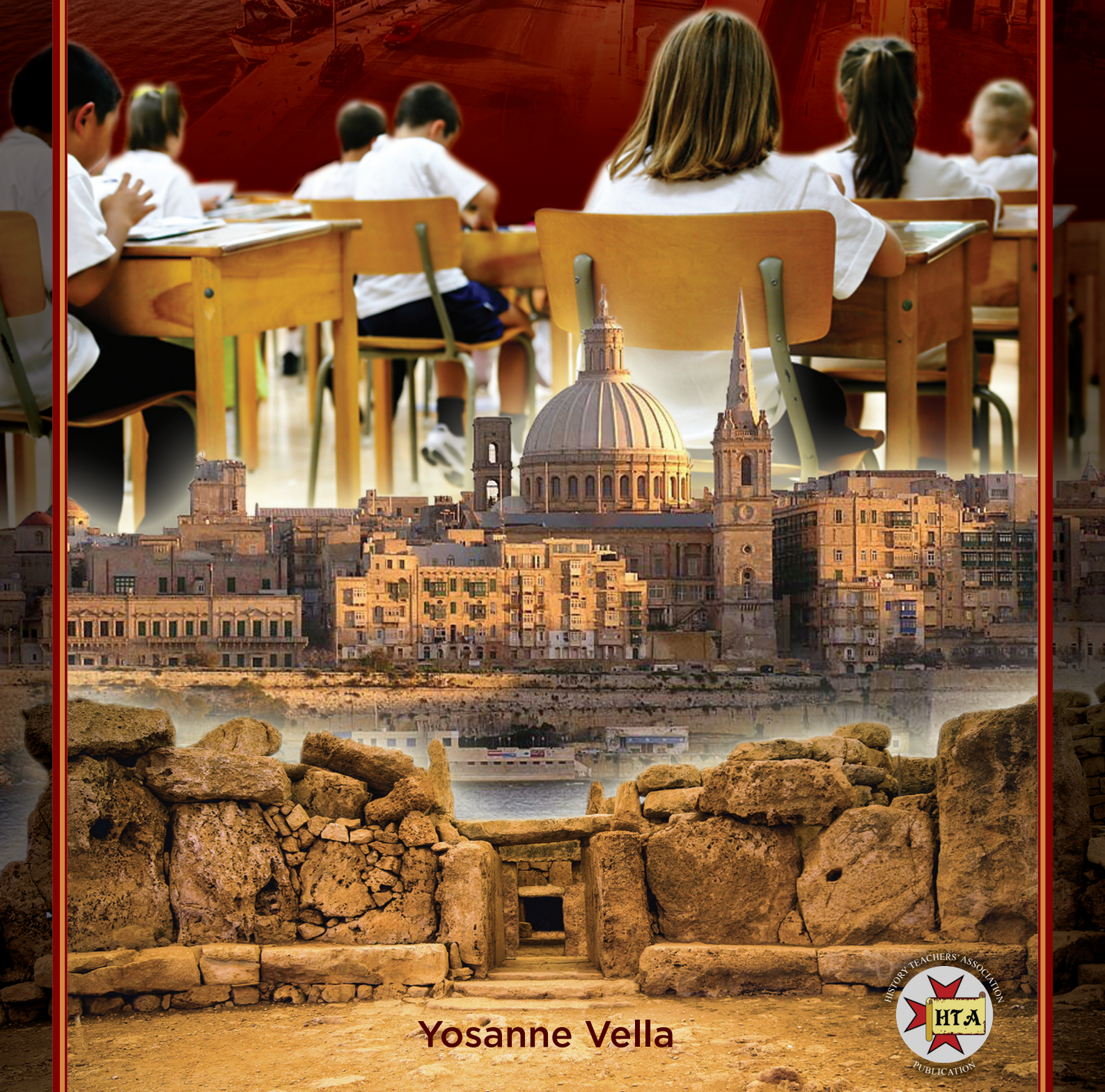


TEACHING HISTORY IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL

approaches, multiculturalism and writing skills



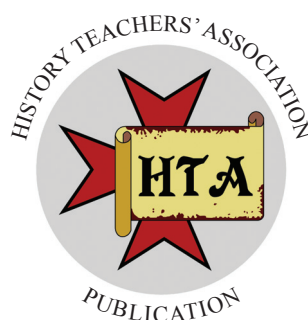
Yosanne Vella



TEACHING HISTORY IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL

approaches, multiculturalism and writing skills

Yosanne Vella



First published June 2016
History Teachers' Association, (Malta) 2016

Sponsored by Malta Airport Foundation



Initiative supported by:

