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EDITORIAL

Charles Mifsud

Value-Added and School Improvement

Over the past decade, improvement in communications and lowering of frontiers have led to an increasing globalisation of economic processes. This has been accompanied by an intensification of the quest for increased educational performance, both individually and nationally. This is especially important for a small country like the Maltese Islands. The lack of enormous natural resources necessitates that our education and employment policies focus on human resources and the skills of the population.

Obviously schools and pupils make a major contribution to educational performance. However, it is important that some kind of feedback is available in the shape of formative and diagnostic assessment. Otherwise, the participants are effectively navigating blind. Provision for this is made in the Maltese National Minimum Curriculum.

This is not to say that we should move in the direction of 'league tables' to assess schools' performance. While measures of eventual outcome are valuable, since this is in fact the currency of the job and tertiary education worker, they have the drawback that in many circumstances they are as much a measure of the quality of the pupil intake, as of the success of the school's efforts. This approach has now been widely recognised to be efficient.

Value-added measures compare the progress made by pupils in a school, by adjusting for pupils different starting points in terms of attainment, rather than simply their final performance in that school. They should not be used only for accountability purposes. It is equally as important to use value-added information for school self-improvement. Especially in a situation of scarce resources, such measures may prove to be invaluable to indicate to schools where improvement efforts might best be concentrated.

Locally, there already exists some experience with studies, which can provide the basis for a value-added review. Such expertise and experience is to be sustained and developed further as an integral part of curriculum development.

2001 - The European Year of Languages

This year has been designated by the European Union and the Council of Europe as the **European Year of Languages (EYL 2001)**. The motivating principle underlying this Year is that language skills are important for mutual understanding, democratic stability, employment and mobility. This Year aims to:

● raise awareness of and promote the linguistic heritage of Europe;
● motivate all European citizens to learn languages, including those less widely used;
● support lifelong language learning as a way of responding to economic, social and cultural changes in Europe.

The European Year of Languages will highlight the value of linguistic diversity and the importance of offering all citizens the opportunity of developing at least certain level of copetence in several languages.

For bilingual Malta, with a long-standing contact with a wide array of languages, this Year should be of special significance. There is no doubt that for economic, social, educational and other reasons it continues to be of utmost importance, perhaps even more so in this age of global communications, for us Maltese continue to attain a high level of proficiency in a wide range of languages. Language learning is a long-term and laborious process and there can be no short cuts. It is important that we continue to review and revise our language teaching and learning policies, strategies and methodologies. Proficiency in Maltese and English is a sine qua non for anybody who would like to continue to function fully in Maltese life. Proficiency in other languages is crucial for our participation in different spheres of life both in Malta and beyond.
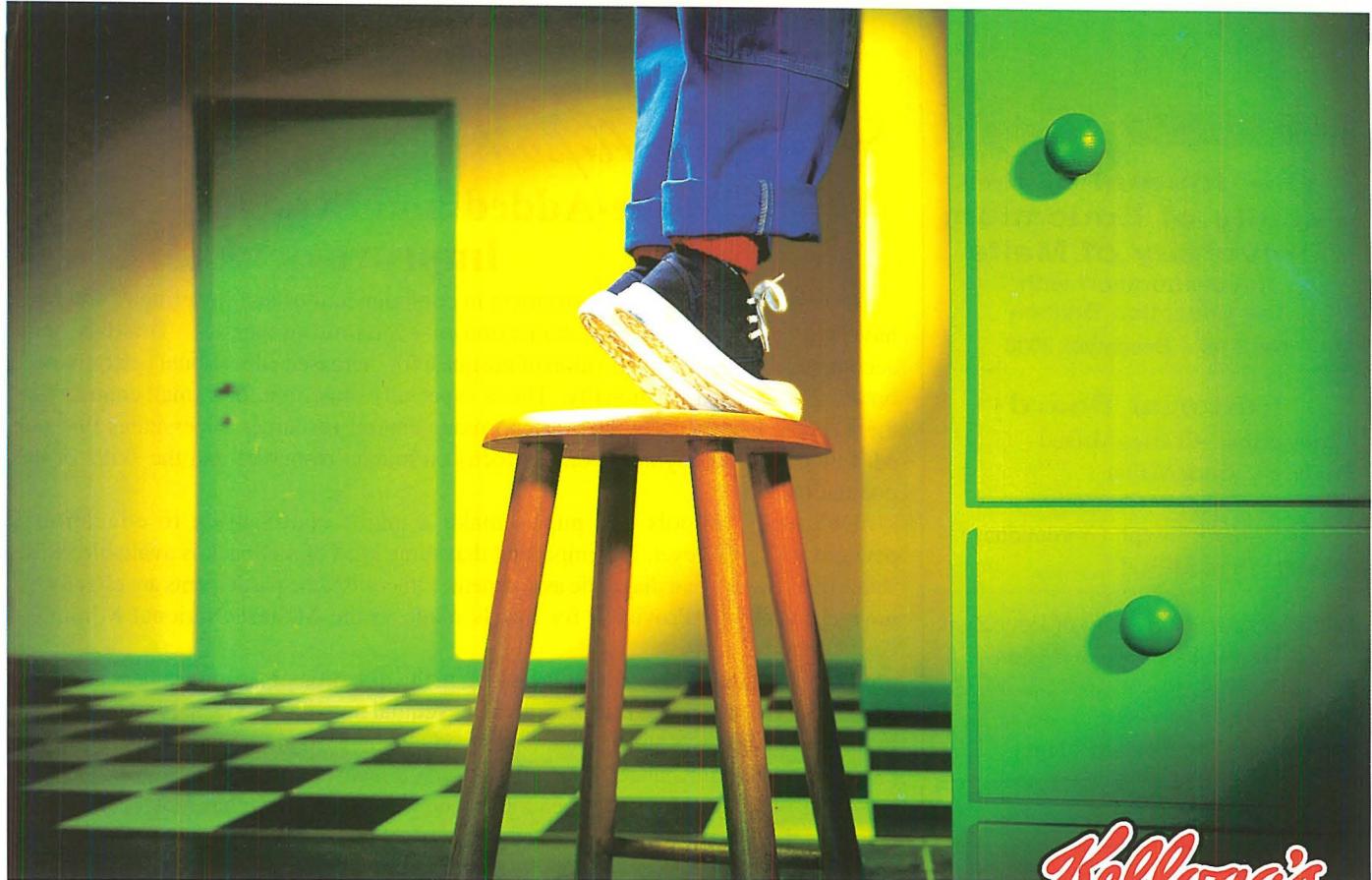
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You filled it with these new crunchy bars from Kellogg's. You will finally give your children a snack which is not only delicious to eat, but is moreover good for them.

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Did you know that there is more **calcium** in one Kellogg's bar than there is in one glass of milk and that these bars are very rich in **vitamin B** and in **iron**? And of course, they are made from their favourite cereals. This is why the new Kellogg's bars suit your children perfectly well during their period of growth.

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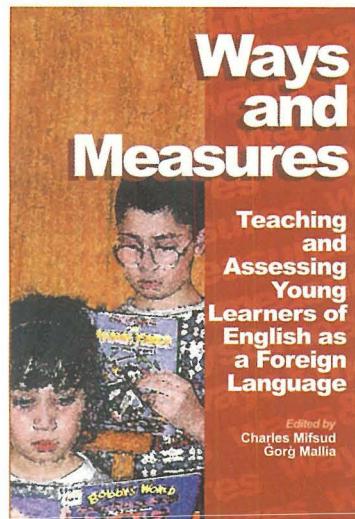
Ways and Measures: Teaching and Assessing Young Learners of English as a Foreign Language
edited by Charles Mifsud & Ġorġ Mallia.
World Academic, 256pp.
ISBN 99932-606-0-6 Paperback
ISBN 99932-606-1-4 Hardback

The teaching and assessment of young learners of English as a Foreign Language have become especially important in recent years. One reason for this has been the introduction of Primary English as a Foreign Language in a number of European countries and other places all over the world. The issues of teaching and assessment are closely linked. How they come together, or at times do not come together, is a matter of grave concern for all of those involved in education.

Ways and Measures is a very useful collection of papers by international authors that range from theoretical discussions of issues and policy implementation to research and practical classroom suggestions. They provide opportunities for enlightened reflection on a number of issues and present ideas for effective practices.

The authors represented in this collection are: Jennifer Jarvis, Jayne Moon, Wendy Superfine, Helen Barrott-Asal, Marjana Finzagar, Miloša Gogala, Liudmyla Byrkun, Stacey H. Hughes, Ġorġ Mallia, Kari Smith, Diane Phillips, Rosalie Kerr, Fred L. Perry, Jr., Doreen Spiteri, Lewis Larking, Khoo Suan Chin, Daphne Pawlec, Anna Lesinska-Gazicka, Charles Mifsud & Josephine Milton.

This book is of particular interest to teachers and student teachers of English as a Foreign Language; academics and researchers interested in teaching and assessment methodologies and interested parents of young learners.

The different chapters in *Ways and Measures* are about: Stories, young learners and teachers: Exploring purposes and practices in using stories to teach English – How Children's Writing Develops in the L2: Implications for Teaching and Assessment – Making topics memorable- Getting teenagers to talk – Stimulating teaching and learning activities – Creating a learning environment for Discourse Competence – Acquisition of English as a Foreign Language in Primary Schools – Comics Create Creative Language – Audio as an instructional medium in the EFL classroom – Why do we want to assess young learners? How do we do it? Who does it? – Testing Times for Young Learners: Testing, assessment and the communicative classroom – What are the desirable characteristics of language tests for children, and how can we produce them? The Cambridge Young Learners English Tests – Presumptions, Realities & Prescriptions – Classroom-based assessment – English Language Assessment: Selection of students for High School in Brunei Darussalam – Assessment of Young Learners in Primary Schools in Poland – Reading in Two Languages in Malta. There is also an index.

The book is available from: *Agenda University Campus Bookshop,* Tel. 331910 / 32902996, and from the *Agenda* bookshops at the Embassy Complex Valletta, and the Plaza Complex Sliema.

Gramsci, Freire & Adult Education: Possibilities for transformative action
by Peter Mayo
ZED Books, ISBN 1 85649 614 7

This book focuses on two of the most cited figures in the debate on radical education - Antonio Gramsci and Paulo Freire. Both regarded fors of adult education as having an important role to play in the struggle for liberation from oppression. In this book Dr. Peter Mayo examines the extent to which their combined insights can provide the foundation for theory for our own times of transformative adult education. He focuses on three aspects of the pedagogical process in particular - social relations, sites of practice and the content of adult education. He analyses their ideas and identifies some of the limitations in their works, notably the critical issues of gender and race which they do not address.
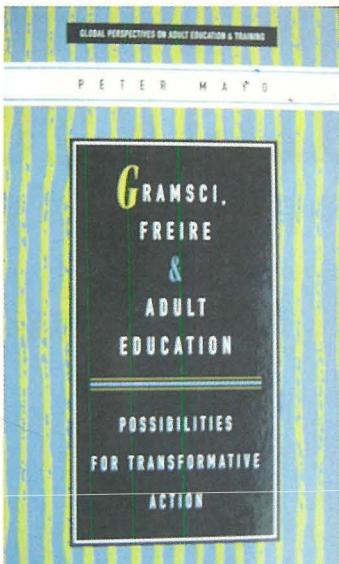
The book concludes with a seminal attempt at synthesising their ideas in the context of other adult educators' more recent contributions in order to develop a theory of transformative adult education, including an assessment of its feasibility in the era of globalisation and neoliberalism.

Professor Ira Shor, a leading writer on critical pedagogy says that "There is something valuable on every page. Gramsci and Freire make the road by walking and Mayo in his own right reveals the road ahead."

The book is available from *Agenda University Campus Bookshop,* Students' House, University of Malta.
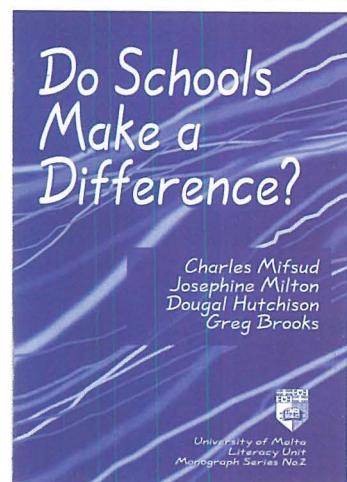
Do Schools Make a Difference?
by Charles Mifsud, Josephine Milton, Dougal Hutchinson and Greg Brooks
University of Malta Literacy Unit Monograph Series No. 2, 40pp.
ISBN 99909-991-2-0

The work reported in this publication is based on the first ever Malta National Literacy Survey (MNLS) which was carried out in

March 1999. The results of the main study were reported in Mifsud et al., (2000) **Literacy in Malta** published by the NFER (UK).

Almost every child in the Maltese Islands born in 1992 was tested in both Maltese and English, using equivalent parallel tests. Complete data was gathered on 4554 children. Multilevel modelling was used as the main statistical approach.

A small island such as Malta, without enormous natural resources, may well wish to adopt a strategy of concentrating on human resources and the skills of its population. Key among these will be the ability to communicate in one of the EU's official languages, and here the island's impressive performance in successfully teaching English to a largely Maltese-speaking population will be of great value. At a time such as this, it will also be important to ensure that the distinguishing features of the islands' heritage and culture are preserved. One important facet of this will be the preservation and encouragement of the Maltese language.

Value added techniques use the statistical technique known as multilevel modelling to assess progress and provide schools with an important means of monitoring their own performance. Some way of assessing the quality of the entry is necessary for value added studies. The MNLS could provide an intake measure for assessing progress at later stages in primary schools. Results from studies comparable to the MNLS could also be used to provide the outcome of a value added study.

It is generally considered that a measure of attainment at entry to school is the optimum predictor of eventual outcome. However the research reported here shows that the MNLS home background information is of high quality and could provide a comparably powerful predictor at the early stages of education.

Do Schools Make a Difference? is necessary reading for all educators, school administrators, teachers, parents, policy-makers, politicians, lecturers, researchers and all those interested in education.

The authors, Charles Mifsud and Josephine Milton, are of the Literacy Unit at the University of Malta, and Dougal Hutchinson and Greg Brooks are of the National Foundation of Educational Research of the UK.

Copies are available from the Faculty of Education, University of Malta and from *Agenda University Campus Bookshop,* Students' House, University of Malta.

Nestling Environmental Education within the Maltese Formal Educational System

Paul Pace

In my earlier paper (*Education 2000*, No.6), referring to the results of a study investigating whether the Maltese formal educational system is receptive to the principles of environmental education, I outlined basic perceptions about the environment and environmental education of the sample made up of student teachers, practising teachers, education authorities from the Education Division and university lecturers involved in the teacher education programme. I will now focus on how these perceptions come to bear on the implementation of environmental education in the formal education sector.

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Traditional environmental education

A characteristic feature of a traditional approach to environmental education is a monodisciplinary curriculum structure. A high percentage of the respondents accepted the interdisciplinary nature of environmental education and felt that it should be infused in all the curriculum subjects (trend also reported by Dorion, 1990). When asked whether environmental education should be a new separate subject in the curriculum or not, the majority of student teachers seemed to contradict their choice for an interdisciplinary approach. A closer look at their comments betrays a lack of awareness of what an integrated approach entails. Furthermore, they also accept the situation in schools as given and seem to think that by promoting environmental education as a new subject they would be ensuring its implementation in the curriculum. On the other hand, teachers, education authorities and university lecturers, seemed to be aware of the already overloaded curriculum. Hence, although quite conscious of the problems involved and the support needed to sustain the innovation, they favoured an integrated approach for the implementation of environmental education (also reported by Dorion, 1990).

A large number of respondents, from all the sample categories, believed that teachers prefer a monodisciplinary approach to the integrated approach mainly because of the stress caused by curriculum constraints. If an increased level of occupational stress forces teachers to adopt coping strategies which in their opinion reduce stress, one can safely assume that stressed teachers tend to give little, if any, concern to the pedagogical requirements inherent in environmental education. Occupational stress caused by 'working conditions' and 'time pressure' has been identified in both Maltese primary (Borg, Riding & Falzon, 1991) and secondary (Borg & Riding, 1991) schoolteachers. The present study revealed that teachers who taught in secondary or post-secondary schools or at the non-formal level tend to have a statistically significant negative attitude toward a traditional approach to environmental education. This implies that the problem lies within the primary sector.

Research on occupational stress in local primary schools (Borg & Falzon, 1989) shows that teachers with over 20 years of teaching experience show the highest level of self-reported occupational stress and the lowest level of self-reported job satisfaction. Considering that primary schools have the highest population of old teachers (Central Office of Statistics, 1996), it follows that the highest percentage of stressed teachers can be found in this sector. The present study seems to confirm this assumption since the results show that teachers with more than 20 years of teaching experience tend to prefer a traditional approach to environmental education. Moreover, the study also suggests that age significantly influences an individual's perception of environmental education: individuals within the 51-70 years age group, together with their younger 17-20 year old counterparts (also confirmed by Fiott & Grech, 1987), tend to have a negative attitude towards environmental education.

