

**Gozo College**

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of  
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Front cover design is a digital interpretation by Marie-Claude Xerri of a painting entitled FIRE, by the artist Lino Xerri. The painting is inspired by the quotation from W.B. Yeats “Education is not the filling of a bucket, but the lighting of a fire”.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

It is impossible to co-ordinate and edit this book without the assistance of many people. They deserve a special word of acknowledgement and thanks. First comes Chev. Frank Gatt, Gozo College Principal, who once again entrusted me with the task of putting together this publication. I thank him for his trust. Special thanks go to Ms Doris Cini, Personal Assistant to the Gozo College Principal, for her help in realizing the work. Obviously without the co-operation of the authors, this undertaking would not have been possible. I thank them for their contribution and for sharing their research. Ms Marie-Claude Xerri and Ms Josephine Micallef were invaluable in the layout and book production of the present journal. They have been patient with my requests and I am in debt for this. Acknowledgements also go to ECO-GOZO, ETC, AHEAD and SEEP for supporting and co-financing the Gozo College Journal of Educational Studies Volume II.

Lino Xerri  
2010



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**FOREWORD**  
**TO THE SECOND VOLUME OF THE**  
***GOZO COLLEGE***  
***JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES***

The motto of the Gozo College is *Embracing Diversity*. Ours is a community college where each diversity is treasured and celebrated as a gift. Our mission statement, aims and objectives aspire to respect ‘otherness’ in any form by working in close harmony with one another in a constant dialogue of equals.

We value immensely, among others, the diversity that exists among our SMT’s and teaching staff. In fact, this publication is a hymn of celebration to our SMT and teaching personnel who leave no stone unturned to give the very best to those entrusted in their care. Not least by furthering their studies in a true spirit of life-long and life-wide learning. Once again, this second volume pays tribute to a number of Gozitan educators who, through their research, are enhancing the quality of education in our College.

This publication comprises various contributions.

The first, by the undersigned, is a detailed researched study of the *raison d’être* of the Gozo College: its mission statement, aims and objectives, vision and voice which revolve around a shared dialogue among all stakeholders, effective leadership, the promotion of resilience, diversity, inclusion and equal opportunities, interculturality, the enhancement of teaching and learning, constant inquiry and access to external expertise. This study spells out concretely how these visions and missions are being implemented at College, Church Schools and Community levels; it shows very clearly how the Gozo College is really walking the talk.

The second contribution by Ms Victoria Mercieca gives in synthesis the highlights of a dissertation in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of M.Ed in Curriculum Design, Development and Evaluation. Ms Mercieca explores the extent and ways the Home Economics curriculum empowers learners to fulfil their potential through its implementation. This study also specifies the curricular needs that might be considered for a possible improvement in its implementation.

In another ex-post-facto, quantitative study, Mr Saviour Tabone focuses on the performance of children in Year 4 up to the end of Form 1 with special emphasis on the transition period from Year 6 to Form 1. The ample data quoted in this article is collected from various sources and allows room for a lot of reflection.

A fourth contribution by Ms Stephanie Azzopardi, a SEBD expert, is based on a study which brings to the fore the perceptions of secondary school students as well as those of their teachers with regards to the impact of teachers' attitude on students' behaviour, the aim being to establish whether there is a correlation between the two. The findings are interesting to read and digest.

The journal includes an interesting, historical account by Mr Ian Grech on the concept of charity as professed and practised by the Order of St. John of Jerusalem.

This year the publication contains an Appendix with contributions by our four sponsors: ECO-GOZO, ETC, SEEP and AHEAD. The information given in this appendix is also very useful for our teachers and very educational. This is also a way of showing our appreciation for their help and support.

Very many thanks go to Mr Lino Xerri, Ms Doris Cini, and Ms Josephine Micallef without whose enthusiasm and dedication this second volume of the GOZO COLLEGE JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES would not have been possible.

The journal can also be viewed on our website: [www.gozocollege.edu.com](http://www.gozocollege.edu.com)

Chev. Frank Gatt, *Gozo College Principal*

# **THE GOZO COLLEGE – A COMMUNITY COLLEGE WHERE EACH DIVERSITY IS TREASURED AND CELEBRATED AS A GIFT**

*Chev. Frank Gatt*

## **About the Author**

Chev. Frank Gatt has been the Coordinator/ Principal of the Gozo College since its inception in 2005. He received his Education at Qormi Boys' Primary, The Lyceum, Hamrun, the Malta College of Education (first three-year Course), the University of Malta and in various Universities abroad. Frank Gatt started his teaching career way back in 1969. He has taught and lectured extensively at primary, secondary, post-secondary and University levels. During the course of his career, Chev. Gatt has occupied the following posts: Head of Department (French), Educational Assistant (French), Education Officer (French), and Assistant Director (Training and Professional Development). For several years he represented Malta on the Governing Board of the ECML (Graz) and was a member on the EU Working Groups on Languages, Entrepreneurship and Basic Skills. He coordinated various Council of Europe projects. At present, he is also a member of the Council for the Teaching Profession.

## **Preamble**

The Gozo College was one of the four pilot colleges launched in October 2005 after the publication of the document FOR ALL CHILDREN TO SUCCEED – *a New Network Organisation for Quality Education in Malta*, by the MEYE on 28 June 2005. The Gozo College is actually one of the ten Colleges regrouping all State schools in Malta and Gozo.

The Gozo College network comprises officially eleven mixed primary schools and two secondary schools, one for boys and one for girls. However, the Gozo College has for the past four years worked very closely with the Arts and Crafts Centre at Ġhajnsielem, the Music School at Sannat, the Drama School at Nadur and the Sir M.A Refalo Centre for Further Studies. As from this past year, all

Church Schools in Gozo have been attending, on a regular basis, our monthly Council of Heads meetings along with the other Heads of School. This means that, practically, the Gozo College network incorporates all schools in Gozo, State and non-State. The Gozo College also works in close collaboration with other stakeholders in the community.

The motto of the Gozo College is ‘Embracing Diversity’. Our mission statement, aims, and objectives aspire to respect this ‘otherness’ in all its forms by working in close harmony with each other in a dialogue of perfect equals.

### **Mission Statement, Aspirational Purpose, Aims, Vision and Voice**

The mission statement of the Gozo College was agreed upon by consensus after a number of discussion meetings at Council of Heads level. It states: The Gozo College, believing that

- *every child matters,*
- *every child can be a powerful learner,*
- *every child can be ‘intelligent’ if taught effectively,*
- *every human being within it is a special occasion,*
- *by working together we can work smarter,*

*aspires to provide a holistic education of the highest quality to each and every learner entrusted in its care and to the whole Gozitan community that it serves.*

Our aims and objectives are intended to enhance:

- *pupil/student learning* with a clear pedagogical focus on *all* learners and *all* teachers, the aim being to raise the individual attainment of each pupil/student and the individual performance of each teacher;
- *adult learning* where teachers share experiences alongside their students through collaborative approaches. In a perspective of life-long and life-wide learning this includes also parents and the whole community;
- *leadership for learning and leadership development* focusing on the continuous professional development of Heads, Assistant Heads and other members of the senior management team (SMT); the aim is also to encourage all to improve practices by not being afraid to take calculated risks and not to shy from experimenting after careful reflection;
- *school-wide learning*, to transform schools into learning organisations and learning communities, learning organisation being defined as: ‘... an enterprise made up of learners and where learning is used continuously to transform the organisation’ (Senge, 1990);

- *school to school learning* where professionals can work in unison sharing knowledge and good practices in a process of co-construction with other outside schools and institutions;
- *network to network learning*: where knowledge is transferred from one network to another enabling networks to learn from each other and grow professionally together;
- *inquiry, personal mastery and research* in a continuous process of reflection and self-evaluation;
- *innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship* since these are essential to Malta's and Gozo's future economic prosperity and quality of life. Our innovation methodology builds on Lingard's concept of productive pedagogies – developing classroom practices that revolve around substantive conversation, recognition and celebration of diversity, connectedness and intellectual challenge.

A vision is '*a dream created in our working hours of a preferred future*' (Block, 1987). Helgesen (1991) speaks of enhancing the concept of vision with that of voice, somebody to hear it until it becomes an interactive, shared vision. The shared *vision* of the Gozo College revolves around the following principles:

- Shared Dialogue, Collaboration, Cooperation and Collegiality,
- Leadership,
- Promotion of resilience to develop emotional and cognitive skills,
- Diversity, inclusion and equal opportunity,
- Multilingualism, multiculturalism, interculturality,
- Enhancement of curricular, pedagogical and methodological practices,
- Constant inquiry and discourse, personal mastery and access to external expertise.

### **Shared Dialogue, Collaboration, Cooperation and Collegiality (CCC)**

*'Teachers learn best by sharing ideas, planning collaboratively, critiquing each other's ideas and experiences and reducing the isolation encountered in most schools'* (Veugleres and O'Hair, 2009). Networking and synergy among our schools is helping in no small measure to create a healthy dialogue and to break this isolation.

From its very beginning, the rationale of the Gozo College was to develop a **shared dialogue** of equals among all stake holders: Heads, Assistant Heads, SMT's, teaching personnel, kindergarten assistants, learning support assistants, parents, social workers, clerical and minor staff, school and local councils, the Gozo Cultural Committee, support services (eg: Sedqa, Appoġġ, Arka, FES, FTS...) Gozo is a very closely-knit society and the amalgamation of all these potential forces hailing from State, non-State and the civil society in general, spells value-added benefits to our educational cause.

Michael Fullan (1995) states clearly that if you want people to be with you at the landing you have to invite them for the launch. This is a ruling principle at the Gozo College. One of our mottos is: *Working together, achieving together, succeeding together*. The Gozo College hymn entitled *Flimkien (Together)* (Gatt, 2006) reflects, as well, our will and firm conviction to join forces and work together as a team.

Our collegiality is much more collaborative than contrived. In collaborative cultures working relationships are more spontaneous, voluntary, development-oriented, persuasive across time and space and unpredictable; contrived collegiality is much more administratively regulated, compulsory, implementation-oriented, fixed in time and space, and predictable. (Hargreaves 1992).

First and foremost CCC with **Heads of School**: undoubtedly, they have a key role to play in terms of education reform. (Fullan, 2002) These are required to provide leadership and vision. They need to develop performance, be innovative, enterprising, and entrepreneurial (Woods 2000). Different schools have different cultures and each Head of school is expected to develop inclusive cultures to cope. (Fullan, 2001). One of my roles as College Principal is to synergize with all of them, celebrating good practices but at the same time leaving intact the identity of each school. In this sense, the College holds at least one Council of Heads meeting every month each time in a *different* school thus giving each and every school the opportunity to play host to all the other schools and to present at least one concrete, hands-on, on the spot example of good practice. During these meetings, each and every Head is given ample time and opportunity to bring forward his/her views. In this way, each school becomes a leading school in its own right irrespective of its number of students and available space. Projects are discussed, planned and agreed upon by consensus; professional material and experiences are willingly shared. Indeed, the general policy of the College is moulded mainly during these regular meetings. In this way, we feel stronger because we can work together and no school is in any way deprived of its identity

and autonomy: this is fundamental for the empowerment, well-being and positive feeling of the network. This positive ambiance at the Gozo College is helping to eliminate needless fear and to create school cultures that accept and encourage intelligent experimentation and risk-taking and open dialogue in order to reach the needs of all learners. (Lucas and Valentine, 2002)

In addition, the Gozo College regularly assembles all **Assistant Heads** in what has become known as the Council of Assistant Heads. The Gozo College invests immensely in the expertise of these future, potential Heads of our schools and College. To date, Assistant Heads have worked conjointly and proactively on various College-wide projects including the preparation of common half-yearly papers, common College policies and in-house CPD.

CCC with the various **teaching personnel** is done on a regular basis. We are very conscious that teacher leadership is a *sine qua non* for school effectiveness. Teachers are sounded regularly in the various action research initiatives taken by the College. Besides, various meetings are held with all teachers, learning support assistants and KA's. It has now become traditional across our College to hold professional development and Inset sessions in common. Moreover, teachers are actively involved in the preparation of common half-yearly examination papers. The contribution of all teaching staff in the various school activities is an everyday occurrence. Determined to give an academic voice to our teaching personnel, the Gozo College has just published a GOZO COLLEGE JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES (2009) with academic contributions from educators in our schools.

Then, our College leaves no stone unturned to cooperate and collaborate with **parents and guardians**. Partnership with parents in education requires effective communication. (Hornby, 2000). Besides the usual Parents' Days, the College truly advocates an open door policy to suit the individual needs of the parents. Regular meetings for parents are held regularly in the different schools during and after school hours. Writing programmes are organised for those who mostly need them. We have also revived the AKS (Assoċjazzjoni Kunsilli Skolastiċi) Gozo Branch to give a stronger voice to the parents and help them share in our educational venture. Two very active special support groups, one for Dyslexia and another one for ADHD, have been set up to aid especially the parents of these children. Parents, grand-parents, other relatives are regularly invited for all our activities: celebration days, mini-musicals, sport festivals, multi-cultural festivals... in a true communal spirit.

The Gozo College prides itself on being a **Community College** set to promote community cohesion. We believe that, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, for an agenda for learning to be effective, we must also work ‘out there’ with families and communities and not only in the College schools and classrooms (ILRC June 2009). As invitational leaders, we reach out to all members of the community by listening to their voices and understanding and responding to their points of view. In fact, work and meetings with local councils are not uncommon and the Principal and other College staff give regular educational talks on the various community radios that are scattered all around the isle of Gozo. We also make it a point to attend and give our contribution during meetings organised by other relevant bodies in the community such as the Gozo Chamber of Commerce, the Gozo Tourism Authority, MCAST, ITS, ARKA, Eko-Gozo and others. This not only enhances the visibility of the Gozo College but keeps us abreast of the policies and developments taking place in the Gozitan community.

Practically, all schools within the Gozo College avail themselves of the various EU programmes and actions. This assures that our networking is further enhanced by closer dialogue, collaboration, cooperation and collegiality with our European partners embarked on the same educational mission.

## **Effective Leadership**

*‘Leadership is one of the key feature of successful schools’* (National Commission of Education 1993) *‘In attempting to bring about change... effective leadership is a key determinant in deciding whether anything positive happens in a school or a school system’* (Stoll and Fink, 2003). Moreover, Leithwood et al., (1999) affirm that in this post-modern climate of diversity, complexity, indeterminacy and instability, *commitment* rather than *control* strategies are called for. This would call for transformational (more people-oriented) rather than transactional leadership (more task-oriented). (Mitchell and Tucker, 1992) In fact, transformational leaders not only manage the structure but purposely impact the culture to achieve school development.

In passing, one should mention, as well, that, especially in the initial months, we were dealing with transitional leadership which is normally and usually characterised by a high level of uncertainty and a degree of apprehension. (Waks 2007). In these circumstances, it was mostly up to me as College Principal to map out an appropriate path inspired by the vision of the new policy, to motivate and enrol the stakeholders on the journey along this path, thus securing their

commitment. (Gunter 2005). To facilitate this transition I constantly kept in mind the three aspects identified by Goldrig et al. (200e), namely, changing conceptual boundaries, maintaining a sense of direction and slowly but steadily adjusting the culture.

This said, our rationale of shared dialogue, collaboration and collegiality calls surely for *distributive* and *collaborative leadership*, core capacity components central to capacity building, which stand to remind us that

- we are all leaders at different times for different purposes;
- no one person has all the knowledge or expertise;
- everyone has something to contribute towards the effectiveness of the school.

We believe that the role of the leader is essentially to harness, focus, liberate, empower and align that leadership towards common purposes and, by so doing, build and release capacity. (Hopkins and Jackson, 2003)

We are firmly convinced, as well, that leadership is also about communicating *invitational* messages to individuals and groups with whom leaders are interacting in order to construct and act on a shared, evolving vision of enhanced educational experiences. At the Gozo College we are building on the four components of *invitational leadership*, (Siegel, Purkey, 2002) namely,

- *optimism*: our belief is that people need to be affirmed about their present worth and that, given the right circumstances, can fully realize their potential;
- *respect*: we also believe in respecting the individuality of each of us by being more civil, polite, courteous and caring to each other;
- *trust*: basic for groups to function and have the right motivation, and
- *Intentional support, caring and encouragement* – fundamental to enhance communication and human relationships.

As invitational leaders, we not only articulate a vision but we share power and authority and invite others to share and develop the dream.

We tend to concur with Brighthouse and Tomlinson (1991) that effective, educational leaders draw upon a wide range of personalised leadership strategies knowing how and when to utilize professional judgement, when to push, when to support and when to give others opportunities to lead; that attend to both structure and culture, continuity and change; that they are both managers and leaders -*'managers are people who do things right and leaders are people who*

*do right things* - (Bennis and Nanus, 1985), leadership and management being difficult to separate in the daily life of schools and colleges. (Louis and Miles, 1990). After all, this integrated approach gives leaders different tools to tackle diverse aspects of complex realities. (Bush and Glover, 2003).

Our intention at all times is to be democratic: democracy that addresses current needs, that is guided by key values, including the worth of individuals, open inquiry and critique, the responsibility of individuals to deliberate about collective choices; democracy implying mutual understanding and a social morality through which individuals act for and with others.

