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mcastlink

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE MALTA COLLEGE OF ARTS, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



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A warm welcome to all readers at the start of the seventh academic year for MCAST. The College is extremely proud of its achievements to date and is moving forward with a vision and a purpose as articulated in the College's Strategic Plan. MCAST is growing and an indication of this growth is the 14% increase in the number of student applicants this year. This augurs well for the future of both MCAST and our country.

This issue features several of the major developments currently taking place at MCAST including the launch of the Master Development brief for the development of the new campus. The new campus will incorporate all nine Institutes as well as a resource centre, flexi-teaching centres, recreational areas and also sports and leisure facilities. The design approach that has been adopted places the student at the heart of the process with the buildings and open areas shaped around the functional activities and

a strong social/community concept. The aim is to create an inspiring educational environment with a series of places and spaces that students can enjoy and want to be associated with. The Master Plan also provides opportunities for the College to engage with the local community by providing accessible, welcoming and friendly buildings and spaces.

Three new members of senior management are featured in this edition. These are Prof. Maurice Grech, Principal, Eur. Ing. Emanuel Attard, Chief Administration Officer and Mr Anthony Saliba, Deputy Principal. Prof. Maurice Grech will be Principal Designate as from 1st October and will become Principal of MCAST as from 1st January 2008. As Principal, he will be responsible for the growth of MCAST, and for transforming the College to a regional centre of excellence. Eur. Ing. Attard is responsible for the strategic management of the College's Corporate and Administration Services while Mr Saliba is responsible for the Academic and Student Services. All possess immense and valuable experience in their particular areas and will no doubt be an asset to MCAST. We augur them well in their new and challenging posts.

Five hundred and twenty-two adult students were awarded certificates after completing one of the reskilling and retraining courses funded through the European Social Fund (ESF). The award ceremonies took place on the 20 and 21 June 2007 at MCAST Main Campus. Speaking at the award ceremony Minister of Education, Youth and Employment, the Hon Dr Louis Galea, expressed his satisfaction at seeing such a large number of adult learners who had taken the opportunity to upgrade their skills and further their studies. Mr Paul Attard, President, stressed the fact that this was the mission and purpose of MCAST, to create and provide such opportunities.

The end-of-year exhibitions held by the Institute of Art and Design and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineering also feature in this magazine. The exhibits and projects on display were of very high quality and provided a good insight into the quality and high standards of students' work. One can see pictures of the work inside the magazine.

Good luck on the start of a new academic year and may this be our best year ever!

**Caroline Balzan
Communications Officer**

All new and progressing students and members of staff are encouraged to submit any interesting articles and pictures to the Communications Office on this e-mail address: caroline.balzan@mcast.edu.mt

Welcome to another academic year!

The current academic year that has just started is yet another major step forward in the development and growth of professional and vocational education and training in Malta. MCAST has seen yet again another record number of applicants for the one hundred courses offered in nine Institutes and two centres in Gozo – over 3,000 students, a 14% increase on last year. This means that MCAST has been growing every year. This is what MCAST's strategic plan projects, this is what Government wants and this is what the economy needs.

What is even more important is the fact that young people and their parents are convinced that education and training should not and must not finish at the end of the compulsory education age. There is still a world of knowledge beyond the age of 16. Compulsory education should provide the fundamental foundation for further and higher education.

The changing and developing economy of our island needs the knowledge, competences and skills of a knowledge society. Our young people need to be well equipped for a very challenging future full of opportunities for those who work hard and obtain the appropriate qualifications for the career they choose to follow.

MCAST can be the institution that can make their dream come true. But they have to commit themselves to study and work hard. MCAST will offer them the support they need in whatever branch of vocational education and training they apply for.

A special welcome to the thousands of new students who have chosen MCAST. A welcome back to the students who are either continuing the course they started last year or progressing from one level to another.

Another special welcome to the lecturers who are joining our academic staff for the first time this year. They will be making their own contribution towards the growth of the College and the education and training of our students.

This September we have seen the opening of the Institute of Community Services at the MCAST Corradino Main Campus. It was a rather long wait for both staff and

students. However, they are now seeing that the wait was well worth it since they will be enjoying facilities, services, equipment and spaces they were dreaming of until recently.

I wish to acknowledge the contribution of the Private Training Providers (PTP) who are offering Information Technology courses to MCAST students within their education and training establishment. Last year MCAST collaborated with the PTP's in the best interest of the students. And we expect more fruitful results this year when the number of Providers is increasing.

The administrative staff, who are an extremely important element in professionally supporting the academic staff and students will soon enjoy the facilities and spaces of the extended and refurbished administration block.

I would like to take the opportunity to welcome the new Principal Designate Prof. Maurice Grech. Prof Grech will be taking over from Mr Frank Edwards as Principal in January 2008. I wish him well on his new challenging post.

We already have had the expertise and experience of Eur. Ing Emanuel Attard as Chief Administration Officer and now we also enjoying the expertise and experience of Mr Anthony Saliba, Deputy Principal, Academic and Student Affairs. They are making a very professional contribution towards the further development of MCAST and strengthening the top management.

I am looking forward to yet another successful year in the young tradition of MCAST. We shall all be working very hard together – academic staff, administrators, students, support staff – to make the students' stay at MCAST both satisfying and fruitful.

**Paul A Attard
President
Board of Governors
MCAST**



A NEW PRINCIPAL FOR MCAST

The Board of Governors is pleased to announce that the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) will be having a new Principal, Prof. Maurice Grech. As from 1st October, Prof. Grech will be Principal Designate and he will become Principal of the College as from 1st January 2008.

Prof. Grech will be taking over from Mr Frank Edwards who has made an exceptional contribution to the development and growth of the College as well as to professional and vocational education and training in Malta. He will be returning to the United Kingdom following seven years of professional and dedicated service, first as consultant and later as Principal. Mr Edwards will continue to provide support to the College for a few months as a consultant in order to ensure a smooth transition.

Until recently Prof Grech was Dean, Faculty of Engineering and Head of Department, Metallurgy and Materials Engineering at the University of Malta. He is in possession of a doctorate in engineering from the University of Birmingham. He won the British Non Ferrous Metal Federation Prize for the most distinguished student undertaking postgraduate studies in Materials. Prof. Grech has worked at the Malta Development Corporation, Malta Shipbuilding Co. Ltd. and TeleMalta Corporation. He received the Engineering Excellence Award for Lifetime Achievement by the Chamber of Engineers, is a Fellow of the Institute of Metals, Minerals and Mining, FIMMM, a Chartered Engineer, and a council member of the International Federation of Heat Treatment and Surface Engineering, IFHTSE.



Prof. Maurice Grech

Prof. Grech has carried out major consultancy works, acted as court expert and led numerous studies on material failure. He has set up and served as Director and General Manager of Surface Engineering Ltd, a joint venture company with foreign and University of Malta shareholding and offering heat treatment and surface engineering services to local and foreign industries. Until recently, Prof Grech has been the Delegate of the Rector of the University of Malta for MCAST and Industry. He has organised and participated in numerous international conferences and chaired several technical session. Prof. Grech has a long list of refereed publications to his credit. He is a member of the editorial panel of 'Surface Engineering' an international quarterly journal of the Institute of Materials; a Grant Evaluator for third year running, on behalf of Czech Science Foundation and referee for a number of technical journals. During his distinguished carrier at the University of Malta, Prof Grech has been instrumental in acquiring substantial European Union funds for projects, many of which he co-ordinated and managed.

MCAST is fast developing as regards to the range of courses being offered at different levels and the growing student population it is attracting to satisfy current and emerging needs of industry, commerce and services. Prof. Grech will be facing the challenge of implementing the MCAST Strategic Plan as well as the Master Plan that should transform the College from a Maltese centre of excellence to a regional centre of excellence in professional and vocational education and training.

NEW CAMPUS FOR MCAST

All the MCAST institutes, that are currently spread across the island, will be moved to the Main Campus within the next years. The new site will cover both the area where MCAST now stands as well as Gaddafi Gardens and a stretch of land that leads to the Grand Harbour.

Following a call for tenders, Mangion, Mangion and Partners heading a team made up of the UK-based Building Design Partnership, Mediterranean Technical Services, ADI Associates and Chris Zahra and Associates, was appointed by MCAST to prepare the Master Plan and work commenced in late August 2006.

The first stage of the Master Plan process was primarily an information gathering stage. An analysis of the design brief was made and the requirements assessed for all teaching and hub activities, sports facilities and car parking.

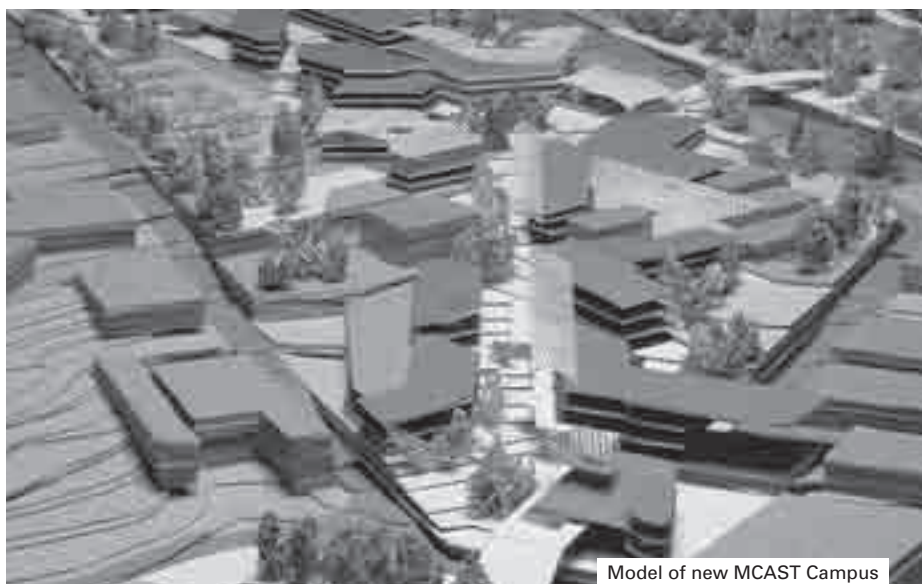
During the second stage meetings were held with various stakeholders - notably MEPA, the Superintendence of Cultural Heritage, the Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna, the Paola Local Council,

the Malta Maritime Authority and the ADT. Construction methods and schedules of materials were prepared, together with a scope of mechanical and electrical engineering services.

From the appraisal of all the information available, it became clear that in order to accommodate all the original and new institutes, the required sports facilities and outdoor amenity spaces and car parking, it was necessary to extend the MCAST site to include from the St Anthony Church down to the harbour.

A USER CENTRED APPROACH

The Master Plan provides an opportunity to bring together the ten MCAST Institutes on one site and provide for the projected growth of vocational education in Malta. The redevelopment of the Corradino Campus will be significant in providing economic and social regeneration within the local area, the industrial estate, and the wider Island context. New improved services, spaces and facilities will play a significant part in attracting students and staff to the College.



Model of new MCAST Campus

THE SITE AS GENERATOR

The Master Plan has drawn inspiration from the advantageous position of the three sites: the existing campus, the waterfront site and Gaddafi Gardens. The site affords views towards the Grand Harbour and includes the Neolithic Kordin Temple dating from 3700BC. The north-west facing contours step down approximately 35 metres from St Anthony's Church and the Kordin Temple at the East to the waterfront site and harbour on the West. The Gaddafi Gardens form a green space within the local area and the Master Plan aims to make this a more attractive place for College and community use.

MASTER PLAN

The full Master Plan provides 59,915 m² of learning space; flexible teaching spaces, workshops, laboratories, student facilities, administration and indoor sports plus outdoor sports, public amenity spaces, 1150 car parking spaces and servicing on one campus.

