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mcastlink

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



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Welcome to MCASTlink issue 25. Another scholastic year has come to an end and Summer is round the corner.

This edition is full of interesting articles about events and activities that have taken place during the past few months. An achievement for the College was the winning of the top three prizes by MCAST students at the National Student Travel Foundation (NSTF) Contest for Young Scientist. This Contest is the annual showcase of the best scientific projects. The prizes were won by students following courses at the Institute of Community Services and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineering. The winners will be representing Malta and MCAST in Copenhagen and Budapest. The College wishes them the best of luck.

A milestone for the College was the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding with the National Commission Persons with Disability. MCAST is continually striving to fulfil its role as an inclusive College. This agreement, also in line with MCAST's mission statement and strategic plan, aims to facilitate the full participation of persons with disabilities at the College. More information can be found inside this magazine.

Another accomplishment for MCAST was the setting up of the SAP academy at the Institute of Business and Commerce. SAP is the world's largest business software company and the world's third largest independent software provider. The major benefits of setting up this academy include the more affordable software and the increased student employability.

This issue also features the inauguration of two main buildings on the Main Campus, namely the Student House and the new Institute of Community Services. These two projects formed part of the capital investment programme that is aimed at improving the MCAST facilities.

This edition includes an interesting article on e-vocational training within Maltese public educational institutions. Stephen Vella delves into the importance of IT and the internet and how they are changing the learning process and the role of the lecturer in vocational education institutions. He reveals the findings of a study that he carried out with 280 lecturers regarding their attitudes towards IT and towards e-vocational training. The article finishes with a set of recommendations.

I would like to thank all members of staff and students that have contributed towards this magazine. Hope you all enjoy your well-deserved Summer holidays!

Caroline Balzan
Communications and PR Manager

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

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ON THE COVER
ALAN CINI FROM THE
INSTITUTE OF INFORMATION
AND COMMUNICATION
TECHNOLOGY

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caroline.balzan@mcast.edu.mt

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MCAST students won all top three prizes at the 2008 National Student Travel Foundation (NSTF) Contest for Young Scientists. The Contest, organized by NSTF Malta, was held at St James Cavalier during the Science Week between the 7th and 13th of April 2008. Students enrolled in the MCAST Institute of Community Services placed first and third and a student following a course at the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineering placed second.

The Contest for Young Scientists, an initiative of the European Commission, was set up to promote the ideals of co-operation and interchange between young scientists. The Contest is the annual showcase of the best of European student scientific achievement. This Contest gives students the opportunity to compete with the best of their contemporaries at European level. The young scientists also have the chance to meet others with similar abilities and interests and to be guided by some of the most prominent scientists in Europe. The three winning projects were entitled 'Biological and Non-Biological - Is there a difference?', 'Object Separation vs Pick and Place' and 'Fermentation By-Products in Beer'.

The project 'Biological and Non-Biological - Is there a difference?' was awarded first prize. It aimed to explain whether there is any difference between biological

and non-biological washing powders, in terms of their ability to reduce, or eliminate completely, the presence of microorganisms in the material being treated. The students who carried out the project were Dorianne Calleja and Anthea Zammit, with the support of their third year colleague in the Applied Science Course, Ismael Gauci who provided original ideas and advice. This project will participate in the 20th Edition of the EU Contest for Young Scientists to be held in Copenhagen, Denmark.

The project that placed second was entitled 'Object Separation vs Pick and Place' by Electrical and Electronics Engineering student Alessandro Vella and mentored by Deputy Director Mr Ronald Curmi. The student, who is currently enrolled on the MCAST Diploma in Industrial Electronics Course, carried out bitmap recognition using a video capture board. Edge detection was carried out by the scanning and vertically marking of 0's and 1's. The aim of this project was to sort different items on an assembly line using edge detection. Alessandro Vella will be participating in the Science Expo Europe 2008 to be held in Budapest between the 13th to the 20th July 2008.

The project that placed third – 'Fermentation By-Products in Beer' was designed to investigate the amount of the chemical sulphur dioxide in beer, to explain what sulphur dioxide is and its importance in the brewing industry. The project was carried out by Bernice Bonello, who found

Opposite Page: From left to right: Roderick Grech, André Attard, Bernice Bonello, Director Dorothy Meli, Lecturer and project supervisor Maria Pia Griscti, Anthea Zammit and Dorianne Calleja at the stands of the two projects after the announcement of the results of the competition



From left to right: Roderick Grech, Bernice Bonello and André Attard, winners of the 3rd prize at the stand during the competition

great help and support from her student colleagues, Roderick Grech and André Attard. Both Bernice and Roderick are actually doing their work placement component of the course at Simonds Farsons Cisk plc, Malta. The project will also be participating in the Science Expo Europe 2008 in Budapest.

The students at the Institute of Community Services are enrolled in the BTEC National Diploma in Applied Science Course. The BTEC Unit, Scientific Investigation, is a core unit within the BTEC National Diploma in Applied Science, which requires the students to carry out practical innovative scientific investigations. This course unit is taught by Ms Maria Pia Griscti, who supervised both projects from the conceptual stage throughout the Young Scientist Competition.

The announcement of these prizes brought overwhelming joy, satisfaction and a sense of pride and fulfillment to all staff at the College. The projects did not only win the vote of the panel of independent expert judges, yet one project, 'Fermentation By-Products in Beer', has been requested and will be used as a model by the University of Malta students during their Chemistry practical experiments. The success of these projects will now take MCAST from St. James Cavalier in Valletta to the EU Contest in Copenhagen and the Science Expo in Budapest.

This is the second time that the Applied Science course students successfully participated in the Contest for Young Scientists, organized by NSTF Malta. In 2006, the project 'Strands of Life' by Ismael Gauci and his colleagues Leanne Buhagiar and Maria Stella Grima, under the supervision of Ms Maria Pia Griscti and Mr Gervais Marcel Cishahayo, placed second and took part in the 2006 Wetenscape Science Expo in Brussels, Belgium.

The students are now looking forward to both Copenhagen and Hungary where they will be proud to fly the MCAST and Malta flags at these international events. Above all, this experience proved that although obstacles exist, through hard work, dedication and appropriate support, students can achieve and reward themselves with truly holistic enriching experiences, a testimony of the potential success that lies behind MCAST and close cooperation with other institutions such as NSTF

MCAST AND KNPD SIGN MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING



On the 13 March 2008 the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Commission Persons with Disability' (KNPD). This agreement is in line with the College's mission statement 'to provide accessible vocational and professional education and training responsive to the needs of the individual and the economy'.

MCAST is continuously working to be an inclusive College that promotes equal opportunities. The signing of this Memorandum of Understanding is a realization of one of the College's objectives as indicated in the Strategic Plan 2007 – 2009 as it sets out to establish a more formal dialogue in order to ensure the full participation of persons with disability who are qualified to undertake MCAST programmes of professional and vocational education and training.

Through this collaboration the College and the KNPD have agreed to set up a Steering Committee and also a MCAST-KNPD Joint Committee in order to establish an agenda for discussions and actions, with the aim of facilitating the full participation of disabled persons at MCAST.

The College has been working closely with other organizations and stakeholders to promote an equal and fair society that has access to new knowledge and skills. This collaboration follows other agreements that the College has undertaken with other organizations such as the Richmond Foundation. Also earlier on in February MCAST, the KNPD and the UoM teamed up in an international EU funded project entitled "APT-Leonardo – Access to Professional Training for Persons with Disability". This EU-funded project aimed is at making it easier for persons with disability, and other socially disadvantaged groups, to take up University and third level studies.

MCAST TO JOIN MinSE, A LEONARDO DA VINCI PROJECT IN ENGINEERING

It has been identified that there is a societal need for an institutional framework offering a full masters programme in surface engineering (SE). Therefore five partner universities namely, the Universities of Malta, Clausthal (Germany), Miskolc (Hungary), Birmingham (UK) and Targu Mures, (Romania) have merged their expertise and strengths with that of six enterprising partners in order to design a study programme that will lead to a European Masters in Heat Treatment and Surface Engineering, MinSE.

The study programme is expected to tackle the subject in a holistic and interdisciplinary manner covering the whole spectrum of surface technologies from aspects of design, engineering, tribology, economics and environmental engineering. This broad vision of the subject will equip students with the comprehensive knowledge required to take effective decisions and will enable them to apply the subject holistically.

The second cycle programme will be structured on the ECTS model, will fully satisfy the Bologna Treatment requirements, and will be designed, delivered and exploited jointly and in a fully integrated manner involving staff and student exchanges and using mixed pedagogical skills.

The masters has as target groups candidates from around the world with a first degree in engineering or science seeking to further their studies, persons from industry working in the field of heat treatment and surface engineering, and life-long learners who may take advantage of the fact that the programme is

composed of a stand alone intensive modules run over two week periods. The programme has potential for wide dissemination and will achieve trans-national quality assurance of curriculum and widespread recognition.

The project started in January 2007 and to date the partners have designed high quality teaching material and even tested it with success in a pilot programme held in Birmingham, UK last October. In February and March this year a partners' meeting and consequently an Evaluators' meeting were held in Malta to assess progress and start preparations for international accreditation of the course and stand alone study units by the Institute of Metals, Mining and Minerals.

When contacted, the co-ordinator of the project Professor Maurice Grech stated, "The project is on track and will be launched in October 2010. The meeting with the course Evaluators and the representatives of the accreditation body was very positive and industrious. During the meeting MCAST was invited to join the pool of partners thus enriching the partnership further by bringing to MinSE a network of industrial partners and expertise with hands on and academic background. Naturally students from MCAST and technical persons from industry may benefit directly particularly from the distant learning and stand alone modules run over two week periods".





Cladonia Scerri, President of the MCAST Student Council, delivering her speech

NEW STUDENTS HOUSE INAUGURATED AT MCAST

MCAST Students' House, consisting of Students Council Board Room, offices, a large common room, the College canteen and other facilities for the provision of student services were inaugurated at MCAST. The Student House project forms part of the West Wing Complex which also houses an administrative floor and has meant an investment of € 1m.

The MCAST Student House project is part of a capital investment programme aimed at improving the facilities available at MCAST which include the building of the Institute of Community Services building, the Aircraft Maintenance Centre, the installation of a Photovoltaic System on the College gym, the refurbishment of the Motor Vehicle Workshop, a new workshop block at Xewkija, Gozo and a Childcare facility which will shortly be available to parents on the Main Campus.



MCAST AND FOI WORKING TOGETHER PARTICIPATING IN EDUCATION AS A - THE BENEFITS OF THE INDUSTRY- ACADEMIA RELATIONSHIP

One of the main requests made by FOI members is to identify industry's needs, in terms of skills, so that an academic institute can tailor its courses according to the supply being requested. This is the rationale behind the collaboration between the FOI and MCAST.

The introduction of these courses is a win-win situation. Industry would benefit by having trained employees where previously there was a shortage. And the benefits to students who take these courses are numerous. One of these benefits would be linking students to industry through work placements.

Also, through customised courses, workers' employability would increase. And what does this mean exactly? Workers will be more flexible, not only in achieving employment, but staying employed, and progressing within their workplace. This will also be done through intensive re-training for inter-industry mobility to enhance the ability of workers to move from one industrial sector to employment in another sector.

This relationship between industry and education will also help identify experienced people in industry, who, not having followed a formal course of study, have no official certification even though they are of high value to their respective employers. The intention would be that of

exposing such employees to the various courses, where they would get recognition both for their study and their uncertified experience and competencies acquired through non-formal and informal learning.

Those enterprises operating in the traditional sectors encounter difficulties due to the shift in the indigenous manufacturing industry towards an innovation-based and value-added industry. Specific measures have to be taken in the low-skilled occupations, where employees operating in such categories would find it much harder to adapt themselves to knowledge-based occupations. Hence, an area that could be explored through a project/scheme that would promote the inter-industry mobility, such as the re-training of manufacturing industry employees to work in the hospitality sector.

