

# network

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“A student’s brain physically changes every day, and the way we teach either enhances or impairs it”

*(Principal B. Lynn Brown  
from the Jacob Shapiro school USA)*

School matters. Your role as a teacher is of crucial importance for the success or otherwise of students. Recent research shows that there is little about learning which is hard-wired. “What we find is people really do change their brain functions in response to experience” (Kurt W. Fischer – Director of Harvard University’s Mind, Brain, and Education Program). This goes to show how important it is that we invest in programmes such as Let Me Learn. Such programmes gives us a better understanding of how students learn best and then give us the tools to adopt those pedagogies which respect the student’s preferred mode of learning.

The articles and reflections in this publication are a testimony of the value of teachers who took the time to attend the Let Me Learn training because they believed that they could make a difference in the lives of their students. I hope that we continue to grow as a community of practitioners and share these experiences to be better equipped to respond to the learners’ needs and work towards empowering each learner to succeed.

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# Intervista mas-Sur Deo Grech, acting head fl-iskola ta' Hal Għaxaq



## 1. X'kienu r-raġunijiet li mbuttaww biex tattendi għat-taħriġ tal-Let Me Learn?

Madwar erba' snin ilu, ġejt appuntat assistent kap tal-iskola primarja ta' Hal Għaxaq fi ħdan il-Kulleġġ San Benedittu. Hekk kif dħalt f'dan ir-rwol, bdejt nirrealizza li kelli bżonn nieħu xi forma ta' taħriġ professjonali dwar il-pedagoġiji tal-lum. Kont ilni li ggradwajt mill-1997, u fl-aħħar 10 snin kont iffukajt totalment fuq il-ħidma tiegħi bħala għalliem tad-Drama, b'hekk il-pedagoġija fi klassi kont inqajt f'tit minnha mhux ħazin. Hassejt il-bżonn li qabel ma nkun nista' nibda nissapportja lill-għalliema fil-ħidma tagħhom, kelli nibda billi nissapportja lili nnifsi.

L-aktar 'buzz word' li kienet laqtitni kienet il-kelma 'differentiated'... fittixt f'tit fuqha u malajr iltaqajt ma' esperjenza ta' għalliema fejn irrakkontat li permezz tal-LML u l-istrategġiji marbutin ma' dan il-proċess, hija jirnexxielha tagħmel *differentiated teaching* bl-aktar mod naturali u effettiv mal-klassi tagħha. Hekk kif ħarġu l-applikazzjonijiet tħajjart u applikajt. U l-vjaġġ tiegħi beda hemm...

## 2. X'kienu l-fatturi li ġieghluk tħajjar lill-għalliema tal-iskola tiegħek biex jipparteċipaw f'dan it-taħriġ?

Nammetti li jena persuna li jekk xi ħaġa ma nemminx fiha, insibha diffiċli ħafna biex inbiegħha lil haddieħor. Fil-każ tal-Proċess tal-LML ġara l-istess ħaġa. Li kieku m'għamiltx il-pass li nieħu t-taħriġ jena wkoll f'dan il-proċess, żgur ma kontx nasal li nissuġġerih lil haddieħor.

Il-proċess tal-LML għoġobni mill-ewwel għax huwa ffukat fuq l-individwu. Narah proċess mill-aktar effettiv għax jibni fuq dak li għandha x'toffri l-persuna, mbagħad jibni fuqha.

Nisimgħu spiss dwar *child-centred pedagogies, quality learning and teaching* u għadd ta' frażijiet li jagħmlu ħafna sens fil-professjoni tagħna. Jien dawn stajt narahom iseħħu bl-aktar mod naturali permezz tal-proċess tal-LML.

Kien għalhekk li waħda mill-ewwel deċiżjonijiet tiegħi, bħala kap tal-iskola, kienet li nħajjar lill-istaff tiegħi li jieħdu t-taħriġ fil-proċess. Onorat ħafna li tlieta minnhom laqgħu l-istedina b'idejhom miftuħin u bdew it-taħriġ huma wkoll.

Ikolli nammetti li fattur ieħor li influwenzani fid-deċiżjoni tiegħi kien il-fatt li nemmen bi sħiħ li għalliem effettiv qatt

ma jista' jieqaf milli jitgħallem sabiex itejjeb lill-nnifs u jzomm l-entuzjażmu u l-motivazzjoni għat-tagħlim (*learning and teaching*) għaddej. Permezz ta' riċerka, riflessjoni u taħriġ kontinwu nistgħu nissejhu professjonisti tassew. Togħgobni ħafna fil-fatt il-frażi *Reflective Practitioners* għax nemmen bi sħiħ li ma nistgħux noffru edukazzjoni tal-ogħla kwalità jekk ma nirriflettux fuq il-metodi li qed nużaw u ma narawx kif nistgħu ntejbu r-riżorsi tagħna għall-ġid tal-istudenti li għandna fdati f'idejna.

