



L-Università ta' Malta
Ġ.F. Abela Junior College

The Annual International Multi-Disciplinary Conference 2022

Conference Programme
and Abstracts

14-16 September 2022





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Foreword

It is my pleasure and honour to welcome you to the fifth edition of the Annual International Multi-Disciplinary Conference, organised by the University of Malta Junior College. The conference presents a great opportunity for local and foreign academics to present their research in a multi-disciplinary context.

Once again this year, delegates had the option of either attending the conference, or following the proceedings online. Participants also have the opportunity of having their submitted paper considered for publication in the peer-reviewed journal Symposia Melitensia.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the keynote speakers and all academics who are presenting a paper, all chairpersons, as well as others who are following the proceedings

Special thanks go to the sponsors of the conference – Buzzer Stationers Anime, the Junior College, MTA and the Ministry of Finance.

A big thank you also goes to the Conference Committee, and other members of staff for their invaluable work to ensure the success of the conference.

Saħħiet

Paul Xuereb

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The Annual International Multi-Disciplinary Conference

On campus & Online

Programme

14 - 16 September 2022

N.B. The Conference Executive Committee reserves the right to change the programme

Date	
Wednesday 14 September 2022	
Venue	University of Malta Junior College
18:30-19:00	Registration
Plenary session 1	
Venue	Hall A
19:00-19:15	Welcome speech by Mr Paul Xuereb, Principal of the Junior College
	Official Opening of Conference
19:15-20:00	Keynote speaker: Professor Christopher James A Biomedical Engineering Journey: Science Fact not Fiction Chairperson: Dr Alexander Farrugia
20:00-20:15	Question time
20:15-21:30	Reception & Networking



Date		Thursday 15 September 2022	
Plenary session 2			
Venue	Hall A		
08:45-09:00	Institutional address by H.E. Professor Frank Bezzina Acting President of the Republic Pro-Rector for International Development & Quality Assurance at UM		
09:00-09:45	Keynote speaker: Professor Peter McKiernan Responsible Research in Business and Management Chairperson: Ms Elaine Borg		
09:45-10:00	Question time		
10:00-10:30	Coffee break		
Plenary session 3			
Venue	Hall A		
10:35-11:20	Keynote speaker: Dr Daniela DeBono The Architecture of Violence: hostility, othering and exclusion at the EU's Mediterranean border Chairperson: Dr Olivia Galea Seychell		
11:20-11:35	Question time		
	Parallel Session 1	Parallel Session 2	
Venue	Hall A	Hall B	
Chairperson	Dr Ing. Ronald Cuschieri	Ms Marie Louise Spiteri Fiteni	
11:40 – 12:05	<i>Professor Robert Ghirlando, Professor Ruben P. Borg</i> The Multidisciplinarity of Industrial Heritage	<i>Dr Edit Veres</i> Fraud risk in companies' financial statements	
12:05 – 12:30	<i>Ms Abigail Cini, Dr Ing. Owen Casha</i> IoT based domestic air quality monitoring system	<i>Ms Mariosa Caruana, Dr Vincent Caruana</i> Homelessness: breaking the silence! Intergroup Dialogue in Maltese communities	

12:30 – 12:55	<i>Mr Daniel Adjei</i> Impact of visual technologies (Virtual Reality Mobile App) on real estate sales	<i>Ms Marion Parnis, Mr Heathcliff Schembri</i> Reaching and teaching students from ethnic minorities in a Maltese state school
13:00 – 14:00	Refreshments	
	Parallel Session 3	Parallel Session 4
Venue	Hall A	Hall B
Chairperson	Ms Suzanne Gatt	Ms Theresa Hoban
14:05-14:30	<i>Ms Dorianne Zammit Briffa, Dr James Calleja</i> Challenges in Lesson Study for secondary school Mathematics teachers	<i>Mr Roderick Vassallo</i> Understanding sexual harassment awareness at the University of Malta
14:30-14:55	<i>Dr James Calleja, Ms Laura Formosa</i> Educating novice Lesson Study leaders: challenges and opportunities	<i>Professor JosAnn Cutajar</i> The distance between stated sexual harassment policy goals and their implementation
14:55-15:20	<i>Ms Claire De Bono</i> School-wide implementation of Lesson Study in a Maltese primary school	<i>Dr Angele Deguara</i> More than a safe space: the many roles of LGBT-affirmative religious communities
15:20-15:45	<i>Dr Michael A. Buhagiar</i> Resistance as agency during attempts to implement educational change	<i>Dott. Manuel J. Ellul - online</i> Trans students: a literature review of their experiences and attitudes

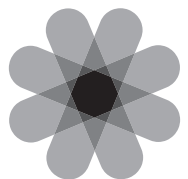


Date		Friday 16 September 2022	
Plenary session 4			
Venue	Hall A		
08:45-09:00	Institutional address by Hon. Dr Clifton Grima, Minister for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation		
09:00-09:45	Keynote speaker: Dott. Immanuel Mifsud Bogħod-Viċin, Viċin-Bogħod: Iċ-ċaqliq u n-nuqqas tiegħu fil-movimenti letterarji Chairperson: Ms Leanne Ellul		
09:45-10:00	Question time		
10:00 – 10:30	Coffee break		
Plenary session 5			
Venue	Hall A		
10:35-11:20	Keynote speaker: Professor Klitsa Antoniou Performing Embodied Crossings at Contested Spaces Chairperson: Dr Niki Young		
11:20-11:35	Question time		
	Parallel Session 5	Parallel Session 6	
Venue	Hall A	Hall B	
Chairperson	Ms Melodie Grima	Mr Roderick Vassallo	
11:40 – 12:05	<i>Dr Stephanie Xerri Agius</i> From essentialism to smart productivity: supporting passionate and resilient educators	<i>Dr Chris Sciberras - online</i> The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Maltese children	
12:05 – 12:30	<i>Ms Karen Buttigieg</i> Using the Let Me Learn process in the post-secondary classroom	<i>Professor Victor Martinelli</i> Classroom anxiety, school climate and adolescent student emotional wellbeing	
12:30 – 12:55	<i>Dr George Cremona</i> Social features in German language textbooks: a multimodal interpretation	<i>Dr Chris Sciberras - online</i> Breaking the news and the community paediatric services	
13:00 – 14:00	Refreshments		

	Parallel Session 7	Parallel Session 8
Venue	Hall A	Hall B
Chairperson	Ms Elaine Bugeja	Dr Stephanie Xerri Agius
14:05-14:30	<i>Ms Maria Giuliana Fenech</i> Recalibrating Quintilian: classical theories of education for the 21st Century	<i>Professor Marián Ambrozy</i> Swinburne's views on the temporality and omniscience of God: an attempt at criticism
14:30-14:55	<i>Ms Ariel Toh - online</i> Sustainability science paradigms: hopes of universities	<i>Dr Janice Sant Balzan</i> Runaway lines in the poetry of Jorie Graham
14:55-15:20	<i>Mr Zoltan Zakota</i> Transforming education in a world full of crises	<i>Dr Jurgen Gatt</i> Two literary discoveries at the National Library of Malta

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Keynote Speeches



Performing Embodied Crossings at Contested Spaces



Professor Klitsa Antoniou

Klitsa Antoniou's lecture will concentrate on the prohibition of walking at contested boundaries and the significance of embodied crossings as border performances. She will first draw examples from the international art scene and then will focus on artworks from Cyprus including two of her own, to address questions of performative artistic walking practices at such boundaries and inquire how effectively actions can problematize and challenge them.

