra, it-tqassim żbaljat u ingust ta' servizzi u riżorsi, ċahda ta' drittijiet u tħarru ta' individwi/gruppi minn parteċipazzjoni shiha fis-soċjetà. L-istess similiċiżmu ntware madwar il-kunċett ta' identità razzjali u etnika. Ma saret l-ebda analiżi ta' kif tissawwar identità u lokazzjoni razzjali, etnika jew kulturali f'kuntest razzjali partikulari. Problema ohra fid-diskors kien il-fatt li l-kelma razziżmu ntużat b'mod totalizzanti, bħal li kieku din il-kelma tispjega l-fenomeni kollha ta' din l-oppressjoni. Kawża ta' dan id-diskors totalizzanti, id-dibattitu ma hariġx id-differenzi bejn, per eżempju, razziżmu attiv u razziżmu passiv, razziżmu

vertikali u dak orizzontali, u razziżmu internalizzat u kollużjoni razzista.

Komunità edukattiva li trid tirreżisti r-razziżmu ma tistax ma tiffamilajrizzax ruħha mal-glossarju razzjali. Edukaturi li għandhom ħakma tajba tat-terminologija awtomatikament jifħmu l-kumplessità ta' dan il-qasam u jkunu f'qagħda li jikkomunikaw b'mod kumpless fuq is-suġġett.

Il-Kurrikulu Minimu Nazzjonali

Il-Kurrikulu Minimu Nazzjonali, mahruġ mill-Ministeru ta' l-Edukazzjoni f'Diċembru ta' 1-1999, huwa mnebbah minn politika edukattiva li għandha l-ġħan li tissoċjalizza lill-istudenti f'kultura demokratika, pluralista u inklużiva. Għalhekk, id-dokument joffri punt ta' tluq tajjeb għal kull min irid jiżviluppa pedagogija anti-razzista.

Il-Kurrikulu Minimu Nazzjonali jagħraf l-intensifikazzjoni tal-proċess multikulturali f'pajjiżna. Din l-isfida soċjali titlob li "is-sistema edukattiva...tharreg lill-istudenti fl-arti tar-rispett, il-kooperazzjoni, u s-solidarjetà bejn il-kulturi" (p.24). L-izvilupp ta' dawn il-ħiliet għandu jgħin lill-istudenti "jifħmu ahjar id-differenzi individwali, lokali u reġjonali...biex ikunu jistgħu jgħixu b'mod effettiv u produttiv f'kuntest ikkaratterizzat mid-diversità soċjo-kulturali" (p.24).

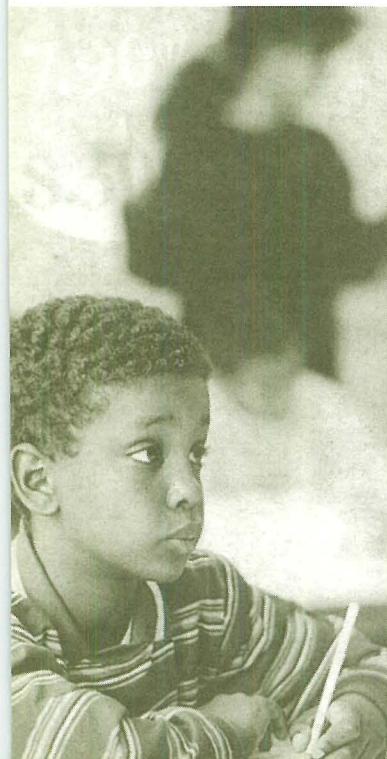
Biex din l-isfida titwettaq, il-komunità edukattiva trid twarrab sistemi ta' tagħlim mibnija fuq l-illużjoni ta' klassijiet/gruppi omoġjeni u, skond il-Kurrikulu, thaddan u thaddem "pedagogija li tirrispetta u tiċċelebra l-kalejdoskopju ta' realtajiet u stejjer personali

Il-mewġa qawwija ta' preġudizzju razzjali li ħakmet 'il-pajjiż f'dawn l-ahhar ġimġħat hasdet u nikket...



66 Is-sistema edukattiva hija waħda mill- istituzzjonijiet tas-soċjetà ċivili fejn l- Istat u l-Knisja jistgħu jirreżistu r- razziżmu 99

Il-Kurrikulu Minimu Nazzjonali jagħraf l-intensifikazzjoni tal-proċess multikulturali f'pajjiżna.



li jiddefinixxu kull klassi f'kull skola f'Malta" (p.30). B'dan il-mod, l-istudenti jibdew jghixu u jqisu d-diversità bhala barka soċjali.

L-gharfien, ir-rispett u ċ-ċelebrazzjoni tad-differenzi m'humiex kunċetti astratti iż-żda esperjenzi konkreti. Għalhekk, is-solidarjetà soċjali tista' tibda tixxettel mit-tfulija bikrija. Il-Kurrikulu Minimu Nazzjonali jishaq li minn kmieni t-tfal għandhom jipparteċipaw fi proċess edukattiv li jgħinhom "jidentifikaw, japprezzaw u jimmanfestaw...id-differenzi ta' bejniethom...jiż-żi viluppaw sens ta' kooperazzjoni...u rispett tad-drittijiet umani u tal-ħlejqiet l-oħra" (p.74). L-infrastruttura teknoloġika eżistenti u futura, u rizorsi oħra, għandhom jitpogġew għas-servizz tal-principju tad-diversità. It-teknoloġija ta' l-informatika għandha twassal biex il-proġett ta' kooperazzjoni u għarfien tad-diversita' jaqbez ix-xefaq ta' pajjiżna u, skond il-Kurrikulu, l-istudenti Maltin "jersqu eqreb lejn studenti li qed jgħixu fi rkejjen differenti tad-dinja" (p.27).

Programm edukattiv li għandu l-għan li jidheri l-istudenti b'mentalità anti-razzista ma jistax jaħrab minn analiżi storika ta' kif ir-razziżmu jissawwar u jinfirex. Barra minn hekk, l-apprezzament ta' kulturi differenti jistrieh fuq informazzjoni dwar il-faċċati differenti tal-hajja f'pajjiż u reġjuni ġeografiċi differenti. Għalhekk, il-pedagoġja anti-razzista għandha l-għeruq tagħha fil-fatti storiċi u attwali.

Il-Kurrikulu Minimu Nazzjonali jagħraf l-htieġa li l-istudenti jagħnu l-kapital kulturali tagħhom f'dan il-qasam. Fit-taqṣima li titratta l-*Għanijiet Ġenerali* d-dokument iheġġeg lill-iskejjen biex ilaqqghu lit-tfal mal-kultura, l-istorja u r-religionijiet differenti fir-reġjun tal-Mediterran u l-istorja ta' Malta bhala parti minn dan ir-reġjun...il-kultura, l-istorja u r-religionijiet differenti tal-Kontinent Ewopew (p. 51). Din id-dimensjoni Ewro-Mediterranja, imżewga mal-bżonn li "l-pajjiż jkollu wkoll nukleu ta' nies li għandhom hakma tajba ta' ilsna meqjusa bhala strategikament importanti, bħaċ-Ċiniż, il-Ġappuniż, ir-Russu u l-Għarbi" (p.82), u l-bżonn ekumeniku li l-istudenti jsiru jaħfu aktar "il-karatteristiċi tar-Religionijiet ewleni u dwar kif kull waħda tipprova twieġeb għall-istess mistoqsijiet fundamentali għall-eżiżenza umana" (p.52), fost għerf iehor, toffri sfond informattiv għat-tparru ta' l-interess, it-tqarrib, il-fehem u s-solidarjetà ma' soċjetajiet u kulturi differenti.

Skejjen li huma mpenjati li joffru kunteż edukattiv kulturalment pluralista u anti-razzjal li għandhom isibu fil-Kurrikulu Minimu Nazzjonali l-ingredjenti bażiċi biex jahmu pedagoġja li twassal biex l-istudenti jikkonfrontaw t-territorjaliżmu kulturali.

Kurrikulu anti-razzist għandu jagħraf il-bżonn li jinkludi għerf u perspettivi li m'humiex mill-Punent. L-ewroċentriżmu jxejjen u jikkontradixxi l-impenn lejn

multikulturaliżmu ġenwin, u jimblokka l-possibilità li l-istudenti jagħrfu r-razziżmu u l-opressjoni fihom infuħom u fis-socjetà. Fil-fatt, kurrikulu ewroċentriku jappoġġja, b'mod konxju jew passiv, is-superiorità tal-ħsieb tal-Punent fuq kull ħsieb iehor, u jagħlaq lill-istudenti f'fortizza kulturali. Din il-fortizza trawwem fl-istudenti mentalità li dak kollu li huwa tajjeb, avvanzat, progressiv u sofistikat għandu l-għeruq tiegħu fil-ħsieb u l-ġenju tal-Punent.

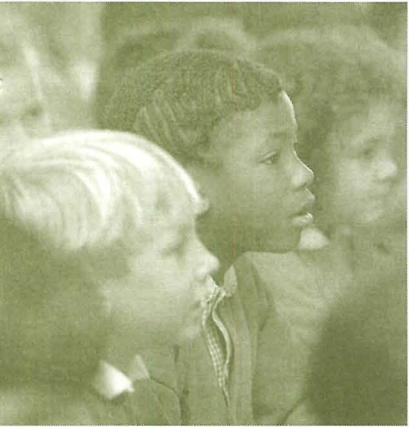
Programmi Edukattivi fl-Iskejjen

Pedagoġja anti-razzista ma tizolax dan l-impenn f'suġġett speċjalizzat. Fi kliem iehor, fejn hemm impenn ġenwin lejn din il-pedagoġja l-ghall-ġiema kollha u l-bqija tal-komunità edukattiva huma responsabli għat-twettiq ta' dan il-proġett soċjo-kulturali. B'hekk l-iskola tevita li toħloq gżejjer kulturali inkompatibbi u/jew kontradittorji.