We strive day in day out to empower people, to build bridges of cooperation, collaboration and collegiality among all our partners in our educational, lifelong journey. We project ourselves as one big family where each retains his/her identity while, at the same time, acquiring the full benefits of belonging to a cohesive group. After all, *'ultimately, leadership in a culture of change will be judged as effective or ineffective not by who you areas a leader but by what leadership you produce in others.'* (Fullan, 2001)

## **Promoting Resilience to Develop Emotional and Cognitive Skills**

Resilience is the power of resuming the original form after compression or stretching. In ecology, resilience is the ability of an ecosystem to return to its original state. Close synonyms of resilience are flexible, supple, strong. The opposite is to be weak and stiff.

In educational terms the resilience perspective led to a reconsideration of the ways in which schools can work towards success in children and young people. It brought a paradigm shift in that it suggested that one could be much more effective in supporting learners' development, educational journey and global well-being by focusing on their strengths rather than on their weaknesses and shortcomings. (Cefai 2008)

In this recent publication, Gozitan born and bred educational psychologist, Dr Carmel Cefai, construes educational resilience as a dynamic, contextual phenomenon rather than a fixed, individual characteristic. It is something that can be moulded and enhanced within the different contexts in which teachers and learners teach and learn.

This definition is forward-looking, inclusive, holistic and very positive because it focuses on learning rather than achievement, and opens opportunities for all and values both the cognitive and affective qualities of our learners. During the four years of its existence, the Gozo College has worked with might and main to *focus on the strengths of our learners by adopting a philosophy of resilience* as explained by Dr Cefai and as spelled out clearly in our mission statement. This mindset is leading our College, schools and individual classes to horizons and fresher pastures of health-promoting and competence-enhancing contexts for *all* our learners, without exceptions.

We believe that effort rather than innate ability leads to success. (Stoll and Fink, 2003). We believe that our College by being resilient and consequently learner-oriented is improving both performance and achievement, as results, even examination results, are already showing. (JL results, 2009)

The Gozo College has from its inception preached and embraced a culture of valuing and celebrating all multiple intelligences be they bodily-kinaesthetic, verbal-linguistic, visual-spatial, logical-mathematical, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, existential or/and naturalistic. (Gardner, 1993). These are intelligences which we constantly celebrate at the Gozo College because they spell beauty in diversity.

Being a resilient College we are offering an array of opportunities which each of our learners can exploit according to his/her talents under the expert guidance or our dedicated educators. These opportunities seek to help children explore, in safety and security, opportunities that help them believe, dream and increase their self-esteem and mastery orientation. Resilience is helping us to view each diversity as an invaluable gift.

We, at the Gozo College, are striving to give a real education of quality to all our learners, at school primarily but also at community level. All our learners need to find and nurture relationships, see possibilities and potentials in what we teach them. The Gozo College is proud to be building a climate and a process within this climate that works for the benefit of all.

## **Diversity, Inclusion and Equal Opportunities at All Levels**

The principle of resilience favours respect for diversity, inclusion and equal opportunities at all levels. Ours is a vision of education which seeks to celebrate rather than exclude, to engage rather than alienate or ignore (Cooper, 2006). We

welcome the challenge of responding to student's diversity and of preparing our teachers for it. (Bartolo et al., 2007). We respond to student diversity. Very conscious of this, we, at the Gozo College, make it a point to:

- treat all as individuals of equal worth, regardless of gender, race, background, special needs;
- address equality of access, uptake and outcome;
- counter, challenge and eliminate stereotypes, discrimination, bias and misconceptions;
- promote a clearer understanding of equal rights and freedoms;
- celebrate the notion of difference and promote positive images of a diverse populace where it exists;
- identify how to break down discriminatory practices;
- develop citizenship in a non-discriminatory way;
- promote a philosophy of all equal all beautiful.

We are proud to have eliminated unhealthy competition in our classes and schools. Emulation yes, unhealthy, visceral competition no, a definite no. Unnecessary stress kills creativity in the bud and creates a social climate of depression and suspicion.

This is why

- traditional prize days have given way to celebration days where the talents of each are rewarded, where each student is invited to compete with him/herself, where each has a fair chance of being celebrated;
- streaming has given way to mixed ability-cum-team, core subject teaching thus improving learning and teaching and helping to avoid discrimination between pupil and pupil, teacher and teacher, parent and parent;
- our new system of reporting progress will be embracing all areas of studies including the softer skills of learning to learn and entrepreneurship at the same time assuring more validity, reliability and better wash-back effect;
- we have introduced an extensive, free-of-charge, after-school programme in each Gozo College school which is meant to assist our learners both academically and socially and to help especially working parents in our community.

Indeed, our many activities for the *whole* community are meant to bring the community closer to our schools. For being inclusive also means stretching our means to all and sundry in the community with their diverse needs and help

them to reach their aspirations, especially those members of the community who mostly require our assistance.

By working consistently on such strategies, we are surely lessening in no small measure the discriminatory attitudes of society which tend to focus on the difficulty rather than on the need, an attitude which could present the greatest obstacle to education and learning. (UNESCO, 2005).

The promotion of diversity, inclusion and equal opportunities in our College is helping us in the formation of academically and socially-mature learners prepared for the tests of life and not solely for a life of tests and examinations; it means, as well, making a positive difference in the lives of learners irrespective of background, and to help produce citizens who can live and work productively with change in increasingly dynamically complex and diverse societies.

### **Multilingualism, Multiculturalism and Interculturality**

Resilience and diversity also favour multilingualism, multiculturalism and interculturality: basic for harmonious living in a flatter world. As a result of globalisation, increased mobility and immigration, European society has become more international, and more linguistically and culturally diverse. Consequently, every institution of schooling has to face the challenges which this linguistic and cultural diversity management entails. Schooling in particular plays a leading role in the establishment of an integrative, harmonious, cohesive society.

Schools should today be rehearsing the future. Schools have the duty to prepare learners to shape tomorrow's society which should be founded on harmonious living. (Vienna, 2009) With this in mind, our College endeavours to give concepts, such as culture and integration, their true significance. As a College, we see it as part of our modern mission to inculcate in our learners the strong belief that harmony requires more than one tone, that schools need to promote more constructive intercultural dialogue, conducted on the basis of mutual respect which should be initiated through the fostering of multilingualism and multiculturalism. At the Gozo College, these are fundamental principles. We are constructing a College in which our pupils, the citizens of tomorrow, from the very early years, are learning to live with linguistic and cultural diversity.

A tangible proof of this – to quote just one concrete example – is the multi-lingual, multi-cultural annual festival for all kinder classes, including those from church schools, organised each year by the Gozo College, winner also of the

2008 Best Language Practice Award. This year, fifteen schools collaborated in the preparation of an activity in a different language at the same time promoting cultural aspects of the country where the language is spoken; fifteen languages including Indian, Flemish and Mandarin Chinese. This is also one of our strategies to integrate foreign parents inside our schools. The final show is held at the Sports Complex in Victoria with two thousand parents, grandparents attending and cheering this celebration of cultures, languages and diversity. The various EU projects, example Comenius but not only, are helping us a lot in bringing cultures and together, in making us all realise that we are all different, all equal; that diversity is a precious gift.

## **Enhancement of Curricular, Pedagogical and Methodological Practices**

The Gozo College strives to give each child an education of the highest quality in line with the National Curriculum Framework and the latest methodological and pedagogical practices. Alas! Much too often we have dwelt on giving children answers to remember rather than problems to solve. The Gozo College works with might and main to reverse this tendency. Rather than teaching in a strict, didactic manner that focuses primarily on memorisation of factual information, the Gozo College encourages and trains teaching staff to engage students in the personal construction of knowledge, skills, attitudes and critical mind that will have value also beyond the school in a perspective of lifelong and life-wide learning.

A lot of emphasis is being placed at the Gozo College on more open-ended methodologies that favour, bottom-up, experiential and thematic approaches, learning to learn, self-directed and autonomous learning (Rogers, 1969, Holec, 1996), entrepreneurship in its widest educational sense, group and project work. And not only in the more traditionally academic subjects. In the true spirit of our National Curriculum Framework and the eight transversal key competences as defined in the Commission Staff Working document (2005), we want our children to be bred in a holistic education where areas of studies merge and support each other to create whole, balanced human beings who can benefit human kind locally and globally.

The aim is to transform our classrooms into learning laboratories and community centres where learning is viewed as a continuous, positive, lifelong and life-wide experience for all and sundry. We are encouraging more student

target setting linked to high quality formative assessment thus making lessons more active and dynamic, better paced and more enjoyable supported at the same time by partnerships that go beyond their actual classrooms. It is the mission of the Gozo College to mould our learners into more imaginative, more innovative, more entrepreneurial and cosmopolitan lifelong and life-wide learners able to get along in later life without a teacher.

The elimination of streaming and formal prize days, the introduction of team-cum-core subject teaching and formative assessment have been a great step forward in helping our teachers to enhance their methodologies. Classes have become more learner-centred, much less teacher-centred. E-learning is a common day experience, I dare say, in the majority of classes. Professional development for all teaching personnel – we firmly believe that teacher learning is a necessary condition for pupil learning – has shown a quality rise in recent years and results are showing. The number of education officers helping in the various areas and the revising of syllabi with clearer objectives and clearer learning outcomes are a most welcome solace to our schools. The integration of post-primary students into one secondary school will further enhance curricular practices with more varied teaching, differentiated approaches and surely better overall results, and not only academic.

Some of the concrete, innovative curricular projects which we have introduced at our College are the following: creative writing workshops, innovative animation sessions through drama for Mathematics and English for Year 6 students, common half-yearly examinations, hands-on science and health and safety exhibitions in typical Gozitan farmhouses for the whole community, an extensive after-school programme featuring homework and activity clubs in all primary schools, ICT fairs, ICT after school sessions for students, teachers and parents, literacy forums, a permanent, self-directed, communal Career Exhibition, healthy breakfast days, environmental issues through the participation of Eko-Skola (acquisition of Green Flag) and Eko-Gozo, week-long PSD seminars for Years, 4, 5 and 6 students, hand-on farming projects, innovative, special learning zones in secondary schools in close affiliation with MCAST, ITS and the Centre for Art and Crafts, multi-cultural and multi-lingual festivals, a mini-musical of the highest calibre in a renowned Gozitan theatre, Chess academy, language festivals, awareness of foreign languages programme in primary schools, innovative sports' days, innovative PE lessons including swimming sessions and so on and so on.

Special mention must be made of the Special School at Gozo College Sannat where not only inclusion is at its very best but where, in line with the Spiteri Report (2005), curricular practices are tailor-made and constantly being refined to give the very best education to these special children and their parents. The Sannat Special Unit, it must be stressed, services, as well, all our schools in Gozo. The emphasis on e-learning and the introduction of level descriptors have brought a new lease of life for these children and their teachers. Besides, the material resources available and constantly being enhanced, a sincere word of praise goes to the dedicated staff who with patience, love and great professional care have transformed the Special unit at Sannat into a smiling centre reminiscent of Dante's beatified, candid rose in heaven.

### **Inquiry, Personal Mastery and Access to External Expertise**

The professional obligation of each of us as leaders in his or her particular sphere never ceases to grow professionally. In conformity with our rationale of invitational leadership we are constantly informing ourselves by reading, relating, reflecting and researching. We believe that research engagement provides an opportunity for school leaders to share leadership and for staff to develop their leadership skills.

The Gozo College is a learning organisation *par excellence*. In line with Confucius, we believe, that without learning the wise become foolish; with learning even the foolish become wise. We are convinced that without constantly updating, our visions will wither away and we will not survive as leaders in a world of constant change.

We are living in a flat yet spiky world of constant changes. We are very much aware at the Gozo College that it is not possible to solve the change problem; yet, we are convinced but we can learn to live with it more proactively and more productively. (Fullan, 2005) Indeed, our capacities to deal with change, learn from it and help our students learn from it and adapt to it, is crucial for the future development of societies. We, as educators, must see ourselves and be seen as the experts of the dynamics of change. We labour at the Gozo College to harbour a philosophy of constant inquiry and personal mastery so as to become catalysts and not victims of change.

Inquiry means essentially internalising norms, habits and techniques for continuous learning. Our quest at the Gozo College is not just a new management

paradigm but a way of thinking that is constantly open to the next paradigm and the next and the next in an ever-ending process of vitality and self-renewal. (Fullan, 2005)

We are convinced that inquiry can thus lead to personal mastery which in no way means being content and complacent with what we already know: it means approaching our life as a creative work, living life from a creative as opposed to a reactive viewpoint. Personal mastery is a process, a lifelong discipline and helps us to live in a continual learning mode.

Our College embraces a philosophy of inquiry and personal mastery as described above. The Gozo College is a professional, learning organisation and community and so, myself as Principal, Heads, Assistant Heads and SMT's, teaching staff and other stakeholders keep ourselves constantly exposed to ideas and knowledge in a process of self-amelioration. This is done not only through CPD sessions but through constant exchange of experiences and pedagogical material.

Not less through access to external expertise, research and action research. The Gozo College works and collaborates closely with various agencies, institutions, other colleges, universities local and abroad, and Government departments. Our staff makes it a point to attend seminars organised by the Directorates and other bodies. A good number of our teaching staff has also the chance to enrich his/her experiences abroad through the various EU, available projects. Various research and action research projects are regularly carried out. To date these focused on networking, leadership, literacy, examinations, assessment procedures, level descriptors, differentiation and student behaviour.

Our aim is to develop a college culture where practitioners draw readily from research and external and internal evidenced-based practice, and where practitioners have developed the skills to apply this learning in their own context.

## **Concluding Remarks**

The Gozo College network has built on good practices that existed in the educational system over the years. Networking has helped in various ways to enhance the past educational system in a world of change and constant transformation. On a general, concluding note networks are helping us to address better the needs of individual learners, to work in partnership with each other, sharing resources and assembling the right mix and range of education for each

individual learner, to investigate new forms of leadership, to work with peers and share good practices, to launch creative and innovative practices, to facilitate collective responsibility for children, to provide a challenge and discipline to teachers' constant learning and development based on a wealth of professional knowledge drawn from a wider contest and to create new opportunities for adult and continuity learning, to facilitate research, reflection and discussion. In this way, we believe we are freeing individuals to find their inner wisdom and confidence so that they will make increasingly healthier and more constructive choices. (Rogers, 1969)

A lot has already been achieved by the Gozo College. But education is fortunately a never-ending process where only the journey is the reward: the reward and satisfaction that the educational experiences we are presenting to our learners are making a difference in their lives and preparing them to meet the transformation, challenges and opportunities that the future holds for us all.

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# **FULFILLING STUDENTS' POTENTIAL THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HOME ECONOMICS CURRICULUM: AN EVALUATIVE STUDY**

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## **About the Author**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This document synthesizes the main highlights of a dissertation submitted to the University of Malta in May 2006, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of M.Ed. in Curriculum Design, Development and Evaluation. It aimed to shed light on the extent and ways the Home Economics Curriculum was empowering all of the students to fulfil their potential through its implementation, whilst specifying curricular needs to be considered for a more effective implementation. Based on Stufflebeam's Context, Input, Process, and Product (CIPP) Evaluation Model (2003), this evaluative study investigated the extent the design of the macro curriculum (the state mandated syllabus) and the micro curriculum (the implementation of the class curriculum through a rigorous pedagogy and authentic assessment), was enabling students to keep on learning throughout their lives to meet the needs of rapid societal changes in a technological world. The universal sample brought forth the opinions, attitudes, and beliefs of all the HE teachers in state and non-state schools who participated in a mixed method survey. The representative sample also elicited both quantitative and qualitative data from individual and focus group interviews with teachers, students and head teachers; class observations; and documents. Although the questionnaire was analysed quantitatively to facilitate objectivity, its naturalistic aspects were integrated with the qualitative data gained from the representative sample. This blend of methods enhanced triangulation to

validate the findings. It emerged that the design of both the macro and micro curricula had to be amended and improved through sustainable development. Not all teachers adopted appropriate pedagogical strategies and assessment techniques to effectively implement the curriculum. Not all students, especially low achievers, were developing their higher order thinking skills necessary for lifelong learning. The needs for updated macro and micro HE curricula were being suggested.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment of Northern Ireland (CCEA, 2003d) explains that

Education has the challenge and the responsibility to prepare students for an uncertain future by seeking to develop life-long learners with the motivation and flexibility to adapt to constant change and the skills and creativity to respond to increasingly challenging issues and problems (p. 17).

Home Economics has always been regarded as enhancing students' holistic development. Its interdisciplinary nature provides broad access to physical, mental, and emotional development from birth through the life cycle (Davies, 1993). It improves individual, family and community well-being, as well as enhancing the development, delivery and evolution of consumer goods and services (The American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences - AAFCS, 1993).

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***The Development of Home Economics (HE)***

Throughout its evolution, Home Economics has constantly been developing in response to demographic and socio-economic change, new scientific knowledge and advances in operational and information technology. The impact of such change is being acknowledged in the newly amended foreign HE curricula. To align with the national curriculum, instead of the transmission of knowledge they emphasize the development of skills and capabilities which are to be infused in all key learning areas. The aim is to optimise students' potential and lifelong learning by providing them with opportunities to develop particular skills, like Critical and Creative Thinking Skills; Personal and Interpersonal Skills; Application of number; and ICT (CCEA, 2003d, October). These skills are

also reflected in other foreign, and national HE Curricula (SQA, 2005; Scottish Executive, 1998; The Queensland Studies Authority - QSA, 2005), and both in the Maltese NMC (1999) and HE Syllabus (1998-1999).