Antoniou's artworks, **2001/51/EC-Embodied Crossings-Now Boarding**, (a collaborative and social participatory action, 2015-today) and **The Long Walk** (site-Specific Installation at *Prespes Walking Encounters*, 2021), attempt to respond to the above questions by transforming artificially imposed barriers into points of performative and irrational confrontation thus highlighting issues of freedom, subjectivities, trafficking and surveillance. For the **2001/51/EC - Embodied Crossings - Now Boarding**, the artist and the *Museum of Forgetting* in Sweden, launched an open call through social media, inviting passengers flying from Cyprus to Sweden to "smuggle" a fish trap filled with refugees' clothes. For the **The Long Walk** at "Prespes Walking Encounters" 2021, three exact copies of the yellow "Caution" signs (U.S. highway safety sign warning motorists to avoid colliding with illegal immigrants darting across the road) were placed at various points by the main roads near the borders at Prespes. Both works raise fundamental questions and awareness with regard to immigration and refugees, the dangers and prosecutions they face during the otherwise inconspicuous, routine act of daily walking and simultaneously demonstrate the fundamental association of walking with the hope of a better life.

Bio-Note



Klitsa Antoniou is a Professor of Fine Arts in the Fine Arts Department of the Cyprus University of Technology. She studied at Wimbledon School of Art and Saint Martin's School of Art and Design [B.F.A.]

in London, at Pratt Institute [Master in Fine Arts] and New York University [D.A.] in New York. Since 2014 she holds a PhD in Theory and Philosophy of Art (Dissertation title: *Contemporary Cypriot Art: Loss, Trauma, Affect and the Material that Passes into Sensation*) from The Cyprus University of Technology.

She is an artist and researcher with interdisciplinary practice. She attended numerous seminars workshops, conferences and artists-residencies in many countries and won a number of awards and honors. She is the founder and coordinator of *Cut Contemporary Fine Arts Lab* since 2019.

As an artist, she has exhibited in major museums, galleries and art institutions worldwide. Her work has been exhibited in Herzliya Museum, Israel; Circulo de Bellas Artes, Madrid; Palais du Rhin/Drac Alsace, Strasbourg; Arte Contemporanea Pinerolo, Torino; Sandström Andersson Gallery, Sweden; Exhibit Gallery, London; Antrepo, Istanbul; Espace Commines Paris; Pulchri Studio, Hague; Macedonian Museum, Thessaloniki; Wonderland Lotte Square, Quanzhou, China; Bozar Expo, Belgium; Museum of Contemporary Art, Sarajevo; Skånes konstförening, Malmö, Sweden; Petach Tikva Museum, Israel; Museum of Nanjing University of the Art, China; and The Museum of the Arts of the 20th and 21st Century, St Petersburg, Russia; *De Skyddssökande*, Ostgotateatern Theatre, Norrköping, Sweden; Norrköping City Museum, Sweden; Anya and Andrew Shiva Gallery, Jonh Jay, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art Athens, Greece.

In 2019 she represented Malta at the Venice Biennale with the work *Atlantropa-X*.

<https://www.klitsa-antoniou.com>

The Architecture of Violence: hostility, othering and exclusion at the EU's Mediterranean border




 **Dr Daniela DeBono**

While southern European countries claim to host and welcome people who survive treacherous sea crossings across the Mediterranean, a glance beyond dominant narratives and discourses reveals systemic exclusion and subjugation. This starts with non-assistance at sea and the criminalising of search and rescue NGOs, factors which contribute towards making the central Mediterranean route the deadliest border crossing in the world. Despite the dangers and the well-known risk of death, migrants persist in embarking on this journey by sea, in itself a clear indication of the strength of the push factors that compel them to move. Their hope is to find safety, freedom, opportunity, and human rights on the other side, Europe. Instead, their journey and reception are all too often characterized by death, detention, and hostility.

Drawing on a rich body of literature discussing borders and citizenship in contemporary societies, and my own long term ethnographic research on the central Mediterranean islands of Lampedusa, Malta and Sicily, this lecture will present the foundations of this system, designed and constructed to consolidate an 'othering' process, at any cost. Ironically, this 'architecture of violence' is officially shrouded in a humanitarian discourse. This lecture takes a social constructionist approach, looking into how these practices of 'othering' are (re)produced and resisted by the travellers, workers and locals present on the territorial border.

Bio-Note

 Daniela DeBono is a Resident Academic at the University of Malta at the Department of Anthropology where she teaches courses, among others, on refugees, migration and displacement, borders, humanitarian action and human rights. She is also Research Coordinator of the Research Node 'Displacement, Democratisation

and Development' at the Mediterranean Institute. She is an Affiliate of the Malmö Institute for the Studies of Migration, Welfare and Diversity (MIM).

Previously she was Associate Professor in International Migration and Ethnic Relations at the Department of Global Political Studies, Malmö University. She held a Marie Curie COFAS Research Fellowship at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute, Fiesole and was a Research Fellow at MIM, Malmö. She was awarded a doctorate from the University of Sussex, where she was based at the Sussex Centre for Migration Research; and appointed Associate Professor at Malmö University. She has conducted long-term ethnographic research on irregularised migration across the Mediterranean, border control and management in Malta, Lampedusa and Western Sicily. She also undertook an ethnographic study on deportation from Sweden. In relation to these projects, she has published on irregularised migration in the Mediterranean, on hospitality, human rights and humanitarianism in the immigration field, on return and deportation from the EU. Daniela is the country expert for Malta at the Global Citizenship Observatory, European University Institute and has authored a series of reports on citizenship law and policy, naturalisation and access to electoral rights.

A Biomedical Engineering Journey: Science Fact not Fiction



Professor Christopher James

Like any engineering discipline, Biomedical Engineering concerns the application of engineering principles to problem solving in medicine and biology. This talk will follow my journey within the biomedical engineering field. My journey takes me from Malta, to New Zealand, to Canada and then the UK – but more than physical location it takes me from working on extracting information from the human brain and understanding what goes wrong when people have epilepsy, to understanding brain activity in those that are severely debilitated and unable to communicate: Brain-computer-interfacing allows those that are “locked-in” to communicate with the world around them. To do this we had to develop sophisticated data analysis techniques, methods such as blind source separation giving the ability to extract “conversations” initiated by the brain and deciphering the “words” used. This work in BCI led to working on an idea, a concept, that of brain-to-brain communication and with it all the many questions of the ethics that arise. In tandem my work expanded to not just extracting and understanding brain activity, but to also using the same machine learning techniques we were developing to extract and give meaning to behaviour, especially when extracted in an unobtrusive manner over day-to-day activities. Getting a grip on behaviour monitoring allows us to further understand conditions in mental health and to track changing behaviour on an individual basis.