So what is being done at the moment? Quite a lot, in fact. Together, FOI and MCAST are researching the needs of industry, and developing these courses. Current courses are being promoted from both ends, especially those pertaining to industry. And future plans, with the help of EU structural funds, include a wide array of courses that target those sectors in industry that need it most.



MOVING TOWARD PROVIDING E-VOCATIONAL TRAINING WITHIN MALTESE PUBLIC VOCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

BY STEPHEN VELLA,
DEPUTY DIRECTOR,
INSTITUTE OF ART AND
DESIGN

Modern information technology and the internet offer several opportunities for Maltese vocational training institutions. Digital technologies are changing the role of the lecturers as well as our understanding of the learning process. These technologies potentially give learners direct access to vast knowledge, as well as the necessary tools to search for and analyse information as well as to teach students. The world is in the middle of a dramatic shift to a new economy, an economy based on knowledge. It is an economy where individuals must be prepared to learn constantly, where those with sophisticated skills are in demand, and where traditional jobs are declining. Most of the forces stirring change in private sector organisations are the same as, or similar to, those impacting upon organisations in the public sector. Inevitably, these trends of change are changing the characteristics of both business enterprises and public bodies (Hamlin, 2001). According to Champy and Noria (1996) one of the main drivers stirring organisational change faster is Information Technology.

The internet is a major provider towards this shift and its effect is now being felt by various industries around the world. Vocational training provision is no exception. The internet is changing the role of lecturers as well as our understanding of the learning process. It offers new possibilities to the public vocational training institutions in Malta, in various ways. These emerging technologies can act as a catalyst for the deployment of e-vocational training. Aldred (2003) states that the higher and vocational education provision around the world is arguably facing one of its greatest challenges in modern times. The impact of information and education technology is posing some profound challenges for educators and their institutions.

In the research I carried out recently I tried to prove the hypothesis that 'The lecturer culture in public training institutions in Malta represents a significant barrier to e-Vocational training'. A questionnaire was distributed to approximately 280 lecturers working in twelve training institutions around Malta.

Specific focus was given towards understanding better the lecturers' culture through their attitudes towards information technology, the potential barriers and possible resistance to change, the need for change and their attitudes towards e-vocational training.

Through the literary review it was identified that e-learning initiatives have reportedly created new educational issues for the lecturers, such as changing work patterns and in some cases the reluctant integration of technology. The literature research also suggests that the current lecturer culture does not support the new student-centred culture which is vital in its support towards implementing e-vocational training. The primary research identified several points which support and refute this theory.

The main findings from primary research indicate that lecturers presently working in various public vocational training institutions around the Maltese islands would support the 'students-centred culture'. This was supported by the findings presented in the primary research analysis.



Lecturers agreed that students should be given access to lecture notes, and tutorials via internet. They also acknowledge that the internet can be used to significantly improve vocational training. They are not bothered that their role will become too complex if internet technology is introduced to deliver e-vocational training. They even feel that the time is ripe to start offering vocational training through e-learning methods, even though the internet is still not so secure. The majority are also keen to receive and send feedback to students via e-mail.

In general the lecturers are not happy with the quality of vocational training presently being provided to students. Although lecturers are doing their utmost to provide good learning possibilities to their students they feel that this is done under heavy constraints which occasionally result in some degree of stress.

The primary research has confirmed that lecturers are dissatisfied with the current situation in public vocational training institutions in Malta. It was also identified that lecturers do not

have a shared vision for e-vocational training and they lack the knowledge of what to do next. It was concluded that lecturers need to be involved in discussions and preparations with other multidisciplinary teams in order to develop an implementation strategy. This dialogue and decision-making phase should be used to close the gap between the current state of vocational training provision and the future vision of e-vocational training.

The expected resistance to change by the lecturer culture may enable the risk of project failure, therefore to achieve change the lecturers must first recognize that change is desirable and feasible (Carnall, 1995). Lecturers need to feel that their present working conditions and security will not be affected. The research evidence has shown that lecturers find it very easy to work closely as a team with other professionals other than their like. This is an advantage towards reducing possible resistance to change. Better communication and involvement of all the stakeholders should be sought especially when decisions regarding new information technology are being discussed within the different institutes. There should be an involvement and contribution from all stakeholders to establish the direction, change and control of the implementation process.

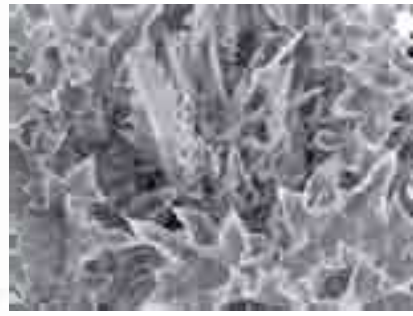
Some recommendations are presented hereunder, which could be used by any public vocational training institution before and during the implementation of e-vocational training:

- If possible try to involve a wide selection of lecturers, technicians and other members of staff in multidisciplinary teams when choosing new IT software and hardware relating to e-vocational training.
- Find methods to make the Internet more secure before launching e-vocational training to students.
- Assess resistance to change before launching new e-vocational training programmes. Change appropriately in order to reduce resistance to change.

- Put forth valid reasons for the need for change. Overcoming resistance to change must be directed at the real fears and doubts of those to be affected.
- In order to facilitate the implementation of e-vocational training, plans should be well defined. Have tangible and realistic goals, providing all necessary resources to facilitate objectives attainment.
- Assess the vocational training staff's IT skills in order to be in a better position to offer them appropriate training.
- Understand that change cannot happen overnight. Systems can be changed overnight but people require considerable time to adapt to change.
- Staff, including lecturers, should be provided with appropriate IT training before launching e-vocational training. Where applicable provide them with actual references of other Institutes or Colleges where e-vocational training methods are being used.
- The right budget must be allocated to provide for training of staff, purchasing of appropriate hardware and software, anti-virus systems and a robust Management Information System which will secure easy flow of e-vocational training.

Collaboration with government, private organisations and other institutions is important to overcome the high cost involved in developing e-learning.





THE GLOBE ARTICHOKE (CYNARA SCOLYMUS)

BY SAMMY VELLA

The Latin name derives from the Greek, combining a word meaning 'pointed stake' (scolymus) with the name of an Aegean island, 'Kinara'. Globe Artichoke is a robust perennial that grows up to two metres in height. These days they tend to be cultivated without spines. But this is not a general rule. In countries where the artichoke is a traditional food, as it is in the Mediterranean, many varieties are used, and some varieties that retain spines at the tip of the scales are indeed valued for their sustained tenderness. The artichoke flowers from July to August with beautiful blue-violet tubular blossoms, up to 15cm wide. The Maltese name is qaqoċċ and in some dialects it is pronounced qarqoċċ.

There are few Maltese families that do not serve artichokes during the early Spring especially in the Lenten and Easter period. But few are aware of the exceptional health and medicinal value of this plant which some even consider as a poor man's dish.

Yet, Globe Artichoke has a long history of traditional use in herbal medicine dating back to ancient times. It was used in cases of jaundice, oedema (fluid retention) and urinary stones. Taken internally it was also used as a deodorant and to help relieve the symptoms of rheumatism. Globe Artichoke contains a substance known as cynarin, a phenolic acid found in the leaves of the herb. This substance is thought to be responsible for the traditional use of Globe Artichoke as an agent to help lower elevated blood cholesterol and protect the liver.

The ancient Egyptians and the Romans prized Globe Artichoke as a medication as well as a food but, regrettably for those suffering from poor liver function

or difficulty in metabolising fats and keeping their cholesterol down, it fell into disuse as a medication. Globe Artichoke has a powerful effect on the production of bile and fat-digesting enzymes, stimulating liver functions and lowering cholesterol levels. Seemingly this latter action is due to increased bile production and reduced absorption of cholesterol in the intestine, with less cholesterol being synthesized in the liver and more being eliminated.

Thanks to this positive effect on managing cholesterol, Globe Artichoke may also be used to help prevent arteriosclerotic changes in the blood vessels - where fatty plaques build up inside the wall of the artery and reduce blood flow, pushing up blood pressure - thus protecting against heart disease.

Like most herbs that can elicit a digestive response, Globe Artichoke tastes bitter. The enzymes contained in Globe Artichoke are extremely effective in the digestive tract and were, in the past, used to curdle milk for cheese making!

Many, many people suffer from IBS (Irritable Bowel Syndrome) and Globe Artichoke may well help in this area too, when people find it hard to digest fatty foods. During clinical trials in 2001 symptoms such as bloating, flatulence, abdominal cramps on the right hand side and constipation were all alleviated with an extract of Artichoke leaf. The Artichoke preparation was well-tolerated and over 80% of the patients improved. The improved bile secretion that Globe Artichoke promotes aids digestion, especially of fatty foods, and also increases bowel movement thus reducing constipation.



The Swiss naturopath, Alfred Vogel wrote 'Since our present-day diet is so rich in fat, it is good to take a remedy which acts - as artichoke does - on the gall and liver, if for no other reason than as a prophylactic measure to lessen the risk of developing gallstones.'

Like Milk Thistle - Xewka tal-Madonna - Globe Artichoke can protect the liver against the harmful effects of substances such as alcohol. As most of us are unlikely to make eating a large plate of artichoke a prerequisite for a visit to the pub, it is useful to have such remedies as artichoke leaf extract on hand.

So next time anybody asks you what kind of nutrition one actually derives from eating those leathery leaves of the globe artichoke, you can tell them that this humble plant which Goethe regarded as a thistle, has more merit than meets the eye and people would do well to make more space for it on their menu.

It is useful to remember that the active ingredient, cynarin, is found chiefly in the leaves of the plant, although it is also present in reduced quantities in all other parts of the plant. Thus the leaves could be dried (in the dark) and an infusion made of the dried leaf. A couple of cups of this infusion daily would make a healthy prophylactic remedy against stress, cholesterol, and digestive problems.

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BERLIN: FASHION AND THE CREATIVE INDUSTRY

by Donald Friggieri



Creativity has often been defined as the ability to think freely, finding solutions where none are immediately apparent. The creative industries sector in Europe is now leading economic growth and creativity is seen as a key factor for the success of the economy as a whole.

Together with representatives from various countries, I was recently invited to visit Berlin under the auspices of the Visitors' Programme of the Federal Republic of Germany. The programme, designed to coincide with the Berlin Fashion Week, was planned and organized by the Goethe-Institut on behalf of the Federal Foreign Office.

Since 2006, Berlin has been able to officially use the designation "Creative City". The capital's art scene is thriving: almost 5,000 artists live and work in Berlin, while 380 galleries market their work to collectors. UNESCO awarded Berlin the title "City of Design" and appointed it, as the first city in Europe, to the Creative Cities Network under the framework of UNESCO's Global Alliance for Cultural Diversity.

The four-day programme kicked off with a visit to ESMOD Berlin, one of the seven specialised fashion schools in Berlin. Annual fashion shows, given by graduating classes at ESMOD, like the ones from the Berlin University of the Arts (UdK), another design college we visited later on in the week, are considered as the most important shows for up-and-coming designers on the German scene.

At the School of Art and Design Berlin Weissensee, founded in 1946 by artists associated with the Bauhaus, we were able to discuss ongoing work in the studios with degree students. The tour to another educational institution of great standing, namely the FHTW Berlin (Fachhochschule für Technik und Wirtschaft), a University of Applied Sciences, the largest of its kind in Berlin, with a student body of nearly 10,000, was also enlightening. The school has received several distinctions for its innovative approaches and for providing an extensive range of training opportunities.

The FHTW Berlin offers forty different courses, ranging from traditional applied sciences like Conservation-Restoration to more contemporary studies like Renewable Energy Systems Technology, to advanced training like the training of trainers or the so-called VisuL, which are programmes for the promotion of the visually talented.

Two de rigueur appointments included a working lunch at the invitation of the Directorate-General for Culture and Communication held at the Federal Foreign Office during which an evaluation of the visitors' programme also took place. This was followed by a visit-cum-conference to the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology, where the federal government's aims of the culture and creative industry initiatives were explained. Among the objectives, one could mention the strengthening of competitiveness, making better use of the employment potential of the creative industry, the promotion of new digital technologies as the main driving forces for innovation and growth and the improvement of the business environment for those involved, through a strengthening of expertise and optimised networking.