Respondents also agreed that environmental education should be a continuous lifelong
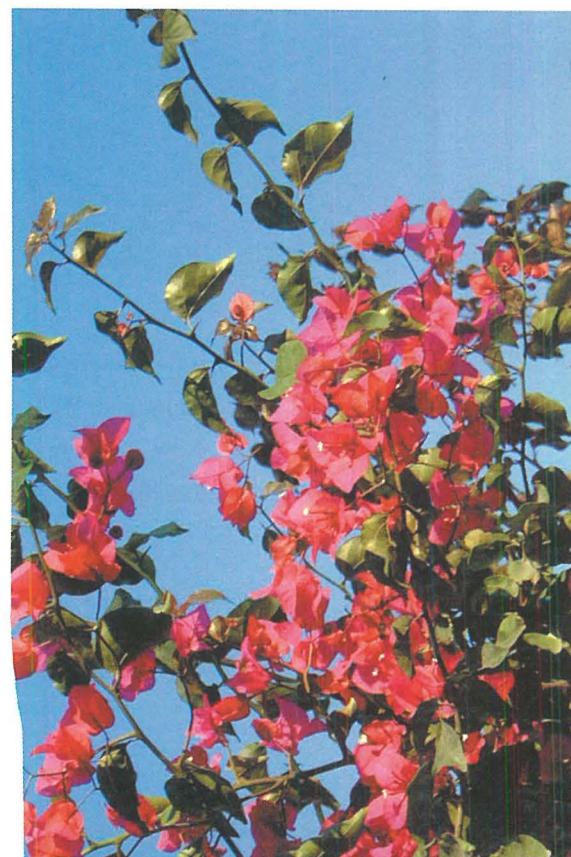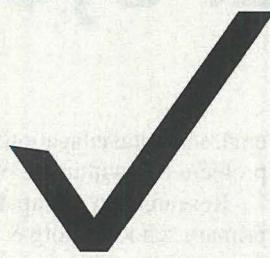
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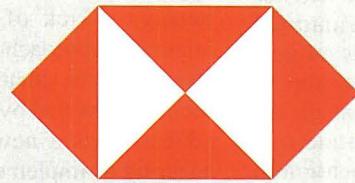
Answer

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> ❝ Environmental education should be a continuous lifelong process forming an essential part of every citizen's education and, because of its importance, it should be given formal acknowledgement in the curriculum ❞

process forming an essential part of every citizen's education and, because of its importance, it should be given formal acknowledgement in the curriculum. Comments made by respondents regarding the type of audience, for whom environmental education is addressed, seemed to view environmental adult education only as a complement of environmental education initiatives in schools. Comments directly addressing adult education relegated this special type of environmental education merely to imparting information about the environment and suggested the use of mass media to achieve this purpose - the only method specifically mentioned for adult education.

Learner centred environmental education and Maltese educational institutions

The vast majority of the sample was in favour of active learner participation, although different sample categories had different perceptions about the type and degree of participation expected. Active learner participation is a continuum ranging between two extremes. At one end, learners are the actors, performing tasks and actively participating in a learning programme, designed and managed by the teacher. At the other end of the continuum, learners determine their own learning programme, while the teacher assists them in their learning needs and helps them design learning strategies. The variable along this continuum is the dependence of the learning experience on the input of the teacher.

Student teachers seemed quite undecided over the issue. Their responses were almost equally divided over the two choice extremes with a slight preference for situations in which learners determine their own learning. This 'uncertainty' could be a reflection of the dilemma student teachers have to face when they experience the incongruency between the ideals of education and the harsh reality of the schools. The educational authorities, who were exactly divided over the issue, also expressed this uncertainty. Teachers opted for a more teacher-controlled learning programme while university lecturers (with the exception of lecturers who teach content units) demonstrated a statistically significant preference for learner-controlled programmes. Content lecturers had a statistically significant negative attitude toward learner centred environmental education when compared with their colleagues who teach subject methodology and foundation subjects (i.e., philosophy, psychology and sociology). This is because content lectures at university level tend to rely on a monodisciplinary approach and a didactic teaching mode that ensure the efficient

transmission of large amounts of sequentially structured knowledge in a relatively short time.

All the sample categories considered first hand learning experiences and a sound interface with the community, particularly parents, as crucial to the notion of learner centred environmental education. Almost all the respondents felt that schools should provide learners with experiences and opportunities to develop problem solving skills and the ability to think critically through the use of diverse teaching approaches and a variety of teaching resources. The vast majority of the sample felt that Maltese educational institutions are not helping learners to achieve these educational goals. They have found them lacking in practical first-hand experiences, in diversity of teaching methods and in the resources required for effective environmental education. By 'educational institutions', the sample seems to be indicating schools, as the results show that exposure to university life generates a more positive attitude towards environmental education. Fiott & Grech (1987) also reported that post-secondary school education positively influenced the environmental awareness of their sample. They also concluded that Maltese schools are failing in their function to promote environmental education.

An examination-oriented pedagogy characterised by the publication of rigid and detailed syllabi, expository teaching and a race against time to cover syllabus items were considered by the sample as the major obstacles for the implementation of environmental education and the adoption of a humanistic type of education in Maltese schools. The responses also revealed that the very people who should be implementing these changes in schools, namely student teachers and teachers, were the ones who had the least positive attitude towards learner centred environmental education. Judging from the nature of the problems cited by these sample categories vis-à-vis environmental education, the probable reason for this negative attitude is that they are aware of the large difficulties inherent in a decision to adopt this approach within the present educational structure. Furthermore, a learner centred pedagogy does not only involve a change in learner-teacher relationships, but also a change in the relationship between teachers and the education authorities. Changes in established practices, particularly within a traditional setting, result in an 'administrator's nightmare'. This could be the reason why education authorities having an administrative role in the Education Division, tended to have a significantly negative attitude towards learner-centred environmental education when compared with other officials who have non-administrative roles.

Yet respondents feel that the 'crippling' constraints reportedly imposed by the system are just "*an excuse*" masking deeper problems. Teachers seem to lack the skills required to deal
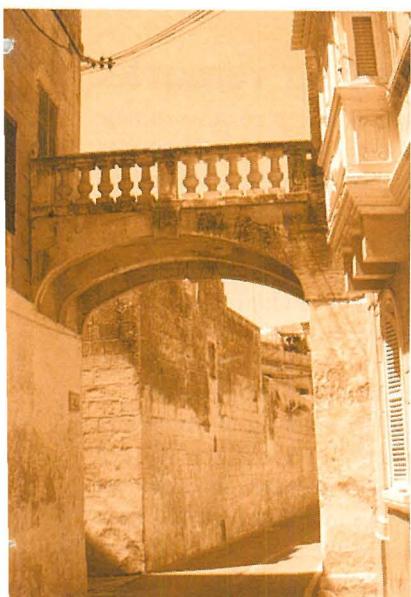
> **Sound environmental education can only be achieved through a radical reform of the way the formal education system presently operates**

with the new roles imposed by their profession as it responds to the changing needs of society. As regards environmental education, the situation seems to be further compounded by implications, made by respondents, that teachers lack environmental awareness and are hence prevented from developing into effective environmental educators. Respondents identified three major requirements for the successful implementation of environmental education in schools: increased teaching resources, the development of an environmental education component in teacher education programmes, and the development of a national policy on environmental education.

Teacher education programmes

Considering the problems identified in teachers' inability to tackle environmental education, it is not surprising that pre- and in-service teacher education were major areas of concern among suggestions made on the establishment of a supporting infrastructure for environmental education. Widespread among the respondents was dissatisfaction with the present pre-service teacher education provisions. Student teachers and teachers felt that the programme was 'too theoretical' at the expense of devoting little time to practical applications. Rather than being a manifestation of the traditional rift between theory and practice, a closer look at the criticisms made reflects an inherent desire to achieve reflective practice. Student teachers and teachers criticised the present teacher education programme on the grounds that it does not provide opportunities for the learners to make the required links between theory and practice. In-service teacher training courses were also considered as a very essential measure to ensure that teachers can keep up with innovations and to adapt to their new roles. The major problem identified in these courses was the fact that teachers are expected to adopt new methodologies without adequate support from the Education Division.

A supportive administrative structure

The vast majority of the sample felt that teachers should be actively involved in curriculum planning. This would ensure that the curriculum becomes more relevant to the particular needs of schools, generating a feeling of ownership essential for the development of a school ethos and a professional collegiality between the teaching staff of a school. A lot of consensus about the desirability of this goal was recorded in the study. The divergent ideas lay in the ways this goal could be achieved.

From the comments given in the survey, student teachers and teachers seemed to favour a complete dissociation from the central authorities, with the professional teacher running the main show. However, educational policy makers clearly pointed out that the curriculum planning process needs to involve other 'stakeholders' besides teachers. They also seem to have some reservations about the level and type of teacher participation. This could be a reflection of the feeling expressed by education authorities and university lecturers in the survey that teachers still lack the necessary initiative and skills to participate in curriculum development effectively. For this possible reason, teacher involvement is still seen as that of the "*professionally trained technician*" who still needs to develop the "*right conceptual framework*". This way of looking at curriculum development is still reminiscent of the traditional top-down curriculum development model in which the change agents are the researchers or the education authorities who develop, disseminate and evaluate the curriculum innovations. Teachers do not play the leading role in the process (Pace, 1996). Such a state of affairs conflicts with the promotion of environmental education that maintains that the change process should involve the active participation of people, whom the changes will ultimately affect, encouraging a pro-active stance.

In his analysis of top-down and bottom-up approaches to curriculum development, Pace (1996) proposed "*a new style of top-down approach*". The new approach essentially involves a redefinition of the role of the people 'at the top', from that of change agents to that of catalysts of change providing support and training to those 'at the bottom' in order to help them become equal partners in the enterprise. Rather than being imposed from an outside body, change is generated from within. Instead of wasting resources and energies trying to fit a generalised solution to particular contexts, the model generates tailor-made solutions for specific needs.

Concluding remarks

The study revealed a very positive attitude toward environmental education principles within a very rigid formal education system that traditionally resists or rather slows down change. It is very important at this point to reiterate that the distinction between the principles of sound educational practice and environmental education principles is very blurred. Sound environmental education can only be achieved through a radical reform of the way the formal education system presently operates. Intimately concerned with the interactions of humans with their environment and with themselves, environmental education provides educators with a context and a scope for such an educational reform. Hence, I find it

hard to believe that a national curriculum published "*on the threshold of the new millennium*" should fail to mention environmental education in its guidelines. In so doing the National Minimum Curriculum (NMC) seems to perpetuate the traditional view that the development of an environmental ethic will occur naturally as a result of the introduction of environmental topics in the curriculum. Nevertheless, it must be said that, should the educational system adopt the principles proposed by the NMC (see below), it would establish the right infrastructure to support environmental education initiatives (Ministry of Education, 1999).

The lesson that needs to be learnt from the history of educational reform as well as from the development of environmental education in Malta is that of avoiding short-term piecemeal reforms (Pace, 1997). These short-term policies tended to have very narrow objectives, usually originating from the transient whims of politicians. Educational reform tends to be characterised by a lot of "going to and fro" and besides striking havoc in the system, this approach develops in individuals a distrust of innovations that are seen as unnecessary breaks in normal routines. Complex long-term changes in the system need to be meticulously planned, approached, co-ordinated and monitored from various angles by the various actors involved. Within the context of environmental education, achieving this co-ordinated action is the principal goal of the Maltese national environmental education strategy (NEES, 1995).

The present study has shown that the successful implementation of environmental education in the formal education sector can be achieved through a combined top-down and bottom-up approach. Policy makers seemed willing to adopt an unequivocal stance in favour of environmental education and to empower students and teachers to take an active part as effective change agents. The following are recommendations how this can be achieved:

● Adopting an unequivocal policy about environmental education in the NMC addressing the multifaceted nature of the environment and the interdisciplinary nature of environmental education and ensuring an educational process that provides a sound knowledge base, equips learners with the required skills and, most importantly, develops pro-environmental values.

● Continuing with the wide consultative process initiated by the revision of the NMC. Once environmental education is included in the NMC, an implementation strategy based on the developmental stages of the learners and the characteristics of the educational institution needs to be set up by the major stakeholders. The implementation exercise needs to be coupled with a concurrent monitoring and evaluation strategy with mechanisms of feeding back suggestions for improvement into the original plan.

● Developing a supportive infrastructure that reduces the examination-oriented pedagogy by promoting other forms of learner centred assessment, establishes closer links between the schools and the community and provides adequate teaching resources based on the local environment.

● Appointing an environmental education co-ordinator or education officer responsible for the smooth implementation of environmental education in schools.

● Greening the university with environmentally oriented courses and environment policies. Staff development courses need to be organised to help lecturers develop more learner centred pedagogies and become more environmentally conscious.

● Restructuring the teacher education programmes so that students are adequately prepared for the challenges of their profession and to help students experience a variety of learner-centred methodologies.

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> **"The successful implementation of environmental education in the formal education sector can be achieved through a combined top-down and bottom-up approach"**

L-ATT DWAR DESKRIZZJONIJIET KUMMERĊJALI

Joyce Borg

Din il-liġi bla dubju hija l-aktar waħda li tipprovdi ħarsien, tapplika għall-bejgħ bejn negozjanti u konsumatur, kif ukoll għall-bejgħ bejn in-negozjanti nfushom. L-iskop tagħha huwa tant wiesgħa li jaffettwa lil kull bejjiegħ għax rari li xi oġġetti jinbiegħu mingħajr ma tiġi applikata xi forma ta' deskrizzjoni għalihom. Imma din il-liġi ma tapplikax għall-bejgħ privat. Jiġifieri jien jew intom nistgħu nbiegħu l-karozzi tagħna mingħajr ma nkunu suġġetti għad-dipożizzjonijiet ta' din il-liġi. Il-biċċa l-kbira ta' l-ilmenti li nirċievu mill-pubbliku, bejn 70 u 80 fil-mija, jaqgħu taħt il-provvedimenti ta' din il-liġi. Għalkemm din il-liġi ma tobbliga lil ħadd li jagħmel dikjarazzjonijiet jew biex jagħti indikazzjoni, għax hemm liġijiet oħra li jagħmlu dan, din toħloq reati meta xi persuna (inklużi għaqda korporata b'liġi u dipartiment tal-gvern) fil-kummerċ jew negozju:

1. tagħmel deskrizzjonijiet kummerċjali foloz jew qarrieqa dwar oġġetti (kull ħaġa offerta għall-bejgħ f'Malta);

2. tagħti indikazzjonijiet foloz jew qarrieqa dwar il-prezz ta' oġġetti jew servizzi; u

3. tagħmel dikjarazzjonijiet foloz jew qarrieqa dwar

JOYCE BORG DPA, MICA, hija uffiċċjal Prinċipali fid-Dipartiment għall-Affarijiet tal-Konsumatur

provvista ta' servizzi, akkomodazzjoni jew faċilitajiet.

Deskrizzjoni kurmmerċjali hija indikazzjoni diretta jew indiretta ta' xi waħda mit-tnax il-kategorija li hemm elenkati f'din il-liġi u tista' tiġi applikata billi tkun immarkata fuq l-oġġetti, riklamata f'ġurnali jew pubblikazzjonijiet oħra, b'dikjarazzjoni verbali u anke meta l-oġġetti jiġu pprovduti fuq talba li fiha x-xerrej stess ikun uża deskrizzjoni kummerċjali. Ilmenti li jaqgħu taħt din il-liġi hemm bil-bosta, imma fl-ispazju limitat li għandi se nagħti spjegazzjoni tagħhom fil-qosor. Dawn huma ftit eżempji ta' xi lmenti li jaqgħu taħt l-Att dwar Deskrizzjonijiet Kummerċjali:

1. *Deskrizzjonijiet Kummerċjali dwar oġġetti:*

● oġġetti ppakkjati jew sfużi mibjugħa bil-kwantità, daqs jew qies u jinstab li huma inqas fil-piż minn kif immarkati jew minn kif kien mitlub;

● oġġetti deskritti bil-metodu ta' manifattura, produzzjoni, proċessar jew rikondizzjoni u jirriżulta li mhux kif deskritt, bħal *jersey handmade* u jinstab ii maħdum bil-makna;

● oġġetti deskritti bil-kompożizzjoni, bħal ġilda, suf, qoton, *nylon* jew b'taħlitiet ta' suf/ *polyester/rayon* u jinstab li mhux veru, jew li t-taħlita mhix fi proporzjon kif immarkata;

● oġġetti deskritti b'addattament għall-għan, saħħa, funzjonament, imġieba jew preċiżjoni u jirriżulta li mhux minnu, bħal *geyser* huwa apparat li jsaħħan l-ilma;

● oġġetti deskritti b'kull karatteristika fiżika li mhix inkluża fl-ispjegazzjoni li diġà tajt, bħal: għamla jew kwalità. Madum taċ-ċeramika u aċċessorji ta' kmamar tal-banju li huma oġġetti deskritti bi prima kwalità, imma mhux dejjem jirriżulta li jkun veru;

● oġġetti deskritti bi provi minn xi persuna, u r-riżultati tagħhom. L-ilmenti li jaqgħu f'din il-kategorija huma dawk fejn jidħol dubju li l-laboratorju msemmi ma jeżistix; jew fejn l-oġġett ikun ġie ttestjat ma' xi *standard* u jidħol id-dubju li min jibagħtu għat-test mhux jinforma dwar ir-riżultat kollu imma b'dik il-biċċa biss li taqbel lilu. Deskrizzjoni tista' tkun falza b'dak li ma tgħidx jew b'dak li jitħalla barra;

● oġġetti deskritti bil-post jew data ta' manifattura, produzzjoni, proċessar jew rikondizzjoni. Hawn jaqgħu lmenti ta' oġġetti

antiki ta' kull xorta. Fuq karozzi u oġġetti oħra tad-dar. B'deskrizzjonijiet bħal *Made in Malta, Brand new,* eċċ;

● oġġetti deskritti bi storja oħra, inkluż proprjetarju ta' qabel jew użu preċedenti. F'din il-kategorija jaqgħu oġġetti b'deskrizzjoni bħal *One Owner, discontinued line*, eċċ.