### *The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Curriculum*

A coherent curriculum focusing on students' identified needs, interests, and concerns, and stressing self-directed and constructed learning is needed (Barrett, 1999) to promote lifelong learners (QSA, 2005, p. 4). The Northern Ireland Cohort Study (CCEA, 2003d) considers learning to be relevant, connected, and skills-based. This plea is mirrored in the amendments of foreign HE curricula, which are flexible, skills-based, relevant, connected, action-oriented and value-based (Walker, 2004). By linking the subject strands within and across learning areas through an interdisciplinary approach, coordination, collaboration, webbing and integration (Fogarty and Stoehr, 1995) are enhanced.

*Curriculum Design in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century:* a good curriculum design should be innovative; enhances the usefulness of the product; aesthetic; logically structured; unobtrusive; honest; enduring; consistent right down to the details; ecologically conscious; and minimally designed (Kleiman, 2002). The outcomes approach to defining, designing, promoting and assessing students' learning is based on constructive alignment. The teacher aligns the teaching methods and the assessment tasks to the learning outcomes (Biggs, 2002, October 7), thus making assessment congruent with the instruction and to what students should be learning (Biggs, 2003). Visual representations communicate the processing of complex information (Jackson and Shaw, 2002, May). The amended foreign HE curricula are designed on such an outcome-based and constructively aligned approach. Besides outlining the common curriculum and the syllabii and guidelines of the subject areas in its introduction, the syllabus informs teachers how courses of study can be planned within and across key learning areas.

*Curriculum models:* the **Objectivist** Curriculum Model regards the curriculum as (a) a body of knowledge to be transmitted (Kelly, 1999), i.e. knowledge is 'delivered' to students by the most effective methods (Blenkin, Edwards, and Kelly, 1992); and as (b) a set of documents to be implemented, i.e. planning focuses on the purpose, the learning experiences, the instructional and evaluating methods (Tyler, 1949). This rationalist Tylerian model moulds students' behaviour to predetermined extrinsic goals, facilitates passivity, and restricts the freedom of teachers and students.

The **Postmodern** Curriculum Model presents the curriculum as a process which focuses on and develops the student. It is “the totality of the experiences which the pupil has as a result of the provision made” (Kelly, 1999, p. 7). This curriculum recognizes the interactive sociocultural views of learning. Knowledge is produced, negotiated, transformed, and realized in the interaction between the teacher, the learner, and the knowledge.

### ***Pedagogy***

A pedagogic act involves those who are teaching in informed interpretations of learners, knowledge and environments in order to manipulate environments in ways that help learners make sense of the knowledge available to them. It is an intense, complex, and discursive act which demands considerable expertise (Edwards, 2001, p. 163).

**Behaviourists**, like Skinner, regard the mind as a tabula rasa to be filled. “Environmental stimuli impinge on the individual who makes responses, whose consequences determine the probability of that response to occur again when the same/similar situation is met” (Bender, 1998, p. 322). Direct Instruction Models (Rosenshine, 1986; Hunter, 1984); Taxonomy of the Cognitive, Affective and Psychomotor learning domains (Bloom, 1956); and Computer-based tutorials and drill-and-practice programmes (Rieber, 1992), are based on this approach. Being highly structured and teacher-directed, behaviourism allows little room for higher-level learning, including problem-solving, creativity, and independent learning.

**Cognitivists** like Piaget, (1926), Ausubel, (1968) amongst others, view knowledge as symbolic mental constructions in the minds of individuals. Students manage to construct knowledge as they actively process information by organising, storing, and finding relationships between new and old knowledge by an assimilation and accommodation process. Cognitivists advise not to overload short term memory by presenting too much material at once; not to lecture for more than twenty minutes without a break; chunk material into groups or categories to facilitate retention; make the structure and patterning of the material explicit for learners; present material in more than one form to facilitate transfer to long term memory; give learners the opportunity to revisit topics to strengthen retention; use key words and terms as memory cues; and outline the metacognitive strategies needed for the subject. (Carlile and Jordan, 2005).

**Constructivists:** trivial constructivism informs that “knowledge is actively constructed by the learner, not passively received from the environment” (von

Glaserfeld, 1990 pp. 19-29). Radical constructivism adds - “Coming to know is a process of dynamic adaptation towards viable interpretations of experience, as the knower does not necessarily construct knowledge of a real world” (ibid.). The teacher should approach material from the learner’s perspective and values; acknowledge and accommodate student diversity; encourage reflection through the use of learning journals; present an overview of the topic including purpose and objectives; explain the relevance of the topic; build on what is already known; encourage active and discovery and independent learning; give timely feedback on performance; and constructively align objectives, strategies and assessment (Carlile et al, 2005, p. 17).

Social Constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978) includes a social component, and conceptual growth comes from sharing perspectives and modifying one’s internal representations in response to such sharing (Bednar, Cunningham, and Duffy, 1991). The teacher should encourage team working and collaboration; promote discussion; involve students in project work; set up study groups for peer learning; allocate small proportion of grades to peer assessment and train students in the process and criteria; and show students models of good practice in essay writing and project work (Carlile et al, 2005).

### ***The Relationship Between Curriculum Models, Learning Theories and Pedagogy***

Objectivism influences the Behaviourist and Cognitivist Learning Theories and pedagogy, whereas postmodernism impacts on Constructivist Learning Theories and pedagogy.

*Curriculum and Assessment affect Pedagogical Approaches:* **Summative** assessment provides information about how much students have learned and how well a course has worked (Gipps, 1994) and leads to critical reflection that demonstrate whether teaching strategies are effective or not (Brighouse and Woods, 1999). Besides helping students understand their weaknesses, **diagnostic** assessment enables teachers to detect students’ levels of progress thus guiding them where to direct their teaching (Marsh, 2002). Whilst **formative** assessment supports pedagogy (Black, 1995), as teachers’ feedback engages students in a self-reflective and self-evaluative process. **Multidimensional** assessment taps the diversity of active learning, creates multiple sources of information to support instructional decision making, and helps students become more reflective and capable learners (Kulieke, Bakker, Collins, Fennimore, Fine, Herman, et al, 1990).

### ***The Impact of Pedagogy on Curriculum Implementation***

Teachers play a major role in interpreting the curriculum, in fashioning pedagogy, and in devising assessment activities. They need Pedagogical Reasoning. Their knowledge bases include content knowledge; general pedagogical knowledge; curriculum knowledge (AERA, 2004); pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987, p. 8); knowledge of learners and their characteristics; knowledge of educational contexts; and knowledge of educational ends, purpose and values and their philosophical and historical grounds. Professional teachers have a range of pedagogical strategies, which include a range of materials and content, teaching styles, and classroom rules/agreements to be used at different times (Gipps, 1999).

Constructivist teaching meets the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century as it promotes divergent and convergent thinking skills through active learning processes, authentic learning contexts and assessment and collaborative learning (Grabinger and Dunlap, 1995). Strategies that enhance students' responsibility and initiative include:

*Generative Learning Activities* – which in the HE contexts include an Inquiry-Based Approach to Learning. This could be carried out during school-based projects; investigation tasks; dialogues; discussions; role plays; discovery learning; and integrating Communications and Information Technologies (ICT) in the lesson.

*Authentic Learning Activities* – which in the HE contexts include anchored instruction. This involves demonstrations and practical activities; problem-based learning; case-based learning; and formative assessment.

*Situated Cognition* – which in the HE contexts implies Cooperative Learning and Collaborative Teaching, i.e. team and thematic teaching:

### ***The Impact of Human and Material Support on Pedagogy***

Students need three types of support: teachers who practise authentic pedagogy, schools that strengthen a professional community, and supportive external agencies and parents (Wang, Haertel, and Walberg, 1993).

Teachers' professional development should be an integral part of any major reform in curriculum, assessment and teaching strategies so as to support change

(Galton, Hargreaves, and Comber, 1998). However, it needs to be “situated and embodied in the teaching context” (McLaughlin, 1991, p. 70). By diffusing new ideas between teachers and colleagues, teachers can make informed choices about curriculum implementation. Forming a network community of practice between teachers from the same and other schools enriches personal reflection.

Team / thematic teaching facilitate a supportive environment. During the former, teachers are exposed to different styles of planning, organisation, and class presentation. They discover new interests and teaching techniques that revitalize their teaching (MacIver, 1990) thus enabling a stronger and more coherent instructional programme. During the latter information covers large amounts of seemingly disparate knowledge cores (Beavers and DeTurck, 2000). Teachers can thus gain enlightenment about lesser-known fields, and grow intellectually.

By adopting productive (Education Queensland, 2004) and authentic pedagogies (Newmann, Marks, and Gamoran, 1996a); organizing and activating knowledge; differentiating teaching, learning and assessment (Waters, 1995) and using formative assessment the teacher can provide the necessary support to student learning.

### ***Material Support: Resources***

Although the more experienced, the more able and the more educated teachers are, the better their students’ achievement would be, school resources are still related to student achievement (Greenwald, Hedes, and Laine, 1996). Material resources support the organization and activation of knowledge. For instance, ICT promotes greater independence of learning by shifting the balance from the ‘direct transmission’ model to a more facilitating approach (DfES, 2002). Computer-based pedagogy could support pedagogy; provide authentic experience (Newmann, Bryk, and Nagaoja, 2001); facilitate teachers’ planning; manage time; optimise collaborative group work; build learner-centred learning communities; and address the learning needs of students and teachers (DfES, 2003).

## **3. THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The Research Methodology focused on Stufflebeam’s CIPP Model (2003). Its scientific quantitative approach dealt with objectiveness and uniqueness. Its naturalistic qualitative aspect incorporated feminist, postmodern, and ethnographic perspectives. To align with the Postmodern Perspective, a collaborative technique

was applied. Results from both inquiries were combined to provide a more general picture, thus following Creswell's (1994) two-phase design.

*Choice of sample:* for the universal sample all HE teachers from the state and non-state schools, were invited to answer the questionnaire, to which 75% responded. For the representative sample, two Girls' Junior Lyceum (GJL), two Boys' Junior Lyceum (BJL), two Girls' Area Secondary (GAS), two Boys' Area Secondary Schools (BAS), and two schools from the non-state schools (a Girls' Secondary Church School – GSCS, and a Co-educational Private Independent School – Co-Ed Pis) were chosen.

*The Research Tools:* the *Quantitative Research* was based on a questionnaire that sought to detect teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards (a) the **relevance** of the HE Syllabus content to both the Maltese lifestyle and to students' current and future needs, and any **changes** envisaged for a future HE syllabus; (b) the **effectiveness** of the pedagogical methodologies and assessment techniques employed; the way resources sustain curriculum implementation; and the way the Investigation Task is being achieved.

*The Qualitative Research* involved *class observations*, and *documentation* that evaluated the development of the HE Curriculum through its actual practices of implementation; and *semi-structured and focused interviews* that added more data to the questionnaire's objective data.

*Data Analysis:* data obtained from close-ended questions of the *Quantitative Data* were entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences for Windows (SPSS, version 12) (a) to obtain the Frequency of the demographic variables, and of all questions; (b) to perform cross tabulations of demographic dependent variables, and of several answers; and (c) to perform Chi-squared Tests analysis to detect the level of significance between dependent and independent variables. The open-ended questions following most close-ended questions were thematically categorised. For the *Qualitative Data Analysis*, Glaser and Strauss (1968) 'grounded theory' methodology, involving open, axial, and selective coding, was followed until theoretical saturation was reached.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 *The HE Curriculum*

The macro HE Curriculum is predominantly based on the objectivist model. Knowledge is organized through the aims and objective approach. Although

knowledge is presented by key learning concepts that focus on what is deemed to be the valued knowledge of the Maltese society, the development of higher-order thinking skills is also highlighted. HE students are thus supposed to have an entitlement to “a process which will develop all of one’s capabilities to the fullest possible degree” (Edwards and Kelly, 1998, p. 10). To cater for the diverse needs of all the students, the micro curriculum should therefore aim to achieve “unity in difference rather than disunity through sameness” (Kelly, 1995, p. 110).

Since the subject is getting too scientific, low achievers are not enhancing their potential. They do not understand all the contents. An intensive syllabus and condensed lessons impede teachers to adapt appropriate teaching methods and provide hands-on learning experiences for all the students. Teachers need a less intensive syllabus with specific aims, objectives and detailed guidelines to assist curriculum implementation. An updated macro curriculum should therefore be less cluttered, and skills-and-activity-oriented. Lessons should be less content laden, but more activity-oriented.

#### *4.2 Pedagogical Methodologies*

Terhart (2003) explains that “the first principle of instruction should be to anchor learning and learning principles in concrete situations - ‘anchored instruction.’ Teachers in the study make good use of the traditional direct teaching techniques enhanced by visual aids. Theoretical lessons are content laden and the main skills acquired involve factual recall. In some cases, this objectivist approach is combined with discussions to increase students’ participation. However, students are still required to answer more close-ended questions to keep with preconceived goals. Although this instructionist method enables students to master the learning, most students are only being trained to assimilate and then to regurgitate knowledge. Hands-on practical activities, like leaflet production, and cookery assignments, are sometimes a repetition of preconceived knowledge on nutrition and the reinforcement of basic cookery skills.

The most effective teaching involves matching approaches to lesson objectives and the learning context. The youngest and least experienced teachers adopt more constructivist teaching methods than the oldest and most experienced teachers. Although these methods facilitate students’ understanding of knowledge through the construction of new knowledge, sometimes they involve students in transferring and translating information presented in one form into another. This occurred during some discussions; leaflets, charts, and model productions; and experimental activities. However, most of these teachers devise

imaginative and relevant tasks to capture students' imagination. They use a careful blend of demonstration and exposition together with opportunities for students to work on investigative cookery tasks. As they encourage students to modify or create recipes, or to carry out experimental work on various foods, they facilitate students' understanding on nutrition and consumer education as the methodology is mainly based on enquiry and discovery approaches.

Some younger teachers use case-studies, video clips, and role plays to develop students' understanding as they are motivated to think reflectively on family and social issues, mainly diet related diseases, safety, kitchen and food hygiene, health hazards, environmental and consumer issues. Learning through well-structured group discussions and debates is encouraged.

The few older and more experienced teachers who apply constructivist activities do not experiment with food. They lack the knowledge and the aptitude. They enable students to discover knowledge through recipe modifications as they do not trust students' creation of new recipes as it might result, in their opinion, in an unsatisfactory dish. Besides, such teachers also employ debates in which students explore and construct knowledge.

During practical cookery and experimental assignments, teachers circulate, intervene constructively, and offer support to students experiencing difficulty. However, although teachers discuss students' work at critical points and give clear guidelines, there is not always time for improvement. Peer-to-peer evaluations are barely carried out. Self-evaluation is almost always carried out orally with the teachers' help, or individually at home, or during the next lesson, or worse none at all. Postponing the evaluation stage to a later lesson reduces its effectiveness as it lacks the immediacy use of constructive feedback. Incorporating effective assessment strategies to identify students' learning and support needs, skills and abilities, in the syllabus' design is fundamental. The class curriculum could then provide for ALL the students' personal development.

Effective practices include students devising and conducting surveys and using school and community resources as follow-up activities. As they apply the various investigative techniques to achieve the Investigation Task, the more able and average students are enabled to make use of research skills through constructivist practices when supported with appropriate guidelines. On-site visits offer students community support, as few teachers invite speakers to elaborate on certain topics, such as, hospitality services. However, low achievers, especially those in mixed ability groups, are not benefiting from these tasks as

they either present incomplete tasks or do not carry them out at all. Consequently their self-image is negatively affected.

Most of the observed lessons were well planned with well matched tasks. Informing students about the instructional objectives stimulated students to participate. Most of the able and average students responded well. They had to produce leaflets and charts, model various issues through role play exercises, and draft models on kitchen planning on paper. This proved that they were responsible for their own learning. Although rather limiting for the more able students, the tasks that demanded simple research and some information handling were quite demanding for the lower achievers. These students gained cognitively through peer-to-peer support during cooperative tasks.

The choice of teaching is affected by three factors: namely, the lack of resources, time, and teachers' professional development. Due to lack of textbooks and appropriate reference books or magazines, which could provide ample sources for discussions and debate, arid practices such as note-copying still persist. Since Form 1 JL and Secondary, Form 3 Secondary, Form 3 (1<sup>st</sup> Yr) JL and Form 4 (2<sup>nd</sup> Yr) JL students have ample content to cover, they are being assigned less practical activities to the detriment of the low achievers. The older and more experienced teachers lack professional development in constructivist inclusive teaching strategies, and this has a negative impact on their students' cognitive and affective capabilities.

#### *4.3 An Updated HE Curriculum*

The outcomes approach to curriculum design which is employed by the amended foreign HE Curricula can make a strong contribution to better implement the HE curriculum. An updated HE Curriculum should thus ensure Kleiman's (2002) principles of good curriculum design; be based on Biggs's (2002) constructive alignment; and be less content-laden but more skills-and-activity-based to enhance students' capabilities. The key learning areas should be well-specified to facilitate greater flexibility for teachers in devising units of work within and across subject strands, according to their own and their students' interests.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Home Economics teaching should contribute to a student's intellectual development through productive pedagogies (Reynolds, 2002). This is necessary because to address the increasingly complex challenges to live in the 21<sup>st</sup> century,

students should be helped to learn how to learn to fulfil their potential. But since teachers cater more for the average achievers, the low achievers are “the losers” (Good & Brophy, 1997). As teaching processes are not adequately adjusted to their abilities in contrast to more able students, they are not being developed holistically in preparation for a knowledge-based, technological society. Teachers should adopt more interactive pedagogical approaches in which all learners are empowered to organize and transform themselves (Doll, 1993). Authentic assessment and productive pedagogies are more likely to develop students’ independent learning and higher order thinking skills.