A most profitable workshop, with 'Networking' as the theme was held at the Goethe-Institut. This was conducted by Dr Ulrich Sacker, representative of the Goethe-Institut for Parliament and Government in Berlin. Through power-point or similar presentations prepared prior to their arrival in Berlin, all participants were able to exchange information and ideas and discuss learning outcomes while perusing students' work from their respective institutions.

Dr Sacker is also the initiator of the project "Createurope – The Fashion Academy Award", with QUELLE (one of the biggest traditional brands in Germany) as chief sponsor in co-operation with the German Foreign Office. This is a Europe-wide competition for young fashion designers and design students, details of which he presented during a meeting held for the purpose. The winner of the "Best Upcoming Designer Award" will receive the "One-Year-in-Berlin" package also known as the "Quelle-Fellow" to a total value of Euro 25,000. There are two more categories in the competition, namely the "Best Avant-garde Award" for a collection which is progressive, trend-setting, future-oriented and the "Best Student Award" for the development cycle of an outfit – from sketches to drawings to the finished model. Students from the MCAST Institute of Art & Design are participating in this competition.

The "Werkhaus Anti-Rost" is made up of a colourful group of people who enjoy dressing up and telling tales from their richly diverse lives. Members of the group wearing a selection of original fashion wear from the '40s, '50s and '60s, mixed with us during an evening get-together. The items of clothing had formed part of a nostalgic fashion show entitled "From Snazzy

to Jazzy” which had taken place a while ago. The fashion show was meant to rekindle memories of the post-war years reminding us how our mothers and grandmothers tailored warm coats from wool blankets, cut confirmation dresses from grandma’s velvet sitting room drapes, and transformed decorative pillow covers and nightgowns into blouses and summer dresses.

“Is there still national fashion in Europe?” was the question debated during a symposium held to mark the Berlin Fashion Week. The speakers’ panel was made up of Professor Sibylle Klose (Pforzheim University – School of Design), Alistair O’Neill (research fellow in Fashion History and Theory, Central Saint Martin’s School of Art and Design, London), Dr Ulrich Sacker (Director of the Capital Office, Goethe Institut), Carl Tillessen (designer FIRMA).

Worth mentioning too is the guided visit to the Wedding district in Berlin for the festival of urban arts organised by the DEGEWO group. With its presentation of twenty-five new stores and numerous art and community projects, the festival brought a new look to the Brunnen Strasse area. The festival was aimed at fashion fans, art lovers, trade visitors as well as the area’s residents. The initiative “Create your own Wedding space” offered a temporary rent-free use of several store fronts to creative individuals who had submitted proposals for art and design activities with a tangible commercial bias. The aim behind this juried competition was to ensure that the neighbourhood’s vitalisation continues after the festival.

The programme also included visits to some renowned outlets, such as the Galeries Lafayette on Friedrichstrasse, a highly informative guided tour by coach around Berlin, and optional initiatives. I chose to visit the collection of the Bauhaus Archive (Museum of Design) on the edge of the Tiergarten park. Here the visitor encounters all the phases of activity and locations of the Bauhaus through a surprising variety of works executed in all the media of the arts.

The governing mayor of Berlin, Klaus Wowereit argues that Berlin has a great future as the capital of designers and creative artists. The Berlin Senate makes a great effort to create more business opportunities for young creative artists and for the entire value chain of the fashion industry. All possible spaces and experimentation fields, for example for an “interim use”, are made available. Companies, large or small, artists and designers receive quick and competent advice with regard to settling in Berlin and receiving financial support. The culture industry in Berlin regularly produces a turnover of over eight billion euro.

The PREMIUM closing party marked the end of the Berlin Fashion Week and the visitors’ programme. As fashion and design enthusiasts left Berlin to return to their destination, twenty-thousand experts, four thousand journalists and innumerable film fans started pouring into the city from around the globe for what is arguably Berlin’s biggest cultural event and one of the world’s most important festivals, the 2008 Berlinale film festival.



Textiles & Fashion Design workshop at the School of Art & Design Weissensee founded in 1946 by Bauhaus artists.

Bauhaus Archive Museum exhibits furniture and products designed at the important school of design.

COMUNIO MEDIA RELEASE ABOUT DE-CRIMINALIZATION OF ABORTION

It is a real pity that from time to time we have to be drawn into discussing the issue of abortion. If ever the people who come up with their suggestion to de-criminalize abortion lived the fate of their same proposal a few days or weeks after their conception, surely the issue would not surface. We feel that this should be enough thought to help one realize the double standards underlying such a desolate proposal.

If one really thinks about the unique value of life, no stone will be left unturned to ensure that life is protected at all stages – from the very first minutes of conception right up to mature age. Just think about all the great men and women who have contributed to a better world.... inventors, researchers, authors, philosophers, administrators, volunteer workers, policy makers, and politicians amongst many others. What would have happened to us if ever all these were denied the natural light of day whilst still in their mother's womb, just because abortion was de-criminalised?

All mankind has been granted with the best possible gift one may receive – the gift of life. Truly, certain moments in life are at times hard to crack. However even for these very difficult moments there are people who are ready and willing to give all their support. Surely there are moments in which you feel on top of the world – and such positive experiences are life's beautiful gems, only if we appreciate the true value of life.

We are all duty bound to give others the same chance to love life and experience its elation, just as we were given this opportunity at birth. This we can do in a tangible way by standing up and voicing our pro-life urge.

There may be many reasons why a mother of an unborn child could be veered towards taking a decision to abort the life of her innocent offspring. All these reasons are never enough to justify a murder. Complementary to this, mothers who are in such intricate situations, are only facing betrayal when they are told that there are no complications following abortions.

It is our duty to help these people by referring them to the right professional assistance which is only a contact away. Never shall we judge. However we should always do our very best to save a life and help a mother to overcome the difficult situation she is in. Just imagine the incomparable joy of cuddling a newborn baby and the million smiles brought about by a child who is growing up.

Comunio urges young people to share with others the opportunity to enjoy life. Appreciate life, whilst making sure that all unborn human beings have their right to life, protected as it should be. De-criminalizing abortion is just as criminal as all other forms of murder.

"Founded in 1949, the Council of Europe seeks to develop throughout Europe common and democratic principles based on the European Convention on Human Rights and other reference texts on the protection of individuals" (www.coe.int). Aren't unborn human beings in need of protection since they have no possibility of defending themselves from any fatal harm which can come their way? Don't they have a basic Human Right to live and grow?

The Council of Europe has fervently worked hard to find and provide solutions to various challenges faced by mankind. It is very active in making a stand against trafficking of human beings, organized crime, violence against children, xenophobia, genocides, and discrimination against minorities.

Comunio urges Maltese civil authorities to do the very best to keep our gracious Islands clean of the innocent blood of the unborn – today and always.





COMUNIO ... COMMUNICATES

www.comuniomalta.org

Comunio – a students’ organization focusing on socio-spiritual matters, which has been active within the Institute of Business and Commerce and beyond for the past seven years, has lately enhanced its communication media.

Thanks to the collaboration and very valid assistance of Mr Daniel Casingena, a young member of the academic staff who amongst others teaches Web Design at the Institute, Comunio now has its very own informative website which is regularly updated. The website is not only intended to promote and inform about Comunio events and initiatives. It also acts as a platform for discussion and provision of information on various issues.

Very soon, Fr John Curmi, the College Chaplain, will be regularly posting his own blog on this website which will also include information about activities nurtured within the College Chaplaincy.

The website also links up its visitors to **“footSTEPS”** – an electronic magazine (e-zine) which Comunio issues regularly and which is also posted by email to a database which currently reaches out to over 800 recipients.

“footSTEPS” is a bilingual e-zine which presents readers with articles and other writings about various themes and aspects of personal development and character formation. Issues related to spirituality are also taken up in this publication and it is Comunio’s intention to try and provide a better fora for a mature debate on spiritual and ethical issues (including bio-ethics).

To underpin these aspects, besides Fr John’s input, the e-zine is also pleased to have had in its pages respectable authors such as Fr Charles Fenech, Fr Joe Giuliano, Seminarian Robert Galea, KDZ’s Fr Marco Portelli as well as Mr Anthony Saliba – the College’s Deputy Principal. Other interesting contributions by well known experts in their area, are on plan.

The e-zine is also a means of promoting and keeping its readers informed about Comunio events and initiatives as well as other national activities being organised by various NGOs and which are of interest and at times provide an appealing challenge to young people.

Over the past six months, Comunio has also been very busy and active with a weekly radio programme broadcast on 102.3FM stereo every Wednesday evening with a repeat on Saturday morning. The programme - christened **“Strumenti”** – has offered a first experience of passing over Comunio’s mission and vision through a very effective means of social communication. Surely the 26th December 2007 open interview with His Grace Archbishop Cremona will remain the highlight of this radio challenge – one can listen to the programme through Comunio’s website in the Strumenti FM section.

The feedback received has been very positive and a lot of new acquaintances have been nurtured through the FM waves. However since the forthcoming period will be a very busy one for Comunio members, just as for all other students, Comunio has had to take the difficult decision not to take up a commitment for a further three months of radio programmes.

This notwithstanding, Comunio will still be involved with other Maltese and Gozitan youths in a new Sunday afternoon two-hour programme which is being aired every Sunday at 2pm on 102.3FM stereo.

You are invited to listen in to these programmes and get in touch with your ideas and feedback. Likewise Comunio encourages all MCAST students and young members of staff to contribute to the various events and initiatives which are in the pipeline. All interested are only an email away – comunio@mcast.edu.mt. Alternatively you are very welcome to visit www.comuniomalta.org for regular updates and information.



IBAC APPOINTED SAP TRAINING PROVIDER

SAP, the world's largest business software company and the world's third largest independent software provider, set up an Academy at the Institute of Business and Commerce.

The SAP Academy is the fourth IT Academy being set up in MCAST as a result of the Vertical Strategic Alliances. The IT Academies set up so far include Microsoft, Oracle and Cisco. Whilst these three academies have been set up in the Institute of Information and Communication Technology, the SAP academy was set up in the Institute of Business and Commerce.

As part of the Vertical Strategic Alliance, SAP has installed for free the latest versions of SAP Business One and mySAP Business Suite at MCAST. Beside, the installation of

the software for free, SAP provided training to two lecturers from the MCAST Institute of Business and Commerce through its local partner (Enterprise SAP). The MCAST tutors successfully obtained the 'Solution Consultant Certification SAP Business One', and hence the Institute is now accredited to deliver this certification to its students.

The 'Solution Consultant Certification SAP Business One' course provides proficiency and consultancy skills in using SAP Business One, an integrated business management application designed specifically to meet the needs of small businesses. This enterprise resource planning software is a single system that can automate critical business operations such as sales, finance, purchasing, inventory, and manufacturing.



INAUGURATION OF NEW BLOCK



The new premises of the Institute of Community Services was officially inaugurated in December 2007. It is now located on the Main Campus of MCAST in Kordin.

The new facility cost EUR 2 million to build and was funded by the Government and the European Development Fund for European Development for 2004-2006.

The Institute of Community Services was previously operating from two buildings, one in Sliema and one in Msida. It now occupies 3290 square metres, has 14 classrooms, four hairdressing salons, two beauty salons, a health care laboratory, a crafts workshop, a computer and science laboratory, a music and drama room, two stores, a multipurpose room and a staff room, among other facilities.



SUCCESSFUL

36

HOUR HAIRDRESSING & BEAUTY THERAPY MARATHON 2008

Over forty three thousand euros were collected during the 13th edition of the annual 36 hour Hair and Beauty Therapy Marathon organised by the MCAST Institute of Community Services between Sunday 4 May and Monday 5th May 2008. The Marathon was held at the Institute of Community Services, Paola. This year's beneficiaries were id-Dar tal-Providenza and the Malta Hospice Movement. The event helps students' development, supports good causes and brings about a community spirit within a learning and caring environment, and also forms part of the College's corporate responsibility service for the community.