Programm edukattiv f'dan il-qasam irid jagħraf il-proċess ta' l-iżvilupp uman. Fl-isfond tat-tfulija bikrija l-programm jiehu xejra konkreta u qrib il-hajja immedjata tat-tfal. L-iżvilupp ta' l-istima personali huwa wieħed mill-ghanijiet ewleni f'dan il-qasam. It-trawwim ta' stima personali jgħiñ lit-tfal individwali japprezzaw lill-ħbiebhom u 'l-adulti li jiffurmaw parti minn ħajjithom. Permezz ta' l-iżvilupp ta' l-istima personali l-infrastruttura emozzjonali tkun f'qagħda li titmalja ma' l-esperjenza konkreta u viżibbli tad-differenzi. L-esperjenza konkreta tat-tfal f'din il-faži tal-kontinwu uman timmanifesta ruħha f'differenzi fizċi, f'ilbies, ikel u ċelebrazzjoni differenti tradizzjoni differenti, u f'tipi differenti ta' mużika, żfin u attivitajiet konkreti oħra.

Fil-livell primarju l-programm edukattiv ikompli jibni fuq il-proċess mibdi fit-tfulija bikrija. F'dan il-livell, it-tfal jibdew jiffamiljarizzaw ruħhom ma' letteratura internazzjonali u ma' l-istorja u l-iżvilupp ta' tradizzjoni lokali u reġjunali, u jsiru jaħfu aktar "il-karatteristiċi tar-Religionijiet ewleni u dwar kif kull waħda tipprova twieġeb għall-istess mistoqsijiet fundamentali għall-eżiżenza umana" (p.52), fost għerf iehor, toffri sfond informattiv għat-tparru ta' l-interess, it-tqarrib, il-fehem u s-solidarjetà ma' soċjetajiet u kulturi differenti. Jwieġbu għall-bżoġi differenti fundamentali tal-bniedem. L-istess programm irid jaħseb biex l-informazzjoni tintiseġ ma': żvilupp ta' attitudni pożittiva u kritika lejn kulturi differenti; rieda li wieħed jitgħallek mill-esperjenzi ta' kulturi differenti; u rieda li wieħed jirreżisti forom differenti ta' preġudizzju, intolleranza u diskriminazzjoni. Dan l-iżvilupp attitudinali, flimkien ma' l-gharfien neċċarju, għandu jiffaċċilita l-proċess ta' żvilupp ta' ħiliet fil-koperazzjoni, cjalogu, ħsieb kritiku, soluzzjoni ta' problemi u konflietti, empatija, u bini ta' argument, fost hiliet oħra. Mingħajr l-iżvilupp ta' dawn il-ħiliet il-proġett anti-razzista fil-livell primarju jibqa' eż-żeċċiżju akkademiku.

Fil-livell sekondarju, l-esperjenza konkreta



TES

**Programm edukattiv
li għandu l-ghan li
jtella' l-ill-istudenti
b'mentalità anti-
razzista ma jistax
jaħrab minn analiżi
storika ta' kif ir-
razziżmu jissawwar
u jinfirex.**

tibqa' l-perm li fuqu ddur il-pedagoġja anti-razzista. It-tishieb kritiku u riflettiv għandu jwassal biex il-programm jieħu xejra aktar prassjali. Dan ifisser li l-esperjenza personali u soċjali ta' l-istudenti tintefha ta' taħbi il-lenti kritika tal-klassi bit-tama li sseħħ xi forma ta' trasformazzjoni f'hajjithom. B'mod aktar speċifiku, il-pedagoġja anti-razzista fis-settur sekondarju għandha tgħin lill-istudenti:

- jagħrfu kif tissawwar identità razzjali;
- jirriflett dwar kif qegħdin jipparteċipaw fil-proġett razzista;
- jagħrfu l-impatt tar-razziżmu fuq l-iżvilupp personali u soċjali tagħhom;
- jagħrfu l-proċess ta' soċjalizzazzjoni f'kultura razzista;
- jagħrfu u jifhmu kif ir-razziżmu jimmanifesta ruħu f'forom u livelli differenti;
- jagħrfu d-differenza bejn razziżmu attiv u dak passiv;
- jifhmu kuncetti bħal privileġgi soċjali, kollużjoni u razziżmu internalizzat;
- jagħrfu l-esperjenzi ta' popli minn kunteisti razzjali u etniċi differenti;
- jagħrfu r-rabta bejn ir-razziżmu u l-ekonomija internazzjonali;
- jagħrfu u jifhmu kif r-razziżmu jista' jithallat ma' forom oħra ta' oppressjoni biex persuni jsofru minn oppressjoni multiplika;
- jidtentifikaw forom differenti ta' azzjoni anti-razzista;
- jaħdmu b'mod effettiv f'kuntest multirazzjali; u
- jiżviluppaw il-hiliet u l-kunfidenza biex isiru aġenti ta' bidla.

Tul il-vjaġġ skolastiku l-istudenti għandhom jaffermaw l-identità tagħhom, jitgħallmu jikkonfrontaw lilhom infuħom, jibdew janalizzaw u jipproblematizzaw l-pregudizzji, l-intolleranza u l-injuranza kulturali, jiċċelebraw id-diversità u jibdew jaħdmu biex il-mużajk kulturali jsir politika personali u soċjali.

66 L-iskola għandha tinvesti f'kotba u materjal iehor li jindirizza l- multi- kulturaliżmu u l-anti- razziżmu 99

Taħriġ ta' l-Għalliema
Għalliema li ma jammettux il-problema serja ta' razziżmu li hawn Malta jew/u ma jaħsbux li s-sistema edukattiva għandha tindirizza din il-problema, x'aktarx se jirreżistu proġett bħal dan. F'kuntest ta' rezistenza d-djalogu ma' l-ghalliema huwa indispensabbi.

Għalhekk, l-ahjar mod kif wieħed jibda proġett anti-razzista fi skola huwa permezz ta' riċerka interna li teżamina l-gharfien u l-attitudnijiet ta' l-ghalliema f'dan il-qasam partikulari.

Ir-riżultat ta' l-istħarriġ jipprovdi kunteż idejali għal djalogu ma' l-ghalliema u possibbli ta' anqas rezistenza ghall-proġett.

Skola li thoss li hemm l-infrastruttura kulturali neċċessarja biex tvara l-proġett għandha tibda mill-pjan ta' l-iżvilupp. Proġett bħal dan għandu jifforma parti integrali mill-viżjoni globali ta' l-iskola. L-gharfien tal-

bżonn ta' pedagoġja anti-razzista fil-pjan ta' l-iżvilupp jagħti sens ta' permanenza u uffiċċjalità lill-proġett.

Il-programm ta' taħriġ għandu jkun imnebbah mir-riżultat tar-riċerka interna u mid-djalogu li jiżvolgi wara l-istħarriġ. Ma teżisti l-ebda riċetta li tindirizza l-bżoniżiet ta' kull skola. Għalhekk, dan li nissuġġerixxi hawn taħt irid jitqies bhala ideja generali ta' x'jistgħu jkunu l-ingredjenti bażiċi ta' programm ta' taħriġ. Il-letteratura f'dan il-qasam tissuġġerixxi li l-ghalliema għandhom jiġu meħġjuna biex:

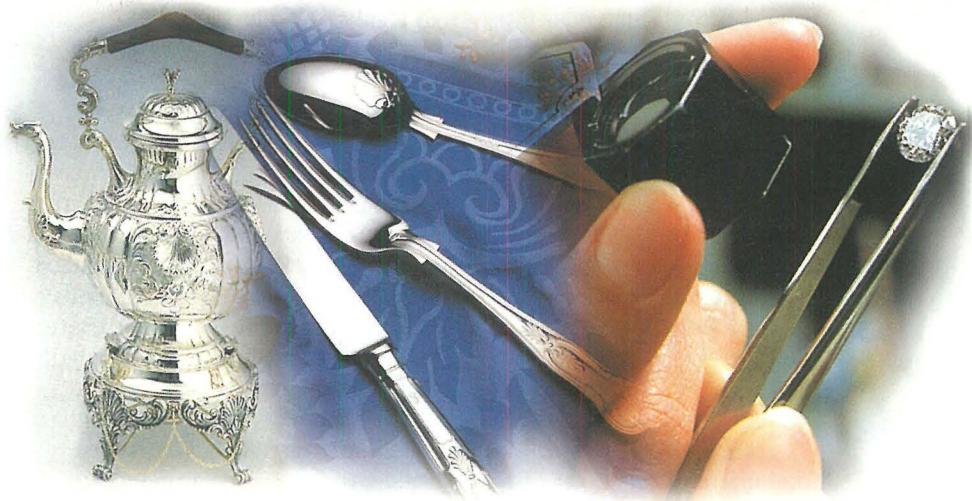
- jiżviluppaw għarfien dwar l-identità tagħhom;
- jeżaminaw l-gherf, l-attitudnijiet u l-esperjenzi personali;
- jiffamiljarizzaw ruħhom mat-terminologija u mal-kunċetti użati f'd-dikors dwar ir-razziżmu;
- jeżaminaw ir-rabta bejn esperjenza personali u razziżmu sistemiku;
- jeżaminaw ir-rabta bejn razziżmu individwali u dak istituzzjonali;
- jeżaminaw kif diversi forom ta' oppressjoni jikkumplikaw il-problema tar-razziżmu;
- jeżaminaw kif it-twahħil fil-vittma ħafna drabi jservi bhala mezz ta' razzjonalizzazzjoni għar-razziżmu;
- jeżaminaw kif l-ewroċentrīsmu jiddomina d-definizzjoni ta' kultura;
- jeżaminaw kif is-sistema edukattiva tista' ssir aktar rilevanti kulturalment;
- jeżaminaw mudelli differenti ta' pedagoġja multikulturali u anti-razzista;
- jiltaqgħu ma' attivisti li jaħdmu fil-qasam tal-multikulturaliżmu u ta' l-anti-razziżmu;
- jippreparaw u jiżviluppaw proġett anti-razzista għall-iskola;
- jirriflett dwar kif jistgħu jibnu komunità permanenti ta' attivisti fil-qasam.