The implementation of the HE curriculum does not fulfil all the students’ potential in preparation for a knowledge-based, technological society. It is evident that not all students are developing their higher-order thinking skills which empower them to learn how to learn. Self-directed learning facilitated through independent study habits is minimally encouraged. However, besides a less intensive syllabus, teachers – mostly the oldest ones with the most experience – need further training to augment their professional development in constructivist teaching methods.

The HE Syllabus should be redesigned. It needs to offer guided support. Visual representations would enable teachers to visualise its constructive alignment. The delineation of appropriate teaching strategies and assessment techniques enhance curriculum implementation. Literature reveals that before implementing revised curricula, teachers in foreign countries were provided with guidelines. Their professional development was reinforced by in-service courses. The provision of website sources facilitated more information on curriculum implementation obtained through communities of practice.

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES**

Future studies could evaluate (a) the various pedagogical approaches teachers adopt to implement the curriculum with both the high and the low achievers; (b) the integration of formative assessment in the teaching and learning processes; (c) the effective use of ICT across the HE curriculum; and (d) the way thematic / team teaching could facilitate a more connected and integrated implementation of the HE curriculum.

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# **AN INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTAINMENT IN YEAR 6 AND FORM 1 IN GOZO**

*Saviour Tabone*

## **About the Author**

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## **Abstract**

This study focuses on the performance of children from Year 4 up to the end of Form 1. Special attention is devoted to the critical transition from Year 6 Primary to Form 1 Secondary. To avoid contamination, this research took the form of an ex-post-facto quantitative study. Data collection focused on annual examination raw scores, family structure, ways of mass media consumption, language used in different settings and attendance to private tuition. The analysis showed that there is a general, significant lowering of the average scores in the secondary when compared to performance in the primary. Nevertheless, transition affected pupils in both directions. Transition also affected performance in the subjects (Mathematics, English and Maltese) and the sexes differently but little differences in social background were registered both for the 'High Winners' and the 'High Losers'.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In Maltese educational literature, transition is a recent topic of interest. The Compulsory Education Ordinance of 1946 paved the way for compulsory education for all from six to sixteen years. An important aspect was that as a result of this, new exams had to be devised 'to sort out' who goes to which school (Zammit Mangion, 2000).

## **BACKGROUND TO THIS STUDY**

After the homely school environment of a primary school, the first few weeks in Secondary School are critical, and follow a fixed pattern. This can be conveniently summarized in two stages: (1) The honeymoon period, during which pupils get used to the new surroundings; (2) The realization period follows, when students start to realize the full extent of what it means to be attending a Secondary School (Kirkpatrick, 2002). The shorter the acclimatization period, the shorter the potential damage done to a student's motivation and performance Kirkpatrick (2002) and William (2002).

Educational researchers are 'resolutely parochial' about transition (Youngman, 1986). Some are sceptical about the effects of transition. Many consider it a grey area. Another view holds that if transition is badly handled, it has the potential of affecting negatively the pupils involved (emotionally, academically and socially). Cotterell (1986) believes that since researchers establish that problems related to transition are transient (they just persist for the first two months after transition and quickly fade away) many researchers play down the negative effects usually associated with it. Nicholl (1984) maintains that the severity of any emotional disturbance resulting from transition depends on whether the child is bright and socially mature. The more mature the child is, the lesser the effects. This is in agreement with Nisbet and Entwistle (1969) and Lazarus and Launier (1978) who see the way the experience is handled by a particular individual as the key to whether it might affect him or her negatively or not. Other researchers do not see transitions as a phenomenon worthy of special attention. They reiterate that the only things that are getting difficult as pupils progress to Secondary School are the academic subjects both in content and in number, reflecting a harder curriculum (Cox, 1978). Graham and Hill (2002) and Ross, Hill and Shelton (2006) claimed that most pupils coped well with transition. At the same time, these pupils were very positive about the preparation they had in the primary school, prior to transition itself. Cocklin (1999) reported that transition was not seen as a difficult experience by members of the sample. As a result of this, new peer relationships developed quickly in Secondary School. However, regression set in Form 1 since the teaching style became much more teacher-centred as opposed to child-centred approaches with what pupils were used to in the primary school.

Whatever the argument, the need for a smooth transition is sorely felt, a transition free from any unexpected turns. It is a daunting task 'to eliminate the rather staccato if not abrupt manner by which students move from primary to

secondary schooling' noted in the document *For All Pupils to Succeed* published by the Malta's Ministry of Education (MEYE, 2005).

In 1980, Andrew Chirnside used a metaphor to describe the attempts made by schools to ensure continuity (Boyd, 2005):

like the pantomime horse, primary and secondary schools would like to be moving in the same direction, but that it was difficult to get their legs moving in the rhythm, and it was not helped by the fact it was dark inside the costume. Not only that, when they tried to communicate, the sounds were muffled and could be drowned out...

Local research about the various facets of transition has been going on for some time now, at least since 1985. In these studies, transition is tackled mainly in terms of stress, expectations, friends and class work. In the context of transition, each study focused on a particular sub-title, like for example, the teaching of English and Maltese and the associated difficulties. Most studies focus more on 'problems' facing pupils pending their transition as a way to describe the situation in Malta.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research took the form of an ex-post-facto quantitative study taking data from four years of the academic life of a sample of pupils. The investigation was partly conducted using a questionnaire to obtain data about the pupils' personal and family background and partly by using results from tests in Mathematics, English and Maltese taken by the same cohort of pupils when they were attending Year 4, Year 5, Year 6 and in Form 1. These tests were in the form of nationally set annual examination national papers for State Primary and Secondary Schools. The chosen subjects, Mathematics, English and Maltese were considered as core subjects in the academic life of a pupil.

The research adopted a quantitative approach as it utilised raw scores and drew upon statistical computations. The study was also partially qualitative because it involved the collection of students' data using questionnaires (Bell, 1992).

The sample was defined as those pupils who were in Year 4 in 1998 and who finished Form 1 in 2001. The research aimed at investigating the following variables related to pupils' progress in school:

- Age of sitting for annual examination;
- Performance during examination;
- Rank orders;
- Changes in rank orders;
- Level of education of parents;
- Level of education of pupils;
- Language preference at home and with friends;
- Channel preference for radio and television stations;
- Structure of the family;
- Position in the family or birth order;
- Remedial Education in Year 3;
- Private tuition in Year 6 and in Form 1;
- Parents' occupation.

To create a sense of uniformity, the whole sample was eventually divided in three separate, independent groups, arbitrarily named Group X, Group Y, Group Z and Group XYZ (Table 1). Group X: This Group included pupils who were in a State Primary School, sat the national-based annual examination in Year 4, Year 5, Year 6, qualified for and attended the Junior Lyceum and sat the Junior Lyceum Form 1 Annual examination. Group Y: This Group included pupils who attended a State Primary School, did the annual national-based examination at the end of Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6, sat but did not qualify for the Junior Lyceum, and attended the Area Secondary School and at the end of Form 1 sat a special paper. Group Z: These were pupils who attended a State Primary School, sat the national-based annual examination at the end of Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6 in the primary, attended the State Area Secondary School and at the end of Form 1 sat the national-based annual examination for area Secondary Schools.

	<b>Boys</b>	<b>% Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>% Girls</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Group X</b>	36	28.3	91	71.7	127	100
<b>Group Y</b>	54	47.4	60	52.6	114	100
<b>Group Z</b>	34	89.5	4	10.5	38	100
<b>Group XYZ</b>	124	44.4	155	55.6	279	100

A pilot study was conducted with thirty students before the formal questionnaire was launched.

## DATA ANALYSIS

In the final analysis, complete data were obtained for 279 pupils. For each individual, the data consisted of the raw scores obtained in the annual examination in primary Years 4, 5 and 6 and in secondary Form 1 and the completed questionnaire. The data in the questionnaires was first transferred to report sheets grouped in terms of the criteria constituting the four different groups. This information was later transferred to the SPSS data files and to Excel Spreadsheets using a separate file for each group (Chester, 1995 and George and Mallery, 2003). The raw scores from the annual examination were also transferred to complete other computations. Excel spreadsheets were also utilised for the computation of rank order, rank difference and changes in rank difference. The most used statistical sections were Descriptive Statistics, Compare Means, Paired t-test and Correlation.

## Limitations

As a whole, the sample of this research is small. Moreover, since this study only applies to a cohort in one region of the Maltese archipelago, these results cannot be generalized to the whole Maltese sample.

## RESULTS

### 1. Raw Scores of the Whole Sample

For the purpose of this paper, only Sample XYZ is being described. The following Tables show the Raw Scores obtained over the said period for the three subjects. The lowering of the average mark in Form 1 when compared to that in the primary is evident.

	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>	<b>Year 6</b>	<b>Form 1</b>
<b>No. of Pupils</b>	279	279	279	279
<b>Average</b>	56.35	62.24	57.99	38.93
<b>S.D.</b>	20.02	23.54	20.54	22.40
<b>MAX</b>	96	100	99	91
<b>MIN</b>	4	3	5	1
<b>MODE</b>	66	87	60	16
<b>MEDIAN</b>	58	67	60	37

<b>Table 3: English Raw Scores for Group XYZ Girls and Boys</b>				
	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>	<b>Year 6</b>	<b>Form 1</b>
<b>No. of Pupils</b>	279	279	279	279
<b>Average</b>	67.32	56.36	55.54	50.76
<b>S.D.</b>	21.95	22.84	20.97	23.29
<b>MAX</b>	98	96	94	95
<b>MIN</b>	4	4	4	5
<b>MODE</b>	74	57	80	40
<b>MEDIAN</b>	74	59	58	50

  

<b>Table 4: Maltese Raw Scores for Group XYZ</b>				
	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>	<b>Year 6</b>	<b>Form 1</b>
<b>No. of Pupils</b>	279	279	279	279
<b>Average</b>	71.04	69.28	67.33	46.59
<b>S.D.</b>	21.67	21.49	19.46	21.74
<b>MAX</b>	99	99	96	90
<b>MIN</b>	1	5	3	0
<b>MODE</b>	91	82	80	40
<b>MEDIAN</b>	79	74	72	46

## 2. Results of the Raw Scores

Results of the raw scores in the secondary are lower than those in the primary.

## 3. Paired Samples t-Tests

The paired samples t-tests and the correlations shown in the following Tables are significant between Year 6 and Form 1.

<b>Table 5 Paired Samples t-Tests for Mathematics of Group XYZ</b>				
<b>Pair</b>	<b>Correlation</b>	<b>Significance</b>	<b>Paired t-test</b>	<b>Significance (2-tail)</b>
<b>Mth 4 – Mth 5</b>	0.861	0.000	-8.209	0.000
<b>Mth 5 – Mth 6</b>	0.855	0.000	5.808	0.000
<b>Mth 6 – Mth 7</b>	0.797	0.000	23.037	0.000

**Table 6: Correlations and Paired Samples t-Tests for English of Group XYZ Girls and Boys**

Pair	Correlation	Significance	Paired t-test	Significance (2-tail)
Eng4 – Eng5	0.880	0.000	16.630	0.000
Eng5 – Eng6	0.892	0.000	1.318	0.189
Eng6 – Eng7	0.843	0.000	6.356	0.000

**Table 7: Paired Samples t-tests XYZ Maltese Girls and Boys**

Pair	Correlation	Significance	Paired t-test	Significance (2-tail)
Mlt 4 – Mlt 5	0.891	0.000	-2.904	0.004
Mlt 5 – Mlt 6	0.877	0.000	3.159	0.002
Mlt 6 – Mlt 7	0.827	0.000	28.122	0.000

#### 4. Changes in Rank Order between Year 6 and Form 1

The following Tables present the number of students whose ranks in Mathematics, English and Maltese changed by the given amounts. The smaller the Stable Band the higher the instability of the Group. At times, numbers in ‘opposing bands’ are almost identical. In other words, transition from primary to secondary affects different pupils differently and in both directions.

**Table 8: Frequency of Changes in Rank Order in Group XYZ Mathematics between Year 6 and Form 1**

	Rank Difference	Yr 6 – Fm 1
High Losers	-40 or more	54 (19%)
Middle Losers	-39 to -10	63 (23%)
Stable	-9 to +10	46 (16%)
Middle Winners	+11 to +40	62 (22%)
High Winners	+41 or more	54 (19%)
Total		279 (100%)

**Table 9: Frequency of Changes in Rank Order in Group XYZ English Girls and Boys**

	Rank Difference	Yr 6 – Fm 1
High Losers	-40 or more	42 (15%)
Middle Losers	-39 to -10	71 (25%)
Stable	-9 to +10	69 (25%)
Middle Winners	+11 to +40	56 (20%)
High Winners	+41 or more	41 (15%)
Total		279 (100%)

	<b>Rank Difference</b>	<b>Yr 6 – Fm 1</b>
<b>High Losers</b>	<b>- 40 or more</b>	55 (20%)
<b>Middle Losers</b>	<b>-39 to -10</b>	61 (22%)
<b>Stable</b>	<b>-9 to +10</b>	58 (21%)
<b>Middle Winners</b>	<b>+11 to +40</b>	58 (21%)
<b>High Winners</b>	<b>+ 41 or more</b>	47 (17%)
<b>Total</b>		279 (100%)

## 5. High Losers and Winners

The High Losers and High Winners were further analysed in terms of age group and sex. There is a predominance of the Median Group.

Age Group	Male	Female	Totals
Junior	8	6	14
Medians	12	14	26
Senior	7	7	14
Totals	27	27	54

Age Group	Male	Female	Totals
Junior	9	8	17
Medians	10	8	18
Senior	10	9	19
Totals	29	25	54

Age Group	Male	Female	Total
Junior	6	9	15
Medians	10	7	17
Senior	4	6	10
Totals	20	22	42

	Male	Female	Totals
<b>Juniors</b>	7	9	16
<b>Medians</b>	7	7	14
<b>Seniors</b>	4	7	11
<b>Totals</b>	18	23	41

Age Group	Male	Female	Totals
<b>Junior</b>	4	14	18
<b>Median</b>	9	11	20
<b>Senior</b>	9	8	17
<b>Totals</b>	22	33	55

Age Group	Male	Female	Totals
<b>Junior</b>	8	7	15
<b>Median</b>	7	8	15
<b>Senior</b>	7	10	17
<b>Totals</b>	23	24	47

## 6. Very High Winners and Very High Losers

Some students registered a rank difference of more than 100 rank places within Group XYZ (Boys and Girls) in at least one subject (Table 17) or more (Table 18).

	Mathematics		English		Maltese		Totals
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	
<b>Very High Winners</b>	3	3	5	3	8	2	24
<b>Very High Losers</b>	5	4	1	0	3	2	15
<b>Totals</b>	8	7	6	3	11	4	39

<b>Table 18: Very High Winners and Very High Losers in two or more subjects by Progressive Number</b>			
<b>Progressive Number</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Maltese</b>
<b>14</b>	+166	+100	+139
<b>128</b>	+124	+104	+128
<b>22</b>	+107	+255	+189
<b>1</b>	-139	Under 100	-101
<b>346</b>	Under 100	+109	+120
<b>13</b>	Under 100	+109	+136
<b>11</b>	Under 100	-104	-127

The Very High Losers and Very High Winners in two or more subjects were further analysed in terms of their social footprint (Table 19).

<b>Table 19</b>	<b>Very High Winners</b>					<b>Very High Losers</b>	
<b>Progressive Number</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Rank Difference</b>	+166 +139 +100	+128 +124 +104	+255 +189 +107	+120 +109	+136 +109	-139 -101	-127 -104
<b>Age</b>	Median	Junior	Median	Junior	Senior	Junior	Median
<b>Sex</b>	Male	Male	Male	Female	Male	Male	Male
<b>Pupil Education</b>	Kinder Prim Sec	Kinder Prim Sec	Kinder Prim Sec	Kinder Prim Sec	Kinder Prim Sec	Kinder Prim Sec	Kinder Prim Sec
<b>Rem.Educ. in Yr. 3</b>	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
<b>Tuition Yr.6</b>	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Tuition Fm. 1</b>	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes
<b>Mother's Education</b>	Prim Sec	Kinder Prim Sec	Prim Sec	Prim Sec	Prim Sec	Kinder Prim Sec	Prim Sec
<b>Father's Education</b>	Prim Sec	Kinder Prim	Prim Sec	Prim Sec	Prim Sec	Kinder Prim Sec	Kinder Prim Sec Trade
<b>Family Structure</b>	2 parents 3 children	2 parents 3 children	2 parents 2 children	2 parents 3 children	2 parents 2 children	2 parents 3 children	2 parents 1 child

<b>Position in Family</b>	3 <sup>RD</sup>	3 <sup>RD</sup>	2 <sup>ND</sup>	2 <sup>ND</sup>	2 <sup>ND</sup>	3 <sup>RD</sup>	1 <sup>ST</sup>
<b>Father's Occupation</b>	Semi Skilled	Semi Skilled	Semi Skilled	Skilled	Skilled	Semi Skilled	Semi Skilled
<b>Mother's Occupation</b>	House Wife	Semi Skilled	House Wife	Skilled	House Wife	House Wife	House Wife
<b>Yr. 6 Streamed</b>	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
<b>Language Home</b>	Gozitan	Gozitan	Gozitan	Gozitan Maltese	Gozitan	Gozitan	Gozitan
<b>Language Friends</b>	Gozitan	Gozitan Italian	Gozitan	Gozitan	Gozitan	Gozitan	Gozitan
<b>T.V. Channel</b>	Maltese	Maltese English Italian	Maltese Italian	Maltese	Italian	Italian	Maltese
<b>Radio Station</b>	Maltese	Maltese English Italian	Maltese	Maltese	Maltese English Italian	Italian	Maltese

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

One cannot consider transition in a vacuum or a harmless change. A report issued by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (Paton, 2007) claimed that in Great Britain a quarter of pupils make no progress from 11 to 14 or even fall back. There is no point, therefore, in creating liaison between the primary and the secondary schools for a smooth transition when just three years after this had taken place, so many students are falling back in their education. The time-honoured principle in education as proposed in 1908 that '... education is one thing, any dislocation in it is at the best but a necessary evil. It ought to be continuous from the time when a child first passes beyond the home and goes to school' is very relevant even today (The Board of Education Report, 1908) so as to avoid the adage *primaries and secondaries are two sectors divided by a common curriculum* (Boyd, 2005).