2. Indikazzjonijiet dwar il-prezz ta' oġġetti jew servizzi - meta persuna tagħti xi indikazzjoni falza li l-prezz ta' l-oġġetti jew servizzi qed jiġu offruti bi prezz daqs jew inqas mill-prezz stabbilit, inqas minn dak offrut minnha qabel jew inqas minn dak il-prezz b'ammont speċifikat. Il-liġi ħasbet għall-bosta *sales* jew *bargain offers* li jsiru matul is-sena għax torbot lill-bejjiegħ li *prezz ogħla jew partikolari* għandu jitqies li l-oġġetti jew servizzi ġew offruti b'dan il-prezz għal perjodu kontinwu ta' mhux inqas minn 28 ġurnata matul is-6 xhur ta' qabel biex il-bejjiegħa ma joffrux bi prezz għoli għal ftit jiem imbagħad taparsi għamlu *sale*. L-ilmenti li jaqgħu l-aktar fdin it-taqsima jikkonċernaw oġġett mis-*sales*.

● Ħwejjeġ bi prezz imnaqqas u meta tmur id-dar u tiflihom issib li jkun fihom xi toqba jew imżarta. Meta tmur tgħid lill-bejjiegħ jgħidlek, x'tistenna mhux bis-*Sale*? Dan m'għandux dritt li jirrispondik hekk, sakemm ma kellux avviż li l-ħwejjeġ fihom jew jista' jkun fihom ħsarat, għax la ġew offruti għall-bejgħ tistenna li jkunu ta' kwalità tajba;

● Oġġetti tad-dar (*white goods*) mixtrija bi prezz imnaqqas li jkunu difettużi mingħajr ma tkun infurmat b'dan qabel tixtri. Il-bejjiegħ ma jistax jagħmel hekk;

● Oġġetti u servizzi offruti bi prezz inqas b'ammont speċifikat ta' flus jew bil-persentaġġ u jirriżulta li dan l-ammont ma jkunx veru.

Dikjarazzjonijiet foloz dwar provvista ta' servizzi, akkomodazzjoni jew faċilitajiet meta persuna tkun taf li qed tagħmel dikjarazzjoni falza jew tagħmilha bi traskuraġni, jiġifieri mingħajr ħsieb jekk hijiex vera jew falza. Hawn il-liġi tħares l-interess ta' min jagħmel użu minn servizz. Eżempji:

● Ordni ta' għamara li skond il-kuntratt kellha tkun lesta f'Settembru '91, wasal Settembru '93 u għadha mhix lesta;

● Karozzi jitnaddfu bil-fwar u ssib li jitnaddfu b'sistema ta' ilma bi pressa kbira;

● Ikollok deskrizzjoni dwar iż-żmien li tingħata s-servizz bħal *same day service* issib li jkollok tmur l-għada jew jumejn wara biex tieħu s-servizz imwiegħed.

Map skills in Primary geography focusing on the year 4 syllabus

Rosette Bonnici

❝In contrast with previous belief and with the appropriate teaching approach, young children have been found to be skilful in interpreting spatial information❞

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Introduction

For use in everyday life and particularly in the teaching of geography, maps are an invaluable resource. It may be assumed that they are solely used by adults and that map reading may not be accessible to young children. Using maps is not easy but researchers have shown that, in contrast with previous belief and with the appropriate teaching approach, young children are skilful in graphicacy which is the skill of interpreting spatial information.

Piaget's influence

The indirect effect of Piaget's work (1956), for instance has been the widespread belief that young children are not yet 'ready' for map work. It used to be thought that children have great difficulty in using maps primarily because they were constructed from such an unfamiliar viewpoint (the plan or bird's eye view). This creed partly stemmed from Piaget's prominent 'three mountain experiment'. Children were confronted with a model of three mountains each topped by a different feature (snow, a red cross and a house). They were asked to describe the model from the point of view of a doll put at the other side of the table. Young children before the age of seven repeatedly described their own view rather than that of the doll on the opposite side. Consequently, Piaget's conclusion was that children were unable to decentre or adopt another viewpoint. Their own perspective is the only viewpoint they can understand. He extended this idea to map reading and assumed that very young children would, therefore, find it difficult to use maps. Unfortunately, an important consequence emerged from this work: exercises in map reading were abandoned with children younger than the age of seven. This is the case with the present Maltese primary syllabus (1997) - officially map work starts in year 4 when children are around seven to eight years old. It is now generally agreed that children are not so restricted by their own viewpoint. One must keep in mind that Piaget's work was conducted before there was a television in every home. At this day and age, the plan view has become to be a more familiar viewpoint both directly and indirectly through experience of holiday flights as well as computer games which involve flying in some form or another. Furthermore, there have been a number of recent studies showing that experiments like that of the 'three mountains' can bring about different results if the nature of the model is modified e.g. by using more familiar features like shops and houses rather than physical features like mountains. Donaldson (1986) makes the further point that the task becomes very difficult if the materials used are either psychologically abstract or not associated with the children's interests and feelings.

The four map skills

Map skills in general can be subdivided into four particular elements: plan view, map language, arrangement and proportion. My study attempted to examine the abilities and shortcomings regarding these four map skills experienced by twenty-five year 4 pupils who formed the sample to represent the 7-8 year old cohort. The work followed a very basic three-phase procedure: input, testing and evaluation. The number of lessons delivered were concluded with activities on the skills separately as well as in conjunction.

Plan view

One of the activities asked the children to name several objects (teapot, hand, cup and saucer, teaspoon) shown in plan view, which were depicted in an abstract style and not in a pictorial manner as in a previous exercise. Abstraction, which is characteristic of maps, rendered the task to be more demanding than the first one because the plan views did not go much beyond a mere outline.

Example of item in first task
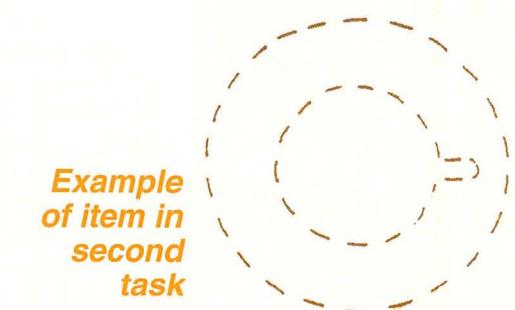
**Example of item in second task**

The hand had a 100% facility level because it is not alien in any way to the children. One third failed to recognise the teaspoon because it is normally shading (which was absent) that gives the drawing of a teaspoon its unmistakable distinctive features. The cup and saucer had a difficulty level of *56%* - eight year olds do not actually drink tea or coffee and when they do, it is probably not from a cup and saucer. Ten from eleven correct answers came from girls because it is, normally, girls who play with tea sets. The teapot proved to be the most difficult because while it is not typical of our culture, children have a very limited contact time with the object. The most obvious finding in terms of plan view was that as soon as the task extends beyond the children's reality, they find it more difficult to perform well. This was evident when, for example, the teapot presented more problems than the hand.

Map Language (symbols, words, numbers, colour)

In one of the activities, the children had to draw a symbol for fourteen names of places in an empty box e.g. wedding hall, hospital. Of the *350* symbols the children produced, *65* were compounds i.e. the symbol included a combination of objects. 285 efforts showed single symbols, which were pictographs (i.e. as they appear in the actual world) rather than ideographs (i.e. symbols).
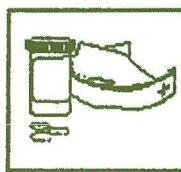
Compounds

Single

These were further subdivided into symbols showing buildings (50), people (33) or objects (200) related to the concept. This tendency by the children to represent the places by single objects seems to imply that following instruction, children should not have major difficulties in understanding the need to use symbols and also to interpret the reality behind symbols in maps.

Arrangement (Location, Direction, Orientation)

One of the tasks about location asked the children to give references of objects presented in a grid and also to draw objects in the correct place according to grid references given to them. Results showed that the children could handle both items well enough. The errors they made did not demonstrate a failure to understand grid references but rather a lack of practice and polish in writing grid references

e.g. 4 F, F'4 or F, 4 rather than 4 F. In strict terms, one can argue that 4 F is incorrect but the failure is only in procedure rather than an inability to understand the concept and function of grids in maps. One feels convinced that with a bit of practice, these imprecisions might be easily corrected.

The other task intended to see how familiar the children were with using the correct directional terminology in Maltese. They were asked to give both the four cardinal points ~, E, S, W) as well as the four intermediate ones (NE, SE, SW, NW). The pupils were given a signpost map and they had to write down the direction in which the character in the middle needs to move to go to different destinations.

Results showed that they had no problem identifying the various points of the compass. The item that created problems was 'lbic' (SW) - many of the incorrect answers wrote 'lvant' (E). A possible explanation for this could be that since children find it easier to name the compass points through a mnemonic, the fact that east and southwest both start with the letter 'l' in Maltese, could have confused them.

Proportion (scale, size)

The children had to scale down a drawing of a locomotive engine made up of a set of geometric shapes (e.g. circle, triangle) to one half the original size.
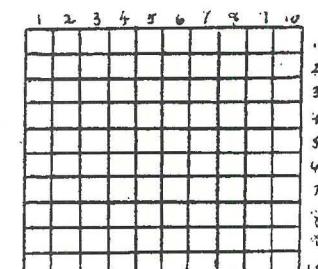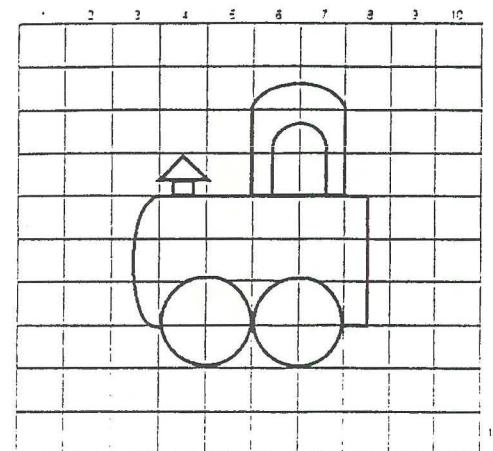
The difficulty of the children of this age in fully grasping the Skill of scaling may be seen by the fact that only 5 Out of 25 children scaled down the drawing correctly in proportion and alignment. Others drew the engine correctly in proportion but not in orientation. Most had a correct part but somehow their drawing had a

> ❝It is feasible to start teaching elements of map skills to children as early as possible❞

> *Map work should permeate throughout the curriculum, not just in geography lessons.*

The area of map skills in relation to children's abilities and shortcomings is in need of serious local research

few deficiencies especially in the lines or curves that did not fall correctly on the grid line.` A few demonstrated very serious problems in that their shape was absolutely not aligned and lacked an acceptable degree of replication to the original. The general conclusion is that eight year olds may find it difficult to handle certain aspects of scale in maps.

Conclusion

Crick (1976) states that 'no map is a total representation of reality in the sense of charting all its features. All maps are selective because there is a "point" to their construction which makes only certain kinds of phenomena significant'. This characteristic in maps reflects the idea that they cannot reproduce all detail. For instance, a farm may be reduced to a square filled with a particular colour. It seems that this change generally creates difficulties for children. The teaspoon item in the plan view activity, for instance, showed that the more abstract a representation becomes, the more difficult children find it to interpret that abstraction. The difficulty in accepting abstraction was also shown in their choice of symbols to represent a number of places. More frequently, the children selected a pictograph rather than an ideograph to stand for the entities. In terms of arrangement, they were skilful at the alphanumeric system of coordinates (e.g. A6). However, the reason that they found the

task manageable could be the fact that the items they had to place in the grid covered a specific square. Conversely, the scaling down task indicated that once an item spreads over several squares, they might encounter problems.

The concluding message for educators is that it is feasible to start teaching elements of map skills to children as early as possible (a new syllabus which includes map skills for the kindergarten level is in progress). Furthermore, map skills need to be integrated in geographical studies right through progression. Last but not least, map work should permeate throughout the curriculum, not just in geography lessons.

The area of map skills in relation to children's abilities and shortcomings is in need of serious local research. It stands to reason that one cannot make sweeping statements on the performance of children in relation to map skills from one group of children.

Furthermore, several factors that affect performance in general like intelligence and gender have been completely ignored. Further studies should look into a more profound and detailed work in specific skills.

This would definitely fine-tune the findings of this research and therefore the understanding of children's accomplishment in each map skill.

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A signpost map

ICE CREAM STALL

CAKE STALL

SHEEPDOG TRIALS

BEST PET COMPETITION

FLOWER ARRANGING

ROSE

VEGETABLE CONTEST

WRESTLING MATCH

HORSE JUMPING

Which way will Rose need to turn to see the horse jumping!
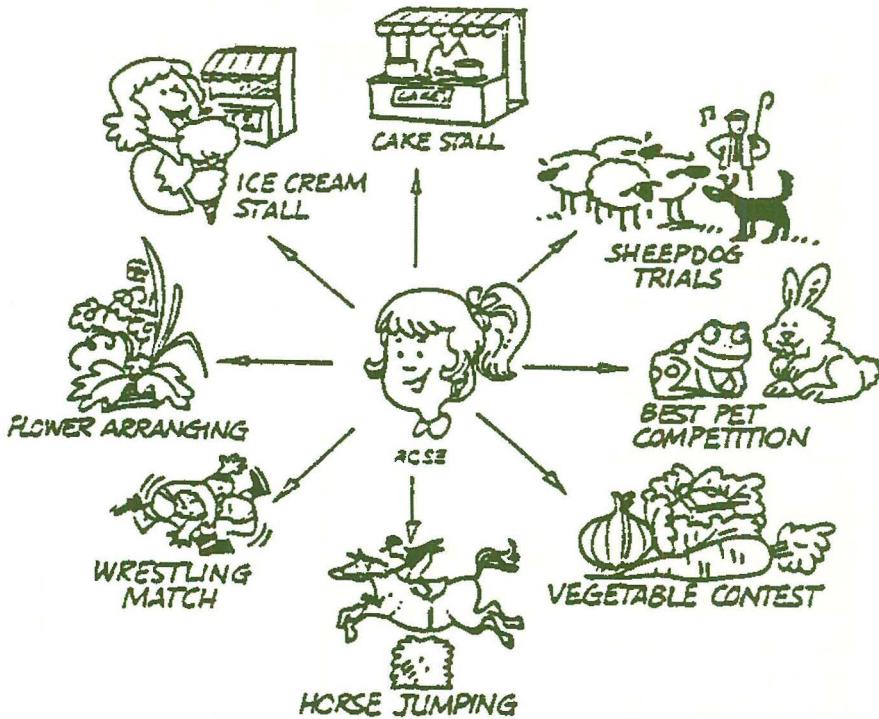
Lejn Kurrikulu Bikri Mingħajr Preġudizzji

Carmel Borg

❝Dan l-artiklu jipproponi kurrikulu bikri li, filwaqt li jenfasizza s-sbuħija tad-diversità soċjo-kulturali, jattakka l-preġudizzji u l-imġiba diskriminatorja❞

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Meta tissemma l-kelma preġudizzju fil-kuntest tat-tfulija bikrija, ikun hemm min jissuġġerixxi li għandna nħallu lit-tfal jgħixu tfulithom bil-kwiet. Ħafna ġenituri ta' tfal żgħar, u edukaturi li jaħdmu fil-qasam tat-tfulija bikrija, jaħsbu li t-tfal huma protetti mill-preġudizzji u s-suġġettivitajiet tad-dinja adulta. Il-fehma ta' ħafna adulti, li l-ġnien tat-tfal huwa mnaqqi minn kull preġudizzju, tistona mar-riżultati tar-riċerka dwar l-iżvilupp ta' l-attitudnijiet u l-identitajiet tat-tfal żgħar. Imnebbaħ minn din ir-riċerka, u mgħarraf mill-għanijiet u l-prinċipji tal-Kurrikulu Minimu Nazzjonali, dan l-artiklu jipproponi kurrikulu bikri li, filwaqt li jenfasizza s-sbuħija tad-diversità soċjo-kulturali, jattakka l-preġudizzji u l-imġiba diskriminatorja.

X'tgħid ir-riċerka

Ir-riċerka turina li:

● minn kmieni f'ħajjithom it-tfal jibdew jinnutaw id-differenzi soċjali u joħolqu klassifikazzjonijiet u kategoriji;

● l-identità u l-attitudnijiet jissawru bil-mod u f'fażijiet;

● l-isterjotipar soċjali u l-preġudizzji jinfluwenzaw il-mod kif it-tfal iħarsu lejhom infushom u lejn għajrhom.

L-istħarriġ internazzjonali jurina wkoll li t-tiswir ta' l-attitudnijiet u l-identitajiet tat-tfal huwa riżultat ta' l-għaġna ta' tliet ingredjenti umani importanti. Dawn huma:

● l-esperjenza fiżika;

● l-esperjenza soċjali;

● l-iżvilupp konjittiv.

Studju ta' Phyllis Katz (1985) dwar l-għarfien razzjali fit-tfulija bikrija juri li fl-ewwel sitt snin ta' ħajjithom it-tfal jibdew:

● jinnutaw messaġġi razzjali;

● jiffurmaw kunċetti primittivi dwar din ir-realtà soċjali;

● jibdew jiddistingwu kunċett minn ieħor;

● jirrikonoxxu li ċerti attribuzzjonijiet huma rriversibbli (eż. il-kulur tal-ġilda ma jinbidilx)

● jikkonsolidaw kunċetti marbutin ma' grupp soċjali;

● jelaboraw kunċetti li jiżviluppaw f'qafas soċjali partikulari.