The campus hub activities are placed around a Piazza located centrally within the site with radiating connections: to the East to another Piazza, the North-West to the Waterfront Piazza, and the South to the Gaddafi Gardens. The main spaces are connected by an active 'learning street' which

activities open out on to and from which they can be viewed. The street is a lively pedestrian space incorporating smaller squares and outdoor study and social spaces.

The hub comprising Learning Resources, Student Facilities and Administration is placed around the main Piazza. This space is the central gathering space for the College and will incorporate shaded areas and water features. The community entrance to the campus is from the East encompassing St Anthony's Church and the Kordin Temple; it is proposed that a small visitor facility and viewing area for the temple are provided here with a café shared with the College. The Eastern campus will have an arts focus with the Theatre and café together with the Art and Design workshops placed around the other Piazza.

From the main Piazza the contours slope North-West down towards the Waterfront. Flexible teaching and covered outdoor study spaces are arranged around the existing buildings that are to be retained. Towards the waterfront the Engineering workshops are grouped together including the Motor Vehicle complex which is set into the slope to the north. The inclusion of the waterfront site is opportune for incorporating the Maritime Institute and a length of quay for use by the Institute. A bridge that can be used as a

viewing deck and café links the workshop buildings across the harbour road to the waterfront. Here there is significant potential to maximise the use of the waterfront with the route through the campus providing access for all to the water.

The Gaddafi Gardens located to the South of the main site are to be retained for public amenity. The outdoor sports are carefully located in the western part of the gardens respecting the avenues of existing trees. The indoor sport building is located below garden level and may be accessed from street level or the gardens. The gardens are connected to the main site via a new bridge link over Triq Kordin. The bridge will act as a local landmark signalling the presence of the MCAST campus. It will also be the entrance to the campus for those arriving from the South and West.

The new Campus will make use of alternative energy systems that will be implemented in the following forms: Solar Water heaters, Photovoltaic Solar Panels, Photovoltaic Solar Membrane and Wind turbines.



NEW SENIOR MAN

EMANUEL ATTARD, CHIEF ADMINISTRATION OFFICER



Emanuel Attard, born in 1955, received his primary education at the Siggiewi Primary School and secondary education at St Augustine's College. On the attainment of his A' levels he started a nursing course leading to State Registered Nurse (SRN). After obtaining the qualification he worked for a short stint as a Staff Nurse at St Luke's Hospital. In 1979 he resigned and went overseas to obtain further experience in hospitals in London and get a UK recognition for the SRN qualification. In the same year he took employment with a Norwegian Oil Company as a Safety Officer-Medic and for a number of years he worked on various drilling platforms mainly in the North Sea sector of Germany and Holland. He was also deployed on offshore units in the Adriatic and Mediterranean sea. During this time he attended various courses, in Germany, UK and Scandinavian countries, mainly in industrial safety engineering.

In 1986 he joined the newly established International Fire and Safety Training Centre at Hal far, initially as its Technical Manager, and after some years in the capacity of Technical Director. He was instrumental in the design of all of its

training programmes which consisted of a modular format. This system was vetted and quality checked by various overseas institutions and eventually got accreditation to HNC level. In addition to the training courses held at the school he was responsible for the development of various short induction courses which were conducted in-house i.e. at the clients facilities.

During this period Mr Attard was also responsible for the conduction of industrial audits including risk analyses and loss prevention. The majority of these assignments were carried out in countries such as Italy, Libya, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain and Iran.

During his time at this training centre, Mr Attard continued his studies. He was chosen to participate in a Bachelor of Engineering degree course held at the Lancashire Polytechnic, later to become the University of Central Lancashire. This was the first fire engineering degree course held in Europe. In 1990 he won a Commonwealth Scholarship. During this scholarship he researched the subject of occupational stress in the training of fire fighting personnel. This project consisting of visiting and analysing the systems of training at the major training centres in Europe. His final thesis from this scholarship gained him a number of invitations to deliver the findings and conclusions, including The Institution of Fire Engineers of which to date he is a corporate Member. Moreover Mr Attard presented a number of research papers at overseas conferences including Germany, UK and U.A.E., on Occupational Stress in the Petrochemical Industry and on other engineering topics such as Considerations of Heat Radiation in the Fire Protection of Tank Farms, Fire Protection of Pressurised Vessels and of Cryogenic Gases' Installations.

At the end of 1995, Mr Attard was selected and appointed CEO of the Foundation of Medical Services which was an umbrella organisation for other Government entities such as Sedqa, SWDP (later to be known as Appogg), Zammit Clapp Hospital, and other health entities.

One of the main responsibility within the CEO's office was the overall responsibility of the construction of an 850 bed General Acute Teaching Hospital in Malta; which during its inception, design and initial

construction stages passed through a number of conceptual changes. Eventually and during his period with FMS this project evolved from a green site to an advance completion stage. The hospital is a state-of-the-art building, spanning over a footprint of approximately 230,000m²

This position of CEO gave Mr Attard wide exposure and opportunities, on which he gained valid experience at all levels of management, policy making, decision-making processes and the co-ordination of the varied disciplines, mainly health, finance and engineering, and also the intricacies of project management for a major construction site. He also visited various projects mainly hospitals and other construction sites in Sweden, Finland, UK, Turkey, Greece and Italy and elsewhere where he analysed the pitfalls in construction management and contractual matters of similar projects. He attended various conferences and seminars related to the construction of hospitals, contracts management, evaluation of different procurement strategies, the procurement of medical equipment, IT systems, and other major procurement packages. Mr Attard represented the organisation on the European Committee for Hospital Projects.

During this period Mr Attard started and complete an MBA programme in Strategic Management with the Maastricht School of Management.

In January 2006 he was deployed at the Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment. He was responsible to set up an entity within the Ministry in order to conceptualise, manage and spearhead EU funded projects in education (primary, secondary, higher and further education and vocational educational training) and employment. He assisted in the design of various ESF and ERDF projects, set budgetary allocations and assisted in the coordination between the Ministry's entities and the Managing Authority. He also was the Ministry's representative on different committees including Better Regulation, Competitiveness and Innovation Programmes. Mr Attard was also a Member of the Masterplan Steering Committee at MCAST.

In January 2007 Mr Attard was asked to take up deployment at MCAST as Chief Administration Officer.

MANAGEMENT STAFF

ANTHONY SALIBA, DEPUTY PRINCIPAL (ACADEMIC & STUDENT SERVICES)



Born in 1958 in Birkirkara, Mr Anthony Saliba was the first born child of late Alfred and Carmelina neé Azzopardi. He received his early and primary education at St Monica's College in Birkirkara between 1961 and 1966. He won a scholarship for his secondary education at the Archbishop's Minor Seminary at the age of ten.

After his 'O' Level exams, Mr Saliba sat for his 'A' Levels in Religion, Maltese, Italian, Philosophy and Latin. In 1976, he joined the Faculty of Theology at the University of Malta, graduating in 1982 as a Bachelor of Theology (Hons). A year before, he joined Stella Maris College, in Gzira, as teacher of Italian and Religion in the Upper Forms until April 1989. During these years, Anthony occupied the role of Master of Discipline, Careers Adviser and Coordinator of Senior School Activities.

In 1989, Mr Saliba joined the Upper Lyceum Gian Frangisk Abela as teacher of Philosophy, and a year later he was appointed Acting Head of the Philosophy Department until he left in 1995 to join St Edward's College. There he started teaching Philosophy and introduced Sixth Form students to Philosophy at Intermediate and Advanced Level. Shortly after he was appointed the Head of Humanities Department for two years and then Senior Tutor of St Edward's Sixth Form. In 1999 Mr Saliba was appointed Head of Middle School till 2002, when he was selected as Headmaster Designate of St Edward's. He was Headmaster of St Edward's College for five years, until July 2007 when he moved to MCAST as Deputy Principal for Academic and Student Services.

During his University standing year, Mr Saliba worked as Management Secretary at the Edible Oil Refining Company in Marsa.

During his teaching career, Mr Saliba was always very keen on the holistic formation of students and he regularly contributed to his schools' Pastoral Team. He formed part of the 'Assessment Focus Group' during the implementation phase of the National Curriculum after December 2000. He was chosen as lecturer in Philosophy of Education for the Instructors' Teaching Development Programme for four consecutive years.

After his first degree, Mr Saliba obtained his PGCE from the local University in June 1991, his Advanced Diploma in Education from London University in 1999 and his Masters of Education in Educational Management from Aberdeen University in 2005. He will shortly start his Ph.D. degree with a leading UK University.

Mr Saliba was a member of the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference between 2005 and 2007 and he regularly attended their annual conference in UK. In 1985, he co-founded the Birkirkara Parish Choir together with his wife, Doris. Their son, Michael-Alfred, is currently reading for a BA (Hons) Degree at UCE Birmingham's Conservatoire, specialising in violin as solo performer.

Mr Saliba's main interests include travelling to European countries, researching on education, philosophy and theology, singing sacred and classical music, participating in local choirs, watching football and practising cycling.



During the launch – From left: Mr Emanuel Attard, Chief Administration Officer, Mr Paul A Attard, President of the Board of Governors, the Hon. Minister of Education Dr. Louis Galea and Mr Frank Edwards, Principal/CEO

The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology has published its seventh Prospectus since its inauguration in October 2001. Since 2001 the College has expanded to incorporate nine institutes as well as the Gozo Centre, offering **95** different full-time courses in Malta and **14** in Gozo besides a very wide range of short courses, including ESF courses specifically targeted at mature students. This year the College is once again offering a wide range of courses at different levels and is introducing new courses and higher levels in certain areas of study.

The two new full-time courses available for the next scholastic year are the MCAST Diploma for Dental Surgery Assistants, offered at the Community Services Institute, and the Sheet Metal and Composite Material Course, offered at the Mechanical Engineering Institute.

The Diploma for Dental Surgery Assistants is intended to provide students with the theoretical and practical skills necessary to work and provide assistance to professional dental personnel. Students are expected to undertake a period of on-the-job training where they will be able to acquaint themselves with modern and specialist equipment as found in modern dental clinics and hospitals.

The Sheet Metal and Composite Material Course is designed for individuals who intend to become qualified in sheet metal and/or composite material technicians particularly in the aircraft maintenance business. This will give the airlines the flexibility to use such trained individuals in a wide range of areas over the entire range of maintenance.

Apart from all the courses leading to a diploma, it is important to note that the trades still exist in the form of Foundation Courses. Students can enter a foundation course without certification. Those who want to enter these courses must sit for an aptitude test. Last year more than 600 students sat for this aptitude test with over 75% passing the test. Seventy four percent of those who passed have gone on to register and start a course with the College.

During the launch of the Prospectus, Minister Louis Galea said that the College was fast becoming the second pillar of Malta's higher education alongside the University of Malta. Over the past few years the College has started to offer Higher National Diplomas which are just one step away from a degree. In the last graduation ceremony 674 students graduated and were presented with national and higher national diplomas.



Group of ESF Participants



ESF Exhibition



Receiving certificate



522 EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND PARTICIPANTS RECEIVE CERTIFICATES

On the 20 and 21 June 2007, five hundred and twenty two participants were awarded certificates after completing one of the reskilling and training courses funded through the European Social Fund (ESF). The list of ESF courses included several foundation and re-skilling courses aimed at mature persons wishing to return to the workforce or interested in further developing and upgrading their skills

A main benefit of these courses was that adults were provided with the opportunity to upgrade or further develop both knowledge and skills that are appropriate for the labour market. As these courses were part-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) MCAST was able to offer these courses free-of-charge. Furthermore, for the majority of courses, participants were given the opportunity to achieve an internationally recognised qualification.

