

# The Educator

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# *The Educator*

A journal of educational matters

The objective of this annual, peer-reviewed journal is to publish research on any aspect of education. It seeks to attract contributions which help to promote debate on educational matters and present new or updated research in the field of education. Such areas of study include human development, learning, formal and informal education, vocational and tertiary education, lifelong learning, the sociology of education, the philosophy of education, the history of education, curriculum studies, the psychology of education, and any other area which is related to the field of education including teacher trade unionism.

This journal accepts articles from teachers, academics, administrators, graduate students, policy-makers, education specialists and any other author or researcher whose work contributes to the different facets of education and related areas.

It is the aim of *The Educator* to publish articles which cover particular dimensions such as:

- a. The integration of education with other academic disciplines including history, law, linguistics, anthropology, demography, philosophy, economics, psychology, political science, and sociology, among others.
- b. The examination of educational issues from a cross-cultural perspective.
- c. The inclusion of substantive findings that may be of help to policy-makers and practice.
- d. The examination of information technology in the field of education.
- e. The implementation of research methods and measurement processes which are clearly presented.
- f. The presentation of theories, models or conceptual frameworks in the field of education.
- g. The exposition of research findings derived from comparative and cross-national studies in education.
- h. The presentation and discussion of material derived from primary sources including archival documents, primary data and resource persons.
- i. Any other dimension which the editorial board deems compatible with the overall objectives of the journal.

Authors who are interested in having their work published in *The Educator* may contact the editor on [editor@mut.org.mt](mailto:editor@mut.org.mt).

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**Developing an Assessment Framework  
for Soft Skills in Tourism Higher Education**

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## Introduction

A frequently highlighted issue is that current Higher Education (HE) graduates do not seem to have the right skill set to facilitate their rapid take-up within the workforce and be active contributors/leading figures that they are often expected to be. This is a source of concern for the new graduates, academics and employers (Times of Malta, 2011). It has been argued by employers that graduates are not equipped with the right set of 'soft skills' that would enable them to integrate themselves, and contribute effectively, at the workplace (Constable and Touloumakos, 2009). One may mention leadership, conflict resolution, negotiation, presentation skills and creativity as being essential soft skills for maximising human capital within an enterprise. Employers tend to see most new graduates as somewhat self-centred, unable to integrate within an existing team and expecting to be placed in a senior position without demonstrating the right qualities for leadership (Schultz, 2008). Maltese policy makers frequently make reference to human capital as being the only resource of the country. However, if HE policy makers are failing to provide the 'right' soft skills, then the country's economic growth may be at risk. This is especially true for the Maltese Tourism and Hospitality sector, which is a significant contributor to the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Azzopardi, 2011).

The aim is to identify the key skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and attempt to incorporate them within the Maltese Tourism Studies HE curriculum. There are various studies that point to a restricted list of social, personal and learning skills. Research carried out by the OECD (2009, 2011), the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) (2011), and many other institutions have all come up with their own set of studies. It seems less clear how to implement a learning process of soft skill acquisition and assessment within the HE curriculum. In seemingly unsuspecting times Crossley and Watson (2003) were already raising some questions as to the way forward being proposed by some of these organisations and their failure to actually redress this apparent lack of skills. Brown, Lauder & Ashton (2011) take a similar, if not more critical, view. They argue that the knowledge and skills acquired throughout education must not be seen solely as an economic investment but rather as a means towards enhancing the quality of life. Simple skill upgrading is insufficient for today's challenging economic times. Creativity, knowledge and collaborative skills that would enable people to come up with innovative solutions would add value to people's lives and improve the (current) economic environment.

## 21<sup>st</sup> century skills

The aspect of providing learners with the right skill set has been a pertaining issue. Kairpa et al. (2005) list leadership, decision making, communication, creativity and others as being essential for entrepreneurial success and maximising human capital in organisations. However, a study commissioned by City and Guilds in the UK (Constable and Touloumakos, 2009), seems to point out the belief held by employers that there is a skills crisis, leading to learners having difficulties in finding employment following the completion of their training. This study provides further evidence that the majority of practitioners hold the belief that they were employed on the basis of industry knowledge/experience, rather than the skills acquired during training.

A detailed study by the OECD (2009) focuses on the 'New Millenium Learner' that has similar characteristics to the 21<sup>st</sup> century student outlined by Borges (2007). This study looks at the skills that these learners require in order to be successful in today's knowledge economies. This study outlines the importance of ICT as being the fundamental tool to support most, if not all, of the skills to be acquired. Moreover, it identifies educational institutions as being the only places where these competencies and skills can be learned. The OECD study groups the various skills as follows:

1. ICT functional skills – skills relevant to mastering different ICT applications
2. ICT skills for learning – skills combining both higher order thinking skills and functional skills for use and management of ICT applications
3. 21<sup>st</sup> century skills – skills considered necessary in the knowledge society, but where the use of ICT is not a necessary condition.

These skills cannot be considered in an isolated context, but rather within a series of dimensions:

i. **The information dimension**

ICT has set a need for new skills for accessing, evaluating and organising information in the digital environment. Information needs to be viewed either as a source or as a product

ii. **The communication dimension**

Learners need to be able to communicate, exchange, criticise and present information and ideas. There requires effective communication and the



capacity to collaborate and interact virtually with other knowledge users

iii. **The ethical and social impact dimension**

In today's world globalisation, multiculturalism and the rise in the use of ICT across the globe bring about new ethical challenges for users/learners, and therefore skills and competencies related to ethics and social impact are important for 21<sup>st</sup> century learners. Learners must be aware of their social responsibilities and impacts related to their actions.

A study done in the USA by Mertiri Group (2011) in collaboration with the US North Central Regional Educational Laboratory puts the citizen's intellectual capital as being the driving force of this century. It is argued that in order to thrive in the digital economy, students need 'digital age' proficiencies. These are:

i. **Digital age literacy**

- a. Basic scientific and technological literacy
- b. Visual and information literacy
- c. Cultural literacy and global awareness

ii. **Inventive thinking – intellectual capital**

- a. Adaptability, managing complexity and self direction
- b. Curiosity, creativity and risk taking
- c. Higher order thinking and sound reasoning

iii. **Interactive communication**

- a. Teaming and collaboration
- b. Personal and social responsibility
- c. Interactive communication

iv. **Quality, state of the art results**

- a. Prioritising, planning and managing for results
- b. Effective use of real world tools
- c. High quality results with real world applications

The study concludes that the translation of these skills into places of learning may determine the level of contribution that learners would be able to provide to society in general.

Suto (2013) refers to the work done by the Assessment and Teaching of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills (ATC21S), where a review of other studies done in the field

of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills was done. The ATC21S group attempted to codify the various studies in order to produce a single list of skills. They manage to condense the various skill categories from the various studies into four main groups. These were:

- Ways of working
- Ways of thinking
- Tools for working
- Skills for living in the world

For each of the above-mentioned categories, the following skills were identified, as illustrated in Table 1. Suto herself (2013) acknowledges that the discussion regarding soft skills is not a new one, and that it is not over at all. However for the purposes of this research, the list devised by Suto shall be adopted.

**Assessment in Higher Education**

Flint and Johnson (2011) look at assessment taking place at universities and argue that while there is the notion of treating the students as ‘clients’ whose views on their university experience are important, little work has been done

<b>Skills Categories</b>	<b>21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills</b>
Ways of Thinking	Creativity and Innovation Critical thinking, problem solving, decision-making Learning to learn, metacognition
Ways of Working	Communication Collaboration (teamwork)
Tools for Working	Information Literacy ICT literacy
Living in the World	Citizenship – local and global Life and career Personal and social responsibility; including cultural awareness and competence

**Table 1: Main Skill Categories and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills Classification**

on having mechanisms whereby the students can determine whether they have been treated fairly or not. By means of comparing assessment practices in various 'Western' universities, Flint and Johnson indicate several poor assessment practices which include:

1. Lack of authenticity and relevance to 'real-world' tasks
2. Make unreasonable demands on students
3. Are narrow in scope
4. Have little long-term benefits
5. Fail to reward genuine effort
6. Have unclear expectations and assessment criteria
7. Fail to provide adequate feedback to students
8. Rely heavily on factual recall, rather than on higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills.

Flint and Johnson (2011) come up with a series of recommendations to the various different stakeholders. In the case of universities they talk of four areas where changes need to be carried out.

1. **Problematising assessment**

A serious debate needs to be initiated about assessment between teachers and students, with the aim to develop a relatively detailed understanding of assessment.

2. **Valuing teaching**

Teaching must be given the due value through the implementation of appropriate policies at universities. Funds are being reduced, class sizes are increasing and the time allocated for teaching is being decreased, as other responsibilities are being allocated more time.

3. **Promoting access to teachers**

Student access to teachers is important, even at university level. Astin (1985) had already pointed out that institutional policies seem to hinder, rather than facilitate, personal contact between teaching staff and students. Flint and Johnson suggest that staff development, flexible work arrangements and employment policies at universities all need to be reviewed, in order to facilitate this access.

4. **Prioritising first-year students**

The point raised by Flint and Johnson's research is that in the beginning of their academic journey at university, students are not the goal-directed

and self-directed learners that most of us wish them to be. It is therefore important that students become autonomous learners as quickly as possible to reduce problems in their later years. They suggest that the best teachers must work with first-year students to mitigate this problem.

Flint and Johnson concede that further research is required in the area of student assessment in HE. They warn against trivialising students' views on assessment. Assessment surrounds all that students do in a university. By improving assessment it would be possible to improve the students' university experience.

### **The assessment and accreditation of 21<sup>st</sup> century soft skills in Maltese Higher Education**

The objective of this study is to provide a comprehensive framework whereby students, academics, employers and other stakeholders in the tourism and hospitality sector would be able to gauge the level of specified 21<sup>st</sup> century soft skill/s acquired throughout the undergraduate study period of the individual concerned.

Similar frameworks have been created. Typical examples would be the European e-Competence Framework (2013) or the Skills Framework for Information Age (2013) in the UK. The European Commission Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry (2013) places great importance on tourism and the need to develop a skills framework for the tourism sector.

The decision to focus upon tourism higher education stems from the fact that the tourism and hospitality sector is a very significant contributor to the Maltese economy. Well over 20 per cent of the island's national GDP is directly determined by tourism, compared to the European average which is at around 5 per cent (Azzopardi, 2011). Research has already been done (Vassallo, 2010). However the focus has been upon the skills required by workers in the low to middle levels of the industry. This paper intends to look at the skills required by graduates who would eventually take up senior roles within the tourism sector. The emphasis will be placed upon the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.

To be able to set up an effective framework the key stakeholders will be actively consulted. Tourism operators will be consulted as to whether the proposed 21<sup>st</sup> century skill set is appropriate to the tourism industry. As indicated earlier, the definitions of soft skills vary. Therefore, it is imperative to identify the skills that are seen as being the most significant to the Maltese tourism sector. The

same exercise will be carried out with academics and researchers in the field of Tourism Studies and with students; both current students at the University of Malta, but also students who have graduated and are now employed within the tourism sector.

Once the skills have been identified, the second phase of the study is to define the competence levels required of each skill. This is probably the most significant phase, as by determining the competence level of each skill, it would be possible to assess and eventually accredit the student with the skill level in a formal manner. Moreover, once the competence levels are established, the existing Tourism Higher Education curriculum in Malta needs to be examined to see whether:

1. any soft skills are being treated and subsequently assessed in a fair manner as advocated by Flint and Johnson (2011)
2. to update it to incorporate 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, such that they would form an integral part of Tourism Studies in Higher Education.

### **Constructive alignment**

The third phase of the research would be to test the proposed competence framework within the Maltese HE environment, in order to evaluate whether or not it is a truly effective method to assess and accredit specific soft skills in Higher Education.

One of the pedagogical models being considered is Constructive Alignment. In Constructive Alignment, Biggs and Tang (2011) appear to provide a learning theory that is able to respond to the current challenges posed to HE today (e.g. gradual decrease in funding/resources; increase in the number of persons opting for HE), yet retain a high quality of return in terms of the 'quality' of the graduates provided – as a result being able to respond to the challenges posed by 21<sup>st</sup> century society.

The points outlined for effective teaching are:

1. getting students involved in learning (motivation);
2. improving the teaching/learning climate;
3. reflective teaching (transformative reflection),
4. (teachers) improving teaching

Within constructive alignment students 'construct' meaning through relevant learning activities. This is not imparted or transmitted but it is something

that the learners have to create for themselves. The role of a teacher is that of a catalyst. The 'alignment' refers to the fact that the desired outcomes of teaching is related not only to the content but also to the level of understanding that is required to be reached by the students. An appropriate environment must therefore be created to facilitate the engagement of the students within the activities provided, designed to achieve the intended learning outcomes. Through participation in the learning activities the students would be able to provide the evidence of their achievement of the previously set learning outcomes. This implies a change of the design of teaching. Students cannot be taught 'evidence', they are to reflect on their experience and provide it themselves. The teaching method has to include a series of negotiations as to how the evidence might be provided, and the assessment would be based on the quality of the evidence provided by the students.

The challenge within this study lies in applying these same principles to the Tourism courses. Staff and students will have to negotiate as to what constitutes evidence and how to provide evidence that a specific soft skill (outlined at the beginning of a course) would have been acquired by students throughout the course programme. Teachers will then assess the quality of the evidence provided. The competence framework provided should serve as a clear guideline for both parties to help them arrive to the evidence required for the various competence levels identified for a specific soft skill.

### **Concluding remarks**

It is envisaged that the first fieldwork phase will start towards the end of 2013, so that the second phase may commence by the beginning of 2014. The outcome of the results should serve in coming up with a list of skills that is shared by all the stakeholders involved, that is, by the students, the academics and the tourism operators in Malta.

These results will also be used to develop the competence framework for a given set of skills and test it within a higher education environment. In this way it would be possible to gather evidence as to whether or not the proposed 21<sup>st</sup> century skill competence framework is an effective way to assess and accredit soft skill competence level in Higher Education.