It-taħriġ ta' l-ghalliema m'għandux jieqaf ma' tmiem il-programm ta' taħriġ tal-bidu. It-taħriġ kontinwu, f'forma ta' laqgħat djalogali u riflettivi, għandu jsostni l-proġett. Flimkien mat-taħriġ l-iskola għandha tinvesti f'kotba u materjal iehor li jindirizza l-multi-kulturaliżmu u l-anti-razziżmu. Wara l-istħarriġ tal-bidu, ir-riċerka interna għandha tintuża biex tinforma lill-komunità edukattiva dwar xejriet fl-iżvilupp tal-proġett, fosthom tibdil fl-attitudni tal-partcipanti kollha.

Tmiem

Ir-razziżmu għandu storja, kawzi, struttura u konsegwenzi. Ir-riflessjoni dwar dawn l-aspetti differenti tar-razziżmu toffri tama ta' azzjoni effettiva maħsuba biex tirreżisti r-razziżmu f'Malta. Il-Kurrikulu Minimu Nazzjonali īħajjar lill-isknejel biex jibdew programmi edukattivi li b'mod sistematiku u ppjanat jgħiġi lill-istudenti jikkonfrontaw dan il-monstru soċjali.

Dan l-impenn iġib miegħu il-bżonn ta' tħarriġ kontinwu ta' l-ghalliema u investimenti f'riżorsi u riċerka maħsuba biex isostnu l-proġett.



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Jum dinji għad-drittijiet tal-konsumatur 15 ta' Marzu, 2000

“Il-konsumaturi sabu ma’ wiċċhom problemi speċjali fosthom nuqqas ta’ tħarriġ tekniku u faċilitajiet biex isiru jafu x’fihom il-prodotti li qed jixtru”

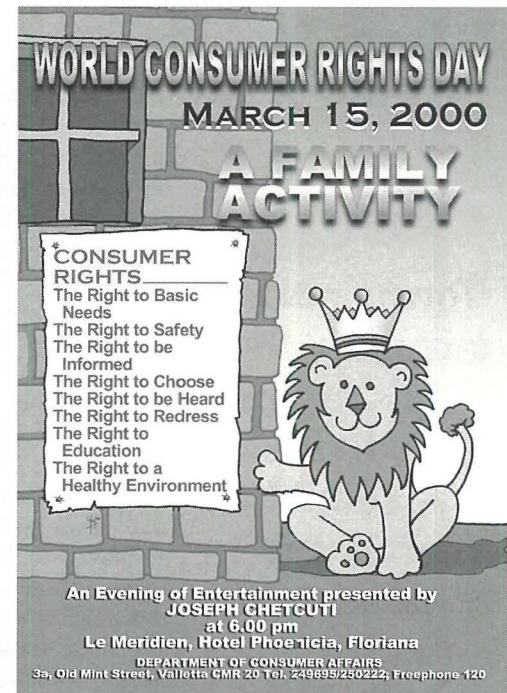


JOYCE BORG DPA, MICA,
hija ufficjal Principali fid-
Dipartiment għall-Affarijiet
tal-Konsumatur

Il-Jum Dinji għad-Drittijiet tal-Konsumatur huwa okkażjoni ta’ solidarjet u ċelebrazzjoni li ssir kull sena mill-moviment dinji tal-konsumatur biex ifakk d-dikjarazzjoni storika ta’ l-ewwel erba’ drittijiet bażiċi tal-konsumatur u li matul iż-żmien saru tmienja. Ghaliex inhasset il-htiega li l-Moviment tal-Konsumatur jikber mad-din ja kollha?

Fl-ahhar snin ix-xjenza u l-industrija žviluppaw eluf ta’ prodotti li huma komplessi. B’hekk il-konsumaturi sabu ma’ wiċċhom problemi speċjali fosthom nuqqas ta’ tħarriġ tekniku u faċilitajiet biex isiru jafu x’fihom il-prodotti li qed jixtru. Il-metodi moderni ta’ bejgħ minn nies imħarrġa apposta biex ibieghu l-prodotti tagħhom qed ikomplu jħawdu l-konsumatur. L-ghadd kbir ta’ prodotti ta’ kull kwalità; tip; u għamla li nsibu f’suq liberalizzat toffri wkoll ġerti diffikultajiet fin-nuqqas ta’ informazzjoni korretta dwar prodotti u servizzi. F’dan ix-xenarju kkomplikat it-tminn drittijiet bażiċi joffru l-protezzjoni. Wieħed mill-ewwel drittijiet li ssemmha kien id-Dritt għas-Sigurta. Dan ifisser li l-konsumatur għandu jkun imħares minn prodotti, mezzi ta’ produzzjoni u servizzi biex dawn ma jkunux ta’ periklu għas-saħħa jew għall-hajja. Għal dan il-ġhan fil-futur qrib se tidħol il-liġi magħrufa aħjar bhala *General Product Safety* fejn kull prodott li jkun hawn fis-suq ma jkunx ta’ periklu għall-konsumatur.

Id-Dritt għall-Informazzjoni huwa dritt tal-konsumatur biex jasal għall-ahjar deċiżjoni dwar l-ghażla tiegħu. Il-konsumatur għandu wkoll id-Dritt għall-Għażla minn sensiela ta’ prodotti u servizzi li jiġu offruti għall-bejgħ bi prezziżi kompetitivi u ta’ kwalità sodisfaċenti. Dan id-dritt twettaq bis-shiħ f’pajjiżna bil-liberalizzazzjoni tal-kummerċ li bdiet fil-bidu tad-disghinijiet tas-seklu li għadu kif spiċċa. Id-Dritt għall-Kumpens ġie ssiggillat f’pajjiżna meta għadda fil-Parlament Malti, nhar is-17 ta’ Novermbru, 1994, l-Att 28 dwar l-Affarijiet tal-Konsumatur. B’dan l-Att twaqqaf id-Dipartiment għall-Affarijiet tal-Konsumatur, kif ukoll it-Tribunal għal Talbiet tal-Konsumatur fejn il-konsumatur Malti seta’ jmur għax qabel ma kċċu mkien fejn jirrikorri dwar l-ilmenti tiegħu biex jieħu l-kumpens mistħoqq. Id-Dritt għar-Rappreżentazzjoni li sfortunatament mhux popolari mal-Maltin huwa d-Dritt li jinstema’. Bhala poplu nippreferu noqogħdu ngorru bejnietna dwar l-



Xbieha bla kulur tal-poster intużat mid-Dipartiment ghall-Affarijiet tal-Konsumatur biex jirreklama l-attività tal-familja organizzata fl-okkażjoni tal-Jum Dinji tal-Konsumatur

affarijiet li jolqtuna u ma norganizzawx ruħna f’għaqdiet tal-konsumaturi li permezz tagħhom nistgħu nagħmlu proposti jew xi tibdil f’miżuri li jolqtuna bhala konsumaturi.

Id-Dritt għal-Ambjent b’Sahħħu biex ngħixu u naħħdu f’ambjent li ma jkunx ta’ periklu għall-bniedem. X’jiswa li jkollna l-kumdità kollha jekk per eżempju n-nifs li nieħdu jkun imniġġes. Id-Dritt għall-Aċċess tal-Bżonnijiet Bażiċi, fejn kemm f’pajjiżi tat-tielet dinja kif ukoll soċjetajiet avvanż-żi hawn nies neqsin minn dawn il-bżonnijiet li jagħmlu hajnejn diċċenti, bħan-nutritment; l-edukazzjoni; il-kura primarja; ecc’.

Id-Dritt għall-Edukazzjoni tal-Konsumatur, li għalkemm saret hħidma kbira f’dan il-qasam mid-Dipartiment għall-Affarijiet tal-Konsumatur, il-htiega ilha tinhass biex din l-edukazzjoni ssir fl-iskejjel matul il-hajja skolastika ta’ l-istudent permezz ta’ l-introduzzjoni ta’ dan is-suġġett fil-Kurrikulu Minimu Nazzjonali. B’hekk inkunu qed inrawmu ġenerazzjoni ta’ konsumaturi infurmati dwar drittijiet hawn u dmiriethom.

The implications of the new National Minimum Curriculum for Science Education

Debbie Chetcuti

“Science forms part of our daily lives and all individuals should be prepared to respond to the realities and challenges of science in our daily lives”



DEBORAH CHETCUTI has a B.Ed (Hons.) (1989), an M.Ed in Curriculum & Instruction at McGill University, Montreal (1992), and has recently graduated Ph.D in Education from the Nottingham Trent University. She is a lecturer in the Faculty of Education, University of Malta.

