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POST-COVID-19... THE WAY FORWARD

EVALUATING NEW PRACTICES INTRODUCED DURING THE PANDEMIC IN KINDERGARTEN, PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS: AN MUT SURVEY

Following an analysis of the work-life balance during the COVID-19 pandemic in the previous issue, this time the MUT decided to look into new practices introduced in schools following their reopening. As all educators at Kindergarten, Primary and Secondary schools have realised by now, a host of new practices were introduced as from October 2020 as mitigation measures due to the pandemic. The original intention was to implement them temporarily for the duration of the scholastic year 2020-2021.

However, as a proactive union, the MUT is now evaluating these practices

to be in a better situation to assess whether there are grounds to keep some of them in the post-pandemic period, or when 'normality' would have been re-established. A very important part of this process is to ask members for their feedback about each of these changes. Results show, in effect, that educators are open to changes if these are reasonable and right in their school circumstances.

The survey included 12 practices and two open-ended questions at the end, about other changes experienced during this scholastic year that you would like to be kept and to be discarded respectively.

The list excluded measures that were taken on a national level to contain the pandemic, such as social distancing, masks and sanitising. The period for the submission of responses was between Thursday 29th April and Monday 10th May 2021. All information was handled in accordance with the GDPR and results are being published as collated data only. Like all exercises of this nature, the outcome shall now assist the Union in its discussions and decisions.

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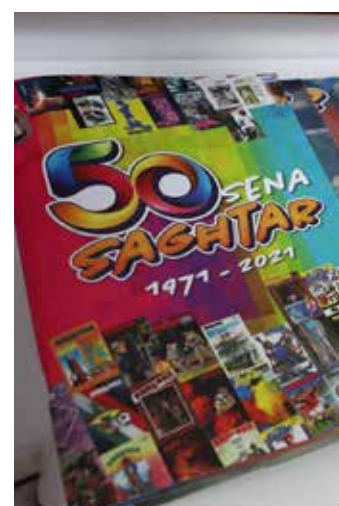
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An educational project actively engaging both parents and the community

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SENA MIT-TWAQQIF TA' FONDAZZJONI SAGHTAR



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© Malta Union of Teachers, 2021. Id-drittijiet kollha mizmuma. L-ebda parti minn din il-pubblikazzjoni ma tista' tkun riprodotta, ikkupjata jew trazzmessa f'xi forma jew bi kwalunkwe metodu, minghajr il-permess bil-miktub minn qabel tal-Malta Union of Teachers.

L-opinjoni espressi f'*il-Hsieb* mhumiex neccessarjament dawg tal-Malta Union of Teachers. Inghatat l-attenzjoni kollha mehtiega biex il-kontenut ikun fattwali u preciz, izda l-Bord Editorjali ma jerfax responsabbiltà għal xi zbalji jew nuqqasijiet li jista' jkun hemm fl-artikli, il-grafika u l-illustrazzjonijiet.

ANALIŻI BIL-LENTI: FEJN SEJRIN?



Marco Bonnici,
President



Ni l q a g h k o m għal din it-tieni edizzjoni tal-ġurnal *il-Hsieb*, li fiha ser naqsmu xi ħsibijiet tat-tmexxija tal-MUT, xi aspetti tal-hidma tal-Union, inkluzi r-riżultati tal-aħħar stharrig mal-edukaturi, kif ukoll kontribuzzjonijiet minn istituzzjonijiet u xoghlijiet ta' ricerka mill-edukaturi. Wara l-feedback pozittiv li kellna għall-ewwel ħarġa s-sena l-oħra, ser inkunu qed inżommu l-appuntament ta' din il-ħarġa b'mod annwali.

Smajna, u ser inkomplu nisimgħu, fuq l-effett tal-pandemija fuq il-qasam edukattiv u nħoss li hawnhekk m'għandix inkompli nżid ma' dan. Minflok, ser inkun qiegħed inħares lil hinn mill-pandemija u ser niffoka fuq dak li seta' ma ġiex innutat fl-aljenazzjoni li ġabet magħha l-pandemija. It-tmexxija ċentrali tas-settur edukattiv, li tikkonsisti fil-Ministeru għall-Edukazzjoni u d-Direttorati, kellha u għad għandha żmien ta' turbulenza kbira, u dan m'għandu x'jaqşam xejn mal-pandemija. Il-bidla waħedha ta' tliet ministri f'sena waħda affettwat ferm lis-settur. F'pajjiżna għadna ma wasalniex fil-livell fejn bidla ta' ministru ma ġgibx magħha bidliet fl-uffiċjali ewlenin fil-Ministeru u fid-direzzjonijiet amministrattivi tal-uffiċjali pubbliċi. Kellna, u għad għandna, sitwazzjonijiet ta' postijiet vakanti fl-ogħla livelli tad-direttorati. Domna ġimgħat u xhur b'dawn il-postijiet battala, u dan fisser li d-deċiżjonijiet ma kinux qed jittieħdu, kienu qed jittieħdu b'mod unilaterali u meta ttieħdu ġew ikkomunikati bl-aġħar mod possibbli. Dan filwaqt li xi individwi ħadu din l-opportunità sabiex jagħmlu fattihom u jagħtu d-direzzjonijiet li fettlilhom.

Ta' min nishqu li t-tali direzzjonijiet qatt u qatt ma jkunu intiżi sabiex jiffacilitaw u jassistu l-hidma tal-edukaturi.

Minflok, ikunu mezz sabiex jew l-individwi jingħoġbu ma' xi sezzjoni jew inkella minħabba l-ambizzjonijiet personali li ħafna drabi jsarrfuhom f'qasir żmien. Dan sfortunatament dejjem a skapitu tal-edukaturi, li jispiċċaw fin-nofs, b'xogħol mibdul u miżjud sabiex ħaddieħor jidher helu. Ħafna membri rappurtaw li l-komunikazzjoni kemm bejn l-iskejjel u anki mat-tmexxija ċentrali kienet diffiċli, u dan nikkonfermawh ahna wkoll, għax il-komunikazzjoni bejn il-Union u l-istess tmexxija edukattiva kienet, u għadha, problema kbira. Il-konsultazzjoni li qed isseħħ, kemm mal-MUT u mas-setturi l-oħra, hi eżercizzju tedjanti li fih kellna saħansitra sitwazzjoni fejn l-aġendi ta' laqgħa wara oħra jkunu intiżi biss sabiex l-MUT u s-setturi jċedu l-pozizzjonijiet tagħhom u jaqblu mat-tmexxija ċentrali. Dan ma seħħx, u nixtieq minn hawn infahħar it-tmexxija tas-setturi tal-Knisja u dak Indipendenti, li mhumiex qed iċedu għall-pressjoni enormi li qed issir. Dan minkejja t-theddid b'mod sottili u xi drabi esplicitu dwar qtugħ ta' għajnuna finanzjarja. Dawn is-setturi għandhom l-appoġġ kollu tagħna.

Min-naħa l-oħra, it-tmexxija unilaterali u dik li ma tħarix l-interessi tal-edukaturi ser issib lill-MUT tiġġieled b'kull mezz sabiex l-interess tal-edukaturi u tas-setturi jiġu mħarsa. Dwar dan u aktar nistedinkom tkomplu ssegwu l-aġġornamenti kontinwi li nibagħtu lill-membri, fejn il-hidma ma tiqafx. Insellmilkom.

SENA SKOLASTIKA LI NIBQGĦU NIFTAKRUHA

Elaine Germani,
Vici President Anzjan



Grazzi talli q e g h d i n issegwu din il-harġa ta' *Il-Hsieb*, li biha qed inwasslu f'itit ħsibijiet tagħna, flimkien ma' diskussjoni dwar sugġetti varji relatati mal-educazzjoni u t-trejdjunjonizmu. Matul is-sena li għaddiet l-MUT kellha xogħol kbir għaddej fuq diversi fronti, u tajjeb li kultant nieqfu f'itit halli naħsbu kif wasalna hawn u 'l fejn irridu mmorru.

Is-sena skolastika li ser tintemm issa kienet waħda li żgur ser nibqgħu niftakruha. Kienet waħda li fiha l-pandemija u l-effetti kollha tagħha nħassu sew fis-settur edukattiv, speċjalment mill-educaturi u l-istudenti. Apparti l-mitigazzjonijiet kollha li ttieħdu rigward is-saħħa, kien hemm effetti oħra kbar fuq l-educazzjoni li għad iridu jiġu analizzati sew halli naraw x'effetti ser iħallu fil-futur u nkunu ċerti li kwalunkwe tibdil li għad isefħ, ikun meqjus u fl-interess ta' dawk li jkunu milquta minnu. Hawn l-MUT diġà bdiet il-proċess li tisma' u tqis sew dak li qegħdin jgħidu l-educaturi, ħalli tkun tista' titkellem f'isimhom fil-ħafna rappreżentazzjonijiet li jkollna. F'din il-harġa fil-fatt issibu stħarriġ dwar dan, li r-riżultat tiegħu huwa vera interessanti u ta' min jixtarru sew.

Apparti dan, f'din is-sena skolastika li daqt tiġi fi tmiemha tajjeb li nsemmu li l-MUT, barra r-rappreżentazzjonijiet kollettivi, għamlet xogħol kbir ma' membri b'mod personali jew fi gruppi. Dan huwa l-aktar xogħol delikat u li ma jidhri, partikolarment meta l-membri stess jew ma jkunux jixtiequ jidhru li

għandhom dawn il-problemi jew inkella saħansitra jibzqgħu li jkollhom xi riperkussjonijiet ma' ta' fuqhom jew mal-kollegi. Hawn l-MUT iżzomm il-kunfidenzjalità kompluta tal-membri tagħha, għax nifhmu li kultant mhux kemm iddoqq it-trombi li jgħodd, imma li verament qiegħed tgħin lil dak li jkun sabiex isolvi l-problema jew is-sitwazzjoni li jkun fiha. Minn hawn niringrazzja lill-membri talli jafdaw fil-Union tagħhom u nassigurahom li ser nibqgħu nagħmlu dak kollu fis-saħħa tagħna biex niddefenduhom quddiem issues fil-post tax-xogħol, problemi tas-sistema u anki ingustizzji. Dan kollu, flimkien mal-feedback kontinwu li nircievu mingħand il-membri, ikompli jinfurmana wkoll għal meta niġu biex nindirizzaw issues ta' natura kollettiva f'negozzjati u diskussjonijiet mal-employers varji fil-postijiet tax-xogħol li nirrappreżentaw.