Dawn ix-xejriet fl-iżvilupp ta' l-għarfien razzjali tat-tfal jixbħu ħafna r-riżultati miksuba minn Kohlberg, fl-istħarriġ tiegħu dwar il-fażijiet ta' l-iżvilupp ta' l-identità sesswali.

Minn dawn iż-żewġ xogħlijiet, u minn stħarriġ ieħor internazzjonali fl-oqsma ta' l-għarfien u t-tiswir ta' l-identitajiet, jirriżulta li

t-tfal żgħar mistħarrġa għaddew minn dawn il-fażijiet ta' żvilupp:

● fl-ewwel sentejn ta' ħajjithom, it-tfal kienu qegħdin jitgħallmu li jeżistu sessi differenti, u li dawn iż-żewġ sessi differenti għandhom isem (tifel, tifla). Fl-istess perjodu, it-tfal bdew jitgħallmu l-ismijiet tal-kuluri. It-tagħlim tal-kuluri jista' jitqies bħala għodda importanti għall-esperjenza senswali tad-differenzi razzjali;

● Qrib it-tliet snin it-tfal bdew juru sinjali li qegħdin jiġu influwenzati min-normi u l-preġudizzji tas-soċjetà;

● Bejn it-tliet u l-ħames snin, it-tfal bdew bil-mod jifhmu x'inhuma l-attribuzzjonijiet esenzjali ta' l-identità personali tagħhom;

● Bejn l-erba' u l-ħames snin it-tfal mhux biss bdew jimmanifestaw dak li s-soċjetà tqis bħala imġiba sesswali propja, iżda wkoll bdew jirrinforzaw din l-imġiba bejniethom, mingħajr l-intervent ta' l-adulti. Instabu wkoll xi każijiet fejn it-tfal użaw skużi razzjali biex ma jitħalltux. F'dan il-perjodu, it-tfal mistħarrġa bdew juru l-ewwel sinjali konkreti ta' l-għarfien dwar id-diżabilità.

Mill-istħarriġ internazzjonali joħroġ ċar li, hemm jew m'hemmx fil-klassi t-taħlita soċjo-kulturali msemmija f'dan l-artiklu, kurrikulu bikri għandu jindirizza l-kunċett tad-differenzi mingħajr preġudizzji.

L-Għanijiet Ġenerali tal-Kurrikulu Mingħajr Preġudizzji

Kurrikulu li b'mod konxju jattakka l-preġudizzji huwa differenti minn kurrikulu multikulturali. Fil-qosor, l-għan ewlieni tal-kurrikulu multikulturali huwa li jiffamiljarizza lit-tfal ma' kulturi differenti. Dan isir bit-tir li jiżdied ir-rispett tat-tfal lejn kulturi li m'humiex tagħhom.

Minħabba l-emfasi esaġerta fuq l-idea ta' ċelebrazzjoni tal-kulturi, il-kurrikulu multikulturali jista' jiddeġenera fi vjaġġ turistiku, b'emfasi fuq informazzjoni standardizzata ta' l-aspetti eżotiċi ta' pajjiżi, reġjuni u kulturi differenti.

Kurrikulu maħsub biex minn kmieni jattakka l-preġudizzji, jibni fuq l-elementi pożittivi tal-kurrikulu multikulturali, filwaqt li jevita l-eżotiċizzar soċjali. Fl-istess ħin, dan il-kurrikulu jippromovi proċess edukattiv inklużiv li jindirizza: (1) id-differenzi fl-abilitajiet, sesswali u kulturali; (2) il-bżonnijiet

ta' l-iżvilupp fl-oqsma tat-tiswir ta' l-attitudnijiet u l-identitajiet; u (3) b'mod konxju l-impatt ta' l-isterjotipar u l-preġudizzji fuq l-iżvilupp tat-tfal.

> **(1) id-differenzi fl-abilitajiet, sesswali u kulturali; (2) il-bżonnjiet ta' l-iżvilupp fl-oqsma tat-tiswir ta' l-attitudnijiet u l-identitajiet; u (3) b'mod konxju l-impatt ta' l-istereotipar u l-preġudizzji fuq l-iżvilupp tat-tfal**

L-Għanijiet Speċifiċi tal-Kurrikulu

Imnebbaħ mill-għanijiet ġenerali, programm edukattiv bikri, maħsub biex jimmina l-preġudizzji, għandu jkollu mill-inqas dawn l-għanijiet speċifiċi:

a. tagħlim dwar xebħ u differenzi razzjali

Il-Kurrikulu għandu:
- jinkuraġġixxi lit-tfal biex jistaqsu dwar il-karatteristiċi fiżiċi tagħhom u ta' sħabhom;
- jipprovdi lit-tfal b'informazzjoni preċiża. Din l-informazzjoni għandha tirrispetta l-fażi ta' l-iżvilupp tat-tfal;
- jgħin lit-tfal iħossuhom kburin bl-identità tagħhom;
- jgħin lit-tfal jiżviluppaw rispett lejn id-differenzi fiżiċi;
- jgħin lit-tfal jagħrfu l-karatteristiċi fiżiċi komuni - dawk li jagħmluna lkoll umani.

b. tagħlim dwar id-diżabilità

Il-Kurrikulu għandu:
- jipprovdi ambjent inklużiv fejn kulħadd jista' jduq is-suċċess;
- jgħin lit-tfal b'diżabilità jiżviluppaw l-awtonomija, l-indipendenza, il-kompetenza, il-kunfidenza u l-istima personali;
- jipprovdi lit-tfal kollha b'informazzjoni dwar id-diżabilitajiet, u jgħin lit-tfal jifhmu li persuna b'diżabilità hija differenti f'xi aspetti u l-istess f'ħafna oħra;
- jgħin lit-tfal jissoċjalizzaw b'mod pożittiv ma' tfal b'dizabilità;
- jgħin lit-tfal b'dizabilità jiffaċċjaw b'suċċess sitwazzjonijiet socjali diffiċli;
- jgħallem lit-tfal li m'għandhomx

diżabilità kif jirreżistu l-preġudizzju assoċċjat mad-diżabilitajiet differenti

ċ. tagħlim dwar l-identità sesswali

Il-Kurrikulu għandu:
- jillibera lit-tfal minn kull tip ta' atteġġjament sterjotipat;
- jgħin fl-iżvilupp ta' identità sesswali b'saħħitha;
- jippromovi l-ekwità fl-iżvilupp taż-zewg sessi billi jiffaċilita l-parteċipazzjoni tat-tfal kollha fl-attivitajiet neċessarji għall-iżvilupp fiżiku, konjittiv, emozzjonali u soċjali;
- jiżviluppa ħiliet li jgħinu lit-tfal jissoċjalizzaw mingħajr preġudizzju

d. tagħlim dwar xebħ u differenzi kulturali

Il-Kurrikulu għandu:
- jgħin lit-tfal jiżviluppaw il-kurżità dwar u empatija mad-differenzi u x-xebħ kulturali;
- jgħin lit-tfal jegħlbu xi atteġjament negattiv fil-konfront tad-differenzi kulturali;
- jgħin lit-tfal jaffermaw l-identità kulturali tagħhom.

e. tagħlim dwar reżistenza għall-imġiba diskriminatorja

Il-Kurrikulu għandu:
- jgħin li-tfal jissoċjalizzaw b'mod pożittiv bejniethom u ma' l-adulti;
- jgħin lit-tfal jiżviluppaw empatija lejn xulxin;
- jgħin lit-tfal jiżviluppaw attitudni kritika lejn l-isterjotipar;
- jgħin lit-tfal ikunu assertivi fil-konfront ta' imġiba diskriminatorja.

L-Ambjent Viżwali u Estetiku

Il-kurrikulu mingħajr preġudizzji għandu jiżviluppa f'kuntest estetiku kompatibbli ma' l-għanijiet ġenerali u speċifici msemmija hawn fuq. Għalhekk, l-ambjent għandu jkun mogħni:
- b'ritratti tat-tfal, tal-familji tagħhom, u ta' l-istaff;
- bi stampi/ritratti li jirriflettu d-diversità kulturali tal-pajjiż;
- bi stampi/ritratti li jirriflettu l-ħajja ta' kuljum tal-familji Maltin;
- b'viżwali li joħolqu bilanċ tajjeb bejn irġiel u nisa f'azzjonijiet differenti;
- b'viżwali ta' anzjani attivi;
- b'ritratti ta' persuni b'diżabilità attivi u indipendenti
- bi stampi ta' xogħlijiet ta' arti u oġġetti minn kulturi differenti

Il-Kotba

Kurrikulu mingħajr preġudizzji ma jistax jiżviluppa f'ambjent nieqes mill-kotba. Il-kotba magħżula biex isostnu dan il-kurrikulu għandhom:

● jirriflettu d-diversità kulturali, razzjali u sesswali;

● jippreżentaw informazzjoni preċiża u meħlusa mill-isterjotipar;

● juru kif kulturi differenti jgħixu l-ħajja ta' kuljum tagħhom;

● jirriflettu lingwi differenti (inklużi l-*braille* u l-lingwa tas-sinjali)

● jesponu lit-tfal għal familji differenti (inklużi familji bi dħul baxx)

Logħob Drammaiku

Il-logħob drammatiku huwa attività ċentrali fil-kurrikulu bikri. Il-logħob drammatiku għandu jinkuraġġixxi:

● id-diversità fil-logħob billi jitbiddel kontinwament il-kuntest ta' l-hekk imsejħa 'home corner', biex tinkludi l-garaxx, il-ħanut tax-xogħol, eċċ. Din iż-żona għandha tinkludi wkoll taħlita ta' ħwejjeg 'maskili' u 'femminili';

● id-diversità kulturali, bl-użu ta' oġġetti minn kulturi differemti;

● l-aċċessibilita għall-apparat użat min-nies b'diżabilità, fil-ħajja ta' kuljum tagħhom;

● l-għarfien personali permezz ta' mirja id-daqs tat-tfal.

Lingwa

l-ambjent għandu jipprovdi diversi opportunitajiet biex, minn kmieni, it-tfal jiffamiljarizzaw ruħhom ma' lingwi differenti. L-aċċessibiltà għal-lingwi bħal *braille* u tas-sinjali tgħin lit-tfal jidraw il-fatt li dawn il-lingwi huma daqs il-lingwa mitkellma.

Pupi

Is-suq huwa mimli b'pupi li jirriflettu t-taħlita soċjo-kulturali.

L-edukaturi f'dan il-qasam għandhom jiżguraw li d-diversità soċjo-kulturali hija riflessa fil-pupi. Għandhom jiġu evitati pupi li jirrinfurzaw l-aspettativi sterjotipati ta' l-adulti.

> **66 Kurrikulu mingħajr preġudizzji għandu l-għan li jimmina l-proċess li jwassal għall-formazzjoni tal-pregudizzji 99**

Manipulattivi

L-attenzjoni mitluba mill-edukaturi fl-għażla tal-kotba, attivitajiet, viżwali u pupi għandha tiġi estiża għall-għażla tal-manipulattivi (eż. *jigsaw puzzles*).

Relazzjonijiet Soċjali

Il-proċess ta' l-għażla bir-reqqa tar-riżorsi għandu jkun ikkumplimentat minn relazzjonijiet soċjali pożittivi. Għalhekk, l-imġiba ta' l-edukaturi fil-konfront tat-tfal għandha tkun fuq l-aġenda personali tagħhom. Xi mistoqsijiet li jistgħu jgħinu lill-edukaturi fil-fażi tar-riflessjoni jinkludu:

● qiegħda tingħata attenzjoni immedjata għall-ħtiġijiet u interessi tal-firxa soċjo-kulturali tal-klassi?

● qiegħda tingħata l-istess libertà fiżika fl-użu ta' apparat għall-iżvilupp tal-muskoli l-kbar?

● qiegħed jingħata spazju biex is-subien jesprimu r-repertorju sħiħ ta' emozzjonijiet?

● qegħdin jiġu pprovduti opportunitajiet biex iż-żewġ sessi jintalbu jgħinu f'xogħol tradizzjonalment sterjotipat?

● qegħdin jinħolqu opportunitajiet biex tfal b'limitazzjonijiet ta' mobilità jitħalltu b'indipenenza ma' tfal oħra?

● Ir-riżorsi jistgħu jintlaħqu minn kulħadd?

● jista' jkun li l-edukaturi qegħdin ikunu protettivi żżejjed fil-konfront ta' ċertu tfal?

● jista' jkun li l-edukaturi għadhom jistennew imġiba differenti minn sessi differenti?

● jista' jkun li r-reazzjoni tagħhom għall-istess imġiba tinbidel skond minn liema sess gejja?

● meta tfal jistaqsu dwar diżabilitajiet, dawn jingħatw tweġibiet diretti u eżatti?

● meta tfal jistaqsu dwar ġenitali u attribuzzjoniet fiżiċi dawn jingħatw tweġibiet tajba?

Tmiem

Huwa magħruf li l-preġudizzji jaqbdu l-għeruq fit-tfulija bikrija. Kurrikulu mingħajr preġudizzji għandu l-għan li jimmina l-proċess li jwassal għall-formazzjoni tal-pregudizzji. Il-ħolqien ta' kuntest edukattiv, il-kitba ta' l-għanijiet, l-għażla tar-riżorsi u r-relazzjonijiet soċjali huma kruċjali fl-iżvilupp ta' dan il-kurrikulu.

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Projected Aims and Costs of Education in Malta in the Year 2001

Joseph Giordmaina

A teacher does not work in a vacuum. Nor does a classroom or a school exist in one. There is a complex machine that runs the education system in the country. What are the main goals of the ministry and division running the system? How is spending sub-divided among the elements that make up that system? We believe that few teachers are aware of this important knowledge at the base of Education in Malta. This article is intended to address that lack of knowledge.

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Successive governments have invested heavily in education, with an increase in the annual education budget each consecutive year. The budget is a process by means of which one transforms financial capital into human capital: investing in people through education.

The budget of the Ministry of Education covers the following main areas:
- The Ministry
- The Education Division
- The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology
- The University of Malta
- The European Union Programmes Unit (EUPU)
- The Institute for Child and parent Learning Support (ICPLS)
- The Department of Culture
- The Department for Youth and Sports
- The Department of Libraries and Archives
- The Department of Museums
- The Malta Council for Science and Technology
- The Mediterranean Conference Centre (MCC)
- The Manoel Theatre
- The National Orchestra
- The Malta Centre for Restoration (MCR)
- The Centre for Creativity at St. James Cavalier
- The Public Broadcasting Services Ltd (PBS)

In this article I will just give a brief resume of the main goals of the Ministry of Education as well as the Division of Education, and how they are planning to finance these targets. Such information should give us an idea of the main projects being undertaken and by whom, and possibly appreciate more what we often take for granted. The included tables give detailed information, as presented to Parliament in the Ministry of Finance *Financial Estimates 2001* (published by the Budget Office, Malta).

Main goals of the Ministry of Education

- The implementation of the National Curriculum
- The exploration for alternative forms of financing tomorrow's schools
- The promotion of a safe school environment in all its aspects

The updating of the 1980 Code of Behaviour and Discipline in Schools

- The spread of technology, including information technology
- The evolution of schools as community centres
- The continuation of the decentralisation process
- The empowerment of the various institutions concerned.

Main goals of the Division of Education

- Provide a quality education for all Maltese citizens of compulsory school age and beyond
- Provide a holistic education that encompasses the development of intellectual, civil, human, ethical and spiritual growth and the recognition of fundamental rights and responsibilities
- Ensure that optimum standards are attained
- Ensure that a wide spectrum of opportunities is provided to all students at all levels.

The following are the main major programmes of the Departments within the Division of Education

Department for Planning and Development

- Strengthen its provision of training courses for all levels of the teaching profession through its In-Service Training Programme (INSET) and the Senior Staff Development Programme (SSDP)
- More courses specifically targeted for key administrators and teachers responsible for the implementation of the national Curriculum
- Use of European Union and Council of Europe opportunities in teacher training
- Organise and annual Council of Europe Seminar in March
- Participate in the Eurydice project (education statistics) of the EU

Department of Curriculum Development, Implementation and Review

The year 2001 is the year of the implementation of the revised National Curriculum. This will involve

- The building of a strong and reliable administrative and other infrastructure to support the implementation process
- A renewed and intensive programme of activities in the area of programme and syllabi design and development of teaching materials;
- An effective training programme at both national and school levels
- Capacity building in the area of action research at both school and Education Division levels
- School Development Planning as the main vehicle for curriculum development and implementation
- Evaluation of established programmes such as the Peripatetic Services, Resource centres, and the Information and Communication Technology Training Unit to enable them to meet emerging challenges created by the revised National Curriculum

Services and International Relations Department

- Reviewing departmental management structures with a view of achieving a full complement of staff at both Division of Education and school levels;
- Contributing meaningfully to the development and implementation of programmes developed by the

Institute for Child and Parent Learning Support (ICPLS) which targets students at risk of school failure and their parents;

- Developing the current provision of psychosocial and career guidance services;
- Ensuring effective implementation of the three new policy documents outlining procedures regarding cases of child abuse, substance abuse and bullying;
- Supporting the implementation process of the revised National Curriculum through further development of the School Library Service, the student exchange and sports awareness programmes, and the setting up of more Student Councils in secondary schools;
- Promoting student participation in the major educational activities of international organisations; and
- in synergy with non-government organisations and parents, ensuring the further development of inclusive and special education and transition programmes.