The new millennium has seen the publication of a new National Minimum Curriculum. This new curriculum offers a number of challenges to all educators. One of the main challenges of the new NMC is without any doubt in the area of "Science Education". As stated in the NMC "Among the recurrent challenges that the curriculum must strategically address are: developments in science and technology, the ability to make use of the recent developments in these areas, digital processing of information and knowledge; developments in the cognitive sciences..." (p. 21). The philosophy encouraged is that science forms part of our daily lives and that all individuals should be prepared to respond to the realities and challenges of science in our daily lives. This is the idea of scientific literacy which is defined according to Koballa, Kemp and Evans (1997) as the knowledge and understanding of scientific concepts and processes required for personal decision making, participation in civic and cultural affairs and economic productivity. As Bybee (1993) argues as citizens, individuals are called on to evaluate the uses and consequences of science and technology. They must decide whether to help establish public policies as much as their knowledge and skills do. This can only be obtained by having a broad and balanced grounding in science.

How does the NMC propose to ensure scientific literacy?

One of the main aims of education is to prepare individuals to lead personally fulfilling and socially responsible lives. As Black (1993) argues, given the large and growing relevance of science in the private, social and political spheres, the optimum planning of a science experience is of utmost importance. For the majority of students science is part of a general education and here science enables students to develop the skills necessary for them to be able to think for themselves, solve problems, and participate in the decision making of the society to which they belong. For other students science is the stepping stone to a profession in the field of science. The same science curriculum therefore needs to provide the first stages for a training in a science career

for the minority as well as a broad overview of the basics of science for a majority of the students. This can be achieved through a broad and balanced overview of science at secondary education and further specialisation in specific science subjects at a later stage.

The new NMC is therefore suggesting the introduction of Co-ordinated Science as a subject in secondary school. The idea is for Co-ordinated Science to replace the existing specialisation in this area of the curriculum. "Co-ordinated Science includes themes from different branches of science, technology, nature studies and applied Science" (NMC, p. 81). The idea is that:

In establishing Co-ordinated Science as a basic subject from Form I until Form 5, the curriculum ensures a more widespread knowledge of science. This should lead to more students choosing scientific subjects at post secondary level (p. 81)

The Philosophy

In principle the idea of Co-ordinated science is an important move towards the development of individuals who are scientifically literate. A broad and balanced science will lead students





“Citizens have a genuine need to understand the impact of science and technology on our society and the social issues they must evaluate.”

to an understanding of science which is process rather than content based, crosses the boundaries between the separate ideologies and creates a co-ordinated science which is rich, authentic and context based. This as argued by Bybee (1993) will result in students developing a number of attitudes, skills and knowledge as well as having acquired certain personal and social habits.

“One of the main aims of education is to prepare individuals to lead personally fulfilling and socially responsible lives”

The Challenge

The philosophy behind introducing Co-ordinated Science is an excellent one but the next step, how it is actually going to be implemented is even more crucial. While most teachers would agree with the idea of Co-ordinated Science in principle since it is important for students to get as broad an idea of science as possible to enable them to deal with science in their lives, the idea has also raised a number of questions. First of all it is not clear what is actually meant by Co-ordinated Science? Does Co-ordinated science mean keeping the three sciences but simply teaching them as a single subject? Does Co-ordinated Science mean a complete change and therefore a completely new curriculum based on themes needs to be developed? Another thought which needs to be considered is who will teach Co-ordinated Science? Will a graduate of a single science subject be able to teach Co-ordinated Science? Will there be a need for re-training? Is there space for team teaching? How will Co-ordinated Science prepare students who wish to specialise in science? Will the separate subjects still be

taught as an option at secondary level? These are all questions which still need to be resolved and there is no actual solution offered by the NMC itself. What the NMC does say is that:

For this to occur, the post secondary institutions and the University of Malta should reform their programmes. Until this agreement translates into concrete reality, the Education Division will persist with the system of specialisation in Science that starts at Form 3 (p. 81).

This is of course only a makeshift solution and work needs to be started on taking up the challenges of the new NMC and making Co-ordinated Science a reality. The danger of such a suggestion is that the idea of Co-ordinated Science remains just that – an idea and we will stick to the status quo. A great deal of work needs to be done to ensure that the dream of Co-ordinated Science becomes a reality.

Of course most of the ground work will need to be carried out by a special committee set up to work on the introduction of Co-ordinated science. But what is more important is the involvement of all science teachers in schools. Science teachers need to get together even if in small groups and air their views. If the introduction of Co-ordinated science is to be a success it has to be based on dialogue and collaboration between all individuals, members of University, Education officers, subject co-ordinators and most important of all teachers. This is an exciting challenge which needs to be taken up by everyone. In my view to limit the role of the teachers in the development of Co-ordinated Science would be a grave mistake. It is the teachers who will teach Co-ordinated Science and it is the teachers who will guide the students through the processes of science. Therefore in order to develop a new curriculum for Co-ordinated science which will be successful and ensure that all students develop their best potential in science the involvement of teachers is an essential and powerful tool. As stated by Bybee (1993), “citizens have a genuine need to understand the impact of science and technology on our society and the social issues they must evaluate. Educators have the responsibility to meet this public need” (p. 84). This is the challenge which the new NMC is putting forward to all science educators.

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CONTROVERSIES IN EDUCATION

eEurope and e-Education

Joseph Giordmaina

“**The European Union is confronted with a quantum shift – resulting from globalisation and the challenges of a new knowledge-driven economy**”



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The Lisbon Meeting

The Council of the European Union has just held a special meeting on 23-24 March 2000 in Lisbon to agree on a new strategic goal for the Union ‘*in order to strengthen employment, economic reform and social cohesion as part of a knowledge-based economy*’. In the Presidency conclusions¹ it is stated that the European Union is confronted with ‘a quantum shift’ – resulting from globalisation and the challenges of a new knowledge-driven economy. The EU is also concerned with the fact that more than 15 million Europeans are unemployed. One of the solutions to the challenge of both this ‘quantum shift’ as well as to unemployment is education – a specific kind of education – one which focuses on information technology.

Such a vision of things to come has important implications as to whoever is involved in the planning and implementation of educational programmes in Malta, both within and outside schools². What the EU is telling us in very simple terms is: *invest in IT*. There are jobs in demand, but these are in specific areas, mainly in information technology.

There is possibility of economic growth – but this is of a new kind: *e-economy*. All citizens must have the ability to live and work in an information society; one simply cannot afford to be IT illiterate.

For this reason the European Council calls member states to:

“ensure that all schools in the Union have access to the Internet and multimedia resources by the end of 2001, and that all the teachers needed are skilled in the use of the Internet and multimedia resources by the end of 2002”.

Implications for Malta

The education authorities are aware of the importance of IT in schools. A well thought out programme for the introduction of computers is still being implemented. This year in the primary level we have reached year 4, while programmes at the secondary level are continuously being ameliorated. Focusing on the primary school, it is evident that the computers are in class, but whether they are being used or not and how, is a different matter.

For it seems that we have managed to place in schools the hardware, but it has had little, if any, impact on the kind of teaching being

carried out in the classroom. The Division, as far as I know has never commissioned a study to analyse the impact of IT in schools, but from informal chats I have with teachers, as well as from what I see in the classrooms it seems that:

- Teachers are not integrating IT in their lessons. Some use computers as time-filers – sending those who finish early to do something – just like doing a ‘workcard’ in the past. Consequently students who work at a slower pace never manage to have access to computers
- Some children are kept from using the computers as punishment.
- Monitors are not used for lesson presentation, using simple software like PowerPoint etc. They are mainly used as large screens for video viewing.
- Teachers see the use of IT integrated in their lesson as too time consuming. Teachers feel that they have a lot to do: an over crammed syllabus which they can hardly cover using traditional methods of teaching; IT is an added burden which they can do without
- Teachers are not well trained to use IT in the classroom. A three day course in June and another three day course in September is definitely not enough. Nor, possibly are the Certificate and Diploma in IT in Education courses run by the Faculty of Education for the Education Division. The MUT’s insistence that training of teachers should take place in those specific time frames is in practice hindering the professional development of teachers. The use of peripatetic teachers (only to be found in Malta) is commendable.
- Teachers also seem to favour drill and practice software, or software that resembles books, like match, fill-in, etc. Software that is more open-ended, like kid-pixs for example is not that popular.
- Teachers leave their laptops at home.
- Teachers do not create their own resources, or simply use the computer to create a chart or a flash card
- Most teachers still do not seem to have an idea of how to teach in groups, with one group working on one task while another group working on another. In most classrooms one sees whole class teaching all the time – with the computers (at least) covered with plastic at the back of the class.

Of course these are some of my impressions, meant to bring about a discussion on whether or not this is the case, and if so, how such problems can be solved.



Change

One important aspect all EU documents refer to is the rapid rate of change. Unfortunately we do not seem to appreciate that things are changing so fast around us. When was it the last time books were changed in schools? We still use *id-Denfil*, the *Pathway* and the *Basic Maths* books. How can it be that nobody does anything about this! We still use traditional modes of teaching, of class and school management. Change has to take place in our schools, and at a much faster rate. This involves great risks, but the alternative is to live in a time warp. The next big change in schools is going to be the introduction of Internet. How is the Education Division preparing for the introduction of Internet in schools (apart from installing the hardware)? Hopefully, just as the Division provided teachers with laptops to familiarize themselves with IT, it will now provide Internet access free of charge. Students should also be offered Internet access from home at a lower rate.³ A study of the number of homes, who own these, and what use is made of them should also be commissioned by the Education Division in order to have a better understanding of the local situation. In Europe 12% of households are connected to the Internet, which means that around 20% of the population have online access.