The results obtained may also be compared with similar studies that may have been carried out in other parts of the world, where the tourism industry may be somewhat different to the scenario found in the Maltese Islands. The scope would be to see whether or not there is a universal set of skills that may

be applicable for the tourism sector. Studies related to soft skills in sectors other than tourism seem to suggest that there is no universal framework. Social, economic and cultural aspects all play a part in determining the soft skill requirements for an operator within a particular sector of the economy, working in a particular region of the world. However, the methodology employed to create the competence framework may well serve as a model to first identify and subsequently assess a particular soft skill that is deemed to be important with a set of socio-economic parameters that may be pertinent to a specific country/region.

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**The Teaching of Foreign Languages**

**for Specific Purposes:**

**The Way Forward**

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Most businesses today need workers who can speak different languages, not only for communication purposes, but also to understand the different cultural realities and needs that exist around the globe. Mastery of foreign languages has become, in today's world, a vital instrument that enables workers to considerably improve their career prospects, since multilingualism is considered to be one of the key elements for a modern Europe. In today's world, knowing how to use a language in specific circumstances and purposes gives people a very strong bargaining power, especially in the labour world. In fact, in today's society languages and intercultural play a fundamental role in helping employees get to know different people and in obtaining professional and economic development. This means that there can be two main objectives for teaching/learning foreign languages: personal growth and professional growth. As declared by the European Commission in one of its documents entitled, 'Languages mean Business!' on multilingualism, one of the main reasons why thousands of European companies lose out on concluding deals and contracts is due to their lack of linguistic and intercultural competencies (European Commission, 2013). And this is exactly why today there exist courses in foreign languages for specific purposes, be it for tourism, for call centres, for business, for commerce and so on, focusing on acquiring the necessary terminological, interdisciplinary and intercultural skills needed for specific jobs.

Balboni (2000) describes a language for specific purposes as a linguistic variety used in scientific and professional sectors. Its objective is to help anyone belonging to that particular scientific or professional sector communicate in the least ambiguous manner possible. Dita Gálová (2007, p. viii) states that "globalization of the world economy requires professionals and specialists in various areas to communicate effectively in foreign languages. The success is conditional on their ability to manage language and cultural barriers, i.e. on the language skills and competences with respect to their professional areas".

Indeed, in today's world, knowing how to use a language in specific circumstances and purposes gives people a very strong bargaining power, especially in the labour world. Whereas up to twenty or thirty years ago speaking a foreign language was a very important prerequisite for just a few, like managers or diplomats, today it has become of fundamental importance in all professional circles. In fact, in today's society languages and intercultural play a fundamental role in helping employees get to know different people and in obtaining professional and economic development.

In the global marketplace that we now live in, languages have become crucial across all sectors. From law to finance, from tourism to technology, from marketing to administration, most businesses today need workers who can speak different languages, not just to permit communication across the globe, but also to understand different cultural realities and needs. In the world of work, language skills are becoming always increasingly important in organisations and businesses that want to remain competitive on an international level. Companies working within the global market require a versatile staff in order to communicate effectively and it is in their interest to employ speakers of foreign languages who are able to talk to clients, business partners, fellow employees in different countries in their own languages as this will not just help communication but, above all, it helps to make sales and to negotiate and secure contracts. As already pointed out above the European Commission (2013) has indicated that one major reason why many European companies fail to conclude deals and contracts is because of a lack of linguistic and intercultural competencies. This is confirmed by the CBI Education and Skills Survey (2009, p. 48) which states that “in an increasingly competitive job market, it is clear that foreign language proficiency adds significant value to a candidate’s portfolio of skills, and can give them a real competitive edge when applying for jobs”. Furthermore, the Business Forum for Multilingualism, established by the European Commission (2008, p. 8) declares clearly that “A significant percentage of European SMEs lose business every year as a direct result of linguistic and intercultural weaknesses. Although it appears certain that English will keep its leading role as the world business language, it is other languages that will make the difference between mainstream and excellence, and provide a competitive edge”.

Several research studies not only show that a variety of languages are required on international markets, but also that the most quoted barrier to intra-European mobility remains lack of foreign language skills. It is no surprise that language skills are considered by employers as one of the ten most important skills for future graduates. This was confirmed by a recent Eurobarometer study where 40 per cent of recruiters in the industry sector highlighted the importance of language skills for future higher education graduates. Another study, about the internationalisation of European SMEs, published by the European Commission in 2010, shows how, when companies start exporting, language and cultural barriers start being perceived as important obstacles. This explains why today there exists a need to diversify the language training market with courses in foreign languages for specific purposes. Such courses imply addressing the immediate and very specific needs of the learners involved, having as their driving force, both in the preparation stage as well as

in the development stage, the needs analysis of the learners. For this reason, the starting point in such courses is always an analysis of the learners' needs, objectives and expectations for the course. This includes forming a list of preferences of what the learners want and need to learn, as far as language and content are concerned, and of how they would like to learn them. This is by no means an easy task given that in the same group individuals may vary considerably in age, education level, motivation, aptitude for languages, work experience, self-discipline, etc. It therefore includes getting to know their knowledge in the language, their past work experiences (especially in countries where the target language is spoken) as well as their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This can be done either by means of an interview or a questionnaire, or else by means of a writing task or an initial test. This stage is of fundamental importance, since the needs of a learner studying, for example, a foreign language for scientific or technological purposes are totally different from those of another learner studying for medical purposes or legal purposes, or financial purposes. The same goes for individuals studying a foreign language for specific trades or occupations, and others still concerned with finding a job. Even the skills required vary considerably. Knowing which skills are required by the students usually helps the teacher determine what to teach, how to teach it and what materials must be used to help the learners reach their goals. As a matter of fact, the people studying for commercial purposes usually need specific reading and writing skills – reading and understanding the contents of an email and replying to it; writing various letters of a different nature, be it a letter of complaint, of protest, of acceptance; taking minutes of an important meeting, etc. On the other hand, those studying the foreign language to work in a call centre are usually more interested in listening and speaking skills – answering the phone; leaving a message; giving information over the phone, etc.

One must also take into consideration whether or not the learners already work in that particular field or if they are still concerned with finding a job. Those already in the job are the primary knowers of the content of the material and experts in the field. The teacher has to keep in mind that he/she is not teaching them the job, but rather helping them communicate better about their work in the target language. The role of the teacher will therefore be to help, to facilitate communication in class, to provide the tools for the learners to develop and acquire the skills they need, to become autonomous learners. There is no doubt that the learners are experts in the field. The teacher's role is to provide the learners with the necessary linguistic tools to be able to apply the concepts, interpret them, and above all communicate in the target language, not just with the particular jargon characteristic of that specific

occupational context but also with the language of everyday informal talk that allows them to communicate effectively regardless of the occupational context.

All this implies that such courses cannot be taught according to any pre-ordained methodology. Rather than talking about a subject to be taught one needs to think of which approach to adopt, and this implies flexibility on the teachers' part, negotiating with the learners how best to reach their objectives. In other words the teacher needs to understand the requirements of the profession and has to be willing to adapt to these requirements. The teacher has to understand the context in which the language will be used as well as any specialist concepts and terminology, and this, in turn, implies the need for specific training, tailor-made courses and teaching the practical use of the target language. It is a known fact that language in different situations varies and therefore the teacher has to tailor make not just the curriculum and the methods, but above all the materials to be used for each and every individual course in accordance to its specific context and centred on its appropriate language. This leaves the teacher with very little choice, but to provide the material for the course him/herself, as it is practically impossible to either find suitably published material or to use a particular textbook without the need for supplementary material. Hutchinson and Waters (2009) suggest three main factors that need to be addressed when designing materials for such courses, namely: (i) the criteria for implementing or modifying materials, (ii) the subjective criteria on what teachers and students want from that material; (iii) the objective criteria, which is what the material really offers.

*Language Magazine*, in an issue entitled 'Business Needs Language', explores 'What Business Wants: Language Needs in the 21st Century', and concludes that, within the American business sector there exists a real need for a more systematic discussion of the role and value of foreign language skills, especially in the face of strong perceptions that English is – and will continue to be – the *lingua franca* of international business. Elisabeth Lord Stuart, Operations Director of the US-Algeria Business Council, argues that an enormous barrier to increasing US participation in overseas markets is the lack of appropriate foreign language skills and abilities among US businessmen. Indeed, a *lingua franca* can never be enough in today's world to satisfy every communication need. Learning foreign languages for specific purposes not only provides the keys to the cultures they represent but, above all, opens doors to new markets and new business opportunities.



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**Towards an 'Assessment Culture' -  
implementing *assessment for learning*  
in the history classroom**

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## **The educational assessment paradigm**

Educational assessment has, since the past two decades, been undergoing a paradigm shift "... from a testing and examination culture to an assessment culture" (Gipps, 1994, p.1). Embedded in this transformative discourse are substantial efforts, both internationally and locally, to maximise on new assessment practices with the aim of promoting meaningful learning opportunities and valorise students' potential. This ideological shift is committing the educational community to rethink the purposes of assessment for the benefit of students.

The need for assessment that supports learning arose out of many concerns surrounding examinations (Brown, 1990; Glaser, 1990; Gipps and Stobart, 1993; Gipps, 1994; Black and Wiliam, 1998; Stiggins, 2007). Research by Black and Wiliam (1998) indicates that tests provide an overall summary of achievement, whereas they should be used to understand learning and provide formative feedback for improvement purposes. If teachers are to make sense of students' attainment, rather than simply gauge it, then assessment should be considered as a tool for learning, rather than a tool of learning. As Stiggins (2007, p.22) suggests, "... we need to move from exclusive reliance on assessments that verify learning to the use of assessments that support learning – that is, assessments for learning." This need had already been felt by Glaser (1990). He had proposed that in order for assessment to support learning, it has to be designed in such a way as to capture evidence of a knowledge base that is increasingly coherent, principled, useful and goal oriented.

Gipps (1994, p.158) suggests that, whenever possible, assessment "... must be of a type suitable to and used for the enhancement of good quality learning ... we need to design assessment programmes that will have a positive impact on teaching and learning." Inevitably, the word assessment has taken over to encompass a rich variety of educational practices. The individual is placed at the centre of the teaching and learning process where any kind of progress is registered, valued, and praised. Above all, assessment is conscientious, where guidance is offered on how work can best be improved. The underlying emphasis is that assessment should support learning (Black and Wiliam, 2006).

### **Assessment for learning**

It must be stipulated from the onset that the terms 'formative assessment' and 'assessment *for* learning' are used interchangeably in the literature consulted.

The Assessment Reform Group (2002, p.2) defines formative assessment as “the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers, to identify where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there.” Implicit in this definition is the understanding that this kind of assessment aims at informing both teachers and students regarding appropriate teaching methods that best suit different learning styles as well as reflections on pupils’ performance and progress. Second: it postulates that formative assessment enables achievement regardless of students’ abilities, by providing them with feedback to identify what they should do next to improve.

Clarke (2005, pp.2-3) identifies a number of practices associated with formative assessment. Primarily, formative assessment consists of clarifying and sharing learning objectives and success criteria – both long term and for individual lessons – with students at the planning stage. It also involves the appropriate use of effective questioning techniques which help to develop learning rather than attempt to measure it. Formative assessment also has to do with feedback about the development of learning objectives and meeting of targets – whether oral or written. It helps students organise targets so that their progress is based on previous achievement while aiming for the next step. This scaffolding helps students to involve themselves in self- and peer-evaluation. The whole issue underpinning formative assessment is that of self-belief because it raises students’ self-efficacy and boosts their potential to learn and achieve.

Formative assessment has been found to have a positive potential in terms of learning gains (Black and Wiliam, 1998; Assessment Reform Group, 1999; 2002; Brookhart, 2001; Black, et al., 2003). Black and Wiliam’s research (1998) has shown that if assessment is used in ways to promote learning, it can raise pupils’ achievement. Their evidence also points towards substantial gains particularly for lower-achieving students. These seminal findings have led the Assessment Reform Group (1999, pp.4-5) to identify five factors, via which learning can be improved through assessment: “the provision of effective feedback to pupils; the active involvement of pupils in their own learning; adjusting teaching to take account of the results of assessment; a recognition of the profound influence assessment has on the motivation and self-esteem of pupils; the need for pupils to be able to assess themselves and understand how to improve.”

The debate about formative assessment has been fuelled by two kinds of evidence: “from research showing that formative practices improve pupils’

achievement; and from practice showing that teachers can transform ideas from the research into productive practices" (Black, 2005, p.1). Research has demonstrated that assessment practices should constitute a buttress to the learning process (Torrance and Pryor, 2001; Black and Wiliam, 2003; Dekker and Feijs, 2005; Taras, 2005; Wiliam, 2006; Kirton, et al., 2007; Brown and Hirschfeld, 2008). Indeed, no one would ever contest the fact that we want students who "want to learn and value learning, know how to learn, feel capable of learning, understand what they have to learn and why, and enjoy learning" (Harlen, 2006, p.75). These are legitimate objectives which stand for the good of society in general. However, for these to be implemented, "pupils need to know how their learning is progressing ..." while "teachers also need ... to guide both their own teaching and the pupils' further learning" (Assessment Reform Group, 2002, p.1). The issue underpinning this thinking is the way assessment is used to summarise learning. In other words: "how do we use the results obtained from those assessments to promote better learning" (Assessment Reform Group, 2002, p.1).

The benefits of well-planned, balanced assessment techniques, particularly on students' motivation, are multitudinous (Black and Wiliam, 1998; Assessment Reform Group, 1999; 2002; Black, et al., 2003; Wiliam, et al., 2004; Hutchinson and Hayward, 2005; Kirton, et al., 2007; Brown and Hirschfeld, 2008). Evidence from research carried out by Black and Wiliam (1998), Black, et al. (2003) and Wiliam, et al. (2004) among a group of teachers in different schools, who sought to explore different approaches to formative assessment in different subject areas over a period of months, has shown that when assessment is used as part of teaching to help learning, hence formative assessment, levels of achievement can be raised.