My journey also involves taking research ideas to practical realities – my company EMBody Biosignals Ltd. develops and distributes a worm tracking station called TrakBox – a low-cost platform that allows neurobiologists to envision nematode behaviour on a scale previously unobtainable. On the other hand, my latest spin-out Augmented Insights Ltd. is taking our AI based behaviour monitoring algorithms and applying them to a series of application areas – initially in the management of older people in a care home environment.

Most of all though, amongst others I will explain why tracking drunk worms is “a thing” and what it has to do with monitoring the well-being of mental health patients and the use of assistive technologies!

Christopher James was born in Malta, received the B.Elec.Eng. (Hons) degree in from the University of Malta (1992) and a Ph.D. from the University of Canterbury, New Zealand (1997). He was a postdoctoral research fellow (PDRF) at the EEG department of the Montreal Neurological Institute, of McGill University, Montreal; PDRF and then Lecturer with the Neural Computing Research Group of Aston University, Birmingham, UK; Reader in Biomedical Signal Processing at the University of Southampton, UK; had a personal chair in Healthcare Technology at the University of Warwick, UK and was founding Director of the Institute of Digital Healthcare. He is now Professor of Biomedical Engineering and Director of the Biomedical Engineering Institute at the University of Warwick.

He is a biomedical engineer whose research centers on the development of biomedical signal and pattern processing techniques for use as diagnostic or prognostic tools in the treatment of disorders of the human body – mainly in analyzing brain activity and in behavior analysis. He has published over 170 papers and has regular interaction with the press through newspaper articles, opinion pieces, radio interviews and TV programmes. In November 2012 he gave the prestigious IET Wheatstone Lecture on Brain-to-brain Communication in Chennai, India. In 2012 he was awarded the IET Sir Monty Finniston Medal and in 2013 the IEEE MGA Achievement Award. For the last two years he has been listed in the “top 2% of scientists in the world, highly cited researchers list”, a study by Stanford University.

He is founder and CEO of EMBody Biosignals Ltd. (www.embody-biosignals.co.uk) concentrating on nematode behavior monitoring. He is also founding director and acting CEO of Augmented Insights Ltd. (www.augmentedinsights.co.uk), a spinout company from the University of Warwick creating pattern recognition algorithms to extract behavior information from health data.

Responsible Research in Business and Management



Professor Peter McKiernan

The last decade has witnessed a ‘responsibility turn’ in scientific research from the UN Prime initiative, through the San Francisco DORA to the Leiden Manifesto, among others. These initiatives aim to return consistent quality and responsibility back into scientific method. Business and management research, criticised by many senior scholars for lacking both rigour and relevance, spawned the highly successful Responsible Research in Business and Management (RRBM) movement whose influence has helped shape the policies of accreditation agencies, journal editors and business school deans in recent years. Part of its agenda, made sharper by the powerful legacies of the global financial crisis and the impact of the pandemic, is the re-orientation of research around societal need, especially ‘grand challenges’, as part of a broader re-examination of the business school in future societies.

This presentation examines how we might better promote responsible research that is responsive to the challenge of relevance and how taking impact more seriously might change our research practices and how we help prepare management academics for the future. Among the challenges we face as a community is a need to legitimize the role of business schools as more than just the cash cow of the higher education world and to demonstrate the impactful nature of B&M research more broadly, beyond the claim of academic excellence as indicated by articles in 4* journals. Embracing ‘the double hurdle’ of rigour and relevance is an essential component of any future research strategy.

RRBM is interested in highlighting and learning from research philosophy and practice that has created engaged scholarship through co-production with a broad range of stakeholders as well as demonstrating academic excellence and, thus, championing new ways of working to produce research that has a positive impact on business (e.g., responsible innovation) and society (e.g., new policy). This will be considered in terms of social value creation and the contribution of B&M research to the public good (e.g., in helping shape a circular or doughnut economy). In parallel, it will involve clarifying barriers to change that can constrain our

research vision. Central to our reflection will be the primacy of improving the involvement of stakeholders in research through co-production and pluralistic and multidisciplinary research values and practices that privilege both basic and applied research.

Bio-Note

Peter is Professor of Management in the Hunter Centre for Entrepreneurship at Strathclyde Business School in Glasgow. He holds a distinguished visiting professorship at Vrije Universiteit Brussel, and an adjunct professorship of management, University of Notre Dame, Ausotetralia. Previously, he was the Sir Walter Murdoch Professor of Management at Murdoch University in Australia and the APS Bank chair of strategy, at the University of Malta.

Peter's main research focus is on organisational foresight and strategic management where, he has (co)authored 10 books, including the bestseller "Sharpbenders" on organisational turnaround, and many articles in top journals in Europe and in the USA. He has been Chairman and President of the British Academy of Management (BAM) and Vice-President and President of the European Academy of Management (EURAM), where he was a co-founder of i) the Academy; ii) its house journal - the European Management Review; and iii) its Research Leadership programme, which he led for a decade. He is the immediate past Dean of the Fellows College of BAM. He holds Fellowships of BAM and EURAM and of five other academic and professional bodies. In 2013, the Central and Eastern European Management Academy (CEEMAN) honoured him with their European 'Institutional Champion' award and in 2015, the BAM honoured him with the Richard Whipp 'Life-Time Achievement award'. Peter is a co-founder of the community for responsible research in business and management (cRRBM).