The *eEurope* document is recommending that:

“All pupils should be ‘digitally literate’ by the time they leave school”

By the end of 2001

- All schools should have access to the internet and multimedia resources
- Support services should be made available to all teachers and pupils
- Access to Internet/multimedia in public centres is to be made available, including in less-favoured areas

By the end of 2002

- Teachers should be equipped and skilled in the use of Internet/multimedia
- Pupils are to have access to Internet/multimedia resources in their classrooms

By the end of 2003

- All pupils should be ‘digitally literate’ by the time they leave school.

Let us hope that we as teachers can come up to this agenda. Your comments on how we can best go about this are greatly appreciated – and will be considered for publication in the forthcoming edition of *Education 2000*.

Notes

¹ Press release; Lisbon (24/03/2000) – Nr:100/00

² The idea that ‘learning can no longer be limited to schooling’ is further discussed in the Green Paper ‘Living and Working in the Information Society: People First’. COM(96) 389.

³ This is a recommendation made by *eEurope: An Information Society for All* (Brussels 08/03/2000) COM (2000) 130 final

The successful school leader

Malta Society for Educational Administration & Management

“Heads of school need to learn many an art including those of leadership, communication, caring and collaboration”

As we work towards developing schools into vital places of learning, into sites of professional inquiry and reflective practice, it is becoming obvious that heads of school need to learn many an art including those of leadership, communication, caring and collaboration. It is becoming quite obvious to heads that there is a lot of truth in the old saying, “It is not what you say as much as how you say it.” Practical and persuasive presentation skills are essential to us if we are to effectively communicate our school’s vision and mission. The best idea in the world will never get anywhere if it is not properly “sold” to the right people. Some of our school heads are learning this the hard way.

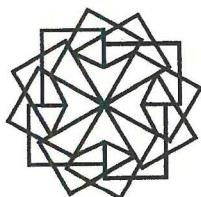
Let us explore some of the domains that heads as leaders need to address and master.

Leadership

A lot is said and written about this area. May I share with you just a few thoughts. Are you a risk taker? Are you willing to take up the challenge, which such a style calls for? Do you set a benchmark of electricity and excitement which others are prepared to emulate?

Oral and Non-verbal Communication

As leaders we also must learn to “work the crowd” both verbally and non-verbally to gain ground for our issues. Facts, proper documentation, and fluent communication skills make a formidable combination.



The Malta Society for Educational Administration and Management aims at promoting good practice, professional development and research in educational administration and management. Anyone interested in learning more about the Society can get in touch with the President, Dr. Christopher Bezzina (author of this article - Tel. 32902404; email: cbez1@educ.um.edu.mt) or the Secretary, Mr Carmel Busuttil (Tel. 433411; email: busuttil@global.net.mt).

Planning and Implementation

Every football team that ever stepped on a field has had a game plan. Everyone sets out to win. Yet, by the end of the game there is one winner. Coaches will tell you the difference in winning is in how well the game plan is implemented. As educators, our programmes and ideas will be accepted more readily if we not only plan well but also remain focused on implementation.

Interpersonal Sensitivity

Do you come across as warm and caring, affable, approachable and professional? Are you genuinely concerned about students, teachers, and parents alike? Does the school project real human values in its day to day living? Relating to the deep personal values of community members is a powerful tool when used tastefully, and not in a maudlin manner

by educators. Remember, “No one cares how much you know until they know how much you care.”

Motivation of others

As heads we need to motivate and persuade others to believe in our ideas and us. We will never do this by being dull and boring, harping on low test results, bemoaning the poor state of society, and continuously whining for this that and the other. We must concentrate on what we can do to merge the educationally sound with the not so sound, and come up with solutions our communities will buy into.

We are never going to get anywhere until we get excited about our vision of the way things can be, then share that excitement with our communities. We must persuade others of our vision before we implement it.

Excitement is contagious. We need to truly believe in what we are doing and express this in exciting and humane ways.

Problem Analysis

Problem analysis is an important component behind strategic planning. This involves hard work, which cannot be accomplished alone but must involve others. As a head you need not only be aware of things around you but also be receptive to how others feel and see things. As you work to address current and future needs determine the central issues, involve others, and plan strategies to address them and then work on implementation.

Organisational Oversight

Organisational oversight is very much tied to problem analysis. Analysts and strategists always look at the big picture of the issues they are called to address, they determine their strengths and weaknesses and how best to tackle them.

As school leaders it is important that we do the same kind of “big picture” thinking. Instead of chasing programme after programme, trend after trend, it is important to keep focused on the overall, collaboratively developed goals of the school community. That is not to say that you still will not have to make tough and unpopular decisions. The important thing is to study, analyze, collaborate, and reflect before making the decisions. These together constitute organisational oversight.

Garbage in, garbage out

Computer programmers wisecrack,

Having the right information to make logical decisions is essential to programme and personnel planning and evaluation. Without it, "Garbage in. Garbage out." 99

Do you come across as warm and caring, affable, approachable and professional?



"Garbage in. Garbage out," signifying the importance of having the right data to get the right output. Too often in education we jump on the newest bandwagon or follow the latest trend without being careful to make sure it is based on sound research and pedagogical principles. Having the right information to make logical decisions is essential to programme and personnel planning and evaluation. Without it, "Garbage in. Garbage out."

Resource Allocation

Just as having the right information is essential, so is its proper use. As educators we are constantly lamenting the lack of resources without determining how we can maximize the use of what we have. Educators should conduct evaluative studies in schools, districts and communities to find out exactly what services are needed and where they are provided, address any duplications, and target special needs.

Often more than one entity is competing for limited external and internal funding. We should develop collaborative processes to cultivate, share, maintain, and grow additional resources. Since huge amounts of additional tax money are highly unlikely in these budget-shrinking days, creative use of limited resources is essential.

Public Relations

Public relations savvy is vital to the success of school heads. Sooner or later everyone is confronted with unforeseeable problems or unfriendly audiences. How you handle the situation is as important as what you say. How we carry ourselves at all times affects the public perception of our schools. We must set the stage, and invite others to the dance. If they do not come, we must work collaboratively with others to figure out ways to entice them. Our public is our success! Our students are what this is all about!

Concluding remarks

Today's heads, as leaders, need to utilise these domains and more. On the one hand, heads have to utilise the functional domains through leadership, information collection, problem analysis, organisational oversight and implementation. Heads need to be particularly strong in interpersonal areas such as motivating others, interpersonal sensitivity, and oral and nonverbal expression. Heads will also need to score high in public relations. They will need to integrate philosophical and cultural values, legal and regulatory applications, and policy and political influences, which in the end, are important in the running of institutions.

These 'ten tips' encourage heads of school to come down from the podium both literally and figuratively. Get involved in the grassroots happenings in your school and community, and then tie them to school goals and objectives. Then stand and deliver in more ways than one! As futurist John Hoyle is fond of saying, "You can't light a fire with a wet match."

Notes for Contributors

Education 2000 is a magazine, published twice yearly (March/April and November/December periods), distributed free to all teachers, school administrators, student teachers and other educational practitioners who are interested in the study and development of the various areas of the school curriculum, teachers' professional development and school management. Its main objective is to facilitate the dissemination of research findings, effective practice and teaching and learning ideas. It carries contributions related to education in the primary, secondary, post-secondary and tertiary sectors. We welcome the following kinds of contributions:

- Reports of research which has implications for the school/classroom situation. (A considerable amount of work in this regard is carried out in the form of dissertations for education degrees. Often this kind of work is shelved and forgotten. This journal will seek to assist in the publication of such work);
- Accounts of school/classroom curriculum-related activities and teaching ideas;
- Discussions of current issues in the teaching of the various curriculum areas and subjects at all ages.

Advice on suitable material in any area of the curriculum and help with the preparation of submissions will be given by the Editorial Board. Articles should not normally exceed 2,000 words. In fact shorter contributions are encouraged. Manuscripts and all bibliographical material should be set out in standard A.P.A. style. The Editorial Board reserves the right to make changes to manuscripts to be consonant with the scope and style of the publication.

ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL: Authors are encouraged to submit illustrative material with their articles. Such material (photographs, children's work, diagrams, etc.) should be in its original form rather than photocopies. Copyright permission, when required, is the responsibility of the author.

Contributions should be submitted:

- on 3.5" diskette, containing the original file of the submission (for example Word, Word Perfect documents, etc), and a **rich text format (RTF)** version. Both PC and Macintosh formatted diskettes are acceptable; alternatively, both files may be sent as attachments via e-mail (gmal1@um.edu.mt).
- a hard copy of the contribution, including detailed notification of the insertion points of illustrative material, as well as the author's photo and a short biographical note.
- all illustrative material in a separate envelope, but with the name of the author and contribution noted on it.

Contributions are to be submitted to *any* member of the Board, or sent to:

The Editorial Board, **Education 2000**, Faculty of Education, University of Malta, Msida - MSD 06 - Malta

How well can Year 2 pupils in Malta read in Maltese and English?

Josephine Milton & Charles Missud

“Virtually every child in the country born in 1992 was tested in both Maltese and English”

This was the subject of the first ever National Literacy Survey in Malta, carried out in March 1999. The project was carried out by the Literacy Unit of the Faculty of Education of the University of Malta, in conjunction with the Curriculum Department of the Education Division.

Virtually every child in the country born in 1992 was tested in both Maltese and English. Complete data were gathered on 4554 children in State, Church and Private Independent Schools.

The test employed to measure English literacy was the *Literacy Baseline*, within the series of the *Reading Progress Tests*. This test is standardised and designed to measure pre-literacy and initial literacy skills that are usually associated with later success in learning to read. A parallel version of the *Literacy Baseline* was devised for Maltese.

