EO’s Note:

Mr Dunstan Hamilton and Mr Stephen Camilleri

Dear PSCD teachers and all who are reading this newsletter, we hope this 2nd edition of the PSCD Newsletter finds you all fine. Despite the pandemic life has gone on and everyone is so busy, possibly even more so that last year, due to the safety arrangements that have to take place in schools.

We hope you will find this edition of the newsletter interesting but more that than inspiring, encouraging you to send in articles of your own for future editions of this newsletter too!

Without a doubt PSCD has suffered unfortunate consequences as a result of COVID 19. In Primary the PSCD teachers had a choice, either opting to become class teachers once again or to take care of the replacements in schools. It is only now that PSCD may be re-starting in a handful of primary schools, always depending on the number of replacement lessons that need to be done.

In Middle and Secondary schools PSCD has continued, but not as we know it! There is no circle, as a safety precaution, no card games, little opportunity for pair or group work, due to social distancing measures, so PSCD lessons are currently more a giving of knowledge rather than being experiential. Hopefully, school life will be back to normal in a couple or so months time and then we can start having PSCD as it really should be delivered, with a good balance of knowledge, learning of skills and development of attitudes.

In the meantime, for those students who for one reason or another are not currently attending school, PSCD teachers can refer them to Teleskola. Here students and their parents or carers will find a selection of both PSCD lessons that can be downloaded as well as a number of recorded PSCD lessons for each Year group, with more being recorded monthly.

Together with our Heads of Department we take this opportunity to wish you well deserved Christmas holidays and all the very best for 2021. Take care and keep safe.
Celebrating World Children’s Day – An initiative by PSCD teachers at St Thomas More College

Ms Jahel Vancell
Head of Department PSCD
St Thomas More Secondary School

Following PSCD lessons held with all year groups in connection with World Children's Day 2020, and to increase their knowledge regarding Children’s Rights, students were invited to choose a right and present it in a creative manner of their choice.

Various mediums were chosen, amongst them Drawings, Posters, Bookmarks, PowerPoints, Word Search and Poems.

Students' work was put together in a video which was shared on the school's Facebook page https://fb.watch/1-heNLi4KM/ and also displayed on the school's main monitor.
Education is one of the fundamental rights. Everybody has the right to learn, the right to be educated. Access to education is when all people have equal opportunity in education, regardless of their social class, sex, gender, sexuality, ethnicity background or physical and mental disabilities.

Unfortunately, although we are living in the 21st century, there are still many people that are not given this right. In different countries like Africa and India, people are not being educated for various reasons. The most common one is money. Since many people are poor, they cannot pay for their education. Another reason is war and, in some cases, it is due to the government's negligence.

There are many people around the world who fights for this right, the right for education. One of them is Malala Yousafzai. She is a Pakistani activist for female education. She even won a Nobel Prize.

Shanice D'Amato

Protection
From harmful DRUGS!

Do I Really
Understand What I'm Getting into?
Stop and think!

We have the right to rest and play.

We have the right to education and access to information.
The EU Kids Online research in Malta was coordinated by the University of Malta, in collaboration with the Malta Communications Authority, the Directorate for Learning and Assessment Programmes and the Secretariat for Catholic Education, with the support of the Besmartonline! Consortium (Tech.mt, Commissioner for Children, Foundation for Social Welfare Services and the Cybercrime Unit, Directorate for Learning and Assessment Programmes).

The study is a comparative study that takes place in 33 European countries. It adopts a multidisciplinary and multi-methodological approach. In Malta a sample of 1234 students and adolescents aged 9-16 years took part in this study. The students came from 20 different schools (church, state and independent) form 6 different demographic regions.

The study put forth various questions varying from use of the internet, bullying, sexting, pornography and others. This article will focus on the results to the question about pornography.

The question which students had to answer was the following:

‘Over the last year you will have seen many different images - images, photographs, videos. Sometimes these images can be explicitly of a sexual nature, for example they could show people naked or having sex. You may have never seen anything like it, or you may have seen it on your phone, in a magazine, on television, on a DVD, or on the internet.’
This research clearly indicates the different feelings and emotions children experience when they come into contact with pornography. It also underlines the importance of continued education on various learning outcomes related to safer internet use to both reduce the chances of children being exposed to online pornography and to equip them with the critical thinking skills and resilience to reduce the negative impact of such an exposure.

The whole analysis of the study can be found on chrome-extension://ohfgljdgelakfkefopgklcohadegdplf/https://www.eukidsonline.ch/files/Eu-kids-online-2020-international-report.pdf
A great attitude becomes a great day which becomes a great year.
there are so many beautiful reasons to be happy
Published paper

“Happy Children’ A project that has the aim of developing emotional literacy and conflict resolution skills. A Maltese Case Study”

Mr Stephen Camilleri and Dr Amanda Bezzina

Educational officer PSCD and Head of Department PSCD

‘Happy Children’ is a project which launched the Friendship Cards (FC). FC is an educational tool that was developed by various professionals coming from the field of education and counselling.

This study examines the effects of the use of the FC interactive tool on children’s social-emotional competence. It is a theoretically derived preventive programme that helps students develop their social and emotional understanding so that they are able to manage their feelings and deal with conflicts in a positive way.

The FC serve as a springboard for lessons on emotional understanding, expression and management, perspective taking, reflection on one’s actions and conflict management and resilience. The study included a thematic analysis of the reflections elicited from 80 reflective journals presented by educators, counsellors, psychologists and social workers who attended specific training on the use of this tool.

The reflective journals had the intention of helping participants in the study to reflect on the outcomes of their activities, using the FC. Results from this study indicate that the tool enhances the social and emotional learning of children and adolescents in a fun and experiential way. The tool enhances reflection, thinking and analysis of one’s emotions and behaviour.

Keywords: Prevention, Emotional literacy, Interpersonal relationships, Conflict resolution, Well-being

Since the start of teaching and learning online due to COVID-19, PSCD teachers kept up with their commitment by uploading work and information related to the topics to be discussed. One of the initiative was a Webinar with teachers and students, organised by the PSCD Department (Ħandaq) and Wasteserv.

The aim of the session was to bring together different students and teachers from various colleges all over Malta to learn and be aware about sustainable attitudes with regards Waste Management.

Ms Doreen Micallef presented a very interactive presentation about Wasteserv facilities and gave participant practical tips and advice on how to manage our domestic waste in a more sustainable manner.

The session was later followed by a Kahoot quiz in which each participant could participate remotely. As a task students were asked to prepare a small sustainable project by creating usable object from recyclable materials such as milk cartons.
NEVER give up because great things take time
“You do not find the happy life. YOU MAKE IT.”

Camilla Eyring Kimball
“Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving.”

- Albert Einstein
Educators need to be geared towards resilience, therefore self-care is undoubtedly important for their physical and mental well-being. Creating time and space for oneself is the key to a calmer inner-self. Mindfulness is an exercise, a tool, that can be mastered by everyone. The idea behind mindfulness is to cope with anxiety whilst reducing stress.

The PSCD church school teachers were encouraged to join a mindfulness online session delivered by Wayne Caruana a mindfulness trainer, during the first term of this scholastic year. The session was an eye-opener to explore and get a taste of what mindfulness is all about. They were guided how to include mindfulness techniques in their daily life. The PSCD teachers were encouraged to work on breathing techniques and to ground themselves to the present moment, away from thoughts and concerns. These few tips would definitely help our students too, to engage in mindfulness and cope with their stressors. Some teachers are willing to try out some mindfulness techniques during the PSCD lessons especially when they sense that the students are experiencing anxiety.

Another session will take place as a continuation of the first session. It would also look into the self-experience and gather feedback from PSCD teachers on mindfulness.
MINDFULNESS

- Breathe
- CLOUD GAZING
- Exercise
- Spend time with nature
- Walk BAREFOOT
- Open Mind
- Relax
- FORGIVE
- Take the day forward

- guided meditation
- Plant
- Cook
- Take a bath
- Chat with friends
- Listen

- Relax
If I were to ask you for a keystone moment in your career as a PSCD teacher you’d probably remember both good and not so good moments. The best memories are probably those times where you felt a deep connection with your students. Back in November 2016 I experienced one such moment and this lead to the start of our ‘Market of Skills’ project.

I was teaching our Year 8 students, and we were in the last part of the lesson on Qualities and Skills. I encouraged them to come forward with a skill they possess and to demonstrate it to their classmates. To everybody’s surprise, Jessica (name changed), a silent member of the group, stepped forward. I was thrilled to see her interest. Despite her young age, Jessica emitted an aura of uncanny maturity but, during the lessons, she had habitually refused to share anything about her life and, with time, the group had grown used to her silence. Her interest in that particular lesson was a breakthrough. We were all curious to learn something about her.

She offered to give us a brief presentation of her hair braiding skills, and a student offered to be her model. With nimble fingers and skilful brush-strokes, Jessica created a beautiful plait within minutes. We were amazed by her work.

What had just happened in the classroom helped me to better understand Jessica’s process. In her private life, Jessica was experiencing difficult times. Disclosing anything about her life would have exposed her perceived faults, and would have engendered feelings of shame in her. Despite all this, Jessica was able to contribute to the class through a different, more physical, medium. I realised that, as her teacher, I had little control over what happened in her personal life, but I did have the power to offer her a positive experience. I wanted Jessica, and all my other students, to have the same opportunity to shine and to be seen through the medium of their skills. This was the principal idea behind the Market of Skills project.

During the Market of Skills, students are invited to showcase their talents and abilities and to offer these as services to the whole school community. This is now an annual activity which takes place over one school day and is held in the main school hall. In our first year, before launching the project, I discussed the idea with all the classes and identified 25 students who were willing to participate. The school administration fully supported the novel idea so we were able to move on to the planning stage. The students’ skills were varied. They included nail painting, photography, music, art, cooking, hair braiding, card making, martial arts, sports and even slime-making. Before each activity, students were given the opportunity to market their skill and take bookings. It was agreed that any expenses would be refunded to them and that the remaining proceeds would go to the school fund. On the day, the whole school was invited to visit the Market of Skills. Staff, administration and students came over to buy a service or a product. It was beautiful to see the whole school community engage in this experience.
The following year, my then PSCD colleagues Ms Melanie Cini and Mr Jesmond Saliba kindly offered to help out with the activity. The event gained momentum and, in the following years, more students opted to take part. This involved more administrative preparation, including student registration, place set-up, system of payment, refunds, timetabling schedules, marketing and issuing of certificates. We shared these tasks as a team, and the Market of Skills became a coordinated PSCD activity. Following each activity, we held meetings to evaluate the process, building on strengths and working on weaknesses.

This year, January 2020, out of a population of 350 students, around 75 students opted to participate. We needed a stronger adult input, so we asked for the support of teachers and LSEs who had a working knowledge of hairdressing, sports, crafts and food preparation. They kindly accepted to act as mentors before and during the activity. Our Head of School, Ms White, also offered to hire wooden stands to serve as mini-shops for each section. The effect was amazing.

The Market of Skills requires a lot of home preparation by the students and solid coordination between the students and the educators. Each year I am fascinated by the dedication students give to their service or product. They take time to perfect their service, and then beam with pride when they see the interest of others.

Unfortunately, the pandemic situation will in the coming year stop us from holding the Market of Skills, but we hope to continue in the years after.

When I look back and reflect on this activity, I feel gratitude towards Jessica who inspired me, the many students who put in so much effort, and the parents that support them; I am thankful for the administration who give us the space and time to organise this activity and, last but not least, I give thanks to my colleagues who, together, make this happen.
The ongoing pandemic presented us PSCD teachers with an unprecedented challenge since our subject is less about facts and processes and more about dealing with the complexities of human emotions, attitudes, relationships and perceptions. While the pandemic took its toll on the mental wellbeing of our children, as teachers we had to search for novel ways to reach out to our students at a time when we were needed the most.

Video is, without doubt, a powerful medium and when you consider that 30 thousand video clips are uploaded to YouTube per hour, one is bound to find useful material on every subject imaginable. The challenge is selecting the chaff from the wheat and categorizing clips according to the topics of our syllabi. At the height of our partial lockdown together with the help of my Gozitan colleagues we took up this challenge and created the first PSCD YouTube channel.

This channel aims at being a valuable resource for all PSCD teachers since it contains an online database of easily accessible videos that complement the many other resources and strategies used during PSCD lessons. This channel also serves as a safe niche for students and parents to find educational PSCD themed video clips that have been vetted by PSCD teachers.

Apart from the creation of the YouTube channel we embarked on the ambitious endeavour of creating new content. Together with Ms Ethel Kawki and Dr Amanda Bezzina we created clips on meditation skills, relaxation techniques, friendship cards, children and chores, mask wearing and studying skills.

Generally students love games so a number of the video clips that we produced included links to learning apps to help reinforce the information shared in the respective clips. Before the start of the scholastic year I, together with my daughters, also produced an eight minute clip about mask wearing at school in preparation for attending school during the pandemic.

Undoubtedly, technology as a medium plays a crucial role to promote learning given its engaging qualities and its allure to students growing up in a highly digital world. However let us not be fooled into thinking that technology could ever replace the role of the PSCD teacher. At the very heart of PSCD pedagogy lies immediacy, a specific ability which makes us PSCD teachers attuned to identify specific dynamics, particularly through non-verbal communication, or a specific behaviour that one or more of our students might be displaying during our lesson. Immediacy does not only help us identify underlying issues but also enables us to process the dynamic so as to elicit solutions or achieve a better understanding of that particular issue.

Anyone wishing to access the PSCD YouTube Channel can do so by clicking the following link: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSVqcX6bDS2-ypHt2t0laCA/playlists Colleagues that would like to contribute by creating new content can contact me by sending an email at: pscdmaalta@gmail.com

Until we meet again stay safe and take care!
Every year, at St Margaret College Middle School, PSCD teachers, together with a team of professionals organize the Human Library. All Year 7 and Year 8 students have the opportunity to meet professionals coming from different career backgrounds.

During the Human Library, students had the chance to get to know about the career path of each professional that we presented, including the opportunities and the challenges that they encounter. For this year, we invited an entrepreneur, a notary, an IT expert, a bank manager, a neurologist, a mechanical engineer, a beat boxer, a magician and a national football player.

The Human Library was also an experience where students could interact with the speakers. Some of the speakers, like the beat boxer and also the magician, also presented a short performance.

This initiative was part of the career programme that was planned by PSCD teachers, together with the Head of School and the PSCD Educational Officers. As a result, the Human Library was processed during PSCD lessons, and lessons about time management, decision making and career planning followed. The feedback from students was very positive and it also acted as a gatekeeper to our College Career Advisor and our College Student Support Services. The activity was done before the Options Exercise of Year 8 students, so that they have the opportunity to engage with different professionals and ask questions about their field.
A positive attitude will lead to positive outcomes.
In the past few years, digital sharing of lesson resources has become standard practice among us PSCD teachers at St. Margaret College Senior Secondary School - Cospicua (Verdala). We have successfully managed to utilise OneDrive to develop an extensive repertoire of teaching material and ideas, making it by far easier to exchange resources among us as well as maintain learning coherence between the different classes.

As soon as the Covid-19 pandemic intensified, we unexpectedly found ourselves away from our classroom and students - or so we thought at first. We immediately set up meetings to discuss ways on how we could resume with the PSCD lessons in an alternative way. In the light of the extraordinary circumstances that we were faced with, we needed to implement a system that readily provided our students with the resources required to support the online PSCD lessons. This was when the idea of an interactive website came about. Following consultations with the head of the department for digital literacy, our website started to materialise in just a matter of days.

The website includes lesson material organised according to year group, unit and lesson objectives. Such material consists of videos, handouts, worksheets, online quizzes, web links and more. Lessons also include tasks such as personal reflections and pair work activities for the students to complete. We also added a section with regular tips and ideas to keep students busy and creative during the partial lockdown. Advice related to mental and emotional health together with links for online support can also be found.
Our primary aim was to reach our students from their homes. In fact, we regularly promoted the website through the school website, the school Facebook page, school SMS system, announcements through MySchool and also within our virtual live lessons. We held weekly departmental meetings to constantly discuss and prepare upcoming virtual lesson plans, adopt experiential learning activities to the virtual lessons and also work on improvements to the website based on students’ feedback.

The benefits reaped from such an initiative are vast. To start with, we gave the students the opportunity to access lesson resources, make any revisions and work on the assigned tasks at their own free time. The website itself also made it very easy for them to get in contact with us; to send their queries or ask for assistance. As the weeks passed, our work was also proved to be beneficial to the LSEs working with students, parents and other PSCD teachers on the island. It served as an excellent resource database where a substantial number of fellow teachers downloaded the material to then adapt to the specific needs of their students.

In conclusion, we must say that despite the initial doubts that we all had about the outcome of this initiative, we still worked together as a team to give it a try for the benefit of our beloved students whom we care for so much. Thanks to our joint efforts, we are very pleased to have reached our goal, that of connecting further with both our students, parents and other PSCD educators during the surreal times that we have been through together in the past months.
BE PROUD OF HOW HARD YOU ARE TRYING.