



Overcoming the Limitations of a Centralized Educational System:

A Portfolio Study Examining a Jesuit School in Malta

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ABSTRACT

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St. Aloysius College Malta is a Jesuit-run school and is affiliated with other local Church schools. All Maltese Church schools have a signed collective agreement with the government of Malta which describes the roles and responsibilities of teachers and salary scales.

Through this portfolio research, a collection of work will be presented to outline the limitations of this collective agreement which is making Church schools in Malta harder to manage especially St. Aloysius College. The four themes which were discussed in this research were financial management, curriculum design, managing human capital and change management. This research concluded that St. Aloysius College would benefit from stronger connections with the international Jesuit schools around the world. In other words, should St. Aloysius College disassociate itself from the collective agreement signed with the local government, it would be more autonomous and thus be able to regulate and have more control on teachers' contracts. An international Jesuit examination board would be established, and Jesuit colleges would run their own curriculum and syllabi.

Keywords: **Portfolio** **Ignatian Pedagogy** **Church Schools**
Jesuits **Change Management**

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1. Introduction

Globalization and technology have changed the way people operate and communicate among themselves. It created new opportunities and connected the world in a way that the world has become one global village (Dreher et al 2008). On the other hand, human beings have become more dependent on technological advancements. This created more financial demands to be connected more with people and stay up to date with the latest technological trends. In some way or another, every social structure has been affected including the educational sector.

Education in Malta, especially in Church schools, has been heavily affected by this change. A collective agreement signed thirty-two years ago between the Holy See and the Maltese government never directly addressed certain issues such as funding of technological aids in classrooms and laboratories. The collective agreement also gives control to the government on what curriculum should Church schools follow and has control on the human resources employed in every school. All these issues have influenced how Church schools operate especially St. Aloysius College.

This portfolio research will look at some of the mentioned points above. Special reference will be made to St. Aloysius College which is a Maltese Church school and forms part of an international Jesuit educational community. This thesis will be divided in the following chapters:

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: A description and overview of the background history of Church schools and how the collective agreement signed between the Holy See and the Maltese government was established.
- Chapter 3: A collection of assignments/reflective journals written during the Master's in Educational Leadership presented to explain the themes to be discussed.
- Chapter 4: A set of recommendations and way forward for St. Aloysius College and the international Jesuit educational community.

2. Overview

2.1 Introduction

Malta is just 27km long and 16km wide (excluding the islands of Gozo and Comino). It is considered a very small nation, and in terms of people-to-land ratio, is the most densely populated country in Europe (Eurostat 2023). Being in the centre of the Mediterranean, other civilizations and empires exploited the country for its strategic position. All settlements and civilizations who lived in Malta left their mark on the Maltese archipelago, culture, language, and its people. Therefore, the country, boasts a very rich history and some UNESCO archaeological sites date older than the Egyptian Pyramids (UNESCO World Heritage n.d.). Malta was always ruled by other nations and the last colonizers were the British.

Education in Malta was heavily influenced by 160 years of British colonization whose rule ended in 1964 and Malta became independent for the first time in its history. Some of the effects of the British colonization are still being felt sixty years after getting the independence. This sense of dependence on an outsider was because, before the independence, the Maltese were always dominated. Subordination was felt for a long time (even after independence) and influenced the Maltese political decision-making processes (Zammit 1981). Being a small country also gave that sense of inferiority which was felt among the Maltese people.

Another stakeholder which had a strong voice was the Catholic Church. Catholicism is not just a law but is part of the Maltese constitution (Leġiżlazzjoni Malta 2021). The dogma and the conservative approach of the Catholic church also had an influence on educational policies. These two power forces had an impact on the set up of the two established political parties and it is why the country is divided into two political ideologies. The Labour party used to represent the socialist, secular, working class and pro-British ideologies. The Nationalist party, on the other hand, used to represent the conservative, Catholic, elitist, and capitalist ideologies. Both governed for around twenty years each, and

educational policies were dictated on their respective ideologies up until Malta started its negotiations to join the European Union (EU).

The following section will delve into understanding the role of Church schools in Malta, and how a political agenda back in the 1980s had a huge effect on how Church schools are presently operating. This portfolio research will specifically focus on one Church school, namely St. Aloysius College, a Jesuit run school.

St. Aloysius College is part of an international network of Jesuit schools around the world and is also part of the Secretariat for Catholic Education in Malta (SfCE). The latter embodies all national Church schools together. Back in the 1980s, due to the political turmoil, the SfCE brought certain security and advantages to all Church schools. Thirty years later, things changed; educational policies, political ideologies, Malta becoming member state of the European Union, financial constraints, inflation, and leadership practices are some but few examples.

Therefore, a historical analysis of events will be presented on how Church schools in Malta were structured. Practical examples (through some of the papers written during the Master's in Educational Leadership programme) will be presented to understand the implications the collective agreement signed between the Government of Malta, the Malta Union of Teachers and the Church Schools has on St. Aloysius College. The last chapter will then present a set of recommendations for the Jesuit community.

2.2 A Brief History

2.2.1 Church schools

Data and research on this topic were very limited to find, especially in the local Maltese context. The term 'Church School' dates to the 6th century, during the Dark ages, when the Benedictine order founded centers for prayers and eventually included teaching and spread of culture (Scerri 2000). Back in those days, education and tuition was offered to those who were financially well-off. However, the Catholic Church felt the need to offer education to those who did

want to learn but had financial plight (ibid.). It was only seven centuries later when the Catholic Church had a revival in monastic life and teaching (Bonnici 1967).

The first recorded Church schools in Malta date to the 13th century when the Augustinian and Carmelite religious orders taught in Mdina (Vella 1961), Malta's first capital city. By the beginning of the 19th century when the British colonized Malta, apart from the University, which origins were Jesuit, all primary and secondary schools were run by religious and diocesan priests. With the colonization of the British, "popular schools" were introduced, which today, are better known as government schools (Scerri 2000). With the rise of state schools, questions were being raised; Are Church/Catholic Schools still valid in a time where public schools founded and administered by the government offer much more facilities and can easily reach all the needs of the community? Are there any differences between the two academic institutions?

These legitimate questions are still being discussed in the present day. A 'Catholic school' is defined as an institution which falls under the control of ecclesiastical authority or of a public ecclesiastical juridical person or that which the ecclesiastical authority recognized in the Canon Law of the Catholic Church (Vatican 1983). All Church schools in Malta are Catholic. Therefore, all Catholic schools in Malta follow the teachings of the Catholic Church. The main distinction between government and Catholic schools is that the main vision of Catholic schools is mainly revolved around the full human formation of youths and not limited to academic content only (Paul VI 1965). A Catholic school can only be understood in light of the principles of Christian teachings such as;

1. The family's prime share and involvement in education
2. An educational curriculum where culture and life find their place in complete harmony of faith
3. Open to all
4. Importance of pastoral care
5. Is not something which fills the void of state schools
6. Cannot be seen as a pastoral mission of the bishop or of secondary importance.

(John Paul II 1982)

The need to have Catholic schools was felt by the high demand and preference parents wanted for their own children to attend a Church school instead of a government school. Throughout the British colony, Malta kept its Catholic faith, and the Catholic Church had a massive influence on people. Therefore, although government schools (when compared to Catholic schools) offered better infrastructure and services, the general public always perceived Catholic schools as offering an added value to education (Scerri 2000).

2.2.2 Political Ideology

In 1964, Malta became Independent for the first time in its entire history and the Nationalist party was elected to govern. Changes in the educational system started in 1970. Before 1970, Private/Catholic schools were given grants by the government on scholarship basis on certain number of students attending the these schools. Catholic schools also offered several scholarship programs to those students who did not afford the fees or needed economic help. By doing so, almost every student wishing to attend a Catholic school was catered for (Scerri 2000).

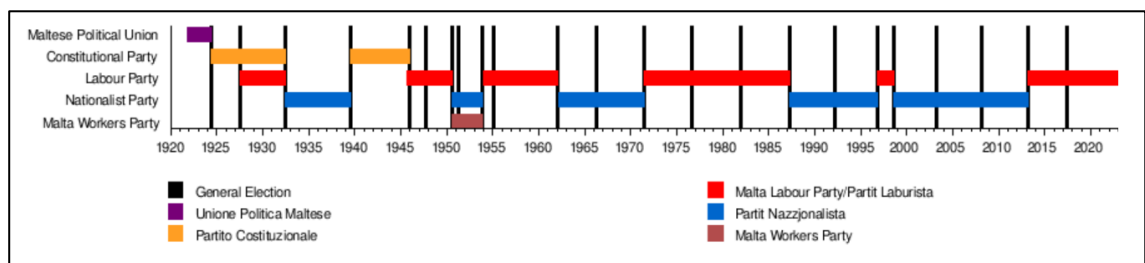


FIGURE 1. Timeline of Maltese elected parties since 1921 (Source: Electoral Commission Malta 2015).

In October 1970, the Nationalist party introduced the Capitation Grant program for all pupils of Maltese Nationality. This meant that all students attending a Church school would receive the same benefits as children attending government secondary schools whilst the said schools would keep their autonomy (ibid.). The mentioned benefit was LM30 (€70) for each student. All this changed when the Socialist/ Malta Labour Party was elected in 1971 and in 1972 the Capitation Grant program was ended. The Socialist's ideology of education was to have

education free for all. It perceived Catholic schools as elitist in their approach and socially segregated students (Calleja 1994).

Before 1972, there was also a streaming system where students entering secondary education had to sit for an exam. Most of the high achievers and those who passed their exams would opt to attend a Catholic school or the Junior Lyceum (government school). Those who failed would attend specific secondary and/or vocational government schools. The Socialist party abolished this streaming system. The whole idea behind the abolishment of examinations and streaming was to offer a comprehensive educational system for every student (Scerri 2000). However, it did not bring the desired effects, especially with the parents (ibid.). Between 1971 and 1986, a period which was governed by the Malta Labour Party, brought with it various conflicts and educational turmoil especially with Church Schools.

Politics and the effect it had on Church schools

After the abolishment of the grants and examinations from primary to secondary, there was a higher demand from parents to have their children enter a Church school. This was because government schools were going through several changes which created instability and uncertainty. A wide spectrum of educational needs in classrooms was being created, which, at that time, could not be catered for. The greatest financial burden Church schools faced was the teachers' salaries. The cost of living was increasing drastically and the overhead cost of running schools rose exponentially. Therefore, fees had to be paid to keep Church schools running (ibid.).

In June 1980, the Socialist Party led by Prime Minister Dominic "Dom" Mintoff, whilst addressing the Annual General Conference of the Central Committee of Labour Women, demanded that education should be free for everyone, and action would be taken against any institution which tried to get rich from Maltese Nationals. This was in response to a Pastoral letter Archbishop Joseph Mercieca and Bishop Nikol Cauchi wrote in May 22nd regarding the inalienable rights and duties of parents in the education of their children and that public authorities

should safeguard the liberty of their respective citizens and observe the principle of distributive justice (Scerri 2000).

The 1980s marked a difficult era for Maltese education. Riots, protests, lawsuits, a teachers' strike lasting seven weeks ordered by the Malta Union of Teachers, and the closure of sixty-four Church schools were among the actions which affected the educational arena. All came to an end when the Holy See officials together with the Maltese government reached an agreement in April of 1985.

12 Feature **malta** today, SUNDAY, 25 APRIL 2010

13 Feature **malta** today, SUNDAY, 25 APRIL 2010

'JEW B'XEJN, JEW XEJN'

THE CHURCH SCHOOL SAGA (PART 1)

In the first of a three-part feature, Gerald Fenech delves into the historical importance of church schools in Malta and the battle for their existence in the 1980s that led to the Catholic Church-State compromise



The massive demonstration in support of Church schools, St. Joseph's, 1984

PICTURE 1: Aerial view of a residential area in Malta. In the eyes of some, it is a sector that has been viewed as vital. It is an attempt to elaborate a form of social segregation in the more extreme viewpoints. Up till the 1980s, the biggest threat of private education was provided by the Catholic Church, whose teachers and religious orders practically monopolised the sector on the islands. Inevitably, this created friction between the Labour government and the Church. In 1984, the Labour Party, led by Prime Minister Dom Mintoff, passed a law to nationalise all Church schools. This led to a massive demonstration in support of Church schools, which was held in St. Joseph's school in 1984. The demonstration was a landmark event in the history of Maltese education, as it led to the eventual compromise between the Church and the State.



ST ALOYSIUS' COLLEGE





Don Mintoff **Carmelo Mizzi** **Archbishop Joseph Mercieca**

DRAWN PERSONAL:
Foreign Minister Sherman PM Gen Mintoff: Although he did not visit as Prime Minister in 1984 - representing the relatively unknown Carmelo Mizzi - Mintoff remained very much in the spotlight. Don Mintoff's role was crucial in the negotiations between the Church and the State. He was instrumental in ensuring that the interests of the Church were protected while also ensuring that the State's educational goals were met.

Minister of Education and Prime Minister Carmelo Mizzi: Mizzi was a prominent figure in the Labour Party and served as Minister of Education. He was instrumental in the negotiations between the Church and the State. He was instrumental in ensuring that the interests of the Church were protected while also ensuring that the State's educational goals were met.

Archbishop Joseph Mercieca: Mercieca was the Archbishop of Malta and played a key role in the negotiations between the Church and the State. He was instrumental in ensuring that the interests of the Church were protected while also ensuring that the State's educational goals were met.

Timeline:

- December 1981:** The Labour Party wins the 1981 election with a majority of seats but a minority of votes. Free education for all part of Labour's manifesto.
- December 1982:** Legal Notice freeing Church School fees at 1987 levels published.
- February 1983:** The Holy See protests against the '20 points' awarded to state school students.
- June 1983:** Publication of White Paper on Devolution of Church Property Acquired by Prescription.
- July 1983:** Archbishop Joseph Mercieca returns from Rome after meetings with Holy See officials. Protests that Church will not cede to government's demands and will retain all legal rights.
- September 1983:** Carmelo Mizzi becomes Minister of Education. Carls publishes 1983 accounts, showing losses of Lm50,000, but does not take into account immovable properties not used for ecclesiastical purposes and their income.
- October 1983:** Church files case in Constitutional Court to declare Devolution Act null. In Ognit, Mifsud Bonnici declares that government was 'ready to take over Church schools if necessary'.
- March 1984:** Negotiations between government and Holy See cease.
- April 1984:** Parliament amends Education Act after heated debate. New licences for schools include various conditions which Church finds unacceptable, declaring that it would be applying for licences with reservations and without renouncing any of its legal rights.
- 19 September 1984:** MUF orders strike in government schools. Teachers locked out with little talking for seven weeks. Teachers return to work to be transferred to other schools where 'angry parents' reactions' cited as an excuse for transfers.
- 25 September 1984:** Mifsud Bonnici addresses dockyard workers, who subsequently go on a campaign in Valletta, campaign the Law Courts and attacking the Carls in Forlani. Mifsud apologises to Archbishop while Mifsud Bonnici berates workers for excessive violence, adding that they did more than was expected of them: 'spanning saktar mill istessja'.
- 30 September 1984:** Archbishop Mercieca orders all 64 Church schools not to open for the schoolastic year. 'Clandestine lessons' begin.
- November 1984:** Agreement finally reached between Holy See and government. Teachers strike called off and Church schools re-open with immediate effect.
- 27 April 1985:** Agreement signed in Rome between government and Holy See officials.

PICTURE 1. Newspaper article summarizing the turmoil of the Church School Saga in the 1980s (Source: Malta Today 2010).

The national examination was reintroduced and, based on the meritocratic achievement, parents of candidates sitting for the exam would choose where to enlist their child. The higher the qualifying result would mean a wider selection of schools to choose from. In this way there would be no distinction between state and Church primary candidates (ibid.). The agreement also stated that after three years (till 1988), Church School fees would be phased out and education in Church schools would be completely free.

In 1987, the Nationalist party was elected in government and in 1991 a new agreement with the Holy See and the Maltese government was reached. In short,

the agreement stated that whilst the Church will be transferring immovable assets to the government, Church schools shall be committed to offer free education to all students (Holy See 1991). The government will in return pay all wages of both academic and non-academic staff as set by the collective agreement signed by the Malta Union of teachers, the Government of Malta [and the Secretariat for Catholic Education] (ibid.).

2.2.3 Collective Agreement

It is understood that this [Collective] AGREEMENT is entered into without prejudice to the right of the Church Authorities to set up or conduct their own schools according to their specific nature and with autonomy of organisation and function as provided in the Holy See - Malta Government Agreement dated 28 November 1991, subject to the right of Trade Union Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining being in no way infringed. (Church Authorities and Malta Union of Teachers 2018)

The collective agreement binds all Church schools and the centralized government with clear instructions of the roles and responsibilities of each worker (as deemed necessary by the centralized government) and clearly points out the distribution of salaries which are in line with the sectoral agreement signed for State schools. The collective agreement is updated whenever salary scales within the State sector are updated.

The aim of this agreement is to adapt the Sectoral agreement (which refers to the agreement signed between the Malta Union of Teachers, the centralized government and State schools) to that for Church Schools (ibid.). Some important adaptations include:

- the autonomy of each Church school to adopt its own mission and vision and their respective implementation.
- protection of identity and enhancement of each Church school's ethos.
- having autonomy on the implementation of the biopsychosocial, emotional, spiritual, and moral formation of every student.

(Church Authorities and Malta Union of Teachers 2018)

On the other hand, through the agreement, Church Schools are obliged to follow the same set of instructions as observed by State Schools. Some main points include:

- Salary Scales for Academic and Non-Academic Staff.
- Following the SEC examinations issued by the University of Malta's Matriculation Secondary Education Certificate (MATSEC) and the Learning Outcomes Framework as directed by the Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, and Innovation.
- Following human resources protocols as discussed and agreed upon between the MUT and Church Schools.

Thirty-two years later, this collective agreement still dictates how Church Schools should operate. Every individual who is employed with a Church school (unless Church schools are willing to introduce a different role which is not listed in the collective agreement, which salary will be paid by the school itself) will automatically fall under this agreement. From its inception, St. Aloysius College was always part and followed this agreement. Nevertheless St. Aloysius College, which is managed by Jesuits, forms part of a greater international network and this religious congregation marked its history in the educational sector.

2.2.4 Jesuit Education

Jesuits first appeared in Malta in 1577 which aim was to open a school and be a base to send Jesuits to Girba near Tripoli. Founder St. Ignatius' initial thought was that Malta's geographic positioning close to Arab countries would serve as an ideal setup to help Jesuit missionaries to enter the Muslim world. In 1593, the Jesuits opened their College (Collegium Melitense) in Valletta. The College premises served as a university up until 1971 (Jesuits 2019).

Along these years Jesuits built other Colleges in Malta such as St. Ignatius in St. Julians, St. Paul's College in Mdina, and seminary and secondary school in Gozo (ibid.). Nowadays, all these schools are closed and only St. Aloysius College in Birkirkara, which was built in 1907, is currently operating and hosting around one

thousand five hundred students with ages ranging from four to eighteen years (see section 3.1.1.3).

Jesuits are not new in the education sector. In fact, Jesuit education dates to 450 years ago, which values are rooted in the vision of the same Order as described by the founder St. Ignatius (Xavier University n.d.). A Jesuit school has its unique way of doing things and should comprise of the following Jesuit values, which should identify its respective institutions as Jesuits in nature:

Cura Personalis: The mission of a Jesuit school is to go beyond academic achievement. Every Jesuit school is committed in the harmonious development of the person as a whole, that is, mental, physical, spiritual, and development as a citizen in the world (Georgetown University n.d.).

Discernment: The ability to be open to God's spirit and take rational decisions that will contribute to the good of the person's life and people around them (Jesuits 2023).

Finding God in All Things: Whatever action is done and whatever is experienced, each person is invited to look for the presence of God. In other words, God should be seen in every culture and peoples living in the world, all areas of studies and learning, and every human experience (Xavier University n.d.).

Magis: This is one of the pinnacles in Jesuit education. Students are encouraged to go beyond what is expected of them and show generosity, excellence, and empathy in whatever is done for Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam (AMDG), that is, for the greater glory of God (Martin 2023).

Reflection: Before making any decisions, students are encouraged to stop and reflect on the actions they are going to take. The value of reflection through the Jesuit perspective also requires people to reflect and challenge the status quo and take responsibility for any actions (Xavier University n.d.).

Service Rooted in Justice and Love: the sense of social justice should be felt and seen in Jesuit schools. Through awareness campaigns, students understand the challenges that the world and certain people face and through volunteering and service programs, students put into action what they have learnt (ibid.).

Solidarity and Kinship: through collaboration, students and staff work together for the greater good and be of service to others. In schools, this is done through engaging students in the local community and helping local areas develop innovative solutions (ibid.).

Apart from the values that should be adopted and implemented in every Jesuit institution, Jesuits also developed their own Ignatian pedagogical paradigms which are guidelines as to how senior management teams should work to achieve the values mentioned above.

Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigms

The Jesuit values, through the implementation of the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigms (IPP), were grounded on the Spiritual Exercises developed by founder St. Ignatius almost five hundred years ago (Rozier and Sargeant 2023). The Spiritual Exercises are a journey of self-exploration to understand the meaning of a person's own existence and must be done by all Jesuits. Guidance is offered to lay people wishing to do the Spiritual Exercises. The pedagogical paradigms are based on five basic concepts which are context, experience, reflection, action, and evaluation (ibid.). At first glance, the IPP (Figure 2) follows the same concept of Kolb's Experiential Learning lifecycle model (Figure 3).

Both models follow the same structure of learning where through a given context, an experience is created, learners reflect on what they did, see or hear, and put into action what solutions, approaches or suggestions which would come up from the experience. At the end, an evaluation of what they learnt is disclosed to consolidate learning (Kolb 2014). The added value to the IPP is that it creates a moral, ethical, and spiritual understanding to the context in question.



FIGURE 2. Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm (Source: Go and Atienza 2018).

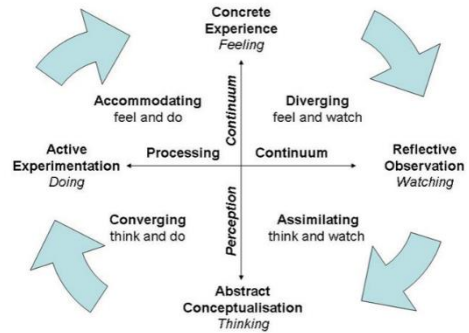


FIGURE 3. Kolb's Experiential Lifecycle Model (Source: Kolb 2014).

In parallel with the IPP, Ignatian pedagogy follows the 6 Es of Refractive learning. This model states that learning is grounded on relationships. As a rule, in class, there is one obvious relationship, that is the one between the learner and the teacher. However, this model states that there is a third-party present, which is the world (Go and Atienza 2018).



FIGURE 4. 6 Es of Refractive Learning (Source: Go and Atienza 2018)

Learner – Teacher Relationship: Empathy and Empowerment

To facilitate learning, teachers need to understand and imagine what it is like to be in the students' shoes. This is where empathy can be an effective skill to guide effective learning. Needless to say, too much empathy can lead to teacher dependency. Therefore, educators need to instill empowerment by creating experiences which offer self-directed and self-reliant learning (Go and Atienza 2018).

Teacher – World Relationship: Expertise and Enthusiasm

Apart from creating independent learners, teachers and educators need to be knowledgeable about the subject matter they are teaching. In an ever-changing world of information, educators need to stay up to date with modern trends and developments. Expertise is not limited to the content teachers facilitate, but also includes expertise in pedagogy, psychology, and technology. In addition, teachers must show this expertise through enthusiasm. Showing passion instills in students a sense of curiosity which in return consolidates independent learners and shows initiative to learn more. Both expertise and enthusiasm need to be present to have an effective teaching and learning experience (ibid.).

Learner – World Relationship: Engagement and Excellence

According to Go and Atienza (2018) this is the most important relationship of them all. If this relationship is not present, there can be no learning. It will be only limited to parrot-like teaching where students just memorize the content without giving it meaning. Therefore, there is no relevance. Student engagement is the summing up of the full enthusiasm teachers show towards their subject, which in return brings upon initiative and a sense of inquiry to look for more information on the subject matter.

The last step is excellence, which means that after gaining enough knowledge and meaning about the information being learnt, students will be able to adapt and apply this knowledge in their own lives to the best of their capabilities. In

other words, excellence is ultimately what the students do with what they have learnt.

The only difference there is between this relationship and the previous two is that teachers have no control over the learning of their respective learners. Teachers can guide the students, but ultimately, it is up to the learners themselves to internalize the information and give it relevance to their respective lives.

2.3 Back to the Future

After understanding the historical development of Church schools in Malta and explaining the idea behind the meaning of a Jesuit school, it is now important to understand what the implications are in managing a Jesuit school in the Maltese context. Whilst an appreciation must be noted for the struggles which took place and the accomplishments achieved along the years, it is also important to note how St. Aloysius College is still struggling in some areas of its operations.

A selection of work written throughout the master's in educational leadership of class 2022 by the researcher will be presented. This portfolio thesis will outline five themes which will be subjects for discussion. These include:

1. The effects of financial dependency of the government
2. The effect of a centralized/controlled curriculum
3. Static teaching and learning methodologies
4. The challenges of the present senior leadership team
5. Change

The next chapter will present the five respective themes mentioned above through the papers written. The last chapter will then discuss a set of recommendations and a way forward.

3. Themes

3.1 The effects of financial dependency of the government

Money and financial stability are always at the core of any project and/or business plan. The main issue Church schools faced back in the 1980s was the financing of teacher salaries, which saga ended with a collective agreement reached between the Holy See and the Maltese government. With the introduction of new technologies, subjects, and pedagogical trends, the costs of running a school have increased drastically. In the agreement reached with the Holy See it is clearly mentioned that Church schools should be free of charge. However, with the introduction of the mentioned costs, who will be responsible for the financing of these new overhead costs?

Although Church schools request a small donation (which is not obligatory) from parents whose children attend a Church school, the nominal fee is still not enough to subsidize large projects. Moreover, with a centralized curriculum system controlled by the government, this indirectly dictates what subjects and requirements Church schools need to adopt at their respective school. However, no mentioning of financial aid is mentioned for the implementation of pedagogical changes. For example, the curriculum framework clearly states the use of technology as part of the teaching and learning process (Ministry of Education and Employment 2012). This would include interactive whiteboards, computers and modern science and technology laboratories which costs would reach hundreds of thousands of Euros. In the collective agreement there is no mentioning of a financial assistance which will help Church schools buy the desired materials.

The first theme to be discussed will be a current financial issue which St. Aloysius College has faced throughout this last decade: the refurbishment of the science laboratories. The College is faced with a great challenge to fund such a project.

3.1.1 Funding Science Laboratories

3.1.1.2 Introduction

Every factory, limited company, small to medium enterprises or self-employed offer a product or service to sell. The product, be it tangible or intangible, is the main source of revenue some organizations have, and therefore, helps them remain competitive. Fixed and current assets are needed to help the organization function and produce a reliable and top-quality product. This argument is also related to schools.

The twenty-first century offered various challenges to all social structures in our society. To survive financially, the family structure requires both parents to work (Astone & McLanahan 1991). In return, this puts more responsibility on educational institutions to facilitate basic life skills, which are usually facilitated by the parents themselves at home. With the constant technological changes which are happening around us, the work sector is in constant change. Industries need ready skilled workers to deal with the ongoing changes which the businesses need to function (Mazurchenko & Zelenka 2022).

As an intangible product, schools offer educational services. Teachers teach academic subjects and students are learning. However, the ultimate main product of schools are the students themselves. The main role of schools is to produce skills workers to function in various sectors in society (Griffin et al 2012). If the primary and secondary school educational system are taken into context (students aged between five to sixteen years), students enter school as children and after eleven years in the same institution they come out as adults with the right to vote and work (in the case of Malta).

Schools, more than ever before, have a huge responsibility to keep up with the technological and scientific changes happening in the business sector. Unfortunately, as time goes by, school funding is always diminishing, especially if schools are state-funded. Nowadays, schools are faced with this paradox of having, on one hand, industries which require top notch skilled employees and on the other hand, governments which are cutting funds for schools. This left some schools stranded alone and must find a solution to search for funding to

upgrade their tangible or intangible assets to help students in their education. Unlike businesses, schools do not have large operating margins and most of their capital is dictated by the state. Therefore, when there is a huge financing at school, the investment itself is twofold; upgrading the assets of the school and helping to produce skilled students. The issue here is that the skilled student does not produce any monetary benefit for the school but only benefits for society and business industries. If schools want to produce skilled workers, they need to be proactive, creative, and wise in how funds are invested.

This is the reality which St. Aloysius Collage in Malta is facing with the upgrading and funding of its four science laboratories. The aim of this assignment will be to investigate how the school can find ways and means to upgrade its four scientific laboratories and remain financially sustainable.

3.1.1.3 Background History of St. Aloysius College, Malta

St. Aloysius College is a Jesuit run college in Malta. The Society of Jesus (SJ) is a Catholic institution which vocation is revolved mainly around education. It is an educational network which comprises of 827 schools around the world (Educate Magis 2019). Each college around the world has its financial autonomy. St. Aloysius College (thereafter SAC) was built in 1907 and up till 2016 it hosted only male students between 11 and 16 years of age. The initial population was 150 students (St. Aloysius College 2020).



PICTURE 2. Main building in 1907 (Source: School archives).

Throughout these 115 years, the main physical building of the school remained the same. 30 years ago, the school bought a piece of land adjacent to the main building to build an additional structure to host high school students aged between 17 and 18 years of age (ibid.). During the past decade the school acquired another building in a different location to host students aged from 5 to 11 years of age and introduce a co-education for both males and females.



PICTURE 3. Sport Complex and undeveloped Swimming pool section (Source: School archives).



PICTURE 4. New sport facilities to be finished by 2024 (Source: School archives).

Nowadays the school offers a comprehensive education to over 1500 students. The school also has a sports complex which consists of a full-size athletic track, full-size football pitch, an indoor pavilion, a fitness center, and an undeveloped Olympic size swimming pool. The development of the sport complex started in the mid-90s. However, due to financial constraints the swimming pool was never finished, and the sports complex went bankrupt.

All these financial constraints led the board of directors of the school to lease the sport complex to a private entity to develop it. The school would always have the right to use the sport premises for its students. However, other external profits would go to the external contractor. By 2024 the sport complex will be finished and apart from the mentioned facilities students will also benefit from a full-size water polo pitch and an outdoor 5-a-side football pitch.

The sport's complex financial challenges led the school to hold back other important upgrades such as the science laboratories. The latter have never seen an upgrade for over 100 years. Back then, the school catered for the elite and high achievers. It attracted students of parents coming from political backgrounds

and high-profile business entities. There was no room for students with any form of disability and blue-collar families. Nowadays, the school is open to everyone; students coming from different social strata, disabilities, and intelligences. Moreover, with the continuous scientific and technological advancements, new



PICTURE 5. Current Science Laboratories (Source: School Archives).



PICTURE 6. Modern Science Laboratories (Source: istock photo).

apparatus is always needed, and health and safety laws must be implemented. With all this change, the science laboratories have become completely outdated. Although some renovations have been done throughout the years, the requirements to have proper science laboratory premises require the building to be demolished and built again. These will ease access to **all** students with differentiated types of learning and reach the proper health and safety requirements expected by the authorities. Presently, there is no wheelchair access or access to any other form of disability, no proper storage and disposal of hazardous chemicals, no proper ventilation and fire alarm system and no professional scientific fire-retardant furniture. The scientific inventory also needs to be refurbished.

More than ever, science and technology have become one of the main industries of economic growth in Malta (Malta Council for Science and Technology 2006). Due to Brexit and the legalization of cannabis as a medicinal drug, led some major pharmaceutical companies in the world to relocate to Malta. Therefore, the demand for highly skilled scientific workers has increased exponentially.

Businesses are therefore urging policymakers in education to enhance the science and technology subjects so that students are more exposed to science. However, as was mentioned earlier, funding is very limited. This study will look at the financial situation at school and investigate potential financial solutions which the school might adopt to sustainably finance the science laboratories.

SWOT Analysis for funding the Scientific Laboratories

Strengths

One of the main strengths of having new science laboratories is that **ALL** students will benefit from the resources being invested in this project. The aim of education is to help present and future generation of students with all the resources and skills required to help them in their employability (Ministry of Education 2020). Since a significant part of the Maltese economy depends on science and technology, it is important that students are offered the best environment to help them in their respective studies.

Weaknesses

The costs and expenditure to build and refurbish the science laboratories will be significantly high. Financial and logistical constraints might influence the day-to-day function of the school. Therefore, good financial planning is needed to sustain this project.

Opportunities

Although the project will put a financial burden on the school's financial situation, the school will start to earn some revenue once the science laboratories are ready. Renting the laboratories to Examination boards, other schools or private institutions after school hours would be a good opportunity to cover the costs incurred to build the laboratories.

Threats

The school will try its best to apply for EU funds. The main threat would be if the project gets rejected. Therefore, the school would need to plan other strategies of how to obtain funds to proceed with this massive project.

Even though all funds are accepted, there might be logistical issues whilst building the new wing of the science laboratories. Since it will take more than a year to demolish, build and furnish the new structure, lessons still need to be done. Alternative classes would need to be used and therefore efficient use of the premises will be crucial. Thus, it is important to set a S.M.A.R.T. business strategy and goals to sustainably build the new laboratories. SMART Goals for the development of the Science Laboratories



PICTURE 7. SMART Goals (Source: Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce 2020).

Specific

The main goal of this project is to build a new science wing. Since the physical infrastructure is old and not fit for modern pedagogical needs, it would need to be demolished and built again. The science wing will comprise of four laboratories each catering for Biology, Chemistry, Physics and General Science. Each lab will also be wheelchair accessible. This means that physical access and new furniture will cater for all students.

The furniture itself will be designed in a way to ease not only scientific skills but also 21st century skills like collaboration, communication, and critical thinking. A new ventilation system will be installed on each workstation (presently there is just a general extraction system for the whole room as seen in the Picture 5 Current Science Laboratories) and fumes coming out from experiments will be extracted and processed immediately to conform with the health and safety regulations set by the authorities. Other upgrades include:

- a modern piping system for gas
- lighting system
- electricity points on each workstation
- water supply on each workstation
- Waste disposal section of hazardous materials

In order not to create waste, old furniture will be sold, donated, or restructured and used in other parts of the school. Construction waste will also be recycled and sold to an entity in Malta where they produce recycled limestone and reused again.

Measurable

	Note	2013 €	2012 €
ASSETS			
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	9	705,232	605,725
Other investments	10	95,589	95,589
		<u>800,821</u>	<u>701,314</u>
Current assets			
Inventories	11	111,192	10,800
Trade and other receivables	12	41,299	71,095
Cash and bank balances		347,942	214,637
		<u>500,433</u>	<u>296,532</u>
Total assets		<u>1,301,254</u>	<u>997,846</u>
FUNDS AND LIABILITIES			
Current account with Province		199,292	(63,237)
Other funds	13	50,072	39,412
Non-current liabilities			
Long-term borrowings	14	171,810	231,810
Trade and other payables	15.1	252,244	252,244
		<u>424,054</u>	<u>484,054</u>
Current liabilities			
Short-term borrowings		36,725	3,966
Trade and other payables	15.2	557,524	515,001
Current tax payable		33,587	18,650
		<u>627,836</u>	<u>537,617</u>
Total equity and liabilities		<u>1,301,254</u>	<u>997,846</u>

FIGURE 5. Income Statement (Source: St. Aloysius' Accounts Department).

	Note	2013 €	2012 €
Income	3	5,445,102	3,527,356
Expenditure		(5,401,315)	(3,315,051)
Operating surplus		43,787	212,305
Investment income	4	12,035	10,446
Interest receivable	5	858	652
Interest payable	6	(8,832)	(11,898)
Surplus before tax	7	47,848	211,505
Tax expense	8	(16,012)	(3,336)
Surplus for the year		31,836	208,169

FIGURE 6. Balance Sheet (Source: St. Aloysius' Accounts Department).

Data Input Area				
Gross Revenues	€5,445,102		Operating Profit Margin (Earns)	€0.01
Variable Expense	€505,833		Asset Turnover Ratio (Turns)	4.185
Fixed Expense	€4,895,482		Return on Assets	4.356%
Interest Expense	€8,832		Spread Above Interest Costs	3.52%
Other Income	€12,893		Debt-to-Equity Ratio (Leverage)	4.22
Total Assets	€1,301,254		Return on Equity	19.188%
Total Liabilities	€1,051,890			

FIGURE 7. ROI DuPont Analysis (Source: Author).

Although the operating margins of the school are very low, it is in line with how Foundations, NGOs and schools work. Unlike businesses, there are no investors at school and the scope of such institutions is for non-profit making. In fact, the

debt-to-equity ratio is very high. This means that the school uses more debt to finance its investments and initiatives than equity.

On the other hand, the return on equity is very high which means that St. Aloysius College is highly efficient to generate profit with the assets available. Although the asset turnover shows how effectively a company uses its assets to generate revenue or sales this is not indicative alone. It should be compared with other establishments in the same sector. Moreover, one must keep in mind that a major part of the turnover is funding from the government. This may render the interpretation misleading. Almost all salaries of staff are paid by the government. Therefore, much of the funding for the science labs must come from external sources, such as EU funding.

The school board calculated that the total expense to fund the science labs should reach €1,100,000. Given that the school gets EU funding, the latter will partially fund 75% of the project which means that a total of €825,000 will be co-financed by the European Union. The school would then need to add at least an extra €275,000.

Throughout the three scholastic semesters, students pay a small nominal fee each semester for the running daily costs of the school. Throughout the three-year period, in which the school needs to finish off the laboratories, the school might ask for an increase of €20 per student per term which rounds up to €60 per year. Whilst the Cost of Living Adjustment in Malta has increased every year the school kept the fee capped for the past 14 years. Therefore, a revision of the fee would be ideal at this point in time. By the time the school finishes the project, it would have received an extra €270,000 in revenues which will almost round up the cost of the whole project. Therefore, the major expenses would be funded.

Achievable

After budgeting all the costs needed to fund this project, it can be argued that the development of the science labs can be achieved. If EU funding for this project gets rejected, then other alternatives and strategies should be taken into consideration.

Outsourcing and/or leasing the science wing to a private investor would be another option. Given the circumstances in Malta, it would be very difficult to find someone to fund such project. The return on equity would not be sustainable for the investors. A strategy would need to be adopted to pay the investor in installments over a period of time to cover the costs incurred for funding the new premises.

Relevant

Having new science laboratories at school is a much-needed requirement. All labs are being used by all students and is a relevant issue which needs to be addressed. The new building will enhance the students' skills and will develop a more skilled workforce in our society. The investment needs to be calculated also on the long-term human potential, which will have a positive effect on the GDP of the country.

Time-Framed

1st Quarter 2023 – Apply for Permissions from Planning Authority to approve the mentioned project.

3rd Quarter 2023 – Apply for EU funds which close at the start of the first week of October. Before and during this period, planning and design of the structure will go underway.

3rd Quarter 2024 – Assuming that the project is accepted by the EU funding department, demolition and building of the science labs will be set to start. This will take place during the students' summer holidays, which last three months.

1st and 2nd Quarter 2025 – Finishing the building and installation of new furniture and any related consumable.

October 2025 – Inauguration of the new science laboratories.

3.1.1.4 Conclusion

The success of a skilled workforce in society depends solely on the primary socializing agents, namely the family and the educational social structures (Haralambos 2014). Schools, more than ever, have a greater responsibility to develop fundamental skills to students. Therefore, having an updated and modern infrastructure is crucial. The development of a new science laboratories will generate an intangible added value to the students coming out of St. Aloysius College. The school always had a high reputation for developing conscientious students and therefore an ongoing refurbishment is always needed.

A SWOT and SMART goal analysis was performed to understand the feasibility of this project. It can be concluded that the project is not only needed but can be developed. There are external variables such as EU funding which might influence the development of the project. However, such projects were already being funded in other similar institutions and therefore the prediction of funding such a project is optimistic.

3.1.2 Thoughts for Discussion

The financial requirements of running a school have increased exponentially and Church schools (within the given agreement) do not have the financial aid they would expect to reach the requirements to implement the Learning Outcomes Framework (LOF) as requested by the government. The government is investing and building new government schools to reach the requirements set by the LOF.

However, Church schools need to adapt with the small donations acquired from parents and finding external stakeholders to support great projects. Benefactors, which were in many cases parents of students attending the College, helped throughout the years to buy new equipment and refurbish some parts of the school. However, benefactors are not a constant revenue and an assurance for the school. Schools deal with overhead costs every day and a certain amount of money is required every term to cover all these costs.

The next issue which will be tackled is the centralized curriculum itself which has to be implemented by all Church schools. Apart from the financial constraints it has created among all Church schools, the curriculum itself has presented various challenges to reach all students having different academic needs.

3.2. The effect of a centralized/controlled curriculum

The following paper will focus on a practical way to integrate all students at all levels in a system which is still very much academic. The Learning Outcomes Framework (LOF) designed by the Ministry of Education are, in theory, structured in a way that should reach every student. However, reality shows a different story.

Syllabi being overloaded with content and continuous school-based assessments happening all throughout the scholastic year are amongst those variables which limit teachers and educators to implement the LOFs. Not to mention that in line with the mentioned parameters, a Jesuit school, as discussed in the previous chapter, should implement in a creative way its core values and pedagogy.

3.2.1 Turning the Null Curriculum to a Valid Curriculum - Reaching out to everyone

3.2.1.1 Introduction

Every educational system in the world always tries to find a solution to reach out to every student in its educational community. Effort is always made to test new systems and adapt the national curriculum to accommodate everyone (Gordon 2006). However, in Malta, there are always a handful of students in every cohort who, in some way or another, do not fit in the formal curriculum system. These students are seen as deviants and the future unskilled workers who would be living on social benefits (Pinkster 2009).

What if these students were given a different educational experience relevant to them? Would they still end up unskilled after eleven years of education? What if the school offered a different curriculum system to these students and helped them become aware of their talents or hone skills they already have through a valid curriculum?

3.2.1.2 The Case

When I started this year's new scholastic year, I was handed over a new role; year coordinator also known as division prefect. The main responsibility of this role is being responsible of hundred and five students' academics, behaviour, and formation. Jake and Mike caught my attention immediately.

Whilst the rest of the group conformed to the rules, both Jake and Mike were all over the place. Assembly lines didn't exist, no attention or interest in most of the lessons with the consequence of roaming around the school corridors for most of the time, academic achievement was very low, and their deviant behaviour showed lack of basic personal and social skills.

The root of their actions comes from the fact that Mike was diagnosed with ADHD and Jake comes from a very challenging social background of crime and an abusive environment. The biggest challenge that I have working with these thirteen-year-old students (Year 10) is to help them make proper use of thirty-five

hours of school time a week. I have been observing such students for over thirteen years now and personally, the system already failed them. They are thirteen years of age, not knowing how to read and write properly. They spend much of their time wandering around the school corridors because they are given 'movement breaks' from teachers. These students are then expected, in three years' time, to sit for and obtain ten Ordinary 'O' level exams. The reality, unfortunately, is, they are lucky enough if they manage to get one 'O' level.

My biggest question is; how can the system/school motivate such students in a way that after eleven years of compulsory education, they come out with useful skills and knowledge which is not directly related to formal academic achievement?

To my biggest surprise, the answer was visible two months (end of November) after I started working with Mike and Jake. I was in my office, and I knew for a fact that Jake was loitering in the division's corridor. However, the idea of complete silence was not normal. I went out of the office, and I could see Jake trying to solve a fifty-piece Meccano® toy. I left him working on it as it was the first time, I saw him interested in something. After three hours he was still there playing/solving/creating this toy.

The day after Mike was playing and intrigued with the same toy. Also, during that day, his physics teacher was sick, and I had to supervise the whole class. During that time, I found a physics quiz online and Mike really got into it. Since he is usually out of class most of the time, I thought that the quiz would be very difficult for him. To my surprise, he was responding to the questions correctly and leading and motivating his peers.

This case made me realize three important aspects.

1. Although they have their own personal needs, when engaged properly they stayed in their own place and worked on something which really intrigued them.
2. The Maltese educational system is not allowing these individuals who are coming from a disadvantaged socioeconomic/vulnerable status to be catered for and ultimately succeed.
3. Even though a fifty-piece Meccano® was difficult to do (other students could have easily done it in fifteen minutes) Jake didn't give up, stayed in his

place, and tried to solve it anyway. Although Mike gives the impression that he is not learning anything and cannot stand a teacher-centered approach, he has the potential to learn. This means that when presented with a proper and meaningful challenge, such students are motivated and deep down, there is a need to learn. I could observe critical thinking all the way and a curiosity to solve/build the toy and answering the quiz questions.

3.2.1.3 The Theory

What these students really need is a valid curriculum which makes sense to them. A curriculum which is so obvious and ignored, but much needed to learn skills in a way students understand in a meaningful and practical way (Wilkinson, 2014 and Illeris 2018). The goal is that after eleven years of compulsory education, ALL students manage to learn and achieve a set of skills and knowledge which is significant to everyone.

Most of the students in schools will manage to successfully achieve the formal curriculum. This is presented as the explicit learning opportunities offered to students which are usually drawn by policy makers and set as formal standards (Milner 2017). In Malta this is presented as the Secondary Education Certificate (SEC). Students achieving this certificate will have successfully completed and obtained at least six 'O' levels which must include, Mathematics, English, Maltese, a Science Subject and two other subjects. Most of the secondary schools in Malta will prepare students to obtain between nine to ten 'O' levels.

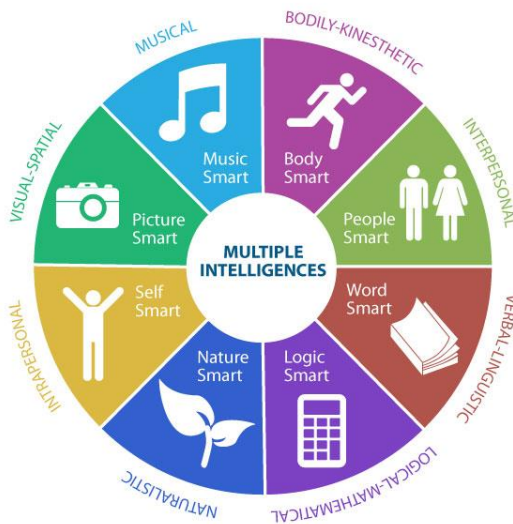
Einser (1994) also points out the implicit curriculum or hidden curriculum which implies all the intended or unintended knowledge passed on to learners. This is very visible in our school and is presented how teachers, administration and other academic staff continuously stress on proper behaviour, etiquette, values and the school's mission and vision.

For some students both mentioned curricula are still difficult to internalize. Although some of the knowledge would have been processed, students would still find the formal and hidden curriculum not so relevant for their life experiences. In fact, Milner (2017) suggests that, at times, the formal curriculum provides a disservice for some students as it takes away the student's identity, builds

competition and does not help students work through the difficult circumstances they pass through their life. This is where the null curriculum plays an important part in developing the much-needed skills and knowledge for students.

The null curriculum refers to all that knowledge that is not taught (Milner 2017). This type of curriculum refers to those topics that, for some, are considered less important and could be easily left out (Einser 1994). By doing so, though, it neglects topics and skills of certain importance such as critical thinking, creativity, entrepreneurship, and problem based learning, and other skills needed to thrive in today's world (Tatar and Adigüzel 2019). In fact, many of the topics found in the null curriculum focus on critical pedagogy, which means that education should be seen as a tool to liberate individuals from social conditions that are suppressing them (ibid.).

According to Freire, a liberating classroom is one where educators pose problems to students and promotes critical thinking through human experiences and profound social consequences (Leonard et al 1992). In other words, in a liberating classroom, students are presented with a complicated problem which is relevant to them, and it stimulates curiosity which activates learning (ibid.). This way of teaching promotes questioning the answer rather than just answering the question posed (Freire 1970). Students are not passive learners but become active learners and can internalize what is being facilitated (Heron 2004). However, the way how and where people learn may be subjective to everyone.



PICTURE 8. Diagram of Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences (Source: Almeida et al 2010).

Gardner (1999) stresses the idea that educators should focus on a classroom context that promotes practical activities and teachers should be more concerned with the *learning* rather than on the *outcomes* expected or time constraints. In fact, Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligence focuses on learning through tasks based on people's lives (Almeida et al 2010). He proposes eight practical ways people learn, namely through kinesthetic body activity, interpersonal relations, linguistic articulation, logical reasoning, contact with nature, self-awareness, visual imagination, and musical understanding. Thus, multiple intelligence theory is a systemic approach to how students can learn by meeting their individual needs (Cheatham 2017).

Dewey's student-centered theory also goes in line with Gardner's concept of Multiple Intelligence. He believed that education is:

- developmental and should be reconstructed on the individual experience of the student.
- education should be a means to process life and not a preparation for the future.
- activities should be at the center of the learning process where the individuality of the students is expressed through their experiences, instincts, and interests (Dewey 1974).

Dewey's concept of curriculum is aligned by the belief that learning should be based on experience and there should be continuity and interaction among subjects as opposed to the formal subjects taught independently (Achkovska-Leshkovska and Spaseva 2016). Moreover, learning should include a flexible timeframe allowing students to follow their interests in the process of learning.

Both Dewey and Gardner believe in a system that promotes real-life situations to promote learning and self-growth (ibid.). Whilst the formal focuses on the personal development of the individual, the latter aims at pointing out the most efficient way how students learn. Dewey also argues that students should be limited to a certain number of specific studies and thus success should not be based on academic achievement, "but in the development of new attitudes towards, and new interest in, experience" (Dewey 1974, p. 434).

With Gardner's Multiple Intelligence and Dewey's student-centered theory of learning by experience, a methodology must be considered to implement in a proper way the valid curriculum proposed. Kolb's experiential life cycle model will fit most of the topics. The role of a teacher in class is not one of instruction but facilitation (Heron 2004). The classroom is a space where experiences are created and students don't just learn from the experience the facilitator created in class, but also from the students' experiences disclosed during the activity as well. The role of the facilitator is to assist learners in their learning and help them become independent learners (ibid.). A more comprehensive approach would be to adopt Jarvis' model of human learning. It is based on the principle that learning is not always circular (as outlined in Kolb's experiential learning cycle) but learners can go back and forth into some stages for change/growth to happen (Illeris 2018).

In the following section, an applied approach will be considered to implement the following theoretical concepts into the mentioned valid curriculum proposed. The practical approach will cross reference the theories mentioned above and applied within a curriculum to complement the main formal Maltese curriculum system. The valid curriculum projected is not a replacement of the formal curriculum but should be a supplementary curriculum integrated in the formal curriculum as another option/opportunity for those students who in some way or another, want a different approach and syllabi leading towards a meaningful learning experience.

3.2.1.4 The Praxis

In Malta, compulsory education consists of six years of primary education followed by five years of secondary education where at sixteen years of age students achieve their Secondary Education Certificate (SEC) also known as their 'O' Levels corresponding to EQF level 3. During secondary education, students study a maximum of ten academic subjects. The SEC syllabi starts at the third year of secondary education.

During the first two years, students will be learning the basics elements to start their SEC syllabi. These include the core subjects which are Mathematics, English and Maltese and other supplementary subjects which include general science, religious studies/ethics, environmental studies, and a foreign language. At the end of the second year of secondary education, students will choose a field of study. Therefore, they must choose three other subjects such as Chemistry, Biology, Physics, Accounts, Economics, Computer Studies, Sports Education, VET subjects and much more. There are also non-academic subjects such as ICT, Physical Education (PE) and Personal Social and Career Education (PSCD) which are compulsory and taught throughout the five years of secondary education.

All students should have the possibility and right to study and obtain their 'O' levels. However, experience has taught me that during the first two years of secondary education, students will start giving an indication as to whether they will manage to sit for ten 'O' levels or not. When considering the student's social background, aptitude, behaviour, educational achievement and approach towards school, the senior management can identify those students who will struggle to follow the mainstream syllabi. If they are lucky, these students will finish compulsory education with a maximum of three 'O' levels.

The valid curriculum should be incorporated during the third year of secondary education. Whilst other students (over 90% of students) will follow the formal curriculum, there will be some who would benefit more from the valid curriculum. Students following the valid curriculum would still have the chance to study the three core subjects, VET subjects (maximum of two) and non-academics subjects

offered at school and will start following applied subjects/themes of the valid curriculum.

The main subject of the valid curriculum would be the Life Education Program (LEP). Each class will consist of a maximum of ten students per class. The method of application will follow Dewey's experiential learning model, Freire concept of a liberating classroom and Jarvis' or Kolb's model of human learning or experiential learning cycle respectively. Having a small group will provide the perfect scenario to facilitate an experiential learning approach. This will promote a peer-centered methodology and students will have the possibility to be the main actors of each other's learning and become active learners. In other words, LEP will incorporate themes that will be applied and practical. This will encourage collaboration and self-discipline (Leonard et al 1992).

The method of application will follow Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligence. This means that themes/topics and application will be based on the eight modes of learning. LEP should incorporate lessons about art, music, nature, logic, physical activity, and basic literature through drama. It will have a group of teachers who will also work collaboratively within this curriculum framework. Interpersonal and Intrapersonal skills will be incorporated across board as well as implemented during the PSCD lessons. All the topics mentioned above will be applied and collaborative. The advantage of this curriculum following Gardner's model of learning is that some topics can be intertwined with how students learn. In other words, if a student is very active and needs physical activity to learn, this can be done through playing the drums during a music appreciation lesson or farming during a nature class. The mentioned student can also learn logic whilst developing/creating an electronic board or learning how to create an electrical circuit.

The advantage of working in a collaborative setting is that students can also complement each other in the thematic project they will be working on. If a student's dominant mode of learning is linguistic, through research, would help the kinesthetic student during farming to explain how crops are better grown and what fertilizer ratio would best fit the crops being cultivated.

The nature of the choice of topics/themes will most of the time be spontaneous. The facilitators responsible for LEP would anticipate any school projects during

the scholastic year and will start to work with students to create any needed material/project. For example, each year the school would organize a talent night. During the LEP, students can work on creating costumes, stage props, set design and other related material. They can also organize fundraising activities and the money obtained will be used to buy material for the show. In such a project, students are learning about project management, finance, art, logical calculations, communication, responsibility, creativity, leadership, collaboration, interdependence, audio-visual literacy, and other skills which are crucial for life and meaningful to them. The idea of LEP should also be to help students bring out their ideas and create something for the school community. Students might observe that the school language rooms, or corridors need uplifting and therefore students might think of ideas how to improve the school aesthetics.

At the end of secondary education, students following the valid curriculum would be presented with a detailed portfolio of the projects done and the skills obtained throughout the three years of LEP. The idea is to recognize the work done by these students and eventually they could present their portfolio when applying for specific job opportunities. Instead of wasting time at school in a system that cannot fulfill their academic needs, students would be using their time efficiently through various meaningful experiences.

The projects created will boost the students' self-confidence and self-esteem. Instead of being seen as the school rejects, such students are empowered with the belief that they can also contribute to society at large.

3.2.1.5 Conclusion

The valid curriculum through LEP are subjects that every student can benefit from and that in some way or another should be provided (maybe in small doses) to everyone. The whole point of this curriculum and multifaceted subject is that after five years of secondary education students would still have the opportunity of getting their three core subjects but most of all, learn other practical skills. Instead of being kicked out of class because of their 'misbehavior' or sleeping throughout the whole lessons, students are given the opportunity to use their time in a qualitative manner. The school community is obliged to provide a quality

education to all students. Therefore, the curriculum and method of instruction must be adapted to all students and not just offering a one for all system.

3.2.2 Thoughts for Discussion

The valid curriculum through the LEP is in line with the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigms and the 6 Es of Refractive learning as described by Go and Atienza (2018). The reason why the LEP cannot be implemented at this stage is that the government, through the collective agreement, dictates the capacity building of how many teachers each Church school should have according to the lessons required per subject per teacher. Therefore, if teachers reach their official load as set by the school in accordance with the collective agreement, they cannot give extra lessons because the school will be in breach of the collective agreement.

On the other hand, if teachers are not given enough teaching load, the government would raise questions as to whether those teachers are needed in the school and thus putting the mentioned teachers at risk of redundancy. The school cannot employ more teachers than the school management would want to (unless it is willing and has enough budget to pay extra staff) because salaries are dictated by the government and the latter decides how many teachers are needed in each Church school.

Therefore, Church schools are limited in the number of teachers they are able to employ. This puts stress on the teaching load and how personnel can be positively exploited in a way that suits the school's needs.

To adopt a curriculum framework which truly reaches every student, and for St. Aloysius College to implement its cores values, it needs to have control over the teachers' contract which includes salaries and have a curriculum framework tailored around the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigms.

3.3. Static teaching and learning methodologies

The following paper will tackle curriculum and pedagogical implementation. It forms part of a journal/reflective experience done during the module *Contemporary Learning Theories*. It presents a theoretical perspective which is in line with the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigms. The IPP goes into detail about the values being invested in teaching and learning and the following practical methodology adopts a similar concept.

3.3.1 My Practical Theory of Teaching

Back in 2004, when I started my bachelor's degree in education to become a PSCD (Personal Social and Career Development) teacher, I was always instructed that our lessons should be student-centered. This was one of the reasons why I wanted to facilitate this subject because it was different and for me, it had meaning. Whenever I need to present or teach a class, whether it's at secondary school, high school or at university, I always involve the audience and create an experience which is relevant to them and one which they are part of. What does it mean and how does a teacher create this environment?

For me, learning is about creating a meaningful and relevant experience for the students in class; creating an environment where students can consolidate what they are learning through practice (Kolb 2014). During the past thirteen years, I put Kolb's experiential learning cycle and Dewey's theory of learning by doing into practice to facilitate my lessons. The role of a teacher in class is not one of instruction but facilitation (Heron 2004). In other words, the classroom is a space where experiences are created and students don't just learn from the experience the facilitator created in class, but also from the students' experiences disclosed during the activity as well. The role of the facilitator is to assist learners in their learning and help them become independent learners (ibid.).

However, throughout these years of teaching I always saw Kolb's experiential cycle as a bit too simplistic in its structure because every learner has a different approach to creating meaning. After reading Jarvis' model of human learning, I could make more sense of my prior thoughts. A person's learning is not always

circular (experiential learning cycle) but, in some cases, needs to go back and forth to some stages for change to happen (Illeris 2018). On the other hand, people might also strengthen their idea about something they always believed in and is left unchanged. Although Jarvis' model might seem complex in its theoretical structure, makes a lot of sense in practice. This also brings out the importance of creating relevance in class.

Nowadays, I'm noticing a huge difference between the first cohort of students I taught back in 2008 and the students I'm presently teaching. The tools and topics I used for the facilitation of my lessons changed throughout these years because the audience needed different tools and more relevant topics to promote learning. Although the formula/model of how I facilitate my lessons remained the same, the medium through which I facilitate changed. I had to adapt to the students' way of learning for them to learn in class. I continuously need to understand the adolescents' culture and their needs to create relevant topics which make sense to them. Therefore, I believe teachers need to create relevant experiences for students and must keep up to date with adolescents' trends.

A student-centered approach to learning promotes critical and creative thinking in students and this is crucial in their cognitive development. According to Piaget, open-ended questions should be asked to students to provoke discussion and instill critical thinking among students (Mechler 2021). When students think and evaluate what they are learning, makes it easier for them to develop their competences and encourages a thirst for knowing more.

Personally, I believe that for teaching and learning to take place, educators must sense what the needs of the classroom are and react to it. In other words, teachers cannot get stuck in their old ways, but must understand what the students' needs are and adapt the lessons by creating a meaningful experience in the classroom (Illeris 2018). Some needs may vary from one class to another. For instance, one class might be more practical and hands on than another and therefore the educator might create an activity which is more relevant and meaningful. Through evaluation and reflection, students can become more authentic thinkers, which is a much-needed skill today.

3.3.2 Thoughts for Discussion

One would ask; what are the issues here? At St. Aloysius College, a student-centered approach with an enquiry-based teaching methodology only happens in one or two taught subjects. There are two variables which hinder the theoretical perspectives above. The first and most obvious reason is the overloaded syllabi each academic subject must cover. Creativity is always sacrificed to cover all the content required for students to sit for their Ordinary 'O' Level examinations. Unfortunately, teachers do not have the luxury to be creative and allow more time to help students to internalize what they are learning.

The second reason is that teachers themselves are not willing to change their approach to their own teaching styles. During the last decade and a half, the educational system in Malta changed from a fully summative approach to a formative methodology, whilst working conditions remained the same. The workload and paperwork increased, and the system also saw the introduction of external and internal audits. All these changes put more stress on teachers, leaving the working conditions in the same nature as they were before. This created an environment conducive to demotivation.

The following two papers will provide a theoretical solution to the two issues mentioned above. One paper will focus on motivating the demotivated teacher and the concluding paper will focus on curriculum change methodologies.

3.4 The challenges of the present senior leadership team

At the core of effective leadership, one finds leaders whose main goal is to motivate and develop their personnel in a way that creates a positive environment and helps each employee develop their talents. Leaders should focus on development, career opportunities and various strategies on how to keep their respective employees focused and motivated.

Having a financial dependency and a working agreement directly dictated by the government (rather than the school management itself), makes it difficult to positively reinforce and motivate personnel. Although the school leadership team prepares staff development days, such topics are sometimes dictated by themes issued by the Ministry of Education. The next paper will delve into the roots of demotivation among Maltese and Italian teachers. Both coming from a Mediterranean culture, both nations share some common organizational cultural traits which were also visible in the educational sector.

3.4.1 Motivating the Unmotivated - Leading and Fuelling inspiration in an ever-changing school environment

3.4.1.1 Introduction

In every organization, worldwide, motivation has become a key factor to deliver success and keep up with the company/brand's vision. Like any other institution, however, unmotivated personnel are present almost everywhere. The achievements of an extraordinary leader are determined with the success stories of delivering a good product and keeping the organization at a competitive advantage whilst retaining a positive brand image. This is done by investing in the most important assets the organization has: human resources.

Employees are the companies' main stakeholder which can express the organizations' vision and are also those who implement the said vision. Therefore, having motivated people working within an organization is vital for a company to succeed. This argument is also related to schools and to one of its main stakeholders: teachers.

This paper will focus on profiles and scenarios visible in Italian and Maltese schools. It will delve into literature and will investigate possible solutions on how to motivate teachers to regain purpose and inspiration in their everyday tasks. A practical approach will be consequently applied to literature.

3.4.1.2 The Unmotivated Teachers

Teacher Profile

After comparing the Italian and Maltese educational system, various similar variables were observed as to why some teachers in both countries become unmotivated. Being both Mediterranean countries, both Malta and Italy share similar attributes and attitudes. The culture, belief systems, norms, values, and political implications are some but few examples of how people working within an organization can lose motivation (Buechler 2015).

For teachers working in both Italian and Maltese schools, once they pass their work probation, educators are offered an indefinite contract with a minimal chance of being dismissed from work. Therefore, such schools would have teachers who would be working in the same school for over twenty years doing the same scheduled scholastic work. Their opinion would be highly valued and have 'political' power on their colleagues and the school's decision-making process. Both cultures offer a relaxed approach towards life in general which has its benefits but also its downfalls especially in the work environment. Such teachers would be very reluctant to change as this would mean more work and responsibilities.

If they are not inspired (which is usually the case in both countries), unmotivated teachers will undergo the bare minimum work required by them with the consequence of putting stress on both their colleagues and on the whole school. Responsibilities and accountability become an issue at the expense of creating a toxic environment within the staffroom.

Usually, these people cannot find a sense of belonging in the workplace. They tend not to believe in teamwork, and above all, do not feel involved. In Italy, for example, the educational reform enacted with Law No. 53 of 28 March 2003 and Law No. 230 of 4 November 2005 of the Minister of Education Letizia Moratti (the reform of the three I's, English/Inglese, computer science/Informatica and business/Impresa), consequent to the Lisbon Treaty of 2000, led to a decentralization of education and a liberalization of the role of teachers, thus leading to a consequent breakdown of the team work that coordinates and sets itself the maximum objective of the well-being of children (Capuana 2020).

In the educational sector, as in the business world, teamwork can have an impact on staff motivation. Leaders will be responsible for founding and consolidating the workplace culture on the values of a teamwork, disseminating a disciplined approach, as defined by Katzenbach and Smith, of a team sees as "discrete units of performance" (Katzenbach and Smith 1993), i.e., the fusion of complementary competences of different people, all committed to the achievement of a single goal.

Teachers with over twenty years (sometimes even less) of experience in the same school can fall in the trap of the fear of change which leads to lack of self-confidence, seeing the whole school system as having problems everywhere and most of all no trust in the school management. Such teachers would then focus only on their rights rather than duties and ultimately, their sense of responsibilities and obligations towards the whole school environment will diminish exponentially with the result of becoming completely unmotivated.

Key factors leading to becoming an Unmotivated Employees

Behind the lack of motivation of teachers in Italian and Maltese schools there can be different causes. It is essential to remember that in both the Italian and Maltese scenarios, the worker's search for a stable and permanent employment contract plays a fundamental role. Although this trend is changing and today's young people are increasingly moving towards the private sector (Sismondi 2022), in the educational sector too, the average Italian worker, lacking motivation, seeks a secure job, where he can constantly receive a monthly salary, knowing that he will not be monitored and assessed for his performance.

Some of these reasons could be:

- Lack of purpose or meaning: If people do not see the value in the work they do, or they do not understand how it contributes to a larger goal, they may feel like they are just going through the motions.
- Lack of autonomy: People may feel unmotivated if they do not have the ability to make decisions or have control over their work.
- Lack of recognition or feedback: When people do not receive feedback or recognition for their work, they may feel unappreciated and unmotivated.
- Poor work environment: A negative work environment, such as a lack of support, poor communication, or toxic co-workers, can be demotivating.
- Burnout: People can experience burnout if they feel overwhelmed, stressed, or overworked, which can lead to feelings of exhaustion and disengagement.
- Personal issues: External factors like personal issues or problems outside of work can also contribute to feeling unmotivated at work.

It is also very important to consider how the world of education, as well as the world of work in general, has undergone a profound transformation in recent years. At this moment, teachers are facing change and most people do not like change (Harari 2022). The 21st century teachers in this historical and economic moment, aligned with the national indications which are influenced by the supranational organizations as the United Nations with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, are required to shift from a content-based learning and teaching to a skills-based approach, dedicating attention to emotional intelligence and mental balance. They are supporting and helping students to keep changing through their life, getting ready for jobs that do not exist yet. But are teachers ready to do this? How much teachers are motivated to be part of this learning environment where education is not perceived anymore as building a stone house with very deep foundation, but as building a tent that people can fold up and move to another location very quickly and easily (Harari 2022).

From a leadership perspective the mentioned unmotivated teacher profile can present a threat to the senior management team. Unmotivated teachers might influence other teachers and can/will oppose every opportunity presented by management. However, this is where the efficacy of good leadership comes into play. It's important for managers to identify the reasons why their employees may feel unmotivated and take steps to address them. This may include improving communication, providing more autonomy or feedback, or creating a positive work environment that fosters engagement and motivation. This is where an effective leader can turn a threat into an opportunity and positively exploit unmotivated but immensely experienced teachers into prolific educators. Leaders within schools must continuously find ways and means to empower, inspire, and create a sense of purpose whilst instilling a shared vision to all the school community.

School as an institution or a business place?

Both in Italy and Malta, there is also a tendency that educators do not see the school from a corporate perspective, but as an institution that provides educational services and are often operated as non-profit organizations. This implies that all the dynamics linked to the corporate context of Human Resources are not implemented: clear work culture, team building, definition of strengths, objectives and of a common purpose, moments of reflection. The dynamics in the Italian and Maltese school systems can affect the team's confidence: the idea of working on improving individual and group competences, skills, and abilities, is not common in the Italian school system, and this can have an impact on the team's ability to feel confident working together.

However, some aspects of schools can be like businesses, such as the need to manage budgets, resources, and personnel. Additionally, some schools may generate revenue through fees, donations, or other means, and may have to operate within the constraints of market competition. So, while schools are not necessarily "business places" in the traditional sense, they do share some characteristics with businesses and may need to employ similar strategies to succeed.

However, this reflection on the school world and its employees is leaving aside a key figure in the definition of teacher motivation and workplace culture, namely those who oversee this institution.

At this point, it is therefore interesting to ask whether a leader or a manager is behind the non-motivation of teachers within the school. Which type of leader has a negative or positive impact on the motivation and thus the subsequent performance of a teacher?

These two terms are very similar to each other and they could almost seem interchangeable. While the term "manager" focuses on decisions made at an administrative level, with "leader" the focus shifts to a level of value-based influence (Murphy and Murphy 2017). A manager typically has a formal authority over a team or a department and is responsible for ensuring that tasks are

completed on time, within budget, and to a certain level of quality. They often focus on controlling resources, directing work, and measuring performance. Managers are typically more concerned with maintaining the status quo and making sure that things run smoothly within their area of responsibility.

On the other hand, a leader is someone who inspires and motivates others to achieve a common goal. They often have a vision of what they want to achieve and are skilled at communicating that vision to others. Leaders tend to focus more on people than on tasks and are often more concerned with developing their team's potential than with simply getting the job done. Leaders are typically more willing to take risks and try new things to achieve their goals (ibid.).

As it is in the business environment, also in the school setting, principals who look like managers tend to focus on tasks, processes, and maintaining the status quo, while principals who are leaders tend to focus on people, vision, and inspiring others to achieve a shared goal. While there can be overlap between the two roles, they are distinct in terms of their approaches and priorities.

3.4.1.5 Motivating the Unmotivated by Inspiring People

The motivation of an employee can therefore be observed on two levels: at the level of the work organization and its culture, and at a level of individual and personal skills. There may be an incompatibility between the individual and the workplace culture in which they are inserted, a lack of sharing or recognition of values; or that individual may not feel valued, seen, heard, or adequate to do what is assigned to them. It will be the leader's task to create a shared vision, listen, and inspire employees to avoid these types of incompatibilities and the resulting discomfort and frustration, which can impact the entire work environment.

For leaders, the starting point for motivating the unmotivated is to start with the question WHY. Leaders need to foster an environment where employees understand why they are doing what they are doing (Sinek 2019). The answer to this question cannot be limited to monetary value, but something which is greater and deeper than what money can give (ibid.). It is about instilling a culture of

believing in the shared vision of the organization (Kouzes and Posner 2017). Why people do what they do is about purpose, legacy and giving true meaning at work, but also in life in general (Sinek 2019).

Motivation comes from instilling in personnel a sense of pride, cause and enjoyment in the work people create at their workplace (Kouzes and Posner 2017). To nurture such an environment, leaders need two basic elements in their leadership role: trust and listening skills. Having these two concepts will help in empowering employees in building confidence and competence and instilling in employees a will to exceed their potential.

Trust

A short word but has a profound meaning and is deeply rooted in every relationship around the world, trust is the cornerstone to creating something extraordinary (Tan 2014). Leaders need to invest in trust and create an environment where they trust their workers. In a study published in Harvard Business Review clearly shows that people who are trusting find themselves happier and psychologically adjusted to those living in a world of suspicion and distrust (Hayashi 2001).

This is also the case observed in both Maltese and Italian schools. People who are unmotivated are usually those who complain and doubt the senior management in their decision-making process. They are also those who, in many cases, have a low mood. Klein (1998), states that the greater the trust within an organization, the greater result will be observed in performance, having prolific teams and personal satisfaction.

For leaders, trust is created by being the first to show trust (Kouzes and Posner 2017). Leaders need to show trust in their employees first. For workers to trust in their respective leaders, they need to be trusted and feel that their word and what they believe in is valued. On one hand, it comes at a price; vulnerability. It is a risk of letting go off control. Some leaders feel they 'need' to have control over everything and would end up micromanaging every decision-making process. This means, the last decision will always be taken by the leader. This leaves

employees not being trusted, no sense of freedom, and the employees' opinion is not important/valued. This attitude will ultimately demotivate employees. Not trusting employees also puts pressure on the leaders themselves because they would end up doing all the work which could have been easily done if leaders trusted their respective workers.

On the other hand, showing trust is an empowering tool and gives responsibility to employees to voice their beliefs and implement what they stand for (ibid.). Employees feel they are valued and what they believe in is important. This can create a positive contagious environment where being trusted creates more trust and this virtue is reciprocated at all levels. However, trust cannot be forced. Some people might need more time than others to build trust (Zak 2017). Although some people might take longer to trust, the latter is a virtue ingrained in people and to function effectively, people need to build a sense of trust (ibid.). When a sense of trust is created, employees will open and disclose their ideas, beliefs, and hardships. This is where listening comes into play.

Developing self-determination: values, team, and leader

A practice that could be applied to develop and consolidate a sense of mutual trust, both among teachers themselves and between teachers and leadership figures, could be to establish practices aimed at developing self-determination. After an initial phase of work on mutual (and personal) knowledge based on socialization and the consolidation of shared values (for example, by organizing activities with a speaking poster), the school institution should empower its teachers by inviting them to take the initiative and carry out projects independently, starting initially from an autonomous definition of their own goals and personal strengths. In this way, even the person who feels less motivated can take a more active role in the team and open a channel of dialogue with the leadership figure and colleagues. By increasing their personal awareness and feeling supported in their independence, the teacher will feel more inclined to make proposals and find solutions instead of problems.

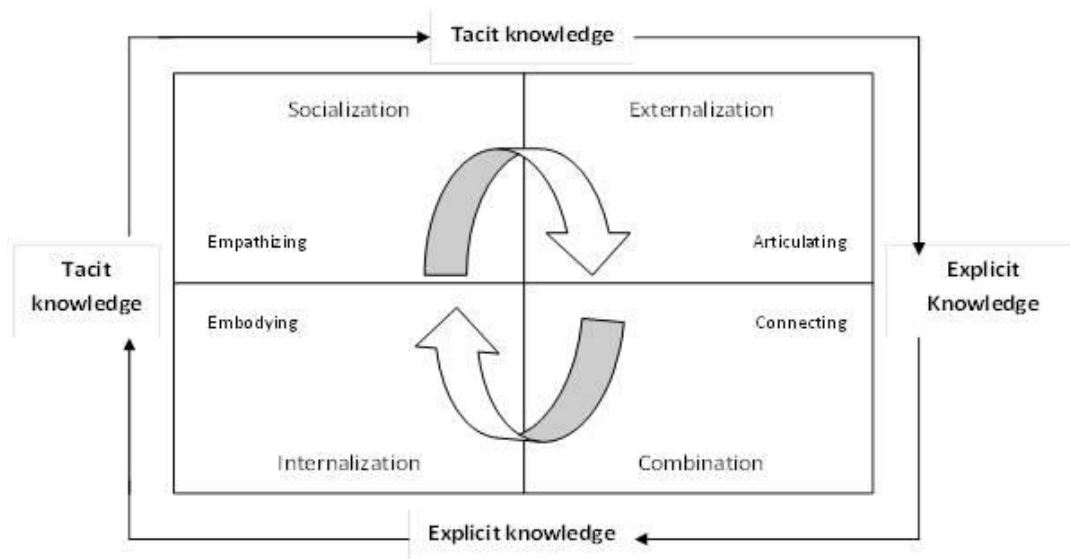


FIGURE 8. The SECI model (Source: Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995).

Listening

Trust is built on the premise that leaders believe and listen to what their employees must share. Giving time to listen to people means that leaders give value, worthiness and build aspirations in what employees are disclosing (Kouzes and Posner 2017). Unmotivated personnel are those who think that their opinions are not listened to. When people are listened to, their ideas are valued, and this will result in having empowered and motivated personnel who believe in the shared vision of the organization and want to create something together (Kaye and Jordan-Evans 2014).

Offering freedom, options and accountability promotes a sense of ownership, resilience, determination, and esteem in what people do (Kouzes and Posner 2017). This motivates people to go the extra mile and create something meaningful at their workplace. Unmotivated people are usually those who lost their self-confidence and feel that they are not competent enough to do anything else at the place of work. This is where the leader plays an important role to coach such individuals and reignite the fire to help workers regain confidence and competence.

Coaching is an excellent way for leaders to actively listen to their employees and at the same time empower them. Using the GROW (Goal, Reality, Options, Will) technique through questioning will facilitate coaching and help employees elicit their existing issues. Coaching is an opportunity for leaders to understand their workers. Mentoring or coaching is an effective tool that can also be implemented at all levels at the workplace. It can be performed peer-to-peer, or leader-to-employee. It is a skill that unifies employees. Coaching is a way people listen to each other and builds more trust, confidence, and competence among employees.

In this ever-changing world, where technology is dictating the requirements in every workplace, being competent with new technologies is crucial. Education and pedagogical techniques are continuously changing, and these changes might demotivate people because they feel they are not competent to use such technologies and give up. In a research conducted by Csikszentmihalyi (2008), concluded that for people to remain confident in the place of work, the task difficulty must be in line with the knowledge of how to perform the said task.

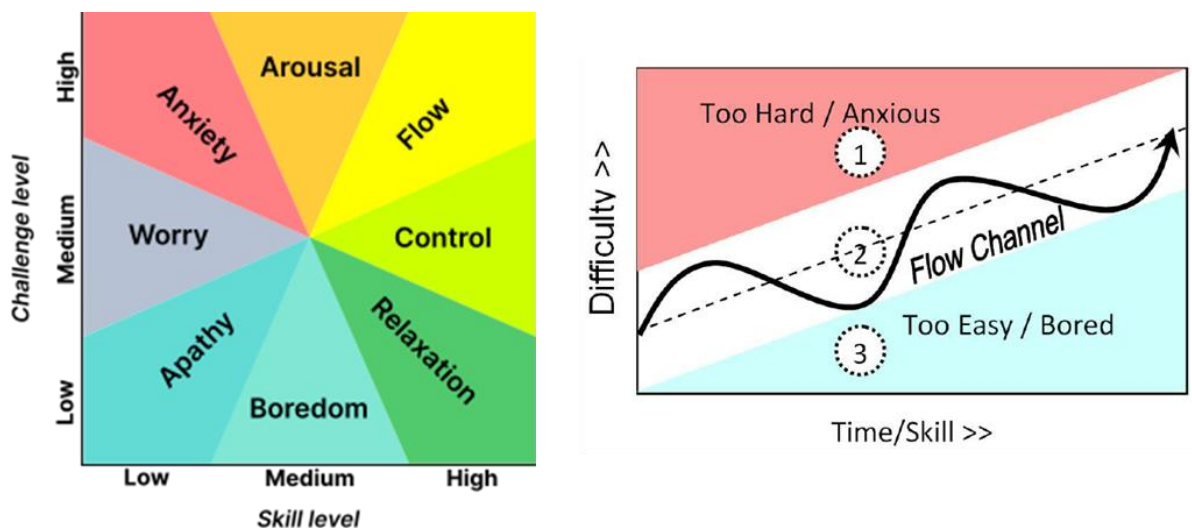


FIGURE 9. Optimal Performance, Challenge and Skill Diagram (Source: Csikszentmihalyi 1997).

In other words, if a task is difficult enough to perform, people will become anxious and might give up. Moreover, if the task is too easy, employees will become bored or apathetic. Both scenarios will eventually create demotivation because the tasks are either too difficult or too easy to perform. Leaders must therefore be mindful of what is being implemented in schools so that educators do not fall on either side of the mentioned spectrum. There must be a balance between the challenge presented and the skill level required.

Leaders must create a work environment which offers the right conditions to make flow possible Csikszentmihalyi (2008). This will in return create an environment where employees are competent to commit themselves in the presented task because they are confident to implement what it's being requested. Therefore, leaders in schools need to support employees by offering ongoing training on new trends and changes happening in the educational sector. Offering continuous training will help teachers remain competent and upgrade their skill sets while at the same time retaining their confidence in what they are expected to do.

3.4.1.3 Conclusion

While motivation has its place in our lives, we should strive to cultivate inspiration as a more powerful and sustainable force that can drive us to achieve our full potential. By focusing on what truly inspires us, we can tap into a deeper source of motivation and meaning that can sustain us over the long-term. Instead of focusing solely on motivation, we should strive to cultivate inspiration in ourselves and others. This can be done by identifying our core values and passions and aligning our goals and actions with them. When we are inspired, we are more likely to find meaning and fulfillment in our work and personal lives and are better equipped to overcome challenges and achieve our goals.

3.4.2 Thoughts for Discussion

Inspiration and motivation are fueled by intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Whilst some intrinsic factors can be controlled by a strong senior leadership team at school, the extrinsic factors at St. Aloysius College are mainly controlled by the centralized government.

Salaries, teachers' conditions, and professional growth are among the key variables which are dictated by the collective agreement, and adaptations are made at the benefit of the government's needs. Therefore, a change in teachers' conditions must be made to help teachers remain motivated and keep up with the ever-changing pedagogical needs required by society.

3.5. Change

The four themes presented above raise questions about the validity of the system being implemented. Although there is no ideal system, it is still important to understand and seek alternatives which might be more effective than the system in place.

Due to the issues with the current curriculum, the next paper will propose a change in curriculum design. The school in question is Amberfield College of South Africa. Malta and South Africa both follow a British-like educational system. Therefore, there were a lot of similarities in the way both schools and both countries' educational systems work. The change plan applied to Amberfield College would be easily applied to St. Aloysius College. The only difference which will be considered is the new curriculum adopted. This will be discussed in the discussion and recommendations chapter.

3.5.1 Change Management Plan - Amberfield College Curriculum Change

3.5.1.1 Introduction

Amberfield College is a private school located in Centurion, South Africa. Currently Amberfield College follows the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). The goal through the “Change and Project Management Methods” is to implement the change from NCS to IEB curriculum at Amberfield College. Our vision main ingredient is advance quality teaching and learning in South Africa through an assessment process of integrity, innovation, and international comparability.

3.5.1.2 Need for change

Change emerges after an analysis of why some students were leaving our school. Families pointed out two main aspects:

- There were not strong differences between the education provided in Amberfield College and the public schools.
- Some families wanted to change their children to a school which follows IEB curriculum because of the prestige of it according to the quality.

The need for change was around families and in the long-term plans of school scope. After the need is created, the school decides to look for a solution and IEB curriculum appears as the most appropriate one. This curriculum focuses on promoting problem- solving skills as a source of learning, which prepares students for life-long learning and competencies required in society.

The IEB seeks to advance quality teaching and learning in South Africa through an assessment process of integrity, innovation, and international comparability. All schools registered with the IEB to write the National Senior Certificate have access to a range of professional development opportunities as well as a variety of assessments, designed to serve a range of purposes (IEB - Independent Examinations Board n.d.-a).

Moreover, according to research, there is an average pass rate between 97%

and 98% in Grade 12 National Senior Certificate for schools following the IEB curriculum, as well as 78%-80% pass with entry to degree study. Apart from that, a study carried out in 2008 by the University of Cape Town noted that IEB students generally perform better at university. (IEB - Independent Examinations Board n.d.-b)

We are determined to design, deliver, and promote a wide range of high quality, affordable assessment products and services to all sectors. Our main priority is to create a framework of real values based on people's development, integrity, perseverance, and excellence.

Amberfield College aims to be a model of equal opportunity in progress, development and social advancement and well-being. It all begins and ends with our students, who possess their rich potential and have an inalienable right to an open horizon of equal opportunities. We want for our children the best conditions for both quality and equality. In figure 10 we find a summary of main ideas about the need for change, following the golden circle model.

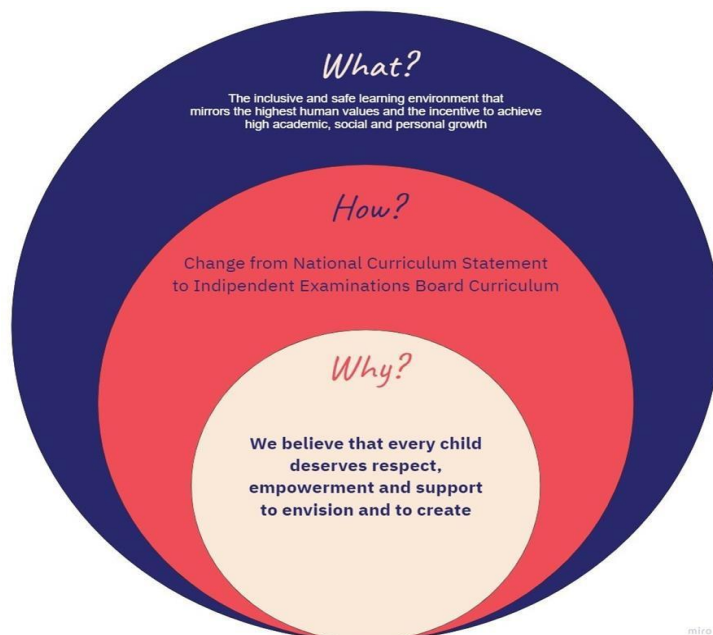


FIGURE 10. Golden Circle-Amberfield College (Source: authors).

Change schedule

We are conscious of changes need time to be settled down, so we believe the best way to introduce it is progressively. Due to this, the IEB curriculum will be implemented in the academic year starting from January 2025 only in Year/Grade 10. After that, the plan is to implement the curriculum with a new cohort each year until the change is completed. Preforming the change this way, we have time enough to keep improving the implementation of curriculum, to promote teaching training and to analyze results year after year.

Change map

Throughout this document different sections are presented to explain the models we are based on and the real application of this theory. After that, the reader will find the project triangle including scope, schedule, and resource. To sum up, communication with all stakeholders is provided.

In the following module, we introduce three models our change is based on, using Lewin's one as the main model in use. The other two models are also explained below to complement our complex plan.

3.5.1.3 Change Models

The models of change that we consider suitable for implementation are the model proposed by Kurt Lewin, the one proposed by William Bridges and finally the one proposed by Senge et al. The above models empowers different stages of change, therefore we tried to synthesize a change plan with the most appropriate specifications for our project.

Lewin's 3-Step Model (Main model in use)

Kurt Lewin's model of change is characterized by the simplicity and clarity of its structure. His model is not basic and does not lack a cognitive dimension, but is based on a deep understanding of human psychology and behavior built up over many years (Burnes 2020). The three stages (unfreezing-change-refreezing) place it among the most used models. Its minimalistic character is very much suited to projects with a complex character. Its strong point is its

focus on the "battlefield". In other words, on the fine line that separates the opposing forces, that is, the existing situation and the need for change. Lewin uses the metaphor of the organism as well as the machine and this combination pays off in terms of the guidelines of his application. One of the notable references in this model is that it is directly related to the concept of homeostasis, which means, the innate tendency of organisms to maintain equilibrium during pivotal or disrupting changes (Cameron and Green 2012). A similar situation could be described by the metaphor of the human immune system, which possesses the ability, under conditions of rest and not stress, to transform disease into health, maintaining the balance of the overall system. Lewin's model is often used by managers mainly as an organizational model and not so much as an implementation model. That is because it is referring to a change in human potential, thus it is of great importance to activate the awakening of human potential and to be motivated by a profoundly strong need for a better status.

Suitability for our change project

In our project we decided to focus on the **teachers** as the main group of change. We believe that teachers are a key link in the change chain and could be likened to the thin line that separates the force field. In addition, teachers are under pressure and often tasked with many roles, challenges and competing classroom demands (Creely et al. 2021). The complex and sometimes conflicting pressures in classrooms can make it challenging to enact novel approaches unless there are systemic support and structures from schools and leaders (ibid.). The crucial importance of teachers' contribution to a change such as the one we are studying at Amberfield College is aptly described by the metaphor of a play where teachers are the actors in the play. Certainly, the text, the sets, the direction, the music are parameters that determine success, but the actor and his or her talent are essential for the performance to take place. On top of that, the actor performs his role realistically when he has first believed in it and identified in its elements that activate him for action.

As described in Lewin's model, the first step is the **unfreezing stage**, where the recognition of the need for improvement takes place. For Lewin the stability of

human behavior was based on a quasi-stationary equilibrium of driving and restraining forces within a life space. Thus, Lewin saw unfreezing as a challenging process of reeducation (Burnes 2020). More specifically, last August, the administration of Amberfield College invited parents of students at the school to participate in a survey about the change from NSC to IEB.

The NSC is better known as CAPS (Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement). This curriculum is set by the South African Department of Education and is the standard for all government schools. On the other hand, the IEB (Independent Examinations Board) curriculum is considered a more challenging and prestigious qualification in the private school sector. The IEB seeks to promote quality teaching and learning in South Africa through an assessment process with integrity, innovation, and international comparability. All schools registered with the IEB to write the National Senior Certificate have access to a range of professional development opportunities as well as a variety of assessments designed to serve a variety of purposes. As stated earlier, the IEB produces consistent, reliable results in the Grade 12 and success with entry to degree courses. Unfreezing points out the need to enhance students' 21st skills and knowledge, thus, school leadership and teachers' contribution and support is vital. (IEB - Independent Examinations Board, n.d.-b)

For Lewin, there is a need to motivate staff to want change, not for change's sake but for the efficacy of current organizational practices and for the adaptation of improved outcomes (Creely et al. 2021).

The second step of Lewin's change model refers to **Participation and Involvement**. Moving occurs when the forces pressing for change are greater than those resisting change (Burnes 2020).

A key aspect of involvement is the connection between the rhetoric of leadership and the experiences and mind-sets of teachers. Many teachers struggle to overcome a mind-set barrier that restricts their creative possibilities. This is irrespective of whether they teach for creativity, or they teach creatively (Creely et al. 2021). In our case, of course, it is important that teachers are trained appropriately to carry out the implementation of the new curriculum and

feel competence and confidence in their practice. However, it is also an important part of the teachers' emotional stimulation, precisely because, in addition to acquiring new technical knowledge, teachers will bring to the surface psychological obstacles and burdens stemming from personal experiences.

This is the main reason why, at this stage, we decided to use Bridges' Change model as a complementary approach, since it delves deeper into the issue of psychological transition. Bridges states that change is situational and can be planned, whereas transition is psychological and less easy to manage (ibid.).

Finally, the third step of Lewin's change model is called **Refreezing**. Lewin's model three aspects are both linear and reciprocal, refreezing is never final but always open to shifting back to earlier states based on awareness of need through a process of evaluation and action (Creely et al. 2021). Freezing requires the new behavior to be consistent with and reinforced by the rest of the behavior, personality, and environment of those concerned in order to prevent regression (Burnes 2020). This involves stabilizing, supporting, and reinforcing change through organizational practices, professional learning and acknowledging achievement. Lewin's model is thus a dialogic model of change with fluid movement implied across all three aspects of change (Creely et al. 2021). We believe precisely because there is no concrete barrier of feedback and revaluation, the stage of refreezing is appropriate for our project since it is natural that points need to be redefined and decisions need to be made afresh to achieve the goal of implementing the new Curriculum.

Bridges & Senge, et al. Change Models (Supplemental models in use)

William Bridges – Transition Model

Changing from one curriculum to another will need the full participation of the teachers to be successful. This critical human element in our change project can be supported with the Bridges Transition Model.

Bridges differentiate between change as a shift in the external world, but people react to the shift with the internal process of transition. This transition process consists of three phases: endings (letting go of the old), the neutral zone (chaos

of change), and beginnings (new understanding, values, attitudes, and identities). Bridges stresses the importance of managing transitions with the two “C’s” – connection and concern and the importance of a leader’s connection with people going through transition. Addressing the four “P’s” will also help leaders to give people guidance and support in the transition.

- Purpose – Why is the change necessary? What will happen if this change does not take place?
- Picture – How is this change going to look, feel and work?
- Plan – Step by step rolling out the plan.
- Parts – What are the roles people will play in the change?

During transition you have different people at different places moving at different speeds, which leads to the following advice from Bridges: “The role of leading the human side of change is an underestimated piece of leadership. (Dyer and Renn 2000)

Peter Senge – Systemic Model

Driving sustainable change takes our focus to Senge and the systemic change model he created in his book *The Fifth Discipline*. The key focus of his model is:

- shared vision: team members need to understand the WHAT and WHY of the change.
- mental models: experience and prior learning = REALITY
- team learning: the path to new understanding creates and allows mistakes.
- personal mastery: what people KNOW and what they NEED to know. (Hedger 2021)

In an interview with Reese (2020), Senge identified three conditions that needs to be developed in organizations:

- long-term orientation – no quick fix will work, deep thinking about the underlying sources of difficulties need to take place, accomplishing something truly significant will take time.
- self-creating (autopoeitic) system view – human organizations are not

machines, but more like living systems, the organization work because of the way humans work, not simply a formal structure and rules that exist outside, but also has a sense of internalization of norms and ways of doing things in the organization.

- critical mass of the right people – the need to have “everyone on board” is not ideal, rather focus on a few influential members, this group will grow bigger until almost everyone is impacted.
- Senge describes the most impactful of his model “personal mastery”. This focuses not only on a commitment to change, but the individual exploring his or her way of thinking, bringing about a deep and personal understanding of systems. Personal mastery is the central to deep personal change that is needed for any real systems change.

Our choice for this model is to focus on:

- starting small,
- growing steadily,
- allowing for plans to change, and
- to expect challenges along the way. (Cameron and Green 2012)

3.5.1.4 Change Plan for School

Our model map includes four steps related to the theory presented above, taking advantage of each model selected, as we can see in figures 2 and 3.

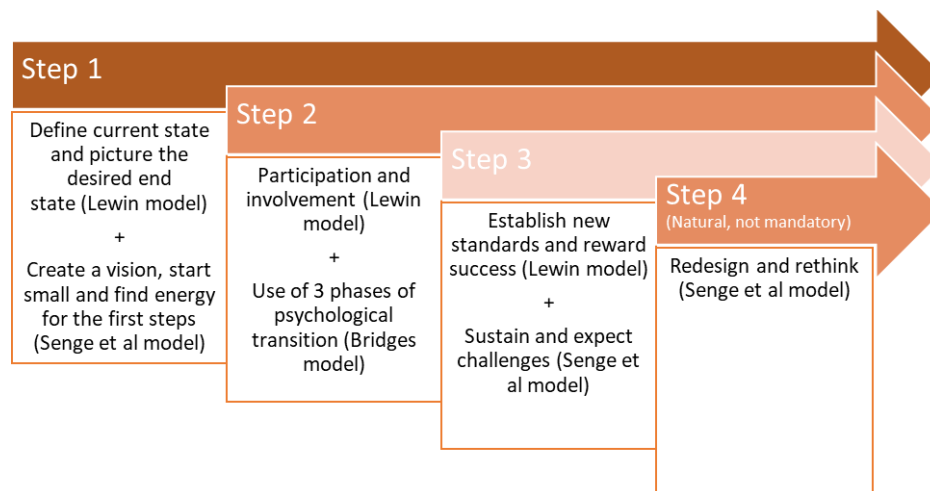


FIGURE 11. Brief description of our model map (Source: authors).

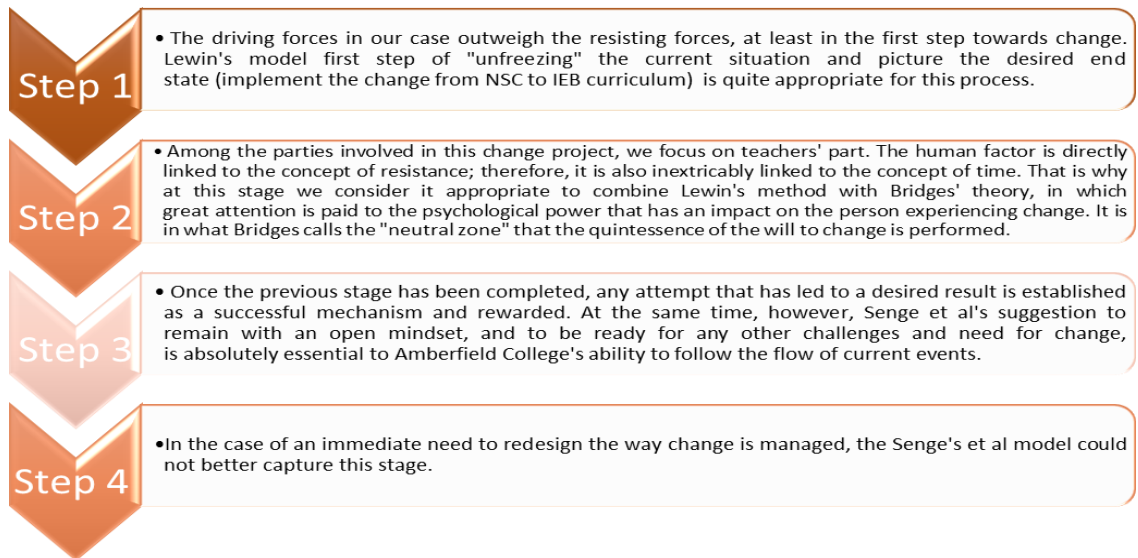


FIGURE 12. Detailed description of our model map (Source: authors).

Lewin's application

After exposing how Lewin's model suits in our case, we will know explain detailed examples of how to apply it in our change plan.

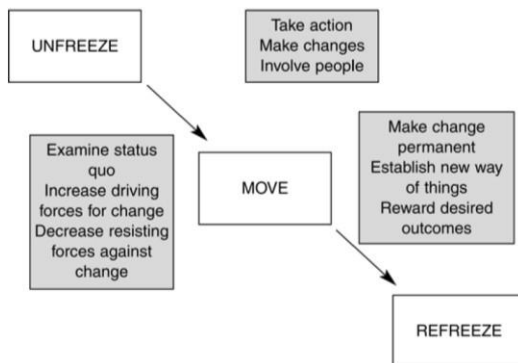


FIGURE 13. Lewin's three-step model (Source: Lewin 1951).

The first step, called unfreeze, we remark the importance of creating a change need in order it to evolve in a successful way, according to Lewin's ideas (Cameron and Green 2012). As we explained in the introduction, this was the first issue of our case: detecting the need for a change with families' interviews and, after that, managers were planning and transferring it to the teachers' team. This shows up how the foundations of the comfort zone have started to shake.

In step two, move, the main point of Lewin's theory is that driving forces need to

outweigh resisting forces. There are two options for that: either the driving forces increase, or the resisting forces decrease. To do that, all we need is participation and involvement:

To reduce the resisting forces, we take time to carefully explain the action plan to teachers, our leverage group, and giving them time to interiorize this new teaching perspective. Moreover, we agree with teachers on a change plan and a timeline for achieving the end state. This is proposed by the managers but listening to the team's needs and opinions so as not to be seen as an imposition but as a flexible idea to concur together the final schedule, which can be seen on section three "project triangle".

To increase the driving forces, on the one hand we will explain to families, students, and teachers the benefits for each of them to use IEB curriculum compared to the current one. There will be seminars and talks about this topic in which educational agents will have the opportunity to voice their doubts. On the other hand, increasing teacher's motivation is crucial. To do that, the message will always be that they are indispensable for this change because they oversee the change. One of the ideas we would like to share to teachers at this point is that thanks to this curriculum and their teaching performance, students will be more successful, and teachers will have more flexibility to organize and adapt the content to each group.

Another idea to transmit is the team spirit, since teacher's cooperation is one of the main factors which affects student's learning, according to neuro-education research (Hattie 2015). If we manage to act as a team, success is closer. Moreover, complete training will be provided to teachers with the purpose of gaining confidence in their future practices. Along the way, there will be many meetings to understand how teachers are feeling and what they need, as well as to solve doubts and specific cases. There will be continuous accompanying and support to provide resources for improving the IEB implementation.

To be sure this change spirit is established, school has prepared some surveys for both families and teachers. Results show that, up to 624 responses, 80.8% of families want Amberfield College's examinations to be administered by the IEB. Talking about Amberfield staff, up to 82 responses, 89% agree with the

change of curriculum and 100% are willing to participate in training by IEB and to adapt their teaching methods and styles according to the requirements of this new curriculum. Regarding the data, we conclude that there is a majority supporting the change to a new curriculum although there are still some people to persuade. Further interviews and questionnaires will help us to understand the reasons behind those who still do not believe in the change.

All this drives us to the third and final step, refreeze, which is important to stop and reflect on achievements. This last step will make the team and families feel confident and safe because it is a 'safe square', a start of the new status quo. Once IEB curriculum is implemented for a whole academic year in Grade 10, evaluation will take place to acknowledge achievements. These results will be shared and discussed with teachers first and families second.

Considering all exposed above and in previous sections, organism and machine metaphors used by Lewin's model are related to our case. Machine because we have a well-planned and controlled scenario in which each gear (educational agent) needs to run for the machine (system) to work. Our organization is seen as an organism because we have shown that it is a living adaptative system which is in congruence with the environment by listening to the demands of the moment and agents involved. This change we will carry out is proof of a healthy adaptation to the outside world.

Bridges' application

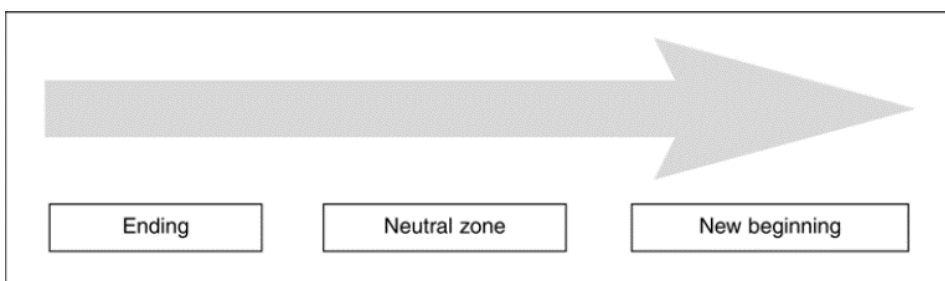


FIGURE 14. Bridges' model (Source: Cameron and Green 2012).

At Amberfield, there will be a visible transition from one curriculum to another. The transitioning from the ending of one curriculum to the neutral zone and eventually the new beginning of the new IEB curriculum is crucial in Bridges' change model. In 2024 it will mark the end of the old curriculum for prospective year 10 students. Between 2023 and 2024 information sessions together with consultation and training will be carried out to all respective stakeholders to mark the end and the beginning of the new curriculum. During the summer holidays between scholastic year 2024 and the scholastic year 2025 will mark the neutral zone.



FIGURE 15. Amberfield College Five-year Action Plan: Implementation of IEB Curriculum (Source: authors).

This period will be crucial for all members of staff at Amberfield College. Clear guidelines and support should be given throughout the holidays so that anxiety levels remain low and motivation to start a new project will be high. Guidance should be given at all levels to hinder the creation of toxic environments and negativity towards the new curriculum.

During the start of scholastic year 2025 there might be some uncertainties of how the new system will operate and issues should be tackled through good communication and efficiency. The first staff seminar should emphasize on the vision why the change was necessary and empower teachers and school staff by thoroughly planning the year and that all staff are change agents in this change. Throughout the first year (the New Beginning) constant monitoring and mentoring should be implemented.

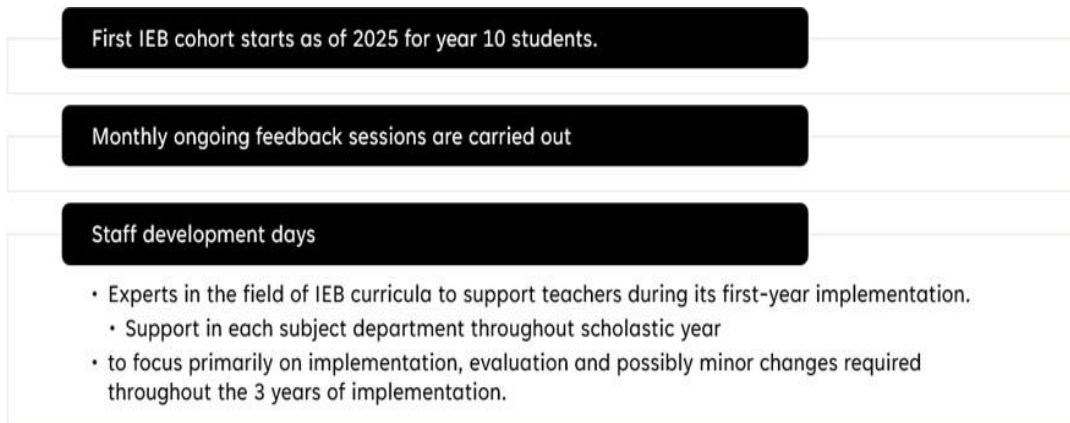


FIGURE 16. First year IEB implementation planning (Source: authors).

Senge's application

Senge's systemic model is simple and straightforward. When developing a change in structure, organizations need to start small, grow steadily, don't plan the whole thing, and expect challenges along the way (Cameron and Green 2012). This model goes in line with the implementation of the new curriculum which will be implemented at Amberfield College. Change and implementation of the new curriculum cannot be implemented across board but needs to start slowly whilst phasing out the old system.

The new curriculum will be implemented for year 10 students where they will start their syllabus leading to the IEB certification. Implementing new curricula might be demanding and requires diligence in the implementation process. The main benefit of following Senge's Systemic model is that it promotes a slow build up. Since it is a five-year plan, growth and development will be gradual but consistent. Since it is a major change in the school operations, challenges need to be forecasted and addressed immediately. Opposition from staff members and infrastructural issues might be some examples of challenges which might influence the smooth implementation of the new curriculum. However, through a clear vision and planning which will take around two years, the mentioned challenges will be addressed, and future challenges tackled throughout the process.



Scholastic year 2023

First Staff seminar 2023: Understanding the new vision of the school for the next 5 years.

Information sessions throughout the year through staff seminars about the new system.

Empowering teachers by owning the vision.

Consulting teachers to understand the needs and requirements for the new system to be implemented.

End of Scholastic year 2023: developing an action plan for 2024 to start the change.



Scholastic year 2024

Staff seminars: will focus on the macro level changes and offering ongoing training and support.

In subject departments: focus on micro level changes and training required.

End of scholastic year 2024: action plan to define the actual implementation of first IEB cohort

FIGURE 17. First year IEB implementation planning (Source: authors).

Project Triangle: Scope – Schedule - Resources

As discussed previously throughout this document, the scope why the change is needed is to provide a sterling quality education for all students at all levels. To do this, Amberfield’s College wants to consolidate its mission and vision with the introduction of the IEB curriculum. This will guarantee the school will be in line with its strategic plan and by 2027 Amberfield College would have fully implemented the IEB curriculum.

With the introduction of the new curriculum, the school community will be affected by additional costs incurred by the new system. Since Amberfield College is a private school, families must pay the nominal school fees required. On top of the school fees, there will be the introduction of another fee imposed by IEB. This will include the following additional costs:

For the School	2025	2026	2027 onwards
Rand (Euro)	5649 (€311)	5649 (€311)	9079 (€500)

TABLE 1. Costs for the school (Source: authors).

For every Family per child	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12
Rand (Euro)	None	None	8080 (€445)

TABLE 2. Costs for families (Source: authors).

Communication to all stakeholders

Successful change needs successful communication routines, as “insufficient communication and lack of stakeholder integration are among the common drivers for unattended change causes and un-controlled change impacts in a project” (Butt et al. 2016). Therefore, the development of effective communication routines between all the stakeholders needs considerable attention during the planning phase. Stakeholders refer to an individual or group who can affect or are affected by the outcome of the project (ibid.). Stakeholder participation should be facilitated (and encouraged) throughout the change management process, beginning from the change identification. Communicating relevant and irrelevant information to all the stakeholders is not a wise choice, but it is prudent to seek a differentiated communication approach for various stakeholder groups (ibid.).

Project change communication routines need more consideration than the project stakeholder analysis and should be updated during project life cycle (ibid.). Technological advancements offer several ICT applications for projects, but an over emphasis on ICT also make communication routines very formal and restrained during the change management process. The stakeholders involved with the curriculum change at Amberfield College are as follows:

- The Royal Schools Board of Directors (referred to as the Board) – headed by Dr Bennie Fourie.
- Amberfield College School Management Team (referred to as SMT) – headed by Mr Marlon Ponnen.
- Independent Examinations Board (referred to as IEB)
- Administrative staff.
- Teaching staff.

- Parents.
- Learners.

Establishing effective communication routines will cultivate stakeholder trust, will monitor project culture changes, and avert development of a dysfunctional culture (ibid.). Below is a sample of the Change Management Communications Plan showing key actions and the relevant stakeholder involvement in the communication activity.

CHANGE MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

DATE CREATED	VERSION DATE	VERSION NO.	PROJECT NAME	PROJECT MANAGER	ORGANIZATION
July 2022	1 July 2022	1.0.0	IEB Curriculum Implementation	Mr Ponnen	Amberfield College

Identify **affected stakeholders** and describe required **communication**

EVENT / ACTION / STRATEGY	PROJECT PHASE(S)	EST. DATE OF EFFECT	TARGETED STAKEHOLDERS	REASON FOR COMMUNICATION	METHOD OF COMMUNICATION
IEB INFO	1	July 2022	IEB	Information for registration and pricing	Email / telephone
SMT MEETING	1	July 2022	SMT	Discuss IEB as an option for Amberfield College	Meeting
CREATE SURVEY	1	Aug 2022	Admin Staff	Compile survey for parents and teachers	Email / Google Forms
INVESTIGATION SURVEY: PARENTS	2	Aug 2022	Parents	Determine interest in changing curriculums	Survey: Google Forms
INVESTIGATION SURVEY: TEACHERS	2	Oct 2022	Teaching Staff	Determine interest in changing curriculums	Survey: Google Forms
MEETING 1: BOARD	2	Oct 2022	Board	Give feedback from surveys and receive further instructions	Face - to - Face
INFO EVENING: PARENTS	2	Nov 2022	Parents	Provide information and answer questions and concerns	Face - to - Face
MEETING 2: BOARD	2	Nov 2022	Board	Approval to go ahead with IEB	Face - to - Face
IEB REGISTRATION	3	Jan 2023	IEB	Complete registration documents	Email / Face-to-Face
LETTER TO PARENTS	3	Feb 2023	Parents	Inform parents of the next steps taken to register, with time schedule as how it will affect them	General letter
TEACHERS INFO	3	Feb 2023	Teaching Staff	Inform teachers of the registration and the process that will follow	Staff Meeting

TABLE 3. Sample of the Change Management Communication Plan (Source: authors).

3.5.2 Thoughts for Discussion

In Malta there is only one curriculum framework designed by the centralized government, and one examination board controlled by the University of Malta: MATSEC. Although St. Aloysius College is a Maltese Jesuit run school, it is also part of an international network.

What if the school, rather than being part of a local setting, would associate itself more with the international community? What if the international Jesuit community create their own curriculum with their own syllabi based on their core values and pedagogical concepts? What if St Aloysius College would rethink and develop a more tailor-based system which will reach all students whilst becoming more financially independent?

The following chapter will present a set of recommendations with possible solutions for all the presented issues discussed in this chapter.

4. Discussion and Recommendations

This portfolio has presented four main themes as to how the collective agreement is affecting the overall management of St. Aloysius College. The main factor which contributed to the establishment of this agreement was purely financial (covering the staff's salaries). Although this financial aid is helping the College, the collective agreement has presented some limitations on the managerial and pedagogical requirements which are expected and desired. What is being proposed in this thesis is to have St. Aloysius College become an international independent Church school.

4.1 An Independent Church School

Having complete control over the academic staff will only be possible if there is financial independence and control over the teachers' contracts. To do so, St. Aloysius College needs to look ahead of the current situation. Instead of being part of the national Church school community, St. Aloysius College can detach itself and become a more active participant in the international Jesuit community.

This would mean the College would detach itself from the collective agreement and become the first independent Church school in the country. The first main constraint to cover would be the financial management of the College.

4.1.1 Financial Management

Covering academic and non-academic employees' salaries is a huge expense for schools. To do so, school fees would have to be incurred on students. This might be the greatest disadvantage of detaching from the government's collective agreement. However, it is also important to take into consideration the pedagogical achievements this will bring which will ultimately be of benefit for the students attending College.

To reduce the financial constraints on students, St. Aloysius College might form a consortium with other private agencies to make use of its premises after school

hours. This would mean that revenue would be gained by renting out school facilities to third parties such as computer and science labs, sport grounds, school theatre and classes. Private entities would for instance enter a five to ten-year term agreement with the school. The same agencies would also contribute to the maintenance of the mentioned spaces.

This approach has already been implemented for the outer grounds (as described in section 3.1.1.3) where a local football club is taking care of the full size football pitch. The club, in agreement with the school, is responsible for the pitch's upkeep. The school receives a yearly fee for renting the football pitch to the sports club. In return, during school hours the students are allowed to use the football pitch and in the afternoon the club uses the pitch for their respective training sessions and rents out the pitch when not in use.

The same approach could also be implemented for the computer and science laboratories. Companies can come into an agreement with the school to maintain the laboratories and in return they are allowed to use the labs for their respective training purposes. This approach could also be used for the inner grounds (which has two futsal/handball pitches and two basketball courts) and other spaces within the school building which can be used after school hours. Therefore, the school would be generating revenue throughout the whole day and the school building would be positively exploited to obtain the maximum potential of its capability.

Moreover, every term, a fund-raising event would be held to help create scholarships for students who would like to enter College but may perhaps not afford the fees. This would include school concerts, sport tournaments and fairs. These events would be directly linked with the educational progression of the students at school, which would be part of their curriculum.

4.1.2 An Ignatian Curriculum

St. Aloysius College is part of an international Jesuit educational community around the world. Jesuit educational schools worldwide, cover from primary education to tertiary institutions. It is an educational organization which already has a mission and vision in place. However, each school has its own freedom as to how to implement the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigms (IPP) framework because most of the schools follow their country's respective national curriculum.

What is being suggested here is to have Jesuit schools work collaboratively to create their own curricula and syllabi. By doing so, the IPP can be more easily implemented in every subject across board. Like International Baccalaureate (IB) schools, Jesuit schools would follow an Ignatian Matriculation course which can be implemented in Jesuit schools around the world. Having such a system will facilitate:

1. Students being part of an international community
2. Student exchanges
3. Teacher mobility
4. International recognized certification
5. Online collaboration
6. A curriculum tailor-made on the IPP
7. Implementation of Ignatian Values across board.

Having an Ignatian Matriculation course implemented in Jesuit schools around the world will make the Jesuit community more connected to each other. This is because the schemes of work, learning outcomes and success criteria of each lesson will be similar. Sharing the same curriculum framework will make it easier for schools to participate in collaborative ideas, such as student exchanges, schools collaborating in sharing lessons and organizing online workshops and teacher mobility around the world.

All this leads to Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) and can also be easily implemented all throughout the Jesuit network. In their research, Naicker et al (2021) found that when using COIL, students are more open to accept other traditions, cultures, and religions. In 2020, Vahed and Rodrigues

found that COIL had a positive impact on intercultural awareness, and motivating students to become more globally engaged.

From a logistical point of view, this collaboration can easily be implemented. Jesuit schools in Europe already have their own established communities. For instance, Malta is grouped together with Italy and Albania which totals eight schools. This small community can serve as a pilot project to test feasibility of a bigger change. As suggested in section 3.5.1 through Senge's application, change has to start small and grow gradually (Cameron and Green 2012). Therefore, this community of eight schools can serve as a small project to start this process of change.

The Jesuit international set up can be easily exploited in a better way if all schools share a common curriculum framework like the one which is being proposed. To do so schools would also need motivated academic staff.

4.1.3 Managing Human Capital

Recruitment of academic staff is becoming a great concern in Malta. There is a huge lack of teachers because tertiary students are not interested in following a course in education, especially in STEM subjects. In 2023, from all those graduating from a Master's in Teaching and Learning to become prospective teachers, only three students graduated as science teachers (which involves, Chemistry, Biology and Physics) and one as computer science teacher (University of Malta 2023a). Therefore, it is crucial for schools to have a low turnover of teachers, and most of all, still be motivated enough to adapt and change to the educational trends.

One of the main reasons why there is a lack of teachers in Malta is the teachers' salary. When compared to other European countries and comparing the cost of living and GDP, a starting teacher in Malta is among the lowest paid in Europe (Eurydice 2022). As mentioned earlier, teacher salaries in Malta are dictated by the government. The collective agreement clearly indicates how much teachers should earn, together with the roles and responsibilities and benefits (Church Authorities and Malta Union of Teachers 2018). Therefore, Church schools are limited to the directives written in the collective agreement.

Although research suggests that extrinsic factors such as salaries or pay per performance might create a culture of division and selfishness (Deci and Flaste (1995), Thomas (2009), Pink (2011)), teachers still need to feel that their work is being appreciated and have financial security (Kulchmanov and Kaliannan 2014). Throughout this last decade, internal and external audits were being implemented in schools and a new curriculum framework was put into action. All these changes increased the workload on teachers. The management at St. Aloysius College always showed its appreciation towards the work performed by teachers, and other academic staff. However, due to the limitations of the collective agreement, nothing could be done to improve the remuneration or bonuses.

On the other end of the spectrum of performance, one also finds people who underperform. The bare minimum of what a teacher must do is indicated in the collective agreement. Some teachers tend to take the work-to-rule approach towards their work which does not necessarily help the school community. This might lead to misuse of sick leave and other forms of time off. Having several teachers absent from school leaves some classes with no adult supervision because there aren't enough teaching staff to cover all the classes. Again, the school management is unable to employ more academic staff because the capacity building of academic staff is directed by the government. All these limitations could be reduced significantly if the College is independent.

Having financial autonomy would mean that St. Aloysius' human resources and management team can devise teachers' contracts in a way which would be suited to the College's needs – benefiting both students and teachers. Teachers' salaries would be more competitive and attract more competent teachers to apply for jobs. On the other hand, the contract would also have clear terms and conditions of consequences for underperformance, something which was never accounted for in the collective agreement. All these changes need proper planning so as not to disturb the students' academic experience.

4.1.4 Change

Change is never an easy process. It brings instability and uncertainty (Glazer and Peurach 2013). Changing the whole curriculum for a school might bring concerns to stakeholders such as parents, students, teachers and school administrators. However, according to the Malta Federation of Professional Associations, there is an increasing concern regarding the curriculum in place (Times of Malta, 2023).

The failing rate is increasing (University of Malta 2023a) and unfortunately there are no other national curriculum options available. Although change might bring uncertainty, the current Maltese educational system is also put into question. Therefore, it might be argued that following the SWOT analysis (as seen in section 3.1.1.3) this change can be seen more as an opportunity rather than a threat to the stakeholders mentioned above.

Van de Ven et al (1999) argue that for developing and upscaling a system there must be a community infrastructure. This incorporates the following four elements:

1. Institutional arrangements: which incorporates all the legal structure, standard of procedures together with rules and regulations.
2. Resource endowments: involving a reliable and continuous source of revenue and having an aligned curriculum.
3. Reliable market: a reliable structure for delivering the product (in this case, the curriculum itself)
4. Proprietary activity: where the institutions are actively receiving revenues from the general public.

Some of the mentioned points are already set in place and others would need to be established before change can take place. Institutional arrangements and having a reliable market are factors already established. Jesuit institutions have been in place for hundreds of years and their legal structures are clearly set. Moreover, Jesuit schools around the world have an excellent reputation and are well sought-after educational institutions (Županov 2019). This also includes St. Aloysius College Malta. On the other hand, resource endowments for St. Aloysius College would mean being financially autonomous. In other words, the school has to disassociate itself from the collective agreement and start generating its

own revenue, which is also linked to proprietary activities (as mentioned earlier in section 4.1.1) This would be the first step towards change.

The proposed changes mentioned in this chapter would require a long process of proper planning. As described in section 3.5, the change management plan would follow Bridge’s model of change. Curricula and Syllabi would have to be discussed and developed by an Ignatian educational body.

Consultation among the teaching community should be followed to allow dialogue and sharing of ideas across all subjects. This will be followed by confirming the content to be taught, and an examination body is established. Implementation of the Ignatian Matriculation course would start over a period of three years, after which the national curriculum framework would be completely phased out. Figure 18 summarizes the timeline needed to fully implement a new curriculum system.

IGNATIAN MATRICULATION COURSE TIMELINE

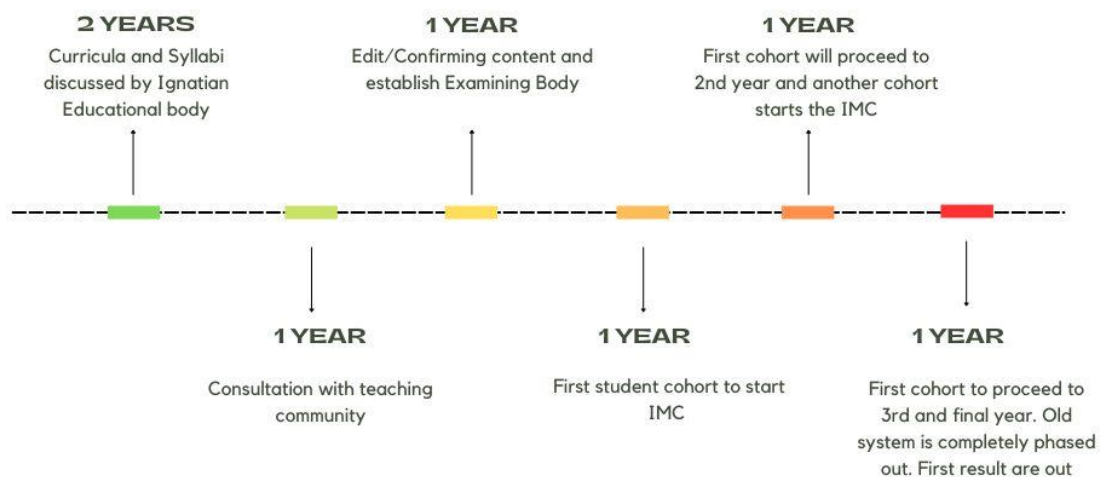


FIGURE 18. Summary of Timeline required to implement the Ignatian Matriculation Course (Source: author).

4.2 Conclusion

The collective agreement signed thirty-two years ago offered a great opportunity to Church schools to reduce the financial burden of teachers' salaries and help them focus on academic content and achievement. However, two decades later, whilst the financial aid from the government to Church schools remained the same, the financial challenges grew exponentially especially with regards to:

- pedagogical demands
- increase in technological use of equipment
- introduction of new specialized subjects
- sensory rooms for students with special needs

Church schools such as St. Aloysius College need to find other ways of offering a comprehensive education to all students. In this day and age, everything is measured in terms of money, and everything comes at a cost including education.

Becoming an independent Church school offers the freedom to implement the Ignatian vision across all subjects. Implemented properly, it will only offer students a unique and collaborative experience on an international level. Making proper use of the International Jesuit network can only help students to become more internationally connected whilst also mastering skills in technology, tolerance, creativity, communication, and collaboration, whilst appreciating other cultures. This would be done by developing thorough academic content which is tailor-made to reach the core values and 21st century skills as set by the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigms.

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