The following certificates were offered:

ESF 11

Preservation of Traditional Maltese Crafts

ESF 12

Reskilling and Retraining of Workers for the Mechanical Engineering Industry

ESF 13

Reskilling and Retraining of Workers for the Electronics Industry

ESF 14

Employability Skills for Women Returning to the Workforce

ESF 15

Reskilling and Retraining of Workers for the Building and Construction Industry

ESF 16

Foundation Training Programme for Adults

MEPs VISIT MCAST



Members of the European Parliament in Malta for the EPP-ED study days visited the MCAST. They were welcomed by the Hon. Minister of Education, Dr Louis Galea, the President of the Board of Governors, Mr Paul A Attard, and the Principal of the College, Mr Frank Edwards.

The MEPs gained insight into how the government intends to invest Lm50 million for a new campus that will increase space to allow more students to attend courses at the College.

DONATION OF TEXTBOOKS

A number of textbooks on the teaching of English for Specific Purposes at different levels was donated by Mr Paul A Attard, President of the Board of Governors, to the MCAST Library and Learning Resource Centre. The textbooks can be used as interesting and stimulating source material by lecturers at the Basic Skills Unit as well as by lecturers teaching English for Specific Purposes at the different Institutes. They cover a variety of fields of education and training at MCAST, including various aspects of science, engineering, nursing, medical science, seafaring, accounting and technical report writing.



'BUILDING A EUROPEAN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AREA'

The purpose of the Agora (conference) was to discuss the state-of-play in implementing the Copenhagen process building on the conclusions of the Education Ministers in their December 2006 meeting in Helsinki. The discussion referred to expected initiatives and priorities agreed to in the Helsinki Communiqué.

The Agora aimed at stimulating the debate on a European area for Vocational Education and Training (VET) beyond 2010, considering the role of VET as an interface of different policy areas and looking into current and future challenges and opportunities. The Agora contributed to raising the awareness of the Copenhagen process and formed the starting point for its future reviews. It addressed the need to ensure skills development for young and older people, to invest adequately in VET and to ensure equity and efficiency, examining evidence and research findings needed for policy making.

The Agora consisted of a series of presentations by experts in various VET fields, reactions from the floor or from a round table and workshops. The following are the major issues raised:

- CEDEFOP's role in the development of vocational training.
- Quality assurance and transparency of VET qualifications so that European workers will be equipped against globalisation particularly the more technologically advanced countries.
- VET with the aim of creating a European Area of Lifelong Learning for all. The quality and effectiveness of education and training systems and the importance of basic skills and competences for lifelong education, training and retraining.
- The Copenhagen Process – improvement of the visibility of VET and development of tools for enhancing quality, transparency and recognition of competences and qualifications.

The following future challenges were brought up:

Demographic changes; the combination of excellence, quality, efficiency with equity; research; entrepreneurship and innovation within limited financial resources. The role of education and training must be strengthened within the broad socio-economic policy. Hence the need to improve the quality and effectiveness of our education and training systems. Lifelong learning policies must be developed together with the relevant stakeholders, providers and practitioners.

Investment in human capital: financing education and training, efficiency and equity, costs and benefits

Human capital contributes to economic growth and enhances social cohesion. Education and training benefit the individual, enterprise and society. VET plays an essential role in human capital development and accumulation. Hence VET should be well resourced. However, investment must guarantee efficiency and equity. Early intervention can generate high rates of return, especially for the most disadvantaged. Initial and continuing VET provisions are essential.

Hence, the need for improved quality of VET provision; increased relevance of VET through partnerships involving different stakeholders; avoidance of early tracking; reduction of opportunity costs for adults to participate in training, e.g. through intensive and modular courses.

The private sector should contribute to the financing of VET while the private sector should also be supported to provide VET.

Active ageing and active inclusion: using VET to tap and develop the potential of older workers, migrants and the low skilled

It is essential for the workers to update their qualifications and skills more frequently to maintain their employability. The strategy for growth requires an inclusive human resource development strategy and the role of VET policies is key in this process. VET can be an important source of higher skills levels and a channel not to be missed. People need to have the opportunity to develop their skills later in their career. Older workers face difficulties in having their skills and competences certified.

Delivering the right skills for working life: demographic and labour market changes

The Helsinki Communiqué (2006) calls for investments in human capital and for delivering skills relevant to working life. Globalisation, changes in employment composition in sectors, ageing society, new technologies and changing work organisation impose new skill requirements which become a fundamental challenge. The following main reasons for skill shortages were identified: labour market tightness, small labour reserve; economic, social and institutional

conditions; skills mismatch; and deficiency in recruitment practices, work organisation, wage policies and working conditions.

There is a need for complex measures viewing VET as an integral part of education and training and lifelong learning, and combining training with other types of policy measures (e.g. social, economic, migration, etc.).

Workers' competences, skills and related qualifications are at the top of the economic agenda. An ambitious and comprehensive lifelong learning agenda is needed, including vocational education and training of adults.

In order to succeed Governments need to allocate the appropriate resources and set up the appropriate institutions and opportunity centres as well as a national qualifications agency. A National Qualifications Framework must be established accompanied with a National Qualifications Catalogue, including both initial and continuing vocational education and training. Structural reform of the education and training system may be necessary. The involvement of social partners would include social commitment.

The Lisbon Agenda indicates the important role of human capital. One additional year of education can mean 10% additional income for a worker. Investment in people is a key to economic and social development. There is an absolute need of heavy investment in human capital to produce a skilled and adaptable workforce. ESF is an EU financial instrument to support the EU employment strategy for jobs and a cohesion policy. ESF can finance up to 10% infrastructure investment. There is a need for the validation of competences.

The EU agencies need to have a common understanding and work together, meeting and sharing experiences.

Thanks to CEDEFOP there is a greater appreciation of VET. VET is needed to promote a knowledge-based society and economy for more and better jobs.



MCAST MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

BY EMANUEL ATTARD, CHIEF ADMINISTRATION OFFICER

I would first like to take this opportunity to thank all MCAST's staff who in some way or another, particularly during my first weeks at the College, assisted me to settle down in this challenging post. I also wish to acknowledge the hard work of all the staff, present and past, most of whom I never meet and do not know, but am able to see the tangible results of their dedication, commitment and hard work.

REALITIES

Nowadays MCAST is considered as a major role player in the country's educational system and in its economy, by both the established and emerging sectors. The total number of students for the present academic year, 2007-2008, is of 4,800 full-time students and 2,550 part-time students. The number of staff is of 420 full-time staff and some other 400 part-time staff. In addition to the academic requirements and demands, MCAST has committed itself to other ambitious projects, outstanding of which is the new Master Plan for the new campus. Moreover MCAST is enhancing its operation by the conclusion of other projects which have been in the pipeline for some time, such as the new building of the Institute of Community Services and the completion of West Wing which shall house additional administration facilities and the students' house.

MISSION OF CHANGE

The work ahead of us is not easy. Sometimes we tend to fall in the trap of illuding ourselves that by recruiting more staff, be it academic or non-academic, and by implementing the necessary organisational policies we will succeed in the achievement of our goals. This is only an illusion as the task ahead is not a simple 'project', with its characteristic date of commencement and date of completion. Our task is more intriguing and it is more of a mission of CHANGE: a change in its widest perspective. The success of the individual Institutes over the recent years, now needs to be transformed into the success of one coherent College with in-built and harmonised systems, procedures and guidelines which are equally known to all and implemented by all. The golden dictum that the ONE thing in management that is always static, is CHANGE, is very apt.

PRIORITIES

There are a number of top priorities which need to be seen to. A proper and adequate Materials Management and Control System with a reliable inventory system is a *sine qua non* for the College. Most materials must

be available at MCAST in anticipation of the demand basically as MCAST's operation is a cyclical one. A Registry and Archiving Facilities System is also needed. MCAST needs to set in motion a process in order to have one uniform system which is well resourced in order to ensure the safe keeping of important documentation. Whenever information is required it must be readily available and also it must be reliable. This can only be achieved by a well-managed registry and archiving centre accompanied by a College Information System (CIS). An organisation the magnitude of MCAST also needs a fully-fledged Human Resources and Development Department.

These are a few priorities to mention. As one can appreciate each priority requires commitment, dedication and resources to fulfil.



FARM VISITS

Students following the First Diploma Animal Care Course visited a commercial pig farm. This was an activity related to Animal Accommodation Handling and Care Unit. Here students had the opportunity to monitor animal behaviour and health as well as the welfare of animals.

Students also visited a layer farm and a broiler farm as part of their studies Animal Care Industry and Organisation. The visit focused on tasks and skills related to this unit. Students had access to different types of housing which are now being changed to new ones introduced recently in relation to legislation.



HANDS-ON- TRAINING

During the last academic year students following the National Diploma in Agriculture course visited several sites in order to carry out work and training related to one of the core units in their course – Estate Skills. On several occasions students visited San Anton Gardens to train in hedge trimming.

The construction of rubble walls and stiles was carried out on the Institute's premises. Students worked in groups under supervision and skillfully constructed sections of new rubble walls as well as repaired other parts that needed attention.

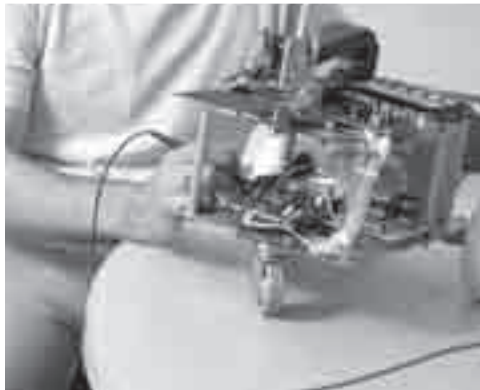
COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY STUDENTS SHOWCASE DYNAMIC FUTURE

BY MR JOHN SCIBERRAS, DIRECTOR INSTITUTE
OF ELECTRICAL & ELECTRONICS ENGINEERING

It is a fact that the opportunities presented by today's modern technologies are broad and most interesting. Computers have affected everyone's way of living and play an important role in our daily lives. The investment in developing SmartCity Malta has generated a high interest in ICT. However, there are a variety of other specialised technological fields that could be of interest and that one must consider for his/her future career beside computing. Just to mention a few specialised areas that go well in complementing the above-mentioned development and other investment in Telecommunications, these could include Communications Technology, Electronics, Computer Engineering and Electrical/Electronic Engineering. As a showcase of the above the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineering organised its annual Projects Exhibition at St. James Cavalier Centre for Creativity, Valletta. Apart from being an exhibition aimed at the general public and local industry, it proves to be a means to motivate students in their specific area, encourage them to carry out research, design circuitry, experiment in a variety of technological fields and sometimes make use of technologies that are not taught at the Institute. The projects are a challenge and provide students with a never-ending learning opportunity. The Annual Project Exhibition, besides being a calendar event, gives industry the opportunity to analyse the variety of projects presented and even acts as a benchmark of projects. This year's final year cohorts of students have exceeded our expectations. The projects displayed addressed four major areas, namely Control, Monitoring and Scada, Instrumentation and Telecommunications. The robot called 'Tele-Operated Mobile Robot' is controlled by the user through a vision system that ensures safety to humans since it is able to go to places where it is dangerous

for humans. The vision system is wireless, and is interfaced through the software via a capture card. Another robot displayed was a 'Line Follower Robot' which follows a pre-defined path with various stations. The other two robots consisted of a 'Bomb Disposal Robot' and an 'Autonomous Vehicle'. The Bomb Disposal Robot can deliver a jet of water at high pressure. The robots were all based around a variety of microcontrollers, usually communicating with a PC. The 'Greenhouse Temperature Control' was developed to monitor a constant temperature within a greenhouse. Heaters and automated ventilation were used to control low or high temperatures. The main goal of the 'Radio Frequency Identification System' was to create an inventory management system. This can be used to track, search and label books wirelessly in a library. The 'Gas Tank Capping Machine' sponsored by the Enemalta Gas Division was designed to withstand the harsh industrial environment and is a good example of simple but effective automation. The system had to be explosion proof and built according to ATEX regulations. The machine adjusts itself automatically to three differently sized gas tanks. The 'Automation of a Bottling and Corking System' designed for small wine producers carries out the necessary automation to be more effective and efficient. Both projects made use of PLCs. A different type of project was the 'Automated Audio Test Jig' used to perform the testing related to the functionality of an audio amplifier. This reduces the need of instrumentation for carrying out the test. Today's modern living is made more comfortable by various technologies, one of these being 'Home Automation Controlled through an Internet Device'. This project provides a way of controlling practically any home appliance remotely through the internet. To complement this project a 'Car