Department of Further Studies and Adult Education

- Support the development of the Malta College of Arts, Science and technology (MCAST)
- Support the national Vocational and Professional Qualifications System
- Support the Board of Governors of MCAST as facilitate the integration of existing schools with MCAST
- Organise training courses for the use of modern teaching and assessment methodologies for the certification of vocational skills and knowledge
- Re-organisation of current course so that adults will be enabled to gain certificates awarded by the National Vocational And Professional Qualifications Council

Operations Department

- Inclusive education measures will be strengthened. Support and guidance will continue to be offered to schools to enable them to develop and strengthen school-based measures. Training courses will be provided to classroom support personnel working with students with special educational needs in mainstream schools;
- Expansions introduced in the area of technology education in secondary schools in 2000 will be monitored. Training courses targeting Instructors will be provided;
- Technical support will continue to be provided to schools in the areas of school development planning and reviews;

- The school-based implementation of the computerised School Information System (SIS) will be closely monitored. Timely technical support regarding the utilisation of newly-introduced modules will be extended to school administrative personnel;
- While seeking to fulfil the target of Health and Safety Teachers in all Schools, more teachers will be recruited in this field and specialist training provided to those in post;
- In fulfilment of the aim of the National Curriculum to provide a welcoming and safe environment for students and teaching personnel, the school upgrading and refurbishment will be stepped up.

Department of Finance and Administration

- Consolidate existing initiatives that strengthen the new administration and procurement branch,
- Promote an Information Technology culture across all sections of the Department, computerise vacation and sick leave records and provide staff development opportunities,
- Launch a Research Center for General Service Grades
- Enlarge the Registry Section,
- Provide financial incentives to General Service employees who arc interested in following courses outside office hours,
- Enhance reforms in the Maintenance Section,

Examinations Department

- Upgrade examination facilities by undertaking building restoration and refurbishment works at the Biagio Centre and the St. Elmo Examination Centre;
- Continue to be administratively responsible for the processing of registrations as well as the organisation and conduct of the MATSEC examinations;
- Continue to facilitate services to prospective candidates on behalf of Edexcel of London University, the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry, City and Guilds International and the Associated Examining Board as well as an increasing number of professional bodies and foreign universities;
- Improve facilities of its customer Service Unit;
- Introduce photocopying facilities for service users;
- Extend its contacts with Local Councils;
- Upgrade the Internet Home Page to enable applicants to register for examinations through the web-site;
- Sustain services at the Gozo Examination Branch;

● The computerised *Examination Results Management System* will incorporate the accumulation of longitudinal data on examination results of every candidate taking examinations with the department. The system will also be used to confirm results.

Table 1: Recurrent Expenditure: Education

Education			
			Vote 18 Recurrent
Expenditure by Standard Item	Actual Expenditure 1999 Lm	Approved Estimate 2000 Lm	Estimate 2001 Lm
Summary			
Personal Emoluments	33,064,654	35,144,000	42,099,000
Operational and Maintenance Expenses	3,952,980	4,242,000	4,243,000
Special Expenditure	38,600	25,000	25,000
Programmes and Initiatives	1,521,575	1,541,000	1,861,000
Contributions to Government Entities	---	---	---
Total Vote	**38,577,809**	**40,952,000**	**48,228,000**
Personal Emoluments			
11 Holders of Political Office	---	---	---
12 Staff – salaries and Wages	27,775,880	29,413,000	35,386,000
13 Bonus	677,730	750,000	735,000
14 Income Supplement	512,654	670,000	630,000
15 Social Security Contributions	2,770,872	2,941,000	3,522,000
16 Allowances	1,296,560	1,310,000	1,769,000
17 Overtime	30,958	60,000	57,000
Total: Personal Emoluments	33,064,654	35,144,000	42,099,000
Operational and Maintenance Expenses			
21 Utilities	351,827	400,000	388,000
22 Materials and Supplies	1,120,316	1,169,000	1,170,000
23 Repair and Upkeep	229,303	276,000	280,000
24 Rent	849,302	850,000	850,000
25 International Memberships	428	1,000	1,000
26 Office Services	39,150	48,000	40,000
27 Transport	1,220,549	1,100,000	1,113,000
28 Travel	10,211	16,000	13,000
29 Information Services	1,835	5,000	5,000
30 Contractual Services	35,864	35,000	37,000
31 Professional Services	29,440	35,000	40,000
32 Training	60,841	300,000	300,000
33 Hospitality	1,123	3,000	2,000
34 Incidental Expenses	2,791	4,000	4,000
Total: Operational and maintenance Expenses	3,952,980	4,242,000	4,243,000
Special Expenditure			
40 Improvements to Property	0	10,000	10,000
41 Equipment	38,600	15,000	15,000
Total: Special Expenditure	38,600	25,000	25,000
Programmes and Initiatives			
5015 Scholarships and Bursaries granted under various Cultural Agreements	19,533	20,000	20,000
5021 St. Patrick Industrial School	270,000	270,000	300,000
5023 Media Education Broadcasting	99,933	100,000	95,000
5026 Adult Education	15,891	16,000	16,000
5027 Technician Apprenticeship Scheme	494,964	450,000	500,000
5030 Science Laboratory Technicians Scheme	13,289	15,000	15,000
5245 Extended Skills Training Scheme Subsidy	373,115	300,000	300,000
5270 Special Education Programme	224,151	240,000	240,000
5316 Skola Sajf	10,008	25,000	150,000
5367 Careers Convention	---	5,000	5,000
5368 Trade Schools Reform	---	10,000	10,000
5369 National Minimum Curriculum	---	30,000	150,000
5370 Literacy and Teaching Unit	---	20,000	20,000
5371 Let me Learn Project	---	15,000	15,000
5372 Specific Learning Difficulty Unit	---	15,000	15,000
5373 Development of Science Centre	---	10,000	10,000
[Nautical School Trainees Allowance Scheme]	691	---	
Total: Programmes and Initiatives	1,521,575	1,541,000	1,861,000
Total: Education	38,577,809	40,952,000	48,228,000

Table 4: Capital Expenditure: Ministry of Education

Ministry of Education			
			Vote III Capital
Details of Expenditure	Actual Expenditure 1999 Lm	Approved Estimate 2000 Lm	Estimate 2001 Lm
7001 Information Technology (a)			
(i) Infrastructure and application maintenance/support			332,000
(ii) Work-in-progress and new investment			243,000
	465,057	650,000	575,000
7021 University of Malta – Construction, adaptation, refurbishment works and equipment	2,833,000	2,095,000	800,000
7022 Malta Centre for Restoration [Restoration Studies Centre] – Rehabilitation Works and equipment	253,949	400,000	50,000
7023 Malta College of [Applied] Arts, Science and Technology	---	900,000	450,000
7024 Malta council for Science and Technology – Rehabilitation of Villa Bighi	---	50,000	30,000
7025 Examinations Department: Improvements at Examinations Centres	9,911	65,000	50,000
Total: Ministry of Education	3,561,917	4,160,000	1,955,000

Table 2: Capital Expenditure: Education

Education			
			Vote III Capital
Details of Expenditure	Actual Expenditure 1999 Lm	Approved Estimate 2000 Lm	Estimate 2001 Lm
7026 Construction and adaptation works in Government Schools	2,599,430	2,600,000	2,600,000
7027 Equipment for Government Schools	472,983	500,000	500,000
7028 Information Technology in Government Schools	1,191,309	1,000,000	1,000,000
7029 Internet in Government Schools	---	---	300,000
7030 Refurbishment and maintenance of Government Schools	499,621	750,000	500,000
7031 Equipment for Education Support Services	49,792	20,000	20,000
Total Education	4,813,126	4,870,000	**4,920,000**

Table 3: Recurrent Expenditure: Ministry of Education

Ministry of Education			
			Vote 17 Recurrent
Expenditure by Standard Item	Actual Expenditure 1999 Lm	Approved Estimate 2000 Lm	Estimate 2001 Lm
Summary			
Personal Emoluments	577,314	598,000	789,000
Operational and Maintenance Expenses	333,584	301,000	294,000
Special Expenditure	22,223	20,000	10,000
Programmes and Initiatives	14,765,244	14,797,000	17,815,000
Contributions to Government Entities	8,872,257	8,941,000	10,191,000
Total Vote	**24,570,622**	**24,657,000**	**29,099,000**
Personal Emoluments			
11 Holders of Political Office	19,674	20,614	26,763
12 Staff – salaries and Wages	426,909	436,000	594,393
13 Bonus	9,865	11,000	11,000
14 Income Supplement	11,239	10,000	10,000
15 Social Security Contributions	40,835	43,386	59,000
16 Allowances	61,803	70,000	80,844
17 Overtime	6,989	7,000	7,000
Total: Personal Emoluments	577,314	598,000	789,000
Operational and maintenance Expenses			
21 Utilities	42,961	45,000	44,000
22 Materials and Supplies	19,737	26,000	26,000
23 Repair and Upkeep	9,193	12,000	12,000
24 Rent	620	1,000	1,000
25 International Memberships	18,641	19,000	19,000
26 Office Services	26,328	25,000	21,000
27 Transport	36,351	35,000	32,000
28 Travel	28,406	20,000	18,000
29 Information Services	44,330	60,000	60,000
30 Contractual Services	56,670	12,000	19,000
31 Professional Services	21,816	18,000	19,000
32 Training	1,793	1,000	1,000
33 Hospitality	22,556	20,000	15,000
34 Incidental Expenses	4,182	7,000	7,000
Total: Operational and maintenance Expenses	333,584	301,000	294,000
Special Expenditure			
40 Improvements to Property	0	5,000	5,000
41 Equipment	22,223	15,000	5,000
Total: Special Expenditure	22,223	20,000	10,000
Programmes and Initiatives			
5004 Institute for Child and Parent Learning Support	---	---	60,000
5006 Premju Letterarju u Sussidji	70	10,000	10,000
5008 Subsidy to the Society of Arts, Manufactureres and Commerce	30,000	30,000	30,000
5024 Contribution towards the Financing of Church Schools	7,499,99	7,080,000	9,000,000
5364 Students' Maintenance Grants	---	7,000,000	7,000,000
5386 National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis	---	---	1,215,000
5400 Support to Private School Students	---	---	500,000
[Students' Remuneration for Summer Projects	569,099	300,000	---
[Contribution towards the President's Award	1,000	1,000	---
[Contribution to support the Commonwealth of Learning Project	5,387	5,000	---
[E.U. Programmes: Leonardo, Socrates, and Youth for Europe	31,699	175,000	---
[School Councils	150	1,000	---
[E.U. Fifth Framework Programme	---	125,000	---
[Challenge 2000	---	70,000	---
[Stipends to University Students	4,683,655		
[Stipends to Sixth forms/Junior College Students	1,886,763	---	---
[General Educational Initiatives	55,302	---	---
[National Commision for Education	2,150	---	---
Total: Programmes and Initiatives	14,765,244	14,797,000	17,815,000
Contributions to Government Entities			
6202 Foundation for International Studies	85,613	90,000	90,000
6374 Junior College	1,290,000	1,300,000	1,400,000
6432 Malta Council for Science and Technology	150,000	150,000	120,000
6454 Maltese National Commision for UNESCO	0	6,000	6,000
6456 Malta Centre for Restoration	---	50,000	150,000
6457 Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology	---	100,000	400,000
6485 National Commission for Information Technology	121,482	20,000	20,000
6623 Office of the University Ombudsman	5,162	5,000	5,000
6701 University of Malta	7,220,000	7,222,000	8,000,000
Total Contributions to Government Entities	8,872,257	8,941,000	10,191,000
TOTAL Ministry of Education	24,570,622	24,657,000	29,099,000

source: *Financial Estimates 2001*
(published by the Budget Office, Malta)

Using *Powerpoint* in the Whole-class Approach

Norman C. Borg

Introduction

Microsoft Powerpoint is available as part of the Microsoft Office Suite installed on the teachers' Notebook computers for all year groups. It is a multimedia presentation program, and as such it is usually associated with slide show presentations for meetings, conferences or seminars. However, what many teachers may not be aware of is its great potential for use in the classroom. As a presentation program, its powerful multimedia functions and visual effects make it the ideal tool for creating whole-class sessions by using it in conjunction with the classroom's large display monitor.

Drill-and-practice vs Tutorial Software

Most of the software currently available in Maltese state primary schools is drill-and-practice software. This kind of software usually offers a number of interactive activities aiming at particular mathematical or language skills. By going through these interactive activities, children are practising, learning or enhancing these skills.

However, most of the time this means that such drill-and-practice activities are reserved for the lesson follow-up, after the teacher has already gone through the explanation of the concept and perhaps following a whole class demonstration of the activity itself on the large monitor (usually limited to an explanation of the actual *running* of the activity, rather than the concepts covered).

As such, there is still no *tutorial software* available in schools which helps the teacher to actually *teach the new concepts directly to the children through the software itself*. Such software has been available for quite some time, albeit in a somewhat restricted way; but my personal visit to the last BETT Show in London has revealed that tutorial software targeting primary-related skills in mathematics and language are developing to a more sophisticated and effective degree.
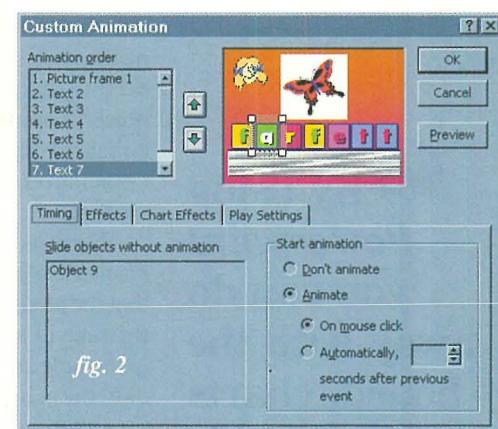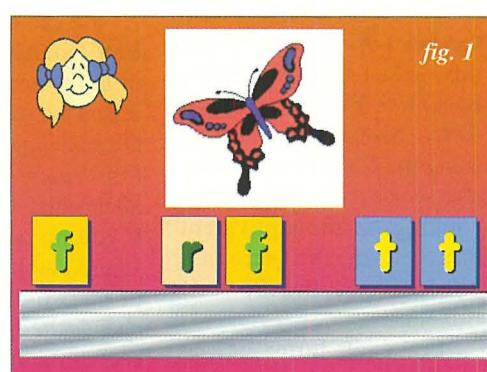
Until this type of software is readily available in schools, however, the teacher may have to think for herself how to actually create rudimentary tutorial applications for use in the class. *MS Powerpoint* obviously does not have all the dedicated features of an automated tutorial software, but it is definitely a good place to start.

fig. 2

fig. 3

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fig. 1
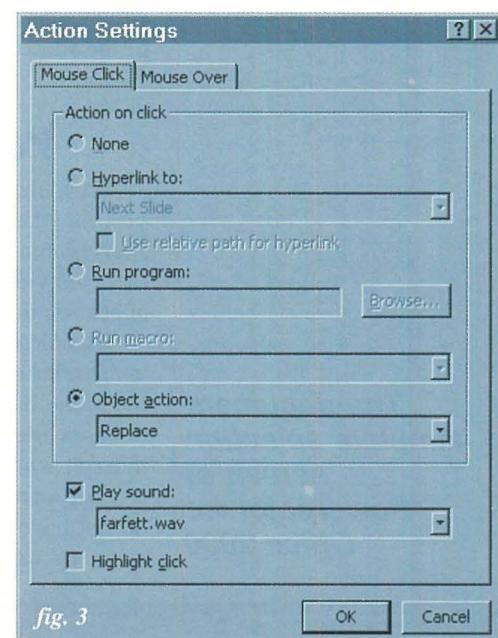
A sophisticated whiteboard

Imagine the large monitor screen in the classroom as a sophisticated whiteboard or chart. Whenever you need to explain a concept, you would traditionally have made use of the board and perhaps some charts and flashcards, in addition, of course, to any solid objects

required. By using *Powerpoint* you can do away with the board, charts and flashcards in one single stroke. What is more you have the option of rendering the whole experience somewhat more lively and interesting by adding animation and sound.

The example discussed below can be used with Year 1 classes or for complementary education purposes. The children are presented with the picture of an object and the consonants of the corresponding word in sequence. They need to discuss which vowels should fall into place to complete the word. Such an activity enhances letter recognition, letter-to-sound association, vowel sounds, vocabulary and spelling.

There is no space here to go through the basic use of *Powerpoint* in detail. It is assumed that the reader is already familiar with this. For the sake of simplicity, we concentrate here on one single screen (slide). What is created here can then be repeated for the rest of the presentation.

The slide setup

The basic setup of the slide consists of a picture and the letters forming the name word, in this case the picture of a butterfly and the letters forming its Maltese equivalent *farfett*. We want both the picture and the consonants to appear as soon as the slide is shown. Two consecutive clicks of the mouse reveal the vowels, one after the other. The teacher is able to show these after a discussion with the children has taken place. The initial appearance of the slide is therefore something like Figure 1.

Powerpoint objects

Each element on the screen (including the vowels still hidden) is a separate object in *Powerpoint*. This will enable us to manipulate them individually and determine the order they appear on the screen.

The picture is a graphic object, or clip art, which can be added to the slide by moving over the Menu bar, and selecting **Insert > Picture > From file...** This will display a requester through which you can select a picture from any clip art disk you may have available. If you do not have a separate clip art disk you may wish to use *Powerpoint*'s own clip art collection, available within the *MS Office* suite. To do this, select from the Menu **Insert > Picture > Clip Art...** instead. Rather than using the Menu bar, you can also access these functions by clicking on the equivalent buttons on the screen's Toolbar: see the *Buttons* Boxout.