### 3. Wara li attendejt għat-taħriġ tal-*Let Me Learn* u doqt is-sapport li joffri ċ-ċentru, rajt xi tibdil fl-għalliema u fl-istudenti?

Forsi min qatt ma żar l-iskola ta' Hal Għaxaq jista' jaħseb li qed inkun ottimist iżżejjed, iżda kull min kellu xi forma ta' kuntatt magħna u b'mod speċjali mal-klassijiet li qed jużaw il-LML fil-prattika, jista' jifhem aħjar għaliex inħares lejn dan il-proċess bħala għodda daqstant effettiva fit-tagħlim. It-tliet għalliema li tħarrġu f'dan il-proċess tul din is-sena skolastika, Ms Azzopardi, Ms Caruana u Ms Cumbo ħadu l-affarijiet bis-serjetà. Saħansitra l-istudenti tagħhom bdew jiffamiljarizzaw ruħhom mal-lingwaġġ tal-LML, mal-karattri Faru, Ġeru, Żringi u Fina. Niehu gost nidhol fil-klassi tagħhom u nara l-karattri fuq l-imwejjed tat-tfal, sabiex dawn 'jgħinu' waqt xi attività ta' kitba, tpingija, proġett jew saħansitra tisjir fil-klassi.



Kien mument mill-isbaħ meta waqt Jum il-Ġenituri fl-iskola, kellmuni xi koppji fejn faħħru s-sistema tal-LML u qaluli li sa fl-aħħar qed jifhmu għaliex it-tfal tagħhom qed igibu ruħhom b'tali mod differenti minnhom. Omm partikolari qaltli, "Qed jiddispaċini kemm kont naħsibha li hi traskurata... issa qed nirrealizza li hi għandha Konfluwenza għolja u Sekwenza baxxa, bil-kontra tiegħi, u għalhekk iġġib ruħha differenti minni. Jeħtieġ li naħdem fuq is-Sekwenza tagħha, u jien fuq il-Konfluwenza tiegħi, b'hekk nifhmu aktar 'il xulxin.'" Kienet esperjenza sabiha ħafna... f'daqqa waħda anke l-ġenituri qed jikkellmu bil-lingwaġġ tal-LML, għall-ġid tat-

tagħlim ta' wliedhom wara kolloxx.

Fir-rigward tal-għalliema, rajt entuzjażmu lejn il-proċess innifsu u wkoll lejn il-fattur li bħala għalliema jeħtieġ li nibqgħu ngeddu lilna nfusna biex b'hekk nibqgħu effettivi fil-klassi u lil hinn minnha, fl-esperjenzi kollha tagħna fil-ħajja edukattiva.

Esperjenza oħra pożittiva ħafna ġrat ftit tax-xhur ilu meta waħda mill-klassijiet fejn l-għalliema qed tiehu t-taħriġ fil-LML, inghatat lill-istudent tal-Università *B.Ed. Hons.* tal-ewwel sena bħala parti mit-taħriġ tiegħu. Jien u l-għalliema tal-klassi irrealizzajna li dan l-istudent-għalliem kien qed juża' l-proċess tal-LML fil-

klassi. Meta tkellimna miegħu, qalilna li hu qatt ma kien sema' bih, u l-Università kienu jagħmluh bħala *credit* 'il quddiem fil-kors. Iżda qalilna li kienu l-istudenti stess li kienu jirreferu għall-vokabularju tal-LML.

#### 4. X'inhuma l-għanijiet futuri tiegħek għal din l-iskola f'dak li għandu x'jaqsam ma' taħriġ u implimentazzjoni tal-Let Me Learn?

L-għan prinċipali huwa li l-iskola tkun ċentru ta' tagħlim tal-ogħla kwalità b'għalliema professjonali li jaħdmu id f'id mal-amministrazzjoni, ġenituri u studenti għall-aqwa ġid tal-istudent innifsu. Għax nemmen li għalliem għandu bżonn ir-rizorsi biex jaħdem bl-aktar mod effettiv, se nkompli nissuggerixxi li l-għalliema jiehdu t-taħriġ neċessarju fil-Proċess tal-LML, bħal fi proċessi oħrajn fosthom tal-Malta Writing Programme. Konvint li bl-



entuzjażmu li qed jinholoq fl-iskola, minħabba fil-kisbiet immedjati li rnexxielna niksbu f'qasir żmien, dan it-taħriġ se jkompli għaddej fis-snin li ġejjin, b'mod volontarju mill-għalliema preżenti u oħrajn li għad jingħaqdu magħna.

Apparti hekk, qed nitfa' għajnejja fuq grupp partikolari ta' studenti bħala mudell biex narahom kif se jkomplu jiżviluppaw fil-ħiliet tagħhom. Fejn hu possibbli, se nipprova li minn sena għall-oħra dejjem ikunu f'idejn għalliema li tharrġu fil-proċess tal-LML, b'hekk il-lingwaġġ u l-ħiliet tal-proċess ikunu f'posthom b'mod immedjat.