Main Findings

Pupil variables:

- The average score on both tests was quite high. The average score for Maltese was significantly higher than that for English; but the difference was not large, and therefore most pupils were making good progress in literacy in both languages.
- The tests also clearly identified pupils with literacy difficulties.
- Girls achieved significantly higher average scores than boys in both languages.
- As would be expected, pupils in the upper half of the Year 2 age range had higher average scores in both languages than those in the younger half of the year group.
- Pupils whose first language was Maltese (90 per cent of the sample) achieved a higher average score on the *Maltese* test than those whose first language was English. On the *English* test those whose first language was English achieved a higher average score than those whose first language was Maltese.
- Children who had had less than two years' preschool education had significantly lower average scores in both languages than those who had had more preschool education.



JOSEPHINE MILTON is currently reading for an MEd in Literacy with the University of Sheffield, UK. For the past two years she has been working as a Research Assistant with the Literacy Unit within the

Faculty of Education, University of Malta. She also lectures part-time with the Department of Primary Education.

- Pupils who had Special Educational needs and/or were receiving Complementary Education had significantly lower average scores in both languages than other pupils.

Home variables:

- Pupils whose mothers and/or fathers were better educated, and those whose fathers had more middle-class jobs, achieved significantly higher average scores than others.

School variables:

- The number of Year 2 classes in the school had little relationship with pupils' attainment. Thus small and large primary schools appeared to be equally effective.
- Pupils in Church and Private Independent schools achieved significantly higher average scores than pupils in state schools.
- Schools in South Eastern Malta had the highest average scores, and those in Inner Harbour the lowest.

Implications

Most Year 2 pupils were making good progress in literacy in both Maltese and English, and this bilingual and biliterate outcome was a very positive finding. However, in both languages there was a 'tail' of pupils with literacy difficulties and these would need to be addressed through intensive individual attention or through monitoring and extra support maybe in small groups. Schools of all sizes seem to be equally effective in teaching early literacy.

Main Recommendations

The standardised scores of all pupils should be fed back to their schools.

Children having severe difficulties should be given intensive individual support and those who are struggling with literacy should be monitored and support provided perhaps in small groups. We also have to ensure that boys do not fall behind in this important life skill.

Moreover, state education should be improved and regional differences investigated.

junction with the Complementary Education Section of the Education Division.

The results of the National Literacy Survey have been published by the NFER and the University of Malta in:

Mifsud, C., Milton, J., Brooks, G. & Hutchison, D. (2000) Literacy in Malta, NFER, UK.

Copies of this report may be purchased from the Faculty of Education, Room 319.

In May 2000 a follow-up study dealing with the School Effectiveness and Value-Added implications of the National Survey is to be published.

Alfred Cauchi

The way ahead... first steps

The Literacy Unit has already visited many primary schools to discuss their performance and has already been invited to hold staff development meetings focusing on literacy in various schools. The Literacy Unit intends to foster closer ties with schools where literacy is thriving, so that this positive outcome is encouraged. Schools where a substantial amount of students are struggling or having severe problems with literacy will be offered assistance and plans for intervention will be drawn up to address the particular needs of the students and school in con-



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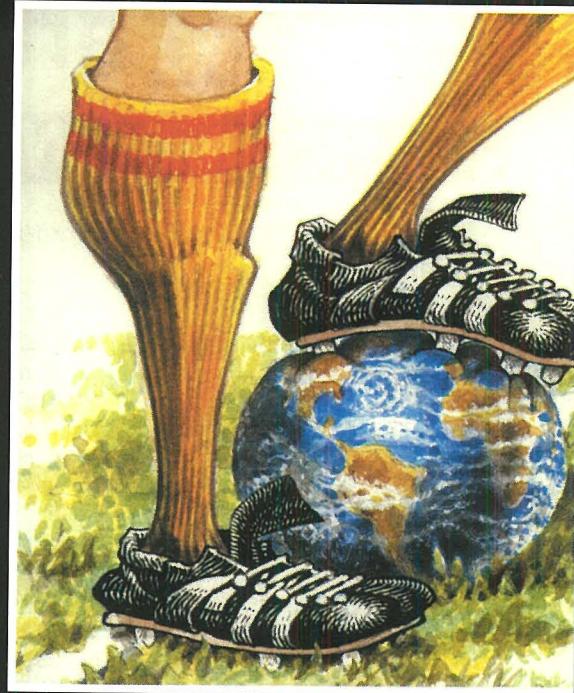
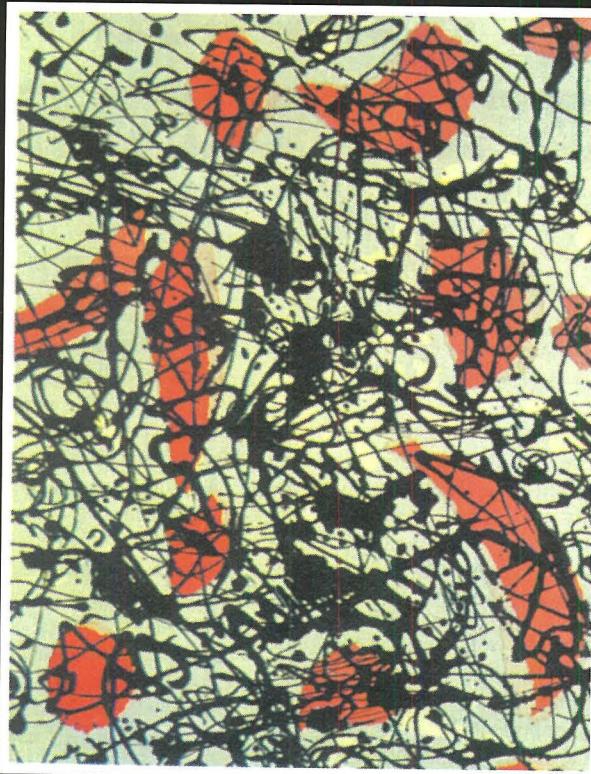
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Pictures for discussion

In this issue of *Education 2000*, we continue our service to teachers, reproducing a number of pictures of graphics, paintings, photos and cartoons - that can be used in the classroom to stimulate discussion among the students.

This can be done both as a language exercise and as general enrichment for the students.

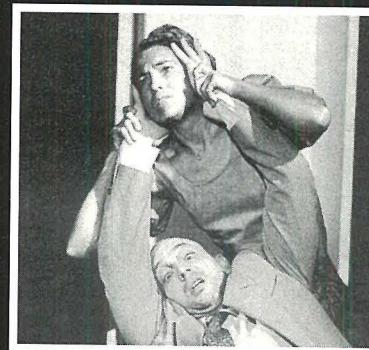
Tex Avery, from *Dare-Devil Droopy* (March 31, 1951)



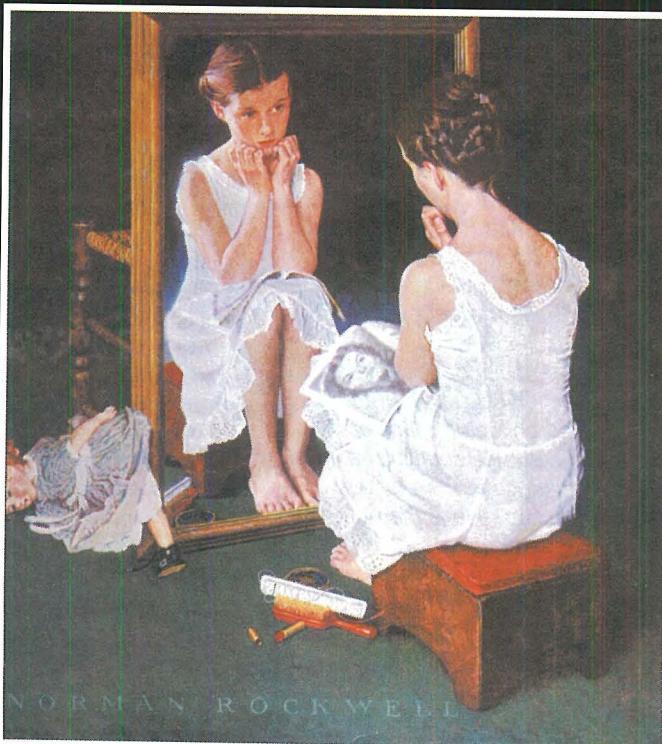
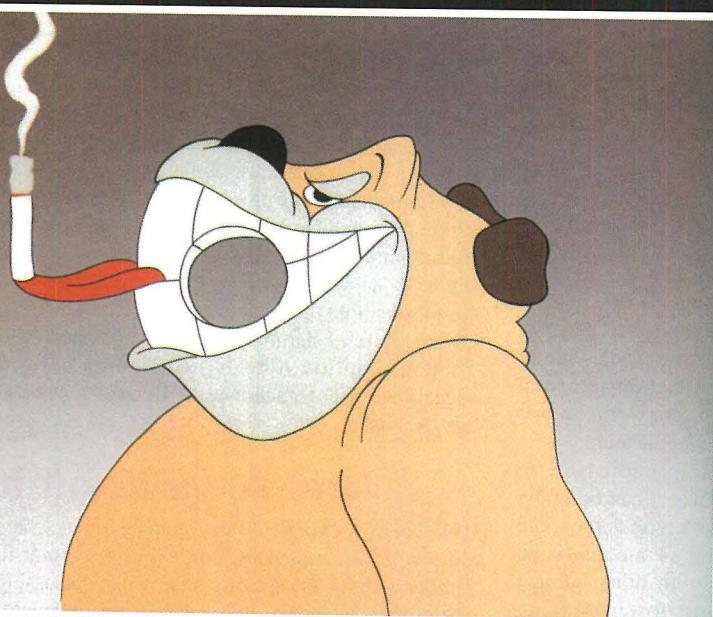
Eray Ozbek, Football
(Turkey, rep. from Witty World No.9, 1990)

Jackson Pollock, Number Fifteen (Cardazzo Collection, Venice)

Kulturchronic³, 1997



Norman Rockwell, Girl at the Mirror (Oil on canvas, 1954)



Katsushika Hokusai, View of Mt. Fuji (Museum Guimet, Paris)



Experiencing works of art in a museum

A visit to the National Museum of Fine Arts

Joseph Paul Cassar

Introduction

Extra curricular activities in our schools have always included visits to various museums. Such visits require planning beforehand. It takes phoning up the museum to inform of the visit, it requires preparatory work in the classroom, explanations at the museum itself and a follow up activity in the class.