Entry, Security and Ignition System using Fingerprint Detection' was also developed. Reliable human authentication schemes are of paramount importance to our society. The advances in biometrics assist in addressing the myriad of problems associated with traditional human recognition methods. The system offers an alternative system for the commonly used 'keys' in the automobile industry. Nowadays fireworks are associated with what is commonly known as Fire 1 systems. However, these are very expensive devices which are sometimes beyond the budget of most band clubs. The 'Wireless Pyromusical Firing System' costs much less than the commercial products and it accurately synchronises a fire display with music whilst maintaining a high level of security for user and equipment. An interesting project, namely 'Brain Computer Interface' detects the signal from the scalp by use of scalp electrodes. The graphs are amplified, filtered, digitized and displayed. These graphs are interpreted according to standard frequency charts. This was a good introduction into the medical electronics field. The 'TV Transmitter' project consisted of the construction of a transmission system. The list of projects exhibited was much larger with projects at different levels and varied technologies. The Institute uses this opportunity to provide a better picture of the courses and their final outcome. For the second consecutive year a project booklet was published. This gives an overview of the major final year projects submitted as part of the curriculum taught at different courses. Although important and exciting this event in no way alienates us from what must be one of our students' objectives which is that of finding a career that satisfies their immediate needs and propels them towards further achievements. In this respect students have a distinct advantage since they are on an apprenticeship



scheme. An interesting point to mention is that salaries are normally very competitive, and since job opportunities are regularly being created, this adds to the attractiveness of our courses.

The technological changes happening in industry necessitate radical changes in curriculum and courses have to be continuously monitored and effectively updated. The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineering provides the highest level of technical skills and competences that will cater for the current and future needs of industry. The excellence in technical competencies and knowledge of staff are a vital support to our students and country. It is a fact that to keep abreast with what is happening in industry one needs to have the right level of exposure which requires good links with industry. Though it is not easy to fulfil the latter, due to the tight schedules required by the various curricula, still there are no obstacles that stop us from sending staff on a regular basis to industry.

The links and good relationship with industry are a key factor in matching the needs of labour demand and keeping abreast of the changes in technologies. The Maltese community stands to gain from the synergy between the educational institutions, the state-owned organisations and the local private sector. There are a number of leading communication companies that are on the forefront in collaborating with the College and thus

benefit from its resources and take full advantage of the apprenticeship schemes offered in the variety of courses at the Institute.

The apprenticeship schemes are an effective tool in vocational education and training. These schemes offer a good opportunity to industry and students themselves to develop technicians in a variety of specialisations. The schemes are well coordinated by ETC and a student has to enter into an agreement laying down the rights and obligations of all parties involved during the apprenticeship period. Students mature a lot from on-the-job-training. Positive experience includes model identification, informal and formal learning, individual coaching and mentoring. The latter plays a valuable tool in attaining the benefits of learning within an organisation. Large companies train engineers or technicians to act as job coaches during the apprenticeship, thus assisting in integrating the theoretical and practical aspects of the course.

One cannot ignore the great career opportunities in Telecommunications Technologies. Telecommunication is based on the fundamental principle of connecting people together in order to communicate. The developments made in telecommunications technologies deal with new ways to open channels of communication through different devices and mediums. Thus the traditional copper connected twisted telephone

that proved to be so important in connecting businessmen world wide, has now been greatly improved and joined by the like of internet and mobile phones with their respective broadband at 3G communication and other technological marvels that appear regularly. The Communications Technology Diploma offered at the Institute gives students an education in all aspects of telecommunications, with emphasis on selected units needed for the local and international market. Successful candidates will be equipped with the skills and knowledge needed for a wide range of jobs in the expanding telecommunications industry, from designing infrastructure and services for the new 3G mobile networks to working on the expansion of the Internet with new technologies and protocols.

The principles and applications of telecommunications, particularly in the way the technology has moved towards full integration of services, increases the need of technical employees that have the special skills needed to build and deploy robust systems. Finally it is also worth mentioning that the development of High Definition TV (HDTV) at various types of set top boxes is creating the need for other specially trained professionals that are already in short supply.





OF BUNK-BEDS, SHAVING FOAM, SINKING, AND OTHER SUCH PLEASANTRIES

BY EMMANUEL SCHEMBRI

The Adventure Weekend organized by the Kummisjoni Djocesana Żgħażaġh (KDZ) some months ago came to my attention in the strange manner of my students asking me to join (typically, these things are done the other way around... this should have served as a warning...). So, after inquiring just what this whole bit was about, and obviously agreeing to join, began the weekend of torture (well, not really... this was a rather sad attempt to get you, the reader, to continue reading with the hopes of some horror story or other... but, seeing as you are in fact reading this sentence, it must have worked). The students were an interesting group following the First Certificate and First Diploma courses at the Institute of Mechanical Engineering.

On Friday 25 May 2007, at about seven-ish, we arrived at the quaint little chapel in Hal-Għaxaq that was to serve as a home base for the following two days. And then until twelve-ish (after a short bus ride) we went walking... or running... or being carried – the intent of which, clearly, was to get us insanely tired... so that the real ‘treasure’ of this treasure hunt was the bed to be found at the end of it (however, sleep or its derivatives totally depend on whether the students would allow it...).

However, it was fun (especially when two or more groups stopped taking it seriously and got sort of lost). Another group decided (after analyzing the clues) that they knew where to go and made an exotic path of their own, making the clues fit the path rather than the other way around (we have creative engineers at the institute, as one can see). One group, however, did actually follow the clues and finished the trip as planned (surprisingly, the lecturer and ‘guide’ with them was not an engineer... but a lecturer of Maltese [probably the better to actually read any of the signs we had to pass]).

The next morning, bright and sunny, we set out for a day at the beach, after breakfast and morning prayers. And then canoeing! The canoe, it is said, was often used by the ancients to cross the mighty oceans, and several of the students, as well as the KDZ representatives, looked as though they might have been able to. Two lecturers in particular, being rather Biblical in their orientation, took this as a wonderful opportunity to stage a re-enactment of St. Paul’s Shipwreck in Malta, and did so accordingly (nearly sinking, and coming in several feet from the landing, in the rocks). Word to the wise – if you wear glasses, keep them on when you canoe,



this aquatic experience, lunch came in the form of a competition – one ‘team’ made the cream sauce, another the red sauce and then we had some spaghetti nicely coloured by one of these sauces.

The evening of the same day, after some water games and an incident involving a bathroom stall, a group of idle students, a lecturer, and an entire can of shaving foam, saw the visit of a Salesian priest who came for the purpose of answering some of the students questions of faith.

Finally, on Sunday we visited the air-raid shelters in Vittoriosa... not for the claustrophobic (although even they had to play along... while singing “Wide Open Spaces”). After a game or two inside the shelter (something like hide and seek on steroids), and a drink at the café just outside, we headed back to Hal-Ghaxaq, packed, ate lunch (catered this time) and heard Mass in the chapel.

What a wonderful weekend!!





VISIT TO MATER DEI HOSPITAL

Students following courses at the Institute of Community Services visited Mater Dei Hospital on the 22 May 2007. Below are some pictures:



BASIC SKILLS

Seek help right from the start
Fittex l-għajnuna minnufih mill - bidu tas-sena



In need of help in Maths, English and Maltese up to 'O' Level standard?
Għandek bżonn l-għajnuna fil-Matematika, l-Ingliż u l-Malti?

Don't worry, we can help you.

Call Mr. David Muscat, MCAST Basic Skills Unit Co-ordinator on 2189 4930/1 or send an email to basicskills@mcast.edu.mt

Tħabbilx rasek. Nistgħu ngħinuk.

Ċempel lis-Sur David Muscat, Ko-ordinatur tal-Hiliet Bażiċi ta' l-MCAST, fuq in-numru 2189 4930/1, Est.126/127 jew ibgħat ittra elettronika lil basicskills@mcast.edu.mt

MCAST
 MALTA COLLEGE of ARTS, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY



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EXHIBITION OF STUDENTS' WORK JULY 07



As in previous years, the MCAST Institute of Art and Design organised its end of year exhibition of students' projects at St James Cavalier. The Centre for Creativity in Valletta has now hosted six exhibitions for the Institute ever since MCAST was set up in 2001.

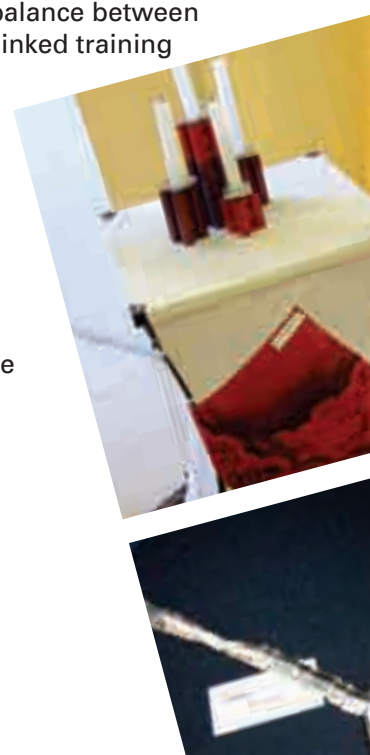
The number of students attending the Institute of Art and Design has risen from year to year. The quality of work on show is also as exciting as it has always been. Indeed there is evidence of consistency in terms of creativity and innovation, as well as range and quality outcomes.

Specialist areas and materials workshops, namely limestone, ceramics, wood, metal, textiles and jewellery are well represented in the exhibition. Students have demonstrated appropriate practical and technical skills, theoretical understanding, research skills and an ability to analyse and evaluate their work. There is also evidence of critical awareness with an ability to research selectively and efficiently while communicating informed and reflective perceptions.

The MCAST Institute of Art and Design provides an educational foundation for a range of creative,

technical and management careers in art, craft and design. The Institute aims to develop a range of skills and techniques, personal qualities and attitudes essential for successful performance in professional working life. Our aim is to strike a balance between the pressures to offer vocationally linked training and the central task of providing a genuine education into the meanings of art at a personal creative level.

The MCAST Institute of Art and Design provides internationally recognised training in a number of specialist art and design areas at various competence levels, from the BTEC First Diploma to the Higher Nationals.







OUR CATERERS

We at JM Operations are committed to providing a premier service by:

- **Constantly listening to our clients**
- **Understanding and anticipating our clients' needs**
- **Relentlessly training and guiding our staff**
- **Keeping abreast of current trends**
- **Producing and serving food of the highest quality**



J M Operations was established in 1986 by Joseph Micallef as JM Distributors; a sole trader organisation, with the aim of purchasing soft drinks, beers and mineral water from local manufacturers and providing door-to-door distribution of the same products to consumers. At the time Joseph was the only person working in the business, owning one delivery truck and a small yard where he used to keep stocks. Eventually, besides door-to-door distribution J M Operations has established itself as a professional vending machines operator and today maintains an extensive distribution network on the island. We operate and service over 400 vending machines in the cold drinks, hot drinks, snacks, ice-cream sector which include machines of our property and rented machines from other parties.

Due to a venture by the vending machines section into a canteen operator environment, it was realised that the two complement each other. We immediately capitalised on the idea by giving birth to the most renowned segment in the JM organisation; JM Catering. After four of years since the initial investment was made, this fresh faced organisation is providing professional catering for schools, colleges, language schools, retail outlets and factory canteens. During these years, JM Catering is rapidly earning a reputation as the island's leading caterers in the education sector, with an estimated overall coverage of over 6500 students.