Bogħod-Viċin, Viċin-Bogħod: Iċ-caqliq u n-nuqqas tiegħu fil-movimenti letterarji



 **Dott. Immanuel Mifsud**

Din hija era ta' moviment: kontinwament tirċievi reklami mill-kumpaniji tal-ajru biex tapprofitta ruġiek ħalli titlaq minn fejn int u tmur lejn post ieħor; l-istess jagħmlu l-kumpaniji li jorganizzaw il-ġiti fuq il-baħar. Il-Ministeru tal-Infrastruttura kontinwament – u b'ħafna kontroversja – iniedi proġetti ta' toroq ġodda, twessigh ta' oħrajn qodma, inizjattivi għal trasport alternattiv ħalli jiġi ffaċilitat il-moviment. Sar anki għandek għaqda li tneġġek tiċċaqlaq bir-rota anki għaliex it-tobba kontinwament qegħdin jgħidulek li hemm bżonn li ċċaqlaq ġismek: timxi kuljum, tmur il-palestra jew il-pixxina regolarment, tagħmel l-eżerċizzju. Mal-ewwel daqqa t'għajn af tgħid li mhemm xejn ġdid f'dan kollu: il-moviment huwa xi ħaġa minn ewl id-dinja u wassal għall-għeġubijiet li fassal u sawwar il-bniedem. Imma din hija wkoll l-era tal-kontradizzjoni għax filwaqt li hemm din il-ħeġġa (jekk mhux ukoll pressjoni) biex tiċċaqlaq, hemm ukoll il-ħajra biex toqgħod fejn int kemm jista' jkun, u dan intwera aktar malli faqqgħet il-pandemija: il-Wolt, il-Bolt, l-Ubereats u servizzi oħrajn simili li jgħibulek l-ikel id-dar jew fl-uffiċċju minflok ma toqgħod tinqala' minn postok. L-Amazon u l-online shopping li qabel kien servizz użat biss għax-xiri minn imkejjen oħra u llum jintuża wkoll għal xiri minn ħwienet kantuniera 'l bogħod. Zoom ħadek virtwalment fejn ma stajtx tmur u aktarx li tant drajt li llum il-ġurnata ssibha aktar faċli tilloggja milli taqbad l-karozza, tal-linja jew l-ajruplan. U t-teleworking: li taħdem mid-dar, aktarx bil-ħwejjeg ta' ġewwa jekk mhux bil-piġama minflok tidhol l-uffiċċju b'xagħrek iġġelljat, bil-makeup u l-fwieħa. Biex ma nsemmux li taqleb iċ-channels tat-televisin bir-remote biex ma tqumx minn fuq is-sufan, tagħfas il-buttuna biex ir-robot jiknislek u jaħsillek l-art u Alexa tobdi kull ordni li tagħtiha, u l-bqija. F'dan il-kuntest hemm letteratura li qiegħda tirreagixxi u fl-istess waqt titmexxa minn dan kollu.

Fit-taħdita tiegħi se nkun qiegħed niffoka fuq kif il-kittieba lokali – li qabel kollox huma iġsma maqbudin f'din il-kontradizzjoni – jikkumplimentaw (jew jikkuntrastaw?) dawn il-kurrenti.

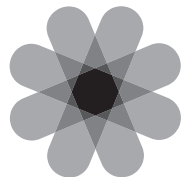
Nota bijografika:

Immanuel Mifsud jgħallem il-letteratura kontemporanja u t-teorija letterarja fl-Università wara li li għal snin twal għallem il-letteratura Maltija fil-Kulleġġ tal-istess università. Huwa kiseb dottorati wara li pprezenta b'suċċess tezi dwar il-ġisem fil-poezija tas-seklu għoxrin u kompla jistudja u jikteb dwar dan is-suġġett. Mifsud regolarment jagħti taħdidiet u jikteb f'ġurnali akkademiċi, l-aktar dwar il-ġisem uman bħala artefatti kulturali u ta taħdidiet fl-universitajiet ta' Birzeit, An-Najah (il-Palestina) u anki fl-università ta' San Ċirillu u San Metodju fi Skopje. Fl-2017 Mifsud kien mistieden mil-Library of Congress f'Washington DC biex jagħti prezentazzjoni hemmhekk u waqt l-istess mawra kien ukoll mistieden jagħti taħdita mid-Delegazzjoni tal-Unjoni Ewropea fil-kapitali Amerikana.

Bħala kittieb, Immanuel Mifsud rebaħ il-Premju Letterarju Nazzjonali b'diversi kotba u kien l-ewwel kittieb Malti li rebaħ il-Premju Letterarju tal-Unjoni Ewropea bil-ktieb *Fl-Isem tal-Missier (u tal-Iben)* li ġie tradott u ppubblikat f'għaxar lingwi fosthom il-Franċiż (Gallimard), l-Ingliż (Parthenon), il-Kroat (Faktura) u l-bqija. Fl-2017 kien ikkommissjonat biex jikteb u jaqra f'Westminster Abbey poezija f'Jum il-Commonwealth u kien irrapprezenta lil Malta fil-Parناسus ta' Londra, festival letterarju kbir li laqqa' kittieb minn kull pajjiż tad-dinja.

Immanuel Mifsud huwa Membru tal-Ordni tal-Mertu, onorificenza mogħtija lil mir-Repubblika għas-sehem letterarju tiegħu fuq bażi lokali u internazzjonali.

Conference Presentations



The Impact of visual technologies (Virtual Reality Mobile App) on real estate sales



● Daniel Adjei

Visual technologies, photography, printing, augmented reality, virtual reality and video have already become defining transformational forces. Extant research has proposed that virtual reality (VR) technology intensifies customer experience and purchasing tendencies. Virtual reality and augmented reality marketing in the real estate business provide customers with experiences that convince them to visit a location or event, make physical offers or want to make physical changes to match expectations. Unlike videos and photos, these immersive technologies are unpopular among potential buyers in real estate business development, retarding sales and limiting this industry to the traditional ways of doing business for far too long.

Therefore, this study examines the effects of offering consumers an actual estate-based software application that displays a VR experience over a widely available technology, allowing them not only to view real estate products in a short-form, virtual reality video-sharing app but also to create and share 15-second videos which is an advertisement in itself. Participants accessed the software application of several real estate agencies that presented apartments and internal decorations through static photos, interactive 360° or virtual reality videos from smartphones and other computers. We identified that immersive technologies are possible in real estate and we envisaged that this business model innovation would boost sales while bringing awareness and connectedness to the public.

Swinburne's views on the temporality and omniscience of God: an attempt at criticism



● Marián Ambrozy

The attributes of God have been expressed by philosophers in the European tradition since the time of Xenophanes. Later, Plato and Aristotle also gave their opinion on the subject as did the early scholastics such as Peter Damiani. The traditional Christian position on the attributes of God was expressed by Thomas Aquinas (13th century) with whom the contemporary Richard Swinburne disagrees. Swinburne thinks that words should be used in the most perfect sense possible even though they are not always accurate. He affirms that a certain knowledge of God is possible only with the preservation of the ordinary meaning of words. What is curious is that, according to Swinburne, it is logically impossible for the omniscient God to know what someone will do freely the next day. He claims that God knows everything that is logically possible to know at a given time. According to Swinburne, the eternal God is not timeless, as Augustine and Aquinas state.

In our presentation, our argumentative starting point will be Kant, who claims that time is only one of the *a priori* forms of sensibility, whereas we will then try to argue, by referring to Aquinas, that God knows even hypothetically possible states of affairs. Although we agree with Swinburne methodologically, we will comment critically on his non-traditional understanding of God's attributes.

Using the Let Me Learn process in the post-secondary classroom



● Karen Buttigieg

Locally, the Advanced level course at post-secondary level is intended to be a two-year course culminating in a high-stakes national exam. This contributes to the requirements needed for entry into university and the continuation of academic studies at tertiary level. An attempt by the author to explore various pedagogies that could promote inclusion and transformation during such a course led to a two-year-long journey of exploring various learning tools such as the Let Me Learn (LML) process. This starts with administering the Learning Connections Inventory (LCI) which helps the individual assess personal learning patterns so as to help them understand and use their unique learning processes with intention. This tool was implemented in a Biology Advanced level classroom in an attempt to empower students through the enhancement of their metacognitive skills. During this project, the LML process was used to create a shared language for a dialogic learning environment and to aid students in interpreting their learning behaviours and finding strategies for more effective learning.

