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# SYMPOSIUM FOR COLLEGES



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# INVESTIGATING THE EFFECT OF A TABLE-TOP ROLE-PLAYING GAME ON PRIMARY STUDENTS' CREATIVITY AND MOTIVATION

Joseph Facciol

## ABSTRACT

The use of games in education has the potential to enhance student motivation and creativity (Diefenthaler et al., 2017; Noel & Liub, 2017; Romero et al., 2015). This is especially true in table-top role-playing games (TTRPGs), where both the game designer and the players create content (Guzdial et al., 2020). This dissertation's objectives were to further local TTRPG research in the field of education by investigating how a TTRPG influences students' creativity and motivation both inside and outside the game. The TTRPG used for this study: 'A Journey Beyond' was designed by the researcher for this dissertation. To achieve these objectives, the following research questions were asked:

1. How does playing a TTRPG affect the students' motivation in and outside of the game?
2. How does playing a TTRPG affect the students' creativity in and outside of the game?

## KEYWORDS

Table-top Role-playing Games,  
Creativity, Motivation

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTOR



Joseph Facciol has been working as an LSE for the past ten years. During this time, he obtained his Master's degree in Contemporary Western Philosophy. The intention behind his thesis, 'Investigating the effect of a table-top role-playing game on primary students' creativity and motivation' was to bridge the gap between games and education.

# OUTDOOR TEACHING AND SCHOOL FOOTPRINTS IN MALTESE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Desirée Falzon

## ABSTRACT

This research was carried out within an Erasmus+ project on outdoor teaching (OT) in Maltese primary schools related to nature-based teaching (NBT) as a form of OT that connects children with nature and increases ecological behaviour. Educators are key drivers of NBT, hence it is important to understand motivating factors and perceived barriers. Two studies were carried out to explore the context and state of practice of OT in Maltese primary schools, comprising a survey of OT among primary school educators, and a mapping survey of different landscapes of primary school footprints. Findings reveal a clear interest in OT, especially among early years educators, and that school grounds are the most popular venue for OT. However, school grounds are dominated by hardscapes, and nature is rarely used during OT. This research recommends systemic support for NBT, and integrated school design incorporating green outdoor spaces as part of the learning environment.

## KEYWORDS

Outdoor teaching, Primary School, School Grounds, Nature-Based Teaching, Integrated School Design

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTOR



Desirée Falzon has been a teacher for thirty years. She is the main author of BirdLife's Dinja Waħda environmental education programme. Her career and interest paths converged when she became a Dinja Waħda programme field teacher connected. Today she leads school visits at nature reserves, and trains educators in Learning Through Nature. Desirée holds a Master of Science degree in Education for Sustainability (LSBU) and is studying for a Doctor of Philosophy in Environment Management and Planning (UoM). She has conducted research on outdoor teaching and on school grounds as a research support officer with the University of Malta.

# WHEN COVID CLOSED MY SCHOOL AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHY ON LEADING A PRIMARY SCHOOL IN MALTA DURING THE EARLY STAGES OF COVID-19

Deo Grech

## ABSTRACT

The aim of this research was to understand how a school leader experienced the COVID-19 pandemic in the Maltese context, without generalising any of the findings. This qualitative research took a grounded approach. Autoethnography and hermeneutics served as the methodology through an interpretative analysis perspective. The researcher told the story from his first-hand experience, taking into consideration documentary evidence of how the pandemic effected his school in this context. The first-hand experiences, challenges faced, emotions lived, and the conclusions derived from the reflections were aimed to enable readers to learn more on how this global pandemic effected the life of a Head of Primary School in Malta. This research also aimed to offer the opportunity to educators to relate to the story and to draw differences and similarities with experiences they lived in their various school settings during the same period, and which have disrupted their lives, drastically.

## KEYWORDS

Crisis Management, Emotional Intelligence, Communication, Technology, Capacity Building, Listening Leadership, Distributed Leadership, COVID-19, Education, Auto-ethnography, Hermeneutics, Grounded Theory

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTOR



Deo Grech is a Head of school, currently leading one of the largest Primary schools in Malta, Birkirkara Primary School within St Theresa College. He has recently completed a Master of Science Degree in Leadership and Strategic Management with Triagon Academy. Having previously obtained an Honours Bachelor's Degree in Education and a Post-Graduate Diploma in Educational Leadership from the University of Malta.

# CREATIVE LEARNING SPACES

Anna Napier & James Callus

## ABSTRACT

The Creative Learning Spaces (CLS) project stems out from the quest of providing learners within the school community an opportunity to engage in hands-on activities through innovative pedagogical approaches. This empowers learners to become critical thinkers, unleashing their creativity by making good use of technology and thinking about innovative ideas to deal with real life problems. The pillars underpinning this project are the school's action plans which focus on working toward Education for Sustainable Development to improve learning that helps students become responsible individuals. The project targets the school's action plans which address a cross-curricular approach, ensuring an inclusive and equitable quality education. The CLS project further promotes lifelong learning through STEM opportunities.