For each letter of the

word we will create a dedicated text box, by selecting **Insert > Text Box**. Use a Maltese font, if you have any installed on the computer, or preferably any font having a rounded letter 'a', such as Moderne or Comic Sans. Give a large font size, say 80. In order to create more text boxes, one for each letter, there is no need to repeat this series of instructions. Simply click on the outline of the text box (making sure that the *object* is highlighted, not the letter within) and press simultaneously CTRL and D on the keyboard. This duplicates the text box with all its settings. Then just replace the letter inside. Before doing this, however, we may need to add some other attributes to the text box as well as the picture, in order to make them somewhat more appealing, so do not duplicate the text box just yet.

Special effects

We can add some special effects both to the picture and the text boxes. For instance, let us say we would like the picture to appear first, using a particular transition method and associating a particular sound to it. Then, the consonants in *farfett* will appear next, in sequence, again with different transition methods and sound effects.

Click with the *right* mouse button on the butterfly picture, and select **Custom Animation**. A new requester will appear (Figure 2). Click on the Effects tab. In the **Entry animation and sound** area, you have two drop-down menus, the first for the entry animation (or transition effect), the second for the accompanying sound. Choose *Box out* for the first and *Camera* for the second. We will now need to time the effect so that it automatically starts off as soon as the slide appears on screen.

While still in the Custom Animation requester, click on the Timing tab. Click on the **Animate** radio button, and then on **Automatically, 0 seconds after previous event**.

Click OK to exit the Custom Animation requester and save your work. You can check out the effect by viewing the slide show (**Menu > Slide Show > View Show**). The butterfly picture should appear expanding from the centre outwards, with the sound of a camera click. If this is not the case try to check the settings described above. Always save whenever you change anything.

We can do the same for the text box. In its Entry animation and sound properties enter *Fly from Top* and *Laser* respectively. For the timer, repeat the same setting as for the picture. Since the text object was created after the picture, *Powerpoint* will know which object appears after which during the presentation. Try it out. If you are satisfied with the text animation and sound, duplicate the text box to create the rest of the word. For the sake of variety you can change the appearance animation and sound for each different text box.

The document template selection screen of Powerpoint for Office 2000
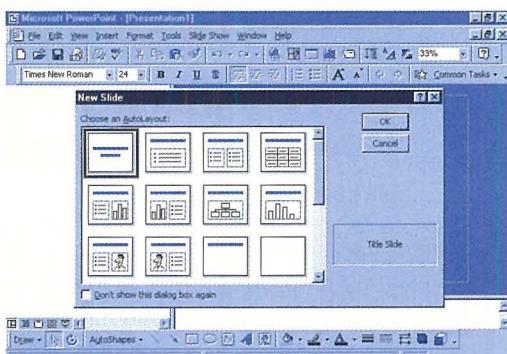
Toolbar Buttons

fill color
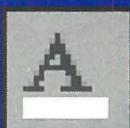
font color

insert clipart

insert picture
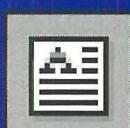
textbox

The above are the tools used in this *Powerpoint* project. Depending on the version of *Powerpoint* you have available and the way you have customised your toolbars, they may appear on different parts of the screen from one computer to another. The icons of the buttons will help you identify them: These buttons will allow you to:

● Change object's fill colour
● Change colour of highlighted text
● Insert Clip Art
● Insert Picture from File
● Create a text box

After having created all the consonants, do the same for the vowels. We do not want the vowels to appear automatically with the rest of the word.

These will only appear after a mouse click, following the whole-class discussion. This can be arranged by giving the vowel text boxes a different timer setting. Right click on a vowel text box and select Custom Animation. Select the Timing tab and **Animate** in the Start animation area. Under Animate, click the **On mouse click** radio button. This will ensure that the vowel box will appear only when the mouse is clicked. Do the same with the rest of the vowels in the word. Save your work.

When you try it out, the picture and the consonants should appear automatically, one by one, as soon as the slide appears, leaving gaps in the word where the vowels should be. The classroom discussion will follow. Clicking the mouse will then bring in the vowels, confirming the children's suggestions.

Narrated presentations

You can add some further interest in the project by actually pre-recording the word beforehand (using **Start > Programs > Accessories > Sound Recorder**, and saving it as a WAV file). Remember your Notebook has an in-built microphone. You can even get one of the children themselves to read the narration. Find a clip art of a boy or a girl, put it on the slide, and right click.

Select **Action Settings** and the Mouse Click tab (Figure 3). For *Action on click* select **None**. Tick the **Play sound** box. Scroll down the options and select **Other sound...** Find on the hard disk the child's narration you saved with Sound Recorder.

Now during the discussion, you can always click on the girl's or boy's image and the word will be read out.

Conclusion

Some final points to consider:
● The instructions above are for *Powerpoint 97*. The 95 version has all the same features, but they may be hidden away under different headings and menus. All the effects are still possible with *Powerpoint 95* anyway.
● Remember that the activity above is only aimed as an introductory whole-class session. You can only use it on your Notebook as *MS Office* is not available on the children's computers. You will need to plan further activities for the follow-up.
● You can add as many words to the presentation by simply duplicating the slide and changing the pictures and words as necessary.
● A working sample of the example can be downloaded from the Downloads section of:

www.geocities.com/norcomm99/

The sample works on both 95 and 97 versions of *Powerpoint*.

Dewar's SUCCESS STORY

Jonathan Valletta, 27
Waterpolo player, Sirens

Dewar's
FINE SCOTCH WHISKY
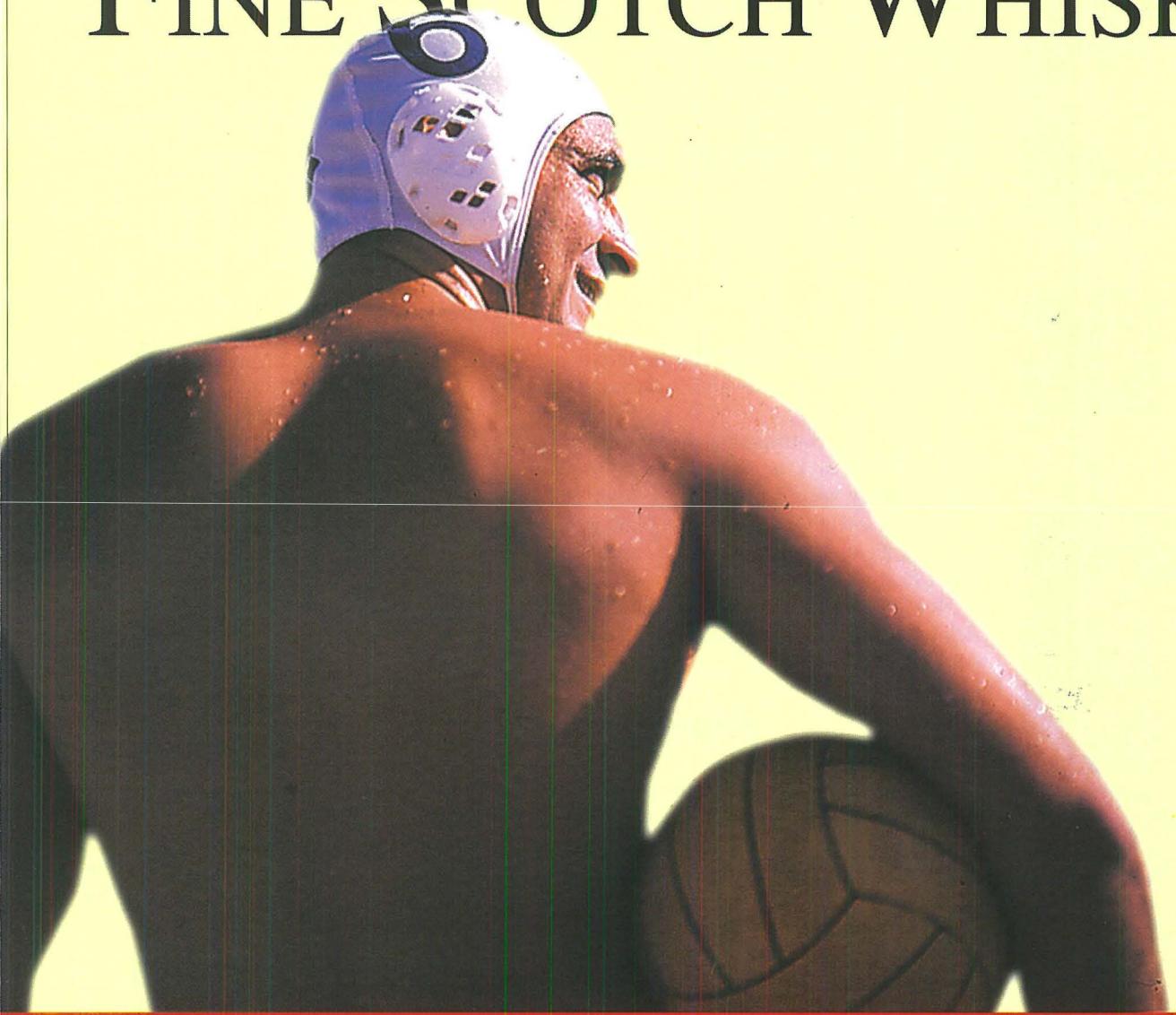
When you win a championship for your club for the first time in 33 years, you're awarded top scorer 4 times, you win the Knockout Cup 3 times and you score seven goals against Switzerland... you must be doing something right. To celebrate all this... the right way...

...it's got to be Dewar's.

MEDIA WORKSTATION

The Matchstick Figure

Ġorġ Mallia

❝ **What if the teacher 'cannot' draw?** ❞
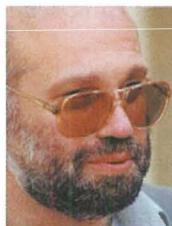
ĠORĠ MALLIA, M.A., lectures in Communication Studies at the University of Malta and is a published cartoonist and writer. He has taught in a secondary school and sixth forms. He is reading for a Ph.D at the University of Sheffield.

In instruction visuals have many key roles to play. Heinich *et al* (1999), succinctly refer to the visual's role as to provide a concrete *referent* for ideas; to *simplify* information; and as a *redundant* channel: helping learners to comprehend visually what they might miss verbally.

Most visuals used in the classroom are pre-prepared by the teacher, often presented complete to the class as an *iconic referent* to a point being made during a lesson. At times, though, there can be a need for *progressive disclosure* of a picture, or of pictures within a narrative framework.

This can be achieved by slowly peeling off masks from different parts of a pre-prepared visual, or uncovering friskets on an OHP transparency, but just as effective, and at times more so because of the 'personal' element involved and the originality of the material used, is the spontaneous drawing of the sequence on a black or white board.

The generally acknowledged use of the board nowadays is as a means of displaying impromptu material (Ellingon & Race, 1993), so actually building up a *live* visual narrative for the students to interact with fits perfectly that suggested usage.

One problem. What if the teacher 'cannot' draw, or can draw 'only a little'? In either case, trying to create the impromptu visual narrative would be useless, as students trying to guess what the image represents tends to defeat the point of the iconic nature of the exercise, in which they (say, during a language lesson) are prompted into saying a sequential series of words that describe figures and actions, and that finally form a whole composition.

a narrative sequence from Johnson & Johnson (1971)

Which is why the use of matchstick figures is suggested. Easily learned and swiftly rendered, these figures make for easy recognisability, and lack of clutter makes necessary cues effective. Of course, there **are** rules that need to be followed also in this. For example, iconographic and representative consistency is expected: a woman must always be drawn the same, as must a man, a dog, etc. (Johnson & Johnson, 1971), so a certain amount of training and planning is needed. But once that is in place, the simplicity involved assures success.

References

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Ellington, H., & Race, P. (1993). *Producing Teaching Materials* 2nd Ed. London: Kogan Page.

Johnson, F., & Johnson, L. A. (1971). *Stick Figure Drawing for Language Teachers.* Bucks: Ginn.

Producing a Radio Programme

Ivan Said

> **A radio programme on a nationwide radio gives your class or school the golden opportunity to broadcast your message all over the two islands**

IVAN SAID is with the ETC. He has a BA (Communications Studies and Maltese) and an MA Qualifying. He was features editor of The Times and a programming officer for Radju ta' l-Università. He trained in journalism in Berlin and Malta. He underwent a Med-Media educational radio course in November 1992.

With thirteen nationwide radios and six long-term community radios on the island your class may come across the opportunity to produce a radio programme.

Or else, your school may want to emulate Mosta Girls' Secondary School, "Lily of the Valley", who set up a community radio called "Radio Lilium". The station, run by the students, transmits daily during the week, throughout the school breaks and early in the morning. It was inaugurated on March 27, 2000, by the President of Malta Professor Guido de Marco.

Such a radio can have a temporary (one month) or a long-term (one-year, renewable) licence. Such stations are set up to keep in touch with the community surrounding the school, raise funds for a particular school project or just to express its voice. In each case, school democracy is deeply strengthened.

"Radio is the media genie, small enough to fit in a bottle, big enough to cover continents," write Michael Kaye and Andrew Popperwell of the BBC World Service in their book, "Making Radio – A Guide to Basic Radio Techniques", published by Broadside Books Ltd., London (1992).

A radio programme on a nationwide radio gives your class or school the golden opportunity to broadcast your message all over the two islands. According to the October 22-28 October 1999 Broadcasting Authority survey 74.6 per cent of the Maltese listen to the radio regularly.

On the other hand a community radio (one-off or long-term) covers only an area of 2.5-Km radius.

In case you want to set up a community radio one has to apply for a licence from the Malta Broadcasting Authority. A licence for a one-off (one-month) community radio licence costs Lm 50 application plus Lm 50 licence, Lm 100 in all. A licence for a long-term (one year, renewable) community radio costs Lm 50 application plus Lm 150 licence, Lm 200 in all. Besides this expense one would need to consider other expenses such as the hiring or purchasing of transmission and production equipment. Your Pentium PC may easily serve as your production equipment.

In all cases there are legal and ethical obligations the class team has to observe. (For more details consult the Malta Broadcasting Authority web site: http://www.ba-malta.org/)

The idea of setting up "Radio Lilium" came from the Head of School, Ms M. D. Aquilina, and with the approval of the staff. As a matter of fact the radio station's programmes are included in the school's Development Plan. Veteran broadcaster Charles Abela Mizzi helped greatly in training the students in running

the station. The station has a Head of Programmes, Head of News, etc. "The station transmits early in the morning at 7.15 a.m. till 8 a.m.," Ms Aquilina told me. "During school breaks there are scheduled programmes varying from news, interviews, story telling, and playing of popular songs."

"Through the radio station, the school is trying to improve communication skills in writing, speaking and the right use of the media. This station besides motivating the students to be creative, is also fostering a healthy and appealing atmosphere in the school," Ms Aquilina added.

I strongly believe that sometimes chances arise for groups to produce a programme, free of charge, on nationwide radios. It did happen in the 1998-1999 scholastic year to a group of male drama students from Vittoriosa Fortini Boys' Secondary "Lorenzo Gafà" who joined forces with another group of female drama students from the Cospicua Girls' Secondary Erin Serracino Inglott, led by Mr. Mario Azzopardi and aided by some of their teachers. The students produced a radio version of their docu-drama, *"Retro – Harsa lejn is-Snin Sittin",* presented at their schools earlier on and eventually broadcast on *Radju ta' l-Università* during the 1999 Easter week radio schedule. The students had the technical assistance of the radio's staff. Eventually the production was nominated for the Best Educational Programme Award of the Broadcasting Award. Even though it did not win a prize, judges gave it a special mention and the authority's chairman Professor Joe Pirotta referred to it in his concluding speech. The advantage of producing a one-off programme (or a series) for an already established radio, nationwide or otherwise, is that you have readily available the much needed technical assistance and the equipment in place as was in the three cases mentioned above.

The school (or class) may either be asked by the station manager or may seek itself the opportunity. In any case the group has to face the manager and show convincingly that they mean business. Thus good preparatory work should be done. Moreover, whether it is an audience of twelve people or one million, listeners deserve the best.

Here I am presenting a series of steps to help you arrive at writing a well thought out proposal to be presented to the station manager and tips to help you produce a good – and the right – radio programme.

The Objective of the programme

❏ To inform only?
❏ To educate only?
❏ To entertain only?

Nationwide Radios

NAME	FREQUENCY
Radju Malta 1	999 kHz MW
	93.7 MHz FM
FM Bronja	91.7 MHz FM
Super 1	92.7 MHz FM
Radio 101	101 MHz FM
RTK	103 MHz FM
Radio Calypso	102.3 MHz FM
Radju ta' l-Universita'	103.7 MHz FM
Bay Radio	89.7 MHz FM
Island Sound	101.8 MHz FM
Capital Radio	88.7 MHz FM
Radju MAS	103.7 MHz FM
Smash Radio	104.6 MHz FM
Radju Parlament	106.2 MHz FM

Long Term Community Radios
(As on December 31, 1999)

NAME	FREQUENCY	BASED
Radju Xeberras	90.8 MHz FM	Valletta
Radju Cottoner	98 MHz FM	Cospicua
Lehen il-Qala	106.5 MHz FM	Qala, Gozo
Deejays Radio	95.6 MHz FM	Kappara
Eden Radio	107.6 MHz FM	Zejtun
Radju Marija	106 MHz FM	Rabat

One-Off Community Radios
(As on December 31, 1999)

NAME	BASED
Radju tal-Katidral	Victoria, Gozo
Radju tal-Belt Victoria	Victoria, Gozo
Radju tal-Providenza	Siggiewi
Radju Bambina	Senglea
Radju Prekursur	Xewkija, Gozo

The author (third from left) and audio technical officer Kenneth Mizzi (centre) with the particpant students of "Retro - Ħarsa lejn is-Snin Sittin" in one of the stuios of Radju ta' l-Università

❏ To inform or to educate while you entertain?