EUROSKILLS



The Director of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineering, John Sciberras, attended the EuroSkills Competition Development Committee (CDC) meeting in Riga, Latvia. This was the largest CDC meeting ever held with 16 countries present.

During the intensive meeting a variety of topics were discussed in view of the EuroSkills September 2008 Competition that will take place in the Netherlands. Mrs Tatjana Koke, Latvia's Minister of Education visited the CDC meeting and welcomed all participants to Latvia. The participants also had the opportunity to visit Latvia's new competition centre where the organization and standards were displayed.

There have been a number of discussions, at both national and international levels, to design competitions for EuroSkills 2008. EuroSkills offers organizations within EU member states, including government bodies, industrial organizations, education establishments and funding providers, a platform to work together to improve the quality, results and appeal of vocational skills and education.

The overall objectives include the following:

- To use vocational competitions to help the EU and its member states promote and improve vocational skills.
- To make EU countries aware of the importance of high-quality vocational skills and education.

- To develop a series of European vocational competitions in which candidates from any EU member state can participate.
- To ensure that the vocational competitions organized by EuroSkills accurately reflect the vocational standards required by EU member states and the EU as a whole.
- To encourage each EU member state to participate in EuroSkills and national vocational competitions, and to develop and/or expand the promotion of vocational skills.

To achieve the above objectives, the EuroSkills committee is focusing on the promotion and presentation of European trades and vocational education. The highlight is not only the trade and vocational training, but also a focus on Europe-wide cooperation within the industries. The aim is to motivate young people through the vocational competitions and search for the best contestants in Europe. The Euroskills committee serves as a platform through which European educational establishments, government education, ministries and international industry organizations can exchange knowledge and experience with regards to innovation and also discusses teaching methods and opportunities to collaborate.

The last meeting is held on April 18 2008 in Espoo (Finland). The direct contacts with national education authorities and international skills organizations and close cooperation with European Skills Promoting Organization ESPO will be of great benefit to our students and to Malta in general.



INDUSTRIAL WORK PLACEMENTS



Over the past few months, lecturing staff from the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineering carried out a range of work placements within Industry. Ten lecturers carried out work visits at local industries such as Dedicated Micros, ST Microelectronics Malta Ltd, Methode Electronics Ltd, Go and Simonds Farsons Cisk. The objectives for these visits were twofold. The main objective was for the lecturers to build upon their knowledge of latest technologies and processes adopted by these industries. A second objective was for the Institute to further solidify its ties and communication networks with industry. All lecturers were placed according to their area of specialization.

Three lecturers, Reuben Grima, Marjohn Demanuele and Raymond Bonello carried out three days work placement at Simonds Farsons Cisk. The latter has recently

invested in millions of liri in modern manufacturing equipment and in skilled technical staff, thus the lecturers, besides visiting various production plants, also had the opportunity to work on the latest equipment. Lecturers Alex Mifsud and Andy Bugeja carried out three days work placement at Methode Electronics Ltd. The two lecturers had the opportunity to look into various production machines, PLC programming techniques and data acquisition applications. Lecturer Charles Agius carried out a three day placement at Dedicated Micros and had the opportunity to expand his knowledge on modern testing and programming, assembly and packaging, and SMT post flow process. At Go, lecturers Joseph Zammit and Jeremy Scerri were treated to a range of visits to particular off-sites from the mother company, such as the ADFSL infrastructure in B'Kara, fiber optic splicing equipment and the exchange

department. Joshua Bugeja and Mary Grace Cassar were assigned a work placement of another three days at ST Microelectronics Malta Ltd. Joshua Bugeja, through the EDP Department, was given the opportunity of seeing computer aided manufacturing systems implemented in a WAN environment which are absolutely crucial to the high end manufacturing as seen in the semiconductor industry. Mary Grace Cassar on the other hand spent time with the facilities organization and could thus appreciate the engineering efforts required to control the environment in a manufacturing site that has many different environment requirements including several clean areas. Mary Grace Cassar was also shown some of the more challenging assembly processes and was impressed with the high speed and high precision automation.



ICT INSTITUTE ORACLE INITIATIVE STUDIES LEADING TO ORACLE CERTIFIED ASSOCIATE

The ICT Institute is pleased to announce a new initiative for ICT students that will enable all first year Higher National Diploma students to obtain the Oracle Certified Associate (OCA) qualification. Discussions with Oracle regarding this initiative have been ongoing since June 2007.

This falls under the Oracle Workforce Development Programme (WDP) whereby Oracle partners up with training institutions in order to help address the global IT worker shortage.

The ICT Institute's philosophy has, since inception, been to integrate Industry standard tools into its curriculum whereby students are then able to obtain Industry standard certification as well as the MCAST Diplomas, thereby putting students in a very strong position to compete with the very best in the sector.

This initiative is yet another milestone that will further strengthen our students' employability in this highly aggressive sector.

The Institute offers four levels of qualifications. All students in their first year of study of the MCAST / BTEC Higher National Diploma (which is the top level qualification at the ICT Institute) will be given the opportunity to benefit from this initiative.

The Institute has integrated part of the OCA programme into the full-time curriculum and the areas not covered will be offered free of charge to students after hours thereby enabling all first year Higher National Diploma students to obtain the highly sought after OCA at no charge, apart from the charge to sit for the necessary examinations.

MCAST/BTEC NATIONAL DIPLOMA IN COMPUTING

In September 2007, the ICT Institute, in conjunction with the ETC, launched an apprenticeship in the Networking and ICT Support stream. A total of fifteen students opted to take up this initiative.

The Institute is pleased to announce that as from September 2008, the apprenticeship will be extended to the Software Development stream. Further details will be announced at a later date.

INSTITUTE SOLIDARITY DAY

The Institute of Information and Communication Technology organized a 'Solidarity Day' on Tuesday 18 March 2008 in support of an MCAST colleague whose house was devastated by a recent deadly explosion.

All lectures were cancelled for the day and a series of activities were organized for all students and staff as follows:

- Football
- Prisoners
- LAN Party
- Car Wash
- Basketball
- Volleyball

The Institute is pleased to have raised over Euro 2000 from the events that will be donated to our colleague.

The Institute would like to thank all staff and students who participated in the events that not only helped in team building but also contributed to a very worthy cause.

OFFICER CADETS VISIT HMS ILLUSTRIOUS

On 26 February 2008, Maritime Institute Officer Cadets and Probationary Officer Cadets paid a visit on board the Royal Navy Aircraft Carrier HMS Illustrious whilst the ship was visiting Malta. The visit was organised by the British High Commission in Malta. The Maritime Institute Officer Cadets were given a tour of the vessel by some of the ship's junior officers who answered a number of questions which the Cadets asked about the ship's operational role. HMS Illustrious is the second of three Invincible Class Aircraft carriers, and the fifth ship to bear her proud name. Illustrious, or 'Lusty' as she is known fondly by all on board, was built at Swan Hunters Ship Builders Yard on the Tyne, and subsequently commissioned in her base port of Portsmouth in 1982.

In terms of her 'vital statistics', Illustrious is an impressive 209m long, with a beam of 36m and a displacement of 22,000 tonnes. She has 1400 compartments and 15 lifts, and she is powered by 4 Gas Turbine Olympus engines (a marinised version of Concorde's), giving her a top speed in excess of 30 knots. With a Tailored Air Group embarked she has a full complement of over 1000 people, and can operate with a range of both rotary and fixed wing aircraft from the Harrier GR9 to troop-carrying Chinooks. Her roles can vary widely, and include everything from Maritime Strike to Evacuation Operations; all of which she has ably demonstrated herself to be very much capable of fulfilling. The Ship's motto, "Vox Non Incerta", comes from a quote in the bible,

specifically Corinthians I, Ch.14 v.8, which reads: "For if the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" The motto then, means "No Uncertain Sound"; and suits Illustrious extremely well.



HMS Illustrious in Grand Harbour, Valletta before coming alongside Pinto Wharf on Tue 26 Feb 08.

MARITIME INSTITUTE OFFICER CADETS START RUGBY TRAINING PROGRAMME

Since mid-December 2007, Maritime Institute Officer Cadets have been following a regular training programme introducing them to the sport of Rugby. The training is being organised by the Malta Rugby Football Union Youth Development Officer, Mr. Sam Ramage, and Officer Cadets have the opportunity to train in the Rugby Pitch in the Marsa Sports Grounds.

The Officer Cadets have shown a very keen interest in this sport,



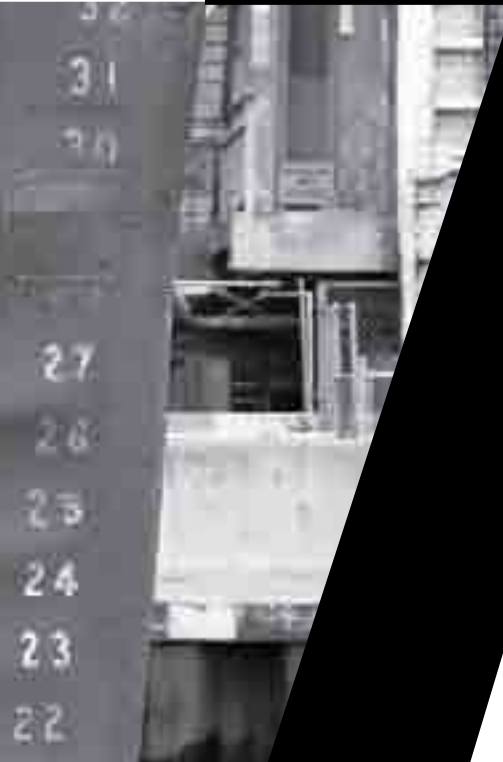
Mr. Sam Ramage, explaining the basic rules of rugby to Maritime Institute Officer Cadets at the Marsa Rugby pitch.

which although relatively new in Malta, has become very popular in most schools and in the local sport scenario. Some of the Officer Cadets have in fact even joined some of the local rugby youth clubs and it is the intention of the Maritime Institute to try to extend this sport to other interested MCAST students. Anybody interested in taking up rugby as a sport is asked to contact Ms Adele Muscat, MCAST Sport Coordinator.

MARITIME INSTITUTE COMMENCES SEVENTH COURSE ON PORT WORK

After the success of the first Port Work Course which commenced on the 10 September 2007, the Maritime Institute is currently running the seventh course on Port Work intended for those persons who would eventually wish to seek employment in a Port-

related environment. The courses are very popular and many local companies have already offered employment to persons who have successfully completed the training courses at the Maritime Institute.



OFFICER CADETS VISIT METEOROLOGICAL OFFICE

On Wednesday 12 March 2008, Maritime Institute first-year Officer Cadets visited the Malta International Airport Meteorological Office at Luqa. This visit was organised by the Institute's Meteorology Lecturer, Capt. Francis Gauci, as part of the Officer-in-Charge of a Navigational Watch Meteorology course. The cadets were also accompanied by GMDSS Lecturer, Mr. Stephen Farrugia.

Left Top:
Probationary Officer Cadets being shown around the historic exhibits section of the Meteorology Office

Left Bottom:
Officer Cadets with lecturers during their visit at the Meteorological Office at Luqa.

ARMED FORCES OF MALTA MARITIME SQUADRON PERSONNEL COMPLETE LOCAL MASTER COURSE



Fifteen Armed Forces of Malta Maritime Squadron Mates have just completed a ten-week full-time course at the Maritime Institute to qualify as Patrol Craft Local Masters. The candidates were trained in a variety of maritime subjects such as navigation, general ship knowledge, meteorology, seamanship, signals, maritime law, radio communications and ship instrumentation, as well as other subjects. The course also allowed candidates to practise their boathandling skills on Sea Craft as well as in realistic rough sea conditions on the recently installed Bridge Simulator at the Maritime Institute, where they also carried out simulated search and rescue missions.

Armed Forces of Malta candidates on the Local Masters course "navigate" a coast guard vessel through rough seas whilst on a simulated search and rescue mission in the Institute's ship bridge simulator.



