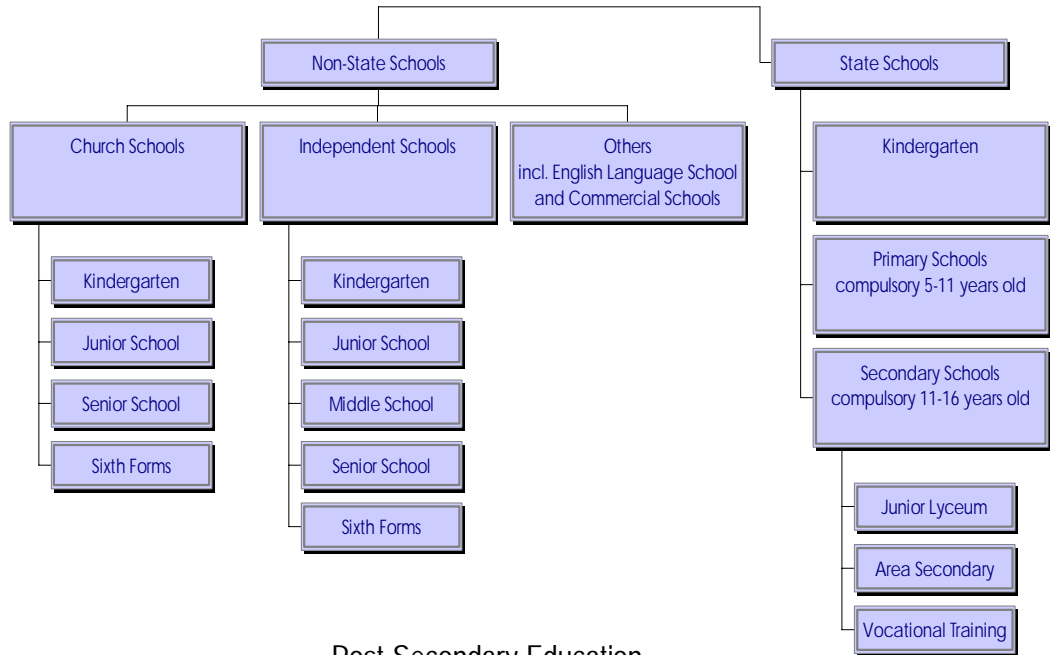


**CRITICAL THINKING AND CAREER EDUCATION:
 SITUATION ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT**

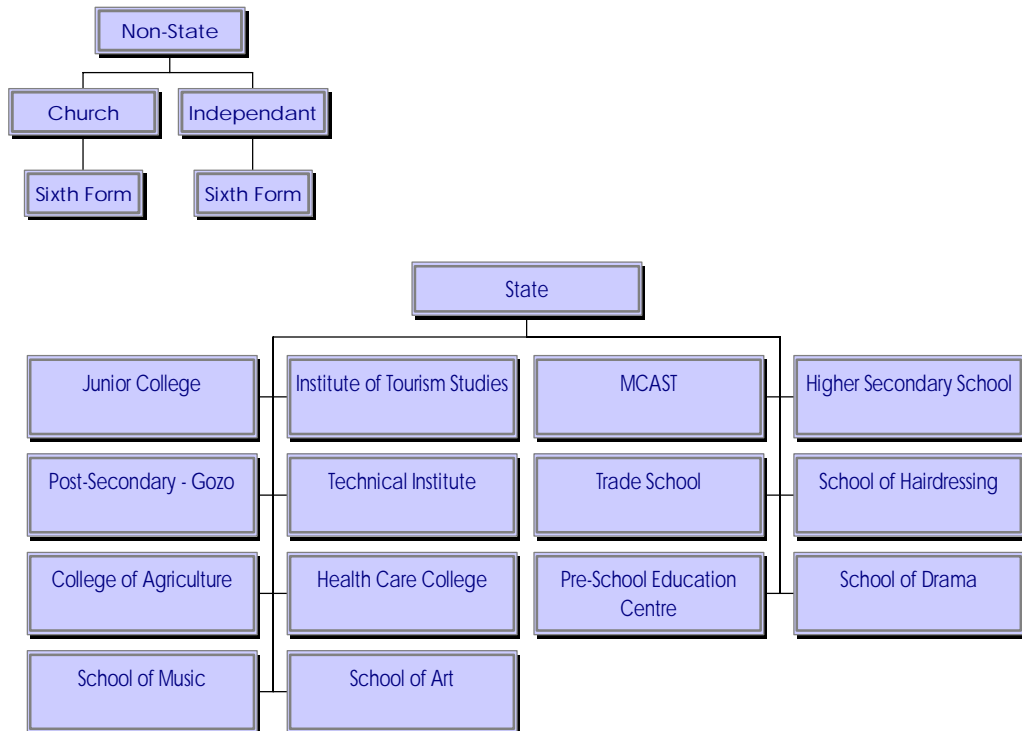
MALTA

SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

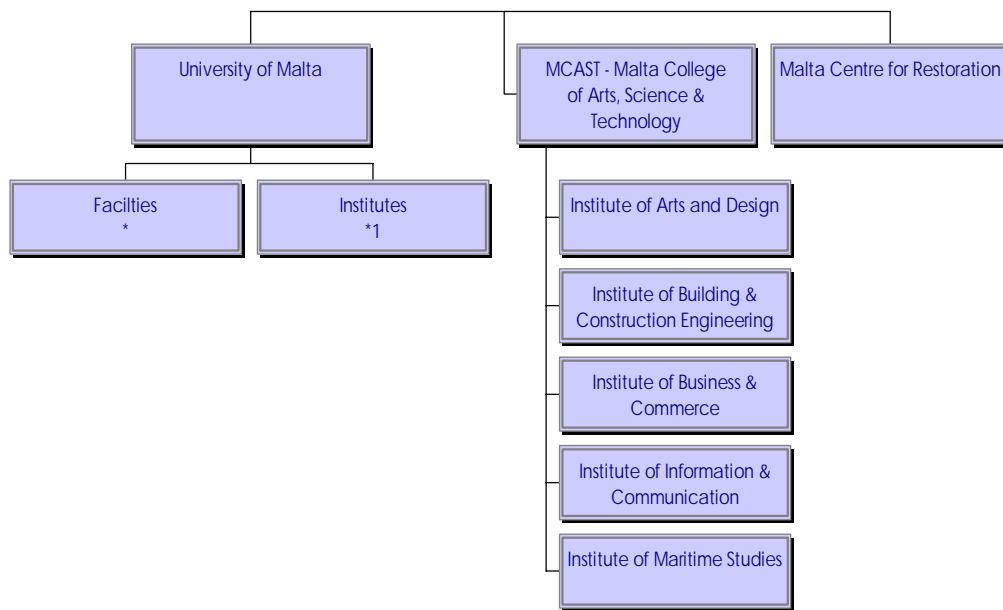
Primary and Secondary Schooling



Post-Secondary Education



Tertiary Education



CRITICAL THINKING AND SYSTEMS OF KNOWLEDGE

- Systems of Knowledge is an obligatory subject for post-secondary students.
- Systems of Knowledge is a subject which tries to be the bridge science and arts.
- Systems of Knowledge found a lot of resistance in its very first years.
- Systems of Knowledge is a subject which tries to "be a scope for creative, critical and operative thinking".
- Systems of Knowledge tries to "promote awareness of values and develop the candidate's ability to learn skills and creative thinking".

What Makes a Good Critical Thinker?

A good critical thinker is the one who:

- "Is able to carefully examine experience".
- "Assess Knowledge and Ideas".
- "Weights arguments before reaching a judgement".
- "Develops certain attitudes – the desire to reason, the willingness to challenge and the passion for truth".

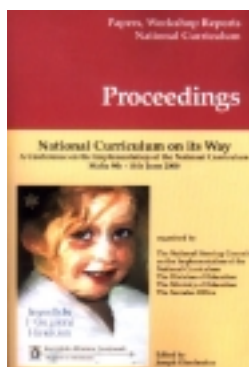
How does Systems of Knowledge Promote Critical Thinking?

- Systems of knowledge is a totally new subject for the students and this itself may intrigue the students into new thinking skills.
- Systems of Knowledge also presents students with information on topics such as art and philosophy which trigger the students into new thinking areas.
- Teachers of this subject have all a very hands on background in either art or into a specific fields related to Systems of Knowledge which help them to create interesting lessons for the students.
- It is such a vast subject which cannot be memorised and needs true apprehension and some thinking in order to be truly understood.

- Systems of Knowledge presents students a lot of ideas and concepts and their historical origin. Students must use their imagination in order to conceptualise and visualise how things came to be in a particular era.
- The mentioned projects help the students evolve their creative potential through seeking new and original ideas.
- The 'know how' or practical part of the project is also a valuable instrument for creative thinking since students learn themselves how to produce and come up with solutions to arising problems.
- Systems of knowledge encourages reflection on values and also the capacity for self-expression.
- Through the regular seminars that occur in System's lessons the classroom is changed in a *Community of Inquiry* where each student can debate and reflect in a critical manner with his/her class mates.

Part of the course requires the students to develop three projects which themselves promote Creative Thinking as seen below:

- Literary Project Involves creative thinking in writing.
- The Aesthetic Project Involves creative thinking in arts and visual creativity.
- The Technological Project involves Creativity in Science through designs and solutions.



THE TEACHING OF THINKING AND THE MALTESE NATIONAL CURRICULUM

The Educational Response to the Cultural, Social and Economic Challenges (p.23)

The democratic spirit is enhanced by the school's ability to arouse curiosity and stimulate critical and creative thinking among children. This curriculum is intended to develop citizens who are independent, creative and critical thinkers. The vehicles for the development of critical and independent thinking are: questions, systematic investigation and the exchange of ideas with others (p.25).

The Curricular Principles (p.29)

The principles that shape this document are inspired by the belief in social justice.

Principle 3: Stimulation of Analytical, Critical and Creative Thinking Skills.

Students learn through an active process involving

- Establishing connections
- Investigation
- Experimentation
- Comparison of what has been discovered with what is already known
- Asking questions
- Listening
- Observing
- Searching

A healthy education therefore encourages:

- Pedagogy based on questioning and not pedagogy based on answers; questions that lead to further questions rather than answers.
- Learning by doing, which involves the creation by students of concrete and relevant objects, a process that involves looking at the problem.

A Search for Meaning

- Teachers should help students not only to establish the link between people, things, events, processes and ideas, but to continuously change or elaborate their structure of knowledge.
- The National Minimum Curriculum (NMC) recognises the interests, knowledge and student experiences, and reflects the understanding that students are capable of transforming and personalising new knowledge. In other words, the NMC regards students not as passive recipients of static content but as critical and creative thinkers and producers of knowledge.

Educational objectives (p.47)

Objective 9: Effective and Productive Participation in the World of Work

"In this area, the pedagogical strategy involved is much more important than the content. It is important that the tools for learning (the lesson, hand-outs, memory tests, etc.) do not render the learning process removed from the reality of work and that the teaching is not rendered abstract and irrelevant. It is desirable that the approach is 'case based' and that the students are exposed to direct work experience." (National Minimum Curriculum p.59)

The educational system should prepare students for the world of work by helping them to develop knowledge and acquire information about:

- the global and local economy and its affects;
- the changing work environment in an information society;
- different workplaces and the required skills;
- the sociology of work and ethics;
- workers' and employers' organisations;
- the Maltese cooperative movement;
- the search for employment;
- adult training agencies;
- the laws and regulations and benefits

Through the curricular experience, students shall acquire, amongst others, the following skills:

- interpersonal, planning, organisation, evaluation, discussion and negotiation skills;
- effective time and money management;
- effective problem solving
- health and safety skills
- ability to choose a career in an informed and responsible manner;
- professional development portfolio;
- ability to prepare oneself for a possible period of unemployment;
- proficiency in all aspects of literacy, numeracy and information technology.

Through the curricular experience, students shall develop an *attitude of appreciation* of:

- different types of work;
- the need for workers to join work organisations;
- the need for workers to follow the work ethic;
- the importance of accountability and initiative;
- the importance of education not as a time-conditioned state which stops at the end of the compulsory schooling period, but as a lifelong process;
- the importance of creative thinking as a key element for success in each area of work.