

DMSTE PUBLICATIONS & RESEARCH PROJECTS

Edited by **Michael A. Buhagiar**

DMSTE PUBLICATIONS & RESEARCH PROJECTS

A Catalogue of Publications and Research Projects by
Members of the Department of Mathematics,
Science & Technical Education within the
Faculty of Education of the
University of Malta

Edited by **Michael A. Buhagiar**

DMSTE Research & Publications Sub-Committee
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Foreword

These last four years I have been privileged to head the Department of Mathematics, Science & Technical Education (DMSTE). When I look at the great diversity within the Department, which includes ten different subject areas, I try to think of what is the common thread that links us all together. Without doubt, it is the strong commitment to the education and professional development of student teachers. But the Department also has a reputation for research excellence. The idea for the development of this catalogue stemmed from the desire to make public the hidden and not so hidden research initiatives and use the critical conversations to showcase the Department's research identity.

This catalogue charts the past and present research and gives a direction for future initiatives. As such, it celebrates the past while looking at the future. Like the Maltese rubble wall, the catalogue stretches across different landscapes, is made up of unique pieces of stone all of different shapes and sizes, but as they come together they build a solid wall. As each stone (or each research project) is pieced together to shape the rubble wall, they join older stones (older research projects), building on without obscuring each other. And as the rubble wall is formed, it changes the landscape according to the different needs of the society that is building it. Like the changing face of the rubble wall, the catalogue is not a static historical record but a process of collective learning, the narrative of a research journey and the reflections of a departmental community of practice that continues to change and evolve through the academic conversations and research initiatives.

Thanks are due to Michael Buhagiar who constructed the rubble wall from the available stones, to Vanessa Camilleri, Lorraine Portelli and Sarah Pulé who sat together with Michael to map out the wall, and to all members of DMSTE who with their research stones helped build and continue to build this unique rubble wall. The catalogue has been dedicated to our dear friend and colleague Michael Aquilina, and in many ways it reminds me very strongly of Michael's strong belief in creating teams to work and strive towards a common goal. Michael believed very much in reaching out and in energising individuals to work together. For me, this catalogue is all of this and much more.

Deborah Chetcuti

Head of Department of Mathematics, Science & Technical Education

March 2012

Introductory Note

The DMSTE Research & Publications Sub-Committee embarked on the catalogue project to address two important issues. First, to publicise the valid research conducted by departmental colleagues, much of which has remained 'hidden' even from members within the Department itself. And second, to celebrate as a Department our many and varied research accomplishments. Towards this end, all DMSTE members were invited to submit details of their publications and the research projects in which they are or have been involved. To signal the 'birth' of DMSTE in 1991, it was decided that the publications in the catalogue be group together by year going back to the founding year, with the rest appearing as 'earlier' publications. The selection criteria for the publications were: (i) books and monographs; (ii) edited books; (iii) chapters in edited books; (iv) papers in refereed journals; (v) papers in published conference proceedings; and (vi) articles in professional publications. The research projects, on the other hand, appear in alphabetical order according to the name of the project.

The idea to go online with the catalogue, as opposed to traditional printing, reflects a desire to have a collection that can easily be updated periodically, say every year. Leafing through this publication reveals that DMSTE members are actively involved in research collaboration, both locally and internationally. Thus, to help the reader appreciate better this level of collaboration, the names of DMSTE members appear in uppercase throughout the catalogue. The material that is included here, while certainly comprehensive, is by no means exhaustive, as it is only based on what had reached the sub-committee by the end of February 2012.

This publication would not have been possible without the input of the many colleagues who submitted their work; the continuous backing of the other sub-committee members, namely, Vanessa Camilleri, Lorraine Portelli and Sarah Pulé; the invaluable book production support of Terence Portelli throughout the whole project; Mauro Scerri who produced the cover design; and the encouragement of Deborah Chetcuti, DMSTE Head of Department, who believed in this project from day one. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all of them.

Michael A. Buhagiar
Editor

*In memory of
Michael Aquilina
(1957-2010)
a dear friend and colleague*

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Research Projects

3 EMI (2008-2010) – which was organised with the support of the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union – was a professional masters programme in Intercultural and Environmental Management of Schools developed by the University Cà Foscari of Venice in cooperation with the Centre for Environmental Education and Research, University of Malta, and a consortium of five other European partners. The programme targeted head teachers, assistant heads of schools and practising teachers who were aspiring for school management roles. PAUL PACE was the Malta partner on this project.

AFANet (2000-2003) was a multi- and inter-disciplinary project in Agriculture, Forestry, Aquaculture, the Environment and the Rural Economy. The project partners came from the UK, Denmark, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Malta. AFANet developed a work-package that explored, outlined and developed communication, education and training strategies which are sensitive to and build upon both universal (i.e., European) and contextual (i.e., local or regional) conceptions of integrated rural development. PAUL PACE was the Maltese partner on this project.

BIO-HEAD CITIZEN (2004-2007) was a project that aimed to improve understanding of how different aspects of citizenship, including affective and social dimensions, are promoted through biology, health and environmental education. It developed a critical analysis of syllabus and schoolbooks, as well as of teachers' and teachers-to-be' conceptions. The project was largely comparative across the 20 countries involved in the project through two approaches: (i) critical analysis of the selected syllabus topics; and (ii) the analysis of teachers' and teachers-to-be' conceptions from questionnaires and interviews regarding implicit values related to each topic. This comparative work was complemented by some case studies. PAUL PACE was the partner from Malta on this project.

Bridge-it (2010-2012) stands for the *Be Relevant to Intercultural Diversity Generation in Europe-Integration Team* project (<http://bridge-it.communicationproject.eu/>). The main objective of this project is to offer concrete tools in several languages (English, French, German, Italian, Dutch, Polish, Turkish, and Arabic) to facilitate the life of vulnerable 'adults-in-mobility'(AMs), as they interact with 'adults-professionally-in-contact-with-mobility' (ACMs) within institutional-bureaucratic systems. The project, led by the Università degli Studi di Perugia, Italy, involves partners from Austria, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, and Turkey. PHILIP BONANNO is a member of the project team representing the University of Malta on this project. His role is to design and develop the online learning component of the project.

CCN (2004-2010) – the *Consumer Citizenship Network* project – aimed to create awareness amongst policy makers in the EU as well as to create and design material to help individuals be wiser consumers, sustainable consumers and responsible citizens. KAREN MUGLIETT, who represented Malta, was actively involved in the first and second thematic networks of this project. SUZANNE PISCOPO joined the network and actively participated from 2006 to 2010. Norway was the coordinating country and research partners came from most countries across Europe. The EU and the Norwegian government were the main sponsors.

Community Centres promoting Sustainable Living (2002-2005) was a three-year project in eight European partner countries, including Malta, that initiated community centres which bring together the synergistic efforts and resources of formal educational institutions, NGOs, local councils and adults to promote sustainable living, particularly in marginalized and disadvantaged communities. This was achieved by exploring specific community needs and by helping community members to design programmes that respond to these requirements. PAUL PACE was the coordinator of this international project.

CROSSLIFE (2005-2007) was a project that developed a joint programme in MA and doctoral degrees in cross-cultural studies in vocational and continuing education. Six partner universities – from Finland (Tampere), the UK (Institute of Education, London), Malta, Denmark (DPU, Copenhagen), Switzerland (Zurich) and Australia (Monash) – developed local solutions to integrate CROSSLIFE into their regular degree structures. PHILIP BONANNO was a member of the project team representing the University of Malta. His role was to coordinate the ICT component of the project.

EFF (2010-2012) – the *European Food Framework* (see www.europeanfoodframework.eu) – is coordinated by the British Nutrition Foundation and involves various European educators and researchers working in different advisory groups. The EFF aims to identify competences to be obtained by schoolchildren of 5-16 years in the areas of diet (food and drink), active lifestyles and energy balance through an online young person's survey and pilot projects. The EFF will be finalised and disseminated in 2012. SUZANNE PISCOPO is the local coordinator of the EFF and a member of one of the advisory groups.

EMPEE (2002-2003) was a *European Masters Programme in Environmental Education*. This European project pooled in the expertise and resources available at universities in Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, England, Holland, Israel, Norway, Poland and Malta. The partner institutions offered a menu of modules from which students could choose according to their particular research interest. PAUL PACE coordinated this international project.

eTTCampus (2005-2007) project has set up, developed and consolidated a European Virtual Campus for teachers and trainers. On the virtual campus, teachers and trainers can directly compare experiences on the pedagogical use of ICT and learn through context-based work. This virtual agora and learning space is intended to develop teachers' and trainers' knowledge, skills and understanding of the pedagogical, critical and responsible use of ICT for learning purpose. PHILIP BONANNO was a member of the project team.

EuroSouthHub (2011-) is a project aimed at creating a centre for research, exchanges, services and initiatives of social entrepreneurship. It will be replicating a model already adopted in almost 30 cities in all the five continents, through the 'Hub network' (www.the-hub.net/). The project is being financed under the Italia-Malta 2007-2013 European Commission programme. 'The Hub' is a global network of physical spaces where people and ideas get in touch and merge, where social innovators and any kind of professionals can get access to resources, get inspired from and create innovative ideas, establish connections and partnerships and respond to the increasing demand of a more sustainable future. The University of Malta's faculties of Information and Communication Technology, Science, and Education, and the Edward de Bono Institute are all involved in the project, which is led by the Department of Architecture at the University of Catania. Other partners include the Municipality and Cooperative Association of Syracuse, Sicily, and Luigi Pirandello School in Lampedusa. VANESSA CAMILLERI is involved in this project. Her main role is that of supporting the development of the 'Virtual World' Hub for Malta.

gamED (2011-) is an interfaculty research group at the University of Malta that is committed to the study of digital games production for education. Through research and sharing with academics in the field, games for education will be developed using underlying pedagogic principles that will aim to provide an environment which is immersive, enjoyable and engaging. This should facilitate the promotion of deeper understanding of curricular targets and knowledge application. VANESSA CAMILLERI and LEONARD BUSUTTIL are both members of this research group.

Incorporating Environmental Education into the Primary School Curriculum: A Teacher's Manual (1990-1991) was a project conducted by the Faculty of Education, University of Malta, under the auspices of UNESCO. The aim was to implement a pilot project on the incorporation of environmental education (EE) into primary teacher education. The project team, which consisted of six teachers and educators with experience in environmental education, analysed the primary school curricula and textbooks to identify the EE components and suggested a number of activities suitable for children at the various levels of the primary school. FRANK VENTURA was the chairperson of the project team and PAUL PACE was the project secretary.

MEDIS Study (2005-) – the *Mediterranean Islands Study* – is coordinated by Harokopio University in Athens. It involves researchers from several Greek Islands, as well as Cyprus, Malta, Mallorca and Australia. The main aim of this epidemiological study is to evaluate bioclinical, lifestyle, behavioural and dietary characteristics of elderly people (65 years of age and older) living in the Mediterranean basin or of Mediterranean descent. Findings will be used, among others, to inform recommendations for public health policy and practice. SUZANNE PISCOPO is the Malta-based researcher of the MEDIS Study.

PAVE (2006-2009) was a project that aimed at *Promoting Audio-Visual Education*. It was implemented by 6 institutions from 5 European countries: Malta, Belgium, Czech Republic, Spain and the UK. PAVE workshops were addressed at people involved in adult education or training. Its main goals were to train in basic design and pedagogical principles for developing instructional materials, as well as to create awareness of the various technologies available to enhance teaching, learning and training. PHILIP BONANNO coordinated this project in Malta.

PERL (2010-2012) – the *Partnership for Education and Responsible Living* (see <http://www.perlprojects.org/>) – comprises educators, researchers and practitioners from over 120 institutions in more than 50 countries working to empower citizens to live responsible and sustainable lifestyles. PERL aims to advance education for responsible living by focusing on consumer citizenship, education for sustainable consumption, social innovation and sustainable lifestyles. PERL partners undertake research and debate, and develop teaching methods and materials. The partnership has multiple funding sources including UNESCO-DESD and the EU Education and Culture DG Lifelong Learning Programme. Funding is currently being sought for PERL 2 (2012-2014). SUZANNE PISCOPO is the local participant in PERL. KAREN MUGLIETT participated during the first year of the project.

PRIMAS (2010-2013) – which stands for *Promoting Inquiry in Mathematics and Science Education across Europe* (see <http://www.primas-project.eu/>) – is an international project within the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) of the European Union. The University of Malta is one of fourteen universities from twelve different countries that are working together to further promote the implementation and use of inquiry-based learning in mathematics and science. This project is coordinated locally by CETTINA AXIAK. The other University of Malta team members on the project are CHARLES BONELLO, MICHAEL BUHAGIAR, DEBORAH CHETCUTI and JOSETTE FARRUGIA.

Programme in Flexible Learning (2005-2007) was a project aimed at designing and developing a programme in flexible learning to address local adult education and training needs. The funds awarded by the UNESCO Participation Programme to the UNESCO Malta Committee were used to develop a description for a masters programme in flexible learning together with a content management system to run the course. This content management system was then used in the PAVE project (see above). PHILIP BONANNO was the coordinator of the project.

Research and Training Programme in Portfolios and Profiling Project (2000-2002) was a local research study conducted jointly by the Education Division and the Faculty of Education. The project consisted in the writing of a manual entitled *Portfolio Assessment* aimed at establishing a common language on the subject to ensure shared understanding and providing clear guidelines on the implementation of portfolio assessment. The writing of the manual was backed up by an extensive review of the available literature. The research team responsible for the study was composed of PAUL PACE (project director), DEBORAH CHETCUTI and GRACE GRIMA.

SEEP (2009-2012) – the *Science Education European Platform* (see <http://project.unimarconi.it/seep/>) – is a three-year project that is supported by the European Commission through its Lifelong Learning Programme. The project aims to build a sustainable network for the promotion of European co-operation and innovation in science education at secondary level. The network activities include online discussion forums, research and training workshops. DEBORAH CHETCUTI is the local coordinator of the project. The other local members of the project are Desiree Scicluna Bugeja (Education Officer, Biology), JOSETTE FARRUGIA and CHARLES BONELLO.

SEEPS (2001-2003) – the *Sustainability Education in European Primary Schools* project – was designed to support whole school approaches to education for sustainable development (ESD) or environmental education (EE) through a school focused model of in-service teacher education. This project revised an existing unit on change and developed two new units on: (i) practical environmental management; and (ii) self evaluation. Eight European countries, including Malta, took part in this project. PAUL PACE was the Malta partner on SEEPS.

SOCIONICAL (2009-2013) – which stands for *Complex Socio-Technical System in Ambient Intelligence* (see www.socionical.eu) – is an international EU project funded under the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7). The project combines computer science, human-computer interaction systems and crowd monitoring during emergency situations and traffic scenarios. The 14 partners are mostly academic and HE institutions. VANESSA CAMILLERI is involved in this project mainly in relation to her PhD work on Virtual Worlds and Intelligent Systems for Lifelong Learning in the Emergency Scenario.

TEPEE (2002-2005) – the project that worked *Towards a European Portfolio for Environmental Education* – developed a mechanism that enabled educators to evaluate and certificate environmental education competencies. The project team, which included partners from eight European countries in addition to Malta, defined a scale of descriptors of abilities and competencies and the most appropriate methods and instruments of evaluation to develop a system of accreditation based on formative evaluation. PAUL PACE was the local partner on TEPEE.

The State of Science Education in Malta (1997–2000) was a local research study that was initiated by DMSTE. The study investigated the ‘State of Science Education in Malta’ at all levels of the education system, starting from the primary right through the secondary, post-secondary and tertiary levels. PAUL PACE, who was the project director, edited the publication of this research in 2000. The other team members came from the University of Malta (from the faculties of Education, Science, Medicine & Surgery, the Institute of Health Care, and the Junior College), the Malta Council for Science and Technology, the Education Division, and SEDQA Agency. The other DMSTE team members on the project were CHARLES BONELLO, DEBORAH CHETCUTI and FRANK VENTURA.

WEBDATANET (2011-) is one of the projects (or ‘Actions’ as they are called) that is given a platform by COST, which is an intergovernmental framework for European Cooperation in Science and Technology (see <http://www.cost.eu/>). The COST platform, instead of funding research, allows the coordination of nationally-funded research on a European level. WEBDATANET – which focuses on web-based data collection, methodological challenges, solutions and implementations – will benefit all the social sciences by establishing a network, bringing together social scientists, survey and web-based data collection experts, and data users. Moreover, this COST project will generate innovative ideas, address the latest technological options, synergise knowledge, foster the drafting of cross-national research proposals, and provide new tools and guidance for researchers, official bodies, and statistical institutes. PATRICK CAMILLERI, who joined the WEBDATANET project in September 2011, is actively involved in the eSocial Sciences group that is geared towards establishing future directions in web data harvesting and the work group on WEBDATA Surveys Design and Implementations.

“Here is clear evidence of DMSTE’s efforts to link theory with practice, action with reflection, and local with regional and international scholarship. It is this constant effort to see such an engagement not as a series of simplistic dualisms, but rather as a productive dialectic that ensures the constant relevance of the Department, and its standing within the University of Malta and Maltese society more generally.”

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