The whole operation is family run, employing a total of thirty five personnel, managed by Joseph Micallef and his three sons Daniel, Clydon and Luke, who manage the Distribution/Vending and catering operations respectively.



SURF SAFELY!

**WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU WENT ON THE INTERNET?
AN HOUR AGO, THIS MORNING, LAST NIGHT...?**

You would probably reply with one of the above. Others might say that it hasn't been too long since they used the Internet, maybe just a few days. The Internet has really become part of our most frequently used technologies. Moreover, most of the young people who cannot access the Internet are also aware of the plethora of information, online games, social networking sites and chatting programmes available on the Net. Nowadays we can communicate with people from all over the world with Instant Messaging, exchange computer files with other people, and even view satellite images of our own home!

Another side of the Internet is currently also coming to light. The Internet is easily accessible and is made use of by many; however not all the information available may be correct or based on facts. This poses a challenge to the Internet user who may be attempting to decipher fact from fiction. The Internet has also become a breeding ground for those sending malicious software. Online chatting has increased the sexual abuse of youngsters, as it provides offenders with the opportunity to be deceptive about their true intentions and identities. The Internet is increasingly being used to transmit pictures and videos showing children and young people who are forced to engage in sexual activities or pose in a sexually suggestive way. The extent of this varies in severity.

People who are abused over the Internet suffer a lot. Their sexuality may be distorted and disrupted, and one may become upset and distressed. The impact of such a situation on a particular individual may depend on one's level of development, together with the reason behind viewing such material.

The hotline within **Supportline 179** is a new service that has been launched, and it aims to promote the use of a safer Internet whilst fighting against child abuse occurring over the Internet. The hotline provides

awareness, information and tips about how to use the Internet safely. A safe and confidential environment has been created, whereby anyone can report child abuse that occurs over the Internet. One may submit a report via the Internet or over the phone, in the following way:

The Internet: You may log on to the homepage of Agenzija Appogg on www.appogg.gov.mt and click on the link HELP US STOP INTERNET CHILD ABUSE. The hotline's website will then pop up.

The phone: A person may dial 179. The volunteer will direct the caller to report online or pass the call to the hotline staff. If calling outside office hours, the caller may also choose to leave his or her contact numbers and other details, and would be contacted by hotline staff on the following working day.

SOME TIPS FOR INTERNET SAFETY:

Be very cautious of passing personal information to others. A person may abuse of your name, phone number, e-mail address, home address or a photograph of yourself. Do not give such material to someone you do not know.

Know where to draw the line. Remember that YOU draw the line. Shut down your computer if you feel unsafe.

Meeting a chat friend alone may cause you unpleasant experiences. Never go to meet someone alone. Let your parents or friends know if you are going to meet a chat friend. Arrange the meeting during daytime in a place where other people are around.

React and hold on to evidence. React if a situation is unpleasant. Remember to hold on to evidence if you have received messages, e-mails or any other material. This makes it easier for adults to help you.

Talk to someone whom you can trust. It always helps to talk to someone if you have experienced something unpleasant.

*Help **Supportline 179** make the Internet safer.
Report any material you suspect may be illegal at
<http://www.appogg.gov.mt>*

OFFICER CADETS AT THE MARITIME INSTITUTE HAD A VERY BUSY PROGRAMME OF EVENTS MAINLY CENTRING ON PRESENTATIONS, VISITS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES DURING THE SECOND QUARTER OF 2007.

OFFICER CADETS VISIT AFM MARITIME SQUADRON

On 17 May 2007, Maritime Institute Officer Cadets and Probationary Officer Cadets paid a visit to the Armed Forces of Malta Maritime Squadron at Hay Wharf, Floriana where they were accompanied throughout the visit by 2nd Lieutenant Amadeo Busuttil, an AFM serving Commissioned Officer and an ex-MCAST Maritime Institute Officer Cadet who completed his training as an Officer-in-Charge of a Navigational Watch around two years ago. The Maritime Institute Officer Cadets were given a tour of the shore facilities at the Maritime Squadron Base and were later taken on board one of the AFM Protector Class Patrol Vessels and taken out to sea on a short patrol.



MARITIME INSTITUTE HOLD TALKS FOR PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

On 5 July 2007, the Maritime Institute organised a talk for prospective students interested in joining the MCAST Maritime Institute on the various maritime full-time courses which commenced in September 2007. The presentation was delivered by Capt. R. Lanfranco, Director of the Maritime Institute and Mr. A. Bonnici, Deputy Director of the Maritime Institute to a full hall of prospective students and accompanying parents. Mr. J. Bartolo, Counsellor, also gave information regarding the application process and any guidance required throughout the week of student registration.

During the week commencing 3 September through to the 7 September 2007, prospective Officer Cadets had their interviews and physical aptitude tests carried out for selection onto the Probationary Officer Cadet Course and the Officer-in-Charge of a Navigational Watch Course.

WORKS CARRIED OUT AT THE MARITIME INSTITUTE DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS

During the summer months works on the Maritime Institute premises at Villa Portelli did not cease. The bulk of work was carried out in preparing for the upgrade of the Bridge and Communications simulator, whilst other works centred on the replacement of wooden apertures and stonework in other areas of the Institute. One of the busiest jobs was the stripping of paint from rooms to expose the natural Maltese limestone and thereby also treating the stone to avoid problems incurred with humidity. All air-conditioning units were also serviced and classroom furniture cleaned for the new scholastic year.

OFFICER CADETS AT SEA

The following Officer Cadets were at sea on the following vessels during the period this article was written, whilst others had already disembarked to commence their third year (Phase III) of training:

MSC Boston

Maersk Dampar

MSC Sarah

MV Grande Bretagna

MV Eurocarga Valencia

HS Challenger

MV Grande Ellade

MV Norasia Freiburg

MV Grande Detroit

Officer Cadet Emanuel Gatt

Officer Cadet Matthew Vella

Officer Cadet Elenio Sciberras

Officer Cadet Steve Azzopardi

Officer Cadets Roderick Borg and Francesca Galea

Officer Cadet Mark Mercieca

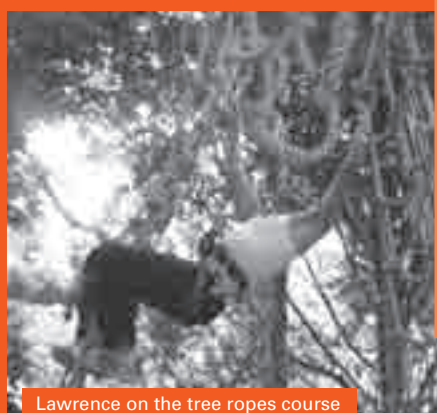
Officer Cadet Gabriel Agius

Officer Cadet Carmen Darmanin

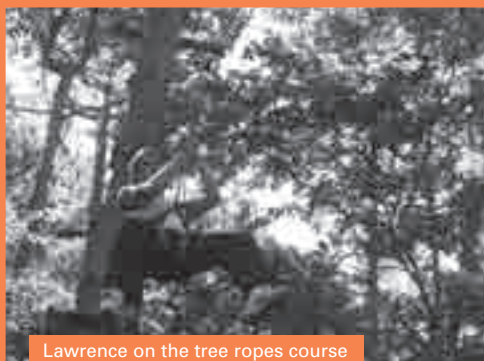
Officer Cadet James Spiteri

MARITIME INSTITUTE COMMENCES COURSES ON PORT WORK

Due to the recent port reform, the Maritime Institute felt the need to start a new course on Port Work intended for those persons who would eventually wish to seek employment in a Port-related environment. Within the first two weeks of the launch of this new course, over one hundred and fifty persons had applied to attend for the three-week evening course. There are already eight courses planned for the coming months as persons keep applying to commence the training which will cover aspects such as Workplace Health and Safety, Cargo Handling and Securing, Operating Ship's Gear to Transfer Cargo, Driving Tractor Units, RoRo Operations and many other modules. The first course commenced on the 10 September 2007.



Lawrence on the tree ropes course



Lawrence on the tree ropes course



Chris doing Capoeira



All the participants



Denelza & Roxane doing Via Ferrata



The kayaking group

YOUTH EXCHANGE IN FRANCE

Between the 7 and the 15 of July 2007, five students and Sports Co-ordinator Adele Muscat traveled to St. Etienne in France to participate in a Youth Exchange entitled 'No Offside with Europe'. Young people from France, the Czech Republic and Turkey also participated in this exchange which was on Violence in Sport. The students attended workshops every morning to discuss the issues faced by different countries when dealing with violent players as well as fans. They also came up with a charter for sport organisations to employ measures to prevent violence in sport.

Every afternoon the students had the opportunity to participate in various sport and adventure activities including a tree ropes course, Capoeira, canoeing, orienteering, via ferrata and street soccer. Other activities included an intercultural evening, a visit to St. Etienne including a visit to the stadium where the rugby World Cup will be played in the coming months, as well as a visit to the city of Lyon.

This was a very enjoyable experience for all as well as a learning experience.

FITTEST **MALE AND FEMALE** ON CAMPUS

David Grech & Michelle Vella

The fittest male/female on campus competition was held in May. Several students from various institutes took part in this challenge where they participated in a 1500m run, a 100m sprint, one minute of push ups, sit ups, step ups and a standing horizontal jump. The eventual male winner was Matthew Monreal from the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineering. The runner up was Daniel Attard from the Maritime Institute. The female winner was Michelle Vella from the Institute of Community Services. This challenge will take place again this scholastic year so start training!

Michelle Vella

David Grech

COMINO CAMPING TRIP

In June 2007, a group of students from the Institute of Community Services participated in a camping trip on Comino. Here the students had the opportunity to play beach games, trek and swim. They also learnt how to erect and dismantle a tent, how to cook in the outdoors and the importance of looking after the environment around us.

Cooking

Erecting the tent

MUSC-MCAST-KNZ SPORTS FEST

A sports fest was held at the University Campus at the end of April. Here MUSC, the University Sports Student Body came together with the MCAST Sports Department as well as the Kunsill Nazzjonali Żgħażaġh to organise a number of sports activities for MCAST students. Here students participated in football, basketball and chess and had the opportunity to learn more about the sport of weightlifting as well as diving.



FOOTBALL MATCH

MALTA BELGIUM

Recently a group of Belgian visitors asked to play a football match against MCAST students. This was held at the St. Aloysius College Football ground where students from the Institute of Community Services had the pleasure of playing against a foreign team. The Maltese team ended up winning the match with a high score.

GYMS

The Naxxar and Agribusiness gyms have now been reopened thanks to the addition of sports staff at MCAST. There are currently two gyms that can be used in Naxxar and one weights room in Luqa. Naxxar weights room hopefully to be refurbished.



*Top left:
Mr Frank Edwards,
Principal/CEO presenting
an attendance certificate
to a French student
participating in the
project.*

*Top right:
Ms. Rosanna Martellino,
Vice Principal at
Alessandro Narbone
School, donating a gift
made by students at
Alessandro Narbone
School in Caltagirone
to Mr. Frank Edwards,
Principal/CEO*

On the 25 and 26 June 2007, a group of ten foreign and four Maltese delegates held a final meeting on a Grundtvig 2 Partnership Learning Programme. For the academic year 2006/2007 MCAST was awarded 6914 Euros to participate. It is envisaged that the programme for MCAST will be renewed for the coming 2 year period 2007/2009 with a total budget of 23,000 Euros. The project is currently co-ordinated by Ms. Katya De Giovanni with the help and assistance of Mr. David Bonello, Deputy Director, Institute of Mechanical Engineering, and Ms. Grace Barbara, Secretary of the Professional Development Centre at MCAST.