- Department of Curriculum Management, Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education and Ministry for Education and Employment
- Faculty of Education University of Malta

ISBN: 978-99957-0-959-4

FORWARD

Reading this book brought back happy and inspiring memories of visiting Malta in 2008, when I had the pleasure of talking at length with Yosanne about the challenges of teaching history both generally and more specifically in Malta. An ancient cross-roads in a sea traversed by civilisations for millennia, it is hard to imagine a better place to teach young people both awe at the complexity of human history and humility at the challenge of handling the diverse, often conflicting accounts, to which efforts at telling the stories of the past inevitably give rise.

At first glance, the three sections of the book appear to be on disparate themes. In fact, they are profoundly related, and form a unified, if complex argument about the curricular and pedagogic challenges of history teaching and how to address them. The chapter arguing for the teaching of history as a discrete discipline is both brave, in its challenge to prevailing trends, and persuasive. It sits well with the next chapter which emphasises the need to understand the practices of the discipline so that students have the means to engage in rational discussion about content which, given the way in which the past invades the present, is often highly emotive. The rogue politician, preacher or propagandist will always seek to plunder the past for his own ends, whether out of fear, material interest or a naive desire to control others' thinking. Young people must, therefore, know enough about *the past* to understand others' reference points and enough *about history* to know how to use the discipline to judge and weigh the veracity of claims.

Vella's book draws richly on research, practice and fertile blends of both, but in its practical dimensions it is always handling intellectual complexity. Characteristic of the book is an avoidance of the short cut and the undue simplification. Instead, it faces up to the challenge of showing young people the thrill of encountering the 'other' in fascinating stories, the puzzle of interrogating intriguing source material and the call to face both with a sense of responsibility – a responsibility to consider objections to which arguments might be open and other ways of narrating.

In the section on essay writing and sources, we see a commitment to structured and purposeful talk. This extended description of how to teach pupils to write their own causation essays attends to the central role of an essay as independent argument. And in that chapter, while ostensibly a guide to the practicalities of writing, Vella manages to underline the messages of the whole book: that induction into responsible, scholarly decision-making, with careful weighing of evidence and argument, are essential if we are to enable all young people to engage in responsible conversations about the past.

At every stage this book eschews quick fixes. At every stage, we are rightly reminded that history is hard. But the rewards of taking the discipline seriously are many – they redound not only to personal academic accomplishment, but to a better way to live together, to share and explore our pasts.

Christine Counsell
University of Cambridge | June 2016

Contents

General Introduction	9
-----------------------------------	----------

Approaches in history teaching.....	11
--	-----------

Chapter 1

The problem with teaching history as part of an integrated or interdisciplinary cross-curricular pedagogical approach.	13
---	----

Chapter 2

Traditional teaching versus ‘New History’ teaching – examples taken from the topic ‘the Great Siege’	25
--	----

Teaching history in a multi-cultural society.....	53
--	-----------

Chapter 3

Strategies to learn about multi-culturalism in Maltese history.....	55
---	----

Chapter 4

History Pedagogy to combat Islamaphobia.....	81
--	----

Writing in history teaching.....	103
---	------------

Chapter 5

Raising performance in history teaching while improving secondary students’ essay writing skills.....	105
---	-----

Chapter 6

An investigation into finding effective ways of presenting a written source to students.....	123
--	-----

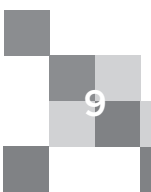
General Introduction

This book focuses on three basic notions which I regard to be extremely important in history teaching. First of all what approach should a history teacher adopt, that is, what pedagogy or methodology to use. This decision is fundamental before any teaching can occur. Long gone are the days when 'knowing the story' and 'telling it' to a class is sufficient. Effective history teaching needs a well-trained teacher who is strong both in subject knowledge and in pedagogical subject skills. Making history accessible to adolescents and developing historical understanding in pupils needs specialised training. Therefore the first two chapters debate precisely the hazards of certain approaches and the benefits of others.