That the accent is on *assessment for learning* does not imply that *assessment of learning* is being sidelined or being limited solely to its negative effects. Research is considering summative assessment against the backdrop of formative assessment (Taras, 2005; Biggs, 1998). Studies by Harlen (2005) and the Assessment Reform Group (2006; 2002), for instance, are concerned with how summative assessment influences learning in the best possible way, and consequently on the harmonization of formative and summative assessment. Hutchinson and Hayward (2005, p.243) suggest that tests and examinations should be "... used at appropriate times to generate one kind of evidence, but not as the sole means of assessing progress and attainment."

Locally, the educational community is fully cognisant of this discourse. The educational assessment paradigm had already been enshrined in the previous

National Minimum Curriculum (1999). Research by Grima and Chetcuti (2003) highlighted a paradoxical situation where, although current practices were still embedded within the culture of examinations and testing, yet there was evidence that educators are making increasing use of formative assessment to support learning. The new National Curriculum Framework (2013) commits educators to implement classroom assessment practices based on both formative and summative purposes, with the aim of helping students develop into self-directed learners.

History education is at the forefront of developments in assessment. In Great Britain, where history forms part of a strong research tradition, assessment has been placed high on the educational agenda, with Philpott (2011) stating that the importance of assessment for learning in moving history teaching and learning forward cannot be ignored. Educators have provided rich examples of integrating assessment practices in history lessons: these range from assessing historical understanding (Stanford, 2008; Fullard and Dacey, 2008; VanSledright, 2014) to approaching assessment on a day-to-day and periodic basis (Burnham and Brown, 2004; Freeman and Philpott, 2009), and helping students become autonomous learners (Knight, 2008; Conway, 2011). In Malta formative assessment practices within the context of history have, so far, been investigated by Grech (2005a; 2005b), Vella (2005) and Cutajar (2009). This is an area which merits further attention if we are to maximise on the benefits of the formative purposes of assessment.

### **Practising formative assessment in the history classroom**

Informed by this framework of research about the educational assessment paradigm the present researcher set out to reflect upon the questions: How can students be involved in their own learning through formative assessment? How can formative assessment be managed in the history classroom? How would students react to this kind of assessment? The objective of the research was to explore the use of assessment as a tool for developing students' historical understanding by relishing students with a number of assessment opportunities based on the *assessment for learning* paradigm.

### **Method**

The case study consisted of a total of 23 lessons with a Form 2 boys' classroom. The topics dealt with during the series of lessons included a balance between Maltese and European history: the Aragonese, the Feudal System, the Crusades, the Renaissance, the Protestant Reformation and the Great Siege. In



each lesson the focus of assessment was on a particular formative assessment technique. The following techniques were explored: the sharing of learning objectives, peer- and self-assessment using success criteria, concept mapping, questioning, and feedback. These were tested out with different topics and in more than one lesson. Moreover, in conjunction with these assessment practices and syllabus topics, a number of worksheets were devised. These sought to address four assessment objectives: development of historical knowledge, evaluation and interpretation of evidence, construction and communication of a simple historical exposition, and empathic understanding. The activities are analysed from two perspectives: first, from their contribution to learning; second, from the assessment opportunities they provide.

It must be stressed that the research presents an exploration of assessment techniques and an explanation of ideas, and not a finished argument. Nor does it attempt to generalise across the whole Form 2 cohort. Practising formative assessment remains an individual teacher's endeavour – it is developed according to one's pedagogical styles and in line with students' learning needs.

## **Analyses and discussion**

### ***i. Sharing of learning objectives***

There is perhaps no better way to involve students in their learning than by communicating to them the learning intentions of the lesson. Aware of the fact that the sharing of learning objectives is assuming an increasingly high profile, this researcher wanted to monitor its advantages to history teaching. In the first of a series of three lessons about the Crusades, the objectives of the lesson were written on the board. So students knew that the lesson was going to introduce the Crusading movement, understand the causes behind such wars of religion, and the countries involved. Constant reference to these objectives written on the board could be made throughout the lesson. During the plenary, then, students were asked to evaluate their understanding of the lesson in terms of these objectives: 'Did I understand the term Crusades? Am I able to explain what they consisted of?' Besides being a form of self-assessment, the researcher could, in this way, link with both the introduction and the development of the lesson.

In the following lesson the learning intention included a focus on the acquisition of a particular skill – bias – apart from content. Having students being aware that the lesson is going to be about the Third Crusade and that they are going to detect elements of bias in sources about Saladin, once again helped them

to direct their attention on what needs to be learned. The objectives of the final lesson about the Crusades helped the researcher link with the previous two lessons and thus to bring the topic to a structured closure.

Whether the learning intentions are knowledge- or skill-based, or a combination of both, it is important to have them communicated. This should manoeuvre students along clearly defined paths – they know what the lesson is going to involve and what they need to do as learners. When objectives are stated just for the sake of having them stated they will evaporate. Making reference to the objectives, even towards the end of lessons, proves useful because students will then view the parts of a lesson in terms of a holistic framework. This formative assessment technique is particularly appealing to history because the learning objectives make the content of the lesson focused and the skills identified from the beginning. So students are not left to wander in a labyrinth of historical, perhaps trivial, details.

### ***ii. Peer- and self-assessment using success criteria***

Peer- and self-assessment were approached through the establishing of success criteria. Maximising on Black's, et al. (2003, p.52) recommendation that "the criteria for evaluating learning achievements must be made transparent to students to enable them to have a clear overview both of the aims of their work and of what it means to complete it successfully," the aim of introducing this approach was to reflect on how students can be involved in activities where realistic targets are set and evaluated.

Peer-assessment was used in answering the simple enquiry: 'Why did the Protestant Reformation take place?' Since criteria for success were going to be used for the first time, it was fitting to first discuss their meaning and importance, together with an example. When it was clear that this was understood quite well, students were prompted to bring their own examples. At the end, the following success criteria to be considered in presentations were agreed upon: content knowledge; use of evidence; use of time; and use of voice. Each criterion was explained so that students knew they had to make reference to such aspects of historical knowledge as the state of the Catholic Church in the Late Middle Ages, back arguments with the primary sources used in class, speak for about five to ten minutes, and project a clear voice. Drawing upon the ideas of Cain and Neil (2004), the aim of introducing success criteria was three-fold: first, students were going to make informed judgements of their own and their peers' outcomes; second, they were going to use evidence in addressing an enquiry question; third, they would arrive at substantiated conclusions (Cain and Neil, 2004, p.32).

This exercise came at a time when the historical context of the Protestant Reformation was already expounded and the role played by Martin Luther established. The class was divided in groups of three. It was explained beforehand that students were going to assess group presentations by commenting and keeping in view the four success criteria. The idea that they were going to assume the role of teachers seemed enticing. Students listened attentively to the first presentation. This went quite well, especially since the student in charge made the presentation without reading any notes. At first, students were reluctant to comment about this presentation. It only needed such an intervention to trigger off peer assessment: How did this group fair with regard to each point? What else could this group mention? How could this group do better next time? How would you rate the knowledge covered: good, very good, not so good? In no time at all, students were reacting in the same vein. Other presentations followed, with students commenting after every intervention. Their comments, although rather negative, included: 'It's not fair. He's reading. I didn't use a text.' 'He did not mention Luther.' 'He didn't cover much content.' 'He did not say anything about the selling of indulgences.' 'His voice was not heard clearly.' 'He went too fast, we did not understand certain words, and he could have managed time better.' This highlights Black's, et al. (2003, p.50) reason why peer-assessment is valuable: "... students often accept, from one another, criticisms of their work that they would not take seriously if made by their teacher." Indeed, teachers' comments carry weight and are appreciated by students, but at times students tend to take particular consideration of their classmates' feedback.

This assessment reveals that students gave equal importance to historical content as much as to presentational skills. This was the first time this type of exercise was conducted. Students reacted positively and showed that they enjoyed the activity. They knew they were evaluating their peers' performance in order to improve. Peer-assessment allowed the present researcher to assess the quality of students' understanding, in particular to note how well students understood the reasons leading to the Protestant Reformation.

The word that we were going to make use of success criteria in another peer-assessment activity had hardly been pronounced that students soon identified the criteria here-above mentioned. This was edifying as it indicated that students had appreciated their relevance. The same type of activity was trialled again with another enquiry: 'How would you describe the first thirty-five years of the Order's rule in Malta?' The enquiry was made varied by giving leading sentences to be extended into paragraphs. These were intended to guide their thinking towards contrasting ideas. With this activity, those

few students who initially did not quite get the gist of the exercise started involving themselves more.

It was noted that peer-assessment can never be organised in isolation, but has to hinge on a preceding activity involving a sound coverage of content and skills so that students will have a solid base upon which to assess critically their peers. Peer-assessment was found to form a two-way communication: on the one hand learners know how far learning was successful and recognise their own learning needs; on the other hand the teacher is informed about how teaching can meet these needs. Moreover, it was highly evident that students' reactions to their peers' delivery governs the pace of the lesson, and therefore good time-management is imperative.

Although students were giving feedback to work done collaboratively, with these success criteria students were in a position to assess their own performance. Self-assessment is intrinsically woven in peer-assessment. Following peer-assessment, students were then left to complete their personal write-up. During the following lesson, when some volunteered to read their work, individual students were better able to locate what their work lacked when compared to success criteria and hence got to know what they needed to do to improve.

### ***iii. Concept mapping***

A concept map has been described by Van Drie and Van Boxtel (2003, p.28) as "... a diagram that represents connections between concepts, where the nodes represent concepts and the lines linking the nodes represent connections." It is a way of selecting information and making sense of that material, so as to structure the salient points associated with a concept.

By developing this assessment strategy the researcher wanted to know whether concept mapping would make pupils explain historical concepts and whether this would contribute to a deeper understanding. In order to have a wider base for response, concept mapping was used at various stages of lessons: as an introductory task, as a concluding activity and as an activity during an enquiry.

Feudalism is an important concept in history and cuts across a number of topics dealing with the Middle Ages. An understanding of this concept is vital if students are to make sense of the Medieval past. The concept map came at the beginning of the lesson and served the two-fold function of revising the important points of the previous lesson and to guide students

in answering the overarching question: Why did vassals have a difficult life? Students immediately found the concept map useful in sorting out their ideas about feudalism. They even suggested the use of sub-themes to further elaborate their ideas. When it was introduced at the beginning of the lesson, the immediate involvement of all students was evident and their reasoning was fully warmed up. The breaking of the main concept into a number of simpler themes by means of a series of questions allowed students to think, classify and discuss. It became easier for them to comprehend the feudal system and all that it entails. With this at-a-glance information, students could easily proceed to the next task and thus be better equipped to answer the overarching question. This first trial confirms what Van Drie and Van Boxtel (2003, p.31) found about concept mapping as an introductory task – that it not only "... activates prior knowledge, improves the quality of this knowledge and makes pupils conscious of the knowledge they lack", but can also "... motivate them to learn more about the subject."

This initial positive reaction on the part of students induced the researcher to experiment with concept mapping during the plenary of a lesson. The lesson about Leonardo Da Vinci was ideal for this because the works of this great Renaissance figure branch out into themes as science, art and engineering. The discussion of students' prior research about Da Vinci enabled the class to view some of his works, analyse his sketches, and consider possible reasons why he wrote the way he did. Moreover, it equipped students with the necessary background information for the concept map. This time round, it was found that it is quite difficult for students to organise a concept map completely on their own without having a prior solid knowledge base of the theme being explored. Therefore, the role of the teacher is to steer students into building ideas in the form of a concept map by means of questions and prevailing discussions. In this way, when the concept map is used at the end stage of the lesson, students' designs function as "... a schematic summary in which the most important concepts are related to one another" with which they "... can assess whether they have mastered the topic" (Van Drie and Van Boxtel, 2003, p.31).

Concept mapping was also used as an activity during an enquiry. The lesson about the Knights of St John of Jerusalem, the first of a series of lessons about 'The coming of the Order of St John and the Great Siege', started with a DVD clip about the origins of the Order. Having discussed the Order's hospitaller and military role, and the changing circumstances which led them to accept Malta, it was time to organise thoughts into a concept map. Since students were already familiar with this kind of exercise, the concept map needed no

introduction except that the researcher explained the importance behind such an activity, especially in helping them to study on their own. As in previous activities, it was not the intention to present a ready-made diagram, but to build one together. In this way, concept mapping helped students evaluate the information featured in the DVD, select the salient points worthy of mention, and organise them in a meaningful representation. Upon its completion, students could see information about the Knights' dual role, the places they hailed from, and their arrival in Malta, all spread clearly and neatly before them. This explains why the enquiry about the role of the Knights of St John throughout the ages benefitted from a concept map about the Order.

The use of concept mapping in history is important if we want students to reason and question, explain and understand. At the beginning of a lesson, a concept map serves as a warm-up for what is to follow. At the concluding stage, it serves as a cooling down; while when forming part of an activity it serves as a boost. In any case, a concept map is a thinking tool which helps students to make sense of concepts – which are difficult to comprehend for various reasons – by discussing meanings and giving examples. Moreover, because concept mapping consists of visual representations with which students can make their ideas explicit, it proves to be "... a powerful strategy which enables pupils to construct a deep understanding of ..." historical concepts (Van Drie and Van Boxtel, 2003, p.31).

#### ***iv. Questioning***

Questioning establishes a healthy line of communication with students. It is therefore a way of interaction. Questioning opens a window into students' thinking. In view of what Black, et al. (2003, p.42) opine, that "... the only point of asking questions is to raise issues about which the teacher needs information or about which the students need to think," the researcher wanted to analyse how questioning effects classroom interaction and improves student understanding.