In this paper, both the practitioner and the students' voices are considered since such an explorative and transformative learning journey affects all the active participants in the classroom. The paper is also based on personal perspectives and interpretation, ultimately showing possibilities of more intentional teaching and learning.

Resistance as agency during attempts to implement educational change



● Michael A. Buhagiar

Resistance to change is one of the reasons why some change initiatives fail (Pardo del Val & Martínez Fuentes, 2003). Indeed, it is an attempt to retain the *status quo* and consequently avoid the impact of change. According to Kearney and Plax (1992), resistance can be either constructive (i.e. the participants remain engaged) or destructive (i.e. the participants detach themselves). In both cases, however, the participants' resistance is worth exploring because, as Bromage (2006) argues, it could be a sign of their engagement with change and willingness to explore the impact of change. Building on this understanding, this paper adopts a stance that resistance offers learning opportunities about the change process. More specifically, it refers to data from three qualitative case studies that highlights instances of participants' resistance to attempts at implementing educational change. In all three cases (i.e. the introduction of inquiry-based learning [IBL] in a Mathematics class; the introduction of investigations in a Mathematics class and the use of IBL as a pedagogy that supports diverse and multicultural Mathematics classrooms), evidence suggests that resistance could be attributed to agency on the part of participants, both teachers and students. The underlying notion that resistance could contribute to the development of agency, understood here as the belief that one's choices and actions can make a difference to one's life (Martin 2004), suggests that good can still emerge when educational initiatives fail to deliver the hoped for change.

Educating novice Lesson Study leaders: challenges and opportunities



 James Calleja, Laura Formosa

Implementing Lesson Study (LS) relies on the ability and knowledge of LS leaders to facilitate the learning process for teachers. Educating LS leaders is essential for countries like Malta who are investing in making LS a sustainable professional development initiative. This presentation focuses on a research conducted with five participants who were doing the Leading Lesson Study (LLS) course as part of a postgraduate degree at the University of Malta. The course involved participants in learning about LLS as they implemented LS in a local school of their choice (see <https://www.um.edu.mt/courses/studyunit/LLI5206>). The research addressed the learning experience of these participants who were novice to LS. Hence, our research focused on the extent to which the course supported participants' in LLS with a group of teachers. We drew on three data sources – the participants' reflective LS journey journal, an end-of-course online survey and a focus group.

Our findings reveal that these novice LS leaders encountered several challenges and opportunities, namely, to identify and invite teachers to engage in a LS; to support teachers to put LS into practice; to engage them to participate actively and own the LS process. These findings suggest that leading LS involves a multitude of roles and responsibilities that impinge on the kind of practical and theoretical knowledge and on the range of abilities that novice LS leaders need to hone over time. This, in turn, has implications on how a LLS course can better prepare novice LS leaders.

Homelessness: breaking the silence! Intergroup Dialogue in Maltese communities



 Mariosa Caruana, Vincent Caruana

This study explores the effectiveness of Intergroup Dialogue (IGD), when conducted within a safe space of inclusiveness, in achieving a more cohesive society for individuals experiencing or having experienced homelessness. A rich amount of data based on human experiences formed throughout the IGD sessions was collected through a qualitative approach.

Although IGD is a new method of dialogue in Malta, international research seems to be available and it predominantly targets youth within formal educative institutions (Dessel & Rogge, 2008). However, to date, one would not find ample research that has been carried out on IGD within the general communities (Dessel & Rogge, 2008). Moreover, there is a lacuna in literature on IGD targeting socio-economic status and homelessness (Madden, 2015), the latter being a dire reality in the current local situation.

This study also investigates whether sustained IGD is an effective pedagogical tool for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in the community. ESD is a critical enabler to accomplish, by 2030, all the 169 targets within the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. This research studied the influence, if any, of IGD as an ESD tool beyond the personal level. It inquired further into group and community levels, seeking to bridge the gap between the individual and the rest of society.

IoT based domestic air quality monitoring system



Abigail Cini, Owen Casha

The Internet of Things (IoT) is a network of devices that features hardware and software components that connect and exchange data with other devices via the Internet. In air quality monitoring systems, sensors produce data that can be analysed so that adequate measures can be taken to improve air quality around specific areas.

The aim of this paper is to present the design, development and testing of a low-cost wireless sensor network that monitors the air quality in domestic households. Due to Covid-19, people have become more aware of the clean air around them since this effectively reduces health hazards. A wireless sensor network was developed to monitor abnormalities in the air and issue warnings. The communication backbone of this network is the nRF24L01 transceiver module. It is a low-power and long-range device and uses the Industrial, Scientific, and Medical band.

The system includes various independent nodes placed around selected areas of a household such as the garage, the kitchen, common areas and bedrooms to monitor specific gases such as CO₂ and CO, pressure and temperature. A webpage was created to show all the data collected from these nodes in tabular form. A Serial Peripheral Interface was used to allow communication between the main hub and the sensory nodes located around the building. The NodeMCU with an onboard ESP-12F chip was utilised as a hub that communicates with a few sensor nodes around the domestic environment to then collect the data and process it onto the webserver.

Social features in German language textbooks: a multimodal interpretation



George Cremona

In the contemporary foreign language classroom, textbooks still play a vital, predominantly present, crucial role (Risager, 2021). Furthermore, instead of treating them as neutral tools, one should acknowledge that textbooks have frequently served as effective vehicles for the transmission (Maijala, 2010) and omission (Gray, 2010) of various socio-cultural ideologies and discourses. In this light, this paper intends to ask one research question: which social features of Germany are included in the *Schritte* International textbook (Hueber, 2007) which until recently, for many years, was the selected set textbook proposed to all Maltese German as Foreign Language secondary state school classrooms?

To answer this question, the paper adopts the original socio-semiotic multimodal MIRROR framework (Cremona, 2017) that focuses both on the linguistic content of the textbook as well as on the social aspects which - loudly or at times silently - are referred to throughout the book.

Based on the outcomes of this investigation, the main findings presented in this paper suggest that repeatedly, the *Schritte* International textbook only includes a very limited one-sided representation of a predominantly white, middle-class, male-dominated, homogeneous German society.

As a proactive conclusion, the paper offers several reachable, practical suggestions through which this one-sided limited representation may be broadened to reflect the more inclusive, heterogeneous picture of the 'true' contemporary Germany and its people.

The distance between stated sexual harassment policy goals and their implementation



 **JosAnn Cutajar**

This paper will analyse the qualitative data which emerged from a research study that the Gender Equality and Sexual Diversity Committee of the University of Malta conducted together with the Kunsill Studenti Universitarji (Students' Council) on the University of Malta Sexual Harassment Policy in 2021, just before a new policy was introduced. This study involved a survey which was conducted among students and staff (supply and academic), as well as a number of interviews with representatives from students' organisations.