The Learning Partnership is entitled "EDUCATION - Strategies for the Inclusion of Adult Dropouts in Educational Contexts." The main focus of this year was on researching the phenomenon of dropouts in each of the educational contexts. In fact the participants are staff working at the Centro Territoriale Alessandro Narbone, Caltagirone, Italy; the Istituto Vicente Espinel, Malaga, Spain; AGORA Centre for Adult Learners, Lorient, France and Groupment D'Interet Public de Formation Continue et Insertion Professionnelle de l'Academie de Limoges, France. Research using questionnaires and interviews was compiled and reported and the meeting in Malta has served to draw conclusions and recommendations for the compilation of a handbook as well as a website with resources. Mr. Frank Edwards, Principal and CEO at MCAST addressed the delegates and presented them with an attendance certificate.

Last February Ms. De Giovanni as well as two colleagues who underwent the Vocational Teacher Training Course attended the second meeting which was held in Malaga, Spain. Ms. Connie Galea and Ms. Maria Cassar from the Basic Skills Unit presented the results of the surveys that they carried out with Foundation level students. Ms. Connie Galea and Ms. Maria Cassar were chosen for their expertise in dealing with students who are highly at risk of dropping out as well as for their topic chosen for research as part completion of their BTEC Certificate in Further Education Teaching. In the programme planned for 2007/2009 it is envisaged that 12 mobilities will take place for the six meetings that will follow. In October 2007, the delegates will be hosted at AGORA in Lorient, France.



Mr Nathan Gatt delivering a lecture in Finland

ERASMUS

THE ERASMUS INITIATIVE

The ERASMUS programme was launched in June 1987 and 3244 participated in its first academic year. Now, more than 150,000 people benefit each year from the programme. The Commission and the 31 participating countries will celebrate its 20th anniversary throughout the year 2007.

The ERASMUS programme, which is arguably one of the best-known Community actions, encourages student and teacher mobility, and promotes transnational cooperation projects among universities across Europe. The scheme currently covers nine out of every ten European higher education establishments.

ERASMUS has developed beyond just being an educational programme. It gives many European university students the chance

of living for the first time in a foreign country, and it has reached the status of a social and cultural phenomenon. Well over 1.5 million students have so far benefited from Erasmus grants, and the European Commission hopes to reach a total of 3 million by 2012.

The purpose of Erasmus is to improve the quality of higher education and strengthen its European dimension. It does this by encouraging transnational cooperation between universities, fostering the European mobility of students and teachers, and contributing to improved transparency and academic recognition of qualifications and studies throughout the European Union.



WHO WAS ERASMUS?

The programme was named after Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466–1536), who was a Dutch humanist and theologian. An untiring adversary of dogmatic thought in all fields of human endeavour, Erasmus lived and worked in several parts of Europe, in quest of the knowledge, experience and insights which only such contacts with other countries could bring. By leaving his fortune to the University of Basel, he became a precursor of mobility grants.

ERASMUS IN MALTA

The Erasmus programme is managed locally by the European Union Programmes Agency (36 Old Mint Street, Valletta). The contact person is Mary Jane Mifsud who can be contacted on 2123 3564 or mary.jane.mifsud@gov.mt

Year	Allocation in	No of students	No of teachers
2000	234,780.00	92	N/A
2001	243,571.00	72	N/A
2002	245,545.00	129	44
2003	284,511.00	119	34
2004	309,572.00	130	57
2005	318,200.00	149	67
2006	351,119.00	N/A	N/A

OFFICE

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1987-2007

ERASMUS AT MCAST

The ERASMUS University Charter awarded to MCAST in June 2004 marked a milestone in the history of this institution. Students undertaking the Higher National Diploma Courses can benefit from the advantages that the Charter provides in terms of mobility, transparency of qualifications and employability across Member States of the EU. Our students may, through bilateral and multilateral agreement with vocational and higher education Institutions continue their studies across Europe from Lisbon to Helsinki and from Tromsø to Messina without having to overcome the barriers of accreditation and co-validation of credits.

After signing two bi-lateral agreements in the first year with York St John in the UK and HAAGA Institute in Finland, MCAST held the first teacher exchange during the first few months of 2006.

Mr Giovanni Vaccaro and Mr Christian Brade, from the IT department of the HAAGA University of Applied Science in Helsinki, visited the MCAST Institute of Information and Communication Technology between the 20 and the 24 February 2006. They spent time teaching different classes focusing mainly on the National Diploma and Higher National Diploma students.

In return, Mr Krassimir Andreinski, Mr Nathan Gatt and Ms Margaret Pace visited the Finnish institution between the 20 and the 24 March 2006. They participated in an International IT seminar. Lecturers from different countries were brought together to deliver a seminar over five days for ICT students. Apart from their teaching duties, the Maltese teachers were on a fact-finding mission to research the possibility of exchanging ICT students between the two educational institutions.

Another teacher placement was undertaken by Mr Donald Friggieri, Director, and Mr Stephen Vella, Deputy Director, at the Art and Design Institute, who visited York St John. Mr Friggieri and Mr Vella carried out some teaching duties. However they also spent time looking at working methods, modules being taught and accommodation facilities thus making this a feasibility study for student exchanges.

The Erasmus students exchange at the Art and Design Institute involved a total of four students.

Two second year BA Hons (Art and Design) students from the University of York St John travelled to Malta to join the second year BTEC HND in 3D Design course of study for three study modules, namely "Commercial Model Making", "Specialist 3D Materials" and "Specialist 3D Technology and Processes". In turn, two HND Maltese students went to York to join the degree course for "Special Study: Research and Method", "Specialist Practice in Design" and "Specialist Research and Communication in Design".

The exchange proved beneficial to all participating students and they coped well throughout the modules, engaging well with the programmes of study and showing sustained application to research, through drawing, writing and collating information. The practical work they undertook using various materials was particularly beneficial. The two students from York St John were anxious to work in limestone which they considered quite a unique experience. During their 12-week stay at the English institution, (the Maltese students, Noel Keith Micallef and Sarah Zerafa worked in textiles (felt-making), stainless steel and wood. Academic tutorials were organised on a regular basis with an aim to gaining an overview of learners' progress.

"QUOTES"



Sarah Zerafa, Erasmus student Institute of Art and Design says...

// There is no doubt that I have gained a lot, not only from an academic point of view but also on a personal note...It was all a new experience and it was nice to learn about new things which I will never have the opportunity of doing or seeing in Malta. Back at the College, one of these new experiences was getting acquainted with a software programme for industrial textiles.

The Erasmus study placement at York St John University has been a great experience for me. I believe I could have done much more with the right guidance and support, like the one I am used to here in Malta where courses are more structured. I do appreciate though that colleges work differently and that they have different demands and priorities //



Noel says...

// This kind of experience is usually well-regarded...The mixture of cultures, the location of the University and its surroundings, the people and especially the students made this experience an unforgettable one. I encountered very few hitches and it did not take me long to adapt to the new system and ways of working. As from the first day, I felt welcome by my new classmates, mainly because I had kept contact with Simon Gornall who had already been in Malta on our student exchange programme //

STUDENT INTAKE 2007 – 2008



The preparation of students for the next intake is always a major task for the Guidance and Counselling personnel at MCAST. Talks and presentations of the MCAST courses and the progression routes offered by the nine Institutes were held throughout the whole year at private, church and state schools. Exhibition stands promoting MCAST full-time courses were displayed at several Career Weeks throughout the academic year.

As soon as the Easter Vacation is over the Guidance and Counselling team contacts the Education Division to remind all Guidance Teachers in all secondary schools to send MCAST adhesive labels with the names and addresses of all their ex form five students. The Counsellors then check that all prospective students will be informed about the new prospectus available at the Local Councils. In the meantime the Information Centre prepares a letter to be sent individually to each and every prospective student on the islands.

The Guidance and Counselling Service intensified during the month of June. With the help and co-ordination of personnel in the MCAST Communications Office, counsellors participated in various radio and

TV programmes. The aim of these slots on the media is to make the general public aware that application week, which generally falls on the last week of July, is fast approaching. Some programmes also included a phone in system, where listeners and viewers had the opportunity to put forward their queries. This provided us with the golden opportunity of obtaining instant feedback from the public.

During the first week of July talks were held for prospective students and their parents. The main speakers during these talks were the Directors of Institute who not only explained each course and its progression route but also gave details of career opportunities. Counsellors provided an overview of the Guidance and Counselling Service and explained how prospective students could make use of this service before and after Sec 'O' level results are published. They also stressed the importance of informed and personalised decisions by prospective applicants. The Director of Information and Support Services talked about application week and details of documents needed to be handed in with applications. Special reference was made to students with special needs.

NEW COUNSELLOR AT MCAST



My name is Marthese Vassallo and I have been entrusted with offering my services as Counsellor to students at MCAST. I must say it is a thrilling and challenging post, one that requires a serious, genuine commitment. I come from a background of counselling and education, in which I have been for the past 10 years. This should help me to understand and empathise with students encountering both educational and personal difficulties. I take this opportunity to promise

that I will do my best to fulfill my responsibilities conscientiously and to always regard the student as a respected individual.

May I take this opportunity to congratulate all students on their achievements and welcome all the new ones joining the College this year. I would like to thank all personnel I have met up to now from the Administrative and Counselling Department, and those from various Institutes who have all been extremely helpful.

COUNSELLING

MCAST COUNSELLOR PARTICIPATES IN GRUNDTVIG 3 ADULT EDUCATION TRAINING PROGRAMME

MCAST Counsellor Mr. John Bartolo participated in a Grundtvig 3 Adult Education Training Programme entitled **"Guidance and Counselling in Further Education: Role, Task, Possibilities and European Dimension"** between the 21 and the 25 of May 2007. The course was organised by the Slovak Academy of Education in Poprad, Slovakia. It was the result of a previous Socrates project among five European partner countries: Slovakia, Germany, Poland, England and Sweden.

The main objectives of the training week were as follows:

- to make use of various methods and techniques in individual case work;
- to identify clients' educational requirements;
- to determine the most efficient form of clients' learning;
- to work out individual action plans.

Representatives from the five partner countries were responsible for the delivery of lectures and the facilitation of sessions during the intensive five day training programme.

Modules covered included:-

- Systems of Guidance and Counselling in Europe
- Counselling forms and concepts
- Target groups
- How to perform advisory sessions
- Media expertise in new ICT.

During the sessions, participants made use of various techniques, such as video sessions and feedback, role plays, discussions and projects in small working groups. This was a positive learning experience and an opportunity for all individuals involved, both participants and organizers, to improve the European Dimension through the sharing of knowledge and the establishment of contacts with other professionals working in the field of Guidance and Counselling in Europe.

MCAST is an active promoter of EU funded projects and supports both multi-annual projects as well as individual grants.

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This article reflects the views of the author only, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained herein.



PATHWAY TO INDEPENDENT LIVING COURSE



BY SARA POLIDANO, 18 YEARS OLD

"This course gives us an excellent opportunity to socialise with our friends. One of the activities I enjoyed the most was when we went to the Eden Super Bowl in Paceville. It was a great feeling when I managed to do the first strike of my life. Surprisingly this was not the only strike I did and my team ended winning the first round.

Another activity that I will never forget is when we went to Mdina. It was a very rainy day and till we arrived at the Natural History Museum we got drenched. At the Natural History Museum there is a section with stuffed animals and it was extremely interesting since we managed to see creatures that you only see on TV, the internet or in books. The day ended on a positive note with a nice piece of cake from a local coffee shop and some very good hot chocolate.

Recently my course mates and I enjoyed a few hours in the countryside. We went to Ta' Qali where we relaxed and had a picnic. After we ate our food in the sun, we enjoyed a good game of football. We didn't wish to go back to the College that day."