The setting up of Colleges, is one sure step in the right direction. The Gozo College has endeavoured from its inception to consolidate the link between the primary and secondary sectors through a number of ground breaking initiatives. These all help to keep primary students' mind at rest that 'what lies beyond' in the secondary is nothing to be afraid of.

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# **THE IMPACT OF TEACHERS' ATTITUDE ON STUDENTS' BEHAVIOUR**

**Stephanie Azzopardi**

## **About the Author**

Stephanie Azzopardi graduated with a Degree Honours in Sociology from the University of Malta. She continued her studies by following a Post-Graduate Certificate in Education. Recently she has read a Masters in Education in Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties.

## **Abstract**

Student misbehaviour is a growing concern in a number of Secondary Schools. This paper is based on a study which highlights the perceptions of both secondary school students as well as teachers towards the impact of teachers' attitude on students' behaviour. The aim of this study, undertaken during the 2008-2009 scholastic year, was to ascertain whether there exists a correlation between teachers' attitude and students' behaviour. A sample of 100 Gozitan Secondary School students, equally divided among Junior Lyceum and Secondary Area Schools, and equally divided again according to gender, took part in the investigation by completing a structured questionnaire. To strengthen the study, a sample of 10 Secondary School teachers participated in a semi-structured interview. This study revealed that both students and teachers agree that teachers' attitude does have an impact on student behaviour.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The objective of this project is to investigate the impact teachers attitudes have on students' behaviour. This particular problem is worth investigating for different reasons.

First and foremost, aggressive student behaviour is of great concern in every school and discovering ways to help teachers prevent and/or respond to negative

student behaviour is of great importance. Additionally, one needs to shift the focus from viewing the student as the problem and concentrate more on the surrounding environment as a possible factor contributing to such behaviour – an environment which includes, above all, the teacher.

Traditionally, the teacher's task was perceived as consisting of two separate and separable commitments. The teacher was expected to be firstly, skilful in the keeping of order and secondly able to communicate knowledge to the students. In the nineteenth century, the former was given far more importance than the latter. In fact, being able to maintain discipline and control classes, even in the absence of pedagogical skills and a satisfactory knowledge of subject matter, qualified any candidate for teaching (Grace, 1985). This reflects Delamont's observation:

Much teacher behaviour is in accordance with the role expectations held for them by their pupils and society at large. They attempt to control their classes and then to teach them something.

(Delamont 1976 as cited in Bezzina 2002 p.55)

The management task of teaching therefore was not only narrowly perceived as consisting of the ability to control students in the classroom, but it was assumed that control preceded instruction.

Decades later, educators, especially those involved in teacher training programmes, accepted the two roles as distinct and redefined the one concerned with discipline and control by including numerous skills – establishing rules and procedures, developing a good relationship with students, managing time, using resources and organizing the classroom space. However, in learning to teach, it became increasingly apparent that the twin tasks of management and instruction flow and feed into each other. (Bezzina et al 2002)

Apart from its intrinsic interest, this issue could be tackled from both a social and scientific point of view. It is a social issue since it involves the behaviour of human beings. In fact, the topic discussed in this study is mainly concerned with the impact of teachers' attitudes on student behaviour and so permits the problem to be tackled from a social point of view.

Such a problem can also be studied from a scientific viewpoint as it can be analysed by means of scientific tools. In this study the scientific tool employed will be quantitative research methods, namely questionnaires, so as to ascertain

students' perceptions in regards to the issue under study and also so that data can be analysed in a statistical manner.

## **Attitude**

Attitude encompasses the way a person feels, thinks and behaves. In the classroom, both teachers' and students' attitudes have an impact on the overall working atmosphere therein and research has shown that their perceptions are important elements in the social and psychological dimensions of classroom environments (Fraser 1994). As the teacher's reaction to certain behaviours can create either a positive and peaceful classroom environment or hostile learning situations, it is imperative for teachers to assess their own behaviour and how it impacts their students. Moore (1997) supports this by arguing that if teachers want to change their students' behaviours and attitudes they should first modify their own behaviour and attitudes (cited in Spaulding 2005).

## **Teachers' Attitude – Effect on Learning Experience**

No printed words, nor spoken plea can teach young minds what they should be. Not all the books on all the shelves – but what the teachers are themselves.

(Rudyard Kipling as cited in Rose 2004)

Teaching, like all other human endeavours, is not static (Hargreaves, Earl, & Ryan 1996). Research has revealed that teachers make many, probably hundreds of decisions throughout a teaching day – decisions which are based, not only on an appraisal of the conditions in which they are operating, but also on the relationship of the conditions with tasks they want students to perform. (Cooper & McIntyre 1996; Brown & McIntyre 1993 as cited in Cooper & Olsen 2001) Research evidence suggests that the most effective approaches to teaching are those where teachers draw on a wide range of strategies which they apply flexibly and selectively to different learning situations (Hargreaves, Earl, & Ryan 1996). Moreover, Hoyle (1969) points out that the different approaches teachers utilize must be worked out within the framework of the personality, skills and attitudes of the individual teacher.

In a study entitled “Research into Teacher Effectiveness” which was carried out by the Department for Education and Employment U.K. (2000) McBer

reported that professional characteristics, teaching skills and classroom climate are three main factors within the teacher's control that significantly influence student progress. Furthermore, as shown below, each factor provides distinctive and complementary ways for teachers to understand the contribution they make – a necessary and vital element in order for effective teaching to take place within their classrooms.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In this case, multi-strategy research was employed. Both the quantitative and qualitative type of methodology was used. Triangulation entails more than one method or source of data in the study of social phenomena (Bryman 2001). It implies that the results of an investigation employing a method associated with one research strategy are cross-checked against the results of using a method associated with the other research strategy. Quantitative research was used to study the viewpoint of the student while qualitative research was used to study the same research question from the point of view of the teacher.

Quantitative research fitted best when it came to collect students' data because the researcher had to carry out the research with a large number of students within a limited period. Besides, quantitative research is also less research biased, an important factor in this particular research, due to the fact that the researcher, being a teacher, was an insider when research on students was being carried out. Quantitative research, therefore, helped to eliminate bias. Moreover, the researcher opted for quantitative research methods because one could generalise on the basis of the findings. In fact, the main research tool utilized by the researcher for collecting students' data was the survey method. Self-completion questionnaires were carefully prepared and distributed to students by hand. Although questionnaires suited best the study concerning students' views, questionnaires have their own disadvantages. For instance, they lack validity and respondents may interpret questions differently to what the researcher intended.

On the other hand, qualitative research was deemed more appropriate in collecting teachers' data because only small groups needed to be studied. Another reason for choosing qualitative research was due to the fact that it delves deeper into the experiences of the people being studied than quantitative research does. Furthermore, the researcher is more flexible. Therefore, semi-structured interviews were used to collect teachers' data. Various considerations motivated my choice for this particular design and method of data collection. Interviews

are a more flexible means of obtaining information than questionnaires since the face-to-face situation helps people to give more valid and in-depth answers. Interviews, however, may raise the problem of interviewer bias. Semi-structured interviews were used instead of unstructured interviews so as to keep the interviewee more focused and also because the researcher had to carry out a number of interviews in a short period of time. On the other hand, structured interviews were not considered as the researcher wanted to obtain more in-depth information.

## **FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION**

Student misbehaviour is a worrying concern in a number of schools. As this study reveals teachers' attitude is one of the factors that leads to misbehaviour. The research findings of this study have led to a number of important conclusions and the following are the main results of this study.

One important conclusion derived from this study is that a good student-teacher relationship does help in creating positive behaviour and it was interesting to note that this was considered as such mainly by female students. One particular effect which was perceived as resulting from a good student-teacher relationship was mutual respect. This shows that classroom climate affects students' behaviour, one of the hypothesis.

Another point that emerged from this study is that certain teachers are perceived as role models by their students. However, certain factors pertaining to the teacher, such as teacher's age, can influence this perception. In fact, when the results of both teachers and students were compared, it was found that while the majority of teachers view themselves as role models, a considerable number of students do not feel the same way.

From this study a number of teachers' characteristics were also identified as helping to create positive behaviour among students, which is in line with the hypothesis – teacher's personal characteristics affect students' behaviour. It is interesting to note that both teachers and students held the same view regarding which characteristics a teacher should have. Being friendly by maintaining a good relationship, being fair and having a sense of humour were the most preferred. In regards to teacher strategies which would help to prevent or de-escalate misbehaviour while increasing positive behaviour, having a positive outlook and being well-prepared were the main strategies put forward by teachers.

The research also revealed that non-verbal messages sent by the teacher are an effective strategy to control students' behaviour without disturbing the class.

Another factor which influences students' behaviour is the teaching method adopted by the teacher. The preferred method which maintains good behaviour, according to all those studied, is to create interesting, interactive lessons. In fact, responses given by students revealed that teaching is still carried out in a traditional way by a number of teachers. The majority of students also viewed teachers as rulers rather than leaders.

Teachers' high academic expectations of their students is another factor which may lead to misbehaviour, with the majority of students arguing that lessons focusing on academics not only become boring but teachers also give no importance to students' needs – a view held by both Junior Lyceum and Area Secondary students. Another significant point which was revealed by this study is that students begin to dislike a certain subject due to the teacher's attitude.

The study also shows that a considerable number of teachers create classroom rules and expectations at the beginning of the scholastic year with the aim of controlling misbehaviour. In fact, these rules are considered as beneficial in controlling classroom behaviour especially by secondary students and more so by males. From the study it resulted that the most frequently used strategy to control behaviour is punishment with praise being the next mostly used. On the other hand rewards are rarely used. This corresponds well with the hypothesis which states that teachers' focus more on giving punishments rather than rewards. In spite of this, students think that rewards are considered as the best practice by the majority with the other two as being also useful.

In a nutshell one can conclude that teachers' attitude does have an effect on students' behaviour which validates the hypothesis – students' behaviour in secondary schools varies according to the teacher. Therefore, teachers' awareness of their own attitudes is the first step in maintaining positive behaviour in the classroom. As the majority of teachers agreed, teachers require assistance to help them become more aware of their own behaviour and more importantly, how to deal with students' misbehaviour. To help teachers do so, training, such as in-service courses, would be beneficial as recommended by all the teachers taking part in this study.

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# **THE CONCEPT OF CHARITY AS PROFESSED AND PRACTICED BY THE HOSPITALLER ORDER OF ST. JOHN OF JERUSALEM**

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## **About the Author**

Ian Grech commenced a B.Ed. Hons. course in 1997, graduating in History in November 2001. After teaching in Malta for two years, he has been teaching History at the Gozo College Girls' Secondary School from 2003 till present. In 2007 he started a M.A. course in Mediterranean Historical Studies at the University of Malta Gozo Centre, where he graduated in 2010.

## **ABSTRACT**

The following study is a summary of a dissertation on the concept of Charity as professed and practiced by the Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem.

What came to be known as the Order of St. John predates not only the Templar and Teutonic Orders but even the crusading movement itself through which the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem was established. It was originally a purely charitable organisation, thought to have originated in the second half of the eleventh century, indeed 'the oldest specialised Christian charitable movement.'<sup>1</sup> Founded in Jerusalem, it was composed of lay brothers.<sup>2</sup> The latter fell into the pattern of the 'radical monastic movements', a late eleventh and early twelfth century phenomenon, where these persons were trying to make an impact on the world they lived in, not only by leading a spiritual life, but also by giving themselves to others.<sup>3</sup> Thus their 'charitable activities... were set on an equal footing with traditional monastic life.'<sup>4</sup> Concern with those in need probably reflected 'the fact that, with economic advances in Europe and the rise of the towns, the urban proletariat was becoming more visible than it had been since the late Roman empire.'<sup>5</sup> These lay brothers received all needy persons in their hospital, thus addressing the needs of that time and place: their later-established statute regarding Hospitality made it clear that the brothers of the Hospital had

to exercise and esteem Hospitality much more than anyone else and it was to the principle of Hospitality that they had to apply themselves. There, in the hospital, or *Palace of the Poor*,<sup>6</sup> every kind of misery was relieved. The brethren became the *sclavus*, slaves, and *servus*, serfs of the *domini infirmi*,<sup>7</sup> their lords the sick, 'under the obligation to render that devotion and reverence that secular lords would receive from their men.'<sup>8</sup>

In 1113, the nascent multi-national<sup>9</sup> order was defined as a charitable monastic institution.<sup>10</sup> The three monastic vows that all those who entered the Order of Hospitallers took, 'bound them to live not *cum pauperate* but *sine proprio*.'<sup>11</sup> The Hospitaller Order was the first of the great centralised orders of medieval times:<sup>12</sup>

The Order that Gerard [its first rector] founded anticipated by many centuries all subsequent organisations devoted to the care of the poor and the sick throughout the world. In his ideals he echoed the Founder of Christianity.<sup>13</sup>

Riley-Smith makes reference to a particular great order; he proclaims that with its humility and love for the poor, the Hospitaller Order was foreshadowing the Franciscan Order, born a century later.<sup>14</sup>

The earliest known rule of the Hospital, known as the Twelfth-Century Rule, was mainly inspired by that of St. Augustine:<sup>15</sup> The Hospitallers' 'more worldly charitable activities were closer in spirit to the Augustinian ideals of the canons than to the monks' enclosed and more liturgical regime.'<sup>16</sup> Religious communities following the Augustinian rule, popular in the Northern parts of Europe, 'became popular as a less enclosed alternative to the Benedictine model.'<sup>17</sup> This rule placed emphasis on the patients' good diet and comfort, and on relying on the physicians' expertise with regard to the sick.<sup>18</sup> In fact, prayer, comfort, and diet came to form the three central elements of the Order with regards to those who needed their assistance, especially the sick.

Although by the end of the twelfth century this hospital was transformed into a modern institution inspired by Muslim and Byzantine models,<sup>19</sup> the most advanced medical models of that time, 'offering free medical care and attention to the sick,'<sup>20</sup> from a professional point of view it was far behind these models.<sup>21</sup> The number of physicians was very low compared to the number of sick, which was much higher than a modern-day hospital would accept.<sup>22</sup> However, the [h]ospital did not set out to give patients an intensive course of medical care, but

rather to provide somewhere for them to rest and recuperate ... to make their last days more bearable.<sup>23</sup>

Thus the hospital could not be understood as we know it today. Rather it was, in Edgington's words, 'a convalescent home',<sup>24</sup> or 'a modern hospice.'<sup>25</sup> Some of those admitted to the hospital were probably weak rather than ill, thus requiring little medical care, and the lack of physicians 'may have been partially offset by more intensive work.'<sup>26</sup>

The transformation that took place in an institution established primarily for a charitable purpose cannot go unnoticed. Assuming a military role like the Templars,<sup>27</sup> or the mandate of defending Christendom,<sup>28</sup> was necessary to meet the exigencies of the Holy Land.<sup>29</sup> The Infidels had renewed their usual attacks on Christian sites and on pilgrims and religious alike. It was not until the second half of the twelfth century that this new dual function became defined by their Master Gilbert of Assailly. However, this change did not take place at the expense of its original *raison d'être*. Notwithstanding the loss of its hospital some time after the fall of the Christian Kingdom of Jerusalem into the hands of the Infidels in 1187 and its increasingly military engagements, it would be incorrect to think that the Order's founding mission somehow began to lose its centrality.