Ħaġa oħra kompletament differenti li xtaqt insemmi hawn hija wkoll it-twaqqif ta' Fondazzjoni Sagħtar u l-avvanzi kollha li għamilna minn sena ilu 'l hawn. Fi f'itit xhur, wara li bdejna l-portal u waqqafna l-Fondazzjoni b'mod formali, ħdimna bla waqfien sabiex f'Ottubru 2020 bdejna noħroġ r-rivista *Sagħtar* mill-ġdid f'verżjoni online b'xejn. Din intlaqgħet tajjeb, u wara li kellna ħafna mistoqsijiet rigward verżjoni stampata kif kienet toħroġ qabel, iddeċidejna li nibdew nistampawha wkoll. Apparti dan ftaħna wkoll ħanut online, parti mill-portal, sabiex ir-rivista tkun tista' tinbiegħ. L-għan mhuwiex li jsiru xi profitti iżda li nerġgħu niġbru lura l-ispejjeż kbar li qed ninvestu f'dan il-proġett edukattiv li ċerti li ser iħalli frott kbir. F'dan is-sens ukoll

applikajna għall-fondi mal-Kunsill Malti għas-Settur tal-Volontarjat għal proġett interessanti, li ser inkunu qegħdin inħabbu dalwaqt flimkien ma' xogħol ieħor li ser tkun qed tagħmel il-Fondazzjoni.

Grazzi lil kulhadd, partikolarment lil sħabi l-ufficjali u lill-membri tal-MUT, tas-sapport kollu li ttuna matul is-sena kollha. Nisperaw li hekk kif iċ-ċirkustanzi jippermettu, ikollna aktar okkażjonijiet biex niltaqgħu wiċċ imb wiċċ u mhux biss virtwalment fi wħud mill-ħafna laqgħat online li sar ikollna.

META TINGĦAQAD FLIMKIEN F'AZZJONI

Claudette Mintoff,
Viċi President



Dan iż-żmien li ghaddejnin minnu huwa żmien bla precedent, u issa ilna fuq sena nagħmlu sagrificċji kbar. Imma x'tgħallimna minn dan kollu? Ha niehdu xi haġa minnu jew mhu ha jkun serva għal xejn? X'inhit triq li rridu naqbd u minn issa 'l quddiem?

F'din l-aħħar sena kellna niżolaw ruħna biex niproteġu kemm lilna nfusna kif ukoll lil dawk ta' madwarna. Għalkemm spicċajna individwalisti, fl-istess hin qed ngħinu lil xulxin biex forsi xi darba nerġġu nirritornaw għan-normalità li konna ngħixu. Indunajna

u tgħallimna li jekk kulhadd jiġbed habel wiehed ikun hemm riżultati pożittivi, u li s-saħħa gejjja mill-unjoni għall-istess skop.

Is-saħħa tal-kollektiv ma tidhirx biss fil-pandemija imma anke fejn tidhol il-professjoni tagħna u l-Union. Is-saħħa tal-Union tiġi meta kulhadd jiġbed habel wiehed, meta l-edukaturi jingħaqdu flimkien għal għan wiehed. Dan rajnieh riċentement meta sar l-istrasjk f'Jannar. Għaliex kien suċċess? Għaliex l-edukaturi ngħaqdu u segwew l-istruzzjoni tal-Union u kulhadd ingħaqad

flimkien. Huwa importanti li kulhadd ikompli jaħdem id f'id biex nimxu 'l quddiem. Huwa importanti wkoll li naħsbu għall-ġid tal-kollektiv, bħalma għamilna meta ngħalaqna go darna. Qatt aktar ma rajna l-importanza ta' dan il-valur daqskemm rajnieha f'dawn l-aħħar xhur.

Din hija l-ewwel Union irregistrata f'Malta, u jekk illum għadha hawn, b'saħħitha iktar minn qatt qabel, huwa grazzi għalikom l-edukaturi membri. Mingħajr is-saħħa kollektiva tagħkom il-Union titef l-iskop tal-eżistenza tagħha.

Nikkonkludi billi nringrazzja lil shabi l-uffiċjali Marco, Elaine u Chris, lill-membri tal-Kunsill u lill-kollegi għall-ħidma kontinwa u s-sapport li nsib mingħandhom. Ma nistax ma nringrazzjax lilkom, edukaturi, tax-xogħol siewi li dejjem tagħmlu, speċjalment f'dawn iż-żminijiet diffiċli.

WARA L-MALTEMP JIĠI L-BNAZZI... U WARA?

Christopher Vella,
Assistent Segretarju Ġenerali



Spiss smajna dan il-qawl Malti, li "wara l-maltemp jiġi l-bnazzi", u probabilmnt il-qarrejja mill-ewwel jobsru li qed nitkellem dwar id-diżordni u t-tfixkil li ġabet magħha l-pandemija fil-ħajja tagħna. Mingħajr ma ntawwal fuq diskors li ġa nafuh, tajjeb li napprezzaw kemm il-pandemija biddlet il-mod ta' għajxien tagħna, il-perspettivi li bihom inħarsu lejn id-dinja u lejn is-soċjetà ta' madwarna, kif ukoll il-mod kif naħdmu. M'għandix dubju li ħafna jittamaw li din il-burraxka tispicċa, u jixxennqu għal żmien fil-futur qarib meta jiġi l-bnazzi u kulhadd ikun jista' jmur lura għaż-żminijiet "sbieħ" ta' qabel, meta kolloxx kien "normali". Waqt li kulhadd jixxennaq għal dan iż-żmien sabiħ tal-bnazzi, ma nistax ma naħsibx ftit fuq x'se jiġri wara, u x'nixtieq bħala edukatur, u bħala trejtdunjonista, li jiġri wara li jgħaddi dan kollu!

Għandna mmorru lura għalkollox għall-metodi tradizzjonali ta' qabel? Għandna nwarbu għalkollox il-mitigazzjonijiet li ħadna biex niżguraw is-saħħa fuq il-postijiet tax-xogħol? Tgħallimna xi haġa fuq kif għandu jkun il-kurrikulu u l-mezzi u l-għanijiet tal-assessjar?

Bħala edukatur tista' tiġini t-tentazzjoni li

nirreżisti kull forma ta' innovazzjoni, għaliex inħossni komdu bil-pedagoġija li drajt nuża u nsibha diffiċli li nadatta u nkun innovattiv. Nifhmu wkoll li f'dawn l-aħħar 20 sena l-edukaturi esperjenzaw ħafna bidliet kbar fis-sistema edukattiva, u kienu ħafna li għejew u li ma jifilħux għal aktar pressjonijiet ġodda. Jista' jkun, għalhekk, li ħafna edukaturi jippreferu jmorru lura għall-metodi ta' qabel il-pandemija u jinsew li ż-żminijiet inbidlu u l-pandemija bidlet mill-qiegħ il-bixra kollha tas-soċjetà. Xi ftit jew wisq inbid gdid m'għandux jitpoġġa f'damigġjani qodma, waqt li min ma jbidlilx, iqammell!

Mill-banda l-oħra hemm il-periklu wkoll li min-naħa tal-amministrazzjoni jippretendu li ladarba skoprejna l-potenzjal tal-mezzi teknoloġiċi ta' komunikazzjoni, l-użu ta' dawn il-metodi għandu jkun tassattiv b'mod permanenti. B'hekk tiżdied il-pessjoni u x-xogħol żejjed fuq l-edukaturi tagħna, li ma' dak li ġa qed jagħmlu jkollhom iżidu xogħol u obbligi oħra ġodda mingħajr kumpens jew mingħajr rispett għal bilanċ xieraq fil-ħajja tal-edukaturi.

Mhux ta' b'xejn li ssib min jgħidlek li dejjem inżidu u qatt ma nnaqqsu x-xogħol. Ninsew li l-edukaturi għandhom dritt għal ħajja privata, u li ħafna drabi jaħdmu ferm lil hinn minn 40 siegħa fil-ġimgħa, u li l-vaganzi mhumiex biss jiem ta' mistrieħ imma ħafna drabi żminijiet ta' pjanar u xogħol bil-quddiem!

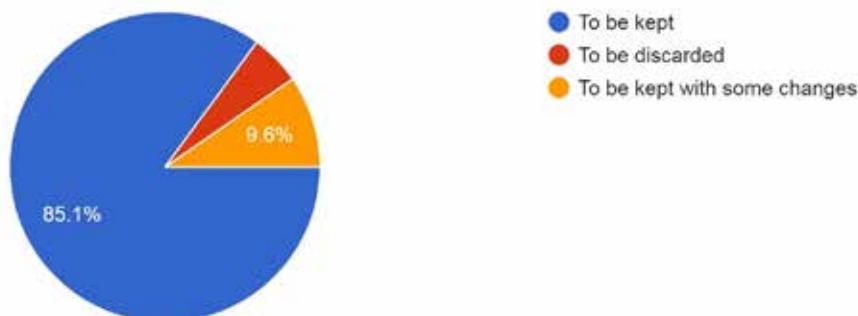
Il-bilanċ għalhekk huwa essenzjali. Minn naħa huwa importanti li dejjem niġġeddu u nkunu innovattivi, f'dinja li dejjem qiegħda tinbidel u li se tkompli tinbidel ħafna minħabba din il-pandemija. Dan nifhmuh bħala union ta' edukaturi professjonisti, għax nemmnu li l-edukazzjoni trid tkompli tiġġedded biex twieġeb għall-isfidi ġodda ta' kull żmien. Mill-banda l-oħra aħna dejjem għassa għal dawk li jimponu bidliet fil-kundizzjonijiet tax-xogħol tal-edukaturi tagħna, mingħajr ma jqisu d-dinjità u l-isfidi kollha li jaffaċċjaw l-edukaturi tagħna. Din kienet il-missjoni tagħna minn dejjem, u l-Union irrispondiet għaliha b'responsabilità u b'għaqaq. U hekk se nibqgħu nagħmlu! Dan hu l-impenn tagħna. Din hi l-viżjoni tagħna!

AN EVALUATION OF NEW PRACTICES INTRODUCED DURING THE PANDEMIC IN KINDERGARTEN, PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS: AN MUT SURVEY

CONTINUED FROM **p1**

RESULTS:

1. Request for medical certificates to students of all ages certifying they are fit for school following sickness.

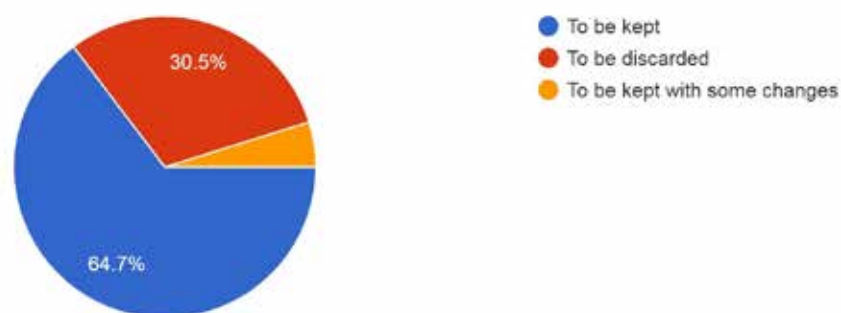


The first question asked was in relation to whether schools should retain the request for medical certificates from students of all ages certifying they are fit for school following sickness. 85.1% of respondents would like to keep this in place, with only 9.6% wanting it to be kept with some changes and 5.3% who would like to discard it. Respondents stated that there was less absenteeism due to this practice, and it led to less transmission of colds and other illnesses.