During the analysis of the data, it became clear that the participants who have experienced or knew people who have experienced sexual harassment, especially those who have been working or studying for more than 2 years at the University of Malta (UM), maintain that UM policies look good on paper but students and staff do not know how they are being implemented, and with what effect. This paper will explain these participants' claims and explore what can be done so that UM staff and students have more trust in the effectiveness of UM machinery. The literature on effective policy implementation underlines that successful implementation does not rest with the policy itself but involves an implementation strategy that demonstrates who has done what, when and how.

School-wide implementation of Lesson Study in a Maltese primary school



 **Claire De Bono**

A case study of a state primary school in Malta which is currently in its initial phase of a three-year programme for the implementation of Lesson Study (LS) as a school-wide approach will be presented. School-wide implementation of LS, driven by the senior leadership team (SLT) in collaboration with a university-based lesson study facilitator, offers educators the opportunity to learn about and take up LS to address pupils' learning needs. This implementation, which will integrate top-down and bottom-up approaches, is intended to improve the professional development experience of all educators and to address short and long term goals for pupil learning. The SLT was the first to engage in doing a LS with a teacher of a Year 6 class (10-year-old pupils) so as to get a first-hand experience of the LS process. Their experience of the benefits and challenges of adopting this professional development approach to improve teaching and learning will eventually serve the SLT and the LS facilitator to understand better and eventually support the school-wide implementation of LS.

The purpose of this presentation is to share the steps taken within the initial implementation phase. Our intention is to explore the challenges and dilemmas encountered and to acquire critical insights that could help us make the school-wide implementation of LS a more robust and sustainable goal for the school.

More than a safe space: the many roles of LGBT-affirmative religious communities



● **Angele Deguara**

LGBT Catholics attach great significance to a sense of belonging to religious communities which tends to depend on continued conformity to the shared values of the community of which they form part. However, deviating from the group's norms, such as not being heterosexual, often leads to judgement, rejection and exclusion of LGBT members. The stigma and the homophobia, characteristics of institutional Christianity and which often pushed LGBT believers away from local church communities upon 'coming out', led to the formation of LGBT faith organisations that not only challenged Church doctrine, discourse and authority on matters pertaining to sexuality but also offered LGBT individuals a path towards sacralisation.

This presentation, based on two years of fieldwork with two LGBT faith communities: Drachma LGBTI in Malta and Ali d'Aquila in Palermo, focuses on how LGBT Catholics may seek such alternative communities which are LGBT-affirmative. LGBT Catholics do this either in addition to, or in lieu of participating in the mainstream Church community. These LGBT-affirmative communities offer a safe space to members of the LGBT community seeking to reconcile their sexual and religious identities. They fill the void left by religious institutions, deemed to be insensitive and unresponsive to the needs of LGBT people of faith. They also provide LGBT believers with a sense of community and supply them with the necessary tools which help them redefine their sense of self and relocate themselves within the wider Catholic community.

Trans students: a literature review of their experiences and attitudes



● **Manuel J. Ellul**

Trans individuals are considered to be completely invisible in society at large (see Cashore and Tuason 2009; see also Grossman and D'Augelli 2006). This invisibility extends to schools since trans individuals, as well as other members of the LGBTIQ+ community, are not contemplated in the curriculum. They do not feature in family books presented to children in schools and they tend to be excluded from events such as Mother's or Father's Day. One of the reasons given by the literature reviewed is that educators at all levels are woefully and inadequately educated on transgender issues and therefore unprepared to support trans students. For instance, the new pedagogical course offered at the University of Malta offers no preparation to teachers on the LGBTIQ+ reality, let alone trans.

This presentation will portray highlights from a systematic literature review carried out on the experiences and attitudes of teachers of trans students in educational institutions, from primary school up to higher education. Its focus is on the lack of academic preparation and on the resulting positive and negative experiences, as well as on the ensuing attitudes. Complementing the review are personal reflections and the author's experience on including LGBTIQ+ students and trans individuals, in particular following studies at the University of Toronto. Ideas on what a programme on gender, sexuality and education in teacher training formation should incorporate will be shared.

Recalibrating Quintilian: classical theories of education for the 21st century



● Maria Giuliana Fenech

The Roman advocate and authority on rhetoric, Quintilian, was born in Spain in 35CE. Following his education, he practised in Rome and taught for twenty years. Among his students were Pliny the Younger and Emperor Domitian's great-nephews and heirs. His masterpiece, the multi-volume textbook *Institutio Oratoria*, published in 95CE at the behest of his friends, explains in detail the education required to become a skilled rhetorician. According to Quintilian, an orator's education started at babyhood where indeed, a baby's ideal nurse would be a philosopher. Moreover, some of his theories, for example, the avoidance of unnecessary baby-talk, still stand today.

A short survey of the first and second volumes of the *Institutio Oratoria* will be presented. These are of particular interest as they deal with what is required from both students and schoolmasters. In addition, there will be an examination of the potential application of Quintilian's theories on education to the modern lecture room, specifically in the Humanities, with special attention given to Classical Studies.

Quintilian believed that the perfect orator is essentially the good man, who should train both the gifts of speech and the character. Students today have available other professions than oratory but the tenet of being a good person still applies. This presentation will also inquire if today's educational journey ensures that young people are given the tools to understand what makes a good man, whatever path they might follow.

Two literary discoveries at the National Library of Malta



● Jurgen Gatt

The National Library of Malta [NLM] possesses a unique collection of published works and manuscripts that must still be studied thoroughly. This implies that the NLM surely contains many significant historical discoveries still to be made, two of which will be discussed in this presentation.

The first relates to MS1519-MS1521, three works by Carolus Benvenuti (1716 - 1797), a Jesuit priest who trained under the physicist Ruđer Bošković (1711 - 1781). One of the most significant details about these manuscripts is their date: 1752/1753, undoubtedly the most important years of Benvenuti's life. Lecturing at the Collegio Romano, where he introduced Newtonian physics following Bošković's lead, Benvenuti's lectures were unorthodox enough for him to be (almost) banished from Rome. These three manuscripts contain the notes for these very lectures, prepared by Benvenuti himself, and thus represent an important document in the reception of Newtonian physics.

The second relates to one of Malta's most prolific authors, Dr Giuseppe Demarco (1718 - 1789), and his published *Tractatus Mechanicus de Non-Naturalibus* (1747). Though the frontispiece of this book states that this is actually a translation, Demarco has not been generally believed. The author can prove, however, that Demarco did, in fact, translate the work of an English doctor, Dr Jeremiah Wainwright, published in 1708. This discovery, aside from being essential to any future study of Demarco's work, proves that Demarco was well-versed in English, a rare feat for the 18th century inhabitant of Malta.