With the loss of Acre, the last Christian stronghold in the Holy Land, in 1291,<sup>30</sup> the Order re-established itself on Cyprus, the eastern Mediterranean island, where it underwent yet another transformation: it gradually became a naval power<sup>31</sup> to continue its mission of defending the Faith against Muslim aggression – this time, too, at sea. On Cyprus the Order possessed another hospital covering an area of almost an acre.<sup>32</sup> It was 'a replacement for the hospital in Acre which had formerly served needy pilgrims and the poor.'<sup>33</sup> In this way they succeeded, not without difficulty, in surviving the numerous critics<sup>34</sup> that the military orders were facing after the loss of the Holy Land:

[P]eople in Europe were disillusioned with the crusading idea in general and with the military orders in particular; many envied the orders' wealth and privileges, or felt that they had betrayed their cause and misused the donations made to them. Tempting schemes for reorganising the military orders or for confiscating their lands received considerable support.<sup>35</sup>

Unlike the Templar Order, the Hospitaller institution did not fall into decay:

If the 'Great Order of the Hospitallers'... rescued itself... from the pit of extinction into which it was rapidly sliding after the Templars, it was due to that

mission of charity and mercy, from which it derives its name and from which it never strayed.<sup>36</sup>

The establishment of the Order on Rhodes in 1310, where it ‘now had substantial territory of its own,’<sup>37</sup> is generally characterised by a long history of warfare. Notwithstanding this, it owned three different hospitals, with the last one built in the fifteenth century, described as ‘the most famous institution of its kind in the world.’<sup>38</sup> The medical, sanitary, and charitable aspects of the Hospitaller profession became ‘better organised and more efficiently administered, almost assuming near-permanent structure’.<sup>39</sup>

In 1522 the Order ‘became a stateless state.’<sup>40</sup> For eight years it navigated from one place to another throughout the Mediterranean facing a continuous, to use Mallia-Milanes’s words, ‘trial of strength.’<sup>41</sup> Despite this situation

[F]rom the moment it left Rhodes to the moment it reached Villefranche and Nice, it had several opportunities where its traditional hospitaller role and duty were visibly performed. Indeed the entire tragic odyssey had offered one such uninterrupted occasion.<sup>42</sup>

When the Order was offered Malta together with the fortress of Tripoli, the central Mediterranean island was only accepted ‘as a transitory base’<sup>43</sup> at first. The importance of their new hospital on the island, described as magnificent, convenient and beautiful,<sup>44</sup> was surely highlighted during the Great Siege of 1565;

In any record of the great siege of Malta it must always be borne in mind how important a part the Infirmary played in restoring men to action who would, under most conditions of war at that time, have certainly died from their wounds.<sup>45</sup>

Following the establishment of the Hospital at Valletta, the medical activities of the Order continued uninterrupted. The medical practice of its new hospital conformed with the Arabo-Hellenic tradition followed on the continent at those times.<sup>46</sup> Provisions for all the socially distressed were already evident when it was still at Birgu, and these became even more pronounced after the Convent was established at Valletta; it ‘provid[ed] a modicum of social welfare in the caritative sense of the term’, a ‘poor-relief system and other State social services.’<sup>47</sup>

- <sup>1</sup> J.Riley-Smith, *Hospitallers: The History of the Order of St.John* (London, Hambledon Press, 1999), 1.
- <sup>2</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>3</sup> H. Nicholson, *The Knights Hospitaller* (Suffolk, Boydell Press, 2001), 3; See also Timothy Miller, 'The Knights of Saint John and the Hospitals of the Latin West', *Speculum*, 53 (1978), 712-717; H. J. A. Sire, *The Knights of Malta* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2005), 102.
- <sup>4</sup> Luis Garcia-Guijarro Ramos, 'Exemption in the Temple, the Hospital and the Teutonic Order: Shortcomings of the Institutional Approach,' in *The Military Orders: Welfare and Warfare*, H. Nicholson (ed.) Ashgate, London 1998, 290.
- <sup>5</sup> Riley-Smith (1999), 20-21.
- <sup>6</sup> E. Schermerhorn, *On the Trail of the Eight-Pointed Cross: A Study of the Heritage of the Knights Hospitallers in Feudal Europe* (New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1940), 54.
- <sup>7</sup> A. Luttrell, 'Hospitaller Life in Aragon: 1319-1370,' in A. Luttrell, *The Hospitallers of Rhodes and their Mediterranean World* (England, Variorum, 1992), 105.
- <sup>8</sup> J. Riley-Smith, *The Knights of St. John in Jerusalem and Cyprus c.1050-1310* (London, Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1967), 233 & 41; See also Schermerhorn (1940), 54.
- <sup>9</sup> Luttrell, 'Hospitaller Life in Aragon: 1319-1370,' 98.
- <sup>10</sup> Riley-Smith (1967), 17-59.
- <sup>11</sup> Sire, 13.
- <sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, 5.
- <sup>13</sup> E. Bradford, *The Knights of the Order* (New York, Barnes & Noble, 1972), 24.
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- <sup>16</sup> Anthony Luttrell, 'The Earliest Hospitallers,' in *Montjoie: Studies in Crusade History in Honour of Hans Eberhard Mayer*, B.Z. Kedar, J. Riley-Smith & R. Hiestand (eds.) Variorum, England 1997, 40.
- <sup>17</sup> Sire, 209; See A. M. Quartiroli, *La Regola di San Benedetto* (Praglia, Edizioni Scritti Monastici, 2004).
- <sup>18</sup> Susan Edgington, 'Medical Care in the Hospital of St.John in Jerusalem,' in *The Military Orders: Welfare and Warfare*, H. Nicholson (ed.) Ashgate, England 1998, 33.
- <sup>19</sup> Anthony Luttrell, 'The Hospitallers' Medical Tradition,' in *The Military Orders: Fighting for the Faith and Caring for the Sick*, M. Barber (ed.) Variorum, England 1994, 65; Christopher Toll, 'Arabic Medicine and Hospitals in the Middle Ages: a Probable Model for the Military Orders' Care of the Sick,' in *The Military Orders: Welfare and Warfare*, H. Nicholson (ed.) Ashgate, England 1998, 39.

- <sup>20</sup> Victor Mallia-Milanes, 'A Pilgrimage of Faith, War and Charity,' in *Religion, Ritual and Mythology*, R.de Calvarho (ed.) Cliohres.net 2006, 85.
- <sup>21</sup> Benjamin Z. Kedar, 'A Twelfth-Century Description of the Jerusalem Hospital,' in *The Military Orders: Welfare and Warfare*, H. Nicholson (ed.) Ashgate, England 1998, 12.
- <sup>22</sup> Riley-Smith (1999), 29.
- <sup>23</sup> Nicholson (2001), 88-89.
- <sup>24</sup> Edgington, 'Medical Care in the Hospital of St. John in Jerusalem,' 33.
- <sup>25</sup> Nicholson (2001), 2.
- <sup>26</sup> Kedar, 'A Twelfth-Century Description of the Jerusalem Hospital,' 12.
- <sup>27</sup> Riley-Smith (1967), 54.
- <sup>28</sup> J. C. Noonan, Jr., *The Church Visible: The Ceremonial Life and Protocol of the Roman Catholic Church* (USA, Viking Penguin, 1996), 132-133.
- <sup>29</sup> Lawrence, 212.
- <sup>30</sup> K. M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant 1204-1571, iv* (USA, Philadelphia, 1976-84), 280.
- <sup>31</sup> Noonan, 133.
- <sup>32</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>33</sup> Luttrell, 'The Hospitallers' Medical Tradition: 1291-1530,' 68.
- <sup>34</sup> Lionel Butler, 'The Order of St. John in Malta: An Historical Sketch,' in *The Order of St. John in Malta*, The Government of Malta and the Council of Europe (ed.) St. Paul's Press Ltd., Malta 1970, 24.
- <sup>35</sup> 'The Hospitallers at Rhodes: 1306-1421,' in *The Hospitallers in Cyprus, Rhodes, Greece and the West 1291-1440*, A. Luttrell (ed.) Variorum, England 1978, 281; Notwithstanding these critics, in 1292 the Holy See confirmed all the exemptions, immunities, privileges, and indulgences that had previously been granted to the hospital previously - G. Bosio, *Dell'Istoria della S. Religione et Ill.ma Militia di San Giovanni Gerosolimitano* (Rome, Stamperia di Guglielmo Facciotti, 1629), 3.
- <sup>36</sup> Schermerhorn (1940), 10.
- <sup>37</sup> Noonan, 133.
- <sup>38</sup> E. E. Hume, *Medical Work of the Knights Hospitallers of Saint John of Jerusalem* (Baltimore, The John Hopkins Press, 1940), 40.
- <sup>39</sup> Mallia-Milanes, 'A Pilgrimage of Faith, War and Charity,' 86.
- <sup>40</sup> Noonan, 134.
- <sup>41</sup> See Victor Mallia-Milanes, 'A Trial of Hospitaller Strength: From Rhodes to Malta via Nice and Villefranche, 1523-1530,' in *La Navigation du Savoir Reseau des Arsenaux Historiques de la Mediterranee. Actes du Colloque: Premieres Journees internationales du patrimoine maritime mediterraneen, 27 au 30 mars 2003*

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<sup>42</sup> *ibid.*, 14.

<sup>43</sup> B. Blouet, *The Story of Malta* (Malta, Progress Press, 1993), 47.

<sup>44</sup> G. Bosio, *Dell'Istoria della S. Religione et Ill.ma Militia di San Giovanni Gerosolimitano* (Rome, Stamperia di Guglielmo Facciotti, 1602), 118.

<sup>45</sup> Bradford, 196.

<sup>46</sup> C. Savona-Ventura, *Knight Hospitaller Medicine in Malta 1530-1798* (Malta, PEG Ltd., 2004), 252.

<sup>47</sup> Victor Mallia-Milanes, 'The Birgu Phase of Hospitaller History,' in *Birgu: A Maltese Maritime City*, i, L. Bugeja, M. Buhagiar & S. Fiorini (eds.) Malta 1994, 94.

# Appendix

- The Role of Education in the Eco-Gozo Vision
- Multimedia Book Review: Eco-Gozo Resource Pack
- ETC Manual on Career Guidance
- SEEP (Science Education European Platform)
- AHEAD



# **THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN THE ECO-GOZO VISION**

One may be justified in asking: what does eco-Gozo have to do with education? The answer is straight and simple... education is the basis of eco-Gozo. The eco-island vision for our island is definitely made up of projects, programmes and initiatives, but education, which leads to culture change, is that binding material which brings all action – both institutional and individual - together and which will finally result in the achievement of the result warranted by this vision. Eco-Gozo is a Local Sustainable Development strategy for the island of Gozo. It therefore relies strongly on the individual's behaviour and contribution towards achieving goals as an island population. This can only be achieved through awareness and education, and in both, formal education plays a determining role.

The eco-island vision targets four main priority areas: Economy, Environment, Society and Culture and Identity. In simple words eco-Gozo is concerned with all that constitutes the island; its inhabitants, their wellbeing, their surroundings and even their future. The vision gives also importance to culture and traditions which give a distinct identity to the island.

## **Economy**

Environmental improvements and social progress cannot happen in isolation for them to be sustainable in the long-term. It is necessary for these improvements to be supported by a degree of economic progress. Eco-Gozo is therefore concerned with economic development, employment and investment, environmental standards in industry, tourism and transport. It may not sound appropriate for some to 'bother' young students with issues like these. Yet, it is essential for our island's success that even from young ages, children start to be exposed to certain economic issues such as the importance of the tourism sector for our island economy, agriculture, sustainable transportation, and consumer issues.

## **Environment**

Thanks to the dedication of many in the teaching profession, leaders and school-based environmental programs such as EkoSkola, our students are today very

much aware of environmental issues. Gozo prides itself of schools which hold the EkoSkola Green Flag, an award given to schools which apply environment-friendly measures and attain significant results in the process. Children are receptive of pro-environmental messages like protecting the environment, reducing waste, reusing material and even practicing waste separation. In this case, students can be the agents of change in their circles – including in the family. The topics featuring in the Eco-Gozo Action Plan such as water, energy, air quality and waste are frequently discussed in our classrooms. Moreover, thanks to the Hands on Farming Programme which operates from the Xewkija Experimental Farm, children are being offered a unique experience in getting up-and-close with the agro-environmental sector, together with the local ecology and sound environmental practices.

## **Society**

Social progress and an increased quality of life are perhaps the ultimate aims of the eco-Gozo vision. Environmental improvements and economic development are never an end to themselves but means to improve life on this island. Among other issues, the eco-Gozo action plan focuses directly on Education, Health and Sports. All appreciate that education is not only made up of the academic content taught in schools or the syllabi which teachers are required to deliver. There is also an essential component of the educational system which we call ‘informal education’, which sometimes conveys lessons which one carries for life. Students already benefit from Health and Safety training, Physical Education and PSD, the latter aiming at students’ wellbeing and their social integration. Health and Safety teachers and PSD teachers organise talks, exhibitions and even seminars to prepare our students for the ‘outside’ world. In addition to this service which students are already benefitting from, the eco-Gozo programme has started providing additional sporting activities such as swimming, cycling and trekking. Secondary School students are also benefitting from a programme run by the Gozo Institute of Tourism Studies which focuses on Healthy Eating and Hygiene.

## **Culture and Identity**

Gozo boasts a strong identity and a very active cultural scene. Cultural heritage, the Arts and even the voluntary sector are considered as strong contributors for the continued development of the island – and therefore sectors of great potential for the eco-island vision. Students cannot attain full development if they do

not evolve a sense of appreciation and mindfulness for our island's natural and cultural heritage. This heritage can only survive if the Gozitan population is aware and proud of the potential the island offers. These skills can be reinforced by passing on positive values in our children, instilling a sense of pride coupled with a sense of responsibility and promoting students' active involvement in their communities from an early.

In May 2010, the 'Eko-Ghawdex: Pakkett ta' Rizorsi għall-Għalliema' (Eco-Gozo: A Resource Pack for Teachers) was launched. The aim behind these lesson-notes which include all the necessary teaching resources was to facilitate Teachers' involvement in the implementation of the eco-Gozo vision. It is believed that this resource pack will generate further ideas in including themes related to Sustainable Development in the teachers' daily schedule of lessons without deviating from the actual syllabi.

Educating implies establishing a constructive and long lasting interaction. With an educational system which believes in the principles of sustainable development, we will ensure that quality of life in Gozo improves on an individual level, leading to a collective effort which will truly bring about eco-Gozo; a better Gozo.

*Sylvana Sultana, Gozo College  
Eco-Gozo teacher*

## MULTIMEDIA BOOK REVIEW: ECO-GOZO RESOURCE PACK

Last May, the Ministry for Gozo launched *Eco-Gozo – a resource pack for teachers*. This professionally-designed essential teaching aid for our students was the idea of the Minister for Gozo, Hon. Giovanna Debono who, being an educator herself, strongly believes that for the eco-Gozo vision to be successful, it has to be inculcated through modern educational media, and therefore starting from the basic roots of schooling was a natural path to follow.

Under the leadership of Prof. Paul J. Pace, Director of the Centre for Environmental Education and Research at the University of Malta, a team of teachers from both primary and secondary sectors within the Gozo College, discussed, planned and developed a number of very interesting lesson activities to target both children in primary as well as students within the secondary schools.

The pack consists of a handy, colourful and easy-to-read booklet in Maltese as well as an English version of the booklet on CD.

The primary lesson activities cover the following topics: traditional Maltese rubble walls, (*il-ħitan tas-sejjeħ*), the life of the bee and honey making, my community, Gozo tourist attractions, farm visit and discovering our feasts - traditions and culture.

On the other hand, the secondary lesson activities cover an even wider spectrum which is subject bound. We find topics such as Impressionism and Plein Air painting from the Citadel in Arts, fieldwork at Ta' Ċenċ in Biology, Externalities in Business Studies, Salt Production in English, *Id-Divertiment fl-imghoddi u llum* in Environmental Studies, the use of Gozo cheeselets in different savoury dishes, organic farming in Home Economics and the Hidden Treasures of Dwejra in Personal and Social Development (PSD). Besides, teachers of Maltese, Italian and French in secondary schools have specific lessons on how to integrate eco-Gozo themes while their students are learning the language being taught. For instance, French students can learn about local and French breakfasts, different modes of transport in Malta and France and national feasts in Gozo and France. During Maltese lessons, children will learn about *Ulisse u r-Ramla* whereas in Italian, students learn about our *feste e arte* and *la grotta di Ninu*.

The CD presentations are definitely a must for us Teachers. Children will find all resources highly relevant and therefore interesting and that is where learning occurs.

Unlike other book reviews, this review is being done some months later than the launching itself. The reason is simple. A book is to be read. This is a resource pack – and it is to be read and delivered. During the last scholastic year, all teachers within the Gozo College were presented with a copy of this resource pack to be used across the primary and secondary curriculum.

It is highly recommended to be used and reused. It is definitely a great asset for all educators. Without doubt, this essential resource pack will leave highly positive long- and short-term results in continuing to shape the island of Gozo into an eco-island.

***Frank Tabone, Assistant Head at Gozo College  
Nadur Primary***

# ETC MANUAL ON CAREER GUIDANCE

The Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) recognizes that prevention is always better than cure. There are some of the jobseekers who use the ETC services who approach the ETC for the first time with little or no career plan. Some also have little knowledge on what a career is and what career management involves.

With the aim of minimizing such situations the ETC is going to be launching a new Manual on Career Guidance. Although the manual is in English a copy of the worksheets in Maltese will also be made available.

## Contents of the Manual

The Manual is divided into three main parts and is composed of five chapters:

### Manual parts:

- (1) Practitioner's Notes
- (2) Students Information Sheets and Worksheets
- (3) Additional Resources including List of Career and Employment resources and List of Ice-breakers.

### Manual chapters:

**Chapter 1** reviews the Career Planning and Development Process, a multi-step process consisting of:

1. Self-Assessment;
2. Career exploration;
3. Narrowing down your options and
4. Decision-Making & Goal-Setting.

Each phase comprises of a number of exercises to be undertaken by the student.

The issue of Gender Equality in employment is also included in Chapter 1, an element which is very important in the delivery of career guidance services.

Practitioners involved in career guidance service-provision cannot remain indifferent to gender issues. This chapter takes a brief look at:

1. Gender stereotyping,
2. Types of occupational segregation, and
3. Tips and recommendations for professionals.

The chapter includes a number of class activities aimed at examining gender stereotyping in the labour market, and also to encourage the students to share their opinions and discuss gender stereotypes in relation to employment.

**Chapter 2** gives information on training and work experience. The contact details of a number of training and educational institutions are listed. Information and advice is also given on how a student or job seeker can gain work experience.

**Chapter 3** reviews the job seeking process and is divided into three phases:

1. Job seeking methods;
2. Applying for a job (including CV and Covering letter writing); and
3. Preparing for the job interview (including grooming and attire and typical interview questions).