Some respondents, however, stated that sometimes students miss school due to family/personal issues which are not related to sickness, and this needs to be taken into consideration, with a clear system to determine whether the student was sick or not. This might include a mandatory certificate for one day only from students who are sent home complaining of feeling sick or showing symptoms, with the rest providing a certificate only if they miss two or more consecutive days of school.

Others also noted that additional financial burdens on parents to provide a certificate each time need to be taken into account. However, the overall message is that every necessary decision should be taken to give better peace of mind to educators. On a different note, various comments stated that the implementation of this practice needs to be revised to reduce the new administrative burdens on SMT.

2. Online records of student attendance for all lessons in Secondary schools instead of online records once in the morning only.



This question asked whether online records of student attendance are to be taken for all lessons in Secondary schools instead of online records once in the morning only. 64.7% agreed that it should be kept while 30.5% disagreed, with 4.8% who would like it to be kept with some changes. Some respondents commented that an online system would eliminate the need of a daily form teacher session, which doesn't make sense anyway since students can easily leave

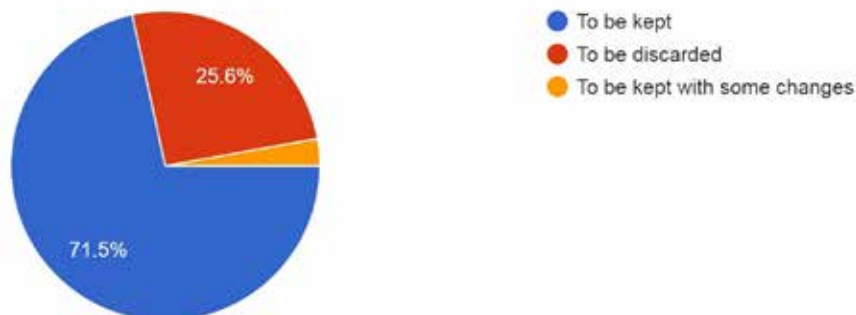
after first attendance. An online record system reduces paperwork and is easier to retrieve when required, assuming that there is constant access to the internet. Some noted that this should only be kept when online lessons are held.

On the other hand, many noted that it would be too time consuming to have it for every lesson, with some respondents stating that this practice should be remunerated with an allowance as it would

be an additional burden. One comment stated that a compromise might be made in this respect, for online attendance to be taken once in the morning and then once after each break in case of any changes.



3. Grab and go breakfast for students attending Breakfast Club instead of the breakfast taken in class.



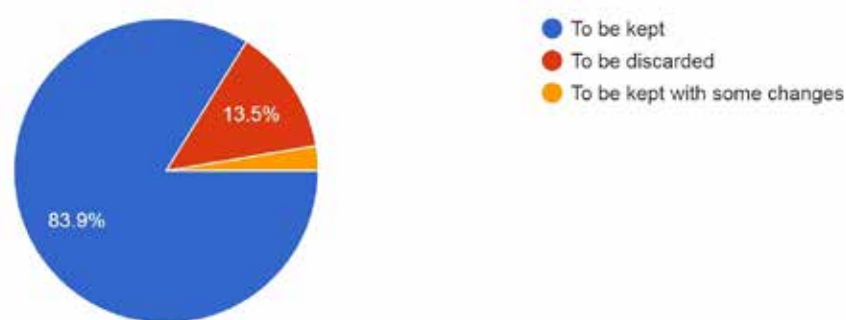
The new practice of "grab and go" breakfast for students attending Breakfast Club was also deemed positive by most respondents. In fact 71.5% stated it should be kept, 25.6% that it should be discarded and 2.8% to be kept with some changes. Respondents felt it is faster and safer this way while being more organised, practical and hygienic, with children more settled in classes.

From those who did not agree that this practice should be kept, comments stated

that schools need to re-establish the community element, the eating aspect and the sense of belonging to a group. As a compromise, one response noted that it might be a solution to have 2 or 3 groups by age instead of choosing one of the extremes (all in one class or all students in their class). Also, a recurring comment was that the food provided needs to be changed, or at least more options be provided, as many students end up not eating breakfast. It needs to include fresh fruit in addition to muffins and

sandwiches. Additionally, one noted that the previous system, whereby the school prepared breakfast for the children, was so much better and there was more of a variety. A solution could be to still have "grab and go" but the breakfast is prepared by a group at school and, like before, the school is refunded the expenses.

4. Recorded lessons on Teleskola as supplementary resources to students.



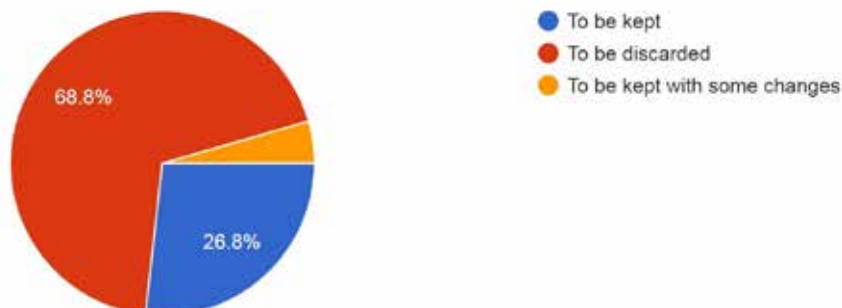
This question asked whether Teleskola recorded lessons should be kept as supplementary resources to students. 83.9% agreed with this and only 13.5% would like the idea to be discarded, while 2.6% would like it to be kept with some changes. The general response was that this is a useful supplementary resource and that it was a lifesaver for many educators.

There were, however, some issues with it. The number of lessons for some subjects

was very limited and the recorded lessons found differed in terms of quality. In this respect, some stated that lessons need to be verified by a competent person to avoid any mistakes, to make sure that there is the same level of quality throughout and to avoid any copyright issues. Also, some subjects whose language of instruction is English were taught in Maltese, which led to their lack of use by foreign students. Some respondents also stated that unfortunately very few students who attended school

were willing to use them, even when encouraged as supplementary resources. In conclusion, some respondents stated that an incentive to teachers could be provided so that more lessons are added on various subjects so that a wider resource bank is created. Examples of incentives mentioned could include CPD hours for progression, extra special leave or an allowance.

5. Recorded lessons for option subjects and selection of subjects instead of lessons in person.



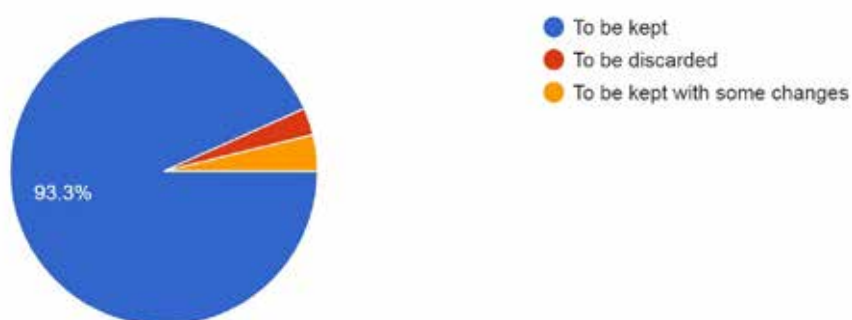
This question asked whether the new practice of recorded lessons for option subjects and a selection of other subjects instead of lessons in person should be kept or not. The majority of respondents, 68.8%, did not agree with it, while 26.8% agreed and 4.5% would like it to be kept with some changes. Many respondents stated that lessons delivered in person are always the better option, and if this is not permitted due to the pandemic, then there should be online live lessons. Recorded lessons in this respect are the worst type and should be discarded as soon as the pandemic is over. They might be used to

supplement lessons if correctly used, but it was not the case in this instance.

The overall feeling was that this was a badly implemented system, with the Ministry not giving value and calculating the amount of work involved properly. Many in fact stated that this was not a good idea for many reasons and that if it happens next year it might be worth considering whether students should have less subjects. It was a very difficult year for both educators and students, and this method of teaching didn't help. There was no way to control participation effectively,

and many stated that a good number of students did not follow these lessons and found them tiring after a day at school, rendering them ineffective. Also, some stated that the subjects whose number of lessons has been reduced need to have them revised and that reducing option subject lessons was also not a good idea. The full complement of lessons is needed to prepare students for MATSEC, who have not changed the curriculum to accommodate the change in the number of lessons.

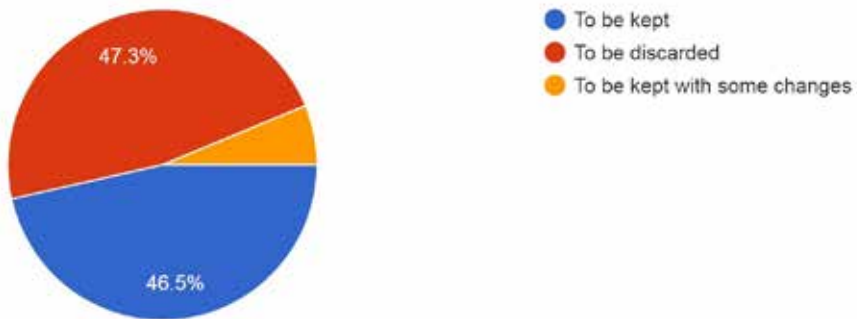
6. Virtual schools for students with a long-term illness.



The idea of virtual schools for students who have a long-term illness seems to have been a very positive experience among educators, with 93.3% agreeing that it should be kept, 3.8% agreeing but with some changes, and only 2.9% thinking it should be discarded. Some commented that it depended on the illness, if it allows them or not to physically attend school, with students following

from home or hospital if they are unable to attend physically. Many respondents also commented that specific teachers (not schoolteachers) should be employed for these jobs only. An interesting idea that was suggested is that another survey should be done for students who attended virtual schools and those who worked in the virtual school to have a more comprehensive assessment of this new service.