The first type of questions dealt with were questions which geared students towards analysing sources so as to extrapolate information. During the lesson about feudalism, a set of four medieval pictures with farmers working in the fields were first discussed. Questions, such as: 'What do we mean by 'fief'? Whose is the land? How was it given to him? What were the obligations of the farmer towards his feudal lord? Who benefited most from the feudal system and why? Who had the least power?' had the potential of steering the focus of the lesson on the analyses of sources and promoting a discussion. The whole-class discussion allowed the researcher to assess the quality of

students' thinking about the topic. When some students commented on other students' comments, the researcher challenged them with higher-order questions such as: 'Do you see any connection between one's social status and one's power?' In this way, students could offer alternative explanations where they disagreed. The information extrapolated from these sources by means of such questions was the prelude to the following exercise whereby students had to suggest ways how to construct the social pyramid and explain one's social status.

Such open-ended questions, however, elicited mostly the response of the more able students. Therefore it was necessary to vary questioning with some closed questions and see the difference in class interaction. This modification in the way questions were formulated was at the same time addressing another function of questioning – that of evaluating students' knowledge and skills/concepts in a lesson about the first years of the Aragonese rule in Malta. Following the reading of a simulated newspaper, a series of questions targeting the knowledge mentioned both in the introduction of the lesson and in the simulated newspaper were posed: 'Who is the newspaper representing? By whom were these people being governed? Who is the king ruling Malta? Why was Malta important for him and for his kingdom? According to the king, were Maltese rights going to be affected or were they going to remain the same?' This mixture of closed- and open-ended questions ensured the participation of all the class.

It was considered useful to ask questions targeting skills. These included: 'What does the title of the newspaper suggest about the contents of the article? Imagine you were living in Malta during the year 1283, what would your reactions be to such news? Why? What other title would you suggest instead of the one given, to explain the events that took place in the Grand Harbour?' At this stage pupil engagement was at its height, even though they were somewhat startled at the empathic question. This, however, made them form an opinion based on the knowledge gleaned and speak their own mind.

Reflecting on this outcome, it was decided to try out this questioning technique once more. The objective of the following lesson was an understanding of the composition of the Aragonese government and the functions of the *Università* and the *Komun*. To this end, a simulated dialogue between government officials was read out and a worksheet bolting on it followed. The questions which targeted knowledge, such as: 'Who are the government officials mentioned in the dialogue? Why did they meet? When is the yearly election held?' acted as

a guide to the worksheet's empathic question. To address the skill of empathy, these questions were asked: 'Why were these government officials important in the running of the Islands? Imagine you form part of the *Komun*, what would your role be? Why is this role important for Malta?' The whole-class discussion that prevailed as a result of these pedagogical styles allowed the present researcher to assess the quality of students' understanding. It could be observed that students can evaluate their historical knowledge in terms of their empathic thinking. When students know what is expected of them, their work would reflect this. This way of assessing students enables teachers to understand how students use their creativity to back historical knowledge.

Indeed, quality question time requires teachers to judge the suitability of their questions and modify them to the task at hand. It is a strategy worth investing in, because through questioning teachers learn about students' prior knowledge and understanding of topics, alongside any gaps and misconceptions in that knowledge and understanding.

It transpired that questions can also serve the function of addressing the skill of empathy. The lesson about the voyage of Christopher Columbus centred round this. To understand the relevance of the activity and set the context, the researcher explained that students had to imagine they are sailors on board Columbus' ship, and that empathy is an important skill in history which needs to be developed. Four diary entries by a sailor on board the *Santa Maria* were read and discussed. Instead of the usual 'imagine you are' question, the researcher wanted questions to arouse in students a level of empathic understanding: 'What kind of difficulties did Columbus and his sailors encounter? Why was Columbus always telling his crew that they travelled less than they had actually done? What type of character had Columbus?' The skill of empathy may be difficult to master, but through well thought-out questions and a sustained feedback, students can be trained into developing this skill. To further exploit this technique, a different way of organising enquiries was employed. Rather than asking a series of questions, it was decided to make use of a big question which would involve a problem-solving task. The open question for the lesson was: 'What led the Turks to attack Malta in 1565?' Causation cards were read out and discussed. The task required students to position these according to their immediate importance. As it turned out, causes were classified into three groups: the Order's threat to the Ottomans; rising Ottoman power; and events which encouraged the Turks. Irrelevant causation cards were discarded. Now, as students were thinking on the bearing of each cause to the Great Siege, their reasoning was deeper and indicated a level of conceptual understanding. This discussion, in turn, was challenged



with further questions so that students could justify their reasoning. Indeed, having a big, open question, rather than a composition of questions, is also useful in promoting an environment where students articulate their thoughts and arrive at substantiated conclusions.

Pupils need structured help to proceed with their learning. It is evident that questions constructively lead students to do this. This part of the research was an exercise in refining questioning techniques as a formative tool in the history classroom. Questioning is bound to have a beneficial effect on classroom interaction, for students are more ready to participate when they know their answer would be valued. For teachers, the answers given to their questions reveal a treasure-trove of information from which to judge the understanding of their students, and provide sufficient evidence on which to plan the next step in learning. The positive attitudes noted in these observations testify to the comment that students "... come to realize that learning may depend less on their capacity to spot the right answer and more on their readiness to express and discuss their own understanding" (Black, et al., 2003, p.42).

#### **v. Oral and written feedback**

Oral feedback is the logical accompaniment to questioning. No questioning is effective without sustained feedback. Equally significant is written feedback which is the necessary requirement for students to reflect on their own learning. An awareness of the importance of feedback gives rise to two pertinent issues: How can oral feedback support learning? In what ways does written feedback help students? This is tantamount to finding the best ways of communicating to students their achievement and improvement. It must be noted that oral feedback is in reality a baseline procedure in teaching and cannot be isolated for its own sake. Subsequently, it could only make sense to organise oral feedback as part of other *assessment for learning* strategies.

The lesson 'Malta under Gonsalvo Monroi' took off with a brainstorming activity about terms and concepts like feudalism, feud, and feudal lords. This was followed by a discussion about the empathic question: 'Imagine you are a feudal lord. Explain your role in the feudal system', which students had for homework. Since the potential of oral feedback was being explored, ways in which comments would be useful were explained. As students were reading their write-ups the researcher commented about the good points they mentioned, particularly their application of historical knowledge. Appreciative comments, such as: 'You've used well the knowledge we mentioned in class. It's clear you've understood how the feudal system worked' and 'Good to have included the use of fiefs and your power over your subordinates,' encouraged

students a lot, especially those who said theirs were wrong even before reading their scripts. References were also made regarding the imagination and creativity used: 'As a feudal lord you must have been very busy handling all your lands. Well done. Very creative.' But at the same time, students had to understand what they could have done better. This was done by asking the rest of the class, rather than the individual student, to highlight any points not mentioned or what could have been done differently: 'You did not write anything about feudal lords and fiefs. How could you have tackled this?'

These and other comments proved to be practical, purposeful tips, adequate enough in guiding students towards improvement. Such immediate oral feedback enabled students to assess their work there and then: those who volunteered to read their work could refine it straightaway, while the rest had the time to think about other ways of how to tackle writing about being a feudal lord. This supportive feedback was also useful for the rest of the lesson where students had to extend sentences so as to construct a historically sound account about the episode of Monroi and the Maltese. Here, oral feedback – which took the form of a series of graded questions – was of paramount importance because if students got this wrong they could easily misinterpret the train of events. Reflecting on this, it could be noted that oral feedback allows as much individualised learning as whole-class learning because from the feedback given to one, others can learn. Not only does oral feedback directly inform learning, it was also found to be a perfect way to valorising a discussion.

Written feedback can be given by the teacher in the form of comments and marks or grades. Clarke (cited in Butler, 2004, p.38) suggests adopting 'close the gap' prompts which may be of three types: 'reminder prompt', 'scaffold prompt', or 'example prompt' comments. The aim is to provide students with concrete illustrations of how to improve. Inspired by these ideas, the researcher wanted to adapt such comments to the subject of history and reflect on their inherent potential. This was done through a 'comments-only' marking with the above-mentioned empathic writings. Reflecting on this practice, it was noticed that end comments tended to emphasise more 'scaffold and example prompts': 'Think about how you could have explained the feudal system'; 'As a feudal lord give your opinion about the feudal system'; and 'You could have been more creative had you mentioned a particular episode which you, as a feudal lord, went through'. 'Example prompts' which were written included: 'You could have explained why you lived a life of luxury'; and 'Next time conclude with a sentence which shows your own opinion'. 'Reminder prompts' were also used, which included comments such as: 'Start using

paragraphs in your write-up so that ideas follow each other'; and 'Say more about the feelings of farmers and serfs'. Along the writings the researcher pointed out good introductions and conclusions with short comments as: 'Interesting introduction'; 'Good examples' or 'You've explained well your role'. The researcher also wrote short directives, like: 'Explain why' or 'Explain what the king expects of you.' Such side remarks identify precisely the existing strengths and set a target for development.

Clarke's winning idea of 'close the gap' comments is convincing enough to show that students need assessments which encourage and not dishearten them. Comments as these proved beneficial in helping students reflect on their performance and assume responsibility for their progress. From such practices it transpired that if students are to make sense of written feedback, teachers' comments should always include reference to the students' work. This confirms Black's (2001, p.18) comment that "feedback to any pupil should be about the particular qualities of his or her work, with advice on what he or she can do to improve."

When giving feedback in the form of marks, it was noticed that although students may be immediately glad with an 8 or a 9 out of 10 – and their first reaction is to compare their mark with peers – they do not quite understand what that means, except that it ranks their performance alongside a continuum of marks. When the mark is accompanied by a comment, students are better equipped to figure out what that mark means. But even here, the mark tends to assume an overriding importance. In a 'comments-only' marking, students do ask why they are not given a mark, but are more readily inclined to make sense of the comments they receive, and in so doing, are given the chance to revisit their work. As Burnham and Brow (2004, p.11) found, "getting better ... is about revisiting, reshaping, reconnecting."

### **Towards an 'assessment culture'**

The case study demonstrates how assessment is woven into all the teaching process, pedagogical styles and classroom interactions. It is reasonable to state that the teaching instances in this research confirm that formative assessment is the vehicle through which teachers inform themselves widely about their students' understanding and thinking in history. That formative assessment consists of a string of pedagogical approaches which are compatible with history teaching was confirmed by this study, where it was evident how various activities can be organised in order to facilitate the development of historical understanding. In this sense, formative assessment unlocks students' thinking

in history and reshapes knowledge extensively.

It must also be noted that teaching with an *assessment for learning* agenda in mind is a challenging endeavour, placing a battery of demands on history teachers. Qualitative feedback, for example, engages teachers in lengthy and time-intensive work – and it surely cannot be provided for every piece of work (Butler, 2004). Teachers are already faced with the task of integrating "... a skills-based and concept-based learning into a predominantly knowledge-based curricular framework" (Calleja, 2003, p.84). However, it is alongside this pedagogy that assessment has to be planned. Teachers have to construct and manage assessment through various strategies, since students do not develop their historical thinking all at the same time. This is particularly important in history because "... one cannot create boundaries with clear demarcations regarding children's history thinking" (Vella, 2004, p.11). When activities are designed with a purpose in mind – and this purpose is communicated – students will not regard such activities as isolated circumstances of assessment, but will realise their relevance as forming part of a wider framework. Cooper's (1994, p.77) suggestion is in line with this view: "if activities are planned on statements of attainment, it is possible to assess children's historical thinking as part of their on-going work, in a variety of ways."

No single, fit-for-all method exists for formative assessment to be implemented in a perfect way; nor is formative assessment a panacea for educational ills. Its use depends on teachers varying and tailoring their individual pedagogical styles to meet the diverse nature of history classrooms. Formative assessment has to be the currency coined in the teacher's own mint.

This scenario does not imply that we are to do away with summative assessment. Summative assessment is there to stay, but it needs to be supported more frequently and soundly by formative assessment. In reality – and as research (Taras, 2005; Biggs, 1999; Harlen, 2005; Assessment Reform Group, 2006, 2002) suggests – both have a great educational value. While in the long term formative assessment gives teachers a holistic understanding of students' capabilities, especially about their performance during tests or examinations, summative assessments can be used formatively in order to consolidate learning. Their use should run parallel and in tandem.

A stronger, conscientious accent on the use of formative assessment should not be seen as a mere cosmetic change. It should constitute a qualitative leap, empowering students to maximise on their capacity to learn so as to progress positively. How students experience formative assessment is the proof of

its value. It is in the arena of everyday teaching circumstances that we are provided with ample opportunities to explore the depth of assessment. Daily acts reaffirming the importance of assessment will increase students' feelings of ownership of their learning.

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### **Note**

The Protestant Reformation is not included in the new Form 2 History curriculum (2012). It is discussed in this paper because the topic still forms part of the Form 3 History curriculum for option classes.

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**Maestro Carmelo Pace (1906 - 1993):  
a prolific twentieth-century composer, musician and  
music educator**

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## Background

Born on 17 August 1906, at 4.15am, in the capital city of Valletta, Chevalier Maestro Carmelo Lorenzo Paolo Pace was the eldest of seven children, of which four died of brucellosis at birth. Pace's birth was registered on 21 August 1906 (the progressive number on Pace's birth certificate is 4690), and was witnessed by the copyist Achille Farrugia and the police officer Alfredo Maria Naudi. He was born to Antonio Pace, a twenty-four year-old cashier in a coffee bar, and Maria Carmela, née Ciappara, a diligent housewife who was two years her husband's senior. During Pace's early childhood the family lived in an apartment in Merchant Street, Valletta. In the same household was his mother's brother, Maestro Vincenzo Ciappara (1890-1979), who was Pace's earliest tutor.

Ciappara was a prominent figure in the early decades of the twentieth century. Bandmaster, arranger and composer by profession, he greatly influenced his nephew's choice of a professional career in music. Through his uncle's encouragement and perseverance, Pace acquired his inclination towards classical music, a passion that continued to evolve throughout his musical career. Pace received his first education at St Augustine College in Valletta, where he became very active in the students' choir. Apart from attending primary school, Pace also attended private lessons.