FIRST YEAR OFFICER CADETS ATTEND PREPARATORY SESSIONS ORGANISED BY MCAST COUNSELLING & GUIDANCE SECTION

In line with the Leadership and Management training programme, first-year Officer Cadets attended a two-day preparatory session organised by the MCAST Counselling and Guidance section on how to cope with certain issues which they may face during their 12-month phase of training at sea. For many who have never experienced being away from family and friends for a long duration of time or served on a ship which poses a totally different and difficult environment, this may become a problem. It is therefore important to prepare for this challenging phase and to train oneself to accept the new environment he or she will be living in over the next 12 months.

It was with this intention in mind that the MCAST Counselling and Guidance section launched a two day training course to prepare the Officer Cadets for the challenges that lie ahead. The first day of training was held at the Maritime Institute itself, whilst the second day was spent at Fort Madalena, Madliena, the training school of the St. John Rescue Corps where the cadets had the chance to work together in an isolated and different environment. The Cadets thoroughly enjoyed the course and recommended it for other Officer Cadets who will be embarking on seagoing vessels.

OFFICER CADETS AT SEA

The following Officer Cadets were at sea on the following vessels during the period this article was written:

Cadet	Date Embarked	Vessel
Christian Grima	17/09/07	MV Grande Scandinavia
Larissa Portelli	11/02/08	HS Bizert
Angele Marie Agius	20/04/08	
Chris Bugeja	26/09/07	MV Grande Anversa
Brandon Lee Camilleri	22/09/07	MV Grande Detroit
James Vella	26/09/07	
Alessandro Zerafa	26/09/07	MV Grande Ellade
Sergio Zahra	29/09/07	
David Cutajar	03/10/07	MV Grande Europa
Dylan Bartolo	25/09/07	
Mauro Zammit	27/09/07	
Keith Marshall	19/09/07	CMA CGM Sambhar
Daniel Attard	02/11/07	MSC Sarah
Charlot Cassar	end of 2007	

EXHIBITION

**INSTITUTE OF ELECTRICAL AND
ELECTRONICS ENGINEERING**



PROJECTS EXHIBITION

at the

**St. James Cavalier Centre for Creativity,
Valletta** (opposite Castille Palace)

from the

20 - 23 June 2008

**Your opportunity to meet the lecturers and fellow students, view students' works
and exhibits, learn more about careers in Electrical and Electronics Engineering**

Viewing hours: **9.30am to 8.30pm**

**Institute of Electrical and
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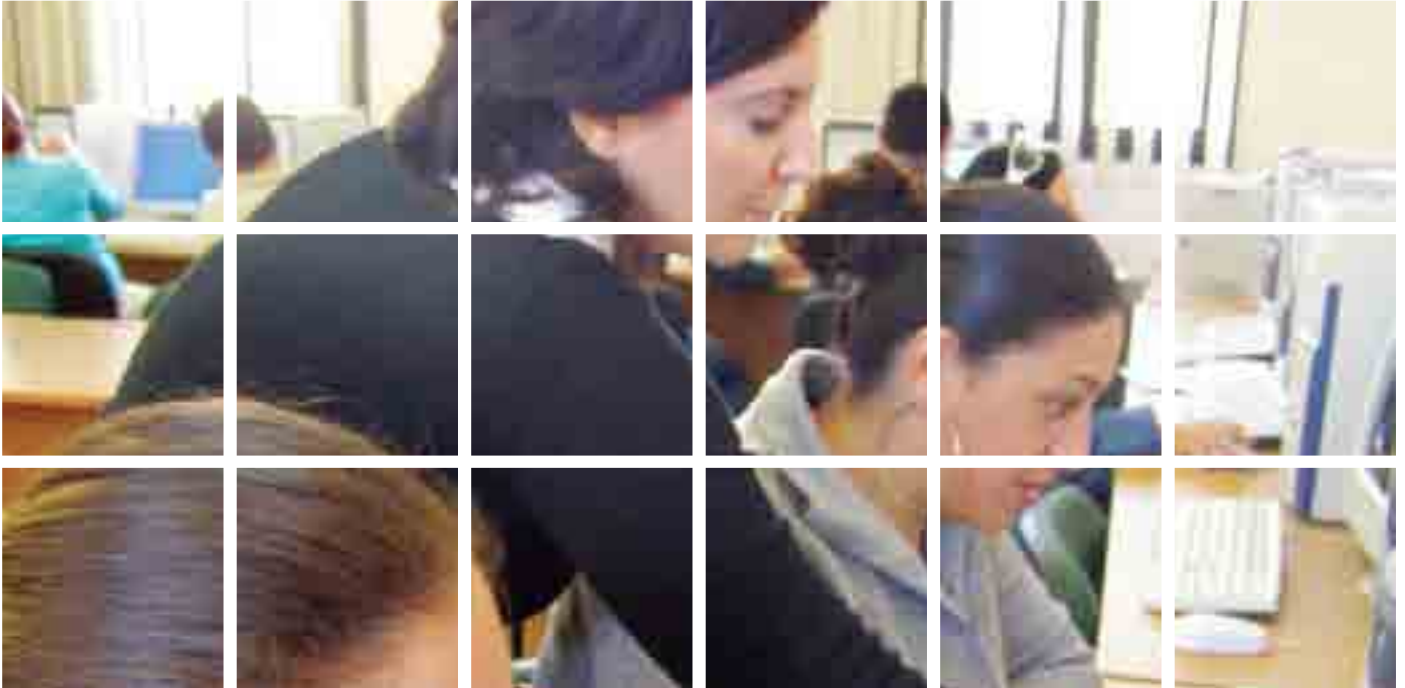
MCAST Main Campus, Triq Kordin, Paola PLA 9032

Tel: 2182 3657 or 2180 3657

E-mail: eei@mcast.edu.mt

Website: www.mcast.edu.mt

BASIC SKILLS



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PROJECTS AND HOBBIES EXHIBITION

A Projects and Hobbies Exhibition was held at the Institute of Mechanical Engineering. Lecturers and students exhibited some of their work which included photography, woodwork, miniature models of church items, models of cars and

more. Some students displayed projects they did during their course at the Institute. For the third consecutive year, members of the Association of Model Engineers also participated in the exhibition.





REVAMPING THE MOTOR VEHICLE COMPLEX

BY DAVID BONELLO, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, INSTITUTE OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

The Motor Vehicle Complex (MV Complex) has suffered from a lack of learning space in these last four years. The main reason was that the reinforced concrete of the MV Complex laboratories were found to be severely damaged and declared unsafe for teaching/learning purposes.

Therefore most of the theory and practical sessions that were carried out in this particular area were either transferred or compressed to a minimum in other areas. I must admit that that this was not the best set-up to motivate learning, especially since this situation lasted for a number of years. Imagine having a panel beating session and an engine practical session taking place

simultaneously in the same lab; or having a class doing an auto electronics theory session while another class is tuning up an internal combustion diesel engine close by.

One could imagine that these circumstances have provided significant interference for proper learning to take place. Nevertheless, with the perseverance of all the administrative staff and lecturers, learning continued to take place and students were kept motivated to learn.

In October 2007, the labs were handed back to the Institute of Mechanical Engineering. However, there was still too much work to be carried out. Apart from all this, one also needs to point out that intruders have broken



into the MV Complex and left with most of the highly dedicated diagnostic equipment which was extremely useful.

Bearing this scenario in mind, the staff of the Institute, especially those directly involved with the MV Complex, have focused on the priorities that had to be carried out in order to make the premises run as they should within the least possible time span. New equipment was purchased and installed and the Autolab was transferred to its original place. The Autolab was the first laboratory commissioned through ERDF funds and will continue to serve as one of the most modern teaching aids in Motor Vehicle Engineering.

It is also important to point out that a temporary partnership has been set up with the Motor Vehicle repair section of the Public Works Department, which is situated at Corradino, Paola. Second and third year

Panel Beating and Spraying students will be using their premises so as to cover the practical spraying part in their syllabus. Thanks goes to Eng Margaret Zammit who was instrumental in providing room for discussions in achieving consent for a partnership between MCAST and the Public Works Department.

When one considers all the work that is underway or has been completed in such a short time, one may think that everything is ready. On the contrary, for us it is still the very beginning of a strategic process which will provide the foundation for developing vocational education that will eventually produce highly skilled employees who are competent to satisfy the requirements of the economy and the emerging needs of today's and tomorrow's world.



Hon. Giovanna Debono, Minister for Gozo together with Mr Paul A Attard, President of the Board of Governors and Prof Maurice Grech, Principal and CEO

WORKSHOP COMPLEX IN XEWKIJA GOZO INAUGURATED



At the workshop

This year the MCAST Institute of Mechanical Engineering with the support of the International Programmes Office is embarking on a Comenius project namely "European CNC-Network". The coordination team is made up of four MCAST staff members. Eventually students will also be invited to join this project. The MCAST team together with 25 participating countries will be taking an active part in this project. The other participating countries are: Germany, Belgium, England, Greece, Italy, Austria, Sweden, Poland, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Finland, Ireland, Croatia, Norway, Portugal, Switzerland, Turkey, France, Faroes Island, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, and Hungary. The coordination of this project is entrusted to BBS TGHS Bad Kreuznach (Germany). This is the largest Comenius partnership launched so far.

A preparatory visit was conducted between the 7 and 13 November 2007 at the BBS College of Bad Kreuznach Germany. The participants of the preparatory visit for the "European CNC-Network" agreed on a number of points namely that a European Network in the field of computerized numerically controlled (CNC) machines will be developed. English has been selected as the working language and the end product of this project will be, in fact, a train, aptly titled "Train for Europe". The train will be composed of an engine and a wagon representing each participating country. The different parts of the locomotive will be the result of common planning and manufacturing based on a European division of labour. Each partner school will provide several parts of the locomotive. The

various parts of the locomotive will be assembled in the final meeting, and the wagons will be individually designed and manufactured by each participant. The wagons will incorporate unique characteristics representing the different countries. Four meetings will be held during the project:

- Dec 2007: Coordination and distribution of the design tasks
- Mar 2008: Assessment and agreement on the design drawings
- Sep/Oct 2008: Planning and coordinating of the production tasks
- Apr 2009: Final assembly and presentation of our project "Train for EUROPE"

Apart from the exchange of technical expertise, this project will also allow staff members and students at the Institute of Mechanical Engineering to compare the different kinds of vocational training and educational work and to exchange and develop training methods and material. Differences in teaching, training methods and equipment will be evened out. The participants will also develop a multilingual internet platform as a basis for long-lasting communication.

During the meeting held in November 2007 the participants were convinced that this project was perfectly suited to result in a product supported by a "European CNC-Network". The result of the efforts symbolizes the successful cooperation of the different European educational institutes. The Institute is confident that this project is an excellent example that will bring the "European thinking to life."

CHARITY AND PHILANTHROPIC ACTIVITIES

VISIT AT RESIDENZA SANT'ANNA

Foundation in Care and First Diploma in Care students visited the residents of Residenza Sant' Anna, Victoria, Gozo. The aim of this visit was to provide some company to the elderly residents during the festive season. Some elderly residents feel emarginated and the students wanted to provide company particularly to those who feel abandoned. Students also entertained the residents by singing Christmas carols and they also provided some cakes as Christmas gifts to all the residents in the home. This activity was coordinated by Ms Maureen Buttigieg.

MCAST GOZO BLOOD DRIVE 2007

As in the past years, another initiative undertaken by the staff and students of the MCAST Gozo Centre was a blood donation campaign. A total of 30 persons participated in this noble initiative at the Blood Donation Unit of the Gozo General Hospital. The number of participants in this initiative is increasing year after year.

A few days before the event, an official from the National Blood Bank gave a brief presentation to our students, explaining the dire need of blood donation and what the process involved. The main message that was conveyed was that blood and its derivatives cannot be purchased or produced in a laboratory – whoever donates blood donates life!

Year after year, we take pleasure and satisfaction in noting that first-time blood donors who are somewhat afraid have a double satisfaction – that of overcoming their fear of the process and especially the satisfaction derived from helping ill people who desperately need blood or any of its derivatives for their treatment.