Know your Target Audience
❏ Who are the members of your audience?
❏ Age;
❏ Education;
❏ Interests;
❏ Well Being;
❏ Socioeconomic status.

Live broadcast or recorded? In studio or outside?
❏ Is it a live broadcast or recorded?
❏ Recorded in studio or outside?
❏ Is it an outside live broadcast or a studio bound transmission?
❏ Whichever is your choice, do you need pre-recorded items or postproduction?
❏ For the purpose of this programme, what advantages does your choice have on other alternative modes of radio broadcasting?
❏ Is it feasible? Will it achieve your programme aims at higher or lower costs than other modes of radio broadcasting?
❏ Have you considered all costs?
❏ In Malta, guests are not paid for their contribution. Will you be sticking to this unwritten convention?

Outside live broadcast:
❏ More real, riskier;
❏ More expensive;
❏ Needs more planning;
❏ Involves a larger variety of techniques

Thus it is pertinent to ask yourself the following questions:
❏ Do you have all necessary permits?
❏ Is the line of transmission clear?
❏ Is the noise interference present manageable?
❏ What advantages does this option have on the option of a live studio broadcast?
❏ Do you have enough personnel to help you?
❏ What equipment do you need on site?
❏ Do you need pre-recorded items?

Outside recorded programme:
❏ Less costly than live;
❏ Allows for editing and postproduction;
❏ Any noise can be controlled if not eliminated;
❏ Any unforeseen mishap during recording can be edited out during or after recording;

Still there are questions that you need to ask:
❏ Do you have all necessary permits?
❏ Is the noise interference on site manageable?
❏ What advantages does this option have on the option of a studio recording?
❏ Do you have enough personnel to help you?
❏ What equipment do I need on site?
❏ Do I need pre-recorded items?

Recorded in studio
❏ The situation in a studio is far more manageable, less expensive than other options and more controllable.

Still there are questions, which you need to ask:
❏ Have you booked your studio?
❏ What advantages does this option have on other options we discussed above?
❏ Do your guests know their way to the studio?
❏ Have you agreed clearly on the studio appointment?
❏ Make sure that your studio is not in a mess or in a way that it gives a unwelcome sight to your guests.
❏ Will you be offering a cup of tea or a glass of water, especially if your guests are not being paid for their contribution?
❏ Do you need pre-recorded items?

Live studio broadcast
❏ Most of what has been written above under "Recorded in studio" item applies except that:
❏ It is far more exciting;
❏ If in the case of a recorded session one can be soft on punctuality in this case punctuality is essential, never excusable as the appointment is not just with your studio guests and personnel, but concurrently with your listeners.
❏ This is a live transmission: all gaffes take place in real time – they cannot be edited out - and thus they are heard, listened to, followed, discussed, accepted or refused, laughed at or scorned by your listeners to whom you owe brand loyalty.
❏ If your production will include phone calls you are legally bound to see that the 10-second delay system is perfectly working, otherwise exclude phone-ins.
❏ Always treat any microphone you see or touch as on.

This schema can easily be used in a media education class on radio broadcasting. Imagine if such a class is complemented by a real radio production experience.

For further reading may I suggest the book "Modern Radio Production" (3rd edition), by Lewis B. O'Donnell, Philip Benoit and Carl Hausman, which you can find at the University of Malta library.

The media and their impact on the acquisition[1] of Italian in Malta

Sandro Caruana

> 66 **Some students even sit for the SEC examination of Italian without ever having studied the subject at school** 99

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Introduction

In Malta many people are regularly exposed to the Italian language via the media and this seems to be enough to justify the fact that it is taken for granted that in Malta Italian is understood well. This is also reflected by the declining figures of students in local Junior Lyceums who study Italian from Form 1. In fact many students in these schools start studying Italian, if they ever study the language, in Form 3 rather than in Form 1. Some students even sit for the SEC examination of Italian without ever having studied the subject at school. Some of these students sit for this examination after attending private lessons or evening classes for a few months, whereas others sit for the examination relying exclusively on the competence that they may have obtained after watching Italian television programmes for many years and after being exposed to the language through other means of communication[2].

At times it is the Junior Lyceum students themselves who opt freely not to study Italian formally at an early stage of their Secondary schooling. In other cases it seems that parents exercise their influence on their children by encouraging them to study French or German in Form 1 and eventually to opt for Italian in Form 3 - *"it-Taljan taghzlux minn Form 1, dak taqbdu mit-televixin*! ("do not choose Italian at Form 1 level, you'll pick it up from television!") and other similar statements are frequently heard and though they rarely seem to be based on any theoretical insight or on any knowledge regarding language teaching and learning, they cannot go unnoticed.

These and other such considerations were the triggers which in the early 90s motivated a group of B.Ed.(Hons) students, amongst whom myself, to start exploring the issues regarding the language of the Italian media, that is the *linguistic input* that Maltese students receive from the media. It was evident then, as it is now, that the presence of the Italian media had breathed new life into a language, the active use of which in Malta had declined during the first decades of this century. Consequently, it is highly relevant to investigate the extent and the impact of this linguistic input on the individuals who are exposed to it.

The results of our research

By means of these studies we confirmed that Italian television programmes are popular amongst Maltese schoolchildren, although the popularity of these programmes has declined significantly in recent years, mainly because of the popularity gained by local private channels. Furthermore, results confirm that over the last decade the media have undoubtedly enhanced the comprehension of Italian amongst local students. In fact, tests carried out in the above mentioned studies carried out by B.Ed.(Hons.) students, show that many students in local Primary state and church schools comprehend words and short phrases from Italian television programmes. Furthermore, students in Junior Lyceums who do not study Italian at school or elsewhere are also capable of understanding such words and phrases. In particular, a clear relationship emerged between the students' competence of Italian and the amount of exposure to the language via television. In this respect it is clear that students who watch television regularly (that is for more than an hour daily) comprehend a larger amount of words and phrases in Italian than their counterparts who watch Italian television less regularly.

These results indicate that regular exposure to Italian may enable our students to acquire a certain degree of competence in the language. Since in most cases the media are unidirectional and any form of interaction between the viewer and the person providing the linguistic input normally does not normally occur, one may assume that the contribution of the media as far as language acquisition is concerned is limited to comprehension skills. A further drawback concerning the acquisition of Italian lies in the fact that in Malta very few people have the opportunity to speak regularly in Italian. However, the results of a recent study which I carried out (Caruana, 2000), have shown that in some cases regular exposure to Italian television programmes may lead to a high degree of competence in the language and that this competence is not necessarily limited to comprehension skills, as after many years of watching Italian television programmes regularly some Maltese students who have never learnt the language formally manage to speak Italian very well.

In this study I collected oral and written data from two groups of Form 4 Junior Lyceum students. None of the students included ion the groups had ever had the opportunity to speak Italian regularly. One group consisted of students who had been learning Italian at school since Form 1 and were therefore exposed to the language in formal settings. The other group

consisted of students who had never learnt Italian at school or elsewhere. In this group there were a number of students who watched Italian television programmes regularly. Most of these students were capable of narrating a story in Italian[3] orally and also of completing correctly a number of written sentences in Italian, just as their counterparts who learn Italian at school were capable of doing. Furthermore, the students who watch Italian television programmes very frequently (more than three hours daily) have a well developed grammatical system in Italian and, for example, they use the verbs correctly and are also capable of formulating complex sentences despite the absence of formal instruction in the language.

The implications of our results for the teaching of Italian in Malta

In the light of the above information is may be natural to pose a series of question regarding the role of teachers of Italian in Malta. If as stated above, many Maltese students have learnt and are still learning Italian through the television programmes they follow, what is the use of learning Italian at school? What attitude should teachers of Italian have when confronted with such results? Isn't it disheartening to hear that students who do not learn the language formally at times perform just as well as the students who do? I believe that the results of the above-mentioned studies should represent a challenge to the teachers and that they should provide food for thought for the following reasons:

Firstly, one could ask oneself whether the use of Italian within the classroom is much too grammatically oriented and therefore distances itself from the varieties of the language that one may be exposed to via the media. The media, especially television programmes, ought to become part and parcel of the curriculum and are not to be used on rare occasions as if they were an item one pulls out of a cupboard in order to carry out a lesson which is more stimulating than the ones carried out regularly. I do not mean to say that grammar and reading ought to be replaced by television programmes, but that it is high time that teachers be given the opportunity on the one hand and take initiative on the other in order to teach Italian in a stimulating manner taking into consideration the fact that his/her students can learn Italian effectively by means of regular exposure to the language via the media.

Secondly, one must take into consideration that our results imply that in the classroom of Italian, even before the very first lesson in the subject, there may be unequal conditions amongst the pupils as far as their linguistic competence is concerned. In fact, some students may have been exposed to Italian via the media regularly as from an early age whereas others may have not. Thus, it is important for teachers to obtain information regarding his/her students' degree of exposure to the language by asking them whether they watch Italian television programmes or whether they listen to Italian music or whether they read in Italian at home.

Thirdly, one must keep in mind the fact that one of the greatest difficulties encountered by language teachers is the fact that language learning is always characterised by individual differences. That is to say that whereas some students grasp a language easily others do not. Consequently, while it has been proved that there is a significant relationship between the amount of exposure to Italian via the media and the acquisition of the language, there is no direct equation which states that a certain amount of exposure will ensure that the language will be learnt because people learn languages in different ways even if they are exposed to it for the same amount of time and under the same conditions. Any teacher with a minimum of experience of language teaching is bound to confirm that some students grasp grammatical concepts easily but often encounter difficulties when speaking the language, whereas others learn how to speak the language fluently but encounter many difficulties when asked to carry out grammatical exercises. In such cases it is the language teacher who is called to bridge the gaps in order to help the student face his/her shortcomings.

Finally, it is also necessary to point out that the media may help one understand Italian and in some cases they may also provide the necessary input in order to learn how to speak Italian. However, the media can only offer very limited assistance as far as written skills are concerned and only learning the language formally can normally develop these skills.

> 66 **One could ask whether the use of Italian within the classroom is much too grammatically oriented** 99

The students who watch Italian television programmes very frequently (more than three hours daily) have a well developed grammatical system in Italian

The presence of the Italian media clearly puts the language in an advantageous position when compared to other languages, such as German or French, which are taught also in local schools.

66 It is beyond doubt that Italian via the media is losing popularity **99**

Looking ahead

As I pointed out earlier one must also take into consideration the fact that whereas in the past television was almost completely the domain of programmes in Italian nowadays most people in Malta receive many channels which transmit in English and in other languages besides a number of local private channels which transmit both in Maltese and in English. Therefore, if up to ten years ago it was not surprising that even our Primary school children would understand Italian well and possibly also speak the language, the situation today is undergoing rapid changes. It is beyond doubt that Italian via the media is losing popularity and the long-term effects of this situation are yet to be studied. The teacher of Italian in Malta is immersed in a highly dynamic situation that offers new challenges as time goes by. In this respect, he/she still has the opportunity to encourage his/her students to be exposed to Italian via the media and to offer a rich and varied linguistic input within the classroom setting so as to give the opportunity to his/her students to listen to the language regularly and to use what they listen to in order to interact in Italian. It is also important to note that technological progress has rendered the media more interactive. As stated earlier, television offers few opportunity for interaction to take place, but this not the case of the Internet or of computer programmes available on CD-ROM which are highly interactive and which offer the learner to be immersed in a process of autonomous learning. Though I am frilly aware of the difficulties teachers may have in order to access these tools it is necessary to point out that language teaching is heading towards this direction and that the use of the means of communication within the classroom can help students to gain more competence in Italian.

Concluding remarks

The presence of the Italian media clearly puts the language in an advantageous position when compared to other languages, such as German or French, which are taught in local schools. It is also beyond doubt, that, while acknowledging the fact that the degree of spontaneous acquisition via television varies between one student and another, many Maltese students develop refined aural comprehensive skills at a very young age even before initiating the process of formal learning of Italian. Also, exposure to the language via the media is a useful reinforcement tool both for students who are still learning the language and for those who have completed their formal schooling years.

Notes

[1] A terminological distinction is often made between the terms *acquisition* and *learning*. This distinction, originally proposed in the works of Krashen (1981), normally refers to the fact that whereas a language is *acquired* in non-formal settings, that is spontaneously or naturally, a language is *learnt* when formal instruction is present, for example at school. The distinction may be considered to be useful when the two processes are to be treated separately as in the case of the field of language teaching or methodology. For other intents and purposes *acquisition* and *learning* overlap to the extent that they often cannot be kept apart, therefore as far as this article is concerned, unless specified otherwise, I will use the terms interchangeably and synonymously.

[2] Although one may be exposed to Italian through various means of communication such as radio channels, reading material and music, it is beyond doubt that the medium that has the greatest linguistic impact is television.

[3] These students were shown an abridged version of the mute film *Modern Times* of Charlie Chaplin. They were then asked to narrate what they had seen in Italian. These narrations were recorded and the data provided the basis for the linguistic analysis I carried out in my research.

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The Professional Development Portfolio

Towards the professional development of student teachers

Deborah Chetcuti

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Introduction

The idea of introducing portfolios for student teachers arose out of the "Tomorrow's Teachers' Project" in 1997. Part of this project involved trying to find alternative ways of assessment for student teachers and one of the proposals suggested the development of student teacher portfolios. A short description of what portfolios were was included in an *Assessment Guidebook* published by the Faculty of Education in 1998. It was also decided during a Faculty Staff Seminar to pilot portfolios among second year B.Ed. (Hons.) students. This pilot project was in fact carried out between October 1998 and April 1999. During this period all second year students were asked to develop a portfolio. The students were then interviewed and asked to share their views about the relevance and usefulness of the portfolio. The students were in fact very positive about the experience and Faculty Board approved the introduction of student teacher portfolios within the Faculty of Education.

In October 1999 the Dean appointed a committee which started to work on the introduction of the student teacher portfolios. The committee was made up of members of the Faculty of Education and the Education Division and proved to be a successful collaborative project. The committee set about identifying what the student teacher portfolio which they renamed "The Professional Development Portfolio" should include and preparing a guidebook for student teachers on how to prepare and develop the portfolio. This guidebook will be launched in January 2001.

What is the Professional Development Portfolio?

The Professional Development Portfolio is a collection of information about a student teacher's (or teacher's) practice. It can include a variety of information such as lesson plans, student assignments, teachers' written descriptions of their instruction and formal evaluations by supervisors (Wolf, 1996). However, the portfolio is also more than simply a collection of artifacts. What distinguishes it from a mere scrap book or album of events is the thought and reflection that goes into the development of a portfolio. It is the means by which student teachers can show their successes and the process of thought and reflection which influenced their growth and development as a professional teacher. As described by Campbell, Cignetti, Melenyzer, Nettles and Wyman (1997) a portfolio is an organised, goal-driven documentation of a student teacher's professional growth and achieved competence in the complex act called teaching. Although it is a collection of documents, a portfolio is tangible evidence of the wide range of knowledge, dispositions and skills that the student teacher possesses as a growing professional.

What are the aims of the portfolio?

The main aims of the portfolio are to enable student teachers to:

- provide an authentic collection of evidence to illustrate academic performance throughout the course;
- reflect about their own professional development;
- critically evaluate their strengths and weaknesses and to set realistic targets for future development;
- hold purposeful discussions about their development needs and achievements with tutors, colleagues and critical friends;
- create a link between the theoretical and practical aspects of the course;
- draw on their experience in keeping a portfolio in order to think of ways of integrating this as part of their own assessment strategies;
- give them greater ownership over their own learning and assessment;
- prepare a presentation document which can be presented to present and future employers.

The portfolio can capture the complexities of professional practice in ways that no other approach can. Not only is it an effective way of assessing teaching quality but it also provides

student teachers with opportunities for self reflection and collegial interactions based on documented episodes of their own teaching (Wolf, 1996). As stated by a student teacher *"...Even though it is time consuming it made me reflect on my initial experiences as a teacher. Moreover it gives an indication to Heads on my commitment as a teacher. It is something to be treasured after graduating..."*. It can also in the words of another student *"...be helpful when we have to face interviewers..."*.

What does the portfolio include?

The professional development portfolio which has been developed by the Faculty of Education is divided into a number of sections. In each section student teachers are expected to include evidence or documents to show that they have acquired certain key skills throughout the course. The portfolio is organised in such a way that students are encouraged to include examples of their work accompanied by pieces of reflective writings which indicate why they have chosen to include particular examples and what they have learnt in the process. While student teacher may choose to include anything which they feel has contributed to their professional growth in the portfolio, the suggested contents of the portfolio are as follows:

The portfolio is organised in such a way that students are encouraged to include examples of their work accompanied by pieces of reflective writings

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FACULTY OF EDUCATION

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO

Professional Knowledge:
- Introducing oneself as a teacher, philosophy and goals.
- Final transcript of results.
- An example of a submitted written task together with the evaluation sheet.
- Evidence of participation in seminars, local conferences, in service courses.
- Abstract of dissertation.

The Teaching and Learning process:
- Tutors' reports of all teaching practices.
- A pack which should include a scheme of work (for a particular subject and year level); a lesson plan developed from the scheme of work presented; the individualised lesson plan for students with learning difficulties (only where applicable); any resources such as handouts used during the lesson; the self evaluation of the lesson. You can for example include a lesson which was observed by a tutor, in such a case the tutor's report can be included as part of the pack.
- Feedback from co-operating teachers and Heads of School.
- Feedback from students and parents.
- Samples of student work.