Each phase comprises of a number of worksheets and exercises, as well as tips on the topic under discussion.

**Chapter 4** gives valuable information relating to the start of employment, in particular:

1. Information for first time employees;
2. Information relating to the filling in of ETC forms;
3. Conditions of work and
4. Contact details of various entities for further information.

**Chapter 5** is dedicated to Entrepreneurship and delves into the following aspects:

1. Qualities of Successful Entrepreneurs;
2. Pros and Cons of starting your own business;
3. Different types of business set-ups and
4. Steps to follow when starting a business.

The chapter ends with a number of exercises designed to stimulate the student's creativity.

## General Introduction on Careers

### *How can we define a Career?*

For the purpose of this handbook, the definition of “career” refers to *the various roles individuals play throughout their lives*. This is a rather broad definition of career and includes a number of aspects, including education, training, work experience (including unpaid work), employment, community activities, volunteer work, interests and hobbies. Hence, a career does not only refer to one's job or occupation, as is the common perception, but all these different aspects. In this sense, the term “career” refers to *“the lifetime pursuits of the individual”* (Sharf, 2006).

### *What is Career Guidance?*

A universally adopted definition for Career Guidance is the one used by the OECD: *“Career guidance refers to services and activities intended to assist individuals, of any age and at any point throughout their lives, to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers”* (OECD, 2004).

Career guidance activities can be categorised into five specialities, each with a different focus (ILO, 2006): (1) Career information; (2) Career education, (3) Career counselling; (4) Employment counselling and (4) Job Placement. Two main goals of career guidance are:

- **Lifelong learning goals**, which includes combating early school leaving and encouraging a smooth school-to-work transition.
- **Labour market outcomes**, which includes addressing skills mismatches in the labour market, managing unemployment and encouraging job mobility.

### *What is Career Planning and Development?*

Career Planning and Development is an ongoing and lifelong process; a process which starts from our earliest educational choices and continues throughout our working lives. Career Development may be defined as *“the way that a particular career unfolds”* (Arnold, 1997). Nowadays, few individuals stay in the same job

for all their working lives; this increasing job mobility, as well as the changes – both physical and psychological – we go through as we age, mean that the career planning process can be repeated several times during one’s lifetime. In fact, today we do not speak solely of Career Guidance but also of Career Development and Career Management, terms which imply constant change and adaptation.

### ***The Importance of Career Management***

The nature of work, jobs and careers has changed in today’s dynamic and competitive labour market; changes which have made it necessary for individuals to gain new skills and learn how to adapt to the shifting demands of the present economy. Some changes that can be mentioned are the following (Arnold, 1997):

- (1) Organisational changes such as downsizing and de-layering are becoming more widespread,
- (2) Outsourcing and the employment of staff on short-term contracts is becoming more common,
- (3) In many occupations, regular re-training or skills updating has become a necessity.

The above-mentioned issues (and others), make career management a necessary reality. Career Management may be defined as the attempts made to influence the career development of one or more people (Arnold, 1997); attempts which might be undertaken both by the individuals themselves, as well as by third parties (such as HR managers).

From a personal viewpoint, it is crucial to acquire the necessary skills not only to plan your career, but also to manage your career for lifetime employability.

### ***What should my role be?***

Your role as practitioner – be it a teacher, an educator or a careers advisor – can be viewed as providing the student with the best information, advice and guidance so as to facilitate the student’s decisions. You yourself, along with your skills, can be viewed as important tools to be “used” by the student in their career journey; hence your responsibility lies with *facilitating* the process. At the end of the day, the responsibility for the *decision-making* lies with the student.

## **GENDER STEREOTYPING**

All students, irrespective of their gender, should be offered the same opportunities and encouraged to use their potential in order to pursue whatever career most interests them. Such choices should be based on their talents, interests and personal qualities, and not on their gender or any other characteristic such as age,

ethnicity, sexual identity or gender identity. Certain jobs, such as in the caring professions (for example Child Carer), are associated with females, while other jobs, such in science and engineering, are associated with males. Hence, some students might not even consider such jobs in the first place due to the gender stereotyping of certain occupations.

Gender-based discrimination produces and strengthens inequalities, which leads to the waste of human talent and resources. The eradication of discrimination and inequalities is crucial if all individuals, irrespective of their sex (or any other characteristic) are to choose freely their career paths.

All professionals involved in the provision of guidance services cannot remain indifferent to gender issues. **Gender** refers to the learned, social differences and relations between males and females. Due to the **gender roles** and **stereotypes** that are prevalent in a specific society, males and females have different work experiences and deal with dissimilar expectations. Gender **stereotypes** can be defined as “*preconceived ideas that people have regarding what is appropriate for males as opposed to females as well as what males and females are capable of doing*” (ILO, 2004). Thus, it is important to tackle the issue of **gender stereotyping**, which tends to segregate women and men in particular sectors (ETC, 2004).

If we take a look at local statistics, The Labour Force Survey can give an indication of such segregation, both in terms of economic activity as well as occupational grouping. With regards to **Economic Activity**, in this quarter (LFS, Q4/2009) the majority of employed men were engaged in manufacturing activities, followed by the wholesale and retail trade sector, whilst third in line was the Construction sector. By contrast, most of the female employed population worked in education-related activities, followed by the wholesale and retail trade and third in line was health and social work.

With regards to the main **Occupational Group**, in general, both males and females were mostly working in service-oriented jobs. This category includes occupations such as hairdressers, waiters and salespersons. The survey shows that female workers were predominant in the following occupational groups: (1) Technicians and associate professionals and (2) Clerks, whilst males were predominant in the following occupational groups: (1) Craft and related trades workers and (2) Elementary occupations.

### **Types of Occupational Segregation** *\*Taken from the Manual for Gender Sensitive Vocational Guidance (ETC, 2004)*

Segregation concerns the tendency for men and women to be in different occupations across the entire spectrum of work. There are two types of segregation: Horizontal and Vertical.

#### **Horizontal**

This refers to the fact that men and women tend to work in different sectors of the economy:

- Truck drivers, for instance are usually men, while women tend to predominate in dressmaking or domestic work (ILO, 2003).

#### **Vertical**

This refers to segregation where men and women both work in the same sector, but men commonly do the more skilled, responsible or better paid work and occupy higher positions:

- For example, the majority of school heads may be men while the majority of teachers are women, the majority of hospital consultants may be men while the majority of nurses may be women (Hakim, 1981:521, in Blackburn & Jarman, 1997).

### **Factors Affecting Occupational Segregation**

Social, cultural, historical and economic factors all play a part in determining the extent and the patterns of occupational segregation around the world.

These factors include:

- Social norms and stereotypical perceptions regarding men and women, family life and working life
- Education and vocational training
- Taxation and social security regimes, and welfare policies and institutions
- The structure of the labour market. Including the size of the informal economy
- Discrimination at entry to the labour market and at work
- Discontinuous working patterns (ILO, 2003).

## Tips and Recommendation for Professionals

### **General recommendations** *\*Taken from the Manual for Gender Sensitive Vocational Guidance (ETC, 2004)*

In a UNESCO publication on Policies and Guidelines for Educational and Vocational Guidance, Stuart Conger (2002) sums up the following recommendations to counsellors and educators to:

1. Provide gender-fair career development programmes whilst examining and checking their own attitudes and preconceived ideas.
2. Encourage risk-taking;
3. Encourage non-traditional choices;
4. Assure accurate information;
5. Develop a sense of agency so that students believe that they can have more control over their lives;
6. Recognise that the use of male terms as gender-neutral reflects bias against women and thus counsellors must use inclusive and gender-fair language in all oral and written communication. This includes using gender neutral terms for occupations, for example using *sales assistant or salesperson* (as opposed to salesgirl), *bar attendant* (as opposed to barman), *delivery person* (as opposed to deliveryman) and *food and beverage attendant* (as opposed to waiter / waitress).
7. Continue throughout their professional careers to gain knowledge and awareness of the social, biological and psychological influences on female and male development in general and their career development in particular.

### **Creating opportunities for gender awareness among students** *\*Taken from the Manual for Gender Sensitive Vocational Guidance (ETC, 2004)*

The need to create opportunities for gender awareness among young people is essential. Therefore educators should:

- **Encourage** positive behaviour to offer access to a wider range of opportunities to careers in the labour market to both sexes.
- **Create** opportunities for dialogue between the sexes in order to help them express and assess beliefs held on relationship issues.

- **Encourage** students to share thoughts and feelings on how they are viewed and treated by each other in order to highlight the stereotyped attitudes between the sexes which should be viewed critically.
- **Encourage** students to develop the ability to evaluate behaviours, attitudes and personal qualities that help or hinder boy/girl relationships.
- **Help** students to address the common problems that exist in boy/girl relationships which are often the subject of embarrassment to young people. A strategy that is simple and non-threatening is essential (Attard, 2003, written communication).

## MANUAL SYNOPSIS

**The first Chapter** of the Manual outlines the Career Planning and Development Process, which can be described as a multi-step process.

In essence, Career Planning and Development means first and foremost choosing a career that matches one's traits including one's personality, interests, abilities and values, and secondly setting goals to strive towards the chosen career. To plan one's career requires a number of tools, which will enable the individual to take, *as much as possible*, an informed decision. The emphasis on the "*as much as possible*" is because with so many factors influencing career planning, in reality it is very difficult to make a totally informed decision. In addition to this, it is important to realise that other external influences might have a bearing on the student's decision-making, such as parental expectations and labour market trends.

One aspect worth pointing out at this stage is that there is no one career best suited for an individual – each of us has abilities and competencies that can be applied to a broad range of career fields. Thus, the major challenge is to find a number of careers which integrate as many of our traits as possible.

The first step in the career planning and development process is getting to know oneself by conducting self-assessment of one's different traits. These traits, which will affect suitability for a particular job, mainly include values, interests (likes and dislikes), skills and personal qualities, as well as the leisure aspect of one's career, which includes hobbies, volunteering and other personal interests. Let us take a brief look at each of these traits.

## ***Traits***

- a. **Values** – Throughout our lives, we learn values that influence our behaviour. Values can be defined as “*ideals that motivate our beliefs and choices*” (Halonon & Santrock, 1997), and can be acquired from a variety of sources (such as parents, peers, and media). Since our behaviour is strongly influenced by our values, it is crucial to take these values, especially “work values” into account during the career planning and development process. Pursuing activities which are in line with one’s values increases the chances that an individual is more satisfied in his / her career.

Work values can be categorised into two main types: (1) **Intrinsic**, which refer to a specific interest in the activities of the work itself and (2) **Extrinsic**, which refer to the “benefits” derived from the occupational choice.

- b. **Interests (Likes & Dislikes)** – This involves assessing one’s likes and dislikes of a number of activities. Needless to say, it’s important that the students show a high degree of interest in the jobs they are considering.
- c. **Skills** – The aims of a Skills assessment are two-fold: (1) helping the students establish what they are good at and (2) helping the students determine what they enjoy doing. It is important that one’s skills should combine both these factors since one may be good at a particular task but not enjoy doing it, and vice versa. Hence, the results of such an assessment are useful in identifying the skills the student requires for the career he / she is interested in.

Skills can be categorised into two main types: (1) **Hard skills**, which refer to the specific and technical skills required to carry out one’s job and (2) **Soft skills**, which refer to the non-technical skills and abilities; basically what makes one a good employee, irrespective of the career chosen.

- d. **Personal Qualities** – Determining one’s personal characteristics and qualities is an important factor in matching oneself to suitable career environments.
- e. **Leisure** – Leisure time is also an aspect of one’s career, and this includes hobbies, volunteering and personal interests. Such activities contribute to the individual’s personal and social development, and with particular relevance to one’s career, such activities also contribute to gaining transferable skills. Transferable skills can broadly be defined as the skills one acquires during any activity in one’s life, skills which have been gained through various

jobs, volunteer work, hobbies, sports, or other life experiences that can be used in one's next job or new career. Such skills enable the individual to be adaptable and flexible, which is extremely important in today's competitive labour market and where a job for life is no longer a reality.

### ***Additional Factors***

In addition to the above traits, there should also be an assessment of any factors which might hinder choice of career. These include obstacles related to:

- 1) Health and disability issues
- 2) Family circumstances
- 3) Factors related to choice of education and training
- 4) Factors related to choice of occupation

### **In addition to providing information the manual also provides professionals with work sheets, exercises & games**

For instance, chapter one exercises will include an Information Sheets and Worksheets Section, which is dedicated to worksheets, information sheets, exercises and games on the following:

1. Values
2. Interests
3. Skills
4. Personal Qualities
5. Leisure
6. Obstacles

Depending on the type, these can be used either by the student on an individual basis, or else by the class in a group setting. The aim of these exercises is for the student to get to know himself / herself better since this is the first step in the Career Planning Process.

The results of these exercises will be used for, and referred to during, other sections of the Manual, most importantly for Section 3, **“I want to work! Where do I Start...?”** which mainly relates to (1) Job Seeking, (2) Applying for a job and (3) Preparing for the job interview. These exercises are in fact most relevant for CV writing and for the Job Interview, since at this stage, the student will be asked to write and talk about him / herself. Therefore, the self-awareness exercises under chapter one will partly serve as a basis for Chapter three.

In the Career Planning Process, which was concluded with the drafting of the Career Action Plan, the students have already made a number of choices, and identified the following:

- The career options they are interested in
- Whether to continue further education / training or start looking for a job
- Which qualifications are required for their chosen career path/s
- Which skills are required for their future job
- Any possible barriers that might prevent them from reaching their goals

**The second Chapter** of the Manual therefore deals with the next tasks the students need to tackle.

**So what is the next step for the student?** Whatever the student's choice, either to continue studying or to seek employment, it is important for the student to understand how essential it is to keep learning throughout one's career. In the context of a Lifelong Learning society, workers need to continually update their skills, abilities and knowledge in order to be competitive and remain employable. And this does not only apply to professional, managerial and technical jobs, but across a span of jobs, including those jobs which are considered administrative and semi-skilled. [Refer to Work Sheet 14].

### ***Students who opt to continue Post-Secondary & Tertiary Education***

If the student has decided to continue formal education, the student needs to focus identifying concretely the possible routes he or she may take for his or her chosen career, as well as the skills needed for the chosen career and possible ways of developing and nurturing these required skills (As already covered in Section 1, Career Planning Process).

### ***Students who decide to seek employment***

If the student has decided and is determined to seek employment after leaving school, try to encourage him / her to take a short course in any area of interest, especially if the student has obtained the School Leaving Certificate and no other qualifications. It should be noted that for those who are between the ages of 16 and 18yrs, research (Gatt, 2003) shows that there are added difficulties in finding employment. Reasons mentioned by employers include:

- Health and safety regulations
- Administrative demand – Since parents are signatories together with the young employee, this creates a further administrative burden;

- Job responsibility – Under 18's are considered as not mature enough, and thus rarely chosen;
- Qualification requirement – Certain specific qualifications can only be obtained on completion of post-secondary education; consequently under 18's are automatically excluded for certain posts.

Students may have a variety of reasons why they need to work; this may be due to financial reasons, family circumstances, or they just don't want to keep on studying. What you can do as an educator is help them gain the soft skills and job seeking skills needed to find employment (*Job Seeking Skills are covered in detail in Chapter 3*), and encourage them to seek assistance from relevant entities such as the Employment and Training Corporation, which can assist the job seeker in a variety of ways, including employment advisory services as well as in training services (Refer to Information Sheet – ETC List of Short Courses).

It is to be noted that a number of young adults do re-enter the educational and training pathway, either after *a period of unemployment* or after *a period of work*. Both phases might serve as a period of reflection for the young adult who no longer identifies with the role of "student", and is adjusting to his / her new role as "unemployed" or "worker". These youth might consider re-entering formal education due to a number of reasons, including:

- They might realise how difficult it is to find a good job without having few or no qualifications
- They might be finding it difficult to adjust to the role of "worker" due to the fact that the world of work is totally different from school
- They might find the responsibility of their role too much to bear when they become aware that now they are accountable for their behaviour and actions

The following table can give you an idea of how **employers** view young adults, with particular emphasis on soft skills and personal characteristics. It outlines three main aspects: (1) *Personality*, (2) *Employability* and (3) *Potential for Professional Development* and their related characteristics, as identified by Gatt (2003):

	<b>Advantages Characteristics</b>	<b>Disadvantages Characteristics</b>
<b>Personality aspects</b>	(1) A positive attitude towards life; (2) Full of energy; (3) Enthusiastic; (4) Strength; (5) Do not complain; (6) Flexible; (7) Outspoken; (8) Humorous; (9) Co-operative; (10) Optimistic; (11) Have ideals & dreams.	(1) No commitment to work; (2) No sense of responsibility; (3) Lack of energy; (4) Are too leisure oriented; (5) Have too many commitments & hobbies outside of work; (6) They are often naïve; (7) Tend to be emotionally immature; (8) Expect approval & reward immediately; (9) At times their grooming leaves much to be desired
<b>Employability aspects</b> Attributes that enable young adults to be more employable	(1) Trained more easily; (2) Take initiative; (3) Ready & willing to learn; (3) Bring innovative ideas; (4) Physically strong; (5) Obedience; (6) Loyalty; (7) Able to withstand pressure; (8) Willing to perform & meet deadlines.	(1) No effort to do their best; (2) Consider work to be too hard; (3) Reluctant to work overtime; (4) Lack work experience and therefore need more training; (6) Incapable to show their potential during interviews.
<b>Potential for professional development</b> Young employees bring with them the possibility of offering long years of service to a company.	(1) Are willing to undergo training; (2) Desire to pursue further studies; (3) Desire professional development; and thus (4) Are considered an investment for the company.	(1) Some young adults have no conception of career advancement, instead they perceive work only from a financial perspective; (2) Other young adults tend to be over-ambitious; (3) Do not realise the limits of their potential.