Għall-istess għan, nixtieq li l-ġenituri wkoll jiehdu t-taħriġ fl-għarfien tal-Proċess tal-LML, imqar f'livell t' għarfien f'dal-punt, b'hekk ikunu jistgħu jsostnu d-dar dak li nkunu bdejna l-iskola.



# Rapunzel

*A collaborative project between the Let Me Learn representative, Writing Support teacher and Literacy teacher.*



As teachers we are constantly being bombarded with different external pressures. Apart from the demands of our class and students' needs, we are also increasingly being demanded to fill in forms and much paper work. Due to our great mix of differentiated students in our classroom, our planning needs to focus on the different needs in order to reach more kids. Now a number of courses are also available to give the teachers different tools in order to maximise their teaching – these are all good things but if taken separately, many times teachers feel overwhelmed on how to implement all this.

The Let Me Learn (LML) representative, Writing Support teacher, Literacy team and Dyslexia specialist, employed by the Secretariat for Church school education, met to discuss how they could collaborate. From this meeting emerged the idea of preparing a lesson combining the three tools and hence modelling how all these may be combined into one lesson.

The first lesson of this type was held in March 2012, when the team liaised with a year 2 teacher at St Benilds. The literacy teacher was already working with this teacher, who also had a basic knowledge of LML from her University years. The teacher provided the team with the letter sound of the week and also the English topic of the week. Hence, the lesson was to be planned around her scheme of work.

The LML representative (Sarah DeGaetano) attended the class before in order to speak to the children about the four learning patterns through the use of the LML soft toys: Ġeru (Sequence), Fina (Precision), Faru (Technical) and Żringi (Confluence). The children became

aware of the roles of each character and also how everyone learns in different ways. The students were observed by Ms DeGaetano in order to find each child's preferred method of learning. These observations were then used to plan out the lesson and also as a tool in order to divide the groups. These were chosen to have a good mix of all four patterns.

On the day, Ms Sarah DeGaetano started off by stating the learning objectives and task decoding the activities through the use of the four LML characters.

Ms Maria Debrincat (Literacy) introduced the new phonic sound 'igh'. An igh song was then sung with the class and they were introduced to a number of 'igh' words. So as to



consolidate this, each group was given a number of flashcards and the children matched the 'igh' words to the correct picture (Precision and Sequence). Fina and Geru were placed near the children in order to encourage them to do the task well.

Rapunzel (Ms Fiona Galea), all dressed up, entered the class to relate her story through an 'igh' poem while in the background a slide feature was being viewed. (Confluence, Precision, Technical).

The class was then asked to work together to form a book. Each group was given a different prompt, pictures to cut and stick (Technical) and lined paper to each child for him to write a few sentences (Precision). The story was then placed and stuck onto cardboard paper in the correct order (Sequence). They could also create their own sentences (Confluence).

The story board was then presented to the whole class (Confluence). Each group came out with their story board and read their sentences to the rest of the class.

The activity targeted all four patterns and the learning outcome was very evidently reached by each and every child in the class. Other lessons similar to the one above were also carried out in other Church schools.

## Involving Parents in Reading and Writing through the LML Process

Ms Dorita Galea, a primary school teacher at St Clare College San Ġwann Primary, decided to involve the parents in her year 4 classroom after completing her training in the Let Me Learn Professional Learning Process. In this particular session, Ms Galea planned to expose the parents to LML and link it to reading and writing skills.



“Parent involvement in learning activities is a strategy for increasing the educational effectiveness of the time that parents and children spend with one another at home.”

*Becker & Epstein, 1982*



The parents who came for the session were made familiar with the four Let Me Learn characters i.e. Ğeru (Sequence), Fina (Precision), Faru (Technical Reasoning) and Žringi (Confluence) by their own children who showed a thorough understanding of what these patterns are and what they mean to them. The children, together with their parents, were then grouped according to the children's own learning patterns, making sure that there was a balance of patterns in each group. Ms Galea gave out a story involving the four

characters to be read in groups by the children and their parents. Before doing so, the teacher gave particular hints on how parents can make reading enjoyable and successful with their children.



This was followed by another interesting activity involving creativity and writing. She came up with the following four titles: "When Ğeru got hurt", "Going through Wied Lelluxa", "Exploring Wied Pepprina" and "The Magical Cave". She gave a title to each group who then had to use Žringi (to help them come up with ideas) and Fina (to help them write) to produce a story about the given title. The teacher



made it very clear that everyone had to contribute in one way or another. It was just amazing how the groups came together, students and parents taking turns at writing and making sketches that illustrate the story they had just written.

At the end, each group of children read out what they had written to the rest of the class. This was a very positive experience since the children felt that they knew something their parents didn't and as one of the parents claimed, "This should be done more often as we have just become aware of how our children learn. This is very interesting as I think that it could help me at home when my daughter is doing her homework."