7. Home-class grouping instead of sets in Secondary schools.

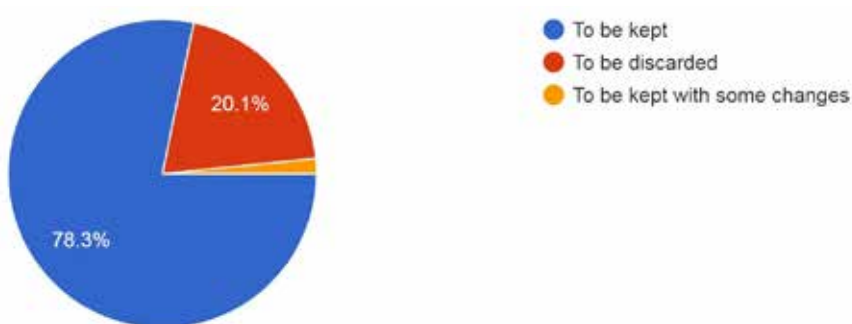


The practice of home-class grouping instead of sets in Secondary schools is the question for which opinions in this survey are most divided. A slight majority thinks it should be kept, of which 46.5% prefer it remains as is and 6.2% prefer some changes, while almost another half, 47.3%, think it should be discarded altogether and we should revert back to the previous set system.

An argument for home-class is that it presents a better sense of class/group ownership and less loitering in corridors due to reduced movement. Some also stated that it can be kept if logistics allow schools to host all student population and all lessons can be conducted in person. Many respondents also stated that this system can be kept in Middle Schools but not in Secondaries because SEC syllabi

are too difficult for struggling students. On the other hand, many stated that sets are vital for many subjects, especially in CCP classes such as Maths, as different tracks have a different syllabus. Streaming was eliminated to give students a chance to excel in different subjects according to their level, and without sets this would be very difficult to achieve. With sets pupils can be reached more.

8. Staggered arrival/dismissal of students.

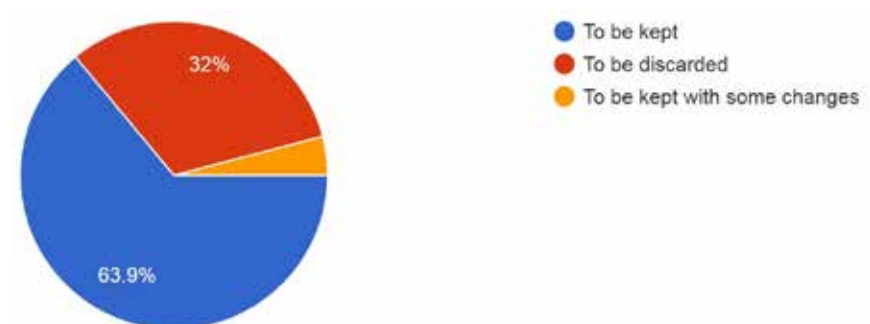


This question asked about the new practice of staggered arrival/dismissal of students, with 78.3% agreeing that it should be kept, 20.1% not agreeing and 1.6% agreeing but with some changes. Many stated that it was very important to keep it staggered as a standard procedure since it made the arrival and dismissal process more efficient, better managed and orderly. Stampeding and

chaos at dismissal were avoided in this way. Respondents also stated that it is a very good system, especially in large schools, even though one commented that it was taking too long. The important thing is that one should ensure that school arrival and dismissal times are fair and that arrival and dismissal time for all classes abides by the official arrival and dismissal time.

On the other hand, many did not agree that this practice should be kept as after the pandemic students should be allowed to mingle and socialise in the morning like they used to do before. Some also had a different experience altogether of the practice, stating that there were students who were poorly supervised before and at dismissal, creating the possibility of avoidable accidents.

9. Staggered breaks.

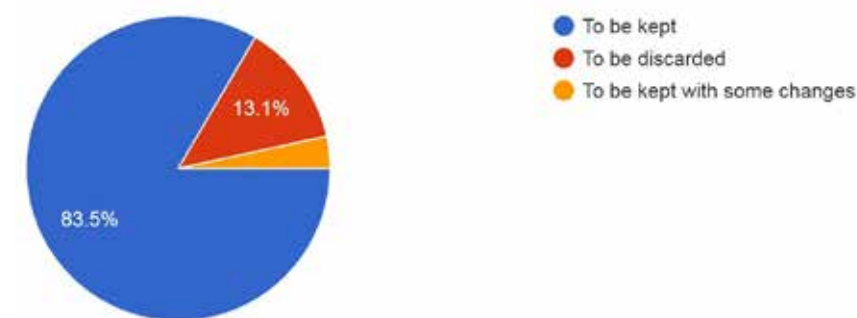


In relation to the new practice of staggered breaks, 63.9% stated that it should be kept while 32% want to discard it. 4.1% would keep it with some changes. The majority agree, with many respondents offering ways of fit the idea better according to their circumstances. Some stated that it could be divided into year groups at a time because some students have friends in other classes. Some stated that it could lead to less injuries and bullying, and that it should be kept only if it helps the school to organize better and students to have more room.

However, many respondents stated that if the situation permits, breaks should return to how they were before the pandemic. It would be healthier for pupils and teachers. Also, some stated that with staggered breaks there would be a constant high level of noise in the school and that there would be no time to organise activities for the whole school and clubs during breaks. Staggered breaks also affect educators, and some commented that as staff they missed having a break together since they rarely meet anymore. It also resulted in a situation in which a teacher could have

six lessons straight, which is exhausting. Finally, one respondent stated that in their case it is not possible to have a long break at lunch time and have breaks staggered.

10. Single groups in kindergarten as opposed to double groups in some classes.

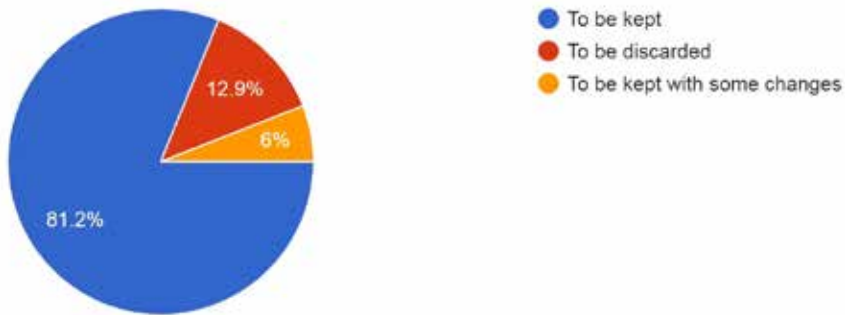


Another positive practice was that of single groups in Kindergarten as opposed to double groups in some classes, with 83.5% stating that it should be kept while only 13.3% think it should be discarded. 3.4% think it should be kept with some changes. The general feeling is that it is healthier for many reasons, including that more individual attention is possible with single groups, with children having more

individual attention and more space to move around.

Some respondents, however, stated that this practice can only be kept if school premises allow for it or if the classroom size is small. In some cases, where schools removed a sensory room to create a classroom, they should revert to having the sensory room instead.

11. Online parents' days



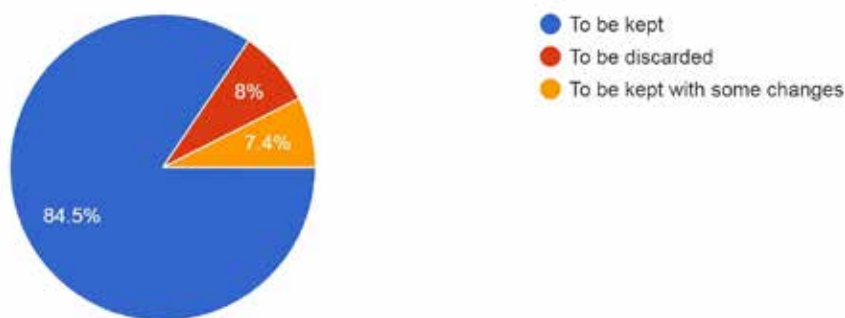
The new practice of online parents' days is very popular as well, with 81.2% agreeing that it should be kept, 6% agreeing but with some changes and only 12.9% wanting it discarded as soon as the pandemic is over. The overall comments received were quite positive, stating that it was very successful and prevented wasting time in queues. Many commented that it worked well for both educators and parents. There was better preparation and educators managed to reach many more parents, who can set a meeting without having to take a whole

day's leave. However, assessments should be issued before Parents' Day so parents can choose wisely which teachers they want to book an appointment with.

Still, some comments stated that physical meetings should still be available but should be requested in advance and if both parties agree. After all, face-to-face is a completely different experience, particularly when important confidential matters need to be discussed, and as it would be an opportunity for the parent to

visit and see the school. One respondent also struggled to keep with the times allocated since not all parents know how to use the school online platform. The educator stated that parents should be given more opportunity to learn how to use such platforms. Some comments reached for a compromise solution, and suggested that maybe out of two parents' days, one of them would be online. If done on two consecutive days, one could be for parents who would like to visit the school and the other one online for the rest.

12. The use of an online platform.



The use of an online platform is also a practice that was deemed as positive, with 84.5% of respondents saying that it should be kept, 7.4% want it kept with some changes and only 8% stated that it should be discarded. The idea of a workable platform was seen as a good and useful experience with many respondents, one stating that uploading notes and assignments on Teams is very convenient and students can keep track of what they might have missed when absent. It is also a very good means of communication

between students, teachers and parents, and that all courses and meetings should be kept online.

Some comments also mention issues, particularly that the efficiency of TEAMS should be improved, that some of the functions of Teams, such as chat, should be deactivated, while some stated that educators shouldn't feel obliged to use these platforms. In the case of corrections, one respondent thinks that online corrections take much more time to be

done than normal corrections and this educator would revert back to correcting handouts instead of marking online. Many also stated that it depended on good Wi-Fi within the school premises and at home. Apart from this, many respondents stated that clear boundaries should be created for all concerned, including parents, SMT, employers and students, stating times and days in which teachers can or cannot be contacted.



13. Other changes experienced during this scholastic year that you would like to be kept.

There are many changes and practices that respondents think should be kept, but the most mentioned have been grouped as follows:

Hygiene practices, social distance and even masks: supply and use of soaps, wipes, hand sanitisers and frequent cleaning need to be kept, along with frequent cleaning of toilets and daily cleaning of classes. Many also mentioned temperature taking, social distancing and even masks to avoid transmission of diseases and flu, and the fact that there is still no guarantee that the vaccine is 100% effective against emerging variants of the virus. Some also mentioned separate

assemblies.

Smaller number of students in class and the number of educators in staffrooms:

This was mentioned by many educators, who stated that there is a better possibility of individual attention in a calmer environment this way.