This activity was organised by Mr Paul Camilleri and Mr Joseph Attard.

VOLUNTARY WORK AT LOURDES HOME, DAR STELLA MARIS AND AT THE ARKA RESPITE CENTRE



A range of charity and philanthropic activities, involving the active participation of students and staff in various organizations, were held in the last week before the Christmas holidays as part of the Christmas activities organised by the MCAST Gozo Centre.

The National Diploma in Care students spent a day at Lourdes Home performing varied activities; the students carried out cleaning duties as well as maintenance work and gardening. This group was led by Ms Victoria Said and Mr Joseph Gatt.

Electrical installation and mechanical engineering students spent a whole day at Dar Stella Maris in Zebbug, Gozo, sanding, repairing and painting apertures. The group was led by Mr Sammy Mifsud and Mr Kevin Vella. The following day, a group of AAT students led by Ms Liliana Xuereb spent the day spring cleaning the same residential retreat house. On behalf of MSSP, Fr. Alfred, the retreat house co-ordinator and the Gozo Centre's religious counsellor, heartily thanked the students for this work.

Another group of students from the ICT courses, led by Mr Ian Attard and Mr Mark Falzon, spent a day at the Arka Respite Centre in Ghajnsielem. The group carried out maintenance work on the organisation's computers and network, replacing faulty hardware and performing operating system and application software re-installation. The Respite Centre management was very grateful for this contribution and described it as a sterling service.



Charlene Attard receiving her First Diploma at the Awards Giving Ceremony

MCAST LEVEL 1 AND 2 AWARD GIVING CEREMONY

The Award Giving Ceremony for students who successfully completed Level 1 and 2 courses at the two Gozo Centres was held at the MCAST Centre in Xaghra on Friday 25 January 2008. Fifty four students were presented with awards in recognition of their efforts and success. These included 9 Foundation in Care students, 16 BTEC First Diploma in Care Students, 11 BTEC First Diploma for ICT Practitioner students, 4 BTEC First Diploma in Construction students, 1 BTEC First Diploma in Electronics student, and 13 Foundation Certificate course students.


The ceremony was presided by the Chairman of the Board of Governors, Mr Paul A Attard and the MCAST Principal/CEO, Prof. Maurice Grech. In his very first address to the Gozo Centre students, Prof. Grech congratulated the students on their success, urging them to further their studies. He explained the different realities we are living in today compared to a few years back, stressing on the periodical need to re-train oneself even once in employment. On the other hand, Mr Attard reiterated MCAST's commitment to Gozitan students in offering them as much study opportunities in Gozo as is feasibly possible. He encouraged students to fully exploit all the study resources at MCAST in preparation for their future career. Mr Attard thanked the lecturing staff and the Gozo Centre Management for their dedication and commitment and announced that Mr Grech had been promoted to director level in recognition of his commitment, hard work and expansion of the Gozo Centre.

Also present for the ceremony were the Deputy Principal, Mr Anthony Saliba and the College Registrar, Mr Ray Farrugia.

It is to be noted that as in the last two years, Gozitan students who successfully completed Level 3 and Level 4 courses at the Gozo Centre graduated with the rest of the MCAST students in the Graduation Ceremony held in December 2007.

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GOAL SETTING

BY JOHN BARTOLO,
COUNSELLOR

To stay motivated, it is helpful to set goals. Goal achievement leads to satisfaction, pride and self-confidence. You have decided to take a course and it will require time and effort to succeed. Most students at the beginning of the term will say to themselves that they are going to study a lot. Now we are in the third term and the academic year is nearing the end. Are we still holding the same goals? Sometimes other things may get in the way. You have planned to study tonight, but there is a great concert playing or a good football match. Or you have just had an argument with a best friend. Or your family/friend's needs come first.

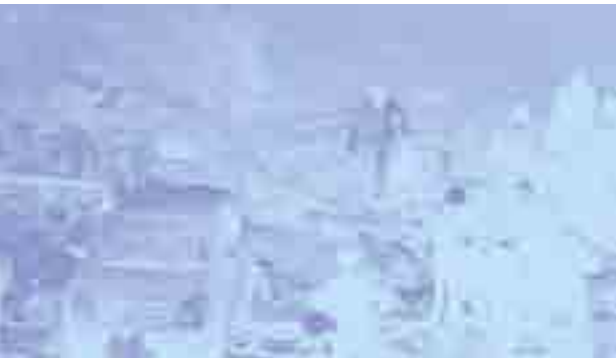
John Bartolo
Tel. 2398 7134
email john.bartolo@mcast.edu.mt

Marthese Vassallo
Tel. 2398 7133
email marthese.vassallo@mcast.edu.mt

How can you stay on track?

- **Goals need to be clear**
- **Be specific – List the details**
- **Set time frames – Set targets dates: number of hours, days, weeks, months, years.**
- **Be realistic – Are your goals achievable (given your skills, abilities, strengths, resources, constraints)**
- **Set measurable goals – But be aware to not set yourself up to fail.**
- **Ask yourself, “Are my goals personally meaningful?” Your goal and the activities and behaviours you exhibit in order to accomplish this goal need to be supportive of other goals.**

Students who would like to discuss their goals can fix an appointment with one of the two Counsellors, either by phone or by email or else call personally at the Counselling Section, Students' House Building, West Wing, MCAST Main Campus, Corradino Hill, Paola.



GHOXRIN MINUTA TWAL HAFNA...FIN-NAXXAR

STEPHEN VELLA, DEPUTAT DIRETTUR,
ISTITAT TA' L-ARTI U D-DISINN

L-Erbgħa, tnax ta' Marzu, kont għadni kif spiċċajt 'tutorial' ma' l-istudenti tan-'National Diploma. Hekk kif wasalt biex niftah l-uffiċċju tiegħi, gie Dwardu (il-*handyman*) fuqi u deher mifxul u fi stat ta' paniku. B'lehen imbikkem qalli li xi hadd ċempillu u qallu li kien hemm splużjoni u d-dar tiegħu sofriet ħsarat kbar. Għalkemm kien hemm min qallu li din setgħet kienet xi ċajta, jiena malajr ħassejt li ma kienx il-waqt u l-mument li noqogħdu nahlu iktar ħin, u għalhekk ġbart iċ-ċavetta tal-karozza tiegħi u tlaqna għal għonq it-triq. Dwardu qalli li joqgħod in-Naxxar, f'it 'il bogħod mill-Istitut ta' l-Arti u d-Disinn.

Matul it-triq ippruvajt nikkalmah kemm stajt. Ftaħt it-twieqi għal ftit arja u mill-ewwel stajt inxomm riħa ta' hruq, riħa partikolari, iva ta' bombi tal-festa. Irrimarkajt li deherli li din kienet xi splużjoni ta' kamra tan-nar. Id-dahna dehret sew issa u kienet ġejja mill-inħawi ta' fejn joqgħod hu. Kien f'dan il-ħin li Dwardu beda jkun xi ftit aktar aġitat. Wasalna fil-post u deher mill-ewwel li s-sitwazzjoni kienet kemxejn gravi, bi preżenza kbira ta' pulizija u paramediċi. Fost konfużjoni kbira ppruvajna naqbzū l-linja tal-pulizija, iżda kien kollu għalxejn. Ir-riħa u d-duħħan kienu insapportabbli. Kien hemm xena li taraha biss fuq it-televisin f'xi żona fejn hemm gwerra. Nies bid-demmm f'partijiet differenti ta' ġisimhom, jiġru, konfużi u ċċassati b'dak li kien qed jiġri madwarhom.

Kienu għaddew madwar ħames minuti minn meta wasalna f'dan il-post u Dwardu issa deher iktar mifxul u f'daqqa waħda qalli, "biċċa ġrali...it-tifla kienet id-dar illum, żgur għadha maqbuda taħt it-tifrik tad-dar." Bdejt nipprova nikkuntattjaha fuq il-'mobile' iżda ma kelli l-ebda risposta. Dwardu issa beda jiġri u jipprova jikkonvinċi lill-pulizija li ried jersaq qrib id-dar tiegħu biex jara jekk Rachel kinitx harget minn hemm jew kenitx mirduma taħt it-

tifrik. Fittixna fl-akkwati, staqsejna lill-pulizija u l-paramediċi għaliha iżda kien kollu għalxejn. Issa kienu għaddew madwar għoxrin minuta ta' tfittixja u qtugħ ta' qalb. Kien f'dan il-mument li paramediku qalilna li kien hemm tfajla f'garaxx li setgħet kienet tixbah ħafna d-deskrizzjoni tat-tifla ta' Dwardu. Hekk kien. Fil-garaxx kien hemm tfajla għadha bil-piġama, wiċċha mimli nugrufun. X'ħin raha, Dwardu ġera lejha, għannaqha miegħu u biesha. Żgur din kienet l-ikbar tghanniqa li qatt taha. Irringrazzja 'l-Madonna li salvatlu lit-tifla. Wara li rajna f'liema stat kienet id-dar, wiehed ma jistax ma jammettix li kien miraklu kbir kif Rachael harget minn dak it-tifrik.

Dak kollu li ġara wara dan l-episodju ġie pprezentat b'diversi modi mill-media, għalhekk ma naħsibx li hemm skop li wiehed jerġa' jirrepeti jew jagħti xi interpretazzjoni ohra fuq dak kollu li ġara. Meta wasalt id-dar mill-ewwel għamilt kuntatt mad-deputat prinċipal, is-Sur Anthony Saliba, sabiex nibdew niġbru fondi għall-familja ta' Dwardu. Huwa mill-ewwel qabel u qalli biex nibda nfassal strateġija sabiex ngħinu lil dan seħibna li kien għaddej minn dan il-mument hekk ikrah.

Il-familja ta' Dwardu hija waħda minn diversi familji li sofrew, għadhom u jibqgħu jsofru minħabba egoizmu ta' hadd ieħor. Huma għandhom bżonnijiet kbar. Għalhekk niextieq inhegġeġ lil dawk li jstgħu, sabiex jagħmlu donazzjoni f'dawn il-kontijiet bankarji differenti: BOV – 40017049454 u HSBC – 059013771050.



***Ġesù qal,
‘Tassew
nghidilkom,
kull ma
għamiltu ma’
wieħed mill-
izgħar fost
dawn ħuti,
għamiltuh
miegħi.’
[Mt:25:41]***

NEWS



MSOFFICE 2007 NOW AVAILABLE IN THE MAIN LIBRARY

All PCs in the Main Library in Paola have now been installed with the 2007 edition of MSOffice. Programmes included are: Word, Publisher, OneNote, InfoPath, Excel, Access and Tools. One still has the option to use the 2003 edition of MSOffice, but the default option is the 2007 edition.



PREPARATIONS FOR THE NEW LIBRARY FOR THE NEW MCAST CAMPUS

As you may have heard, a high level decision has been taken to centralise all Institutes into one main Campus over the coming years. This fact, coupled with a projected increase in student population, has translated into a decision to build a new Library building over the coming years as part of the whole campus rebuilding programme. Presently a small group is working on drawing up the design brief for this building which roughly will be two to three times as big as the current Main Library building. As part of this exercise the Librarian has visited a number of recently built academic libraries in the Netherlands and Switzerland.

UNESCO DONATES BOOKS TO THE MCAST LIBRARY AND LEARNING RESOURCE CENTRE

Professor Charles Farrugia, Chairman of UNESCO Maltese National Commission, donated a selection of books to the Library and Learning Resource Centre in the presence of Mr Paul A. Attard, President of the MCAST Board of Governors, Prof Maurice Grech, Principal and CEO and Mr Laurence Zerafa, Manager Library and Learning Resource Centre.

The publications received were mainly in the areas of Education and Training, Development, World Heritage and Health and Education.

