

Differentiated Instruction and Implications for UDL Implementation

Effective Classroom Practices Report
NCAC National Centre on Accessing the General Curriculum

"Not all students are alike. Based on this knowledge, differentiated instruction applies an approach to teaching and learning that gives students multiple options for taking in information and making sense of ideas."
(Tomlinson, 2001)

This is the summary of a report on differentiated instruction and UDL (Universal Design for Learning). It begins with a brief introduction to differentiated instruction and then moves to UDL applications of differentiated instruction. If you would like to read the complete report, you can find it on the Let Me Learn website: www.letmelearnmalta.org

The model of differentiated instruction requires teachers to be flexible in their approach to teaching students to modify themselves for the curriculum. Many teachers and teacher educators have recently identified differentiated instruction as a method of helping more students in diverse classroom settings experience success.

To differentiate instruction is to recognize students' varying background knowledge, readiness, language, preference in learning and interests; and to react responsively. Tomlinson (2001) identifies three elements of the curriculum that can be differentiated: Content, Process, and Products.

UDL is a theoretical framework developed by CAST (Centre for Applied Special Technology) to guide the development of



Names of students have been changed to protect their privacy

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curricula that are flexible and supportive of all students. The concept of UDL was inspired by the universal design movement in architecture. This movement calls for the design of structures that anticipate the needs of individuals with disabilities and accommodate these needs from the outset. Universally designed structures are indeed more usable by individuals with disabilities, but in addition they offer unforeseen benefits for *all* users.

Similarly, but uniquely, UDL calls for the design of curricula with the needs of all students in mind, so that methods, materials and assessment are usable by all. Traditional curricula present a host of barriers that limit students’ access to information and learning. Of these, printed text is particularly notorious. In a traditional curriculum, a student without a well-developed ability to see, decode, attend to, or comprehend printed text is compelled to adapt to its ubiquity as best as he or she can. In contrast, a UDL curriculum is designed to be innately flexible, enriched with multiple media so that alternatives can be accessed whenever appropriate.

The UDL framework guides the development of adaptable curricula by means of 3 principles: These 3 principles parallel 3 fundamentally important learning components and 3 distinct learning networks in the brain: recognition,

strategy and affect (Rose & Meyer, 2002). The common recommendation of these 3 principles is to select goals, methods, assessment, and materials in a way that will minimize barriers and maximize flexibility. In this manner, the UDL framework structures the development of curricula that fully support every student’s access, participation and progress in all 3 essential facets of learning.

The three UDL principles call for flexibility in relation to three essential facets of learning, each one orchestrated by a distinct set of networks in the brain.

Critical to successfully implementing UDL theory is the use of digital materials. Digital materials, unlike the conventional pedagogical mainstays, speech, printed text, and printed images, have an inherent flexibility. They can be modified in a host of ways, depending on the needs of the student. This flexibility makes it feasible to customize learning materials and methods to each individual.

For teachers wondering *how* to customize the curriculum, CAST has devised three sets of broad [teaching methods](#) that support each of the 3 UDL principles (Rose and Meyer, 2002). These teaching methods draw on knowledge of the qualities of digital media and how recognition, strategic and affective networks operate. (See table 1)

Network–Appropriate Teaching Methods

Principle 1	Principle 2	Principle 2
To support diverse recognition networks:	To support diverse strategic networks:	To support diverse affective– networks:
Provide multiple examples	Provide flexible models of skilled performance	Offer choices of content and tools
Highlight critical features	Provide opportunities to practice with supports	Offer adjustable levels of challenge
Provide multiple media formats	Provide ongoing, relevant feedback	Offer choices of rewards
Support Background context	Offer flexible opportunities for demonstrating skill	Offer choices of learning context

In order to implement UDL at a classroom level, the first and most basic step is self-education. Although UDL has been more than a decade in the making, it is an approach that challenges many traditional educational perspectives and practices. Before teachers can implement UDL effectively, they may need to learn a different way of looking at their students and the materials that they use in the classroom. CAST has been working to disseminate UDL widely and has developed multiple avenues through which individuals can learn about UDL and develop the skills necessary to put it into practice. The CAST website devotes a large section to UDL, including ideas and examples for implementing it.

Differentiated Instruction, although still developing in educational settings, has received significant recognition. When combined with the practices and principles of UDL, differentiated instruction can provide teachers with both theory and practice to appropriately challenge the broad scope of students in classrooms today. Although educators are continually challenged by the ever-changing classroom profile of students, resources, and reforms, practices continue to evolve and the relevant research base should grow. And along with them grows the promise of differentiated instruction and UDL in educational practices.

Leah, a success story

Claudia Agius, LSA St Joseph Sliema



Leah is a very shy Form 2 student who scores high in Technical Reasoning and Confluence and very low in Sequence and Precision. In view of her scores, she tends to be very disorganized and does not like to read. Leah has always had a problem dealing with word problems in Maths. She always liked Maths and enjoyed working out sums. However, when confronted with word problems, Leah has always found them impossible to understand and work out. This was very frustrating for Leah and also for her teachers and LSAs as she simply couldn't apply the knowledge she has to word problems. The LML Process has helped Leah gain more confidence and improve her performance in Maths and in her exams.

After Leah's low mark in Maths in last year's annual exam, we had started considering an adapted syllabus for her and an exam paper that contained less word problems and more straightforward sums. This however, would have made it practically impossible for her to be ready to sit for her O-level in Maths in three years' time. So we gave it a last try and it was a good idea.

During her pull-outs from class, I worked with Leah on her Maths syllabus. We started the topics a week before the teacher did them in class and this helped Leah to be more focused in class and take more interest. Since she enjoys the subject I knew she would be willing to work but I did not want her to feel demotivated when meeting a word sum. I started by introducing her to the LML principles during her one-to-one sessions and I explained each pattern using real life examples. She could easily relate to the patterns, comparing each one to a family member or a friend, and she could identify her own patterns. At first she was a little hesitant when she was seeing how people who use Precision and Sequence as their Use First patterns were more organised and found it easier to complete tasks and fit into the educational system. However, when I explained that my own patterns were very similar to hers, she felt more confident and not at all judged. This helped her to be herself without inhibition and be more open to discussion, telling me when she couldn't understand or felt lost.



This similarity in patterns has also helped me provide better assistance to Leah and be more in tune with her thoughts and feelings since she often finds it hard to express herself in a clear way.

After a few Maths sessions we decided to start off with word sums and we were prepared that this was not going to be easy but we were both determined to make it happen. Here is when I showed Leah my Power Card and suggested she does one for herself. I gave her some coloured paper, scissors, glue, pens and markers and led her step by step to create her own tool.

Now we had a plan; we would break down these monstrous word problems into smaller tasks that did not look that impossible to achieve. We would use our Confluence to draw diagrams or pictures when needed and read the questions one bit at a time until each useful detail was well understood. We started with simple, achievable sums and a topic which Leah was confident in. This proved to be successful and amongst the egg cartons, stick figures and cake portions we drew, we started finding a way around most of the problems presented to us. Leah felt more confident with every quest achieved and she was now

looking forward to these sessions. Each session was different than the other: We used real 3D shapes to understand volume; we used shower gel and water to understand density, and the floor tiles came very useful when the word 'coordinates' could not make any sense. Leah's participation in class improved as she felt she could give out answers without making a fool of herself. She was eager to show me her HW because she knew that some of it, and sometimes most of it, was correct.

Leah managed to get 76 in her half-yearly exam, having the same paper as all the others and scored very high marks in all her tests. She stumbled a few times but kept believing in herself. Her mother explained that she goes home feeling motivated, telling her parents what she has achieved at school. In the annual exam, her mark increased to 81, higher than the class average.

For Leah, the LML process has not just meant better grades, but also a better understanding that although she is different and unique, she can still be successful and that she can find a solution for whatever hurdle she meets. She has learnt that the word 'impossible' can be overcome just by looking at things from a different perspective.

Empowering Parents *through Let Me Learn (LML)®*

Schools, communities and families all share the common goal of wanting children to succeed in school. Since education begins at home and parents are their children's first and most influential teachers, supporting and educating parents is a logical strategy. Both SMTs at St Michael Foundation Senior Section, San Ġwann and St Benedict College Ġhaxaq Primary have risen up to this challenge. Having embarked on implementing LML as a whole-school learning policy, they felt the need to start roping in parents, mostly to have parents and teachers already certified as LML practitioners collaborating together for the holistic well-being of students. Over four 2-hour weekly sessions, Ġhaxaq Primary endorsed training targeting learners in the Primary, whereas St Michael Foundation endorsed two evening trainings targeting adolescent learners.

The LML Process® is proving to be an effective tool in aiding parents understand how they can motivate their children to learn and keep up with their studies. As a by-product, it starts as a booster of parent morale, especially in cases where parents, for various reasons, feel academically

inept to help out at home. Parents, even in small capacities, can always offer a complimentary role, acting in partnership with the school to support their children's education. Frequently, they fail to recognise parental qualities that not only are their major strengths, but may also give them an advantage over teachers in paving the way for the establishment of a healthy adult/younger learner relationship.

Through a mix of discussions and hands-on applications, parents become aware of how they and their children obtain and process knowledge. They view learning as an interactive process of thinking, doing and feeling which reveals itself in the four learning patterns: Sequence, Precision, Technical Reasoning and Confluence. This is their first eye-opener as to why they often clash with their children when selecting study space and offering advice as to how the latter can complete home and study work that is proving to be a source of frustration. Frequently parents would be reasoning things out of their own learning pattern combination rather than that of their children.

by Susan Grixiti, Let Me Learn trainer

"In the past, I automatically assumed that in terms of studying, my son should enjoy writing out notes, having a neat and organised desk and that he would feel uncomfortable within a disorganised environment. This was definitely not the case for my son, whose score in Sequence indicates that he might avoid it. Getting to know about the four learning patterns and the way they interact with one another has been a great insight for me. I no longer expect him to do things the way I want him to and now I accept that he is different."

Natasha Grech

"For me it was an eye opener as to why my son reacts in a particular manner. It helped me to understand that the way I react to situations does not necessarily need to reflect in my son's behaviour."

Lucienne Grech

Parents become aware how diverse learning pattern combinations affect family relations on a personal, social level as much as on the academic plane. In fact, parents' initial comments revolve upon the immediate change for the better in the parent/child communicative and affective relationship rather than anything else.

"...upon seeing my son's scores and mine and how they differed, made me start thinking twice before I lose my temper while talking and working with him. I am now trying to go more around his needs and trying to put mine on hold. Since he is a sensitive boy, I think he seems to have realised that something has changed and that I'm trying harder to see things from his point of view."

Luisa Camilleri



"...definitely my communication with [my son] is better. I'm not just shouting at him, instead I now try to understand why and how I can present a problem to him in a way that his patterns match."

Carmen Valletta



"I am listening more to what [my son] has to say when he gets stuck and am trying to find ways and means to go about solving a problem by using methods he is comfortable with rather than imposing my opinion on him."

Odette Muscat

During the training, parents were provided with the necessary skills that enable them to help their children understand how they can make their learning combinations work successfully when the task requirements clash with the children's learning patterns. Parents whose learning patterns match their children's and feel at a loss themselves when asked for advice with homework and study state that they themselves are finding such strategies fruitful.

"I liked the part which allows adaptability of and implementation of the patterns, tethering, stretching of patterns to help bridge the gap between the task demands and your 'abilities'. This really helps as well in understanding others' views on tasks apart from your own."

Ivan Riolo





Others comment positively about showing their children an alternative path of learning: how to tackle same tasks and still reaching the targeted goal. Children as learners feel less frustrated which in turn impacts the way parents deal with their general attitudes and behaviour.

"[It] has helped me to make some changes in the way I help my daughter with her homework. Her teacher asks her to read a book every week and write a book summary. [Her] score in Precision might be very low and she might score high in Confluence. Instead of reading the book and pin pointing every detail, we read together and I allow her to draw her story, appealing to her Confluence, then proceed to writing."

Marcelline Agius

"My son scores high in Technical and Confluence and so I have learned that I need to break down a task for him, especially written tasks. I am also letting him explore his ideas first and then together decide which ideas are the most appropriate."

Carmen Valletta

Parents who have received training commented favourably about it, deeming it highly relevant on more than one level.

"The fact that we discussed each other's problems, were given actual facts of everyday life and discussed how to go about them through different learning skills helped a lot. We could apply the case studies we went through to our situations at home."

Odette Muscat

"Getting to understand your child's learning patterns immediately put things in place! One can understand the struggles with lack of enthusiasm in carrying out specific tasks and demands, not necessarily HW but also other roles within the household."

Ivan Riolo

On several occasions, despite parents having to deal with personal issues or coming straight from work, it was a pleasure seeing them happy to stay on to continue exploring further strategies for their children. In specific instances, members of the school administration, who are themselves LML trained, also attended the evening sessions to experience another dimension of LML. Gauging the parents' receptiveness and positive feedback, both schools foresee more parents' sessions in the near future.



Tania Farrugia joined the Let Me Learn team in September 2011. We are interviewing her so as to get to know her better...

GETTING TO KNOW...

TANIA FARRUGIA

1. How did the work with the Let Me Learn team change your perceptions about learning?

Let Me Learn has provided me with an answer to questions which have been lingering in my mind since I attended primary schooling. With my high Sequence and Precision I always wondered why it is so difficult for certain individuals to understand the importance of being organised and of taking detailed notes. This perception started to change when I continued my post graduate studies in creativity which amongst other things, enabled me to become more aware of alternative ways of expressing oneself. I extended my knowledge and skills in this regard when I joined LML and participated in the LML Advanced course led by Prof Christine Johnston. Now I understand that we all have our unique combination of learning patterns and any educator needs to respect that, if his/her aim is to empower the learners in her care.

2. What do you find most rewarding about this job?

Each and every opportunity to visit the different stakeholders, being it educators and/or parents who have the sole aim of reaching children

in their care, is very rewarding indeed. Individuals who embark on this journey have one sole aim: to take control of their own learning and become capable of teaching and learning with intention. Being capable of understanding who we are as learners and having the ability to take in the world around us and make sense of it, is an essential life skill in this everchanging environment we live in!

3. What are the challenges that you have to face?

LML is an advanced Learning system as it does not only stop at explaining the four learning patterns and the theory of pattern combination. That is only the beginning of the whole process which also includes tools, skills and shared language which is implemented throughout the whole learning process. This means that sometimes other educators might initially perceive the whole process as being complicated or something which will not complement their already very busy load in the classroom. This wrong perception



might keep them away from actually taking the plunge to embark on this journey. Thankfully, such perceptions fade when fellow educators start the journey with us and realise how complimentary and beneficial it is both to their personal and professional lives.

4. Is there any particular experience that is special to you?

The time I spent with Prof. Christine Johnston who is the originator of LML is very close to heart. It was such a rich learning experience and a huge learning curve. I still have very clear memory of myself sitting at her kitchen table whilst she was preparing dinner, discussing concepts and skills she'd have imparted during the formal training sessions during the day. Prof. Christine Johnston is a treasure trove of learning and I feel extremely lucky to have had the opportunity to spend time with her in New Jersey. Participating in various LML projects and visiting classrooms were also unforgettable experiences. Some of the highlights were:

- The 'LML and Maths' seminar (a joint project between LML and Primary Maths Support Team within the Education Directorate) which was an excellent means through which teachers could have first-hand experience in using LML in imparting Mathematical skills.
- The teachers who kindly invited us to their classrooms to participate in lessons embedding LML concepts.
- The 'Literacy Week' (a joint project between LML and the Literacy Team and Writing Programme within the Secretariat for Catholic Education) where we had a good number of children participating in workshops embedding LML concepts in Literacy-related activities.

5. What are your projections and aspirations for the future?

In the immediate future, I look forward to introducing LML in an international conference taking place in Portugal and another international event taking place in Malta. Subsequently, I look forward to continue working with all the stakeholders involved in education, including educators, parents and the students themselves.

the writing of a journal



Maria Gauci

To be honest, although I always believed that people tick in different ways, I did not imagine that Let Me Learn was going to create a mini revolution in my class!

My students were introduced to the LML process in December. They immediately grasped the concept and understood that they feel most comfortable with their 'Use first' learning patterns.

In one of my first LML lessons, I experimented with an activity where the students had to present a case study of a quarry near the school. I provided 5 different options for a project, each option highlighting a specific learning pattern or two. This was not pointed out to the students, but they were free to choose any title they wanted. Amazingly, nearly all the students chose to work with a project that mirrored their 'Use First' patterns. One particular student, who is a strong-willed learner, was indecisive at first as to which option to choose, however, she managed to incorporate all her patterns with very good results. All the students became aware that they had chosen to work with their preferred learning patterns. They were also aware of the learning patterns of their peers and commented on each other's patterns during the presentations. As a class, each student felt proud and owned the work he/she presented.

One of my biggest successes this year was Luke who is a student with high Technical and Confluence and low Precision – He used to avoid writing at all costs – but his virtual 3D presentation was excellent. I saw a big difference in Luke since I started acknowledging and providing him space to use his

preferred learning patterns. He is now trying hard (and succeeding) to stretch his Precision. Not only is he completing the chapter summaries, using writing, diagrams and pictures, but he went back to the previous summaries that he had left incomplete, and redid them all out of his own initiative.

Simon is highly Technical and has low Precision. Simon also suffers from severe Dyslexia. Simon was reluctant to write so it was agreed that he would present his share of the work using mind-maps. He did a wonderful job. In fact he liked this idea so much that he decided to use mind-maps to plan his essay in the exam as well. He usually had a scribe to help him write, but in this exam he decided that he wanted to write the entire essay by himself. He wrote 7 pages - I had asked for only one page. And the sequence in which he wrote was brilliant.

My students commented that the LML process helped them to apply what they learned and also to become active learners and reflect on real life situations. Some of the students commented that they are transferring the skills they acquired through the LML process to other subjects, and not just to Environmental Studies.

Since I am high in Confluence, I tend to be quite creative and use different learning patterns for different topics. However, I realised that having the

patterns in black and white helped me to plan in a more concrete way. Having the guidance of the LML patterns and the descriptors for the 'Use First' and 'Avoid' patterns, together with knowledge of the learning patterns of each student, kept me more focused on what strategies to use with each student – where to push, where to restrain, where to prompt and above all where to give positive reinforcement and encouragement. I believe that when students realise that you are aware of their learning patterns and that you are helping them to achieve more – they are very eager to comply with your suggestions.

If the LML process is to be taken aboard by the schools, the 'straight jacket' approach of the Matsec which favours the Precise and Sequential students has to change. Highly Technical and Confluent students have no place to demonstrate their knowledge and their skills and the results of the exams they sit for does not reflect the picture of who they really are.

Regarding teaching practices, I believe that teachers who own the LML process are willing to work with this process to empower students to reach their full potential – and most of all giving them the confidence and belief that they can succeed.

Going through the main tenants of the NCF I highlighted the following statements:

- Depart from traditional curriculum structures and practices that may restrict learning.
- A greater degree of choice to suit interests and capabilities of individual learners.
- Providing diverse and integrated learning experiences that cater for a wide spectrum of learners.
- Active co-construction of meaning rather than the mere acquisition of content.
- More thematic, real life situations and encouraging the transfer of skills from one learning area to another.

Through the LML process I managed to integrate most of the above in the tasks I give in class. The awareness of the students' patterns together with the decoding of the specific task at hand helps the teacher to guide every child to use his /her full potential to succeed in the learning process.

*Maria Gauci
San Anton School*



FOOD FOR THOUGHT



I have to admit that my heart skipped a beat when I was told to write an evaluation of the journey I took with my students during the second year of implementing the Let Me Learn (LML) Process. Putting into words the experiences and changes I've witnessed in my students and myself, is according to me, an impossible task. When it comes to the LML journey, I truly believe that 'actions speak louder than words' so how could I give feedback without being limited to a number of words?!

Feedback.....what an intriguing word.....it's as if you feed back what you have already fed on.....a camel! Yes, this could work! That's what was done during this scholastic year! Together with my students, we have 'digested' once more what we had already 'fed on' the previous year! Just like a camel does! Oh, and trust me, the second time you feed on 'knowledge' it tastes so much better! Keeping to the theme of food, with a pinch of salt and a spoonful, if not mouthful, of acceptance, willingness to change,

and addictive attitude, my students felt as if they could understand themselves, and their peers better. A friend no longer seemed 'annoying' because she cannot understand how a net will be changed into 3D shape; instead Sam could give her step-by-step guidance to help her develop a cube as well! A student no longer felt belittled when Max* gave him guidance on how to plan his work before answering a maths problem, because even Max himself had experienced such a difficulty and understood how to tackle it!

I can't express fully how proud I felt of my students during the year, that they could reflect and provide feedback on the whole LML process. Even though they may not be the most brilliant of diamonds in their classroom, I am sure that what we shared together has made them better learners, more empathetic, and open to new experiences.

Daphne Camilleri, St Michael's Foundation

Let Me Learn Maths Seminar



The Let Me Learn Malta Centre and the Maths Support Teachers embarked on a joint initiative to provide a professional development opportunity for teachers of the primary. A Let Me Learn Maths Seminar was held at Attard Primary School, St Nicholas College on the 7th of May. The aim of the seminar was to enrich every child's Maths learning experience by exploring ways of how the LML Process can be integrated in Maths lessons.

The seminar kicked off with ice breaker Maths activities, which helped to set the tone for the day. Teachers



who were present were immediately immersed in Maths games and trivia and everyone participated enthusiastically. This was followed by a 'treasure hunt' in which teachers had to find the missing pieces to build the Maths Word Wall together. The Word Wall was used to guide teachers as to which learning patterns were being targeted in the various activities.

Following the introductory activities, it was time for the workshops. Teachers participated in different workshops which explored ways of teaching Maths through diverse learning patterns. The workshops were very hands-on and teachers could try their hand at new Maths activities. These workshops were characterized by relevance, application, collaborative learning and teaching for diverse learners within the classroom.

In all the workshops, teachers were exposed to the idea of creating varied activities for different learning patterns. One must note that all the Maths Support Teachers, coordinated by the Primary Maths EO, Ms Melanie Casha Sammut, have all completed their training in LML, and are therefore very conversant in the LML language. They also use LML in the planning of their everyday lessons. In fact, all the lessons that were discussed in the

workshops, had already been tried and tested in Maltese and Gozitan classrooms!



The first workshop, **Maths through Stories: Time**, was targeted at students of yr 1. It showed how the concept of Time can be taught in a cross-curricular manner in Maths, English Reading and Crafts lessons. In this case, the book 'The Bad-Tempered Ladybird', by Eric Carle was used. This workshop showed how to introduce the clock to students and how they can build their own clock. This clock is used throughout the rest of the topic. Other activities included card games, 'Just in Time' activity, and also a tombola game. However, the highlight in this workshop was 'What's the time Mr Wolf?'

The second workshop, **Compass Directions and Angles**, was targeted at yr 3 and yr 4 students. It demonstrated how students



can create their own 'angle eater' to measure angles around the classroom. In this way, students are encouraged to start observing angles in the world around them. This workshop also showed how to use the BeeBot to understand clockwise and anticlockwise. Many teachers commented that they were now eager to try using the BeeBots, which were already available in most of the schools. In another activity, teachers were shown how students can create a treasure hunt for their classmates so as to learn compass directions and how these can be applied to real-life situations.



The third workshop, **Fractions and Patterns**, for students of yrs 4, 5 and 6, explored a number of interesting ways to help students learn fractions. Some of the activities included matching card games and the use of grids. One particularly interesting concept was the amalgamation of fractions and symmetry, in which students have to use soft drink coloured caps to create symmetrical patterns using the given fractions.



The last workshop, **Weight and Capacity**, targeting students of yrs 4, 5 and 6, made use of everyday life resources and also showed how these topics can be seen in their everyday life context. In order to make a pizza, students are encouraged to handle objects, make estimations and use money. Students have to look for ingredients on commercial advertising leaflets, find the ingredients from the 'shopping bag' and work out the correct prices, discounts, total costs and change given. This topic can be easily taught in cross-curricular

lessons with Maltese and English. In this workshop, teachers were also given different ideas of how to teach capacity. Again, the topic was related to an everyday life context.

The workshops were followed by Maths Trails held at the Kitchen Garden and San Anton Gardens. Maths Trails emphasise the application of Maths to the environment in which we live. A number of age-appropriate Maths topics are integrated into a 'trail' which the students have to follow and work out as they move along. The teachers were given ideas on how to create their own trails within the school grounds or in public gardens close to their schools.



Feedback from this seminar was extremely positive and the Let Me Learn Trainers and the Maths Support Team look forward for further collaboration in the near future. For more information please visit: www.primarymaths.skola.edu.mt or www.letmelearnmalta.org.

Mentoring: An Increasing Request

We requested the services of the LML team to mentor four members of our staff who are trained in the process. I consider the mentoring process as very effective, upon seeing that teachers feel supported through the whole process. The mentoring process forms part of a strategy envisaged by the current School Development Plan, that is, to enhance the PLC (professional learning community) within our school. The mentors are accessible and very professional in their attitudes. They modelled sessions for the teachers and followed them up with on-site discussions. The outcome is positive and in line with the school's vision. Throughout the scholastic year, I witnessed the pupils' correct use of the LML terminology and its successful application. As for the school's plans for this scholastic year, the school will surely request for more mentoring sessions with our members of staff, and to eventually embark on a larger-scale project whereby we will be applying LML in both the Early and the Junior Years cycles.

*Deo Grech
Head, St Benedict College, Hal Għaxaq
Primary School*

Last year I had the opportunity to try out the LML process hands on within the classroom context through Susan Grixti's help. My



students were given an awareness session

in which they were introduced to the four characters and they were soon identifying themselves with the characters. This motivating lesson served as a spring board to the whole concept. The class profile served as a good aid in gauging the type of pedagogy that needs to be applied in order to cater better for my children's still developing learning patterns. Susan prepared a very interesting model lesson which was highly motivating for the children since it involved a myriad of resources. I was given the opportunity to wholly understand how to go about helping the children, making the most of their strengths. I'll definitely make use of the LML process in the upcoming scholastic years.

Every year, more teachers are taking up the Mentoring service offered by the LML team. Experience has shown that teachers need to be provided with support and guidance after completing training in order to be fully confident in applying the process successfully. This has been confirmed by educators who have received this support throughout the past scholastic year. The feedback that we have received has been very positive and this encourages us to keep going.



*Stephanie Cumbo
St Ignatius College, Luqa Primary*



I would like to thank the Let Me Learn team for the brilliant idea of Mentoring. I had great help throughout the year, without which I would have failed to carry on working with the LML process in my class. Last year I did not have an easy class and thanks to my mentor Sarah I could do some lessons which helped them understand their strengths. I was particularly impressed with the Maths lesson which we carried out through some P.E. activities. The girls really enjoyed the lesson and practised their maths skills well. I really hope that we will have this help and same opportunities this year.

AnnMarie Grech, St Joseph Blata



Following my training in LML, the idea was to introduce the Form 1 girls in my school to the process. We had three sessions with the students, where we introduced them to the Let Me Learn process, word wall, cue words, grouping according to their different scores and the power card. I feel this mentoring experience has been very beneficial in that I have now gone a step further. My main aim behind this initiative was to empower the girls by showing them that there isn't just one mode of learning and to believe in their different potentials. Thanks to the mentoring help, I now think in terms of LML and refer to the girls' scores if they ask me for help in their study skills. Then I utilise that knowledge by drawing up a personalised study programme while respecting the individual's preferred mode of learning.

*Roberta Micallef, St Dorothy's School,
Żebbuġ*



The mentoring course was a great opportunity to apply LML to my classroom. My tutor, Ms Graziella helped me with lesson planning and also in the preparation of the resources. This way I got the opportunity to see how it worked and applied it to all other classes. Students have now started to understand themselves as learners and this gives us loads of satisfaction in seeing the effect LML is having on our students in their daily life, their study habits and their exam skills. Thanks to the guidance of Ms Graziella I feel confident enough to keep on applying LML in the hope that all students feel supported by myself to be able to gain control of their learning patterns.

Debbie Shranz, St Michael's Foundation

Last year I was mentored in the LML process by Ms. Susan Grixti. She introduced the LML characters to the children through an interactive lesson. After having established the class profile and each child's learning patterns, Susan prepared and delivered a hands-on activity to revise the days of the week. The lesson integrated all the children's different learning patterns and abilities. They enjoyed it and it was a very successful lesson. Throughout the year, she has been very helpful and supportive. The demo lessons she gave were very interesting and I learned how to better apply the LML programme within my lessons. It was a great journey with a lovely mentor!

*Maria Eleonora Schembri
St Ignatius College Primary School Luqa*



Last year I was assigned a student with autism. It was a big challenge for me. I had lots of stumbling blocks during my first few months as the student had a problem with comprehension. Luckily, I was offered support from the LML team. Through observation I realized that my student scores high in Sequence and Confluence. Valerie and Tania were very helpful with their ideas and also helped me by creating resources for particular lessons. Thanks to them I continued experimenting new ways to support the student, always respecting his learning patterns.

Rita Montebello – LSA, Savio College

The mentoring was an opportunity to make me realise that I was indeed following the LML ideas during my teaching. My tutor, Ms Graziella believed in me all the way along, encouraging me all the way through. The mentoring process has boosted me up and now I feel ever so willing to continue moving on using the LML principles and hopefully, making my own students realise that it works, if only we let it! Indeed, one particular student in Form 2 was making up his mind regarding the choice of subjects for next year, taking into account his own scores! I would like to take the opportunity to thank my mentor for the change she brought about in me first and foremost, and also in our students. I sincerely look forward to another year where I can apply what I have learnt through these sessions!

Maria Brincat, St Ignatius College, Luqa Primary





Being a mixed ability school we favour processes that facilitate differentiation. We are very aware that each child is different, yet some sort of commonality still needs to be present – LML offered the differentiation as well as the common language that gels every stakeholder in the education of our students. As a school, we have set upon ourselves the target to have our teachers LML certified over a number of years. But, we also felt that, for the sustainability of the process after training, the same teachers keep receiving support from their trainers so that the LML initiative remains alive amidst their classes.

Our mentors are an extension of our staffroom; actually they are part of our school environment. Teachers and students recognise them, converse with them and ask for their guidance. They are available at all times: via e-mail, phone calls, sms-es, whichever way we are most comfortable to communicate. They meet us individually or in groups depending on our needs. Participating teachers feel encouraged and that is the most important aspect! They are positively motivated to keep implementing what they have learnt to the benefit of the students and the teachers.

I encourage the mentors to remain a friendly figure in our school. Over and above to remain accessible for teachers to bounce ideas and tackle challenges with them. They have a very good working relationship with us and I can only see it grow and blossom further in the future.

Alfred Sant Fournier
Head

St Michael's Foundation, Senior Section, San Gwann



Let Me Learn mentoring is an excellent and flexible service as I know I can rely on tutors who can support me. Ms Valerie and Ms Tanya gave me very good ideas for 'Let me Learn' implementation in the complementary lessons I deliver. The highlight of this year was when we constructed the Christmas Crib in the school yard. This crib was designed and constructed by the children using the Let Me Learn strategies and was also linked to activities in literacy. The LML programme gave me the ability to include a variety of learning activities to fit the differentiated learning profiles present. I was free to ask for all the help and support that I needed during the scholastic year.

Lydia Zammit
St George Precia College, Paola Primary A



Carina Gerada
Assistant Head

The Let Me Learn Process

A Personal Experience



I had a teaching experience of about twenty-three years, when I had the opportunity to participate in the training of the Let Me Learn Process.

Initially I was rather hesitant because I felt that since I was no longer a class teacher, I would not benefit from it. However, the tutors of the Let Me Learn Process advised the school that it would be a good idea if a member of the senior management team would do the training. This would help to monitor how well the trained teachers and LSAs were implementing LML with their students. So, reluctantly, leaving the school with the never-ending surprises to be dealt with immediately, besides the planned agenda, I went for the first session.

When I did my inventory, the scores came as no surprise. I scored highest in Sequential Processing at 33, followed by Precise Processing at 26, then Technical Processing at 20 and Confluent Processing at 20 as well. However, as the sessions in the training progressed, I was taken truly by surprise at the realisation of what my personal scores meant to me and to those I came in contact with, not only professionally, but also on a personal basis.

I always looked back on my classroom experience with fondness and nostalgia. I loved teaching and it gave me a lot of fulfilment. In fact my first two years in

administration were a great challenge and a time of big adjustments. I am not ashamed to admit that I look upon the first couple of years in administration as a time of frustration and dissatisfaction. The end of the day was always characterised by a feeling of emptiness and inadequacy. Why hadn't I managed to complete all the tasks on my agenda? Why hadn't I managed to take all the phone calls which came in? Why did I feel the intercom was planning to drive me crazy? and so many other whys. However with the experience of the Let Me Learn Process came the enlightenment and the answer to all my whys.

Administration is a job which requires one to be Confluent, to be able to tackle more than one task at a time and to forget about a planned agenda and do tasks which crop up according to priority. Having said that, does it mean that a person with my learning patterns is not good in an administrative post? Not at all! However knowing why one is experiencing such feelings immediately tackles the issue of inadequacy. Therefore the person is better able to deal with tasks which require Confluence by stretching one's learning patterns. This awareness of what was actually happening was like a balm to my bruised ego. I gradually started coping much better with my daily tasks and I can now say with confidence that I look forward to the unexpected challenges which each

day brings with pleasant anticipation. I would also like to add that the Let Me Learn Process has given me an insight into the learning patterns of the people I work with and also the members of my family. This helps me in no small way in my relations with them. The scores of the learning patterns are a most valuable source of information at work because they help one to use the human resources available in the most profitable way for any particular task to be undertaken without frustrating any member of the staff.

Looking back on my teaching years, I feel I could have reached so many more of my pupils with less effort and more effectiveness. Surely, students with high scores in Technical Reasoning and Confluence must have regarded me as a severe taskmaster, although I am hopeful that they realised it was all done in good faith.

However, enough of what would have been. The future is what lies ahead and I feel that the ways in which the Let Me Learn Programme has enriched my life holistically is more than enough reason to encourage the staff under my care to go for this wonderful experience!

M. T. Spiteri
Assistant Head, Primary Section
St Joseph School, Blata l-Bajda

Muża poetika...



Dejjem kelli kurżità
Xi jkun dal-Let Me Learn
Hbiebi li għamluh qabli
Qaluli fih l-impenn.

Kif ħarġu l-applications
Lil ħabibti kkuntattajt
Nara kinitx imħajra
Qaltli "iva" u applikajt

Novembru kien niftakar
Li bdejna l-ewwel session
Iltqajna ma' Graziella
Għamlitilna l-ewwel lesson

Ikolli jien nammetti
Li ħriġt bla ma fhimt xejn
"Dal-kors fejn se jwassalni
Qed nahlil l-ħin għalxejn?"

U xettika jien bqajt
Dwar kemm hu importanti
Dal-kors li tant smajt dwaru
Dwar kemm hu interessanti

Sakemm waslet dik is-session
Fejn Graziella ġiet fil-klassi
Iltaqgħet mat-tfal tiegħi
U wriethom il-pupazzi

U bdiet tkellimhom dwarhom
Tgħidilhom kemm jgħinuhom
Kif meta se jitgħallmu
Il-pupazzi se jmxexxuhom

Spjegatilhom kif fil-ħajja
Mhux kulhadd jaħdem l-istess
Min tajjeb jikteb ħafna
Min il-kitba tqabbdus stress

Min jaħdem b'ħafna ordni
Sekwenza u struttura
U min biex jorganizza
Ma tantx jaqta' figura

Min mohħu biss biex jibni
Xi mudell jew kraft sabiħ
Min tih jagħmel xogħol bl-idejn
U tal-qamar ikun ħa jtih

Spjegatilhom li hemm nies
Li jhobbu jivvintaw
B'ideat minn kullimkien
Joħolqu u jimmaġinaw

It-tfal fethu widnejhom
Jisimgħu u jixtarru
U b'interess kbir fuqhom
Hdejn il-pupazzi marru

Bdew jaqbdus min lil Żrinġi
Min lil Fina jew Faru
Min kien qabad lil Ġeru
Hbieb tagħhom malajr saru

Assoċjaw ruħhom magħhom
Saru hbieb minn dak il-ħin
Riedu illi jzommuhom
Meta l-problemi bdew ġejjin

Hemmhekk bdejt jiena nifhem
Li t-tfal mhux kollha bħali
B'Konfluwenza u Preciżjoni
B'Sekwenza mhix normali (34)

Ridt nifhem aktar lilhom
Mhux kolloxx li rrid jien
Ridt ngħinuhom biex jitgħallmu
U jieħdu pjaċir flimkien

Fil-lezzjonijiet ta' wara
Il-pupazzi bdew jużaw
Il-pattern qed irażżnu
Jew inkella jistrettċjaw

Fil-filmat li se nurikom
Taraw tfal fuq ix-xogħol tagħhom
Bit-tbissima impenjati
Bil-pupazzi jduru magħhom

Il-llum m'għadnix incerta
Qas dubju ma jigini
Li dal-kors lili swieli
Biex sodisfazzjon jagħtini

Nieħu din l-okkażjoni
Ngħid grazzi lill-għalliema
Li tawni din l-esperjenza
Li żgur hija dejjiema.

Therese Muscat
Hamrun SS Primary

Muża poetika...



Dan il-kors issuggerewli
Qaluli 'agħmel Let Me Learn!
Għall-bidu kont ftit xettika
Għax hsibtu ħa jkun xi nfern!

Smajt b'Sekwenza, Preċizjoni
Teknika u Konfluwenza
U jekk inti sew tadatta
Tagħmel ħafna differenza.

Hawn jien bdejt nirrealizza
Li għalhekk jiena irrid
Li kollox jimxi f'ordni tajba
U rrid kollox bla taħwid.

Dak li jiena bdejt nitgħallem
Ġewwa l-klassi ħadtu miegħi
Miegħi ħadt ukoll is-soft toys
Bihom ġennint lit-tfal tiegħi!

Issa meta nipprepara
Xi ftit xogħol għal dawn it-tfal
F'moħħi nżomm il-patterns tagħhom
Nipprova ma nagħmilx xi żball.

Li neħodhom f'keffa waħda
Għax dawn kollha differenti
U bix-xogħol li nipprepara
Nipprova nżommhom kuntenti

*Maria Romina Zammit
Paola Primary A*

I decided to take a journey
That would never end
Of exploration and discovery
A means to an end.

Then along the way
I realised that I had found myself
And along with my students
We started to appreciate ourselves.

As a child I felt a misfit
A man in a woman's head
Expected to be clean and perfect
Yet happy when I drive somebody mad.

What I took for madness
Was only a pattern, called *Confluence*
Where all the crazy ideas
Would float within my brain.

What I considered a male trait
Was only a *hands-on-Technical*
Where I was ready to take the world apart
As if it were ever mechanical.

In the classroom I feel at my best
With an audience to entertain.
What I want most is their interest
I found out there was more to them.

Most of them are Sequential
Something I will never be
I learnt how to restrain myself
Just to satisfy their ever growing needs.

My *Precision* isn't bad
Though it fights my *Technical* sense
I need both, but they drive me mad
Everything has to appeal to my verse.

LML has opened my eyes
To a world that was already there
I was blind not to see
What was obvious but to me .

The human mind is a mystery
That can be triggered differently.
What is a nightmare to thee
Can be a revelation to see.

My students are no longer numbers
That disappoint me if they do not
achieve.
They are humans waiting to be reached
That learn differently in the way they
perceive.

My plans for the future are still to be set
Knowing me and my crazy self
They will come along by themselves
So let me stop here before I bore you
to death!



*Portia Mizzi
GSS, Blata l-Bajda*