BY SEAN JAMES MICALLEF, 18 YEARS OLD

"I enjoy going to activities organised during our course since they allow me not only to learn but to have a good time with my friends.

Before we broke up for the holidays we went out on a very interesting and unusual outing. We visited two historical sites: Fort Rinella at Kalkara and the War Museum in Birgu. Fort Rinella was particularly interesting since we engaged in a quiz after a detailed tour of the Fort. I was one of the students who answered correctly and I was given the chance to wear typical clothes of the time and take part in a short re-enactment. It was really cool firing the rifle! The film at the War Museum was also very interesting since I got to see how Malta was in the past. I must admit I did not enjoy the tour round the shelters that much since I felt the space was very restricted especially since I am tall.

An activity that was also very interesting was when we visited the floating bookshop Logos II. There were a lot of books from which we could buy. This is a special ship that goes round various countries and the profits made from the books sold go to particular projects to help children and families in need. We went on a tour of the boat. We got to see where the captain drives the ship. The people on the ship are volunteers and we were taken to see where they gather to pray, eat and were also taken to one of their cabins. We were also told what the volunteers are advised to do in case of emergency. In the end we also put on life jackets!

We also visited Popeye's Village. We went for a very long walk from Ghadira to Popeye's Village but believe me it was all worth it. We watched a short extract from the film Popeye where Robin Williams was the protagonist. We also saw a puppet show that was very funny. Later we went to have a snack at the restaurant."

SISIEN ADULT LITERACY RESOURCE PACK

The Department of Further Studies and Adult Education of the Education Division will soon be publishing the second edition of Sisien, an adult literacy resource pack made up of three books – Ngħallmu Lsienna, Inħaddmu Lsienna and Nitharrġu fi Lsienna – a CD, 24 educational cards and 16 A3 posters.

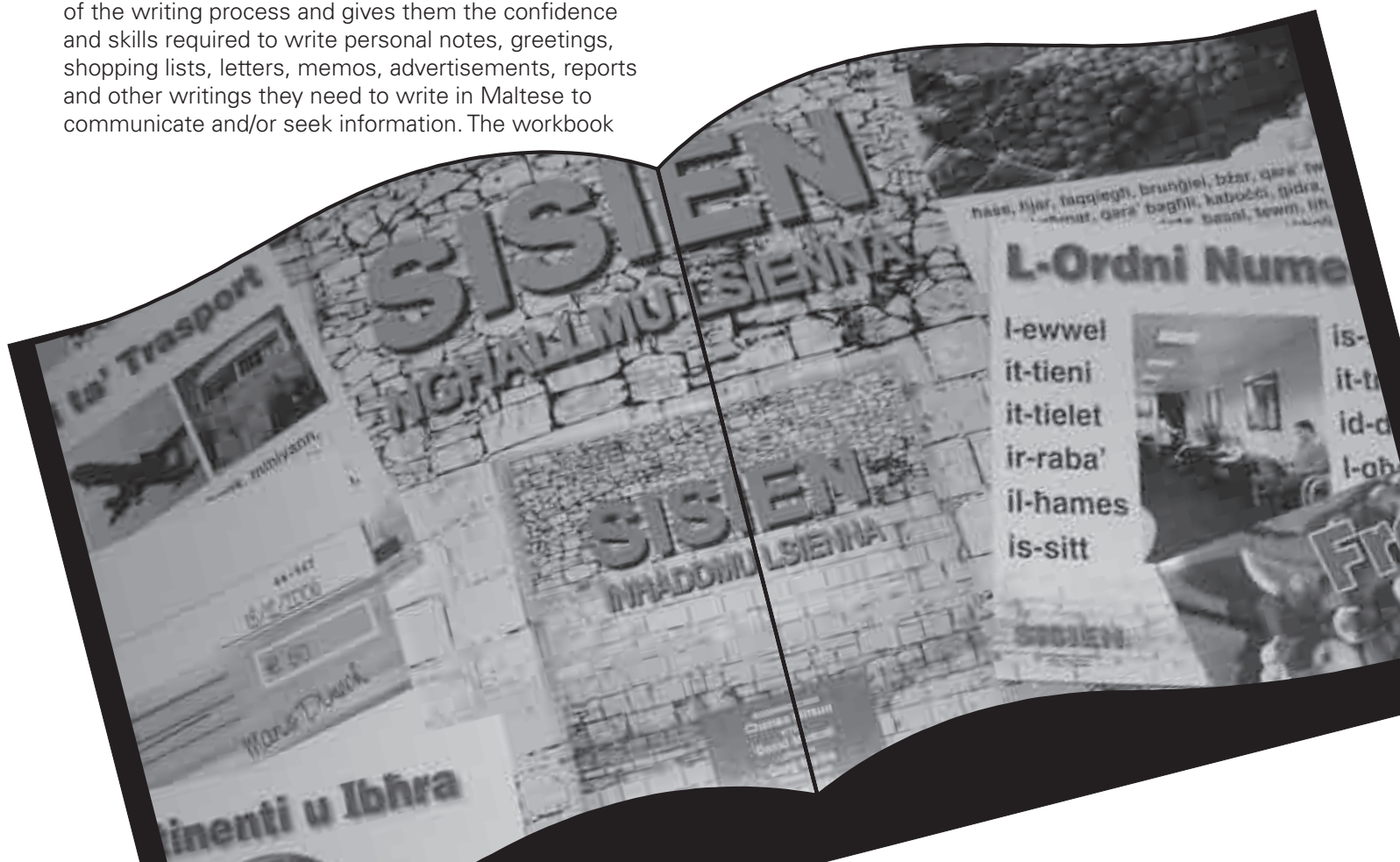
Ngħallmu Lsienna, the teacher's book provides practical teaching techniques appropriate for adult learners, an adult literacy core curriculum framework, a sample scheme of work made up of 16 themes, exemplar lesson plans, and a short bibliography of books and other teaching material that can help adult literacy tutors set up and deliver their programmes.

Inħaddmu Lsienna, the student's book is designed to help adult learners master their listening and speaking skills, improve their reading skills and through discussion and role play discover the beauty of their mother tongue. The book offers a wide range of authentic material, including 42 listening texts that can be used for several motivating learning activities. The questions, language games and activities are graded and thought provoking. Nitharrġu fi Lsienna, the workbook builds on Inħaddmu Lsienna. It takes adult learners through the first steps of the writing process and gives them the confidence and skills required to write personal notes, greetings, shopping lists, letters, memos, advertisements, reports and other writings they need to write in Maltese to communicate and/or seek information. The workbook

includes a variety of discussion topics, reading texts, comprehension exercises, grammar games and vocabulary building activities.

Sisien is a starter pack. It can be used in any setting where literacy sessions are held. The worksheets can be photocopied and adapted to respond to the needs of specific adult learners. The student's book and workbook are intended to stimulate adult literacy tutors to produce their own teaching resources according to their individual or group learning plans.

Professor Manwel Mifsud, President of Il-Kunsill Nazzjonali ta' l-Ilsien Malti, referred to the resource pack as a milestone in the history of the Maltese language since it offers a modern attractive communicative approach to the teaching of Maltese to illiterate adults. The team that produced Sisien consisted of David Muscat (MCAST Basic Skills Co-ordinator), author of the resource pack, Profs. Charles Mifsud, (Director, Literacy Unit, University of Malta) Co-ordinator of the project, and Dr. Ġorġ Mallia (Lecturer at the Centre for Communication Technology, University of Malta), designer and cartoonist. The resource pack was partly financed by the E.U. through ESF Funds.



THE BASE-COAT AND THE TOP-COAT AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN

BY EMMANUEL SCHEMBRI

Buy me to be beautiful. Buy me to be famous. You need me to be 'in'. I will fix all your problems. If one were to sum up the values of the commercial age into a neat and sleek mission statement or motto, it could easily be done in two words – Buy Me. It is perhaps strange that in such an age of prosperity, when all is good (or so it generally appears), that all our advertised human interests seem to be focused on filling in a multitude of lacks, failings and errors. In fact, if we were to really dig into this phenomenon of the modern man or woman (it makes it sound interesting that way) we would find that, despite the fact that today human civilization is standing on the shoulders of giants, or so someone once said, we are actually most unhappy and (and this is the real clincher) incomplete as people. And the various fluff merchants are really happy to make sure that we stay that way. Before going any further, we should appreciate what a fluff merchant is. He would be one of those seemingly obsequious purveyors of market goods... in other words somebody who sells something. Not, of course, in the sense of the local corner store or green grocer. By fluff merchant is meant a brand. Any average football jersey or pitch boasts about a quarter of a million of these and their logos thrown willy-nilly for aesthetic effect, so the reader should by now have grasped the essential meaning.

So then, having understood the basic target of this article, we can get back to that rather worrying statement from above regarding the essential incompleteness of modern man (or woman). This actually should not be a worrying insight, and we will get back to just why later on. The worrying aspect has to do with this 'lack' as coupled with the vicious marketing strategies of all those 'beautiful people' in business. This is because a person's faults and failings, defects and, above all, needs can be handled so long as he is aware of them and, most importantly, the centre of it all – himself. The vicious marketing, on the other hand, combats this self-awareness and places instead another overpowering message into all manner of fragile young minds. And the message is – You Are Not Important. After which, having thrown you bodily to the proverbial ground (spiritually speaking), they will extol the virtues of a particular brand of tin car, badly fitting trousers, pre-torn shoes, cardboard food, hair glop, or Persian cat that will undeniably fill the ebbing void that is the nothing of your life. By now, I can imagine that the reading audience is gasping (or choking on their half-eaten sandwich) saying things like of course not, this is not true at all, I never eat the box or my jeans fit perfectly and sag just enough to showcase the branded lining on my und... oh, wait a sec. What is most interesting, when we have come to grips with this, is that really, deep down, the merchants themselves know (and this with certainty) that their basic slogan, You Are Not Important, is not actually true. Why? Well, if there were not a multitude of 'you's' with a multitude of you-type money, nobody would need or buy anything! So the hidden part of the slogan is actually We (the merchants) Need You (Badly) – but they never tell you that part. It's bad business.

So, now what? Well, up to this point we have a picture of the person in a pickle. She (or he) is an individual filled with needs (and this is okay) and all around him (or her) there is a plague of beastly fluff merchants who have exploited these in order to tell said person that she (or he) [or it] is not important but the needs – the needs are very important because how else could you buy the branded products that make life worthwhile? Life, therefore, is meant in order to buy things. What is important is the brand, not the person. Now, at the beginning (of the article, that is), it was noted that having needs is not a bad thing. No person is super-human, except if he is illustrated and communicates using speech bubbles, and therefore it cannot be expected that there is anybody in the world who is not in need of something or other. It could be a cup of sugar from someone next door, or something like it, which are simple passing needs or other, more important, needs which are something much deeper than that. This need-thing is one of the constituting features of a state known as 'being human' and it is a chronic feature of everyone's life. These basic 'empty slots' in our life (not that our life is empty) have to be filled and all people try to fill them in order to make their life whole and complete. Of course, our needs are of a particular form and shape, metaphorically, so it does not mean that because people have some needs they must try to satisfy them all of the time. The market-people exaggerated the basic human neediness, reducing the value of actually being a person in order to make more money. So, how do we make sense of all this, and where does it all lead? Perhaps someone can help us. Actually two people, One more important than the other... but let's look at the less important one first...