Similarly to most European countries Malta today is a multicultural society and teaching any subject in such an environment needs a bit of extra thought. All democratic politicians, educators and consultants exalt the benefits of living in a multicultural society. However, I have long felt we are rich in rhetoric but poor in practical ideas of how to promote multiculturalism in any classroom let alone specifically in history lessons. So the second part of the book is in fact presenting two personal research attempts (chapter 3 and chapter 4) in the local context to try and find ways how history can foster and stimulate pupils to think about multiculturalism.

Throughout my years as a history pedagogist I have watched and participated in various wonderful history lessons where pupils were very much engaged in learning, and participated fully in resource rich lessons with tasks focused on interpretation and evidence analysis. Unfortunately there were several occasions where these same lessons were followed by writing activities and it was here that the pupils floundered. The work produced by the pupils was not up to standard. I have given much thought to this anomaly and researched various work on how pupils' writing can be improved. Anybody learning and studying history cannot escape from writing in history; it is part and parcel of the subject. Inevitably you are going to face occasions where you need to be able to read and understand fairly long complex text and in turn you need to produce written text. Therefore as their dissertation tutor I took the opportunity to encourage two of my history teacher trainees to try out various techniques which would hopefully produce better written pupil feedback and better pupil understanding of written text. The last part of this book (chapter 5 and chapter 6) are two papers I wrote, based on the work carried out in these dissertations. They were successful in both supporting pupils' writing in history (Rosaline Caruana's B.Ed Dissertation) and pupils' understanding of history written text (Kimberly Caruana's B.Ed Dissertation).

So this book brings together my most recent research in history teaching which specifically focused on aspects which I feel are growing in importance in my field. While by no means offering permanent solutions I hope this book contributes to the ongoing quest to find the best pedagogy for history teachers to use.



All the chapters in this book have been peer reviewed since I always present my research at various international as well as local conferences and seminars, and conduct changes or adjustment to my work after peer feedback. Reference to the original presentation can be found at the beginning of each chapter, together with place of academic publication.

Yosanne Vella

June 2016

Approaches in history teaching

Chapter 1 and chapter 2

Chapter 1 was presented as a paper in Rome in September 2012 during a conference organised by the International Research Association for History and Social Studies Education (IRAHSSE) or in French AIRDHSS , Association Internationale de Recherche en Didactique de l'Histoire et des Science Sociales

It had attracted quite an audience since it was a paper going against the prevailing educational trend which promotes teaching in an interdisciplinary approach. This paper is rare in the sense that it questions the wisdom of integrating history with other subjects like Social Studies and Citizenship and highlights the harm done to history teaching where this method was adopted. There was a very constructive and lively debate from the floor not least from Prof Luigi Cajani co-editor of 'History Teaching, Identities, Citizenship'.

It took a while to find a publisher for this paper in an academic journal since it is criticising a very popular teaching approach and editors are understandably surprised and cautious. However, it finally appeared in summer 2015 in Heirnet's journal. Heirnet is the History Educators International Research Network, and their journal is presently one of the most prestigious academic history teaching journals.