Relatively little is known about Pace's musical education as a teenager and as a young adult. His earliest experience of hearing performances of classical music led him to listen to military marches played by the British military bands, which were permanently stationed there at that time, as Malta was a British colony. During frequent visits to his father's workplace at the *Commerce* cinema theatre in *Strada Reale* (Kingsway - Republic Street) in Valletta, Pace became captivated by the impromptu style of live musical accompaniment, played by the resident quartet during the screenings of silent films. Through his uncle's tutelage, Pace made good progress in his lessons and was able to join the orchestra at the age of fifteen. Pace eventually joined Carlo Diacono's (1876-1942) *cappella di musica* and the orchestra of the Italian Opera Company at the Royal Opera House between 1921 and 1938, where he was principal viola in the orchestra. Whilst Pace performed at the Royal Opera House in Valletta, he had the opportunity to participate in various performances, and thus could study and thoroughly analyse the playing techniques of each instrument of the orchestra.

After acquiring some fundamental training from his uncle, Pace continued his studies for a further nine years, under the guidance of three foreign musicians

who were resident on the island. Pace studied violin under the tutelage of Antonio Genova, Professor Carlo Fiamingo (for violin and later the viola) and Dr Thomas Maine, acquiring a thorough grounding in harmony, counterpoint, fugue, musical composition, and orchestration.

By 1931 Pace obtained the Licentiate Diploma in teaching from the Royal School of Music, London. His anonymity is due to the fact that Pace never enhanced his studies abroad but progressed in his technical harmonic skills through correspondence. Unfortunately, such correspondence that could provide significant information regarding the intriguing harmonic expression that was employed in Pace's post-tonal works could not be traced. However, according to Ronald Azzopardi Caffari (interviewed in May 2013) a short congratulatory note sent by Dr Maine to Pace was found.

Pace's success in composition resulted in him being the first pioneering collector of Maltese folk music, a professional violinist at the Royal Opera House, teacher and composer. Due to his extensive musical *oeuvre*, Pace managed to comprehend his musical aptitudes by exploring every aspect of stylistic *genres*, ranging from piano sonatas to fully-fledged operas, choral, chamber and large-scale orchestral works. Although Pace produced an extensive range of stylistic *genres*, his music remains almost completely unknown, as most of it has not been published or performed up to this day.

In Malta the amalgamation of religious culture with the deep-rooted Mediterranean predisposition meant that the national school of composition up to the twentieth century focused on two vocal *genres*: sacred music in particular – through the works of composers from Benigno Zerafa (1762-1804) to Paul Nani (1906-1986) – and classical opera. Thus, Joseph Vella Bondin's illustrated books, which exemplify the whole spectrum of creativity and enhancement in Pace's music, explain that the conservative nature of music in Malta from the thirteenth century leading up to Pace's time is focused on conventional music, both in terms of harmony and instrumentation (Vella Bondin, 2000a & 2000b). Therefore, to support the argument of the present article, when contextualising Pace's folk and post-tonal music in relation to the works of his Maltese predecessors it stands in stark contrast. Pace's musical approach in developing a stylistic approach in Malta instigated a new form of medium, and thus this paper argues that Pace served not only as a pioneer of folk music but introduced a modernistic approach that continued to materialise throughout the twentieth century through his fellow contemporaries.

As Pace's compositions were donated to the Mdina archives towards the end of his lifetime, and stored there (except for his four operas, which can be found at the Manoel Theatre library), no relevant documents, letters, correspondence or other evidence seem to exist which exhibit any relevant connections with other foreign mainstays of his time that could support Pace's contribution towards the development of modernism in the first part of the twentieth century. This has generated substantial speculation connected to the lack of evidence, which does not help to shed any light on Pace's departure from the norm.

## Musical language

Pace began to expand the traditional Maltese *repertoire* into a wider, more focused musical spectrum. In the early twenties of the last century, Pace was still in his teens, but his earliest efforts were quite prolific. He composed suites for piano, violin and violoncello, followed by cantatas, orchestral and chamber music, sacred hymns, two ballets, band marches, concertos, and an oratorio. Pace's first musical work was called *Two Pieces*, composed in 1926, and divided into two separate sections: *Reverie* and *Lullaby* (De Gabriele and Caffari, 1991).

*Reverie* (Fig. 1), which commences in the key of E<sup>b</sup> major and modulates to the dominant key, is based on a classical Ternary Form, ending on a short Coda. The formal organisation of *Lullaby* (Fig. 2) is structured like *Reverie*; however the development section is constantly repeated in its thematic material and ends on a short Coda. This work was composed in conventional harmony for pianoforte, violin and violoncello,<sup>1</sup> with its first part *Reverie* transcribed in the same year for chamber orchestra<sup>2</sup> and later for violin and piano. The piano trio, organised by Paul Carabott (v'cello) (1906-1976), was premiered on 15 October 1932 at the *Juventus Domus* in Sliema.

Pace's earliest works were recorded on the Maltese recoding label *Odeon Dischi Maltin*, and distributed by Paul Carabott, situated in Merchants' Street, Valletta. These works included *Nghannu lil Kwiekeb* (We sing to the stars – Foxtrot),<sup>3</sup> *Stedina għaż-Żfin* (An invitation to dance – Tango),<sup>4</sup> *Lucia* (Lucia – Tango),<sup>5</sup> *Għid lil Mama* (Tell your mum – One Step)<sup>6</sup> and *Għodwa ta' Imħabba* (A day of love – Sentimental Waltz).<sup>7</sup> These works were put to text by Pace and the recordings featured three well-known singers: C. Aquilina (Soprano), A. Theuma Castelletti (Tenor) and Watty Cachia (Baritone). According to Azzopardi Caffari (interviewed in May 2013) these recordings have disappeared without a trace; it is possible that as Pace's first residence in Valletta was heavily bombarded during the Second World War, these discs may have been destroyed at that time.





Following his earliest attempts at string quartets, which were also written in a conventional late Romantic tonal language resembling that of the early to middle Verdian-operatic style, Pace composed his first orchestral work in 1929, which was the Symphonic Overture in C minor *Simoisius* (Fig. 3). Unfortunately, this work was never performed. This nine-minute composition is presented in two principal subjects, recapitulation and a sharply defined Coda. The first subject, after a slow short introduction, opens with a fugato and from that point the music proceeds in a direct and straightforward manner. The work opens with a short contrapuntal introduction using the woodwinds, strings and horns, in the key of E<sup>b</sup> major and in simple quadruple time *Adagio* pace. As the work progresses, the second section enters in an *Allegro* tempo, with the first subject appearing in the part of the first violin. Contrapuntally developing in the string section, the work progresses into uncomplicated harmonic language, generally employing a chorale style throughout the sections of the orchestra. In the middle section the work changes to *Moderato molto in 4 movimenti*, generally keeping the same rhythmic structure as had been employed in the first half. In this section the melodic material is doubled by the first and second violins with the upper sections of the woodwinds. The work continues to be enhanced as the piccolo and the first violin are doubled together, supported by diatonic chordal progressions. Another section appears using sustained progressions on the bassoon, while the horns are melodically approached in a two- and three-part counterpoint. With a recapitulation and motivic melodic treatments taken from previous materials, the work concludes in a long Coda, ending in a climax in the last few bars, in *Vivo* tempo.

**Concert Overture in C minor**  
(1929)

Carmelo Pace (1906-1993)

**Fig. 3: *Simoisius* – Concert Overture in C minor (1929), bars 9-15**

Towards the forties of the twentieth century, Pace became intrigued with composing Maltese folk music. He decided to write in the Maltese language, differently from the customary Italianate style so common among most of his predecessors. It may be that as Malta was experiencing political tension between the supporters of the British colonisers and the followers of Italian culture, Pace

deviated from the habitual practices dominant in the island and embarked on the new venture of composing traditional Maltese folk music. Apart from the fact that this made him the first collector of folk music, Pace served as an educator to his fellow contemporaries, who continued on his path in cultivating the national identity of Malta. One of his successors was Professor Charles Camilleri (1931-2009), considered by many as a national composer, who scored a number of works based on folk music and legends. *The Malta Suite* (1946) and *Songs from Malta* are fine examples of folk music.

The kinds of Maltese subjects that Pace employed were mainly based on variations of Maltese traditional tunes, variations on the *Maltese National Anthem* and a choral work featuring a typical Maltese feast. This represents the fact that Pace integrated the Maltese language with traditional folk music so as to promote the island's true identity through his compositions. For:

*"at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century few Maltese could speak English and the colonial power had not penetrated the everyday life of locals. The elite working with the British military could interact with the colonial authorities and some famous British Lords (such as Lord Strickland) became major figures in the political debate for independence. However, the influence of British culture was competing with a previous cultural order. The islands' neighbouring Sicily and the broader Italian region had been the former purveyors of culture. Through the powerful Roman Catholic Church and through commercial exchanges, the Italian peninsula had influenced Maltese culture for centuries before the British occupation. The main language of the Knights of Malta was Italian and the juridical system was written in Italian until the 20<sup>th</sup> century" (Billiard, n.d., n.p.).*

As Billiard highlights, although English and Maltese are the two official languages in Malta under EU regulations, one can still find elderly Maltese people who can speak Italian better than English. In addition, as the cultural supremacy between Britain and Italy can be clearly understood from political debates that took place at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, their political issues still influence their structural policies.

Enhancing Billiard's claims about the establishment of an identity in Malta, Henry Frendo argues that in "1899 a language substitution decree was announced, whereby a deadline of fifteen years was set for the final replacement of Italian by

English in the law courts – as ‘a first bombshell’, wrote Chamberlain.” Therefore, when “anglicisation accompanied de-italianisation in Malta as a policy, replacing such informal cultural influences as had less conspicuously accompanied the British presence since 1800. At the same time, Maltese was promoted as a means for learning English; and in its own right, Italian was increasingly pressured out on the ground that English was the Empire’s language, and that children could not be expected to learn as many as three languages” (1992, p.733).

In a Maltese context Pace emerges as the counterpart of Vaughan Williams in England, or Bartók in Hungary: one of a generation of European composers working in the earlier twentieth century who continued the traditions of Romantic nationalism. In mainland Europe, nationalism came to be regarded with great suspicion after the Second World War and nationalist schools of composition enjoyed no critical credibility once the post-war musical *avant-garde* emerged. However, Pace’s interest in Maltese folk music and Maltese subjects was life-long and lasted up to his death. This reinforces the sense of his isolation from the *avant-garde*. In some respects, therefore, his position once again shows similarities with Irish composers such as Potter and Fleischmann, who similarly continued to have recourse to Irish subject matter and to folk music even after 1945, or with composers in Eastern Europe such as Kodaly.

Pace’s nationalistic identity features in his work *Maltesina* (1931), a musical fantasy based largely on traditional Maltese folk tunes (Fig. 4). The Scottish Highland Fusiliers’ Light Infantry Band premiered this work on the Palace Square in the same year. In 1936 Pace re-arranged it for chamber orchestra:

*“This fantasy contains nine different original folk-tunes and each tune is given a number at the opening bar. A few bars of episodic material are introduced to connect the principal themes. Although there are hundreds of lyrics for Maltese folk-songs, there are however very few real Maltese traditional melodies. This is due to the unfortunate local habit of setting numerous different songs to the same tune. For this reason one cannot identify a melody with its proper title” (De Gabriele and Caffari, 1991, p. 184).*

At the beginning of his career as a composer Pace constantly sought to divert the traditional idiom that was constantly pursued by his predecessors to an *avant-garde*, contemporary style of musical language. This definitive approach to creating an innovative stylistic idiom dates back to as early as the 1930s, where it was achieved through a cycle of string quartets. Pace’s interest in post-tonal

# Maltesina

(1936)

No. 1

Carmelo Pace (1906-1993)

The image shows a musical score for 'Maltesina' (1936), No. 1, Slow March. The score is in 2/4 time and B-flat major. It features a melody for Oboe/Clarinet in B-flat and a piano accompaniment. The piano part is marked 'pp pizz' and 'pizz'. The score shows bars 1-11, with a measure rest at the beginning and a measure rest at bar 6.

**Fig. 4: Maltesina (1931), 1<sup>st</sup> Maltese tune, bars 1-11**

harmonic language is an important development in Maltese musical heritage, and thus Pace became the first composer to develop this kind of medium. As Pace's predecessors were reluctant to exploit a modern spectrum of musical ideas, unlike those of the late-Romantic European composers of their time, Pace's approach in composing a modernist style may be considered as constituting one of the pillars of music composition in the twentieth century.

Prior to composing his cycle of post-tonal string quartets, Pace had already worked on three other string quartets, which were completely different in texture and structure. These four-movement string quartets in C major (Fig. 5), F major (Fig. 6) and B<sup>b</sup> major (Fig. 7) were composed between 1927 and 1929. The first two string quartets (C major and F major) were premiered at the local Relay System on 16 November 1936 and at the Malta Cultural Institute Concert on 3 June 1954. The formal organisation of these three quartets consists of four movements: *Allegro*, *Adagio/Andante*, *Scherzo* and *Fugue*. The structural form of each movement is based on the first subject, the second subject, the development section, the recapitulation of the first subject and the recapitulation of the second subject; the fourth movement contains *stretto* episodes throughout the fugue section, followed by a coda. Therefore, the overall formal organisation of the first three

string quartets is based on a ternary form, including a coda for the first three movements, and the fourth movement consists of *stretto* episodes with a coda.

**String Quartet in C major**  
(1927)

Carmelo Pace (1906-1993)

**Allegro Moderato** ♩ = 100

The musical score is presented in four systems. The first system (bars 1-10) is marked 'Allegro Moderato' with a tempo of ♩ = 100. It features four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Violoncello. Dynamics include *f* (forte) and *p* (piano). The second system (bars 11-19) includes markings for *pizz* (pizzicato) and *arco* (arco). The third system (bars 20-27) is marked 'Grazioso e Poco Meno' with a tempo of ♩ = 94. It includes a first ending bracket labeled '1'.