In accepting this donation of UNESCO publications Mr. Laurence Zerafa, Manager Library and Learning Resource Centre, stated that the Library was set up four years ago and has as its main mission the direct support of MCAST lecturers and students in their lecturing and learning programmes respectively. The Library does this through its growing collections besides the direct support provided to patrons by professional library staff and the spaces, facilities and equipment it provides. However the Library moreover aspires to provide other collections beyond the strictly College academic requirements. This is done to support the wider general knowledge requirements of those who turn to Libraries as the main place for independent life-long education in the wider sense and for leisure purposes. It is in this context that this regular donation of UNESCO publications by Professor Charles Farrugia is particularly welcome.

Professor Farrugia stated that "The Maltese National Commission for UNESCO is very pleased to contribute to the work which is being carried out at MCAST. While the National Commission rarely advertises its many activities that it carries out at a national level, it feels proud that in a small way it is helping the students of an emerging and dynamic institution".

UNESCO promotes international co-operation among its Member States in the fields of education, science, culture and communications whilst working to create genuine dialogue amongst people of all races and beliefs. The observance of human rights, mutual respect and the alleviation of poverty are top priorities in UNESCO's framework of activities.



FREE DESIGN SOFTWARE

AUTODESK STUDENT ENGINEERING AND DESIGN COMMUNITY

Did you know that you can download engineering design software for free?

Sign up at <http://students6.autodesk.com/>. When you join this community you can connect with students and faculties from all over the world to inspire and share interests in architecture, civil engineering, mechanical engineering, industrial design, and animation and games. This networking site allows members to:

- Download free Autodesk software
- Take self paced tutorials
- Show off projects
- Learn from experts
- Explore industry careers.

Some of the free software you can download includes:

- AutoCAD Architecture 2008
- AutoCAD Electrical
- AutoDesk Motion Builder PLE
- AutoCAD Map 3D
- AutoCAD Civil 3D.

GOOGLE SKETCHUP

Another free design software is Google SketchUp. This software, which can be downloaded for free from <http://www.google.com/sketchup/index.html>, can be used to create, modify and share 3D models. It is easier to learn than other 3D modeling programmes, which is why so many people are already using it.

SketchUp's simplified toolset, guided drawing system and clean look-and-feel is designed to help users concentrate on two things: getting your work done as efficiently as possible, and having fun while you're doing it. The library highly recommends it and has already started using it to roughly plan out its new library building.

From left: Mr Laurence Zerafa, Library Manager, Mr Paul A Attard, President of the Board of Governors, Prof Charles Farrugia, Chairman of UNESCO Maltese National Commission, Prof Maurice Grech, Principal and Mr Anthony Saliba, Deputy Principal



**A NEW
INTERNATIONAL
PROGRAMMES
OFFICER
FOR MCAST**

Bjorn Azzopardi has been recruited as MCAST's new International Programmes Officer.

Bjorn Azzopardi was born on 19th September 1986 in Pieta'. He received his elementary education at the Qormi San Gorg Primary School and his secondary education at the M.A Vassalli (Tal-Handaq) Junior Lyceum. He pursued his studies at the Msida Junior College. In December 2007, he graduated in International Relations and is currently reading for a Masters degree in International Relations.

Throughout his studies, he gained valuable experience by attending several EU funded seminars around Europe, one of them being at the European Parliament in Brussels.

Through his current post he manages the EU mobility programmes from which MCAST students and staff can benefit.

Those interested can contact the MCAST International Office on 23987306 or email on international@mcast.edu.mt

MCAST BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION ENGINEERING STUDENTS VISIT GERMANY

The project titled 'Roofs of Europe' is a Comenius school project and forms part of the Life-Long Learning programmes funded by the European Union. The academic year 2007 – 2008 marks the third and final year of the project. The MCAST Institute of Building and Construction Engineering is the project coordinator. Other similar vocational institutions from Germany, Spain and Ireland are actively involved as partners in the project.

A number of aims and objectives were mapped out at the initial stages of the project. During this academic year, the aims and objectives of the project will be finalized by reaching a number of learning outcomes. The first project meeting of this academic year was held in Recklinghausen, Germany during the third week of January 2008. The selected theme for this project meeting focused on structural forces. The project meeting in Germany had, as its main objectives, the identification of structural forces that might be present in a structure or structural element and the investigation of effects due to

the structural effects identified with particular focus on roofs. These objectives can be mapped to a particular unit in the BTEC National Diploma in Construction currently being offered by the Institute. The referred unit is a specialist unit in the programme and is titled 'Unit 14: Structural Mechanics'.

A number of project activities for the project meeting in Recklinghausen, Germany were effectively planned, organized and held. The initial planning of these activities was done during the project meeting in Ireland which was held in April 2007. The learning group that was involved in the project meeting held in Germany is currently following the BTEC National Diploma in Construction and Land Surveying at the Institute of Building and Construction Engineering. Mr. Reginald Galea, lecturer in Architectural Drawing and Mr. Martin Borg, lecturer in Applied Sciences at the Institute, were actively involved in the project development. To achieve the learning outcomes, it was decided that each participating country in the project would focus on one particular structural force and in



Project Partner	College	Structural Force
Letterkenny - Ireland	Garmscoil	Tension
La Laguna - Tenerife, Spain	IES Geneto	Compression
Recklinghausen -Germany	Max-Born Berufskolleg	Shear
Naxxar - Malta	MCAST IBCE	Bending

national groups perform the below listed tasks:

- Identify and describe structural force
- Investigate the structural effects
- Analyze methods of possible failure due to the presence of the force identified
- Use multimedia techniques to present the gathered information.

The learning group from the MCAST Institute produced a DVD to explain the force of bending, the effect of deflection on structural steel, structural calculations on amount of deflection based on the general theory of bending, and possible methods of failure. After conducting a simplistic form of literature review using specialized text in Structural Mechanics and Properties of Materials, the learning group produced an experimental set up at the Naxxar grounds. Different steel sections having different dimensions and cross-sectional properties were loaded with different loads and the amount of deflection was recorded. The steel beams were simply supported on two walls with different

span constructed purposely for this activity. This experimental set up enabled the learning group to investigate all the parameters on which deflection is dependent, namely:

- Amount of loading
- Span of beam
- Cross-sectional properties and
- Condition of loading.

This experimental set up was recorded by Mr. Paul Camilleri, lecturer at the Institute of Art and Design, Targa Gap (MCAST). The researched information and video were transformed into a DVD, complete with sound and pictorial enhancement. This DVD was then presented to the learning community at the Institute of Building and Construction Engineering and during the project meeting at Max-Born Berufskolleg, Recklinghausen.

The participants were two teachers - Mr Martin Borg and Mr Reginald Galea, and five students – Nicky Zammit Tabona, George Xerri, Bradley Vella, Karl Vella and Ryan Bilocca.



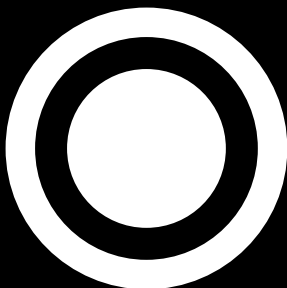
BALSTA GOES TO CIVITANOVA

It was Italy's turn to host the fifth meeting of BALSTA at the 'Istituto di Istruzione Superiore' Leonardo da Vinci, in Civitanova Marche.

BALSTA (Bridging Academically Language and Skills Training Agendas) was officially launched in Malta in November 2005. It is an Education and Culture Lifelong Learning Programme funded by the EU through Comenius Projects with the main aim to develop a new pedagogical tool that encourages technical and English language teachers to integrate their respective lessons. This in turn will make them more effective and therefore increase the motivation for learning thus improving communication and the employability of the students.

This meeting was a follow up to the other meetings that were held in the participating countries during the last two years. Albert Bonnici, Claire Abela, Manuel Gatt, and Vanessa Mifsud, lecturers from the Institute of Mechanical Engineering (MCAST), co-ordinated the 5th meeting and together with other teachers from France, Italy, Finland and Slovenia analysed the progress of their activities. A lot of work has been done by all the members to produce a manual. The main purpose of this manual is to develop a pedagogy that can be used throughout Europe by technical or language teachers.

All participants were greeted with excellent hospitality by their Italian counterparts. The discussions were held at the school library but in the evenings all members eased their tension by going out to dinner together. On Wednesday 6th February 2008 in the afternoon, a cultural tour was organised and all the members were taken to the 'Frasassi Caves', which are among the largest and most famous caves in Europe. Having most of the material written and checked for the setting of the manual, the meeting adjourned for the final meeting which is planned to be held in June 2008 in Malta when the final product will be presented.



SPORTS DAY



The Sports Department together with the MCAST Student Council organised Sports Day for all MCAST students and staff. The event was a very successful one with over 1000 students participating in football, basketball, breakdance, athletics and fun games. Out of the 57 football teams who participated, the Team Ultras won the tournament followed by Galacticos. Both teams are from the Institute of Building and Construction Engineering. This Institute also won the Fun Games thanks to team Super Dudes. Basketball was won by Globetrotters from the Institute of Art and Design and the Institute of Community Services.



MUSC MCAST SPORTS FEST

A NUMBER OF MCAST STUDENTS PARTICIPATED IN THE SPORTS FEST AT THE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS. STUDENTS TOOK PART IN FOOTBALL, BASKETBALL, ABSEILING, DIVE, CHESS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES.

CLIMBING



Francesca Psaila Savona

The Malta Climbing Club recently offered their services to teach students more about their sport. Students were taken to Xaqqa, Ghar Lapsi to abseil and climb. Although very scary for some, all faced the challenge.

BADMINTON



Alison Bugeja with Dutch coach

Once again the Badminton Federation offered us the services of a professional Dutch coach who visited the College and provided training to students keen to learn more about the sport. Thanks goes to Mr. John Attard from the Badminton Federation who always help by sending their coaches and equipment.

GOLF



David Grech

A group of students recently tried their hand at golf at the Royal Malta Golf Club. The sport was much tougher than we thought! Thanks goes to Mr. Henning who helped to instruct the students.

STUDENTS VISIT THE ARMY

As from this year the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineering and the Institute of Mechanical Engineering together with the Sports Department have started including sport as part of the students' timetable at post-secondary level. This has been seen as a good move in order to enhance the students' physical and psychological well-being.

As part of their sport activities, 70 Foundation students from the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineering visited the Army Barracks in Hal Far. The students were divided into three groups and participated in a number of activities which included abseiling, climbing, command tasks and team building exercises.

These activities were organised to help students come up with practical solutions to given situations under time and environment-based controlled stress. It was also a good opportunity for them to try activities which they had never participated in, help to overcome their fears and doubts, such as fear of heights, and it was a good opportunity for team building between all the students. The Sports Department would like to thank the 'C' (Special Duties) Company, 1st Regiment, Armed Forces of Malta for providing our students with this opportunity.

A number of sports students at ICS were also given the opportunity to do an obstacle course, fitness training & boxing at the army.



Michelle Vella



Andre Buhagrar



EEl Students



EEl Students



EEl Student

BRITISH BADMINTON COACHES AT MCAST

On the 14 February 2008, British badminton coaches Steve Kiernan and Martin Fenn visited MCAST and spent a couple of hours instructing students on techniques in badminton. All students had the opportunity to make use of their expertise and to learn how to play the sport of badminton better. Once again a big thank you goes to John Attard of the Malta Badminton Federation for providing our students with this opportunity.

KNZ-MCAST FEST

The MCAST Sports Department and KNZ came together to organise a national sport event which was held at the Marsa Sports Grounds. Activities included cricket, baseball, basketball, football, athletics, weightlifting, judo, kendo, hip hop, breakdance, chess, gymnastics and motor sports.



Mike Longo, ICS, playing chess



ICT students playing football



EEl & IME students playing basketball

POST-SECONDARY TRACK AND FIELD SPORTS DAY

On the 20 February 2008, students from the Institutes of Information and Communication Technology, Community Services and Business and Commerce came together with students from Higher Secondary, Junior College and Gozo Sixth Form to compete in track and field events including high jump, long jump, shot, discus, 100m, 200m, 400m, 800m, 1500m and 4 x 100m relay as well as the Tug of War. This was an enjoyable friendly competition and all students who participated received a participation medal.

RUGBY



The students also played in an interschool tournament.