# LML in the teaching of Mathematics

**The Let Me Learn Experience is undoubtedly an enriching professional development experience for all educators, irrespective of their role.**

**The Let Me Learn is a journey of growth and reflection.** In November 2011, the Mathematics Support Team has decided to embark on this experience as well. Upskilling the Mathematics Support Team was definitely a priority in order to ensure quality support to Primary class teachers. The Mathematics classroom should be a community of collaborative learners whose voices and ideas are valued. Our aim as the Primary Mathematics Support Team is to make Mathematics fun and meaningful. Providing opportunities for students to develop intrinsic motivation in Mathematics is generally superior to providing extrinsic incentives for achievement. The approach to Mathematics teaching and learning has changed in recent times. Mathematics is not just learning of facts and procedures! It focuses more on making sense of number and on conceptual understanding. All learners are unique, thus the Primary Mathematics Syllabus promotes different methods and strategies. Carefully selecting and using combinations of teaching

practices will increase the probability of helping students learn. Not all practices may work in all classrooms at all times.

Effective questioning in Mathematics is a very powerful tool. Teaching through questioning is interactive and it engages students by providing them with opportunities to share their thinking. The feedback students give while learning provides a lot of insight into what needs to be modified in the teaching and learning activities.

The Mathematics Support team is doing its utmost to:

- promote and support various Mathematics learning situations within and outside the classroom;
- prepare and use various resources that appeal to different learners.

Mathematics Trails, Mathematics Clubs, Hands on Activities and Themed Mathematics Fun Days and the Mental Mathematics Championship were quite a success with students and teachers alike.

Besides participating in lectures and workshops during the Let Me Learn training, the Mathematics Support

Teachers had the opportunity to prepare different Mathematics lessons which they had to carry out in front of each other. The feedback generated throughout this activity was very inspiring. In this activity, the Mathematics Teachers had the opportunity to learn with each other and from each other, an opportunity which they cherished immensely.

## The Mathematics Support Team's Feedback on Let Me Learn

When both teachers and students know and are aware of each other's learning patterns, they are empowered to make sense of learning and act in a way that yields success. As a result, they shift the way from taking ad hoc intuitive actions to using informed, deliberate and intentional behaviours. Thus, the Let Me Learn is a powerful process in making both teaching and learning intentional (Johnston, 1996). Effective teachers do not only offer education but seek to ensure learning (Darling-Hammond, 1996). Teaching with intention is a way to reach the *unreachable* learners.

**Melanie Casha Sammut**





The Let Me Learn course has provided me with the opportunity to engage in personal as well as professional development. Throughout these sessions, we were able to share, discuss, collaborate and reflect upon our own teaching approaches and how these can be improved in order to provide more quality teaching in our schools. Engaging in ongoing professional development over a number of months has proved to be highly effective in enabling us to find the required support and motivation to learn from each other and work as a team. I strongly believe that the Let Me Learn approach can be successfully implemented in any classroom and integrated in any lesson, in order to ensure equal participation by all pupils in the learning process.

**Elaine Muscat**

The LML process helped me a lot to understand myself better and grow as a person and as a teacher. It helped me become more aware of my learning patterns and to use them with intention. This knowledge will help me create different learning environments and provide students with tools for developing their individual patterns.

**Joanne Ghirxi**



Through LML individuals find out how to recognise who they are as learners. Recognising how I enjoy being taught helped me realise why I prefer certain teaching styles more than others. On second thoughts much of my teaching reflected both my own learning patterns and those of my favourite teachers. LML has made me realise that this could be problematic for those students whose learning patterns may differ from my own. We have little, if any, control over the nature of the pupils placed in our care, or the colleagues with whom we are expected to work. Thus, it is best to discover who they are and accept them as they are. It is not always easy to recognise and respond to student variability. Sometimes it is difficult for students themselves to accept that they are different and that they do not have a problem. Students who use the LML Process understand themselves better as learners. Consequently, they have more academic success because they take charge of their learning with greater confidence. I feel that this increases one's self-confidence

and persistence to achieve. Thus, an individual's achievement will automatically increase and lead to success.

**Amanda Cilia**

LML helped me a lot to understand that we are all different and that children learn from different methods. I am working hard to accept the fact that certain things could be carried out in a different way and not the way I say they should be done.

**Maria Grima**



All teaching staff should be knowledgeable of the learning patterns so that they can help all pupils to learn, create activities suitable for each learning pattern, reduce labelling, involve all pupils in the lesson and ultimately the lesson objectives can be achieved.

**Maria Spiteri**

**L***EARN... Learn more  
about you as a learner  
and you'll be a better  
teacher.*

**E***MPOWER... Empower  
your students to be  
successful learners.*

**T***HINK... Think  
outside the box!*

**M***ARK... Mark your  
learners' journey.*

**E***NRICH... Enrich your  
children's learning  
experience.*

**L***ISTEN... Listen to the  
voice of every learner.*

**E***NGAGE... Engage  
all learners in a  
meaningful way.*

**A***CCEPT... Accept  
that each learner is  
an individual.*

**R***EFLECT... Reflect  
and become an  
intentional learner.*

**N***OURISH... Nourish  
a hope that we can  
all succeed.*

# Little Literates

A joint project between Let Me Learn, Writing Support and Literacy Support Teachers. Endorsed and sponsored by the Secretariat for Catholic Education.



During the week between the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of April, Valletta was buzzing with activity as young girls and boys from a number of different schools roamed the streets to participate in a new project, 'LittleLiterates'. This project came about as a result of a joint collaboration between the Let Me Learn representative, Writing Support teacher and Literacy Support Teachers employed by the Curia.

The aim of the project was to encourage reading and writing among year 3 students through a number of activities held at different 'stations', namely, the Auberge D'Italie, The Manoel Theatre and the Museum of Fine Arts. Each class was divided into two groups and rotated from one activity to another.

At the Auberge D'Italie, the children in the first group were helped by Faru and Geru to build a galleon. The

children had a wonderful time working in groups. After reading out all the instructions, the children worked together to build and paint a galleon. While this was happening, the second group listened to a story in Maltese about a galleon travelling in rough weather during the time of the Knights. The children were helped by Fina to do a pre-writing activity and write a short story about their adventure.



After a stroll in the sun, the students reached the Manoel theatre where they listened to a story about the Three Little Pigs. Zringi was there to help predict what would happen next in the story. Zringi was also the protagonist as the students used masks and wigs to dramatise the story of the big bad wolf who was taken to court and charged with a prison sentence!

The last stop was at The Museum of Fine Arts where students searched for clues in order to complete a treasure hunt. A colourful booklet

was designed by the organisers. This booklet consisted of a numbered trail around the rooms of the museum, where the children were asked to look out for different details in the paintings or to fill in the missing part onto their booklet. Another group were once again helped by Fina and Geru and were given some literacy games to complete.

This is the first time that such a project has been organised. Even though it was a pilot project, it proved to be a great success. The activities were fully booked as schools were very eager to participate, seeing this as a golden opportunity whereby students could be encouraged to read and write through fun activities. This was also a platform for the teachers to become more aware of the services offered by the LML Centre, the Writing Support and the Literacy Support Teachers. Well done to all the organisers!



# Introducing LML at St Michael Foundation

Introducing Let Me Learn (LML) in an independent secondary school is certainly a challenge. One has to take in consideration a number of factors as one brings on board all the stakeholders: students, teachers, parents and the Board of Trustees.

LML was mentioned some years ago by a number of individuals at school as a means to provide a way forward, to accompany students in their learning and to improve differentiated teaching in a mixed ability school. Understanding and working with the learning patterns one has, enables the Learner to take more control of his/her learning.

The fact that LML was also suggested by Mr C. Busuttill (then the Assistant Director of Education) during his visit to St. Michael Foundation (January 2009) was a great push. It gave more credibility to the project in a school where little was known about it.

## 2009-2010

In 2009-2010, the SMT was looking ahead to work on its School Development Plan and one of the areas that was discussed was the LML project. In fact it was decided that LML would be launched during the Staff Seminar held on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2010. Here the LML Team conducted a seminar for members of staff.

After July 2010, the implementation of LML was in the hands of the new SMT, with me as the new Head of School. I have always thought that the way the project is implemented will have a bearing on whether the project will be accepted and be successful or not. The process of implementation is almost as important as the project itself.

## 2010-2011

The timetable determined who could be sent to the LML course in 2010 – 2011. In fact it was only possible to send four teachers from the seven who volunteered and myself for the LML course. A pilot project was started in Forms III and IVG in January 2011. Parents were informed about LML through circulars and parents' meetings. The teachers who were doing the LML course shared their experience with their colleagues in the Staff Seminar held on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2011. This ensured that there would be more teachers on board the following year and that the project would move ahead on steady ground.

## 2011-2012

The benefits of LML were soon to be seen by the rest of the staff. More teachers became interested and the Board of Trustees and the School Administration arranged that eight teachers and Ms Carina Gerada, the Assistant Head (who is







in charge of LSD and Support) participate in the 2011-2012 course. The target groups now included Form I and Form III.

The focus here was to consolidate the work started the previous year – in fact the PSD teachers participated in the course so that LML will permeate through the whole school. The teachers from the Support Department also joined the LML training to complement the sterling work being done there.

The LML team meets often at school to discuss the progress of the project. It was felt that the rest of the staff should be given some more information about LML to maintain the momentum of the project until it would be their turn to be trained. This time LML trainers joined our teachers who participated in the LML course to share their expertise with the staff in a SDP seminar in March 2012. This gave the school the possibility of introducing a two tier training programme: the normal year's LML course organised by the LML Centre and the input in the SDP seminars by the LML team.

The students took to the LML ideas immediately. They embraced the Learning Patterns enthusiastically in class. One could see this in the LML inventories carried out by the teachers in the school.

This interest by the students was also evident during the seminars held for parents about LML by members of the

LML Centre. The SMT organised two seminars for parents so they can participate in the Learning Process. There were a number of parents who were very keen to know more about the process and how this can help them communicate better with their children and offer them more effective help with their studies. In fact the next step which will take place in this scholastic year will be to organise LML training in smaller groups for parents.

Besides the mentoring by the LML trainers, the teachers are also doing peer mentoring among themselves as they discuss and support each other during the year.

The LML project within the school is going well, thanks to the dedication of all teachers and the guidance and support of the LML Centre. This year another group of teachers will be participating in the LML course.

The LML project has already started to yield its benefits and enable students to learn better. We look forward with enthusiasm as the LML approach permeates more of the school's learning.

*Alfred Sant Fournier*  
Head of School



# The ‘Merchant of Venice’ in Gozo



Last scholastic year we had two educators who bravely faced the journey from Gozo to Pembroke in order to participate in the LML training. One of these educators is Ms Georgette Bajada, an LSA who works at the archbishop’s seminary in Rabat, Gozo, a church secondary school for girls. Ms Georgette Bajada is liaising with the English teacher, Mr Ronald Debrincat, in order to implement the LML process with a group of Form 4 girls.

Ms Georgette and Mr Rondald decided to use LML to make a lesson with a difference in which the girls had to revise ACT 1 of ‘The Merchant of Venice’ by William Shakespeare. The girls were divided into groups according to their learning patterns and they were assigned different tasks

suitable to their learning profile. The first group decided to use drama as their medium: They brought the play to life by acting out Act 1 in front of their classmates. Of course, this activity was very much enjoyed by those girls who were high in Confluence, but nevertheless, everyone participated with great enthusiasm. Another group of students created a PPT presentation in which they explained to their classmates the most salient points of Act 1. They also predicted what would happen in Act 2. Even though it was a group effort, the girls very wisely assigned the creation of the PPT to the girl who scores highest in Technical Reasoning. The third group opted for a ‘Character Presentation’. This presentation was structured as a game, in which names of characters had to be matched to their pictures and to their roles in the play. They also introduced the characters that they would read about in Act 2, and so succeeded in arousing the curiosity of their audience. During this presentation, the girls were sticking the pictures and the flashcards onto a chart, and the student who scores highest in Sequence couldn’t stop rearranging the cards and the pictures so as to have them placed neatly on the chart!

Each presentation was followed by a short discussion in which the students processed the way they worked as a team. They also analysed how each member contributed to the group depending on her learning patterns. Towards the end of the lesson, Ms Georgette introduced the concept of learning strategies by encouraging the students to think about what they did to complete their task successfully.

This was an exemplary lesson in which students used the LML process to maximize their potential. We would like to see more teachers from Gozo implementing the LML process. In fact, the LML Malta Centre is exploring the possibility of providing training sessions in Gozo in the near future.



# Let Me Learn in a Kindergarten Class

I came to know about the Let Me Learn Professional Learning Process through my colleagues. They urged me to participate as did my headmaster Mr Alfred Debattista. I was very interested and I promptly signed up. The reason I chose to apply for this training was to improve my teaching skills, know more about students' way of learning and work in a professional manner. This proved to be a stepping stone towards achieving that result. Through the knowledge imparted by the Let Me Learn course I aim to push my students to achieve further than I had originally planned.

During my first LML lesson observation, I conducted a butterfly mobile craft activity. This involved an introduction on garden creatures, followed by an imaginative dialogue with a caterpillar puppet, an interactive whiteboard game, painting and craft making.

I started off with the introduction by giving as much information as possible on garden creatures. This involved mentioning their colours, features and the sounds they make. The aim of this introduction was mainly to target the learners with high Precision who want to know everything in detail and so I included Fina, during this activity. Before being exposed to LML, I didn't give a lot of importance to questions. Now, being aware of the fact that the Precise pattern is very dominant in my class, I am allowing more time for questions from students. This not only fulfils the children's curiosity but also imparts knowledge to those asking the question as well as the others present in the classroom. Vice versa, when asking questions to students I am not rushing for an answer as I know that they may be thinking it through before replying since they may lead with the Precise learning pattern.

Using the Let Me Learn concepts, I am also varying my daily activities according to the four learning patterns. I have decided to do this since establishing an accurate class profile simply through observation is quite challenging. For instance, if one day I used the interactive whiteboard as an introduction or explanation of an activity, I make sure that on another day I use puppets or stories. In this particular activity I used both since I know that my students enjoy these type of tasks and are able to remain focused and interested throughout



the whole lesson. I have also increased hands-on activities in my planning since I have noticed that a good portion of the students also lead with the Technical pattern. This makes students feel at ease in class and thus makes learning a much more enjoyable experience.

Apart from working on the Technical, Precise and Sequential patterns, I am also taking in consideration creativity while planning my activities. This is mainly done to target learners scoring high in Confluence through freedom of choice of colours and role plays. By allowing children to pick and mix their own colours while painting, I am stretching their Confluence and giving them space to manifest their creativity. For instance, during this butterfly activity I distributed a lot of paint colours on each table and heart-shaped cut outs to stick onto the template. However, I also gave an example of the finished product; targeting the learners who use Sequence first. I made sure that the model is always visible for those who needed an example. I realised that showing a sample saved me a lot of time since students did not feel the need to ask a lot of instructions. There is a particular student who used to ask me regularly whether he is doing the task right or if it is good enough. Now with the sample provided, he feels more self confident that he can finish the task successfully. Moreover, this child is the last one to finish a

project. As such I gave this particular child extra time to finish his craft while the others washed their hands and cleaned up the room.

The introduction of the four characters, Ġeru, Fina, Faru and Żringi, had tremendous effects on my teaching methodology, children's learning and the teacher-student relationship. Students can now relate to the characters and make their learning patterns more evident. The students got used to them since I am constantly mentioning and including them in different activities and tasks throughout the day. For example, I include Ġeru during cleaning time after tabletop toys, paint activities and meal. By constantly reinforcing that Ġeru likes everything in order, children are more eager to tidy up. As such the class is organised in a much shorter period of time. In addition, learning about patterns helped me deal with my students in a more professional manner. I can now correct, reward or discipline each child in line with his learning pattern/s which will eventually influence the child's behaviour in a positive and beneficial way.

Let Me Learn provided the tools through which a beneficial overall harmony was created in class. The students and I both directly benefited from the topics imparted in the course as mentioned above. Furthermore, I indirectly benefitted from the learning

experience in that I gained further confidence in my teaching capabilities through seeing the growth and development of the individual students under my care.

*Ms Rodianne Mercieca, St Margaret College, Żabbar Primary A*



*If you would like to share your experience with the Let Me Learn Process in the next issue of 'Netwerk', contact Ms Valerie Salerno on 2340 2554 or [info@letmelearnmalta.org](mailto:info@letmelearnmalta.org)*



# TEACHING LOCI

I teach Mathematics to a Form 4 class which has been set with high ability motivated students. Notwithstanding this, the students found the topic LOCI boring and were starting to show lack of enthusiasm for the Maths lesson. After a set of meetings with the Let Me Learn representatives (Ms Sarah DeGaetano and Ms Valerie Salerno) where we spoke about the four Let Me Learn Patterns and the different ways of targeting all four patterns, I decided to go beyond Precision and Sequence and to use Technical Reasoning and Confluence for this lesson. I told the girls that we would be doing a LOCI lesson in the yard. They would concentrate on one out of the four LOCI in the syllabus and use what is available in the yard, ground lines, poles, bins, benches, to explain the LOCUS to the rest of the class.

Being high in Confluence myself I did not see the need of further instructions, but the students who score high in Sequence in the class, which is the majority, were lost even though the topic had been covered with many applications. So I prepared a handout with further instructions but they were still asked to come up with their own location and yard objects needed for their presentation. I myself went prepared with chalk, rulers and string.

The students in this class (which is made up of a number of strong-willed learners and has a very good mix of all four patterns) were asked to split themselves up in four groups of four students each. Since they had the freedom to choose, the grouping was carried out in such a way as to compliment each other's learning patterns. Each group quickly settled down as to who does the recording, who would be the fixed points and who would do the actual construction, or give instructions and take measurements. The four LOCI were drawn on the ground and presented to the rest of the class and to the LML representatives, some of whom had no idea of the topic.

Finally, the students asked and answered questions regarding the use of LOCI and which LOCUS applied to a particular practical situation.

The aim of this activity as regards the development and consolidation of the concept of LOCI was achieved but most important I gained insight into students' thinking.

*Josephine de Battista*  
Mathematics teacher at St. Joseph Blata I-Bajda  
HOD for Mathematics in Church Schools



# TEAM-BASED LEARNING

Being both high in Confluence, Dr Don Stoll and his wife were touring Europe, needless to say, without having any particular plans in mind. So they rented a car and started travelling and exploring many different European countries. In the middle of this adventure, they decided to take a 'break' from their holiday and visit Malta, on the recommendation of their colleague and friend Prof. Christine Johnston.

So that is how Mr Colin Calleja organized a meeting between Dr Stoll and a group of educators at the NCC in Hamrun on the 18<sup>th</sup> of April. During this meeting, Dr Stoll shared his expertise in team-based learning using the LML learning patterns. This is a teaching strategy which he uses to enhance collaboration between his college students at Rowan University where he teaches written and spoken academic discourse.

As Dr Stoll explained, in the first lecture, he asks his students to fill out the Learning Connections Inventory and together they discuss what their scores mean. Dr Stoll makes it a point

to help his students gain a clear understanding of who they are as learners. The data from the LCIs is then used by the students themselves to form diversified teams. Students put themselves into groups based on the proviso that a "use-first" pattern needs to be represented on every group and that the group needs to avoid a cluster of the same patterns. In this way, in each team there is a wide spectrum of each of the four patterns. Each student needs to understand his or her role within that team, and the way in which he or she is going to contribute to that team throughout the whole year. Another basic principle which drives Dr Stoll's methodology is that people work better on project-based efforts when they are in groups rather than alone: "the result is greater than the sum of the parts".

In order to foster commitment among the team members, students are asked to sign a covenant. The covenant is like a 'learning contract' which students sign to show that they intend to do their best to collaborate with the other team members. Through the signing of the covenant, students

also promise to be responsible in their learning process and for their contribution to the team.

The educators who were present were very much interested in this process, and having experimented with LML groups themselves, they discussed the benefits and possible challenges of such an approach. This meeting was also an opportunity of sharing of good practice in which teachers and administrators shared how LML is enriching their practice.

After spending a week in Malta, Dr Stoll and his wife could finally continue their holiday in Europe.

*Dr Stoll, Rowan University*



# Ms Enid Bonello, ICT teacher, explains how she uses LML to group students

I came across LML around 6 years ago, when the school had organised an SDP session. We were asked to fill in the inventory. When I was filling mine, I found out that certain questions were pretty obvious and thought that my colleague was going to have the same answers like mine. Little did I know that at the end of all this, one could find more about how one learns, thinks and reacts/works with others.

I found out that I am a strong willed learner with S 26, P 27, T 33, and C 26. Most of the time I have a conflict within myself to try to keep a step back when I work within a group or to keep my mouth shut as my ideas are always out of the box. Through LML I realised why. It was then that I wanted to know more, as I felt that this could be a tool which could help me understand my students better.



Initially, I implemented LML with only one class. I was able to get to know the group of students better and experiment a bit with my methodology of teaching.

When I implemented LML with the whole cohort the following year, all the process was much easier. I decided to use the LML grouping for group work where the students had to create something in ICT with the theme for Achievement Day. Initially, at the beginning of the scholastic year, I asked the students to group themselves. The output left much to be desired. So it was then that I decided to group the students according to their scores.

Although time was always a constraint throughout the whole scholastic year, I grouped the students making sure that I had a mix of patterns in every group. Some of the groups had to be modified due to lack of chemistry between the members of the group.

Throughout this exercise I made sure that during my lessons I refer to the scores and encourage the students to stretch or tether their patterns where needed. The final result this time was superb. The students made use of their patterns with intention and this



resulted in less conflict within the groups.

Some argue that when students are forced into teams this does not always work. Sometimes there are bound to be problems and some people do take a free ride. I believe that in a real life situation people work together at their workplace and the training has to start from school. If the students learn how to deal with their patterns and understand those of their colleagues, it will definitely help them to work in teams.

After this experience, my target for this year is to try to help students use these scores to the maximum potential. Now that they are aware of the LML process, I can ask students to group themselves up instead of grouping them up myself. This will definitely empower the students during their time at school and carry this baggage outside school.

*Ms Enid Bonello, St Dorothy's Convent, Senior School, Zebbuġ.*

## Why am I different?

I really was quite interested  
But no one gave a care.  
I wanted to express my ideas  
But I definitely wouldn't dare.



I was not like the others  
They studied hard and often  
But I preferred experimenting  
Or doing things by chalking.

Until that day I remember  
I was introduced to Let Me Learn  
When I learnt that I was also capable  
A position, able to earn.

In my own way, I still reached my targets  
I could still choose my own way of life  
The profession I wanted to follow  
And I could do this without lots of strife.

I discovered the way I was different  
Was a different learning pattern after all  
And I was not an ignorant person  
To be put in a corner facing the wall.

Now that I'm aware that all are able  
To reach their goal in different ways  
Now that I'm aware of different patterns  
And that all are capable whatever people say.

I am being trusted with my own little learners  
I can appreciate their different feelings too  
Whether, Confluent, Precise, Technical or Sequential  
My little friends, I can reach out to you!

*By Ms Natalie Zahra  
St Joseph School, Blata l-Bajda*

## The Four Learning Patterns

Let Me Learn has taught me  
To be happy with what life has brought me.  
There are four different ways,  
We make use of them to learn.

There is no right way,  
There is no wrong way,  
Just seek the right pattern...  
And that's all that matters.

Sequence can help me order,  
Outline or organize.  
It's easy to arrange and alphabetize,  
Put in a series or make a sample!

Precision is the one I like,  
I can calibrate or describe,  
Measure and observe,  
Be specific and write!

Technical to me is hard and scary,  
I'd have to erect or experience,  
Demonstrate or draw,  
Use tools or problem solve!

Confluence can make me shriek!  
How can I improvise or take a risk?  
Can I imagine or even dream?  
What to invent or be unique?

Get used to your pattern,  
But learn how to tether!  
To forge is not easy, but give it a try!  
While focusing can help you to intensify.

These lectures have been,  
The light in my dark,  
I am not lazy or stupid,  
I am just right!

They filled me with courage,  
And I understood,  
Why I am different,  
And that is so cool!

And finally...  
To Valerie and Sarah,  
Graziella and Sue,  
A very big thank you  
For your pursuit.

In succeeding to teach me  
To put to good use  
The four learning patterns  
That I have to use.

*A reflection by Ms Silvana Farrugia  
St Theresa College BSS, B'Kara*