**Fig. 5: String Quartet in C major (1927), bars 1-27**

After the first three string quartets Pace commenced with his cycle of string quartets, which he did not compose in close succession. His first nine string quartets were scored from 1930 to 1938, and the last two were composed in 1970 and 1972. Regrettably, only one of the string quartets has been performed so far – the 2<sup>nd</sup> string quartet (1931) was premiered on 5 February 1965 in Waltham, UK – with the remaining works still waiting to be performed. To present an overview of Pace’s post-tonal string quartets, the illustrated example, the 7<sup>th</sup> string quartet, composed in 1936 (Fig. 8), exemplifies the kind of language pertained in his works.



## String Quartet in Bb major

(1929)

Carmelo Pace (1906-1993)

Allegro ♩ = 100

Violin I  
Violin II  
Viola  
Violoncello

*f* staccato e leggero

*f* staccato e leggero

*f*

*f*

*f*

*f*

**Fig. 7: String Quartet in Bb major (1929), bars 1- 15**

within each movement. These concepts create a contrast between diametrically opposing movements, which in turn incorporates short fragmented features that develop between the first and third movement with a complexity in structure and tempo. While the first and third movement develop a consistency of innovative thematic traits, it is evident that the second movement stands alone in nearly all factors, thereby offering a complete departure from the outer two movements. This departure reveals that the second movement is highly chromatic and conveys very short fragmented passages, distinguished from each other by means of individual motifs. When assimilating the overall harmonic language, the string quartet is based on lines where the first and third movements exploit traits of superimposed diatonic chords, supported by primary notes in the cello part.

According to Azzopardi Caffari (interview May 2013), Pace composed two additional string quartets. Although these compositions are untraceable and are therefore not noted in the catalogue, these works were transmitted by Rediffusion (Malta) in a series of concerts from Nani's Piano Studio in South Street, Valletta. The *String Quartet in C minor* was transmitted on 14 November 1936, whilst *The Spring Bow*, composed for string orchestra, was transmitted in August 1937.

# String Quartet No. 7 (1936)

1st Movement

Carmelo Pace (1906-1993)

**Largamente** ♩ = 56

(1st Theme) (A1) Consequent

pp dim. p p accel.

Extension A Antecedent (A1)

pp accel. slentando f espress. p dolce

Extension (A3) (2nd Theme) - (B)

**Allegro ma non Troppo** (♩=112)

p p pizz.

**Fig. 8: First movement, *Largamente* section, antecedent and consequent phrases, bars 1-18**

Vella Bondin (2000, p. 181) expounds that Pace was musically adventurous when it came to *musica da camera*. Pace wanted to demonstrate that his chamber works were of a high calibre Vella Bondin also noted that, apart from being “harmonically



advanced for his era”,<sup>8</sup> Pace’s *musica da camera* is generally exquisitely refined; the harmonic language portrays melodious progressions while at times, complex dissonant chromaticism is employed.

This kind of complex harmonic language is illustrated in a number of examples. *Intermezzo for Flute Solo* (1971) is a five minute through-composed work which contains short improvisory themes, incorporating contrasting tempi and moods (Fig. 9). This short work distinctively portrays complex melodic chromaticism, with major, minor, augmented and diminished intervallic patterns presented throughout the score. Although the work employs fragmented melodic contours which are constantly connected from one phrase to another using different articulated techniques, Pace still presents large intervallic patterns that at times function as a melodic dissonance in its overall complexity.

### Intermezzo (1971)

For solo flute

Carmelo Pace (1906-1993)



**Fig. 9: Intermezzo (1971) for solo flute, bars 1-17**

Written in three movements, Pace’s 7<sup>th</sup> String Quartet (1936) bears an important place in the Maltese musical heritage as the overall harmonic language reveals the transition from the norm (Fig. 10). The work constitutes three movements where it is constructed from fragmentary gestures and based on recurrences of structured progressions. The work allows Pace to incorporate some of his concepts concerning fundamental parameters and asymmetrical features and textures within each movement. These concepts create a contrast between diametrically opposing movements, which in turn incorporates short fragmented features that develop between the first and third movement with a structural complexity in structure and tempo. As the first and third movement develop a consistency of

Largamente  $\text{♩} = 56$

(1st Theme) (A1) Consequent

pp dim. p p p accel. Dmaj7

iv i of G minor V9 vi of G minor vii - G minor V7 i of G minor F# min

Extension A Tempo Antecedent (A1)

pp accel... slentando f espress. Bb aug A major IV Corda

pp accel..... slentando f Eb major express. p dolce i of C minor

pp accel..... A minor slentando f D7 i7 of G minor v7 of C minor

Extension (A3) Allegro ma non Troppo ( $\text{♩} = 112$ ) (2nd Theme)

trill p p p p pizz.

**Fig. 10: 7<sup>th</sup> String Quartet (1936), 1<sup>st</sup> Movement, diatonic harmonic progressions, bars 1-18**

innovative thematic traits, it is evident that the second movement stands alone in nearly all factors, thereby offering a complete departure from the outer two

movements. This departure has led to reveal that the second movement is highly chromatic and conveys very short fragmented passages, distinguishing them from each other by means of individual motifs.

The first implications of diatonic tonal harmony are exemplified in the first musical idea of the introduction section. The overall system is based on superimposed diatonic chords where in the cello part, in the antecedent and consequent phrases (bars 1-8), the bass notes are implying in the key of G minor – ii – iv – i, iii – ii – V<sup>7</sup> – i – vii. As illustrated in Fig. 10, the upper diatonic chords are structured on V<sup>9</sup> at bar 3, resolving onto vi of G minor. In the second phrase, the F<sup>#</sup> leading note is projected prominently, mainly in the first violin part, and is later heard in the second violin part, resolving on the first beat of bar 8, which serves as the leading diatonic chord of G minor.

The second period opens at bar 12 with two superimposed chords where in the cello part, the V<sup>7</sup> serves as a support to the E<sup>b</sup> major chord, demonstrated in the second violin and viola parts. The V<sup>7</sup> chord resolves onto the tonic of G minor at bar 15, where the same chord functions as a pivot chord to the key of C minor. In the upper register, the two diatonic chords are based on an augmented chord of B<sup>b</sup> major (bar 14), followed by Amaj<sup>7</sup> (bar 15) between the first and second violin parts. At bar 16 the tonic of C minor functions as a long pedal note till bar 18.

Although it was not his intention to elicit the concept of 'atonality' in his chamber works, Pace's objectives for his chamber works were to infuse his own expressiveness, thoughts and emotions into his own compositions.<sup>9</sup> Pace's music, although diversified from the classical conventional harmony that one would expect to hear, still remained lyrical and expressive as well as melancholic, both in texture and quality. "The style of Carmelo Pace's orchestral and chamber music is more modern in outlook; however, according to the composer himself, he does not follow any particular school of composition and he is not inclined to follow exaggerated experiments" (De Gabriele and Caffari, 1991, p. xvi).

With the onset of the Second World War Pace was conscripted with the British Forces, but was found medically unfit for active military duties. He was appointed shelter supervisor in Valletta, in charge of about six hundred homeless refugees. Later, he continued to work as a civilian clerk with the Royal Air Force; his job involved the deciphering of allied aeroplane movement codes, which was a highly secret exercise during the war. Pace was permanently stationed in Valletta where attacks were constant. On one occasion, during an air raid on Valletta, Pace refused to leave the building from where he was working and continued on his

job. When he finally decided to leave his office and took shelter from the attacks, Pace was fortunate to escape harm when a bomb directly hit the office in which he had been working (Farrugia, 2003).

Due to his work during the war, Pace was constrained to suspend his musical composition activity from 1940 to 1944. Notwithstanding this situation, during the war he still managed to conduct a small orchestra for the refugees. Pace also managed to teach music after office hours at the Command School of Education, in South Street, Valletta. During this time Pace's family, including his wife, moved house from Merchant Street to Old Mint Street in Valletta, as this had been heavily bombarded. Thereafter, they moved to Sliema in Tigné Street, and later to 14, St Dominic Street, where Pace continued to teach for more than fifty years.

After the Second World War one would assume that Pace moved to a new harmonic approach, reflecting the developments being experimented in the rest of Europe. However, to the contrary, the present author's analytical evaluation of his works have revealed that Pace did not change his artistic style of composition; he remained consistent in his harmonic language throughout his musical career by employing complex dissonant chromaticism, mostly presented in intricate fugal writing.

Although the majority of Pace's orchestral and vocal works are based on tonality, the harmonic originality of some of his selected works, such as the four operas, piano and chamber works and the *Symphony No. 2* (Fig. 11) characterise elements of post-tonal language. Through thorough archival research, the present author

### Symphony No. 2

(1966)

Carmelo Pace (1906-1993)

The image displays a musical score for the first movement of Carmelo Pace's Symphony No. 2 (1966), specifically Theme A from bars 1-7. The score is written for a full orchestra and includes parts for Flutes, Trombones, Horns, Bassoons, Strings, and D. Bass. The tempo is marked 'Allegro Energico' with a quarter note equal to 100 beats per minute. The dynamics are marked 'ff' (fortissimo). The music is characterized by complex dissonant chromaticism and intricate fugal writing.

Fig. 11: *Symphony No. 2* (1966), 1<sup>st</sup> Movement - Theme A, from bar 1-7

can confirm that Pace appears to have had no contact with the burgeoning post-tonal language of the European mainland; however, he represents the foundations of Maltese post-tonal compositional practice. Pace's music demonstrates itself to be an independent conception of what musical language and syntax might be in the post-common practice era.

It took thirty-five years after his symphony *Symphonie Dramatique* (1931) before Pace composed *Symphony No. 2* (1966), a twenty-seven minute three-movement work, which premiered at the Manoel Theatre, in Valletta, during an orchestral concert presented by the British Council and Rediffusion (Malta) Limited on 20 January 1968, under the baton of Maestro Joseph Sammut. The "structure of this work differs in many ways from that of the classical models. The traditional four movement frame work is reduced to three and the usual division of the movement into an exposition, development and recapitulation is also modified. The music flows as a continuous train of musical ideas, growing and branching out freely" (De Gabriele and Caffari 1991, p. 169).

Structured for a full orchestra, with double woodwinds, four horns, two trumpets, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, harp and strings (similarly scored as some symphonies by Hindemith and Bruckner), the three-movement work features characteristics employed in Pace's large-scale orchestral works. The overall formal organisation of the symphony does not conform to the standard classical models, but consists of a trail of new thematic ideas, which in turn are continuously based on improvisory materials that are developed from one section to another. Throughout the symphony, in some sections the statements and developments are in contrast with each other, while the rhythmic complexities of such passages are presented in contrasting superimposed rhythms; the majority are based on crotchets, triplet crotchets and quavers and quaver passages. Organising and structuring such a complex work of this calibre requires a diversity of compositional creativity encompassing a psychological and philosophical evaluation of the whole framework. In turn, each composer creates a whole new individual dimension of ingenuity, where different musical cultures embody different ways of imagining sound as music. As noted by Nicholas Cook the "transformation from the simple to the elaborate occurs when a composer plans out and realizes a complex musical work such as a symphony. One cannot write a symphony all at once; so part of the skill of composition lies in splitting up what has to be done into a number of 'sub-jobs', each of more manageable length or complexity" (Cook, 1992, p. 192).

Although the themes are generally presented at the opening of each section, mainly projected on the woodwinds or on the first violins, the thematic ideas in

turn develop into improvisory treatments. In addition, with the use of new thematic ideas, which constitute unstructured phrases of four or more than eight bars in length, Pace employs short motives which are not directly derived from thematic material, but are independently presented in either two-bar canonic progressions or in short contrapuntal textures. As the basis of the work constitutes an absence of clear traditional tonal idioms, the listener's perspective sense of the musical organisation is largely dependent on thematic and textural contrasts, rather than tonal ones. Unlike other European composers whose tonality declined, in the works of Schoenberg, Berg and Webern, their "thematic processes came to play an ever larger role, both in the creation of unity and in the articulation of form." In the essay *Problems of Harmony* (1934) Schoenberg maintained that "abandoning tonality can be contemplated only if other satisfactory means for coherence and articulation present themselves, and for him these other means were clearly motivic" (Dale, 2000, p. 76).

With reference to the symphony's harmonic language, Pace's approach to this medium stands in comparison with his post-tonal chamber music. The symphony does not employ a clear tonal centre but constitutes dissonant structural harmonies that prevail constantly throughout the work. Such obscure harmonies are presented as: (i) superimposed and higher diatonic chordal progressions, (ii) dissonant intervallic patterns of augmented/diminished 4ths and 5ths, (iii) dissonant clashes between two-part contrapuntal textures, and (iv) chromatic interventions of non-harmonic notes. The harmonic organisation is based on contrapuntal textures, prominently projected in the strings; similar to Hindemith's contrapuntal techniques which are structured on the same textures. Highlighting Hindemith's evaluations on contrapuntal textures, Hans Tischler states that: "There are two basic approaches to counterpoint, one based on consonance, the other on independent melodic-rhythmic progressions. As a conservative, Hindemith employs counterpoint in the first sense only, yet uses dissonant counterpoint, the dissonance being the result of (1) non-traditional chords, (2) an extended application of non-harmonic notes, (3) certain melodic techniques, and (4) polytonality" (Tischler, 1964, p. 53).

Despite personal challenges, Pace still continued to expand his musical *repertoire* in various *genres*, such as ballets, symphonies, choral works, overtures, and various combinations of chamber works. Pace's music was played by freelance Maltese musicians and the first documented concerts, held in Malta not under the auspices of the Church, were organised by the MCI (Malta Cultural Institute). The initial concert took place on 15 February 1949 at the Hotel Phoenicia, under the distinguished patronage of Governor and Lady Douglas and the Minister for

Education and Ms G.G. Ganado. In the Inaugural Concert of the Malta Cultural Institute, as the founder member of the institute, Pace also conducted the orchestra during this concert. For the prestigious event, the Mozart Amateur String Orchestra performed Pace's *Polonaise* (1930), a six-minute work which was originally composed for pianoforte and chamber orchestra, while an arrangement was later set for violoncello and piano. This orchestra was founded by Edward Naudi in 1917.