The Multidisciplinarity of Industrial Heritage



● Robert Ghirlando, Ruben P. Borg

Industrial Heritage consists of the remains of industrial culture which are of historical, technological, social, architectural or scientific value. These remains consist of buildings and machinery, workshops, mills and factories, mines and sites for processing and refining, warehouses and stores, places where energy is generated, transmitted and used, transport and all its infrastructure, as well as places used for social activities related to industry such as housing, religious worship or education” (The International Committee for the Conservation of Industrial Heritage, TICCIH).

The interpretation of Industrial Heritage requires an integrated approach, drawing on different disciplines in the assessment of its spatial dimension, social dynamics and historical development. The understanding of Industrial Heritage sites is a key step for the interpretation of elements and structures, and the appraisal of buildings and infrastructure supports strategies for restoration and adaptive reuse. Machines and equipment mark key stages in the advances in technology over time and present an opportunity for the appreciation of engineering innovation. Industrial spaces represent not only the technological developments at a particular stage in history but also an industrial society.

Multidisciplinarity supports an integrated approach towards Industrial Heritage valorisation, leading to its conservation. Yet the conservation of Industrial Heritage elements and spaces presents a new field with new challenges. An appreciation of the developments in industry over time sets the scene for technological advances. The paper addresses multidisciplinarity as a key principle in Industrial Heritage, limitations and opportunities, supported with representative machines, elements and structures.

Classroom anxiety, school climate and adolescent student emotional wellbeing



● Victor Martinelli

Mental wellbeing is a significant issue affecting students' quality of life and academic achievement. Poor mental wellbeing, in particular, strongly influences the academic achievement of secondary school students, in addition to developmental and adaptive stressors. Students face increased academic demands and pressure from standardised assessments as part of the requirements for graduation and entry to the tertiary level of education. A large body of research demonstrates a significant association between school climate, classroom anxiety and student academic achievement, but relatively few studies explore school climate and classroom anxiety associations with students' emotional wellbeing. The main objective of this study was to examine the relationships between classroom anxiety and the school climate of students of different ages and their emotional wellbeing. This impacts other aspects of student mental health. A sample of 292 middle and secondary school students in some Maltese state colleges completed the Georgia School Climate Survey and the Classroom Anxiety Scale for Secondary School Students. Descriptive analysis, analysis of variance and multiple regression procedures were applied to analyse the collected data. The study identified significant relationships between emotional wellbeing with test anxiety and several aspects of school climate. Increasing academic demands inflict emotional demands that, in addition to the other developmental stressors, contribute to the deterioration of students' overall mental wellbeing. This study's results suggest possible ways to optimise environmental factors to reduce classroom anxiety and ameliorate school climate to improve students' mental wellbeing.

Reaching and teaching students from ethnic minorities in a Maltese state school



● Marion Parnis, Heathcliff Schembri

One of the objectives of educational institutions is to transmit positive values and skills to all students, irrespective of their background. As often outlined by research, students from ethnic minorities tend to experience marginalisation, an issue that can potentially be removed by schools and educators through multicultural education. This qualitative study sought to understand the perspectives of seven educators in a Maltese secondary state school on the inclusion of students from ethnic minorities. It delved into the educators' positionality, knowledge and skills, and into the provisions available to them to holistically reach students from ethnic minorities in their classrooms. Following semi-structured interviews with teachers, Learning Support Educators and members of the School Leadership Team, a thematic analysis was employed to identify the factors that affect the holistic inclusion of students from ethnic minorities. This research brought forward the educators' positive outlook toward the inclusion of these students. It also highlighted their will to become more culturally competent in addressing the students' holistic needs. Distinct barriers were also pointed out, such as language, behaviour and the provision of basic needs. Finally, the researchers sought to derive potential solutions that could advance and sustain the holistic inclusion of these students. Considering the evidence of the pivotal role of educators in kick-starting the process for a genuine education that includes all students, the right support and mechanisms need to be set up to complete the beautiful kaleidoscope of multicultural education.

Runaway lines in the poetry of Jorie Graham

● Janice Sant Balzan



Jorie Graham's lines have evolved considerably since Helen Vendler's observation, in her book *The Breaking of Style*, that the poet makes a 'definitive break' with the short-lined lyric. Speaking about her 1987 collection *The End of Beauty*, Vendler remarks that the book evidences 'a struggle against the intellectual and formal dénouement of shapely closure'. In her last four collections of poetry, spanning 12 years and due to come out as a single volume entitled *[To] The Last [Be] Human* (September 2022), the 'struggle' against closure that Vendler discerns in the early volume becomes all the more marked and consequential. Graham, here, turns her attention to a planet already in the throes of irreversible ecological crises and faces these realities with heightened urgency. Paying particular attention to what Vendler calls the 'material body' of the poem, this paper analyses the formal experiments in Graham's most recent collection of poems, *Runaway* (2020), with a view to exploring how lineation becomes an adequate vehicle through which to confront an ever-uncertain present and a post-apocalyptic future.

Breaking the news and the Community Paediatric Services



● Chris Sciberras

Introduction: Breaking bad news is one of a physician's most difficult duties. A growing body of evidence demonstrates that the physician's attitude and communication skills play a crucial role in how well patients cope with bad news. Focused training in communication skills and techniques to facilitate breaking bad news have been demonstrated to improve patients' satisfaction and the physician's comfort.

Method: Rabow and McPhees's ABCDE mnemonic of a practical and comprehensive model, synthesised from multiple sources, of how bad news can be most compassionately and competently delivered, proved to be greatly effective within the Community Paediatric Services. This model was implemented within the Child Development Unit (CDAU), the Children's Outpatient clinics (COP), the Foundation for Educational Services (FES) Child Care Centres and the Resource Centres in Malta, during the regular screening and assessment of Children with Disability, over the last decade.

Conclusion: This paper will demonstrate how working with parents or carers of children with a chronic illness or a developmental disability requires a compassionate and effective system of breaking the news. Despite the challenges involved in delivering bad news, physicians find tremendous gratification in providing a therapeutic presence during a patient's time of greatest need.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Maltese children



● Chris Sciberras

Introduction: Since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, virtual consultations became the norm to reduce the risk of contagion both for the sick child and the paediatric team. Eliciting signs in paediatrics is always tricky and it becomes even more difficult when attempting to reach a diagnosis by remote access.

Results: Malta is a small island state with a population of 514,000, 78,000 of whom are children under the age of 16 years. Over a 2-year period (18th March 2020 to 27th March 2022), 7,695 children have been confirmed positive for Covid-19, from a total Covid positive population of 71,052, resulting in a 10.83% ratio of children to adults. Most children experienced mild symptoms and were monitored daily by the team of Community Paediatric Consultants. Unfortunately, several cases had symptoms severe enough that warranted referral for inpatient hospital management.

Impact: The somewhat severe negative impact of the pandemic on the physical and psychological health of Covid-19 positive children in Malta will also be studied in association with the clinical risk taken by the paediatric remote Covid team of doctors.

Conclusion: As professionals providing healthcare to children and to their parents, we must be careful to offer safe care within strict privacy parameters. Even though we aim to minimise direct face to face exposure, we can still provide informed shared decision making, regarding medical management.

Sustainability science paradigms: hopes of universities



 **Ariel Toh**

Sustainability science is global in nature, and affects a wide range of scientific disciplines. Taking account of the recent sustainable development governance and the transformation of universities towards sustainability, there is a perceived need to study the theme of sustainability science and explore the foundation of this concept. This research reports matters related to sustainability science transformation in universities and in scientific business. It will present a systematic review while providing a content analysis aimed at defining, to a certain degree, the developments of sustainability science based on the experiences of universities, scholars' work trends, and the multidisciplinary approaches in scientific training and research. The review demonstrates pathways which universities undertake in adopting sustainability science and provides insights on the impact of sustainability science transformation when helping research institutes to succeed in meeting their sustainability targets

This paper will provide a case study regarding the evolution of the concept of sustainability science and the process behind its establishment at university level. Based on current trends, this paper identifies the need for universities to facilitate the inclusion of sustainability science as a whole and to cater for a more multidisciplinary scientific education. The basis for the sustainability science approach, here introduced, includes participants and actors from institutions, academics, businesses and professional practitioners of sustainability.

Understanding sexual harassment awareness at the University of Malta



 **Roderick Vassallo**

In 2020, the University of Malta (UM) Gender Equality and Sexual Diversity Committee decided to embark on a study to assess the level of awareness regarding the Sexual Harassment Policy amongst its employees and student community. The decision was sparked by the Committee members' concern about the rise in domestic violence on a national scale spurred by the general lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic. Between March and April 2021, a study, composed of two parts, was undertaken: an online quantitative survey distributed to all employees and students and a qualitative study carried out through interviews with students from Student Societies recognised by Senate. This presentation will show the results of the quantitative survey where Maltese female undergraduate students were the main respondents. While 58% of the 588 respondents were not aware of the existence of the UM Sexual Harassment Policy, 31% of the respondents know somebody who suffered sexual harassment at UM. Respondents call out for more awareness campaigns to educate about sexual harassment, to offer visibility to the UM's Sexual Harassment Policy and to promote the support and protection given to the victims of sexual harassment. The University of Malta should also strive to create a safe environment by enforcing its Policy and by normalising reporting.

Fraud risk in companies' financial statements

● Edit Veres



The main aim of this research is to examine how the companies' financial reports are manipulated by the firms that prepared them. In this presentation, the database used are the official financial reports between 2014 to 2019 of the Hungarian-Romanian border counties. The database examined includes private companies with at least €100,000 in total sales and total assets and having annual reports for all the years examined. The database meeting the previous criteria contains between 4685 and 4810 companies in the six years studied. Beneish's M-score model was used to investigate the possible manipulation of the financial statements according to the following decision criteria: if the M-score is less than -2.22, manipulation is unlikely; if the M-score is between -2.22 and -1.78, manipulation is possible; if the M-score is greater than -1.78, manipulation is likely. The study also examines the manipulation of financial reports by different groupings (county, sector, size).

It can be concluded that, according to the Beneish M-score values, there is no significant difference among the neighbouring counties of both countries. It can also be seen that the number of corporate financial statements in both countries likely to be manipulated is high in each year examined. The average M-score values of the reports likely to be manipulated exceed 30% whereas the proportion of corporate financial statements that are unlikely to be manipulated is around 50%, which is relatively low.

From essentialism to smart productivity: supporting passionate and resilient educators

● Stephanie Xerri Agius



In a post-pandemic world, essentialism, prioritisation and resilience have taken on new meanings. They may seem at loggerheads with one another, when focusing and prioritising could be considered anathema to a fast-tracked pace that is often adopted to accomplish important tasks and goals; however, the latter way of doing things can eventually cause undue stress and unwittingly affect one's productivity and resilience (Sandberg and Grant, 2017; Kagge, 2016). If considered from different perspectives, however, they can be complementary. For instance, selecting tasks, strategies, and activities that matter, as well as visualising concrete goals and executing decisions, often require paring it down, and momentarily forgetting about the bigger picture (Duhigg 2016, 2012; McKeown 2014; Rubin, 2009).

This presentation aims to conceptualise, distil and concretise strategies and practices that educators can adapt and adopt, and in turn guide others to engage in and integrate in their daily habits and work modes (Clear, 2018; Gino, 2018; Mercer, 2016). Participants will have an opportunity to reflect on their work practices and choices so that by the end of the presentation, one consideration would be whether it is time to reconfigure the way things are done. One ultimate goal is for both educators and their students to build their resilience and harness their potential in the classroom and beyond, hence making their daily lives more enriching, meaningful, and rewarding, both personally and professionally.

Transforming education in a world full of crises

 Zoltan Zakota



The Covid-19 pandemic constituted a turning point in the life of our planet, unparalleled until now by its world-wide extent, after which nothing will be as it was before. Pathogens are constantly mutating and the appearance of new epidemics is likely. At the same time, other unexpected events also shook our smaller world. Who would have thought that a war would be taking place in our neighbourhood, whose global consequences are immeasurable? As much as we would like to, the “new normal” will not be the same as the “old” one was. Those who will try to live and work in the same way will soon realise that they are just pursuing wishful dreams because the institutions will not be able to operate in the same way after this forced break. Only those who look ahead and try to take new paths out of the crisis, avoiding ways to return to the pre-crisis situation, can emerge victorious with minimal losses.

The study is based on our own research, carried out among students in North-West Romania, intending to outline the evolution of education during the pandemics. This included a questionnaire, focus group discussions with students, and interviews with teachers. The purpose of this paper is to map out the main changes in education due to the current crises and to outline how the lessons learned could be put to use for a successful future.

Challenges in Lesson Study for secondary school Mathematics teachers

 Dorianne Zammit Briffa, James Calleja



Introducing Lesson Study (LS) to teachers and inviting them to participate is a delicate process. This is particularly true for countries like Malta where the form of school-based teacher professional development still consists of one-shot sit-and-get experiences. This presentation focuses on an initiative, taken by a Head of department in a state secondary school, to invite the five teachers within her Mathematics department to engage in a LS. The four-month long lesson study process was led by an experienced lesson study leader. To learn about the participants’ experiences, we draw on data from the reflective journal of the Head of department, a one-to-one post-lesson study discussion between the lesson study leader and the Head of department, and a focus group discussion held with participants at the end of their lesson study journey. This will in turn be analysed from a sociocultural perspective.

Findings indicate that participants found collaboration and the sharing of ideas useful to their learning. However, the descriptive and detailed collaborative planning phase, a completely new process to the participants, was deemed overwhelming as it involved an in-depth understanding of the issue identified. This paper will focus on the challenges brought about by the context of the school and of the Mathematics department while allowing us to delve into the culture of collaboration among teachers and the changes that the implementation of lesson study requires from them.