Use of technology, particularly for meetings:

Better use of technology opened up a wealth of new teaching methodologies that were previously not available and in the right situations could be of benefit. Meetings such as CoPE, PD, SDP, IEP meetings, assemblies, meetings with the Head of School, Council of Heads

and other meetings could still continue to be held online. Use of Teams and other platforms, which was very important when the schools went online, could still be kept.

Added security and limited access to school premises:

The idea of having security officers at the school gate was very well received and many observed that they would like it to be permanent. Also, many stated that with no parents in schools the perception was that it was much safer.

Other comments, specific to a sector or age group, were also noted.

14. Other changes experienced during this scholastic year that you would like to be discarded.

There are also many changes and practices that respondents think should be discarded as soon as the pandemic is over. The most mentioned have been grouped as follows:

Online meetings and other COVID-19 restrictions:

Interestingly, many educators stated that they would like online meetings and excessive screen time to be a thing of the past once face-to-face meetings can be held again. Similarly, some comments related to masks and other mitigations that ought to be discarded once the pandemic is over. Others mentioned the return of extracurricular activities and subjects such as Ethics, the return to the previous

number of lessons per subject, curriculum time, group work, outings, and a return to library visits.

Peripatetic teachers doing replacements:

Even though the idea of having replacement teachers for when teachers are on sick leave was well received, many stated that the practice of having peripatetic teachers perform this task should be discarded. Replacements should be done by replacement teachers, not peripatetic or subject teachers.

Bare and empty classrooms:

Many educators wish to have classrooms back with visual aids and resources to help

students and have a much better equipped and nice-looking classroom. Some also want a return of all furniture removed from classes, including cupboards and shelving.

Compulsory schooling:

Some respondents stated that all students should be attending school without exception as in pre-COVID-19.

There were many other comments, again specific to a sector or age group, which the MUT is noting. The union takes the opportunity to thank all educators for the feedback provided and their continuous support.

IL-VALUR TAT-TEŻI TAL-MTL GĦALL-PRATTIKA PROFESSIONALI TAL-GĦALLIEMA

Dr Jacqueline Zammit



Is-Sur Jake Debattista, Dr Jacqueline Zammit,
u s-Sa Sarah Scicluna nhar il-gradwazzjoni tal-MTL tal-2019



Dr Jacqueline Zammit u s-Sa Daniela Mifsud
nhar il-gradwazzjoni tal-2020 matul il-pandemija tal-COVID-19

Ir-riċerka hija tabilhaqq il-muftieħ li jiftaħ il-bibien magħluqa, u kif stqarr Neil Armstrong, ir-riċerka tohloq għarfien ġdid. Fost bosta benefiċċji, ir-riċerka tista' twieġeb għall-inċertezzi u l-mistoqsijiet tagħna filwaqt li paradossalment iġġegħelna nirriflettu, nistaqsu u niddubitaw miċ-ċertezzi tagħna, kif ukoll tikkaratterizza u tidentifika kuncetti magħrufa jew li għadhom mhumiex magħrufa, timla n-nuqqasijiet tal-informazzjoni li għandna, issolvi l-isfidi tagħna u tibdel il-mod kif jaħdmu l-professionisti tal-edukazzjoni.

Jeħtieġ ir-riċerka biex l-edukaturi jkomplu jaġġornaw ruħhom u jsiru aktar midhla tal-aħjar approċċi tat-tagħlim effettiv, innovattiv u kreattiv bl-għan li jilħqu aktar lil kull student li jgħallmu. Fil-fatt it-teżi tal-Masters fit-Tagħlim (MTL) li jaħdmu fuqha l-istudenti tal-Fakultà tal-Edukazzjoni fl-Università ta' Malta għandha rwol importanti fl-iżvilupp professjonali tal-edukaturi. Ħafna drabi r-riċerka titqies bħala attività akkademika mmexxija mill-akkademiċi, li dejjem joħolmu u jgħixu fis-sħab, minflok ma r-riċerkatur jimxi id f'id mal-edukatur u jgħin lill-edukatur. Madankollu bosta studenti tal-MTL jagħrfu kemm jitgħallmu mir-riċerka li jagħmlu fit-teżi tagħhom u jieħdu gost jiksbu riżultati interessanti u forsi saħansitra mhux mistennija, filwaqt li janalizzaw l-informazzjoni, jitgħallmu jużaw għodod ġodda, jaddattaw il-ħsibijiet, it-twemmin, il-filosofiji, il-perspettivi u l-attitudnijiet tagħhom skont l-informazzjoni li jiġbru, waqt li jfittxu li jtejbu xi sitwazzjoni jew sfida fit-tagħlim u jaddattaw ruħhom skont teoriji u prattiki tat-tagħlim. Jekk l-edukazzjoni mhix ibbażata fuq ir-riċerka, allura tkun qed turriskja li tkun ibbażata fuq filosofija/teorija partikolari, jew ideologija jew konvenjenza jew preġudizzju, filwaqt li l-edukazzjoni għandha sservi biex tilliberana u tippromwovi d-demokrazija u l-ugwaljanza fl-opportunitajiet u mhux tohnoq lill-individwu. Bħala lekċerer tal-Malti bi speċjalizzazzjoni tal-Malti bħala lingwa barranija (MLB) fil-Fakultà tal-Edukazzjoni, xtaqt nistharreg l-għala r-riċerka kienet importanti għal tliet għalliema tal-Malti li sa ftit żmien ilu, mhux daqshekk 'il bogħod, kont is-supervisor tat-teżi tal-MTL tagħhom fil-MLB.

Fit-teżi tal-MTL is-Sa Sarah Scicluna u s-Sur Jake Debattista holqu riżorsi fil-MLB li kkontribwew għan-nuqqas ta' riżorsi tal-MLB. Is-Sa Scicluna stqarret li "mir-riċerka li għamilt fit-tagħlim tal-qasam tal-ikel fil-MLB sirt konxja tal-importanza li l-edukaturi jesibixxu l-kulturi ta' diversi gruppi etniċi li jsawru l-klassi. Meta dan iseħħ, id-diskriminazzjoni bbażata fuq religjonijiet u kulturi differenti tonqos. Dan jikkontribwixxi għal ambjent aktar pjaċevoli fil-klassi u b'hekk ir-relazzjonijiet bejn l-istudenti jkunu ħafna iktar b'saħħithom. Għat-teżi rbatt diversi tipi ta' riżorsi mal-istorja ta' Frawlina. Hloqt riżorsi tradizzjonali, bħal karti tat-taħriġ u leħhiet, kif ukoll diġitali, bħal Powerpoints u logħob interattiv bil-Learning Apps, ActivInspire u iMovie. Għamilthom kemm jista' jkun addattati u ta' interess għall-istudenti barranin. Kemm l-istorja ta' Frawlina kif ukoll ir-riżorsi huma ppublikati u disponibbli għal kulhadd fuq is-sit tar-riżorsi tal-MaltiSkola. Permezz tat-teżi sirt naf inħaddem ċerti programmi diġitali li għadni nħaddimhom sabiex nohloq riżorsi interessanti. It-teżi ġegħlitni nifhem li l-istudenti dejjem għandhom ikunu l-fulkru tat-tagħlim."

Is-Sur Jake Debattista saħaq li holoq ir-riżorsi tal-partiċipju attiv verbali tal-Malti Semitiku "sabiex inkompli niffaċilità x-xogħol tal-ghalliem u fl-istess ħin inqajjem aktar interess fl-istudenti. L-esperjenza li akkwistajt permezz tat-teżi hija ta' vantaġġ kbir minħabba li llum waqt li nkun qed nipprepara r-riżorsi qed nipprattika dak li tghallimt. It-teżi ġabitni konxju li minkejja li l-użu tal-informatika hu importanti fid-dinja tal-lum, mhijjex is-soluzzjoni għall-isfidi kollha fit-tagħlim, imma meta l-informatika tintuża kif suppost se żżid il-motivazzjoni fl-istudenti u b'hekk tgħin lill-ghalliem jkollhom xogħol anqas stressanti u aktar effettiv. It-teżi ġabitni aktar konxju biex qabel ma nipprepara l-lezzjonijiet nagħti aktar kas tal-interessi tal-istudenti u kif iħobbu jitgħallmu, biex b'hekk nilhaq lill-istudenti kollha, u nevalwa wkoll

x'mar tajjeb, hażin jew x'seta' mar aħjar fir-riżorsi li nuża."

Is-Sa Daniela Mifsud stqarret li "t-teżi tiegħi tittratta dwar l-akkwist tal-artiklu fit-tagħlim tal-MLB. Inħoss li kien studju interessanti immens għax ġabni konxja li jekk student iġib ċerta marka f'test partikolari, ma jfissirx li se jerga' jgħib l-istess marka jew marka aħjar fl-istess test li jinghata xahar wara. Dan l-istudju ġegħelni nifhem ukoll li jekk il-lingwa nattiva tal-istudenti barranin tkun tal-istess familja ta' lingwi, bħalma hu l-Gharbi fil-każ tal-Malti, mhux bilfors li tkun ta' vantaġġ fit-tagħlim tal-MLB. Fil-fatt il-partecipanti li kienu Gharab ma marrux aħjar mill-istudenti l-oħra barranin li ma kinux jafu l-Gharbi, meta eżaminajthom fl-akkwist tal-artikli qamrin u xemxin. Għalhekk dan l-istudju b'riżultat mhux mistenni qanqalli aktar kurżità dwar x'qed iseħħ f'moħħ l-istudent, hekk kif qed jitgħallmu il-MLB, u għenni napprezza xi ssarraf il-marka ta' kull student. L-istudenti barranin għallmuni wkoll strateġiji li jhaddmu biex jitgħallmu l-Malti li l-istudenti Maltin m'għandhomx għalfejn iħaddmuhom meta jitgħallmu l-Malti fl-iskola. B'hekk din it-teżi għenitni nifhem aħjar kif jitgħallmu l-istudent u ġegħlitni nagħraf li l-pedagoġija, it-tħarriġ tal-ghalliem u r-riżorsi fit-tagħlim tal-MLB għandhom ikunu differenti minn dawk li jintużaw fit-tagħlim tal-Malti bħala lingwa materna."

Ir-riċerka u r-riżultati li joħorġu mit-teżijiet tal-MTL għandhom il-potenzjal li jintużaw mhux biss mill-ghalliem nfušhom u mill-istudenti tagħhom iżda mill-komunità edukattiva. Barra minn hekk, bħala riżultat tal-esperjenza tagħhom fit-teżi tal-MTL, dawn l-ghalliem wrew rieda li jesploraw, jirriflett u jevalwaw it-teoriji u l-prattika tat-tagħlim. Għalhekk it-teżi tal-MTL, barra li tgħin lill-ghalliem fil-prattika professjonali tagħhom, tista' sservi bħala mezz li bih għalliem oħra jistghu jiżviluppaw il-prattika professjonali tagħhom.