Management Skills:
- Photographs of the class during specific activities (for example during group work).
- Photographs of resources used.
- Floor plans of classrooms, laboratories, space used for teaching and learning.
- A written description of how a class was organised to carry out a particular activity (for example role play) and a reflective evaluation of the effectiveness of the management skills.
- An anecdotal record of how you dealt with one or two specific discipline problems.
- Excerpts from tutors reports regarding management skills.

Information and Communications Technology:
- A short description of the various forms of media used in instruction with a reflective evaluation on the advantages and disadvantages of each resource.
- Examples of how information technology was incorporated in the classroom (for example a list of Internet Resources and the use of email to communicate with colleagues).
- Examples of any learning aids produced such as handouts, flashcards, games, computer programs.

Monitoring Student Learning:
- An assessment plan for a particular topic or subject to show how multiple forms of assessment have been used.

One of the main reasons why the Professional Development Portfolio is considered to be so important for student teachers is because it helps to encourage reflective practice and professional development.

- An example of an assessment given and an example of the feedback given to students.
- An example of progressive feedback given to students (to show feedback given and how this was followed through).
- An example of an assessment record sheet.
- A student or class profile.

Other Professional Qualities and Community Involvement:

- Evidence of involvement in school activities and extracurricular activities.
- Letters of reference indicating involvement in community activities.
- Letters indicating involvement in organising activities in and out of school.

Professional Development:

- Final reflections on growth and development throughout the course.
- Final reflection on the development of the portfolio.
- Professional development plan.

All these artifacts are intended to show the skills which each student teacher is expected to have acquired at the end of their course.

The portfolio is a commitment to professional development

Why is the Professional Development Portfolio so important?

One of the main reasons why the Professional Development Portfolio is considered to be so important for student teachers is because it helps to encourage reflective practice and professional development. The idea is not simply to help students present themselves in a positive way but also to make a difference to the way in which our teachers are educated. It is important to remember that the objective is not to create outstanding portfolios, but rather to cultivate outstanding teaching and learning (Wolf, 1996, p. 37).

Another important reason for the introduction of the portfolio is that it can also be used as a presentation document during job interviews. In today's competitive world, it is useful to be able to sit in an interview and produce a portfolio which shows all the work which has contributed to professional growth and development. As stated by Campbell et al (1997) "teaching jobs are highly competitive and therefore creative ways of presenting yourself are essential" (p. 2).

How can the Professional Development Portfolio be used in schools?

As has been seen the Professional Development Portfolio is very important for the professional development and growth of student teachers, but how can it be used by teachers and Heads of School? The portfolio can in fact be very useful in to introduce student teachers to co-operating teachers and Heads of School.

During teaching practice a number of student teachers are always to be found in schools and usually they come to the school completely anonymous without any references and without any evidence of their strengths and potential. The portfolio can be presented to the Head of School and to the co-operating teacher or mentor and act as a window into the experiences of the student teachers. It can give Heads of School and co-operating teachers an idea of the academic abilities of the students, of their performance on previous teaching practices, on their preparation and commitment to learning and of any other talents or commitments to the community. This gives face and personality to each student teacher and creates a link between the work which has been done at University and the practical teaching. It also gives Heads of School and co-operating teachers the opportunity to include their own feedback and suggestions to the student teacher.

The portfolio is a commitment to professional development which makes the practice of teaching a collaborative venture between novice and expert teachers, between theory and practice.

It is an ongoing journey of reflective practice which enables us to cultivate better teaching and better learning.

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It-Twaqqif tal-Kunsill ta' l-iStudenti fl-iskola Lorenzo Gafà

Samuel Mercieca

Hekk kif lejn tmiem is-sena l-oħra fl-iskola sekondarja tas-subien tal-Fortini wasal il-ktejjeb maħruġ mid-Diviżjoni ta' l-Edukazzjoni - *Democracy In Schools - Setting up of Students' Councils & Class Committees* - żewġ għalliema avviċinaw lill-Kap ta' l-Iskola, is-Sur Horace Caruana, b'numru ta' proposti biex jitwaqqaf il-Kunsill ta' l-iStudenti. Il-Kap, min-naħa tiegħu aċċetta mill-ewwel u ħatar Kumitat 'ad hoc' biex jibda jipprepara għat-twettiq ta' din l-idea. Dan il-Kumitat kien iffurmat minn dawk l-għalliema li wrew l-iżjed interess f'dan il-proġett - sitta b'kollox. Uħud minnhom diġa' kellhom esperjenza fi proġett simili għax f'Novembru li għadda, bħala parti miċ-Ċelebrazzjonijiet tal-Millenju, kienu organizzaw elezzjoni fost l-istudenti sabiex jinħatar ir-Rappreżentant tagħhom għas-sessjoni tal-Parlament ta' l-iStudenti li saret fis-6 t'April 2000. Kif kiteb id-Direttur Ġenerali fl-Introduzzjoni għall-ktejjeb imsemmi, ". . . . the Maltese child [must] be made knowledgeable in the ideals and practice of democracy." (p. iii). Għal dan il-għan, f'dan il-Kumitat 'ad hoc' li kien presedut minn wieħed mill-istess għalliema, ġew mistiedna jipparteċipaw tliet studenti biex huma wkoll jgħidu tagħhom.

> **The Maltese child must be made knowledgeable in the ideals and practice of democracy**

L-ewwel xogħol tal-Kumitat

Minn meta twaqqaf dan il-Kumitat 'ad hoc' f'Jannar li għadda, sakemm lesta x-xogħol kollu tiegħu, għaddew erba' xhur li matulhom kienu jsiru medja ta' żewġ laqgħat fil-ġimgħa. L-ewwel biċċa xogħol ta' dan il-Kumitat kien li jiġbor kemm jista' jkun ideat dwar dan il-proġett u għalhekk talab l-opinjoni ta' l-

Amministrazzjoni, ta' l-għalliema kollha ta' l-iskola u anke tal-ġenituri. Ħaseb ukoll biex jitlob l-opinjoni ta' l-istudenti u għalhekk ġew organizzati żewġ laqgħat għalihom: waħda għall- istudenti tal-Forms 1u 2 u l-oħra għall-istudenti tal-Forms 3, 4 u 5 rispettivament. Dawn il-laqgħat kienu importanti ħafna għax b'hekk ħareġ ċar x'jistennew l-istudenti nfushom meta jkollhom sehem fit-tmexxija ta' l-iskola tagħhom.

Wara li analizza dawn l-ideat kollha, il-Kumitat wasal għall-konklużjoni li l-Kunsill ta' l-iStudenti għandu jkun magħmul minn Eżekuttiv u minn Rappreżentant ta' kull klassi. Għalhekk ħa ħsieb jorganizza żewġ elezzjonijiet. L-ewwel waħda saret għall-iskola kollha biex jintgħażlu l-ħames membri ta' l-Eżekuttiv u tmexxiet fuq l-istess linji ta' l-Elezzjoni Ġenerali: inħatret Kummissjoni Elettorali biex tieħu ħsieb l-organizzazzjoni tal-proċess elettorali kollu, twaqqaf uffiċċju elettorali magħmul mill-għalliema sabiex jgħinu lill-istudenti-kandidati fil-kampanja
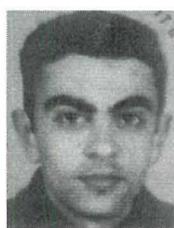
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B'kollox dan il-Kunsill hu magħmul minn sittax-il student.

It-theijija ta' l-istatut ghall-Kunsill

L-aħħar biċċa xogħol tal-Kumitat 'ad hoc' kienet li jhejji Statut għall-Kunsill. Wieħed mill-għalliema hejja abbozz u fuqu saret diskussjoni twila li ħadet diversi laqgħat. Anke hawnhekk intalbet l-opinjoni ta' l-Istaff u ta' l-istudenti biex kemm jista' jkun ikun hemm kunsens wiesa' dwar dan id-dokument. B'hekk issa l-Kunsill għandu l-istruttura fuq xiex jaħdem għall-ġid ta' l-istudenti kollha. Sar provediment fl-istatut biex dan il-Kunsill ikollu żewġ għalliema li jgħinuh fix-xogħol tiegħu. Għalhekk, wara l-elezzjonijiet, l-istudenti talbu lill-għalliema biex min hu interessat joffri ismu. Imbagħad, minn din il-lista huma għażlu tliet għalliema u għaddew dawn l-ismijiet lill-Kap ta' l-Iskola li, min-naħa tiegħu, għażel iż-żewġ għalliema li għal din is-sena se jkunu l-Link Teachers ta' dan il-Kunsill. Kif wieħed jista' jinnota, f'dan l-eżerċizzju preparatorju kollu,

> **Nawgura lil skejjel oħra biex huma wkoll iniedu l-Kunsilli ta' l-Istudenti sabiex jgħinuhom jitħarrġu fit-tħaddim tad-demokrazija**

elettorali tagħhom, stampar tal-voti, laqgħat għall-istudenti dwar kif jivvutaw, thejjija tal-post tal-votazzjoni u tal-post ta' l-għadd tal-voti. Matul il-kampanja Elettorali, wieħed seta' jara lill-istudenti-kandidati u 'l sħabhom iwaħħlu posters ma' l-iskola kollha. Dak in-nhar ta' l-elezzjoni, l-atmosfera fl-iskola, speċjalment fis-sala ta' l-iskola, li ntużat kemm bħala post tal-votazzjoni kif ukoll għall-għadd tal-voti, kienet waħda interessanti għall-aħħar, u fi kliem is-Sur Alfred Mallia (EO YSO) li ġie mistieden biex josserva l-proċess elettorali,

l-istudenti diġà' daqu ħafna minn dik il-'practice of democracy' li kiteb dwarha d-Direttur Ġenerali.

Din kienet inizzjattiva oħra ta' suċċess li ttieħdet fl-iskola sekondarja tal-Fortini. Minn hawnhekk nixtieq nifraħ lil dan il-Kunsill ta' l-iStudenti u nawguralu ħidma fejjieda. Nawgura wkoll lil skejjel oħra biex huma wkoll iniedu l-Kunsilli ta' l-Istudenti sabiex jgħinuhom jitħarrġu fit-tħaddim tad-demokrazija u jafdaw fil-ħila ta' l-istudenti biex jagħtu sehemhom b'mod demokratiku fit-tmexxija ta' l-iskola.

The Senglea Family Literacy Programme

Josephine Milton

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> ❝ The Programme offered literacy teaching for children while improving the parents' ability to help their children with literacy ❞

The National Literacy Survey of the Reading Attainment of Year 2 Pupils carried out by the Literacy Unit in March 1999 (Mifsud, Milton, Brooks & Hutchison, 2000) highlighted many interesting findings. Amongst these was the difference in attainment on both the Maltese and English tests by pupils coming from families of different socio-economic backgrounds and different regions in Malta. Thus, to act upon recommendations posited in the light of such findings, the Senglea Primary School and the Senglea School Council took the initiative of contacting the Literacy Unit of the University of Malta requesting it to implement a Family Literacy Programme.

The Family Literacy Programme studied here was 'two-generation, two-pronged' instead of 'three-pronged' as the programme did not include adult basic education for the parents. The Programme offered literacy teaching for children while improving the parents' ability to help their children with literacy. Thus, the main focus was the children and their literacy. Since the Programme was relatively short it was not possible to focus on the parents' literacy as well.

The Family Literacy Programme aimed to build on existing family literacy practices in the home as well as extending them (Auerbach, 1989; Taylor, 1983). In order to extend these literacy practices in the home the parents learnt how to use different reading techniques, how to read with their children, and also how to encourage and motivate them to enjoy reading.

The Programme sought to be sensitive to the needs of the families and to respect their different social, cultural, and educational backgrounds (Morrow, 1995; Heath, 1983; Auerbach, 1989; Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines, 1988). This was achieved by obtaining as much information as possible about the families. Also throughout the programme informal discussions were held with the participants to ensure they felt at ease and to communicate their needs to the Literacy Team.

The programme adopted a parallel approach; sessions run for parents and separate sessions run for children. However, a very important feature of the Programme was that a few sessions or parts of sessions involved both the children and parents working together.

Main Aims

The main aims of the Senglea Family Literacy Programme for the children were as follows:
- to improve the children's literacy skills in both Maltese and English;
- to enhance their enjoyment of reading;
- to encourage their participation in other literacy related activities at home and at school;
- to involve the children in literacy activities which should be viewed as a source of enjoyment and pleasure.

The main aims of the Senglea Family Literacy Programme for the parents were:
- to enable parents to be in a better position to help their children with literacy skills;

Parents learning how to make a mind-map to use with their children to plan study sessions

Children 'fishing' for parts of sentences

> **❝It was important for participants to be actively involved through discussion, role-play and other related activities❞**

Children enjoying a literacy board game under the guidance of a tutor

● to encourage parents to share, or start sharing, literacy-related activities with their children;

● to create awareness of the importance of a literacy-rich environment in the home as well as outside the home;

● to enhance and foster a positive attitude towards reading and other literacy-related activities in the parent;

● to create the awareness that literacy starts at home and that many activities they engage in at home with their child/ren are related to literacy;

● to raise awareness about the fact that as parents they play a key role in their child's literacy development.

A Description of the Senglea Family Literacy Programme

The Family Literacy Programme was structured over a series of 8 sessions of 2 hours each spread over an 8-week period between the 16th of May to the 4th of July 2000.

The sessions were held at the Senglea Primary School as this was a convenient venue for all the participants who live in Senglea. The Programme was voluntary and was not of a 'restricted' nature (Hannon, 1999) to give an equal opportunity to families who wished to participate. At the very beginning of the Family Literacy Programme the content of the parents' and children's sessions was discussed with the parents to ensure that the parents were involved in the sessions as valued partners.

The parents' sessions focused primarily on how they could help their children with their literacy development. Therefore, the sessions highlighted and created awareness of literacy in the environment (Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982). An important aspect of the Programme was that it was important for participants to be actively involved through discussion, role-play and other related activities. For most of the parents this was a novel experience. Despite the fact that some parents showed a certain degree of self-consciousness at first, they soon came to feel at ease with each other and were happy to participate fully in this aspect of the Programme.

The parents' sessions

These sessions were led by two tutors and expounded on the subject areas below:

● We live in a print-rich environment and we are dealing with this print which is around us all the time (eg: logos, street names, traffic signs, names of shops, recipes, banners, timetables, instructions, prayers on holy pictures, newspapers.);

● Ways of reading books with their child/ren using different techniques and strategies like paired or shared reading;

● How to choose books for (or with) children that are interesting, enjoyable and of the appropriate level of difficulty;

● Guidelines about what to do or not do while reading with their children were also discussed and the parents themselves were involved in a roleplay as parent and child. Issues discussed included the importance of giving the child positive feedback and encouragement while reading, talking about the pictures and not only reading the text and of eliminating competing stimuli such as television and radio while reading;

● How to help their child with studying and revision. Preparing schedules and mindmaps of what to study including the time-frame and specific topics or subjects. Planning for free time and breaks in between study sessions was also discussed.

The children's sessions

The children's sessions were led by five literacy tutors and included many different literacy activities. A lot of thought and careful planning was put into the sessions to make sure they were enjoyable and significant learning experiences for the children. The team's aim was to change the attitude towards reading of those children who were not very keen on reading. The purpose of the exercise was to motivate them to read and to improve their reading habits/

Parents and children during a shared reading activity

> **The Family Literacy Programme was successful in instilling a sense of self-esteem and self-confidence in the parents and children**

behaviours. Thus, the team always took a big box with a quality selection of Maltese and English books to the sessions for the children to borrow and to read at home or even during part of the session if they so wanted. The children would start the sessions in small groups where they would tell the other children what the book they had borrowed was about and whether they had enjoyed reading it.

The children would then have different literacy activities (such as reading and discussing books, board games, writing activities) in small groups or a story-telling session as a whole group.

The Joint Sessions

During the joint sessions (or parts of sessions) the parents and children practised reading strategies and techniques discussed in other sessions while the tutors observed and were ready to assist if necessary. After the activity the tutors would usually give feedback upon what had been observed.

One of the joint sessions involved book-making. Each parent and child was to write a story and prepare a book. Samples and models of different types of books that could be produced were presented to the parents and children by the tutors to provide them with a variety of different ideas. The parents and children were to think about a book and story at home and continue with the book-making process during the next session. Some actually turned up for the next session with the finished book! The books and ideas they came up with were very creative and involved many hours of work. Many participants also involved other members of the family who were good at drawing or who were just interested and wanted to be involved. Since this was what the team thought would happen, it had prepared other activities for the session. However, those who had finalised their book were quite happy to help those who were still working on theirs.

Another joint session involved the parents and children in making hand puppets out of

paper bags. They really enjoyed creating their own characters. When the puppets were finished they prepared short scripts and created puppet shows in small groups.

Evaluation of the Programme

The evaluation of the Programme draws on multiple sources of evidence derived from the different participants involved. A thorough evaluation through the parents', children's and tutors' questionnaires and the parents' interviews was undertaken. This evaluation would enable the amelioration of the Programme through identifying the strong aspects of the practice of implementing family literacy processes and detecting and improving the weaker aspects of the Programme.

Outcomes

The Family Literacy Programme was successful in instilling a sense of self-esteem and self-confidence in the parents and children. The Programme was also successful in challenging and changing the children's negative attitudes towards reading, as they became more positive: most of the children came to enjoy reading by the end of the Programme. They also started believing more in themselves as capable readers.

The parents also became more aware of their important role in their children's literacy development and learned how to assist the children with reading through employing different techniques such as paired- and shared-reading. They also learned how to read with, or to, their children and to set aside a special time to devote to reading. As a bonus effect two of the adult participants also improved their own literacy skills.

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