### ***Students who disengage from the transition system (NEET – Not in Employment, Education & Training)***

It is important to note that there are students who will simply disengage from the transition system, those who after finishing school become “inactive”, i.e. they are neither in employment nor in education and training. This may be due to a variety of reasons, ranging from those who have responsibilities at home, such as taking care of a sick relative or young siblings (gender might play a significant role in such circumstances), as well as those who may not feel the need to work, and thus are not motivated in seeking employment.

Again, your role as an educator may revolve around trying to teach soft skills, which will always help the student develop on a personal and social level, as well as job seeking skills, which may eventually be used later on.

This chapter will also provide information on and contact details of various **Training & Educational Institutions, Voluntary Organisations and Educational Programmes offered by the European Commission.**

**The third Chapter** deals with Job Seeking. Job seeking may be considered a full-time job in itself, an effort which requires dedication and commitment. This Section, will be covering (1) Job Seeking skills and methods, (2) Job application techniques, (3) How best to prepare for a Job Interview and Interview Follow-up. Needless to say, job seekers who have this know-how have an increased chance of success in getting hired.

## **Phase 1 - Job Seeking**

There are a number of methods and sources which can be used for finding a job; some are more effective than others. What follows is a brief description of each of these methods:

### **1. Networking and word of mouth**

In reality, the majority of vacancies are not advertised through direct means such as newspapers. In fact, networking is considered to be one of the most effective ways of finding employment. Some jobs are never advertised because an employer might prefer for an employee to be recommended by someone he / she knows and trusts. In this way, the employer also reduces recruitment costs.

**So what does networking entail...?** Networking involves making contact with either: (1) *Individuals*, such as relatives, friends, acquaintances, local

business people, etc or (2) *groups and / or organisations*, such as Local Councils, Volunteer organisations, etc. These can help the job seeker locate any job openings they might know of, refer the job seeker to someone who might assist him / her, and may even offer a job to the job seeker!

**Why is word of mouth so effective...?** Word of mouth, which can take the form of informal chats, personal meetings, or simply a phone call, is very valuable because:

- If a job seeker knows an employee who works within a particular company they are interested in, she / he can recommend the job seeker or maybe pass on his / her CV;
- Personal contacts can inform the job seeker of any new job openings at their workplace, even before they may be advertised in a public way,
- Personal contacts may have information on companies which are expanding and who might be recruiting in the near future. Such valuable information can give a head start to the job seeker.

## **2. Newspapers**

Using newspapers is a conventional method for searching for job openings. A number of jobs are advertised in newspapers, especially the Sunday Newspapers. The vacancies are listed in the “**Classified**” Section, under “**Situations Vacant**”. Most newspapers also have their own website, on which this information is also available.

## **3. Yellow Pages or Company Directories**

Another method which might be used and which shows initiative on the part of the job seeker is searching on the yellow pages for companies and employers who might offer the type of work job seekers are looking for. In this way, the job seeker can contact the company / employer and send a CV and a covering letter just in case there are any current or future job openings. For example, if the job seeker is searching for employment within a supermarket, he / she can contact the supermarkets listed and which are of interest, and send them a CV and a covering letter for future reference. In this way, the job seeker is reaching out to the company / employer before there are any job openings.

## **4. Internet**

The internet is a very convenient means of searching for vacancies. The job seeker can visit various websites on which there may be adverts of job openings, including newspaper sites and recruitment agencies sites. In addition to this,

companies who have their own site usually have a section within the site where they list any current vacancies within the company.

### **5. Private Recruitment Agencies**

Private Recruitment Agencies are also a great source for advertised vacancies. There are Recruitment Agencies which specialise in a particular sector, for example ICT or Accounting and Finance; whereas there are others who advertise a selection of vacancies from all industries and sectors. In addition to using the Agency's website to search for job openings, the job seeker can also register online and receive vacancy listing and details by e-mail.

### **6. Being on the lookout**

Sometimes, job vacancies may be advertised in a very informal way in shops or on notice boards in various places. It is not unusual for employers to advertise positions in their own place of work, for example a vacancy for a sales assistant in a shop window, a vacancy for a food and beverage attendant affixed to a cafeteria or restaurant door etc. This is rather convenient since the job seeker may be passing by and can enquire about the vacancy and method of application there and then.

### **7. Department of Information (DOI) site**

The Department of Information (DOI) website, [www.doi.gov.mt](http://www.doi.gov.mt) is also a good source for employment opportunities, both local and within the EU. Such vacancies pertain to the Public Service Commission, Government Ministries and Agencies and those within EU Institutions, Agencies and Bodies.

### **8. ETC Resources**

The Employment and Training Corporation has numerous services which can assist the job seeker in their search for employment, including:

#### **(a) Registering for work**

A job seeker may register for work with the ETC to receive additional assistance. The ETC has a Youth Section manned by a number of Youth Employment Advisors who are there to assist the young job seeker. There are different registers on which one can register:

- Part I** – The following are considered eligible for inclusion in the Part I register: (1) Official School Leavers and (2) Young persons whose 16th birthday falls within the same academic year are only permitted to register on Part I after the official school

leaving date (16th July). This condition applies whether they are already 16 years old and/or in possession of a school exemption certificate (*For more information kindly refer to **Job Seeking Methods 3 Sheet***).

**Part II** – The Part II register consists of persons who fail to qualify for Part I for a variety of reasons.

**Part III** – This register is for people who are already working but who are seeking alternative employment.

**Part IIIB** – Students seeking seasonal / temporary employment may register on Part 3B

**Part-time register** – For persons wishing to find part-time employment

**(b) Employment Advisory Service**

The ETC has a Youth Section where Employment Advisors can help the job seekers in their job search, as well as in their career choices if still unsure as to which jobs they could be interested in.

**(c) ETC Website – [www.etc.gov.mt](http://www.etc.gov.mt)**

The ETC Website, [www.etc.gov.mt](http://www.etc.gov.mt), is a very useful resource which can be used during job seeking. It contains lists of vacancies available both locally and in other European Countries. By clicking on job links, the job seeker can access other websites such as that of the Department of Information (for public vacancies). You can also submit your CV on-line (for employers to check out) and receive vacancy notifications via e-mail or sms.

**(d) ETC Freephone – 800 765 00**

By phoning on this number (from a landline), the job seeker can ask the ETC vacancy officers about possible vacancies on a daily basis.

**(e) ETC E-mail – [etc@gov.mt](mailto:etc@gov.mt)**

One can also contact the ETC through this generic e-mail address.

**(f) Job Centres**

At the Job Centres, the job seeker may check out the **notice boards** for job listings, as well as use the **job banks** (which form part of a computer system which offers a touch–screen facility that one can use to find information on

vacancies held on the job bank. JOB banks display vacancies available both in Malta and even in the European Union Member States). Apart from assisting job seekers in looking for a job, the Job Centre staff can provide information on what a client needs in order to register for employment.

## **EURES Network**

For those job seekers who are interested in working abroad in the EU, there is the **EURES (European Employment Services)**, the European job mobility portal, which makes it easier to find information on jobs and learning opportunities in other European Countries. The purpose of the EURES network is to provide services for the benefit of workers and employers as well as any citizen wishing to benefit from the principle of the free movement of persons. This involves two types of service: (1) Information and (2) Advice.

The EURES services are delivered here in Malta by the EURES Office, which is administered by the Employment Division at the Employment and Training Corporation in Hal Far. The Office is open from Monday to Friday between 9.00am and 12.00am. The EURES advisors play an important role in delivering information, guidance and assistance to both job seekers and employers.

They can be contacted by phone on 22201203 during the office hours mentioned above, or by e-mail on: [eures.etc@gov.mt](mailto:eures.etc@gov.mt). For more information on the EURES Network kindly refer to the **EURES Malta website**, [www.eures.com.mt](http://www.eures.com.mt), and the **EURES Portal** found at [www.ec.europa.eu/eures](http://www.ec.europa.eu/eures).

## **Phase 2 - Applying for a Job**

Applying for a job may seem like a daunting task for the first-timer. This section will give information on job application techniques and will give tips and advice to the students on how to go about this very delicate stage. The goal of applying for a job, is after all, **to generate enough interest for the employer to call the job seeker for an interview**, or at the very least to keep the job seeker's resume' on file for future reference.

During the exercises in this section, it will be useful for the students to try and understand the employer's point of view, who will be thinking along these lines:

**“Is it worth taking out the time and effort to meet this candidate for an interview?”**

**“What can the candidate offer to the company?”**

**“Does this candidate have the right skills and qualifications for the job?”**

**“Will this candidate fit in with the rest of the employees?”**

When discussing Job application techniques in class, the most important aspects to cover would be the following:

1. Using the telephone;
2. Filling in a Job Application Form;
3. CV writing;
4. Covering letter / letter or application writing;
5. Recommendation letters

### **Phase 3 - Preparing for the Job Interview**

Planning and preparing for the job interview is a crucial aspect which should be considered of utmost importance! When the job seeker finally manages to get an interview, they should really make the most of it. To help the students prepare for a job interview, the following elements should be covered:

1. Attire and grooming – presenting yourself during the interview
2. Typical Interview questions and answers
3. Job Interview tips
4. Mistakes to avoid

Once again this chapter includes a number of information sheets to discuss with students, which contain tips and advice on the above-mentioned aspects. At the end of this section, there will also be a number of exercises and activities which can provide hands-on experience for the students.

**The fourth Chapter** focuses on the information which first time employees should know. This information is crucial and its aim is to serve as a point of reference for when students eventually start working. Sometimes, young adults are unfortunately not aware of their rights and responsibilities in this area and the information sheets give basic information to students on when they

eventually start working, including information on filling in the Commencement of Employment Form with the ETC (Engagement Form) and information on Conditions of Work.

More importantly, the contact details of various entities are listed so that the student can obtain further information on the specific issues that are of concern to him / her.

Hence, the information sheets mainly include the following information:

1. Information for first time employees
2. Information relating to the filling in of ETC forms
3. Conditions of Work
4. Contact details of various entities for further information
5. Conditions of Work Q and A

**The fifth and last chapter** provides information on starting a business. The information sheets basically give information on the following:

1. What is Entrepreneurship?
2. Qualities of Successful Entrepreneurs and business owners
3. Pros and Cons of starting your own business
4. Different types of business set-ups
  - Self-employment
  - Starting a company or a partnership
  - Starting a cooperative
5. Steps to follow when starting a business
6. Group assignment exercise

Persons interested in getting a copy of the full manual including **work sheets, exercises & games** can send an e-mail to [employment.etc@gov.mt](mailto:employment.etc@gov.mt).

## **Career & Employment Information Resources and References**

### ***Manuals***

Manual for Gender Sensitive Vocational Guidance, ETC (2004)

Entrepreneurship Manual – Don't just start a business...Start a successful one! (ETC, 2007)

Career Guidance for People with a Disability (Azzopardi, 2005)

Gozo College

Gender Equality and Child Labour: A Participatory Tool for Facilitators, ILO (2004)

Career Guidance: A Handbook for Policy Makers (OECD/EC, 2004)

MTA Tourism Career Guide Vol. 1 – Your Future in Hospitality and Catering

MTA Tourism Career Guide Vol. 2 – Your Future in Travel and Tourism

Jabbertalk – A Methodology for International Youth Work, Don Bosco Youth-Net

## **Relevant Bodies, Entities & Organisations**

### **Employment and Training Corporation (ETC)**

<https://www.etc.gov.mt>

### **National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE)**

[www.nche.gov.mt](http://www.nche.gov.mt)

### **Malta Qualifications Council (MQC)**

[www.mqc.gov.mt](http://www.mqc.gov.mt)

### **Foundation for Human Resources Development (FHRD)**

<http://www.fhrd.org/>

### **National Statistics Office (NSO)**

<http://www.nso.gov.mt>

### **European Union Programmes Agency (EUPA)**

<http://www.eupa.org.mt/>

### **Malta Career Guidance Association (MCGA)**

<http://www.mcga.org.mt/>

### **Occupational Health and Safety Authority (OHSA)**

<http://www.ohsa.org.mt>

### **Department of Employment and Industrial Relations (DIER)**

<http://www.msp.gov.mt>

**Malta Financial Services Authority (MFSA)**

<http://www.mfsa.com.mt>

**Koperattivi Malta**

<http://www.cooperatives-malta.coop>

**Bord tal-Koperattivi**

<http://www.coopsboard.org>

**Websites and Audio-Visual material:**

**EURES Malta:**

<http://www.eures.com.mt>

**EURES (European Job Mobility Portal):**

<http://ec.europa.eu/eures>

**Employment and Training Corporation**

The following ETC videos are downloadable from: <https://etc.gov.mt>:

- Il-EURES f'Malta / EURES in Malta
- Il-Job Centres tal-ETC
- L-Apprentistat f'Malta
- Il-Valur tax-Xoghol

**Karrieri Project**

(A project which is currently developing audio-visual career profiles)

<http://www.karrieri.com>

**Malta Tourism Authority (MTA)**

L-Impjegati – DVD Box Set on Careers in Tourism

*Raphael Scerri*  
*Senior Manager ETC*

# SCIENCE EDUCATION EUROPEAN PLATFORM

## *(SEEP)*

SEEP is a network of teachers, trainers of future teachers of science, career guidance, professionals and policy makers in education. It started in Rome in 2009 and it will last for three years under the present funding as a Comenius network.

The network is coordinated by the Università degli Studi Guglielmo Marconi of Rome and there were two partners from Malta. One is Gozo College Boys' Secondary from Gozo and the other is Opportunities Aid Foundation that is in fact a key partner to the network. Other schools and organisations from Malta are joining SEEP.

The network is open to new entries both from individual professionals and from organisations. Joining SEEP comes at no cost and the request to join it can be done via its portal [www.seepnetwork.eu](http://www.seepnetwork.eu).

Members in the SEEP network, even those that join now or in the future work and learn together for the benefit of their students who are willing to or could choose a career in science. The network activities include online discussion forums, as well as research and training workshops. The main issues at the heart of SEEP are three:

- teachers of science are also mentors for students in the choice of a career in the science field. In the SEEP network teachers can share and exchange ideas and materials about how to make science education more attractive and how to widen the vision of students of science subjects to more possibilities,
- in SEEP there is a foresight and growth for the teacher's professional life since science education is a process of constant and rapid changes. SEEP makes it possible for the teachers to keep up with this process and to find innovative ways to teaching science, and
- networking with others always creates opportunities to learn from others.

The SEEP network works towards milestones and the attainment of a number of specific success criteria however one can sum up this into one orientation.

SEEP will be working towards become a network that is relevant for the individuals that are members, then relevant to their peers and organisation and, last but not least to the community of where the members come from. The only criterion for joining SEEP is that teachers who join are individuals who love their profession and want to grow, teachers who do not see themselves as just implementers of a curriculum but also as mentors and positive players in the future of their students of science.

For more information about SEEP: [seep@oafmalta.org](mailto:seep@oafmalta.org)

***Dr Antoine Gambin***  
***Project Co-ordinator***

## AHEAD

Opportunities Aid Foundation, together with other partners from Italy, Poland, Turkey and Greece is making preparations for the launch of the experimentation training that will be taking place in Malta and Gozo in 2011. The training will be for heads of secondary schools and members in the management of schools particularly those involved in EU projects management.

AHEAD is a project that is coordinated by the FOR.COM of Rome and it started in 2009. Under their leadership the partners are putting together a training course that banks on innovation in content and methodology.

The point of departure is that as a result of more school autonomy and increased opportunities for funding, the workload of headmasters has expanded and it is now necessary for EU high schools to invest in innovation. It is more important than ever to make good use of funds to improve curricula and to carry out research. AHEAD addresses these needs and the Comenius priority: “to develop an approach to provide headmasters with practical training in school management”. The AHEAD project partners are producing a didactic model that combines a web based Problem-Based-Learning approach with a peer training method to promote the ongoing updating of the headmasters’ skills in leadership and management.

The main outcomes of AHEAD are:

- **AHEAD DIDACTIC MODEL** to strengthen a headmasters’ practical skills to build a team which is able to carry out innovative research activities and to cope with national and international projects management
- **E-LEARNING PLATFORM AND PBL REPOSITORY** as a web learning and collaborative setting for headmasters. The e-learning platform and the Problem-Based-Learning repository (virtual training library) host headmasters’ cases and scenarios based on real experiences
- **SELF-LEARNING TOOLKIT FOR HEADMASTERS** to promote their skills’ regular updating, to exploit the AHEAD model among EU schools and to apply a peer-training approach.

Over the coming weeks Opportunities Aid Foundation will be soliciting a small number of heads of secondary schools in Malta and Gozo to participate

in this training. There will be online audio lessons that will be available on demand to participants. These will cover topics like team management, project management, sustainability and volarisation activities of projects. There will be online meeting rooms where participants meet and discuss scenarios. In this activity there will also be scenario building by the participants themselves.

It is a creative way of learning through a process of self discovery and reflection, sharing and learning with others with minimum effort. AHEAD training is all online and is delivered via easy to use online tools that require normal internet connection which means that participants can access from office, from home or from wherever they might feel it convenient and comfortable to do so.

For more information: [ahead@oafmalta.org](mailto:ahead@oafmalta.org)

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