Although Pace was considered to be a conservative, introvert and self-effacing person, he still sought to extend his musical output beyond the geographical boundaries of Malta. His musical knowledge and expertise in composing such intriguing and highly complex post-tonal works allowed him not only to win prestigious awards, but also enabled him to have his own compositions performed in various European and non-European countries. Such works have been exhibited in several countries, such as in:

England (*Impromptu* – 1950 for piano solo) – winning piece in the International Chamber Music Competition of the Waltham Contemporary Music Society in 1967;

London (*Toccatina* – 1954 for piano solo) – performed on 5 January 1989;

Japan (*Jubilamus* – 1970 Tone Poem);

Germany (*Rondo* – 1979 for flute and pianoforte) and (*Rhapsody* – 1960 for clarinet and pianoforte);

Egypt (*Nel Crepuscolo* – 1934 for soprano and pianoforte);

USA (*Aprilja* – 1956 for soprano/tenor with pianoforte or orchestra);

Argentina, Wales, London and Yugoslavia (*Hunting Song* – 1956 for SATB unaccompanied) – awarded first prize in the Rediffusion Chamber Music Competition, October 1956;

Wales, London, Italy, Norway and Sweden (*L-Imnarja* – 1960 for SATB unaccompanied or with pianoforte);

Argentina – (*T'Accogliam Pane Celeste* – 1960 for SATB unaccompanied);

Italy and Wales (*Description of Spring* – 1960 – madrigal for SATB unaccompanied)

When one considers that the main focus in Malta inclined towards classical conservatism, Pace's operas stand in stark contrast. Although Pace's operas portray advanced post-tonal synthesis, they still characterise "the traditional style of music that suits the general Maltese audience well. He avoids using many modern experiments" (De Gabriele and Caffari, 1991, p.xvi). Pace's operas stood out from other productions simply because the majority of performances, especially in

the 1960s and 1970s (according to the programme index at the Manoel Theatre, dating back to the 1960s), were all focused on Italian productions. For example, during the 1964 season (November), Italian operas such as *Fedora*, *La Traviata*, *Manon*, *I Pescatori di Perle*, *Faust* and *Madame Butterfly* were performed.

As the majority of the concerts consisted of Italian operas, instrumental and vocal recitals, ballets, operettas and fully-fledged theatrical plays, performed both in Maltese and English, the production and performance of Pace's operas was considered highly innovative in the 1960s. For example, *Caterina Desguanez* was the first to be performed at the Manoel Theatre in the mid-1960s. This opera appeared for the first time on 27 October 1965. The plot is based on a historical event during the Great Siege of Malta of 1565 (Miceli, 2001).

Pace's operas were considered to be the first fully-fledged Maltese stage works, and thus were highly praised by critics for their mastery in harmonic language and musicianship. As Pace's operas are mostly directed towards a nationalistic idiom, this aspect of nationalism reflects strong attachments with other European countries. Thus:

*"In addition to Italian, French, and German operas, there were operatic developments in those countries where nationalism was strong, especially in Russia and Bohemia. These operas were also based on folklore or upon events of national significance with nationally important personages. Composers such as Mussorgsky in Russia created works that are highly original, with great dramatic power but without using the closed forms of the Italians and without imitating Wagner"* (Wold, Martin, Miller, Cyker, 1998, p. 147).

When considering the kind of stage works that Pace composed, his operatic settings consist of a combination of mythological and historical events involving Malta. Hence, his operas shed light on the kind of traditional historical background that has been maintained through the centuries, although some of this is more or less fictitious. Hence the operas: *Caterina Desguanez* (set in 1565), *I Martiri* (set in 1798), *Angelica* (set in 1526) and *Ipogea* (set in 1600 B.C.).

Pace's second opera was *I Martiri* (1967),<sup>10</sup> with a libretto by Vincenzo Maria Pellegrini (1911-1997), is a three-act opera written for soloists, choir and orchestra. The opera is a dramatisation of the rising of the Maltese against the French, who, under Napoleon Bonaparte, took possession of the islands without any serious



opposition in 1798 (De Gabriele and Caffari, 1991, p.9). The two subsequent operas were *Angelica* and *Ipogeana*. *Angelica – The Bride of Mosta* (1973),<sup>11</sup> with a libretto by Vincenzo Maria Pellegrini, is an opera in three acts, written for soloists, choir and orchestra. The story is inspired by common events during the year 1525: Malta was often invaded, its treasures robbed and its people carried away as slaves (De Gabriele and Caffari, 1991, p.17). *Ipogeana* (1976),<sup>12</sup> with libretto by Vincenzo Maria Pellegrini, is a three-act opera written for soloists, choir and orchestra, set in Malta during the period 1600 B.C. The actual libretto of this opera was found at the University of Malta's Melitensia section<sup>13</sup>, and was later published by Giovanni Muscat and Company Limited in Valletta on 30 July 1976.

Considering that the majority of works performed at the Manoel Theatre were mostly Italian operas, Antonio Nani and Francesco Schira (1809-1883) endeavoured to compose operas that would reflect Maltese musical culture. Schira's works demonstrated Italianate traits similar to that of many Romantic composers of the nineteenth century. Apart from Nani and Schira, other Maltese composers, who mainly worked abroad, produced operas that were specifically meant to be performed in foreign theatres. Some notable eighteenth and nineteenth century Maltese composers were Giuseppe Arena (1707-1784), Girolamo Abos (1715-1760), and Nicolò Isouard (1773-1818). In addition, Maltese composers such as Giuseppe Giorgio Pisani (1870-1929), Vincenzo Napoleone Mifsud (1807-1870) and Alessandro Curmi (1801-1857) also wrote operas which were performed in other countries, for example at the Zizinia Theatre in Alexandria, in Egypt; the Apollo Theatre in Rome; the Teatro Nuovo in Naples; and also at the La Scala in Milan; all in Italy.

Being a freelance musician enabled Pace to produce more music and experiment more with various styles. However, he never travelled extensively to combine his musical talents with other European mainstreams. According to Azzopardi Caffari (interview May 2013), Pace only went abroad a few times, and thus had almost no opportunity to attend musical performances outside Malta. He could only listen to music being performed overseas over the Rediffusion system (cable radio service). During the war ownership of private radios was prohibited. However, in the post-war years, radio and later on television provided more opportunities.

During his last years Pace continued to teach and compose at his private residence in Sliema, where his very last work was composed in 1993: a miniature piece for solo flute. Five months prior to his death Pace received his appointment as Officer of the National Order of Merit on 13 December 1992 from the then President of Malta, Dr Vincent Tabone. After dedicating his entire life to music and teaching,

Pace suddenly fell ill with pneumonia and died on 20 May 1993 at St Luke's Hospital, at the age of 87. In an article in a local paper announcing Pace's death, the correspondent states that "his extraordinary consistent and prolific output consists of more than 500 works in a remarkable range of style, type and form. He was the first Maltese to write works in a number of classical forms, including the pianoforte concerto, the variation, the symphony and the ballet" (Vella Bondin, 1993).

As one interviewee observed: "Pace always wanted to be original in the music which he produced, and he never wanted to copy other composer's styles and material" (interview with Georgette Caffari – November 2007). This is a reason why Pace barely listened to recorded music and the very few records that he owned were merely the unstudied accumulations of a normal person rather than a conscious effort to build a well-regulated library that would constitute a potential aid for his work. Apart from acquiring a very limited number of musical manuscripts, Pace had two personal possessions consisting in the most basic equipment – a simple black and white single lens box camera, which produced good results through the selection of interesting subjects; and a 78 rpm disc player – it was of the portable horn type with a spring driven motor.

In Pace's illustrated catalogue of works, his achievements and inspirations are described thus:

*"His compositions are without unnecessary tinsel for his inclination was for a musical idiom which is sympathetic and honest, ignoring all that was merely bravura and deliberately provocative. His art was direct, with a strong will and a firm patriotism underpinning it. Without doubt, his music is the most versatile and prolific native musical talent Malta has known so far. His 500-odd compositions form a remarkably large, rarely realised oeuvre, whose excellence and worth go much beyond the awe the mere writing of such a large body of works inspired. Even the briefest examination of Pace's achievement cannot avoid a consideration of the four elements on which this achievement is built; his skilful handling of the musical instruments; the diversity of form; style and range of his compositions; the importance given to chamber music; and his knowledge of old rhythms and traditions" (De Gabriele and Caffari, 1993).*

## **Pace as music educator**

Throughout the centuries various Maltese composers have emerged as leading composers and music educators, leaving behind a substantial amount of compositions that are frequently performed in local concerts to this day. By the end of the first half of the twentieth century Pace was already a well-established composer, musician and music educator. His life was focused entirely on composing and educating music students in harmony, counterpoint and the history of music.

Carmelo Pace obtained the Licentiate of the Royal Schools of Music (London) Teaching Diploma in 1931. He taught privately at the reading room of the *Bibliotheca* (The National Library in Malta), which served as his classroom. His teaching quickly spread and his students rapidly increased in number, and thus his students were considered to be leading musical theorists, with various talented students emerging as well-established composers and conductors and music educators in their own right. Amongst his students were Dr. Albert Pace (b. 1958), Prof. Dion Buhagiar (b. 1944), Prof. Michael Laus (b. 1960), Mro. Ray Sciberras (b.1962), trumpeter Sigmund Mifsud, Mro. Raymond Fenech (b.1958) and the late Maria Ghirlando and Prof. Charles Camilleri (1931-2009). Many of these are music educators in their own right.

Apart from being a music theorist, in 1946 Pace published a collection of radio programmes highlighting aspects on classical music, which were aired on the Rediffusion cable radio. A year later, in 1947, Pace issued a theoretical booklet called *A Handbook of Musical Forms*, a publication which has long been unavailable in both local and foreign book stores, and thus cannot be traced.

In addition to his teaching and composing, Pace was the main musical advisor and organiser of the MCI concerts from the inaugural concert up to the year 1987. Though there is no written proof that Pace was the official organiser of the MCI, yet, the recent MCI organiser, mezzo-soprano Marie Therese Vassallo, holds that Pace was in fact the resident conductor and performer of the MCI. Pace took the initiative to enhance his student's talents by encouraging them to perform at these concerts.

## **Conclusion**

Thorough investigation and research into Pace's life and career as a musician, composer and educator reveals that the circumstances of Maltese musical life

hindered Pace's creative development to a considerable extent, due to a variety of practical reasons. Owing to the comparative lack of an audience for instrumental music and new music, and the lack of professional performing groups capable of performing complex modern works, some of Pace's most stylistically interesting and enterprising compositions were never performed in his lifetime, and moreover he never had an opportunity to hear a great deal of what he wrote. It is extremely difficult for a composer to develop his artistic aptitudes if he does not have a chance to hear his own music performed in a good live performance. Therefore, most of Pace's musical output has remained virtually unknown and unperformed up to this date. In addition, Pace never published any kind of academic analytical essays or contributed to periodical literature.

Notwithstanding these limitations, Pace still emerges as the first collector of folk music in Malta. Besides, as much of the composed music on the island was entirely scored for liturgical/ecclesiastical functions, Pace endeavoured to revolutionise this perception by composing some of his most well-known folk music. Up to Pace's time, his predecessors had not attempted to compose such music, and thus Pace undertook a new concept that continued to be developed by his fellow contemporary Professor Charles Camilleri. This sense of national identity that brought forward the true nature of the Maltese people made Pace an important figure in Maltese music history during the twentieth century.

Apart from composing folk music, Pace enhanced his artistic attributes by developing a new concept of harmonic language in Malta. As Pace's music remains in manuscript and only a small proportion of it was ever performed, some of his works such as *7<sup>th</sup> String Quartet* (1936) and *Piano Sonata No. 2* (1972) are still thought to constitute the first modernist musical idiom in the twentieth century, and were highly influential among his fellow contemporaries. Besides, as Pace was highly acclaimed as being the foremost music educator on the island, his advanced musical abilities served as fundamental guidance to his talented students.

In a twentieth century Maltese context Pace is consequently a very prominent figure and a pioneer. After dedicating his entire life to music and teaching, Pace suddenly fell ill with pneumonia and died on 20 May 1993, leaving an array of unperformed works that require attention.

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## **Interviews**

With Georgette Caffari, November 2007, at her residence, Sliema, Malta.

With Joseph Vella Bondin, 19 August 2010, at his private residence, St. Venera, Malta.

With Ronald Azzopardi Caffari, May 2010, telephone conversation.

## **Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> Music Manuscript Number 2640, Microfilmed Project Number 8098.

- <sup>2</sup> Music Manuscript Number 2750, transcription for Chamber Orchestra.
- <sup>3</sup> Disc code number – A247509, '*Ngħannu lil Cuiecheb*'.
- <sup>4</sup> Code number of the disc A247510 , '*Stediena għas-sfin*'.
- <sup>5</sup> Disc code number – A247511.
- <sup>6</sup> Disc code number – A247512, '*Għajd lil mama*'.
- <sup>7</sup> Disc code number – AA212902 , '*Għodua ta' imħabba*'.
- <sup>8</sup> From an interview with J. Vella Bondin at his private residence in St Venera (19 August 2010).
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>10</sup> Original manuscripts donated to the Manoel Theatre, Malta, on 13 October 1988 – Deed No. 369. Microfilm project No. 3411 at the Cathedral Museum of Mdina, Malta. A libretto was found at the University of Malta's Melitenisa Section on bookshelf MZX.GC. DPB.174 a
- <sup>11</sup> Original manuscripts donated to the Manoel Theatre, Malta on 13 October, 1988 – Deed No. 369. Microfilm project No. 3410 at the Cathedral Museum of Mdina, Malta. A booklet was found at the University of Malta's Melitensia Section on bookshelf MZX.GPB.173 P, with a short biographical account of Vincenzo Maria Pellegrini (librettist) written by Gaetano Ravizza, and including all Pellegrini's works in English, Italian and Maltese. It also comprises quotations taken from newspapers and statements made by well-known artists.
- <sup>12</sup> Microfilm project No. 3409 at the Cathedral Museum of Mdina, Malta.
- <sup>13</sup> University of Malta's Melitensia Section bookshelf MZX.GC.