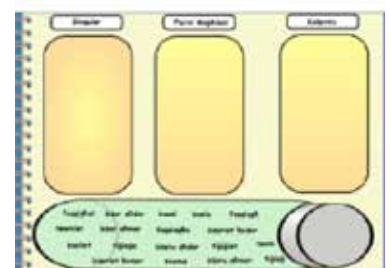
Mit-teżi tas-Sa Sarah Scicluna



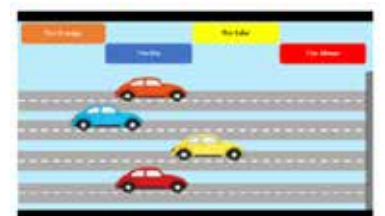
Eżempju ta' karta tat-taħriġ



Attività mill-istorja Nieklu u Nivvjaġġaw ma' Frawlina permezz tal-Powerpoint



Attività permezz tal-ActivInspire



Attività oħra permezz tal-ActivInspire



Eżempju ta' leħhiet



Parti mill-istorja Nieklu u Nivvjaġġaw ma' Frawlina



WHEN LITERACY MEETS FOOTBALL: ALL TOWARDS THE SAME VISION!

AN EDUCATIONAL PROJECT
ACTIVELY ENGAGING
BOTH PARENTS AND THE
COMMUNITY

By Janice Cachia Schembri

Assistant Head San Ġorġ Preca College, Paola Primary
Currently reading for a Master's in Applied Educational Leadership at the Institute for Education

If the planning of this event was a book it would have been named *'TEAM'*, as together everyone achieved more. Although effective leadership is the key that brings about change in a school (Atkinson, 2015), a leader cannot function well if he/she tries to implement change alone. As Kotter (2012) argues, a leader's ability is in building up a winning alliance. School-parent-community partnerships are meaningful relationships (Gross et al, 2015; *Framework for Educational Strategy for Malta*, 2014), since everyone will be gearing

towards the holistic development of the child (Epstein, 2010; *For all children to succeed*, 2005). Parental involvement is crucial in influencing the students' education and progress (Abel, 2012), and as stated by Cutajar and Bezzina (2013), one of the DES' missions is to form partnerships with parents and the wider community to prepare students for the world outside the classroom.



Although the actual event was held on one particular day, the planning involved a lot of meetings and discussions with various stakeholders. This event was linked with two of our SDP targets, together with one of the school's mottos:

1. bridging diversity and multiculturalism,
2. emotional literacy,
3. active bodies – healthy minds (one of our mottos).

It was a cross-curricular activity, that incorporated emotional wellbeing, physical activity and literacy. The event included a collaboration between the school, the parents and the community, with the aim to "enhance students' learning opportunities" (Epstein & Salinas, 2004, p. 12). Schools should foster a culture of "learning centres for the entire community" (*For All Children to Succeed*, 2005). This event, amongst others, established itself as part of the school calendar, whereby all stakeholders play a crucial role in the success of the students' learning journey (Epstein, 2010).

It all started three years ago, when two of our Year 5 classes participated in an in-house activity organised by the National Literacy Agency, which was called 'Bil-qari u l-kitba niskorja'. It was a one-time session whereby two footballers together with two representatives of the NLA visited the school and took part in a reading session combined with football activities. The students enjoyed it so much that two years ago as a school we decided to carry out a similar activity but on a larger scale, involving the whole school. This project was also to be presented as part of the coursework for a Master's in Applied Educational Leadership that the author was reading for at the Institute for Education. All the parents/guardians were invited to participate in fun-filled activities of sports and reading sessions. The community of Paola was also involved, with the aim of giving a voice to everyone in order to be able to reach all the students. We worked like a chain and every stakeholder acted as a loop, giving an input in achieving the

same target: celebrating diversity, giving importance to emotions and learning the academic in a fun way.

This activity was held during the second term at the Hibernians Ground and consisted of four main sections: circle time involving all stakeholders; parents' penalty shootout; various physical activities and reading stations for everyone; and finally we had a 30-minute football game for parents and teachers. Our school started this journey by collaborating with the National Literacy Agency and the MFA. Two reading ambassadors took part in the reading sessions with the help of other players. We also managed to get some sponsors from different sport shops in the form of vouchers and sport equipment. MCAST PE students were involved, thus learning from the experience while helping out in the smooth running of the events.

Among the outcomes that were reached through this project, the most important was that it brought the students, the staff, the parents and the community together, bridging all the diversities, working towards the same goal, viewing "one another as partners in education" (Epstein, 2010, p. 82). All stakeholders embarked on this experience, which in turn, as Stefanski et al point out, attained the aim "to cultivate mutual respect and trust, develop parents' leadership skills, and expand school and partnership capacity" (2016, p. 151).

Another important goal attained was that those involved shared their emotions and understood the emotions of others, giving importance to everyone's emotional wellbeing; thus, as Elais et al (2007) point out, it helped in keeping a healthy channel of communication.

Through this activity we promoted the importance of being part of something bigger. This project was done before the pandemic. It would be very beneficial to see more of these types of collaborations when the situation permits.

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STANDARDS FOR MEANINGFUL E-LEARNING

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The sudden transition from face-to-face learning to 100% online learning caused by the unexpected COVID-19 pandemic has taken many educators (but not everyone) by surprise. Empirical research in the experience of 2020 has already started to be published and educators in Maltese compulsory education seem to have gone through a mixture

of both positive and negative issues. Educators say they felt increased empowerment, collegiality and appreciation by society. However, they had to face the lack of preparedness, the lack of relevant training and lack of support at department level in relation to e-learning (Busuttill & Farrugia, 2020). The experience in post-secondary and higher education is still

being studied but initial research is pointing towards educators and students trying to look at the situation as an opportunity rather than a challenge (Bonello et al, 2020), though students were concerned with the issues triggered by examinations, not being able to do practical work and personal wellbeing (Cuschieri & Calleja Agius, 2020).

Educators, including the author, who have adopted e-learning practices over the years, could leverage on their experience and the significant volume of research and praxis both locally and around the world. As the quality of technology improved, e.g. in terms of internet speed and access and the performance of computing devices, the focus shifted from the logistics and handling of technology to content and the development of a new pedagogy that exploited the affordances of these new digital technologies (Govindasamy, 2002). The 'sage on a stage' and 'chalk and talk'-based pedagogies were increasingly seen as unsuited for online learning (Garrison and Anderson, 2011). A constructivist approach was increasingly being adopted online, where learner-centred teaching and learning seemed to flourish (Rovai, 2004). Learners became more active participants (Tomte and Sutherland Olsen, 2014) as digital technology became more affordable and pervasive. This was especially marked in higher and further education.

However, educators who were advocating e-learning were met by suspicion as the traditional face-to-face engagement was still regarded as superior to e-learning (Casey, 2008) and of better quality (Jung and Latchem, 2012). The experience induced by the COVID-19 pandemic seems to have allayed some of these fears. A transition towards a blend of both face-to-face and online learning as standard praxis seems the most likely post-pandemic scenario (Algrove, 2020; Jones & Sharma 2020), though educators in Malta clamour for more training, support and better policies to be able to deliver in this new post-COVID reality (Busuttil & Farrugia, 2020).

For many years now the online learning experience has demonstrated, quite clearly, that meaningful pure and blended online learning was possible if only the right pedagogical approach was adopted. Common standards between different educational establishments and individual professionals were pointing towards a shared understanding of what constituted effective online learning that is pedagogically sound, is engaging, and achieves the set learning outcomes. This did not mean that e-learning was a straightforward answer to all questions and situations, but in terms of learning design it had much to offer.

Earlier research by the author in post-secondary, higher and further education (Debattista, 2018) discovered that these common standards are instructional design, web design and technical access, communication between tutor/s and students, interactivity and community building, instructional resources with possible multimedia use, instructional support, assessment, and evaluation of the instruction with learner feedback.

Ten main standards could be extracted from these aspects of teaching and learning online:

1. Instructional design – an analysis of the learning needs and the use of appropriate strategies and methods to meet them
2. Course opening – welcoming learners and giving them relevant information on their learning
3. Assessment of learning – determining what the learner has learnt and subsequent accreditation
4. Interaction and community – the exchanges between instructor and learners that build a community that supports teaching and learning
5. Instructional resources for teaching and learning are made available online
6. Learner support – learners are enabled to achieve their maximum potential
7. Technology design – technology is at the service of teaching and learning
8. Course evaluation – feedback is sought to improve teaching and learning
9. Course closing with assessment and archiving of content
10. Instructional design cycle with an academic, technical and administrative review

A detailed view on these standards is available at <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/IJILT-09-2017-0092/full/html>

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MCAST: A COLLEGE OF THE FUTURE

Professor Joachim James Calleja, Principal/CEO



On its 20th anniversary, the College can look back and be proud of its growth and look forward and be ready to play an outward-looking and responsive role to the changing labour market and the community from which it derives its resources.

MCAST must move towards the type of educational institution known as a community college. This may mean different things in different cultural contexts. For us, it will simply make the College available to institutionalised and individual needs and aspirations. The College will increase its role in helping learners advance in reskilling and upskilling. This vision implies strengthening the strategic direction taken in 2018 for the period 2019-2021 of which over 90% has been achieved.

In the years ahead, as the country recovers from the pandemic, MCAST must continue working towards teaching the skills students need to find a footing in a radically altered labour market. Stepping up to meet this challenge will emerge as an essential engine of economic growth, critical for learners and for employers in search of talent to fill new roles and fuel a national resurgence.

The College's Strategic landscape is dominated by the MCAST Strategy Blueprint 2019-2030. This document outlines the contextual challenges faced by the College, depicts its alignment to European and National policies. It also informs the seven Strategic Objectives set out in the Strategic Plan 2019-2021 as well as the ones proposed in this plan for the years 2022-2027. Furthermore, in this Strategic Plan, MCAST is proposing 3 Transversal Themes, 40 Initiatives and 140 Measures.

Sustained efforts and investments are necessary across all education and industry stakeholders to drive the upskilling of the Maltese labour force to become more dynamic, knowledge-based and more relevantly skilled. The strategic objectives are being reiterated:

1. Invest in modern infrastructure that is fit for current and future staff and students.

2. Strengthen Quality and Relevance to enhance the students' learning experience.
3. Position quality WBL at the heart of all professional and vocational training programmes offered.
4. Reinforce the image and build the esteem of Vocational and Professional Education and Training.
5. Broaden the local and international MCAST partner network.
6. Provide support and reinforce the Management and Governance Structures.
7. Incentivise the development of applied research and sustainable innovation across the College.