Over the past weeks, Sam Rammage, the Malta Rugby Football Union Youth Development Officer, conducted rugby sessions with Maritime students at the Marsa Sports Club. Thanks goes to the Rugby Federation for providing us with this opportunity.



MCAST female soccer team made up of IBAC & ICS students



IBAC & ICS students in the basketball tournament



Trence Galdes from EEI



Francesca Psaila Savona



Boys football team vs St. Aloysius 6th Form



Doubles Table-tennis



Female football



Volleyball



MCAST Female team

SPORTS TOURNAMENTS

MCAST, NAXXAR HIGHER SECONDARY, JUNIOR COLLEGE AND ST. ALOYSIUS SIXTH FORM CAME TOGETHER TO PARTICIPATE IN SPORTS TOURNAMENTS. THESE INCLUDED FOOTBALL, BASKETBALL AND VOLLEYBALL, TABLE-TENNIS AND SNOOKER. THIS WAS AN ENJOYABLE DAY FOR ALL STUDENTS CONCERNED AND GOOD RESULTS WERE ACHIEVED BY THE MCAST TEAMS.



EEl Student



Male football team

MARYLYN PERINGER VISITS THE BSU LEARNING SUPPORT CENTRE



On Friday 14 March 2008 English language lecturers at the BSU Learning Support Centre had a very inspiring meeting with Ms Marylyn Peringer, a renowned storyteller and English teacher in Toronto, Canada. Marylyn visited the Learning Support Centre and discussed the Adult Literacy pack "Sisien" with David Muscat, Basic Skills Co-ordinator. She also delivered a lecture to the BSU lecturers on how to use stories to promote and enhance listening, understanding, reading and writing skills.

Marylyn Peringer has been telling stories to children, youths and adults in schools,

libraries, learning resource centres and community centres for these last 20 years. Throughout Canada she is famous for her bilingual narration of French - Canadian folktales and legends. Marylyn recounts riddle tales, folklore of stars and constellations and classical epics in a unique, peculiar and amusing way, using gestures, facial expressions and body language. Marylyn is attending Maltese lessons led by Ms Carmen Galea in Toronto, Canada and she will be narrating tales from Malta using Maltese expressions in the Toronto Storytelling Festival.



"...very inspiring meeting..."



THE BSU LEARNING SUPPORT CENTRE – BASICALLY, WE ARE HERE TO HELP BY JOSEPHINE SALIBA, LECTURER BSU

These past few months have been very intensive for the Basic Skills Unit (BSU) team. At the beginning of the year, the team carried out initial assessment tests (IATs) in all Institutes. New applicants sat for three papers that assessed their numeracy skills as well as their English and Maltese literacy skills. From that sea of names, over 400 individuals emerged in need of support. The BSU offered support programmes to all these freshmen, some of whom asked the same questions. 'Will we be doing the same material as our classmates?' 'Will we be able to get along in our studies?' 'Will we sit for the same exams?' 'Will we be able to continue following lessons with the rest of our mates?'

Following the IATs, a laborious and careful selection of students takes place. The BSU team divide students into groups; some might need additional lessons, other more intensive complete withdrawal sessions where they can work in small groups with more attention focused on their needs. Groups rarely exceed eight persons in number. Some students might even receive one-to-one sessions especially if they are in need of intensive coaching whether with their basic skills, general course work or even for their MATSECs.

At the Learning Support Centre (LSC), all students' needs are treated in confidence with a lecturer who follows their progress, devises a scheme of work and keeps record of progress through continuous assessment recorded on an individual's profile. Some students might simply need a little bit of extra coaching to complete an assignment or fill out an application form. Whatever the need, the LSC has the resources to deal with these academic queries – a

resource section on the second floor of the Library and Learning Resource Centre and a complement of staff to carry out lessons either on these premises or in any other Institute away from the Main Campus.

What does a 'Basic Skills' course, as it is more widely referred to, entail? Basic Skills is a very generic name and is sometimes misleading. Not all students require help in basic skills. Some students might require intensive intervention; however, the majority just need to brush up their English, Maltese or Mathematical competencies in order to cope with their coursework. Lessons not only address difficulties but they are also relevant to the coursework of the student be it engineering, marketing or hairdressing. LSC lecturers have their work planned out – they end up having an overview of the subjects they teach. The LSC team liaises closely with mainstream lecturers to see that all the students are covering the same material – be it the actual mainstream handouts or any other adapted version of the syllabus.

Therefore, if you and your lecturers think you might need some extra help at any stage of your journey, the LSC doors are always open for a friendly chat and a bit of advice and reassurance. LSC staff are always pleased to see new and old faces – we are only ever glad to see the back of students when they are ready to go on for the rest of the way confidently and successfully. For further information or if you need assistance in English, Mathematics and/or Maltese please call Mr. David Muscat, BSU Coordinator on 21894930/1 or send an email to basicskills@mcast.edu.mt.

BASIC SKILLS COORDINATOR ATTENDS CONSORTIUM MEETING OF UNITED eLEARNING ENVIRONMENT



Mr. David Muscat, Basic Skills Unit Coordinator attended a consortium meeting of Unified eLearning environment for the school project (UNITE), a project supported by the European Community under the Information Society Technologies priority of the 6th Framework Programme. The meeting took place in Ljubljana, Slovenia on the 17, 18 and 19 January 2008 and lecturers, IT specialists and leading e-learning experts from Germany, Slovenia, Croatia, UK, Greece, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Cyprus and Malta participated in the workshops and presentations.

In these last 2 years UNITE partners developed a technical platform and pedagogical guidelines specifically aimed at teachers eager to create high-quality e-learning experiences for their students. The UNITE portal-like platform supports the re-use of content material, the integration of mobile learning activities and the customization of functionality according to the needs of the user/s.

The UNITE platform supports forms of learning which do not take place in the classroom and explores innovative approaches of structuring and delivering content to learners. A pedagogical framework has been set focused on mobile learning, explanatory learning and group learning. UNITE's eLearning scenarios offer opportunities to teachers and students not only to pursue common and individual tasks but also to make use of the new mobile technologies and engage in activities that go beyond the traditional way of formal learning.

MCAST lecturers who would like more information about new technologies used to foster enquiry/discovery learning and to support collaborative and autonomous learning should visit UNITE's website at <http://www.unite-ist.org> or call at the Centre for Literacy of the University of Malta, UNITE's local representative.

THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTRE AT MCAST TRAINS THE FACULTY OF DENTISTRY AT UOM

The Professional Development Centre was entrusted with an Introductory Course in Pedagogy for staff lecturing at the Faculty of Dentistry within the University of Malta. The three-day course was held in January at the Institute of Business and Commerce Training Room.

The training was conducted by Ms. Katya De Giovanni who was senior lecturer and co-ordinator of the Professional Development Centre, assisted by Mr. David Bonello who is a Deputy Director at the Institute of Mechanical Engineering. Mr. Kevin Bonnici, Administrative Manager and Mr. Ray Farrugia, Registrar of the College were also involved in the co-ordination whilst Miss Grace Barbara, Clerk at the Professional Development

Centre was involved in administrative work required for the training programme to take place.

The first day of the course commenced with a brief introduction by Mr. Simon Camilleri who is the Dean of the Faculty of Dentistry. The first few hours of training were dedicated to an awareness level training in the Let Me Learn Process ® and the use of certain tools such as lecture plans, student profiles and strategy cards. The second day was devoted to communication processes in higher education, the implications of the use of IT resources in lecturing as well as their impact on the communicative processes. The third and final day of training was devoted to assessment in

higher education as well as issues in relation to professional and reflective practice. The participants were then asked to fill up a reflective journal and comment on their learning during the three-day course.

A brief ceremony was also held on the last day where MCAST Principal and CEO Prof Maurice Grech certified the participants. Mr. Anthony Saliba, Deputy Principal of the College was also present to congratulate the attendees on their achievement. It is likely that this introductory course will be followed up by another training course in the near future.





MEETING PEOPLE

BY FR JOHN CURMI

Meeting people has characterised most of my pastoral work during my first nine months at MCAST; going from one block to another meeting so many people and sharing with them a loving smile, a caring nod, a friendly handshake, an encouraging shoulder tap, a message of hope and the embracing love of Jesus! I have witnessed a respectful welcome everywhere and for this I am most grateful to everyone!

I still keep visiting people at MCAST. One general impression: everyone is so busy! A good sign!?! I may say that all MCAST people are so different from each other yet so much alike in more ways than one! Surely everyone wants to make the best of his/her life and tries to take every opportunity that unfolds in front of him/her. Some are highly motivated; others less. Some are favoured by life; others seem to be less, but the desire to make the best of life is there and everyone is for it! Unfortunately not everyone will make it! That's life.

Our society has become too competitive and our education system is still too much examination-oriented. And in the process we forget the great stress it involves for lecturers and students alike, not remembering that not all can take it! And this is my point: what more can be done to meet people's hearts? Very often we are so taken up by our tasks and achievements, by our success stories and ego trips that we tend to lose sight of the baggage that people carry in their hearts: their pains, their past wounds, their family problems, their mishaps and failures, their fears and anxieties, their mistakes, their limitations, their moods and their life stories! And yet each one is expected to contribute his full whether on the giving or the receiving end! But who is addressing these hearts crying or sobbing silently or discreetly in front of us? We also tend to forget that after

half past four there are other important jobs to be done! Lecturers, in their majority very young and recently married, have family chores, babies or young children to care for, to help them in their homework while struggling to spend some healthy time with them. Surely they have a family life to live for. And what about the young students? Don't they have a life too? Who is caring for their emotions and feelings, their search for meaning, their queries about life, their pains of growing up, their decision taking, their full human development....? How much time, people and money can we afford to spend on such tasks? How are we going to do it? And what are our priorities in our curricula settings and timetables? What is our vision?

I am aware that top level people at MCAST are already racking their brains to arrive at this. Perhaps a glance at one of the most human episodes in the gospels can recapitulate all I am saying. Once Jesus was walking through the narrow streets of one of Palestine's rural villages, preaching the Good News and healing many a person. The crowd was pressing upon him. They were looking for someone who could help them shoulder life's hard toils. With the intuition of a great educator, Jesus read their wandering hearts. They were lost! And here comes the most beautiful verse in chapter nine of Matthew's gospel:

Jesus had compassion on the crowd.

Wow, how human and how caring Jesus is! How true that is! Jesus not only filled people's bellies with food but also warmed their empty hearts with soothing and life giving words! What is even as true is that we cannot provide the best human resources for Malta's future unless we take pains in the caring of their hearts!



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Receiving applications for Aircraft Maintenance Courses

These courses are designed to equip students with the necessary theoretical and practical understanding to work in a wide range of areas in the field of aircraft maintenance.

Applications will be received from Monday 21 July to Friday 25 July 2008 between 8.30am and 12.30pm at the Institute of Mechanical Engineering, Corradino Hill, Paola as follows:

Mon 21 July	Applicants with surnames starting A to B
Tue 22 July	Applicants with surnames starting C to F
Wed 23 July	Applicants with surnames starting G to P
Thur 24 July	Applicants with surnames starting Q to Z

Courses are in English.

Applications may be collected from the Reception at the Administration Building, MCAST Main Campus, Corradino Hill, Paola from 8.30am to 4.30pm.

No late applications will be accepted.

Further information on the courses may be obtained from the Institute of Mechanical Engineering or from the Information Centre, MCAST Main Campus.

COURSES:

- Part-66 Aircraft Maintenance Category 'A' Licence Course (code 08/01/11)
- Aircraft Structure and Composite Material Course (code 08/01/12)
- MCAST-BTEC First Diploma in Mechanical Engineering (Aircraft Maintenance Mechanics) (code 08/01/13)
- MCAST Aircraft Maintenance Technician Course (Leading to Part-66 CAT B 1.1 Examinations) (code 08/01/14A)

Institute of Mechanical Engineering
MCAST Main Campus, Corradino Hill, Paola, Malta
Tel: 2166 0993, 2166 0995
Email: ime@mcast.edu.mt
Website: www.mcast.edu.mt

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