The need for an organised package that can assist both teachers and students alike at all levels has long been felt to render museum visits more fruitful. Education in the Arts in Malta is gaining momentum, yet much is still to be desired. The Museums Department has room for special art educators to be permanently assigned to perform the job recommended in this study. Very little material is available to assist our students to benefit from the unique experience of encountering an original work of art. The responsibility remains on the teachers to perform this task to the best of their ability.

The specimen practical worksheet presented here offers an open approach; there is ample room for creativity and the content offers multiple adaptable ways of analysing, experiencing and interpreting works of art. The questions, exercises and discussions are designed to stimulate and develop the visual, mental and psychological well being of our students through the unique experience of standing in front of the work, more or less within the same parameters the original maker stood in producing it.

This exercise is based on works found in the collection of the National Museum of Fine Arts, in Valletta, Malta. Teachers are encouraged to follow the proposed procedures as well as to adapt, change, create and design their own handouts. A wide variety of approaches are put to use to get the message through. The different techniques applied are flexible enough to be adjusted to the abilities of each individual student. Links can also be made with all the other subjects. It is my wish that this proposal serves as a model to guide educators to work towards creating a more comprehensive art education.

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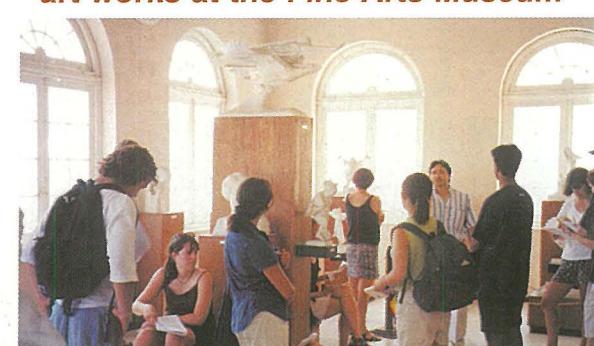
The Worksheets

Each worksheet is a unit in itself, focussing on a particular painting or sculpture from the National Museum Collection. The teacher or students can pick any work of art to study. Each work of art is illustrated in the beginning of the unit, labelled with the name of the artist, title of the work and relative dates, medium, size and museum room number. All this information is needed to serve as a reference both before visiting the actual work in the museum, and also as a reminder when it comes to conclude and do a follow up in class after the visit. The reproduction serves as an easy available point of reference for the students in class or at home. The exercises which follow are graded, each simple question leads on to the next. The strategy is varied to maintain an element of curiosity, interest and maximum participation. Various checklists are provided to assist the students in understanding the nature of the work and help them towards appreciating art and develop a critical eye. Some questions demand an easy YES or NO answer. The students tick what they feel is right. Other questions demand a simple description of things; others require a list of qualities, while others are geared towards debates. The glossary in the end is to assist the teachers and the students to research more their studies and provide a quick reference section, similar to an art dictionary. The reproductions are not to substitute the actual experience, but to serve ONLY as useful starting points to the planned visit. Their promotion here is justified as a valid educational tool to achieve the desired results of this exercise.

How to go about it

It has been my experience that students and teachers alike will be tempted to jump from one point to another without any specific order when discussing works of art. Such an approach does not enhance a critical discussion. The strategy proposed in this worksheet is not based on a mere description of what catches the eye. There is a series of open-ended questions, inviting interactive talk. The exercises

Students encountering art works at the Fine Arts Museum



Experiencing original works of art in a museum is a special experience. Viewing directly the work of art in a museum setting is a whole different sensation. The physical dimensions, the texture, colour and lighting of the real work leave an impact that a reproduction cannot convey, no matter how good it may be. The proposal here encourages our students to listen to others, investigate art forms, participate in structured discussions, learn how to see and read a picture, as well as write upon seeing art. Imagery has a special role in learning for it helps students to develop skills in the use of language, learn concepts, values and attitudes. Such qualities are highly desirable in fostering aesthetic education and should find a place in the school curriculum.

start with the obvious in order to build up the students' confidence and curiosity. Students are invited to name things they see in the works of art. It is therefore suggested that a logical procedure will be followed thus:

1. DESCRIBE
2. ANALYSE
3. INTERPRET

1. The descriptive stage

The idea here is a simple one. The students are asked to describe in very precise words what they see in the work of art. In today's world of images, students respond positively to pictures. Get the students talking from what they see. Many times they see things which you might have not realised that they are there!

The information has to be factual and should be something like this: trees, lake, sunlight, rocks, cart, 3 persons...very much like an inventory list. The students will finish with a long list of "things" which are in the picture/sculpture. Make sure that they do not start to express their feelings about the work, discuss technique or what it might mean. No conclusions are meant to be drawn at this stage.

Terms such as "Landscape", "Portrait", "Interior", "Romantic", "Pastoral", can be mentioned. If such comments arise, check them in the glossary.

2. The analyses stage

Now, the students can analyse and "dissect" as it were, the work of art into parts, studying each detail and its expressive qualities and relating it to the whole.

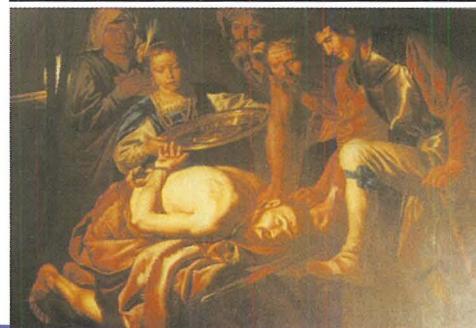
It is at this stage that the students are guided to look for **basic elements in a picture**, such as **shapes, colour, texture, composition, painting technique**. These sensory and formal qualities should be discussed and reasons or explanations should be given for all observations. This exercise should also serve as an opportunity to develop and learn new vocabulary.

An effective question to ask students in helping them analyse a picture is:

WHERE ARE YOU - THE VIEWER - STANDING IN RELATION TO THIS PICTURE?

OR

IF YOU COULD ACTUALLY ENTER THE PAINTING WHERE IS IT LIKELY THAT YOU GO?



Worksheet
"Beheading of St. John" by Matthias Stomer

7

1. What is the story depicted in this painting?
2. a) Following the numbers in the ink drawing provided identify the figures in the painting:



1.	4.
2.	5.
3.	6.

- b) Describe how your eye moves through the scene. Give reasons for your answer. Identify your starting point and ending.
3. a) How would you describe the composition in this painting?
- b) Compare this dramatic painting with Stomer's gruesome scene of the "Death of Cato" in Room 9 in the Museum's Collection.
- c) Indicate the focal point in both paintings.

In this way the student identifies the nature of elements such as shapes (square-round), lines (thick-thin), values (dark-light), textures (coarse-smooth), colours (bright-dull), size (large-small), space (deep-shallow).

3. The interpretative stage

This is an attempt to decipher meaning from the evidence collected in stages 1 & 2. After describing and analysing all the information, the student is then asked to put this knowledge into a historical context and see its implications.

The various images listed in the Descriptive Stage evoke responses from one's storehouse of images.

Now, these can be translated into:

MOOD LANGUAGE: nuances of feeling describable in terms such as harsh, pleasing....

DYNAMIC STATES: arousing a sense of tension, conflict, and relaxation...

IDEA & IDEAL LANGUAGE: interpretations of social or psychological events and beliefs, expressions of courage, wisdom...

Students should be helped to realise that some information in works of art is not always very apparent. This is the time when they should be told about it.

Specimen Worksheet

The National Museum of Fine Arts has in its collection four of Stomer's outstanding paintings. This Dutch artist moved to Italy and worked mainly in Naples and Sicily. The *Caravaggesque* features are strong in these paintings, accentuated with an extra dose of drama in the subjects depicting a dead Abel, "The Death of Cato", the assault on a traveller and the "Beheading of St. John". The composition of the latter focuses on the head of the Baptist and the remaining figures gather around in a semi-circle. A torch, almost

hidden by the

Matthias STOMER
(1600-c.1650)
"Beheading of
St. John"
Oils on canvas
144x194cms
Museum Room 9

the woman enlightens the scene, striking hard on the armour of a soldier, on the platter, Salome's dress and St. John's right shoulder and back. The Baptist's severed head gazes at us, as we look on (like the figures in the painting), participating in the killing. This painting is very rich in its *chromatic values*, the play of light, the modelling, the organisation of space, *realism* and colours.

d) Identify the source of light.

e) Where is the scene taking place?