Underpinning these strategic objectives, which will inform our decision directions for the next 6 years, MCAST is keen to intertwine three transversal themes. These thematic priorities will direct the priorities which the College will set for each Strategic Objective.

1. Student Engagement, Retention and Involvement: the level and quality of student engagement with their educational institutions are critical in determining student retention, learning, achievement and graduation.
2. Greener Sustainability: sustainable development and growth to better serve the economic needs of the country while safeguarding our environment and promoting social cohesion and wellbeing.
3. Community College and a College for the Community: outward-looking and responsive to the changing labour market.

The way forward for the College includes a wide array of initiatives which ensure a more personalised and seamless experience across a digital environment that enable a deeper and richer learning experience. Further investment in the campus is necessary. Similarly, from a curriculum perspective, we aim to enhance the digital experience, include more transversal skills, provide more flexibility to personalise the content; while strengthening the staff professional development particularly those of the lecturing staff who are closest to students and adult learners.

Recognizing alternative work-based learning models is central to its development and to widen its boundaries. The College is keen on providing professional development for lecturers, mentors (at the place of work) and WBL coordinators to develop instructional strategies, while sustaining relationships with industry partners.

A more integrated communications approach is needed to pursue a closer relationship and interaction between staff, students, alumni and local communities. MCAST wants to be at the service of society and to act as a key player in the economic and social wellbeing of Malta. The College aims at positioning itself internationally by expanding and pursuing collaborations with international institutions to offer a broad, attractive range of subjects and increase knowledge transfer. This is also possible by improving the quality, quantity and impact of research, innovation and publications, increase and improve research partnerships and supporting staff to undertake excellent research and innovative professional practice.

As an institution, we will focus on consolidating our business model through closer alignment between strategy, planning, evaluation and accountability and to augment the MCAST Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS), while also strengthening staff commitment, engagement and dedication.

The new legislation for MCAST (which will shortly be launched for public consultation) will shape this distinction even further for the years 2022-2027 and will certainly be used to synergise a more constructive and positive relationship between the two vital instruments of development. This is an inspiring vision for MCAST 2030. The years 2022-2027 will lay the structures and identify the resources to sustain an open community of learners and workers that will make our country competitive, sustainable and greener. It will also ensure that relations with Unions will remain committed towards improving the working conditions of staff members who in return will be expected to continue serving our community of learners, workers and citizens.



SENA MIT-TWAQQIF TA' FONDAZZJONI SAGHTAR

Minn sena ilu 'l hawn, jiġifieri minn meta ħarġet l-ewwel edizzjoni ta' *Il-Hsieb*, komplejna bix-xogħol. L-ewwel nett kien hemm it-tnejn sabiex titwaqqaf formalment il-Fondazzjoni, u t-tieni halli tkompli l-hidma li għaliha l-Fondazzjoni twaqqfet. Dawn huma xi ftit mill-aħbarijiet sbieħ li kellna matul dan il-perjodu.

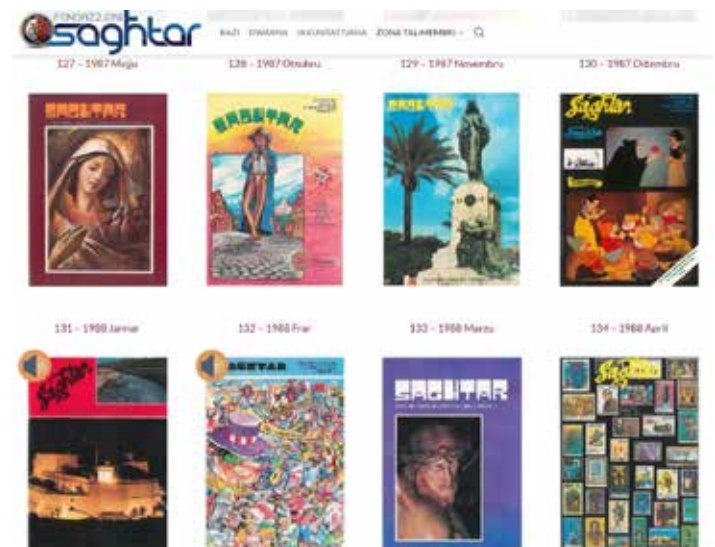
Ġunju 2020: Titnieda Fondazzjoni Saghtar

Il-Malta Union of Teachers nediet fi hdanha Fondazzjoni Saghtar. L-għan ta' din il-Fondazzjoni hu li permezz tagħha l-MUT taqdi l-irwol doppju tagħha, bħala entità trejdnjunistika u professjonali. Il-Fondazzjoni issa qed taħdem biex tissaħħaħ il-professjoni edukattiva billi toffri taħriġ u materjal edukattiv lill-edukaturi u l-istudenti, torganizza korsijiet u lekkers minn żmien għal iehor, u tohroġ pubblikazzjonijiet diversi għall-edukaturi u l-istudenti, ewlieni fosthom il-magażin popolari *Saghtar*. It-tnedija tal-Fondazzjoni saret fil-Kwartieri Ġenerali tal-MUT fil-Hamrun u kienet preseduta mill-Onor. Owen Bonnici, Ministru tal-Edukazzjoni u x-Xogħol. Iċ-Chairperson ta' Fondazzjoni Saghtar hija s-Sa Elaine Germani, li fil-preżent hija wkoll il-Viċi President Anzjan tal-MUT.



Lulju 2020: L-edizzjonijiet passati u siltiet moqrija mis-*Saghtar* imtellighin fis-sit saghtar.org.mt

Fis-sit saghtar.org.mt wiehed isib skennjati l-edizzjonijiet passati kollha tar-rivista *Saghtar* mill-1971 sal-2015! Biex taċċessahom mur fiż-Żona tal-Membri u mil-lista li tidher, aghżel id-deċennju li trid u aghfas fuqu biex imbagħad tagħżel l-edizzjoni li trid. Mill-istess lista tista' tagħfas ukoll fuq Siltiet mis-*Saghtar* biex tisma' xi silta minn xi edizzjoni passata tinqara. B'hekk il-Fondazzjoni issa tista' turi b'wiċċha minn quddiem l-istorja twila ta' din ir-rivista filwaqt li tipprovi valur miżjud permezz ta' servizz ġdid għal min jixtieq jisma' flok jaqra xi kontenut mir-rivista.



Ottubru 2020: Is-*Saghtar* reġa' magħna!

Konna ilna nistennewh u fl-aħhar wasal! L-ewwel ħarġa tar-rivista *Saghtar* mahruġa minn Fondazzjoni Saghtar fi hdan l-MUT, dik t'Ottubru 2020, ittellighet fis-sit saghtar.org.mt. Fl-ewwel xhur kienet rivista digitali, li tista' taqraha meta trid minn fuq kompjuter, mobile jew tablet, u tinkludi materjal varjat, informattiv, divertenti u interattiv. Ir-rispons għal din l-aħbar kien sabiħ ħafna, b'eluf ta' nies isiru membri tal-Fondazzjoni u jidhlu jaraw is-*Saghtar* il-ġdid.





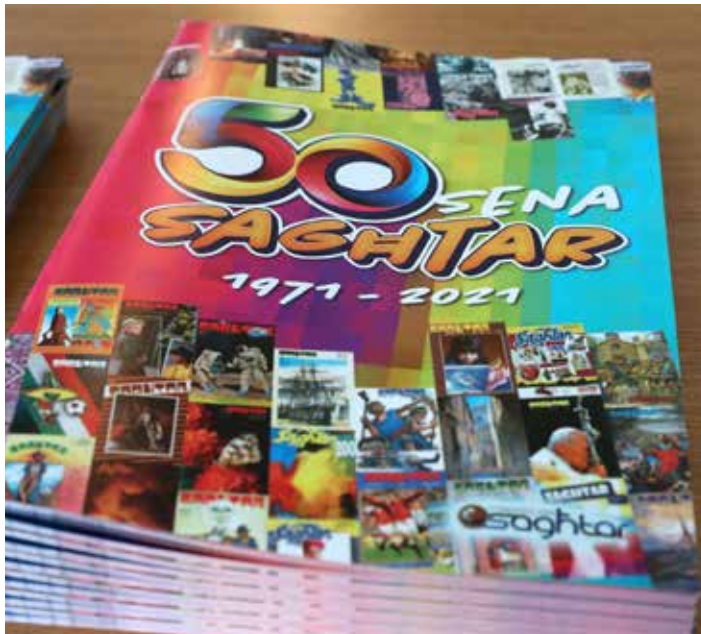
Marzu 2021:
Is-Saghtar stampat

Malli harġet ir-rivista *Saghtar* b'mod diġitali l-Fondazzjoni bdiet tircievi għadd ta' mistoqsijiet u rikjesti minn hafna nies li xtaqu jixtruha stampata, kif kienet toħroġ oriġinarjament. Kien għalhekk, imbagħad, li sar ix-xogħol neċessarju sabiex dan seta' jsehh. U f'it tax-xhur wara r-rivista setgħet ukoll tinxtara bħala rivista stampata mill-hanut online li tnedja fl-istess perjodu mill-Fondazzjoni. Ir-rivista stampata serviet sabiex tilhaq aktar tfaljew li għall-ewwel darba reġa' kellhom l-esperjenza ta' rivista bil-Malti stampata apposta għalihom, bħalma kien hemm għal tant snin fil-passat.



Marzu 2021:
Il-hanut online tal-Fondazzjoni – saghtar.org.mt/hanut

Minn dak iż-żmien 'l hawn kull min hu interessat jakkwista kopja stampata tar-rivista *Saghtar* seta' jissieheb b'xejn bħala membru tal-Fondazzjoni u jmur fil-hanut li nfetħ bħala parti mis-sit saghtar.org.mt. Hemmhekk wiehed seta' (u għadu jista'!) jabbona għal tmien edizzjonijiet stampati tal-magażin, jiġifieri minn Ottubru 2020 sa Mejju 2021, jew inkella jixtrihom waħdiet. Fl-istess hanut wiehed isib ukoll għażla ta' kotba sbieħ għat-tfal u pubblikazzjonijiet oħra.