## KEYWORDS

Creative Learning Spaces, Education for Sustainable Development, Digital Literacy, Computational Thinking, Equity, Lifelong learning

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS



Anna Napier has been serving as a Head of School at Senglea Primary since 2017. Prior to taking up this role, she served as Head of School at Birkirkara Primary and Assistant Head at Zabbar Primary A. She has extensive teaching experience, teaching at Kalkara Primary School for twenty-two years. She continued to further her studies in 2012, when she obtained a Master's Degree from Leicester University in Educational Leadership.



James Callus is a Head of Department Digital Literacy within the Directorate for Digital Literacy and Transversal Skills and one of his main roles is to promote Digital Literacy and Computational Thinking in Primary State Schools. Together with the school leadership team, he endeavours to empower educators to effectively use digital technologies in the teaching and learning process. He is regularly involved in teacher training sessions, continuing professional development meetings and digital literacy workshops. Throughout the year he is actively involved in Digital Literacy Days, EU Code Week activities, Family Coding activities, Robotics, eTwinning, Digital Citizenship Education, Coding and Computational Thinking workshops.

# THE ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERS IN INITIATING EARLY INTERVENTION TO SUPPORT LEARNERS WITH DYSLEXIA

Marisa Pace

## ABSTRACT

Dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty typically identified when children are enrolled in school. Language learning for learners with dyslexia poses several challenges, especially when it comes to reading and writing. Most academic material requires fluency in literacy, hence learners with dyslexia tend to lag behind. This qualitative study sheds light on the barriers encountered by educational leaders when seeking support services to further assist learners with dyslexia, particularly through intervention programmes provided by the National Literacy Agency. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with primary school leaders, educational psychologists, counsellors and leading educational specialists. It emerged from the study that many learners with dyslexia rely mainly on the support provided by their class teacher or at best attend complimentary language sessions. Consequently, these learners are bound to be subjected to academic failure, which subsequently translates into symptoms of low self-esteem, anxiety and behavioural issues.

## KEYWORDS

Dyslexia, early intervention, educational leadership, intervention programmes, Maltese state primary schools

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTOR



Marisa Pace is a primary school educator at Maria Regina College with fifteen years of experience in teaching and learning, particularly in the junior years. She received a bachelor's degree with honours in Education from the University of Malta in 2007 and a Higher Diploma in Administration and Management from the same university in 2017. This year, Ms Pace graduated with a master's degree in Applied Educational Leadership from the Institute of Education. Her main interests are literacy programmes for learners with reading difficulties, intervention programmes for learners with dyslexia, critical and creative pedagogies and sociology of education.

# PEER COLLABORATION FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Randolph Peresso

## ABSTRACT

One way to improve the outcome of a school is through the strengthening of the social and decisional capitals (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012). This presentation outlines the strategy adopted by a Maltese primary school, St Ignatius College Siggiewi Primary, to provide its educators with more opportunities to collaborate in a structured way. This is being achieved through an ongoing project in which all educators in school are given the possibility to conduct lesson studies, peer-to-peer observations and learning walks. It discusses the rationale for this project and reflects on lessons learned thus far. For instance, the reflective process sheds light on the teachers' willingness to take ownership of their professional trajectory and benefits associated with it; the role school leaders can adopt; and the effects of a paradigm shift from a culture of performativity to a culture of support and development. Challenges encountered are also discussed.

## KEYWORDS

Professional development, collaboration, lesson study, peer-to-peer, learning walks, leadership

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTOR



Randolph Peresso, MA (Comparative Euro-Mediterranean Education Studies), is an assistant head at St Ignatius College, Siggiewi Primary School. He also performs lecturing duties at the Institute for Education (IfE) and the University of Malta (UM). His main academic interest is pedagogy in the primary classroom. Mr Peresso is a PhD student. He is currently conducting a study to gain a deeper understanding of the pedagogical discourse in Maltese primary classrooms.



# A CASE STUDY OF PRIMARY SCHOOL LEADERS INVESTING IN SOCIAL CAPITAL TO EMBRACE FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT WITHIN A STATE COLLEGE

Gertrude Tabone

## ABSTRACT

The absence of a collaborative culture and the sporadic use of formative assessment are frequently encountered challenges in Maltese primary schools. This research investigates how primary school leaders, in one state college, are supporting social capital to enhance the quality of teaching and learning through formative assessment. Virtual interviews were the source of data collection. The data was analysed through thematic analysis approach using Microsoft Excel to colour-code the emerged themes. The themes capture the realities as interpreted by the college primary school leaders within their environment. Findings reveal that the assessment and curricular reforms, combined by the pandemic circumstances, are stimulating the educators to join their forces and work collectively. Collaborative opportunities and formative assessment are supported and promoted by the school leaders. This study unveils the importance of collaborative inquiry, through the co-teaching cycle methodology, to impact the quality of the daily practices.

## KEYWORDS

Social capital, formative assessment, thematic analysis, collaborative inquiry

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTOR



Gertrude Tabone is a Head of Department in Assessment for Learning supporting a state college. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Education from the University of Malta and was a classroom teacher for twenty years in the primary sector. She holds a Postgraduate Certificate in Assessment for Learning Teaching Strategies and a Master's degree in Applied Educational Leadership, both from the Institute for Education. Currently, she promotes active learning and motivates educators to implement a learner-centred approach using formative assessment practices. She co-ordinates and provides curricular support while collaborating with other departments to optimise professional learning.

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