4. This painting is:

Surrealistic	
Realistic	
Impressionistic	

5. Put an "X" in the space next to the word that best describes your ideas about this painting. Add any other words you think correspond to your general feeling concerning this work:

happy	intense	violent	bright	
fearsome	tense	bloody	crowded	
gruesome	impressive	cosy	dark	
forceful	brutal	dramatic	emotional	
sad	tight	

6. Focus on the young girl:

- a) Describe the angle she is holding the salver.
- b) How would you describe the expression on her face?
- c) What material is the platter made of?
- d) Describe her dress and jewellery.

7. Name the artist who was the pioneer in exploiting such drama by contrasting light and shade to render a powerful realism beyond compare?

8. This painting is rich in tonal values. What is the dominant colour scheme that is modelling this painting?

9. Focus on the eyes of the Baptist, his tied up hands, the woman's hands in the background, and the armoured soldier in the foreground holding the Baptist's hair. Describe the psychological impact of all of these details.

10. Identify the difference between this painting and that of Andrea Vicaro's (1598-1670) "Beheading of St. John" in Room 8.

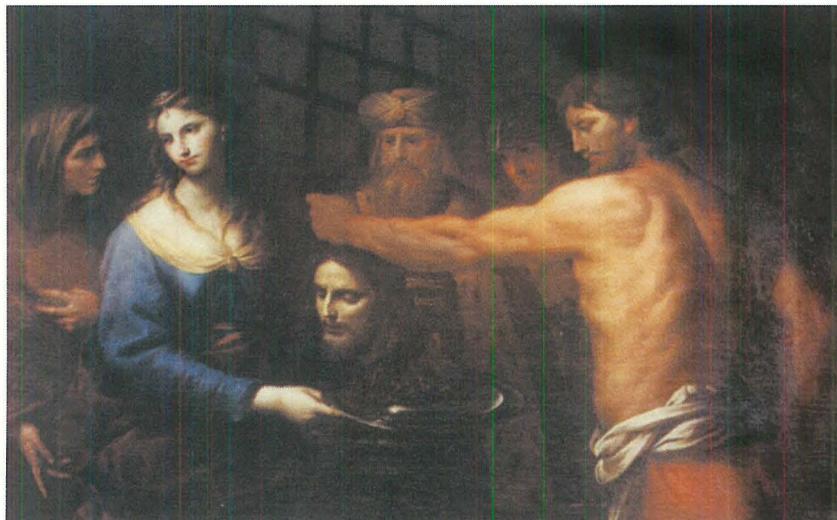


GLOSSARY (related to this worksheet)

“Viewing directly the work of art in a museum setting is a whole different sensation. The physical dimensions, the texture, colour and lighting of the real work leave an impact that a reproduction cannot convey, no matter how good it may be”

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Andrea Mantegna “Beheading of St. John”



Caravaggio referring to Italian painter Michelangelo Merisi (1571-1610) famous for painting sensational, innovative, dramatic, large religious pictures. His use of CHIAROSCURO renders his paintings so effective and life-like.

Caravaggesque works that are painted in the idiom established by CARAVAGGIO.

Chiaroscuro Italian word meaning “light” (chiaro) and “dark” (scuro). It refers to the play and contrast of light and dark areas in painting, which was initiated by Leonardo Vinci. Later on CARAVAGGIO and Rembrandt were to develop an art based on these characteristics.

Chromatic values refer to the degree of tone vividness in a colour.

Composition refers to the arrangement of various elements in a painting or sculpture that forms a coherent whole.

Contrast a difference which is clearly seen once things are put together; comparing two opposite things for example light and dark areas.

Depth the degree of recession in a picture; generally referred to as PERSPECTIVE.

Dramatic exciting, vivid, striking in appearance or effect; impressive and theatrical.

Expression the act itself of representing subject matter in art through a medium; feeling and meaning given to the work of art generally manifested as DRAMA.

Focus the position where things or people are placed for clarity of perception.

Foreshortening TECHNIQUE depicting objects lying at an angle to the picture plane by means of PERSPECTIVE. The illusion created is one of depth. It is our eye, which reconstructs the correct proportions and understanding of what is represented.

Form the structural qualities of a work of art such as shapes and volumes and their relationship.

Highlight the lightest area in a painting; the spot, which is receiving most light; a strong light that hits an area in a painting to attract our attention.

Illusion pictorial device such as PERSPECTIVE and FORESHORTENING to make things look real; representation of 3-dimensional space on a flat 2-dimensional surface giving the impression of an extension in real space.

Masterpiece a test-piece by which an apprentice showed that he qualified to be a master of his craft. Later on this came to refer to a work of art of outstanding merit in the course of the history of art.

Oil painting a TECHNIQUE produced by the use of PIGMENT with drying fine oils, generally linseed oil. This medium of painting allowed the artists to produce different gradations of TONE. This medium can also produce surface TEXTURE depending on the application of IMPASTO and BRUSHWORK.

Perspective method of representing 3-dimensional objects, their volume and space on a flat surface. The system is based on the principal that objects in the distance appear smaller than those, which are closer to the viewer.

Proportion harmonious or symmetrical; the ratio of different parts in a work of art.

Psychological refers to a work of art, which emphasizes the character, mental state and behaviour of the SITTER.

Realism an artform which aims at reproducing reality in its accuracy and details.

Style the common characteristics in the arts of a given period. It can refer also to a distinctive manner of painting by an artist.

Tactile value refers to the artist's attempts to represent the weight and TEXTURE of objects by means of colour and line. Visual qualities, characteristics and appearance of the depicted objects.

Technique French word for “technical”. Methods used by an artist to accomplish his aims; mastery of a body of knowledge pertaining to the artist's craft.

Texture the nature of the surface of a painting or sculpture. It can also refer to the free handling of brush strokes, which create a rough surface on the canvas.

Tonal values the relation of light and dark areas in a painting irrespective of colour.

Volume the space occupied by the human figure or object within a painting; it is used to refer to the solidity of the painted object in its REALISTIC representation.

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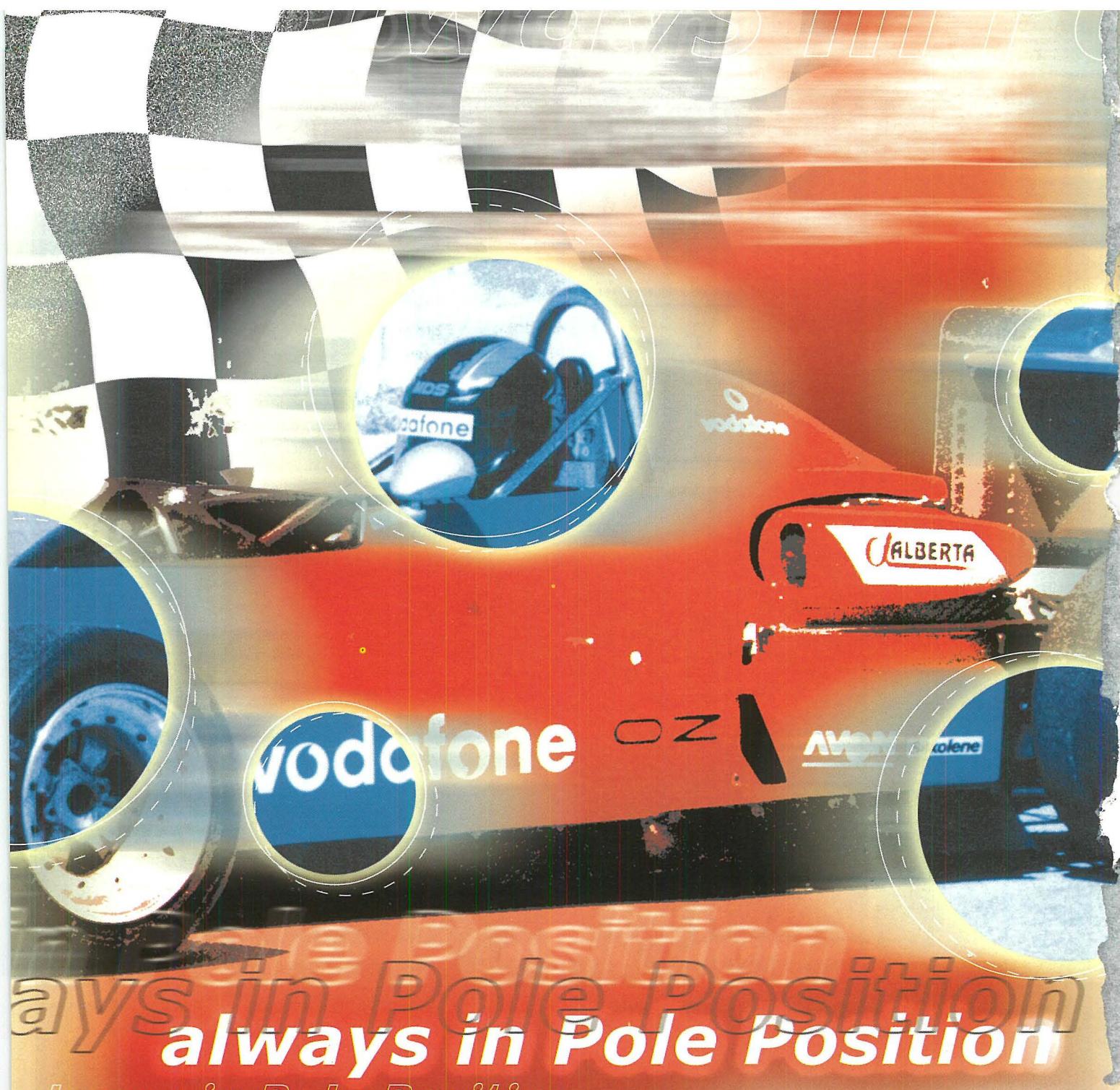


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