Mejju 2021:
Celebrazzjoni tal-50 sena

Illum, fl-2021, bis-*Saghtar* nistgħu niċcelebraw 50 sena ta' qari tajjeb, divertenti, edukattiv u informativ għall-istudenti Maltin u Għawdxin; 50 sena ta' kitba ta' kwalità bl-ilsien nazzjonali tagħna; 50 sena ta' diversità ta' stili letterarji – poeżiji, novelli, drammi, studji kritiċi letterarji, studji riċerkati, artikli ta' interess u kurżità, siltiet minn rumanzi u l-bqija; 50 sena ta' kontribuzzjonijiet minn tant awturi differenti, stabbiliti u rinomati u oħrajn godda u emergenti; 50 sena ta' modi diversi ta' divertiment – kitbiet dwar il-mużika u l-films, loġhob, komiks, passatempi, u illum għandna wkoll l-aspett diġitali, li hu maħsub li jkompli jitkabbar u jirfina ruħu skont l-aħħar teknoloġija moderna.

Fondazzjoni Saghtar iċcelebrat dan kollu f'attività li fiha ġie mistieden il-Prim Ministru sabiex jinawgura pubblikazzjoni speċjali flimkien ma' installazzjoni fil-kwartieri tal-Malta Union of Teachers li tfakkar dan it-taqward.

50 SENNA
SAGHTAR
1971 - 2021

Waqgħ l-attività taċ-ċelebrazzjoni tal-50 sena mill-ewwel pubblikazzjoni tas-Sagħtar



Wara s-suċċess tar-rivista popolari Sagħtar matul din is-sena skolastika, Fondazzjoni Sagħtar fi hndan il-Malta Union of Teachers thabbar li qed tilqa' materjal mingħand kittieba, illustraturi u edukaturi u kull min hu interessat li jikkontribwixxi b'xi mod f'din il-pubblikazzjoni għas-sena 2021-2022.

sejha
għall-kontribuzzjonijiet

FONDAZZJONI
SAGHTAR

SAGHTAR

Ir-rivista reggħet bdiet tinħareg f'Ottubru 2020 kull xahar bi tmien edizzjonijiet f'sena skolastika. Bdiet bil-format diġitali sakemm bdiet toħroġ ukoll f'forma stampata kmieni din is-sena. Ir-rivista Sagħtar hija sors edukattiv għall-istudenti u sservi wkoll ta' vetrina għall-kittieba u l-artisti, stabbiliti jew emergenti. Il-kontribuzzjonijiet jistgħu jkunu ta' diversi forom – kitbiet, illustrazzjonijiet, materjal awdjoviziv, xogħol ta' riċerka u informazzjoni, materjal rikreattiv u iktar.

Kull min hu interessat u għandu xogħol lest li jixtieq jissottomettih huwa mħegġeg jinkiteb u jissottometti xogħlu billi jimla l-formola li tinsab hawn:
<https://forms.gle/qf5sR4sb5agnVAQ3A>



saghtar.org.mt

L-MUT FI ŻMIEN IL-PANDEMIJA TLIET OSSERVAZZJONIJIET

Il-pandemija issa ilha magħna fuq sena. F'dan iż-żmien, minn meta beda l-COVID-19, tgħallimna hafna. Kien żmien bla precedent fuq diversi fronti, kemm rigward sistemi edukattivi u taqlim, materji trejdzjunjonistiċi u ovgjament anki tibdiliet soċjali u fil-hajja ta' kuljum. Partikolarment, kien hemm ukoll il-miżuri kollha ta' mitigazzjoni halli jilqgħu għall-isfidi ġodda li l-qasam edukattiv sab ma' wiċċu fiċ-ċirkostanzi.

Dawn li ġejjin huma tliet punti li osservajna f'dan il-perjodu diffiċli u xtaqna naqsmuhom mal-membri halli flimkien nifhmu l-proċessi, ir-raġunamenti u anki d-dilemmi li jkollha ta' kuljum l-MUT.

1. Id-differenza bejn x'nixtiequ u x'hemm bżonn li jsir

Jigri x'jigri, f'dan iż-żmien bhala soċjetà tgħallimna b'mod dirett li kull deċiżjoni li tittiehed dejjem ser tkun diffiċli għal hafna nies. Kull persuna u kull familja għandha s-sitwazzjoni tagħha, u l-MUT tifhem li kull miżura halliet u tibqa' thalli l-impatt tagħha b'modi differenti. Għal ċertu għalliem l-online jaf ikun aħjar, u għal iehor impossibbli. Għal ċerti tfal jaf ma jhallix daqstant impatt mil-lat akkademiku, jew għal oħrajn li għandhom sitwazzjoni prekarja jew saħansitra ta' abbuż fid-dar jaf ikun litteralment sitwazzjoni ta' hajja jew mewt. Għaldaqstant, l-awtoritajiet dejjem kellhom ir-responsabbiltà diffiċli li jiżnu l-effetti kollha ta' kull deċiżjoni u kif din ser teffettwa lil kulhadd b'mod differenti. L-istess tagħmel l-MUT meta tiġi biex tiddeċiedi jekk tohroġ direttiva jew saħansitra li tagħmel strajk, li ovgjament ser iqanqal reazzjoni kbira minn kulhadd.

Il-mistoqsija li staqsejna hafna drabi ma kinitx biss x'nixtiequ li jseħh. F'dak il-każ is-soluzzjoni kienet tkun li, pereżempju, nafu biċ-ċar li l-educaturi dejjem xtaqu li jmorru lura fil-bini tal-iskola minnufih, b'mod normali, u jiltaqgħu mal-istudenti tagħhom fiżikament. Imma le. Il-mistoqsija li staqsejna kemm-il darba, u nibqgħu nistaqsuha, kienet x'inhu l-aħjar li hemm bżonn li jsir għas-saħħa tat-tfal, tal-educaturi u l-familji. Wara kollox dak kollu li ġara minn Marzu tas-sena l-oħra 'l hawn seħh minhabba l-pandemija kiefra tal-COVID-19, li flimkien għadna qed niġġieldu kontriha sabiex niproteġu l-hajja ta' xulxin.

2. L-importanza li tkun konsistenti fid-deċiżjonijiet

Osservazzjoni importanti hija l-importanza li l-MUT tat lill-fatt li dejjem kienet konsistenti fid-deċiżjonijiet li hadet matul il-pandemija. Dawn id-deċiżjonijiet kienu bbażati fuq pariri ta' esperti mediċi lokali u internazzjonali mill-qasam tas-saħħa. Kien b'dawn il-pariri li:

- tlabna li jingħalqu l-iskejjel f'Marzu tal-2020 meta feġġet il-pandemija għall-ewwel darba;
- tlabna li jkun hemm posponiment tal-ftuħ tal-iskejjel f'Settembru tal-2020 sabiex l-MUT tkun mohħha mistrieħ li l-educaturi dahlu fil-klassi u hadu hsieb il-miżuri kollha ta' mitigazzjoni li kien hemm bżonn qabel jibdeu l-istudenti;
- tlabna li mmorru għal taqlim online għal daww il-jumejn wara l-btajjel tal-Milied li wasslu għall-istrjajk minhabba rakkomandazzjoni mill-awtoritajiet;
- fdajna d-deċiżjoni dwar it-tilqim f'idejn l-awtoritajiet, partikolarment liema vaċċin għandu jingħata u lil min;
- tlabna li nerġgħu mmorru għal taqlim online f'Marzu 2021 meta l-każijiet sparaw saħansitra sa aktar minn 500 każ f'gurnata waħda.

L-MUT dejjem għamlitha ċara li tafda fl-esperti mediċi, u bhala union ser tibqa' tagħmel dan għall-ġid tal-educaturi, tal-istudenti, il-familji tagħhom u l-komunità kollha. L-MUT f'dan is-sens tibqa' tappella lil kulhadd, speċjalment lill-membri u lil daww fil-qasam edukattiv, sabiex ma naqgħux f'populizmu u f'għajdut li fl-aħħar mill-aħħar aktar tagħmel hsara milli ġid.

3. Dak li hu tajjeb u dak li hu popolari

Haġa oħra li l-MUT tinnota hafna drabi hi wkoll li kultant ma tirbaħ qatt mal-pubbliku hemm barra, tkun xi tkun id-deċiżjoni jew l-azzjoni li tittiehed. Minn sena ilu 'l hawn,

fil-fatt, irrepetejna l-istess sekwenza ta' grajjiet tliet darbiet, l-ewwel darba minn Marzu sa Ottubru 2020, it-tieni f'Janjar 2021 u t-tielet darba f'Marzu u April 2021. Fi ftit kliem ġara hekk:

1. Skejjel miftuħin – jiżiedu l-każijiet attivi;
2. Wara informazzjoni konklussiva mill-esperti, l-MUT titlob li l-iskejjel imorru online – l-MUT tidher kerha u taqla' hafna kliem dispregġattiv mis-soċjetà;
3. Il-Gvern fl-aħħar jagħlaq l-iskejjel;
4. Jinzlu l-każijiet attivi u kulhadd jgħid proset lill-Gvern;
5. Il-Gvern irid jerga' jiftaħ l-iskejjel;
6. L-MUT tesigi aktar kawtela u miżuri ta' mitigazzjoni – l-MUT tidher kerha u taqla' hafna kliem dispregġattiv mis-soċjetà;
7. Wara argumenti, direttivi, posponimenti u/jew strajk, il-Gvern eventwalment jiftaħ l-iskejjel;
8. Kulhadd jgħid proset lill-Gvern.

Minn dan kollu naraw li dak li hu tajjeb u dak li hu popolari kultant ma jkunux l-istess haġa u wiehed irid jagħzel bejniethom anki akkost li jidher ikrah. Dan l-MUT tqisu b'responsabbiltà kbira anki jekk taf li ser tidher kerha waqt li qed tiddefendi s-saħħa u s-sigurtà ta' kulhadd. Daww li jiktbu kliem dispregġattiv, li hafna drabi jinkludi tgħajjir, offiżi u hate speech, qajla jifhmu li l-MUT tagħmel dan kollu għall-ġid tagħhom stess. Id-dispjaċir hu li l-educaturi u l-qasam edukattiv jiġu attakkati wkoll, u dan ma tagħmel ebda ġieħ lil hadd. Anzi, l-MUT tiehu l-okkażjoni sabiex tikkundanna dawn il-kummenti kollha li ma jagħmlu xejn hliet li joholqu l-firda fil-pajjiż.

Min-naħa l-oħra huwa importanti hafna wkoll li l-educaturi jifhmu li s-saħħa tal-Union tiġi mill-fatt li l-educaturi jingħaqdu wara l-MUT bhala l-Union tagħhom u li jtuha s-sapport meħtieġ. B'hekk biss inkunu nistgħu naħdmu u nirrappreżentaw lill-educaturi fil-fora kollha bl-aħjar mod sabiex nibqgħu nagħmlu d-differenza li tant hemm bżonn fis-settur.



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