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*SHORT COMMUNICATIONS*

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## **Development of Legal Interpreting in Malta**

*Anthony Licari*

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As the number of foreign residents in Malta increases, most of whom find the learning of English and Maltese for court use quite a challenging task, legal and police structures in Malta are requiring more interpreters and translators in several languages.<sup>1</sup> The European Union is becoming more and more conscious of this phenomenon, and has issued a directive regarding this matter.<sup>2</sup>

There is a difference between a translator and an interpreter, although some translators are also interpreters and vice versa. Translators work without using their voice, but if they do then they are also interpreters. A translator must also be a linguist, which necessitates the study of language as a science but also the intricacies of traductology and interpretation. If one knows many languages, then that person is a polyglot, but NOT a linguist.

The knowledge of a language does not make one a translator. Having lived in an Anglophone country does not mean one knows the scientific basis of the English language. If one's father is Italian and his/her mother French, this does not automatically make that person a good translator/interpreter between these two languages. If you are a tourist guide, teacher or lawyer you cannot automatically claim to be an interpreter or a translator at the same time.

Over the past years legal structures in Malta have looked for good translators/interpreters. When this work is done by amateurs the result can be compared, more or less, with that of a swimmer claiming to be a life-saver at the same time, or a pet lover declaring to be a veterinarian. Court interpreters are thus acquiring a special responsibility as time goes by.<sup>3</sup>

Some years ago interpreters working with the Malta Police and the Maltese Courts when the need arose got together and discussed the possibility of becoming better organised. The expression "when the need arose" looked – and actually was – too amateurish and an association for court and police interpreters would make the justice and home affairs structures in the country work more efficiently, to the benefit of democracy. This initiative was especially encouraged by Court staff, members of the Judiciary and the Police Administration who understood that an association of interpreters and translators with rules, regulations and linguistic requirements would be to the benefit of the Courts, the Police, legal persons, and Court and Police experts. These are not necessarily directly employed by these structures and their clients, whether they are citizens making Court applications, accused persons and their lawyers who are legal experts without being linguistic experts.

An *ad hoc* committee called CPITA – Court and Police Interpreters and Translators Association – was formed in an attempt to meet the former Minister of Justice and the Interior. This meeting did not materialise because the Minister was very busy. As soon as Dr Chris Said became Minister of Justice, the *ad hoc* committee asked him for a meeting which was granted immediately, and was quickly followed by another. CPITA and the Ministry agreed on everything discussed. This included the importance of utilising trained, professional translators/interpreters when work of this nature had to be carried out. Some other aspects of this agreement are mentioned below. Further attempts at other meetings with the former Minister of Justice intended to concretise what had been agreed on verbally did not materialise.

Meanwhile the CPITA *ad hoc* committee called for a formal general meeting. A formal committee was elected consisting of six persons representing about twenty five professionals, themselves representing approximately thirteen languages and their variations. A language variation may, for example, be Creole as a liberal or formal variation of French. A statute and a code of ethics were also drawn up, emphasising the importance of a linguistic and traductology/interpreting basis for members. The members are also bound to participate in ongoing linguistic self-improvement. CPITA organises in-service training for its members. Members also exchange articles and other information about traductology/interpretation.

The former Minister of Justice had also promised to inform the Director General of the Courts about this agreement. After a number of months of having no news about this, CPITA sought and obtained a meeting with the Judiciary and Court Administration, who listened and offered suggestions.

Meetings were also held with the Leader of the Opposition, now Prime Minister Dr Joseph Muscat, and the then shadow Minister of Justice Dr José Herrera, with exchanges of opinion with the then shadow Minister of the Interior Dr Michael Falzon. Basically all matters discussed and agreed upon with the former Minister of Justice Dr Chris Said were also agreed upon with these gentlemen. CPITA is enthusiastic about having the agreements black on white and working smoothly.

Another meeting was organised with the Police Corps administration, led by former Commissioner of Police Mr John Rizzo and Assistant Commissioner Mr Raymond Zammit. At the time of writing this article CPITA is awaiting the organisation of other meetings with new Police Commissioner Dr Peter Paul Zammit, and Home Affairs Minister Dr Emanuel Mallia. A cordial meeting with

the Parliamentary Secretary for Justice Dr Owen Bonnici reviewed matters agreed upon in previous meetings with other structures. Immediately before this CPITA president Dr Anthony Licari met Assistant Police Commissioner Mr Neil Harrison with the help of Police Inspector Mr Nikolai Sant.

Interpreters often spend hours working at police stations, police headquarters or prisons at all hours of the day and night.<sup>4</sup> This is only fair, since one cannot work shoulder to shoulder with someone without accepting common sacrifices along with the declared indispensability of the service rendered.<sup>5</sup> Relations and reciprocal respect between CPITA and the Police Corps are excellent, to the point of considering each other as colleagues. CPITA members are also enthusiastic about seeing the Corps enjoy excellent working conditions, as this renders the work of both structures more harmonious and efficient.

Let me now mention a few more items out of about fifteen discussed and agreed upon between CPITA and legal and police structures. Most interpreters in Malta are part-timers. For example some members of CPITA are university lecturers with a responsibility also towards their university administration and especially towards their students. Interpreters have to be off duty after their work in court to be able to attend to other important duties elsewhere. It is desirable that they are released from court duties as quickly as possible when asked to be interpreting experts. Interpreters usually enjoy working with lawyers, members of the Judiciary and Court employees and look forward to continue doing this work with the understanding of the Court structures about the part-time nature of their Court duties. Apart from their expertise in a third 'exotic' language, many interpreters can very easily translate Maltese/English. They do hope that linguistic work is given to them as professionals in the 'trade'. Thus CPITA members hope that legal and police structures agree that translations are related to their expertise, and *ergo* assigned to them.

All structures with whom CPITA has entered into discussions have emphasised that interpreters must not stop at being linguists, but they must take an active interest in all police and legal work to create a good balance with their linguistics.<sup>6</sup> Interpreters must observe and learn from police and Court work. It is desirable that interpreters are fully recognised as court experts and invited to remain in a Court hall – as part of their duty to learn well the association between linguistics, law and policing – even when cases are held behind closed doors. Court experts are NOT members of the public. Some members of the Judiciary already recognise this in various countries and are combining the recognition of interpreters as Court experts with the efficiency expected of them.<sup>7</sup>

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Istituto di Traduzione e Interpretariato. [online]. *Obiettivi: I partecipanti approfondiscono nozioni di diritto e dell'ordinamento statale...prassi di polizia, delle procure, dei tribunali e dei servizi sociali*. Available at: <[www.linguistik.zhaw.ch](http://www.linguistik.zhaw.ch)>; Global Connects. [online]. It is important that court interpreters have a thorough knowledge of legal terms and court procedures. Available at: <[www.globalconnects.com](http://www.globalconnects.com)>; The Scottish Courts Service prefers court interpreters to hold a DPSI in Scottish law. Available at: <[www.linguistik.zhaw.ch](http://www.linguistik.zhaw.ch)>
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- <sup>3</sup> Interpretation is not just for people on trial, but also for witnesses, victims of crime and others involved in legal proceedings. Available at: <[www.japantimes.co.jp](http://www.japantimes.co.jp)>; CIP Court Interpreters Program. California Courts. Developing programs and practices that influence the quality of interpretation and increased availability of qualified interpreters in the courts...It includes a Judicial Council's Court Interpreters Advisory Board that makes recommendations on policies and procedures. Available at: <[www.courts.co.gov/programs.interpreters.htm](http://www.courts.co.gov/programs.interpreters.htm)>; United States Courts. The use of competent Federal Court interpreters in proceedings involving speakers of languages...is critical to ensure that justice is carried out fairly for defendants and other stakeholders...Communication in courtroom proceedings may be more complex than that in other settings...for example the parties may use specialised and legal terminology, formal and informal registers, dialect and jargon, varieties in language and nuances of meaning. Available at: <[www.uscourts.gov](http://www.uscourts.gov)>; Global connects. Interpreting in Courts of Law, Tribunals and other formal legal proceedings is a specialism that requires highly-skilled expert interpreters who can interpret with the correct techniques for Court and also have sufficient qualifier experience to understand legal terminology and procedures. Available at: <[www.globalconnects.com/court-interpreting/](http://www.globalconnects.com/court-interpreting/)>; Hawaii State Judiciary. Language interpreters play an essential role in the administration of Justice... Interpreters help persons with limited English proficiency to have equal access to justice and help court proceedings function efficiently and effectively. Available at: <[www.courts.state.hi.us](http://www.courts.state.hi.us)>; AIIC. What is interpreting? Court interpreters must naturally observe neutrality regarding the content, and impartiality between parties. This is frequently difficult to maintain, due to the insistence by the 'client' to regard their (compatriot) interpreter as an ally. Luigi Luccarelli and Liese Katschinka. Available at: <[Aiic.net/page](http://aiic.net/page)>.
- <sup>4</sup> AMANA – Traductions et Interprètes Multilingues Inc. *L'interprète assigné à la Cour Supérieure doit absolument être accrédité auprès du Ministère de la Justice de chaque province canadienne...L'interprète peut même être amené à se déplacer pour rencontrer le détenu en prison en présence de son avocat*. Available at: <<http://amana-inc.com>>

- <sup>5</sup> See Hawaii State Judiciary. Available at: <[www.courts.state.hi.us](http://www.courts.state.hi.us)>
- <sup>6</sup> See Global Connects. Available at: <[www.globalconnects.com](http://www.globalconnects.com)>
- <sup>7</sup> AITI in progress. Bollettino – Traduttori e Interpreti per il Tribunale. [online]. *Il giudice, quando ne avrà bisogno, consulterà l'Albo per chiamare un traduttore e/o interprete come perito o consulente*. Available at: < <http://www.aiti.org/news-formazione-eventi/archivio-news/bollettino-%C3%A2%E2%82%AC%E2%80%9C-traduttori-e-interpreti-il-tribunale>>





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**Project Report**

**Sustaining Inquiry-based Learning**

**beyond the PRIMAS Project**

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## **The project**

PRIMAS (2010-2013) was an EU-funded research project that sought to promote inquiry-based learning (IBL) in mathematics and science classrooms across 12 European countries (<http://www.primas-project.eu/>). This type of pedagogy distances teaching and learning from the traditional transmission model that is characterised by the teacher dishing out 'knowledge' to his or her largely passive students. The emphasis, instead, is on active learning approaches that facilitate students' personal constructions and the integration of the resulting knowledge.

The University of Malta was one of the 14 partner universities in this project. The Malta project team, which grouped together a number of mathematics education and science education colleagues at the Faculty of Education, collaborated closely over a period of two scholastic years with ten so-called 'multipliers' – five for mathematics and five for science. The multipliers were chosen from among interested practitioners, Heads of Department and Education Officers. Each multiplier worked in turn with a small group of either mathematics or science teachers in selected State secondary schools.

This organizational structure favoured the formation of communities of practice at two distinct levels. At school level, multipliers guided and offered support to their teachers. On the other hand, multipliers found mutual support and guidance when they met with the University team. The fruitful collaboration that distinguished most of these communities has been identified by the local PRIMAS participants as one of the more positive aspects of their involvement in the project

## **Recognising achievements and limitations**

The PRIMAS project met with different levels of success, both within and across the two subject areas and the different schools where it was implemented. Given that inquiry has traditionally been more associated with the teaching and learning of science than mathematics, the notion of IBL was initially more widely accepted within the science classes. By and large, the mathematics teachers in the project required more time and persuasion to start experimenting and engaging with this pedagogy. Again, even within the individual school-based communities, there were mathematics and science teachers who enthusiastically embraced and did their best to practise this pedagogy, while others remained sceptical and apparently disengaged till the very end. Overall, however, the PRIMAS experience suggests that many

Maltese teachers are willing to partake in carefully thought initiatives that respect their professional knowledge and address their contextualised needs. There were also clear indications that these initiatives can really thrive once continuous professional support is readily available, preferably as part of the schools' daily organizational structure.

Evaluation was an important component of the PRIMAS project. The research data – which was collected primarily through questionnaires, observations and interviews – suggest strongly that students and their teachers tend to equate IBL pedagogy to an enjoyable educational experience. Moreover, there seems to be a general acceptance that an inquiry-based approach helps students to construct and internalise knowledge as opposed to simply storing and retrieving on demand the information received. Reservations were however expressed primarily with regards to syllabus coverage and IBL's ultimate utility with regards to students' success in high stakes examinations that continue not to necessarily favour understanding over rote memorisation. But in spite of these concerns, which were largely linked to systemic issues, the University of Malta PRIMAS team and the multipliers still came across oases of good pedagogical practices that were identifiably rooted in teachers' participation in the project.

### **Looking beyond PRIMAS**

Logistical and financial constraints dictated that the implementation of the PRIMAS project in Malta be limited to a small number of schools in the State secondary sector. Notwithstanding this, constant efforts were made to bring IBL pedagogy to the attention of other local stake holders, including prospective teachers, other schools and other teachers, educational researchers and policy makers (for an indication of these initiatives see <http://www.primasnational.eu/MT/>). It was heartening to note that participation in IBL-related events that were open to non-PRIMAS participants was always encouraging and feedback was generally positive. More strikingly, perhaps, were the genuine demands by numerous non-PRIMAS schools and teachers to become involved in the project. Having to tell them that it was not possible at that stage was always a big let-down.

PRIMAS as a project has now come to an end. The crux at this point is how to ensure that IBL pedagogy continues to flourish in Malta beyond PRIMAS. This desire for continuity and renewed investment has been on the minds of all involved in the running of the project. The good news is that local education authorities seem to share this feeling. As a result, meetings are currently

being held among a number of interested stake holders to ensure a strong, lasting and fruitful presence of IBL in the Maltese education system.

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