A long time ago, in this galaxy and on this particular planet, there was a chap who was pretty intelligent and, since there were no mobiles around, he used to write a lot. He lived in a pretty big Empire-thing, based in Italy (Rome actually), and he had a pretty longish name – Augustine. He realized at a pretty tender age that he as a human being had these needs we were talking about. And he tried to fill them, as it were, with whatever he could think of. Parties, songs, women... more parties... women... that sort of thing. Well, it was not all that bad... Anyway, this Augustine noticed, after a few hangovers, that the whole bit was not getting him anywhere. Sure, while he was drinking and partying everything was hunky-dory. The needs seemed to be filled – or at least he was too drunk to remember. After the parties, things were not so great. If we skip forward a bit (because I want to leave the central bit and the other Guy that comes into play until the next paragraph), we find that Augustine, after meeting Someone very important (who we will get to in a bit), came up with a very good idea. He realized that at the core of all the needs he had (and all others had) was a central one, and that was a need for Love. Now, because of this – and this is the really good bit – Augustine noted that human beings were always looking to fill this need to Love and be Loved, as it were, by giving their love to certain things – people, places, and such-like. So, for example, different people have different hobbies



that they like and this, in its own way, fills up a need and this, Augustine would say, is fantastic. But, and here it gets really interesting so pay special attention to it, he said that people cannot go and start attaching their affections to things haphazardly because not every thing can satisfy every need. We can only get out of a thing the love (or worth) that it is capable of giving. Take for instance man's (or woman's) best friend – the dog. We can buy a puppy and lavish our affections on it and it will love us back in its own, particular, puppy-like way – which is fine, because Augustine would say that this fills some form of need and that's great. However, we could never love the dog in the same way as we love a person nor, for that matter, as we would love a car or a plant, because the dog is not capable of giving us anything more than its own specific kind of love. Hence, Augustine said that if we give to things an inordinate amount of love, or try to like them in the wrong way, and thus we expect more from them than they can actually give, our love is what he calls disordered love. This kind of love is harmful because, in the end, instead of filling us up, it leaves us empty and, worse off, we become addicted to our disordered love and keep turning back to it despite the disappointment – something which turns our life into a kind of slavery. This is a bit like, for example, a person who thinks drinking will solve his problems – he goes and gets horrendously drunk, feels better for a bit, then absolutely horrible after the effects wear off and then starts all over again. The thing to do, Augustine continues, is to make sure we love things as they should be loved, and there is in this way room for all the different types of love we can think of – love of dogs, carrots, hamsters, cars, and even cats. The thing not to do is expect any one of these things to be fulfilling for our life in and of itself. No wonder they made this guy a saint, huh?

There was another part to what Augustine wrote, and for that we have to refer to another Person, and He lived about 300 years before Augustine (though it was still in the same Empire). This Man came around and the people He was living with had close to the same problem we have today. As today our so-called fluff merchants are telling us what to buy in order for our life to have any meaning, these people had their leaders telling them how exactly to live their life, in every detail, according to their particular Law. And just as today the impression is that without brand names and logos being plastered all over your clothing you are a 'nobody', so too these people were made to believe that without the Law their life was lost and meaningless. Now our Man comes along and He says 'No, that's not right at all, you're missing the point.' The point, He said, is not the Law but Love. The Law and the things of the Law are not meant to be done in themselves but only insofar as they lead to a life that fills us and others with Love. What's more, He goes on, the fact is this Love is none other than God, who created us to fill us with Himself, this Love. Since God so Loved us, a Love that caused Him to create us in the first place, He always wanted to have us near Him and eventually He decided He'd come Himself – which is why we have this Man here (who's telling us all this), Jesus Christ. This is exactly the last part of what Augustine said, because, after talking about disordered love and that all people must love things in a proper and ordered manner, he said that above all things human beings seek a Love that can truly fill their desire for that which is beyond this life, that goes beyond cats and all the other things we mentioned. This is the kind of Love only God can fill and Augustine summed it up by saying: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee." (Confessions I, 1)

Now Jesus Himself, beyond just telling us that God loves us, wanted to show us that God loved us. He did this first by coming at all – because He is God and yet He bothered to come around as a human being. Then finally, after walking with us for a time, He did something quite remarkable – He let us kill Him. This was because we humans thought (again): 'No, we can get by without God's love; we'll make due on our own.' Now, the thing about disordered love is that it no longer functions properly – when we let something take God's place our whole life goes off kilter so to speak and what should have brought joy and pleasure causes misery (think again of the problem-drinker up above). Hence, without Love (God) there was only Hate – with a capital H. This Hate was not so nice, but Jesus did something extraordinary – He took it all from us, letting us direct it all at Him. This is the way that He emptied Himself on the cross. The really interesting part, though, is that because of His Love for us, Jesus turned the Cross (an object of Hate) around and used it as a means to fill us with God's Love (which is the whole point, really). Because at that moment, He gave Himself to us – something which He still does in the Mystery of Holy Communion. When we eat that little piece of bread and drink the wine, it is not just a symbol of God's Love but it is God's Love which we take into ourselves in a very real way. In this way, we are helped by God Himself to put our Life in order, because He is telling us You Are Important, very important – so much that I wish to give myself (as God) for you. What is important is not anything but you as a person. Everything else gets its importance because of the You at its center. Knowing this, that our life is full of God's Love, Real Love, we can then live our life, having all our ordered relationships, and never feel empty or depressed because we know where we come from and where we are headed to.

So that, in a nutshell... (alright, admittedly it would have to be a pretty large nutshell... a Brazil nut, perhaps, or a coconut)... So that, in a coconut shell, is the meaning of the life of faith. We make Christ the centre of our life, so that Christ can then make us the centre of our life – us taken in a substantial, holistic way. For God, we are not a base-coat, as it were, which is only important depending on how many brand-related pretty pictures we put on it. Rather, we are important (the base-coat and the top-coat and everything in between) – our life is valuable – so much so that Jesus (God) wishes to give His life (which is Love) to us every time we receive Communion at Mass. When we realize this slogan – You Are Important – in our lives, it makes an enormous difference. We begin to appreciate things for what they are, living our lives to the full and loving things as they should be loved. If, one of these days, sitting quietly somewhere in the midst of this beautiful world, you think back on this article and you say to yourself, 'Yes, I think he might have had a point,' make sure to enjoy that moment and, if you don't forget, say a little prayer for me.

THE YOUNG ENTERPRISE EXPERIENCE – JOIN US!!

BY KARL GOUDER



Ever thought of running your own business? Ever thought of some strange idea, that deep down you know you could market and make money out of it? Ever thought about the idea of learning how a business works by actually running it yourself?

Then the answer to all this is Young Enterprise, once again Young Enterprise offers you the opportunity to build your own company and get trained while you are doing it.

Young Enterprise offers you the opportunity to join up with a group of friends, who are not necessarily from the same institute and form your own company. Starting mid October and ending in July you will have the opportunity to form your own board of directors, decide on a product or service, produce or outsource it, market it, take part in trade fairs and finally show your company off to a large audience including prolific business people.

More than that you will have the opportunity to take part in a number of seminars where you will be trained with regards to the running of the company, more that that, these seminars are packed with games and fun activities. You will also get to meet top business people in Malta, who will be certainly looking out for future employees.

Young Enterprise also offers you the opportunity to travel, being also a competition the winning team will be going to Sweden this year so as to take part in the European Company of the year award. Other travel opportunities will also be available.

Young Enterprise will be holding various meetings at all institutes. The day and time will be announced on the notice board. If you would like to join us or are simply interested in getting to know more, please attend these meetings where we will give you more information about the program.

For more information please visit www.youngenterprise.org.mt or email kgouder@youngenterprise.org.mt, or call 7925 6132.



APPRECIATION – FERDINAND DEMICOLI

BY ALEXANDER PACE

This page usually features various interesting articles by the late Mr. Ferdinand Demicoli on a number of topics associated with science, particularly the environment.

Today, this page is a tribute to a gentleman who always strived to give everyone a better quality of education, a better quality of self-assurance, a better quality of working conditions, a better quality of life. Ferdinand did not educate just for the sake of having an occupation. He could have had any other better-paid job since he was an expert in the scientific and engineering fields, but he chose to be a teacher so that he would enjoy seeing his students learn new things and integrate themselves in the environment, constantly making them aware of what is going on around them. His lectures were not solely limited to class sessions, but periodically he would organize field trips so that his students would feel and observe what he taught in class as a first-hand experience.

Ferdinand was always in the thick of things, organising educational activities and programmes for the 'Education Channel' so that people of all ages, from all walks of life, could have the opportunity to learn new things from the comfort of their own homes. At the same time, he was always consumed with the utmost care for his students, striving to implement new strategies so that they would achieve the highest grades possible. He was never satisfied with 'second

best' results. No! For them he wanted first class only. Moreover, he was always deeply concerned with the plight of the refugees, poverty, suffering, political instabilities, religious integration....for in his mind, body and soul there was always the yearning for a 'perfect world'.

With Ferdinand one could converse on a wide range of subjects since he was such an avid reader and had a great eye for the minutest of details. Yes, knowing Ferdinand was the real music to one's ears and he was more than capable to dance to the melody of his given surroundings. Only his real friends could ever acknowledge his outstanding qualities. Ferdinand could not comprehend why certain people could be consumed in dishonesty, disrespect and corruption, but alas, my friend, "woe to the world because of stumbling blocks! It is necessary that stumbling blocks come, but woe to the person through whom they come". You used your worldly knowledge to its optimum level by sharing and giving everything that you knew to others "so that when it runs out you will be welcomed into the eternal home".

Now, that you are on the other side, you can fully understand why the ones left here are the truly woeful. Rest in peace dear friend...till we meet again...you'll never walk alone.

LOSS OF A FRIEND

BY CHARLOTTE LANFRANCO

*We stand aghast, in shock, in pain,
on wasted life, beyond regain.
On promise shattered, on brilliance lost,
on youth still clinging, on Fate so crossed.*

*We couldn't see, nor yet presage,
the loss of one so young of age.
Nor can one fathom the whys and fores
the twists and turns of Life's set course.*

*Our loss, dear friend, could be your gain.
You've left this world of strife and pain.
Yet friend, it also gave you joy,
In work, in subjects you so enjoyed.*

*Yet now, you rest in final peace,
serene, and calm, to your heart's ease.
A purer sky, and greener fields,
with blooms a'burst from golden seeds.*

*And as we feel the vacuum made,
our loss so hard of friendship staid,
what makes our spirits so slightly rise,
is your joy's thought in Paradise.*

Rest in Peace dear friend.

NCHE MALTA



Jacques Sciberras, CEO,
National Commission for Higher Education

The National Commission for Higher Education (NCHE) was established in September 2006 with the objectives of promoting a structured dialogue between all stakeholders and to make recommendations to Government on all areas which can improve further and higher education.

Part of its function is to identify the needs and aspirations of education institutions, to assess the relevance of Malta's education system to societal and economic needs, and to evaluate the quality and sustainability of the education system.

Since January 2007 the Commission has undertaken wide consultation with all stakeholders to assess the structure of the sector, and shall be making recommendations on the type of reforms required to modernise further and higher education.

In August 2007, the NCHE in partnership with MCST launched a project entitled "Further and Higher Education Futures". The seminar brought students, policy makers and heads of institutions together to share their views on the visions, opportunities and challenges these sectors shall face in the long term. Over the coming months up to December 2007, the NCHE will organise intensive workshops on strategy development with MCAST both with the staff and the student body.

The further education sector in Malta, in particular the vocational sector in which MCAST is the principal player, is undergoing a vibrant and dynamic transformation. The NCHE is committed to supporting this process through research and evidence based policy formulation, rooted on the vision of quality and sustainability of education systems and linked with equally rapid developments on the European and international front.

The Commission is operating from its offices at the Old University Building in St. Paul's Street, Valletta. For more information visit the website <http://www.nchemalta.org>.

www.nchemalta.org

**NCHE
MALTA**

Kummissjoni Nazzjonali
għall-Edukazzjoni Ogħja
National Commission
for Higher Education





Fun games Sports activities
Live bands

A day of
events for
MCAST
students

MCAST

Foundation

Day 07

Friday 26 October 2007
MCAST Main Campus
Corradino Hill, Paola
From 9am onwards

 **MCAST**
MALTA COLLEGE of ARTS, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY