

MCAST LINK

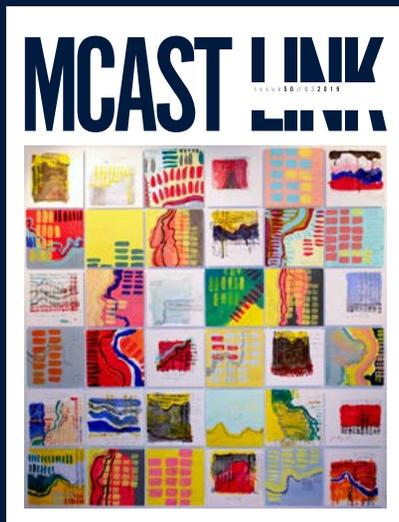
Issue 50 // Q3 2019



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FRONT COVER

Francesca Vella , MCAST's Art Festival

3	Editor's Note
4	Message from the Principal and CEO
6	News
8	Institute for the Creative Arts
12	Curriculum Department
15	Institute of Engineering and Transport
16	MCAST Entrepreneurship Centre
17	Erasmus
20	Gozo Campus
22	MCAST Grievance Office
23	I Belong Programme
24	Institute of Information and Communication Technology
26	Institute of Applied Sciences
28	MCAST Energy Group
29	Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning Department
30	International Office
32	MCAST Research and Innovation Centre



Editorial

Welcome back to a new academic year!

This edition features the various projects and events carried out during the last academic term including the annual Arts Festival, that took place at Spazju Kreattiv at St John's Cavalier in Valletta. Around 200 Creative Arts students participated and showcased their varied projects to the general public. Projects ranged from photography to interactive media, spatial design, graphic design, product development as well as journalism.

Another project that the MCAST Institute of Engineering and Transport embarked on is the 'Offshore Passive Photovoltaics Project' which is researching the possibility of setting up large-scale PV systems in the Maltese waters. MCAST students are collaborating with international partners and once finalized this project could lead to the commercialization of the offshore passive photovoltaics.

The College promotes and supports entrepreneurship and is proud that this edition includes an article on a group of students from MCAST's Entrepreneur Centre that have successfully designed and developed a new locker system that is already set-up and functioning. MCAST is offering full-time students the opportunity to study foreign languages free-of-charge while pursuing their studies at College. Over fifty students have already successfully completed this programme in French, German, Italian and Spanish. Kirsten Demanuele, shared her experience with us after successfully completing this programme.

An award ceremony was held for foreign students that participated in the I Belong Programme. This programme was designed to help foreigners residents learn Maltese, English as well as the Maltese culture in order for them to integrate themselves into the Maltese society.

Hope you enjoy this edition!

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Message from the Principal & Ceo

PROF JOACHIM JAMES CALLEJA

A new academic year brings with it fresh challenges and opportunities for growth and development.

One of our challenging innovations at the College is the management information system that has been installed over this summer. It will take some time before all software responds to the complex and increasing needs of students and staff members. Training on its use is vital as otherwise it will remain inactive and futile. Therefore, patience but also hard work and more use of the system can only improve the way we communicate internally. In the long run, it should free more human resources which can be utilised in more creative tasks.

A second challenge is inclusion and retention of students. In today's healthy economic environment in Malta, employment is luring students away from the College at early years and particularly before they reach the technical level desired by all. This means that employers who are our key partners in vocational education and training are also our key competitors. We need to work harder to retain students beyond MQF Level 3 qualifications. This may mean that the balance between work and learning experiences at this level must be revisited and that more attractive pedagogy needs to be implemented in the form of new technologies in learning. On the other side of the coin, lies inclusivity especially at the lower levels of our qualification. In principle, no one should find closed doors at MCAST. No efforts should be spared to include all learning capacities, students who may have missed their chance to apply during the specific dates last summer as well as older workers who may need re-skilling and up-skilling. Putting inclusivity in practice is a challenge but also MCAST's key vocation.

A further challenge which will certainly open



enormous opportunities is the construction of two large centres: the one for information and communication technology and a resource centre. Works on these two infrastructures is moving at a fast rate and I cannot wait to see our students enjoying the benefits of the facilities these two buildings will provide and the infrastructural image of the College improving substantially on their completion. The state-of-the art amenities that these two buildings will provide will be the pride of education in Malta. Only last May the Prime Minister inaugurated the Engineering and Transport Institute new building and it is obvious that the level of support that students and staff members receive has improved and will continue to improve in the coming months when it is planned that the whole facilities of the building will be completed.

A further challenge is the internationalisation of the College. With ERASMUS + students and staff mobility increasing systematically, establishing contacts with other European and non-European institutions similar to MCAST is an inspiring experience at many levels. The signing and implementation of MoUs is forging relationships which improve the way we impart

knowledge and the quality of our education and training programmes. The growing demand on MCAST to provide vocational education and training with its own lecturing staff outside Malta is a feather in our cap. Besides the exposure to new education cultures, lecturing staff are building capacities and contacts which add value to their personal life and professional careers. Managing human resources to meet these challenges is no mean feat! But with committed staff members meeting these challenges is an opportunity to grow and attract more learners to the College.

The population growth of MCAST in learners and workers is a positive challenge which requires more attention and management. A call for employers to invest in MCAST is a step in this direction. Employers on Campus is a campaign and an invitation to meet the challenges of innovation, relevancy, skillset and match. Education must keep its pace with developments in industry but industry must ensure that this development is well resourced and maintained. MCAST with the support of the Malta Employers Association and the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Enterprise is inviting employers to install at MCAST their latest equipment, to provide tools, products and services which they expect our students to be knowledgeable about. More information is available on MCAST's web portal www.mcast.edu.mt

As the new academic year unfolds, life at the College continues to show signs of a vibrant education and training institution upon which Malta's current and future workforce will heavily rely. In a working world which is changing so fast, the education sector cannot deliver anymore ready-made human capital. It is up to industry and the employment sector (public and private) to offer MCAST places for apprentices, work-based learning and resources that can support the formal learning environment. It is up to the two worlds (education and industry) to share resources, avoid duplication and provide our learners with real and relevant work and learning experiences.

MCAST will continue to extend its partnership strategy with industry until we ensure that all programmes are governed by mutually beneficial dividends for all parties. In education and training there is no more time for a stakeholder's approach! It is time for shareholding. This is perhaps the greatest challenge.

Due to unforeseen circumstances the following profile had been omitted from MCASTlink issue 49. Any inconvenience is regretted.

Member Board of Governors

Mr Brian Farrugia



Mr Brian Farrugia has extensive experience within the banking sector. He started his professional banking career in two Maltese banks namely Bank of Valletta and APS Bank where he specialised in corporate lending. He later joined Erste Bank Malta, a subsidiary of the Erste Bank Group of Austria, where he was responsible for trading services and back-office operations and also responsible for its subsidiaries in Malta and overseas.

In 2005 he established his own firm, InterLink Corporate. Following a merger that took place in 2009 the company was restructured and later in 2011 he established Quantum Group. Mr Farrugia is both a founding member and Director of Quantum Group.

Mr Farrugia's professional experience led him to lecture in Banking and Finance at the Malta International Training Centre both in Malta and overseas. He is also a Director of Bank of Valletta Asset Management Limited and sits on the National General Contracting Committee.

Brian furthered his studies in Strategic and Financial Management at the University of Maastricht (The Netherlands) and is an Associate of the Chartered Institute of Bankers.

Launching the MCAST Strategic Plan 2019-2021



*Mr Frederick Schembri,
President of the MCAST Board
of Governors, greeting Prime
Minister Muscat at the launch of
the Strategic Plan*

In the first quarter of 2019, MCAST had embarked on an extensive internal and external consultation process about its strategic direction for the coming three years. After reviewing all the feedback received and reviewing the draft plan, the MCAST Board of Governors agreed on the parameters for the strategic direction of the College.

The MCAST Strategic Plan was launched by the Prime Minister of Malta, Hon. Dr Joseph Muscat on the 20th May 2019. The plan spans 7 strategic directions, 18 initiatives and 86 measures. The document outlines the priorities of the College and highlights the importance of a dynamic evolution to reflect the changes in the socio-economic fabric in Malta.

The College has re-asserted its goals to provide a learning space and an outstanding education experience for every student, leading to graduates being competent, resourceful, critically conscious and innovators in preparation for their future vocational and professional careers. It insists on having a high-quality landscaped setting while taking into consideration the investment made in the past years and seeking financial sustainability. MCAST is keen to ensure that it sustains its leading role in the provision of quality vocational education and training in Malta as well as partnering with employers and other stakeholders in securing the relevance of its programmes. Furthermore, MCAST has placed significant emphasis on incentivizing the development of applied

research and sustainable innovation across the College.

The initiatives and measures elaborated in the published document further reflect in detail the strategic goals and directions. They seek to provide more concrete embodiment of the path which MCAST will tread in the coming years. The ambitious targets and objectives which MCAST has set for itself will provide a challenging context for those seeking to drive MCAST into becoming more relevant to the industry context in Malta. Since the launch of the Strategic Plan, the Strategy Implementation Office has embarked on the development of operational plans and individual staff plans. The plans are translated into annual and thematic action plans assigned to different operational units and departments within the College. The next step is to set up ongoing monitoring and appraisal structures to ensure success. In parallel, bi-annual reviews and reporting to the Board of Governors will track achievements.

The MCAST Strategic Plan 2019-2021 can be downloaded from <https://www.mcast.edu.mt/wp-content/uploads/MCAST-Strategic-Plan-2019-2021-2.pdf>.

MCAST and EfVET seek closer collaboration between VET training providers and the world of employers

In two separate events held in Brussels and Padua, MCAST Principal/CEO who is also EfVET President, Professor Calleja intensified his plea for more structured and long-term collaboration between VET training providers and employers. Speaking at the European Commission High-Level Conference on Skills for Industry Strategy 2030, Professor Calleja said that industry and vocational education and training of the future have to work hand in hand, not as stakeholders but as permanent partners. Employees and employers are feeling threatened by the speed of change and the advancements in technology. Industry 4.0 is an opportunity to merge the two traditionally separate sectors into a process of work-based learning for a wide spectrum of learners.

Digitalisation, globalisation and demographic changes are having negative as well as positive impacts on VET as well as on work places. The two contexts cannot operate anymore in isolation from each other. On the contrary, Professor Calleja firmly believes that the two sectors should operate as one with two distinct roles: businesses must ensure that VET environments remain up-to-date in curriculum design, infrastructure, quality assurance and relevancy to new jobs; on the other hand, VET schools, colleges and universities have to intensify their role of producing a workforce which is equipped with soft skills, flexibility and the readiness to learn while working and working while learning. The future of work, Professor Calleja said, is the future of education and training. "There is only one future for the two sectors and employers and educators should be sitting at the same desk and planning and executing education and training together but in separate contexts: the workplace and the learning home – colleges, schools and higher education institutions.

The high-level conference had a plethora of distinguished speakers from the world of education and training and the world of business, with high profile speakers coming from Bosch, IBM Europe, McKinsey & Company, Cisco Systems, the University of Luxembourg, Google, the European Investment Bank (EIB), the AVAENSEN Cluster, Le Forem and others. EfVET President insisted that the time is ripe to convene a European summit for VET providers and businesses to establish a set of criteria to join the two sectors in permanent statutory roles in different national and regional settings.

At the Archivio Antico, Bo Palace of the University of Padua,

MCAST Principal intervened during a panel discussion on the return on investment and mobility. The discussion was part of the concluding session of the ERASMUS project on the ROI for VET International Mobility co-funded by the ERASMUS+ Programme of the EU. In his intervention, Professor Calleja said that we live in a culture of mobility in both a physical and virtual manner. As a result of technology, connectivity today is easier, more effective but equally challenging and constructive. Young people have been brought up connecting ideas and interests in a manner which any education and work establishment cannot ignore. Hence mobility has become a valuable learning process according to Professor Calleja. However, he said, "the ultimate objective of mobility in the context of learning and working is employability coupled with social inclusion and a nurturing of European identity. In this respect, cooperation between businesses and training providers as well as the larger community is a step towards creating more opportunities for young people to broaden their experiences". In an environment in which work-based learning is increasingly becoming a new way of learning, mobility will play an important part in people's lives. Referring to the new Programme Generation Erasmus 2021-2027 proposal by the European Commission, MCAST Principal/CEO said that budgets must reflect priorities.

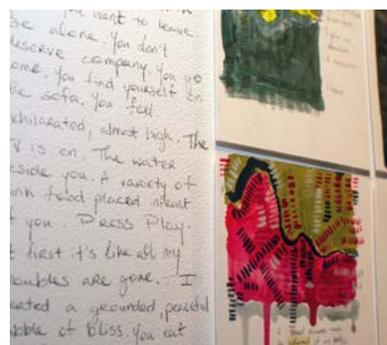
He feels that there is still a deficit in supporting mobility (and VET in general) when considering the high levels of unemployment in Europe and the high percentages of lamenting employers and people with low skills and others not in E&T. "Mobility", Professor Calleja said, "is a win-win learning process, an opportunity to take in response to the enormous development in travelling, in connecting with different cultures and working places and in the development of quality standards in production and service provision in the various sectors". Mobility, according to the speaker, is the most efficient way of producing workforce readiness, soft skills (particularly language speaking), technical skills and entrepreneurial culture. MCAST and EfVET will be at the forefront to connect businesses with VET training providers and promote mobility across all sectors of education and training. The latest introduction of Degree Apprenticeships at MCAST is a case in point.

Arts Festival





This year's Institute for the Creative Arts Festival was built on former editions which championed the importance of showcasing students' work at the end of the learning process. Gradually morphing from an exhibition to a festival and in time returning to Valletta after being held at MCAST's Mosta Campus, this year the event was accommodated within Spazju Kreattiv, Malta's National Centre for Creativity, once the Festival's home.



While presenting learners' work is of value within most educational settings, it is especially important within the context of the creative arts. Creative work requires an audience. Though often reflexive and introverted it nonetheless connects, and Spazju Kreattiv provides an appropriate context for that.

Spazju Kreattiv facilitates connection between graduands of various programmes and stakeholders in the outer world both local and international at an important junction in their lives, with some actually being given jobs as a result of the Festival.

Indeed, a transition to the industry characterises the approach taken by the Institute for the Creative Arts before reaching this point. Whether by job shadowing, placements, apprenticeships or live cases with stakeholders in the industry, who rightfully deserve acknowledgment for their priceless contribution to the formation of our learners, ICA's approach connects the learning environment to real life in the working world.

Whereas last year it was Valletta, then European Capital of Culture, that connected the various departments of the Institute, this year Spazju Kreattiv brought them together





under the same roof. For an entire month between 4 July and 4 August 2019 we could appreciate outcomes of programmes in Fine Arts, Photography, Graphic Design, Interactive Media, Game Art and Visual Design, Creative Media Production, Journalism, Cultural Heritage Skills, Fashion and Retail, Product Design and Spatial Design, together with Performing Arts.

Festival participants could also benefit from a rich and varied programme of complementary events. Apart from presenting MCAST's prospectus and providing numerous opportunities for prospective MCAST students to explore the various options for furthering their studies in different areas, the Festival also included a number of events - such as the bookmaking workshop and the board game demo - which were interactive sessions building on knowledge and skills learnt in MCAST's ICA programmes.

Others, largely coordinated in collaboration with industry partners, further strengthened the connection with the industry. These included the Media Students Awards sponsored by The Tumas Fenech Foundation for Education in Journalism, talks by a product designer from Toly and by representatives from the Malta Association for Interior Designers, another by Heritage Malta officials and apprentices, together with a presentation supported by Studio 7 on the importance of documentation in conservation-restoration. Probably the highlight of these events was the series of three workshops given by Argentinian graphic designer of international acclaim - Ariel Garofalo - who was brought over to Malta by the Broadcasting Authority specifically for the Festival.

Although the basis of the Festival is the collective exhibition which has acquired an identity over the years, it presents students as distinct - with their own unique

identity. Though formative processes have been similar, outcomes are clearly different and distinguishable. These were the underlying principles of this year's edition of the Festival which bore the name Distinct.

The concept and accompanying aesthetic were the work of our final year students of the BA programme in Graphic Design. They ensured homogeneity through branding. This was further complemented by the curatorial design carried out by final year students of the Spatial Design and Product Design degrees. Once again, we witnessed connection - connection even though each individual student product is distinct.

This takes us to the importance of working in teams - as a community. The Festival would certainly not have been possible were it not for teamwork with all its challenges; it would not have materialised had each individual only looked at his own separate part. Thus, the Festival embodies values which are far greater than the products that we experienced whilst touring the various spaces - which products also communicate the important values of honesty, perseverance, humility. The Festival experience also gives value to other significant aspects which make us the distinct individuals that we are, values that enable us to live effectively within a community. These include support, encouragement, and above all respect.

The Festival is therefore also a celebration of these values. We celebrated them with stakeholders who in one way or another have helped form the identity of our students and, collectively, also this Festival. Key amongst these are our partners and sponsors for this edition and academic year which include Arts Council Malta, Spazju Kreattiv, Heritage Malta, Studio 7, the Broadcasting Authority, JB Stores, Toly, the US Embassy, Mini, the Tumas Fenech Foundation for Education in Journalism, Avantech, Canon, Hudson, the Malta Community Chest Fund, Finn (Freedom is not negotiable), the Cross Culture International Foundation, HSBC Water Programme.

Thanks naturally also go to all MCAST and ICA academic and administrative staff who supported and contributed in many ways, particularly ICA Director, Deputy Directors, the ICA Festival team and other collaborating colleagues, and last but certainly not least the students and their parents, guardians and friends without whose support this would not have been possible.

Learning foreign languages at MCAST

For the past year MCAST has been providing students with the opportunity to learn foreign languages on a voluntary basis free-of-charge. So far, over 50 students have studied and successfully completed EQF Level 1 courses in Italian, French, German and Spanish. During the academic year 2019-2020 MCAST will be adding Chinese Mandarin to the list. Kirsten Demanuele, a full-time MCAST student studying Early Years at the Institute of Community Services, shares her experience after successfully completing an EQF Level 1 in Italian as a Foreign Language.

I have always believed that learning foreign languages are very important. I enjoy travelling to different countries, meeting new people and communicating with others. When I was at Sacred Heart College, I had decided to choose two foreign languages. At that time I chose German and French. I achieved Ordinary Level certification in both languages. I always aspired that some day I would learn Italian too.

I joined MCAST in 2016 and followed the course MCAST Advanced Level in Children's Care and Development. I have now moved on to the MCAST Higher Diploma in Advanced Studies in Early Years. During the last academic year, I learnt about the opportunity to learn a foreign language in addition to my full-time studies and I decided to take up the challenge and try to fit the course in my busy schedule. To me, learning Italian at this stage in my life became even more important for a number of reasons.

Dance is my passion. I have been dancing since the age



of three. I attend Mandy's Dance Academy in Marsascala. We are exposed to different styles of dance that include ballet, jazz, lyrical, contemporary and other styles. We are lucky enough to learn different styles and are taught by both local and foreign teachers. I have reached a stage in my life where communicating in Italian has become a need in order to be able to communicate with teachers and other students, especially when attending courses.

Over the years at our dance school, we have had sessions delivered by Michele Nocca from Amici and Gianluca Blandi. I have attended courses both locally and abroad. While attending the dance lessons and courses, I have felt the need to learn Italian in order to be able to communicate with teachers and other students attending the course. I also felt that I would benefit more from the dance courses if I learnt Italian as I would also understand better the instructions and details given by teachers.

When I heard about the opportunity at MCAST to follow foreign languages, I immediately decided to apply. Little did I know that this course was going to open a world of

opportunities for me. I must admit that the course was professionally run. Our teacher was very professional and catered for individual needs by giving us individual attention. Being a small group made it even better to integrate with each other. Lessons were very interesting and practical. We covered areas that we need to talk about in our everyday life, including hobbies and areas of interest.

This foreign language course has helped me to pursue my dreams in dance and to be able to attend dance courses both locally and abroad. I feel more knowledgeable and confident. I am now more able to follow dance lessons delivered by Italian teachers and to make new Italian friends. It has also increased my employability skills. In Marsascala, the village I live in, the Italian community has increased radically in the past few years. I have noticed an increase in the number of Italian students who attend our

dance school. I have been entrusted by our Ballet School Principal - Ms Mandy Pellicano to teach a class of young ballerinas and a class of musical theatre. This summer I also worked with FES at Skolasajf in Marsascala. Having a basic knowledge of Italian is an asset. I have Italian students in my class and feel privileged to be able now to communicate with them and especially with their parents.

I strongly recommend that other students do like I did ... take up the challenge and study a new foreign language. Thank you MCAST for this great opportunity. I am grateful that I have made MCAST my first choice. I value the fact that MCAST has helped me to increase my employability skills and addressed my areas of interest. I feel that now I am even more able to embark on new opportunities and adventures relating to my passion for dance and to pursue my dream to become a dance teacher.

Continuous Professional Development Sessions at MCAST

During the academic year 2018-2019, the Centre for Professional Development (CPD) within the Curriculum and Student Affairs Department organised a total of 32 sessions and workshops with an attendance of over 370 members of staff. This year the sessions covered academic methods, ideas and assessment designs that proved to be beneficial and enlightening to those who attended. A few of the topics included Integrating Transversal Skills in Delivery and Assessment, Key Skills (Mathematics, English, Maltese, Science, Information Technology, Individual and Social Responsibility) – Implementation, Assignment Modes and Design, Using Collaborative Inquiry as a means to Enhance Vocational Teaching and Lecturing, and Managing Challenging Behaviour.

In addition to these titles, other sessions that were organised aimed to target all employees at MCAST, including the non-academic staff, in order to ensure that the CPD will delve into the needs of all the MCAST employees. These sessions included Communicating Effectively, Stress Management, Becoming Effective Individuals and Creative Thinking Skills.

During the upcoming academic year 2019-2020, the CPD is expanding its workshop/training portfolio as it aims



to target more individuals working within MCAST. This is mainly due to the positive and encouraging feedback given following the success of the last group of sessions. New training sessions and workshops planned for the months of February, July and September 2020 are to be included within the MCAST calendar of events on an annual basis.

The CPD has one aim in mind: it is determined to assist and motivate wholeheartedly all those employees who meet each and every student who walks through our MCAST gates!

Enhancing Entrepreneurial Skills at MCAST



MCAST degree students delivering their sales pitch

During the academic year 2018-2019 MCAST delivered Entrepreneurship Courses to over 1300 students enrolled in Level 4 and Level 6 programmes. Besides attending for lectures in Entrepreneurship, students worked in groups to come up with a product or service that can generate a profit or a surplus. Level 4 students worked in their class within the same Institute while Level 6 students worked from different Institutes.

Furthermore, Level 6 students were given a business mentor, with vast experience in business and industry, to support them as they developed their product/service ideas. Beyond the issues of actually fulfilling the task of developing a product/service, students experienced the realities of working in a team.

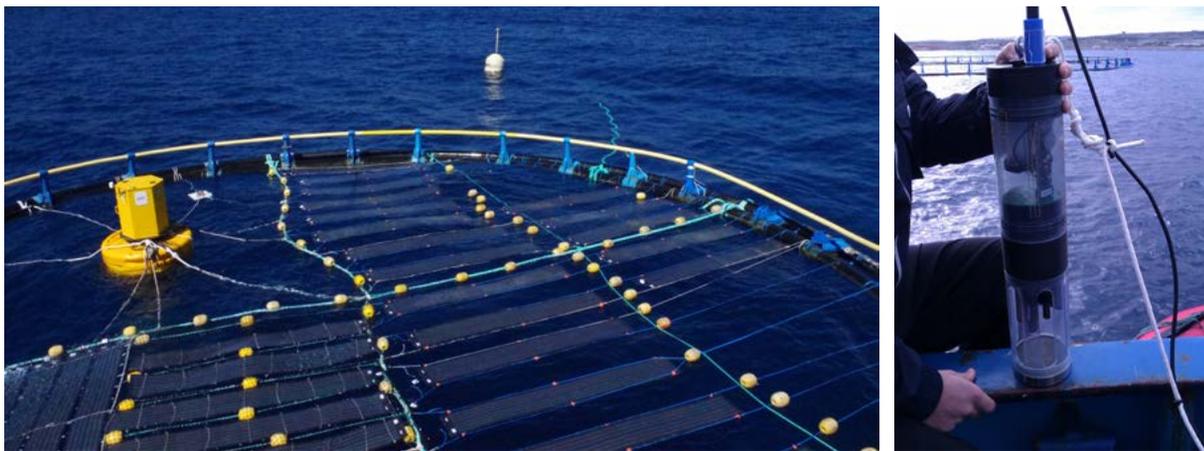
MCAST looks at Entrepreneurship as more than just another subject. Besides addressing the requirements to

start a business, the focus is on creative and innovative thinking, problem-solving and analytical skills, adaptability and flexibility, leadership and being driven, influencing skills and persuasiveness. Acknowledging the importance of these skills is a must in today's competitive world.

Five hundred students enrolled in Level 6 MCAST programmes delivered their sales pitch to different board members composed of management, academics and representatives from industry. Feedback received from industry was very positive and MCAST looks forward to strengthening the links with industrial partners to provide a more meaningful learning experience to students. Following the delivery of their sales pitch, a number of students have already approached the MCAST Entrepreneurship Centre as they now wish to go a step further and start their own business.

MCAST investigates the possibility of generating Solar Energy from the Sea

MCAST is leading a major project entitled Offshore Passive Photovoltaics (OPPV), through which the possibility of setting up large scale floating PV systems in Maltese territorial waters was explored. This project investigates the feasibility of deploying PV systems in the sea in a bid to respond to the ever-growing demand for renewable energy supplies.



Solar PV systems require a large footprint, which is scarce in Malta, given that the island only has a total land surface of 316 km². PV systems also suffer a reduction in efficiency when the PV panel temperature increases. Sea water has the potential to mitigate this disadvantage and keep PV panels cooler than those in a comparable ground based PV system, improving PV systems' efficiency.

In this project MCAST is collaborating with Econetique Ltd, a leading local organisation that deals in renewables, MIRARCO, a research organisation based in Canada, and Malta Mariculture Ltd, which is part of Azzopardi Fisheries, a major player in the Maltese fisheries industry.

The College, together with its partners, was successful in securing substantial funding for the project from the Malta Council for Science and Technology, for and on behalf of the Foundation for Science and Technology, through the FUSION: R&I Technology Development Programme.

Floating PVs on fresh water lakes have long been in existence. MCAST is innovative in exploring the floating PVs on sea water. This in itself presents great challenges in terms of materials that can withstand a harsh environment such

as corrosion, marine growth, strong seawater currents, high waves and strong winds. The Maltese coastal waters presented another challenge, that of heavy maritime traffic.

A number of studies were undertaken before the project took off. These included a market research exercise, a preliminary feasibility study and a patent check. The system itself was designed in-house by MCAST staff and took into consideration numerous concepts and designs that were verified through the use of finite element analysis. The design stage was followed by an international procurement exercise for the sourcing of highly specialised components. This was combined with the in-house manufacturing of certain components as well as the assembly of the different components to produce the system.

The first pilot 8KW system was deployed at sea in 2018. The data obtained from this seaborne system was benchmarked against a land system that was set up close to the sea site at Ċirkewwa. Data gathered during the pilot phase is being used to design and set up a follow-up system that will be deployed at sea later on this year. It is anticipated that the results will lead to the commercialisation of the system.

Paddy – an innovative locker system created and designed by MCAST students



Paddy is a Maltese start-up company which focuses on creating innovative locker systems using the latest technologies available such as mobile app technology.

The Paddy team is made up of six core members, all of whom used to attend MCAST. The members include Roberto Tweraser, the product designer who created the designs of the lockers; Sebastian Mizzi, the electrical engineer who handles the complex electrical components in the lockers; Clayton Calleja who is in charge of manufacturing, and joining all the separate parts together to create the lockers; Chris Borg who is the brains behind everything that is software related in Paddy, both on the actual locker, as well as on the mobile apps and back end side of things; Steve Scerri who is the designer and UI developer, creating the look and feel for every front that Paddy has; Nicole Borg who is the Project Manager and Administrator, and who keeps the team in check while also handling important administrative work which keeps Paddy moving forward.

Thanks to Mr. Ray Vella and the MCAST Entrepreneurship Centre, Paddy has a workshop at KBIC (Kordin Business Incubation Centre) which provides the space needed to create, assemble, wire and test the lockers. This space makes all the operations possible since this particular start-up requires ample

space although funds are very low during this investment phase. The current premises are restrictive in size. This does not allow for an optimal working environment and space for simultaneous locker projects, however, it is hoped that with the help of MEC, Malta Enterprise and Mr. Ray Vella, a larger workshop may soon be available.

Paddy has recently launched a new locker at Mater Dei Hospital's Day Care section. People who need to visit the day care section of the hospital can now store their belongings securely and without the risk of any possible theft during their stay. This is extremely helpful during an operation, when a patient's belongings would be unattended.

Paddy is also currently working at full speed on creating lockers which will be spread out across Ghadira Bay. This is a big milestone for Paddy since beach theft is the primary reason behind the whole idea. Paddy seeks to address this problem on beaches and other private venues while also making the whole experience hassle free, easy to use, and fun. Paddy is fully automated and does not need personnel on sight to operate it. Clients simply download the Paddy app from the App Store or Playstore, create a booking while also paying for the locker through the app, and then simply access their locker by using the keypad on the locker. Easy does it!

We would like to take this opportunity to thank MET, Malta Enterprise, MCAST, and Mr. Ray Vella for their help and support. We look forward to many more opportunities and growth with such great establishments.

EuroApprentices Network Meeting

The EuroApprentices Network is a network that connects apprentices or young people following a work-based learning experience in a Vocational Education and Training field. The main objective of the EuroApprentices Network is that of bringing together mobile apprentices who have benefited from the Erasmus+ programme so that they can disseminate their individual success stories of a learning mobility abroad. It aims at promoting the VET sector and to encourage other young people to join VET institutions and undertake apprenticeship and work-based learning schemes.

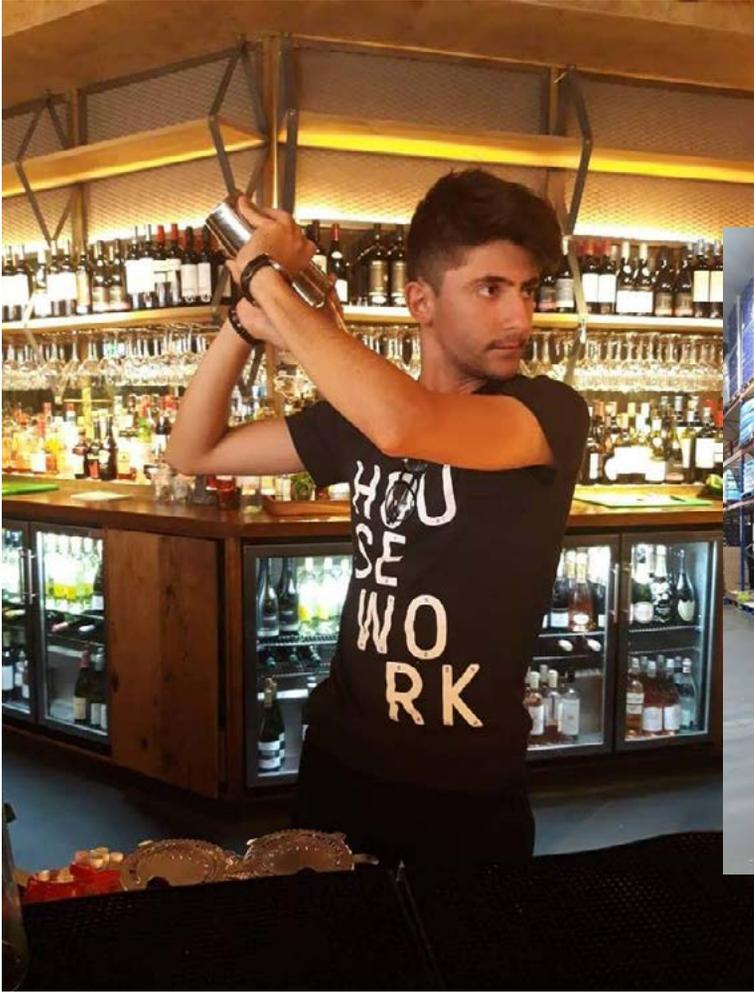


EuroApprentices – Who are they?

EuroApprentices are enrolled in training which is regarded in the national VET system as Apprenticeship or a Work-Based Learning Scheme. A EuroApprentice is perceived as someone who has gained working experiences while being trained in his/her home country and has benefited from the Erasmus+ programme by realising a stay abroad during his/her study.

Through the collaborations established by the European Union Programmes Agency, Malta joined the EuroApprentices Network in 2018. In 2019, six EuroApprentices were selected to share their stories and work towards creating increased awareness about VET and the benefits of the Erasmus+ programme. MCAST Link will be introducing you to the six EuroApprentices. Thus, stay tuned in to learn more about the EuroApprentices and the activities held by them and EUPA.

Meet two EuroApprentices, Michael Formosa and Mandy Cortis.



Michael Formosa

Advanced Diploma in Food Technology

Michael Formosa was amongst the first to join the EuroApprentices Network in 2018. Since then he had various training opportunities on various topics including public speaking and social media use for marketing purposes. Furthermore, he had the opportunity to meet his fellow European EuroApprentices in Vienna in May 2018. In March 2019, he was also selected to represent Malta in the Apprenticeships Network Meeting in Brussels.

Here is what Michael has to say about his experience:

"I found my work-based experience in England very fruitful. The main objective for going to England was to understand the food industry through the lens of the hospitality sector. Here we got to visit various suppliers and company pubs within Oakmann Inns. At the start of my apprenticeship I was working in the kitchen, helping with simple food orders such as salads and sandwiches, but I felt that that environment was not for me. So I asked for a change to go and practise

behind the bar. Since I had prior experience as an assistant in the bar, I wanted to expand my knowledge and skills and understand the method of preparing various beverages. Prior to my apprenticeship I was invited to attend another Erasmus+ event in Vienna where we had a taste of what it meant to be a EuroApprentice. There we got to meet new apprentices and senior apprentices and learnt about this Erasmus network and the opportunities it offers.

My experience as a EuroApprentice is allowing me to expand my travelling skills, my international communication skills, my organisational skills, as well as my network of friends.

I encourage all students to participate in an apprenticeship related to their studies as one understands better through their 5 senses than by just using the knowledge gained in the classroom. An apprenticeship provides you with opportunities to learn in an efficient, dynamic and interesting manner. It works for me."

Mandy Cortis

Multimedia Software Development

Mandy Cortis joined the EuroApprentices Network in 2019 and has so far participated in the EuroApprentices Network Meeting which was held in Malta in May 2019. Mandy will be also participating in the EuroApprentices meet-up during the VET Skills Week in Helsinki this October.

"I had the opportunity to apply for an Erasmus programme in my first year of returning back to my studies at the age of 26. It was an experience I have always wanted to do as I know the great benefits of working outside your own country, such as independence, adventure, knowledge and self-development in general. Being an IT student, I was offered to go to Berlin for 1 month to work with an esteemed company, managing their website and doing other IT-related work. The experience itself opened me up to a foreign way of working and to their culture. An interesting fact, for example, is that I got to know that Berliners do not like to see the colour brown on websites (or in general), because of its connotations.

The EuroApprenticeship Network is a network of young apprentices whose voices are heard in any discussion related to Vocational Educational and Training (VET) and who benefit from an 'In-Company Learning Mobility' anywhere in Europe. My experience so far consists of a 3-day Network meeting in Malta. For this event, groups of EuroApprentices from different European countries flew here and we all got the chance to learn more about the different VET programmes offered in each others' countries. This besides learning other interesting, important skills such as video-making for social media, overcoming public speaking butterflies through theatre improvisation, giving a great speech, and much more.

My goals are to share the great benefits of taking on an Erasmus opportunity and the great chance of becoming a EuroApprentice, travel more and be part of something big.



I do encourage others to follow a VET course together with an apprenticeship. VET is a career or technical education which equips people with the required knowledge for that particular occupation, and makes them a more suitable candidate once in the world of work. An apprenticeship gives one an opportunity to have on-the-job training, often accompanied by studies which prepare the student better for the chosen career.

I also believe that going on Erasmus is a great way for young people to leave their comfort zone and explore the world from a different perspective while meeting and socialising with different people. Hence, this experience broadens one's mind and mindset and makes them grow.

EuroApprentices Meet-up in Malta

Between 8-10 May 2019, 58 EuroApprentices from 10 different European countries came together in Malta to share experiences, learn and ultimately create new friendships and memories to cherish forever.

During this three-day meeting, the EuroApprentices had the opportunity to learn more about the Network and participate in various workshops, which provided them with important transversal skills including public speaking skills,

entrepreneurship, video-making and social media use. They also visited a number of local companies to get another on-the-job experience. The EuroApprentices had the opportunity to meet Hon Aaron Farrugia who also spoke about the benefits reaped from the Erasmus+ programme.

If you are interested in watching what these EuroApprentices have been up to, watch the videos by following this link: <http://eupa.org/mt/euroapprentices-network-meeting-malta-2019/>.

GOZO INNOVATION HUB:

Signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between MCAST, the Gozo Ministry, Malta Enterprise Parks and Malta Enterprise

On 7 August 2019, an Innovation Hub was inaugurated in Xewkija, Gozo by the Minister of Education and Employment, Hon. Evarist Bartolo, the Minister for the Economy, Investment and Small Business, Hon. Dr Chris Cardona and the Minister for Gozo, Hon. Dr Justyne Caruana.

This Innovation Hub will serve as a base that will house internationally known industry giants, including Microsoft, Noovle (a Google partner) and others. The hub tenants will be working on innovative research projects in the fields of artificial intelligence, machine learning, data analytics, productivity and efficiency, and augmented reality amongst others. Through research and development, they will be conducting pilot projects that are envisaged to result in significant developments in health, tourism, traffic, supply chain management and logistics.

In line with the government's strategy to foster the economic development and competitiveness of Gozo through innovation, entrepreneurship and training opportunities, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Gozo Ministry, MCAST, Malta Enterprise (ME) and Malta Industrial Parks (MIP). This MoU will ensure coordinated work and complete synergy to provide a Gozitan workforce that is adaptable to both present and future market needs.

Prior to this MoU, MCAST had been working closely with MIP on an initiative relating to the adoption of immersive technologies within the classroom. The MoU will aid to strengthen the relationship that already exists between these two entities. Furthermore, the MoU widens this relationship through additional partners, namely the Gozo Ministry and Malta Enterprise, with which the College shall be working closely on the government's quest to transform Gozo into an Innovation Island. This agreement will work on ensuring that the following objectives are also achieved:

- Establishing and implementing innovative EdTech solutions



- Providing a trained workforce with the right knowledge, skills and competences to work with emerging technologies and create new innovative solutions
- Generating a simple working channel to collaborate on projects of mutual benefit.

The MoU will give MCAST the opportunity to work with forward-looking industry stakeholders hosted within the Innovation Hub to develop technological solutions and investigate skills gaps to ensure industry relevant programmes. Additionally, it will allow access to MCAST staff and students to make use of emerging technologies within this Innovation Hub.

It is envisaged that the Xewkija Innovation Hub will entice more businesses to tap Gozo as the location for smart infrastructure and smart solutions, creating high quality employment and career opportunities in Gozo and further contributing to the establishment of the island as a centre of excellence, research and innovation. MCAST will be a major stakeholder in these exciting developments.

Gozo EXPO 2019

MCAST participated in the very first edition of the Gozo EXPO, organised by the Malta Business Review in collaboration with the Gozo Ministry. The Expo was held over two days at the Grand Hotel at Mġarr (Gozo) and was open to the general public.



This business trading expo and networking event offered a fruitful gathering of Gozo's best business companies and industry leaders under one roof, in a setting conducive to building up new partnerships, fostering and developing investment and gaining new business opportunities.

MCAST's presence in this event, enabled it to re-affirm and consolidate its presence among industrial partners and important stakeholders in Gozo. It also proved to be an important networking event to establish new industrial contacts, potentially leading to securing new

apprenticeship and work-based learning opportunities for our students. MCAST personnel were also available on site, providing information about the courses and taking appointments for any career advisory meetings that were requested by visitors.

The event was officially launched by the Minister for Gozo, Hon. Dr Justyne Caruana. His Excellency, Dr George Vella, President of Malta also visited the trade expo, stopping at each stand, including the MCAST Gozo Campus stand, where he spoke to the College personnel.



The MCAST Grievance Office

On 12 July 2018, MCAST informed all its staff and students about the setting up of its Grievance Office “to ensure that all its community members, including full-time and part-time students and staff, operate in a conducive environment where they can live together guided by sound values of inclusion and respect in the light of social and cultural diversity” (cf. Decision no. 01/2018).



Anthony Saliba, Deputy Principal, Grievance Office

The Grievance Office, which is located in the Administration Building at the MCAST Main Campus, Paola, Room 116, welcomes both MCAST students and staff who may wish or require additional support in handling disputes or disagreements. The MCAST Grievance Office assists all its community members who may voluntarily seek to share and obtain advice about their concerns, complaints and grievances. The overall main objective is to enhance and promote an authentic MCAST community spirit among all its members.

Mr Anthony Saliba, Deputy Principal, who joined MCAST on 16 July 2007, was assigned the responsibility of setting up and running the MCAST Grievance Office. One of his first assignments was to establish a clear policy for this Office and the procedures to be followed in handling claims made by both students and staff. By January 2019, more than 450 MCAST students and staff referred to the Grievance Office. Initially, contact with the Grievance Office starts with a phone call, a casual meeting somewhere on the Campus or in individual Institutes, by an email or by a note addressed to the Deputy Principal.

Three most popular ways of handling grievances or complaints are briefly described as follows for the benefit of prospective Grievance Office visitors: making clarifications at the source of the problem to eliminate unnecessary issues based on misinterpretation of facts and College regulations and procedures; an encounter – under the guidance and assistance of the Deputy Principal – between the complainant and the other party; and, if and whenever it is necessary, making use of the Formal Grievance Procedure, which involves a full investigation of one’s complaint until a Final Opinion is concluded and endorsed by the MCAST Principal & CEO,

Professor Joachim James Calleja.

The entire procedure of handling a grievance is carried out under the strictest confidentiality, while the Deputy Principal responsible for the MCAST Grievance Office keeps a detailed record of each procedure and his Final Opinion about its outcomes. The Grievance Office adheres strictly to the fundamental Principle of justice, while carrying out its investigations and providing any required support or making referrals in a timely and fair manner with all concerned. When a complainant presents his case by filling in Form A (it will shortly be also available on the College website), the whole procedure is explained to the complainant during an initial meeting where both the complainant and the Deputy Principal agree on a clear understanding of the matter that requires a formal investigation.

Finally, all MCAST students and staff may opt to appeal against the Grievance Office’s Final Opinion according to established procedures.

The Opening Hours of the MCAST Grievance Office are as follows:

<i>Mon</i>	<i>0815-1200 hrs</i>
<i>Tue</i>	<i>0845-1230 hrs</i>
<i>Wed</i>	<i>Closed</i>
<i>Thur</i>	<i>0845-1230 hrs</i>
<i>Fri</i>	<i>0930-1500 hrs</i>

In case of emergencies, one may contact the Grievance Office on any one of the following contacts:

<i>Office telephone number</i>	<i>2398 7105</i>
<i>Mobile</i>	<i>9949 5697</i>
<i>Email</i>	<i>anthony.saliba@mcast.edu.mt</i>

I Belong Programme



Following the launch of the National Migrant Integration Strategy and Action Plan Vision 2020 by the Ministry for European Affairs and Equality, MCAST started offering the Pre-Integration Certificate (Stage 1). This certificate is part of the I Belong Programme coordinated by the Human Rights and Integration Department. MCAST was tasked with designing the unit specifications of the Maltese, English and Culture units of the course. In February 2019 it commenced delivering the units' to the HRID I Belong clients.

Classes are held both at the MCAST Paola Campus and at MCAST Mosta in order to accommodate students from all areas on the island. The Stage 1, I Belong courses in Maltese and Culture are also offered to employees of Saint Vincent de Paule Residence. The lectures are held at their premises to accommodate the students.

Migrants have the opportunity to learn the basics of the Maltese language. This will enable the learners to be more independent. The English language classes are intended to help learners integrate better within the Maltese community, as well as be able to carry out every day needs and tasks. The Basic Cultural and Societal Orientation classes aim to provide basic information for learners coming from other countries about the local multiple sociocultural factors characterizing the Maltese society and about available support services in Malta.

An Award Ceremony for Cohort 1 clients was held on 3 July 2019. All ninety-five students who completed all Cohort 1 courses were invited. The Graduation Ceremony was organised at the MCAST Student House hall.



ICT EXPO

During July 2019 the Institute of Information and Communication Technology organised the Student Projects EXPO at the MCAST Student Hub. The EXPO provided a platform for ICT students to showcase their work and highlight the emerging technologies which are being researched within the Institute. Research topics included Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality, Games Development, Blockchain-enabled Applications, AI and Computer Networks.



The eSkills Malta Foundation continually supports the ICT educational system across the board and works incessantly to increase the numbers and the quality of resources. This year the Foundation was invited to participate in a panel regarding the students and industry. Mr Carm Cachia, Chief Administrator of the Foundation, spoke about the importance of bringing the knowledge learned to practice and also highlighted the important tasks within the industry that lays ahead of them. Following this, the first three ranked students that presented Level 6 projects were presented with a cash award for their achievement. Mr Axel Curmi ranked first with his project entitled "Academic Achievement Recognition and Verification using Blockchain", followed by Mr Michael Joe Cini with "Development of an Interactive Augmented Reality System as a Medium for Historical Facts". Mr Kevin Borg came third with the project "Using AI and NLP Techniques to Perform Automatic Text Summarization in the English Language".



Axel Curmi receiving the award



Kevin Borg receiving the award

Catch the Drop Campaign – Every Drop Counts!

Esplora Interactive Science Centre and HSBC Water Programme - Catch the Drop Campaign have teamed up to offer a unique opportunity for students to design and develop a digital game with the chance for it to be installed as an exhibit at Esplora in Kalkara.



Dr Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando, MCST Executive Chairman awarding the prize to Alex Fiott, MCAST student

Hydolink Winning Game

The game aims to promote the conservation of water as our planet's most important resource and was recently installed in the Ecolife Exhibition Gallery which focuses on raising awareness about sustainability, energy efficiency, water filtration and waste management.

Mr Paul Caruana, HSBC Malta's Southern Area Manager, awarded the winning MCAST student Alex Fiott with a €500 prize courtesy of HSBC Water Programme - Catch the Drop Campaign.

HSBC Malta congratulated the winner for his accomplishment and Mr. Caruana highlighted how this interactive game is another corporate sustainability initiative by HSBC focusing on education with the hopes of achieving long-term results. Through the game, tens of thousands of visitors can delve deeper into what they can do at home to conserve and harvest water, a limited resource in Malta, practically every day.

MCST's executive chairman Dr Jeffrey Pullicino Orlando stated that, "Esplora Interactive Science Centre is engaged in a mission to help people connect with science. In doing so, we truly believe that the Centre should have an active role in educating the public on global issues affecting our daily lives. Through the 'Catch the Drop' initiative, Esplora and HSBC have collaborated

in instilling a sense of responsibility in our citizens regarding the judicious use of water, an invaluable natural resource."

Alex Fiott described the making of the game Hydolink Winning Game as a 4-month long journey full of road bumps. However, even though it was not easy, he believes that his participation in Esplora's Water Conservation Game competition has been an invaluable learning experience since it challenged his programming and design skills and encouraged him to express his creativity.

"MCST and HSBC Malta gave me this opportunity to do something worthwhile and I am grateful for all the support I got from my lecturers and schoolmates. I could not do anything without the help of those around me, especially my father who has guided me along the way. This competition has been a great experience as well as a wonderful opportunity to expand my knowledge. I learnt how to create my own graphics as well as new coding techniques. I thank everyone who has helped me make this game possible."

Every Drop Counts! In a time where drinking water scarcity is an ever-growing concern, Esplora, HSBC and MCAST have joined forces to raise awareness about water conservation among the general public.

MCAST students safeguard Malta's natural heritage



It is clear that we are living in a day and age where people are more conscious about the natural environment. People are more aware of the numerous intrinsic and extrinsic benefits related to safeguarding our natural heritage. That is why it is imperative that students who are studying about safeguarding the environment and providing sustainable solutions do so not just by discussing theories in class, but by actually getting their hands dirty and practising the concepts that are so important for environmental professionals.

For the second consecutive year, students reading for a BSc (Hons) in Environmental Engineering at MCAST carried out a number of fieldwork sessions in Gozo. Over a span of two days students devised and carried out different sampling techniques within both terrestrial and marine ecosystems. This allowed students the opportunity to apply the concepts discussed in class. Such fieldwork sessions complemented class-based lectures during which students were presented with real-life problems. In the field, students had to collect, analyse and evaluate data to deduce the state of different habitats and of the environment. Based on the information they collected, they eventually presented their ideas on how to mitigate the effects of anthropogenic activity.

Whilst importance was given to technical and professional skills that the students will eventually use in their line of work, particular emphasis was also given to transferable skills, such as problem-solving, critical thinking, teamwork and time-management, amongst many others. Such initiatives offer opportunities for students to develop and strengthen skills which go



beyond the lecture room and are important for day-to-day professional activities in their field.

In a dynamic economy, development and progress depend on the practical application of scientific knowledge. The pedagogy of Vocational and Professional Education and Training ensures that knowledge is practised and applied in real-life contexts. In the case of the BSc (Hons) in Environmental Engineering programme, students actually put into practice knowledge about the environment and develop their professional skills. MCAST aims to play a strategic role in allowing students to develop and enhance skills that enable them to thrive and succeed in a constantly changing market and be catalysts in promoting economic development, expanding opportunities of employment, and improving the quality of employment. Students are also empowered to develop themselves personally and professionally to contribute to their own and society's well-being.

The students were accompanied by MCAST Institute of Applied Sciences lecturers Mr Juan José Bonello, Mr Edwin Zammit and Ms Francesca Spagnol Gravino.

MCAST Energy knowledge gain in France during the first JUMP2Excel Workshop



MCAST Energy team members participated in a three-day workshop organised by the French Alternative Energies and Atomic Energy Commission (CEA) in Cadarache, France. Dr Ing. Brian Azzopardi, JUMP2Excel Coordinator; Renata Mikalauskiene, Projects Manager (Research); and MRes Candidates and Research Support Assistants Marina Prutianov, George Bugeja and Ing. Albert Zerafa were among the participants. MCAST Energy is part of the MCAST Institute of Engineering and Transport and collaborates with the MCAST Capital Projects Department on energy infrastructure projects.

The JUMP2Excel project participants from Malta, Spain (CENER) and France had the opportunity to meet a strong delegation of the Electricity Syndicate of Martinique Island, representatives from the Energy group at Aix-Marseille University, Aéroport Marseille Provence, Mines ParisTech, EDF-SEI Corsica and the CAPENERGIES competitive cluster.

A number of site visits were also organised to CEA outdoor solar test facilities, Mégasol Platform 13MWp solar photovoltaic facility, Thassalia marine geothermal

power plant facility (ENGIE Group) and Cité des Energies microalgae facility.

The JUMP2Excel: Joint Universal activities for Mediterranean PV Integration Excellence project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 810809.

JUMP2Excel activities may be also open to the Maltese research community and the public, free of charge. For further information visit: JUMP2Excel.eu.

Achieving Vocational Excellence – Work-Based Learning at MCAST

by Martin Borg, Director for Work-Based Learning

Work-Based Learning is at the heart of vocational and professional education and training. The mission statement of MCAST places a specific emphasis on the need to provide universally accessible education and training that is responsive to the needs of the individual and of the economy.

Over the past three years significant milestones in the reform of Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning in Malta have been achieved. Following an extensive analysis carried out by CEDEFOP in 2014, MCAST has effectively steered an important reform that resulted in a significant increase of apprenticeships in Malta. In particular, the Work-Based Learning Department (WBL) at MCAST has been restructured in order to effectively engage with local industry and simultaneously provide the necessary support to learners to carry out WBL while they are developing their competences throughout the learning process.

The facilitation between the world of education and the world of employment requires effective and efficient structures to be in place. Based on the principles of lean management, MCAST has managed to engage 1,500 industry partners across all fields of economic activity in Malta. The formulation of these partnerships with industry have provided the opportunity for 3,400 students at MCAST to work and learn in 2018 alone.

Learning by doing is the main philosophical praxis of professional and vocational education. This is in fact the main distinctive characteristic of VET Institutions. At the same time, the importance of a properly regulating framework for work-based learning is essential. Through the recently enacted Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning Act, VET providers are required to develop further their internal capacity to ensure quality learning at the workplace.

MCAST has in fact recently launched an innovative project entitled “Achieving Vocational Excellence through Enhanced Work-Based Learning” by securing €7 million from European Social Funds. The main aim of this ESF Project is to take WBL to the next level through a series of strategic action measures. For instance, as one of the project deliverables, 400 trainers will be trained to facilitate



the learning process at the place of work. This will be conducted by primarily building up the human capital of key experts, who in return will develop and implement a train the trainer accredited programme.

Additionally, through the involvement of strategic partnership with the National Skills Council, industry stakeholders will also be equipped with the necessary knowledge and information. This action will be conducted through the organization of 15 thematic workshops that cover economic fields in Malta and Gozo. In order to ensure that quality learning takes place, a competency framework that covers over 250 occupations in Malta will be developed. At the same time, an analysis tool will be developed in order to also forecast skill needs that the Maltese labour market requires through statistical techniques and equation modelling. Finally, MCAST will also develop emulative centres that will be equipped with state-of-the-art technology and equipment. This will not only enable MCAST students to be better equipped with the necessary and essential competencies, but will also greatly improve the time required for effectiveness in the world of work.

Student Erasmus+ Experiences

Elise Galea

Advanced Diploma in Fashion and Retail

Elise Galea participated in an Erasmus+ mobility programme in the United Kingdom from the 12th of June to the 10th of July 2019. She observed how seamstresses and secondary design helpers work in a fashion studio and how different tasks are shown and viewed by the directors of the brand 'Mary Katrantzou'. She was taught how changes to clothes are done and which different details of garments fit best with each other. Another important thing that she learnt during her mobility was how to

live independently for a whole month whilst also gaining knowledge about the fashion industry. She has experienced the culture in London and she has travelled around using public transport.

This Erasmus+ experience has given Elise a better understanding in the different roles of a fashion company. She has also experienced how a large fashion design team operates. This experience acted as a platform for Elise to discover and explore more about her future career.



Michael Anthony Baldacchino

Advanced Diploma in Sports

Michael Anthony Baldacchino travelled to Denmark from the 24th of June to the 5th of July 2019 as part of an Erasmus+ mobility.

He has learned and observed a lot of things during the two weeks that he spent working in Copenhagen with BK Skjold. During this mobility he had the opportunity to discuss and prepare the periodization for the U14 and U19 teams. Michael has had various opportunities to observe and learn new methods on how the coaches at this club conducted their training sessions and he was also given the chance to conduct one of his own training sessions.

During the second week of his Erasmus+ programme, the club organised a five-day summer camp for the players. These were supervised by two AIK Stockholm coaches and three FC Concordia coaches. Michael's role in this summer



camp was to coach the 2005 and 2006 age groups under the guidance of the above-mentioned coaches. This really helped him to broaden his coaching techniques.

Over all this Erasmus+ mobility was an amazing experience for Michael due to the positive feedback and knowledge which he has gained.

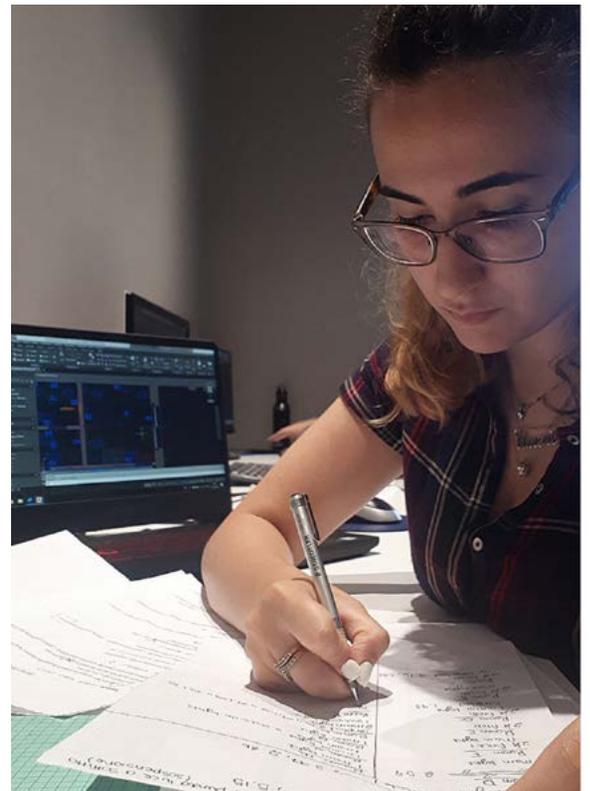
Naomi Tanti

Advanced Diploma in Civil Engineering

Naomi Tanti travelled to Italy from the 1st of July to the 19th of July 2019 as part of an Erasmus+ mobility project.

Naomi gained knowledge and skills that have helped her grow on both a professional and personal level. She gained invaluable knowledge and experience in the architectural sector, appreciated simple things in life that she took for granted before and also became more open-minded.

She stated, "Having an eye for detail is key so that one can be as precise as possible, and to help you appreciate your work and that of others. We continue to learn and grow till the very end of our lives. The beauty of life is that we do things that we love. Success is not being rich but reaching a point of pride in your work."



First Mcast Research Symposium

The first MCAST Research Symposium featured presentations of academic papers published in the MCAST Journal of Applied Research and Practice and a poster gallery of the MCAST Masters in Vocational Education and Applied Research 4.0.



The Minister for Education and Employment Evarist Bartolo key note message cited Malta's education strategy that is supported on seven key pillars that include governance of education organisations; social dimension; student focus; quality of education provision; international dimension; strategic innovation, and performance dashboards. The Ministry positions itself at the forefront to provide present and future generations with the necessary skills and talents for employability and citizenship in the 21st century. MCAST President Mr Frederick Schembri argued that in implementing strategies, educators and education systems worldwide need to continually assess the knowledge, skills and dispositions students need for success in today's rapidly changing and complex world.

Professor Joachim James Calleja, Principal and CEO of MCAST, accentuated the growing relevance of MCAST as an institution to cater for the demands of our nation and its impact on society. MCAST is offering programmes that are flexible, relevant and responsive to the aspirations

of the students and to the needs of industries which are constantly evolving to meet the challenges of a changing global economy. As Malta is one of the fastest-growing economies in the European Union through the implementation of a long-term vision geared towards increased foreign and domestic investment, economic growth and increased productivity, it becomes more pertinent for institutions to provide high quality education that supports employment for all.

Whilst launching the publication of the Journal of Applied Research and Practice, Dr. Ing Alex Rizzo, Deputy Principal for Research and Innovation at MCAST, emphasised the need for research and publications in the journal. Ten research papers were presented by authors from different backgrounds and a debate on quantitative and qualitative research methods preceded the academic paper presentations. Dr Nadia Maria Vassallo, MCAST's Deputy Principal for Curriculum Development, contended that we need to unpack the three very loaded terms



of inclusion, excellence and equity in the light of the 4th Industrial Revolution, which will bring rapid and drastic changes that will affect the way we operate, the loss of jobs and the creation of new ones and life in general.

Research Symposium Theme – Applied Research and Innovation within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The underlying theme of the first MCAST Research Symposium featured the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2030 Agenda that supports economic growth and addresses a range of social needs including education, health, social protection and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection. This is shaped by the architecture and rapid transformations of artificial intelligence and Industry 4.0. In a remarkable moment of global consensus, the United Nations, through its adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, prioritized education for global citizenship and global competence and has worked with academics, educators, and stakeholders in the global education field to define global competence in education.

The aim of the Research Symposium was intended to apply knowledge to real world experience and promote research endeavours generating answers to solve specific down-to-earth problems that someone may be facing using sound evidence and critical thinking. This supports the formation of basic skills required in working life that are changing all the time, and which require further development and supplementation of existing labour force competencies. The skills to be developed include

cooperation and networking between different professional groups, as well as technological competence and problem-solving skills. The keywords here are readiness for change and continued education.

The conference presentations allowed participants to present their data during various stages of development including preliminary findings, recently collected data, or data that is in the process of being published. Academic papers and poster sessions presented up-to-date findings and participants had the opportunity to receive feedback from colleagues and from master’s students which will then help them ultimately write up their study.

Perhaps one of the most important benefits from the research symposium was the ability by presenters to advocate their science. Representing respective fields of interest allows researchers in other disciplines, policy-makers, and lecturers to become aware of the research being generated in particular subfields. As researchers, it is important that we share our research findings with people outside our specific discipline to increase the visibility of our research and provide interested individuals with more information. MCAST’s role is to provide solid foundations for master’s students for their eventual pathway to doctoral research.

Debate on quantitative and qualitative research was conducted by Dr Ing Alex Rizzo, Deputy Principal for Applied Research and Innovation and Dr Ronald Aquilina, coordinator for the master’s programme in Research Methods. The debate on research methodologies titled ‘Which one will set you up to fail?’ was moderated by Stephen Hall, coordinator for the MSc



in Information Technology and Systems, who prompted key questions to both participants.

Ten research papers were presented during the first MCAST Research Symposium, four employing quantitative research methods and six employing qualitative research methods. The first session comprised five papers that were moderated by Eleni Tsitsirigou, coordinator for the MSc in Lean Enterprise. This included four papers from the social sciences and one paper from engineering by Christian Camilleri, Luke Pace and Alex Rizzo that presented the performance analysis of ageing domestic water meters with respect to apparent losses in a case study. Doreen Susanne Micallef studied the physiological and therapeutic outcomes of intermittent fasting versus calorie-restriction diet in patients suffering from metabolic syndrome. Poverty alleviation in Malta was researched by Theresa Demanuele Montebello, whereas the effects on the Maltese economy by labour migration into Malta was studied by Daniel-Louis Tabone and Luke Vella. Rosienne C Farrugia researched Vocational pedagogies for the formation and training of early childhood educators by analysing perspectives of VET lecturers and level 5 Early Years learners.

The second session comprised the presentation of the other five papers. Dr Mario Caruana, programme coordinator for MSc in Exercise and Sports Science moderated this session. Robert Vassallo and Marco Dimech presented a paper titled Irrigation-Water demand in the Maltese Islands employing quantitative methods in Engineering. The other four papers employed qualitative research methods in social sciences. These papers included 'A study of the factors that lead to student drop-out'

by Colette Farrugia and 'Student's perception of global warming on the Maltese Islands' by Jesmond Agius. Kirsty Farrugia and Beverley Abela Gatt discussed 'The broken rainbow – same-sex intimate partner violence' whereas Josette Bonnici and Ronald Aquilina presented the initial stages of the research on the impact of lecturer's emotional intelligence on students.

Following the presentation of the research papers to MCAST master's students, the author moderated a discussion exploring potential dissertation themes for students enrolled in the various MCAST master's programmes. The moderator stressed on the benefits of the masters programmes at MCAST whereby access to a multidisciplinary range of programmes is made available to all master's students. This not only helps students gain broader insights from the content and development of all the master's programmes but also exposes them to diverse issues from a wide range of perspectives, enhancing research quality and applicability of research based on real life experiences and practices.

The Research Symposium Steering Committee is composed of Dr Ing Alex Rizzo, Architect Joseph Falzon and Information Technologist Stephen Hall. The Symposium was held on Saturday 6th July 2019 at MCAST Campus Paola. Access to the web portal dedicated to the Research Symposium is available at <https://moodle.mcast.edu.mt/course/view.php?id=3806>.

Dr Joseph Falzon, PhD, LEED AP (US), is an architect and programme coordinator of the MCAST MSc in High Performance Buildings, and a senior lecturer at the College's Research and Innovation Centre.



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