First Publication

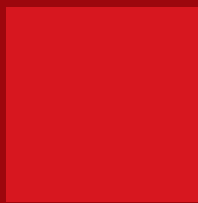
Vella, Yosanne (2015) *How Do Students Learn History? The Problem With Teaching History As Part Of An Integrated, Interdisciplinary Or Cross-Curricular Pedagogical Approach* in International Journal of Historical Learning Teaching and Research Volume 13.3 pp 60–68
www.history.org.uk

Chapter 2 paper was presented in November 2015 at the Inquisitor's Palace in Birgu, Malta, as part of a Conference organised by Malta's History Society to commemorate the 450 anniversary of the Great Siege of 1565. It was presented with the slightly different title of *What is the best Pedagogy to use when teaching the Great Siege in Maltese History textbooks? Some examples of good practice*. This paper was unique at this conference, for it was the only one on the history pedagogy of the Great Siege whereas all the other presentations had been done by historians and were history papers on the Great Siege.

Publication

Vella, Yosanne (in print) *What is the best Pedagogy to use when teaching the Great Siege in Maltese History textbooks? Some examples of good practice*
Melita Historica Conference Proceedings

The problem with
teaching history as
part of an integrated
or interdisciplinary
cross-curricular
pedagogical
approach.



Chapter 1



Introduction

Interdisciplinary/cross-curricular teaching sometimes also called an integrated approach involves a deliberate attempt to apply knowledge and principles to more than one academic discipline concurrently. This approach is also linked to project work, topic or thematic teaching which incorporate the integration of different curricular areas around a particular topic, a central theme, issue, problem, process, or experience. This teaching approach is highly favoured in many Primary schools (5 to 11 years-olds) in Europe and to a lesser extent in Secondary schools too. In the Secondary sector (11 to 16 year-olds) it is more difficult to infiltrate as a method because it is harder to remove the subject barriers, however because of the attractiveness of cross curricular advantages, attempts occur here too. Thus in the case of humanities such 'umbrella' titles as Citizenship Education, Social Studies and Environmental Studies may replace separate academic subjects such as Geography, Sociology, Home Economics, Physical and Social Education, Religious Studies and History. These are now taught as one subject.

This approach is often seen as a panacea to various problems facing education today; from opening up more space and time on overcrowded school timetables to cutting down fragmentation and giving a more holistic, relevant and modern education.¹ Unfortunately while undoubtedly having various positive aspects, like most cures, an interdisciplinary approach which mixes history with civics or with any other subject does not come without a number of serious negative side-effects. There are three particular challenges presented by an interdisciplinary/cross-curricular approach to history teaching and learning which I feel need to be addressed. These are less history teaching and learning time, loss of independence for history as a school subject and the nature of history as an academic subject and its pedagogy may not be reconcilable with citizenship education and interdisciplinary approaches.

Problems of teaching history within an interdisciplinary/cross-curricular approach

Less history teaching and learning time

First of all interdisciplinary/cross-curricular approaches compound the already existing problem of very little history time on school timetables, as Euroclio research shows "the time allocated to history in schools is under pressure everywhere in Europe with a tendency to further decrease"² The situation of the dwindling history lesson is made worse because within an interdisciplinary/cross-curricular approaches history stops being the focus and has to merge with all the other subject areas.

Loss of independence for history as a school subject

This leads to the second difficulty that is, that history ceases to exist in its own right. This was already a worry in 1992 when the top concern of most western European History Teachers Associations was a possible loss of the independent position of history in the curriculum.³ By 2001 another research project, this time from the Council of Europe on history in schools,⁴ noticed a considerable change in school history curricula. “There is now far more emphasis on recent and contemporary history, and a growing focus on strengthening European consciousness, human rights and civil society through the teaching of history and civics.”⁵

The nature of history as an academic subject and its pedagogy may not be reconcilable with citizenship education and interdisciplinary approaches.

Citizenship education has become very popular in the last 15 years and many interdisciplinary curriculums are now tailored to include history and other humanities within the citizenship umbrella, and this leads me to the third and to me the most worrying aspect of an interdisciplinary/cross-curriculum. A concern that by far transcends both the two previous concerns, that is, the decrease in the time allotted to proper history teaching and that history stops being a separate subject on the school timetable. It is important to point out that in the case of history there is the added problem that history and citizenship do not always sit comfortably together; indeed, in some instances they are incompatible. Whereas, citizenship is concerned with developing certain attitudes and values which currently prevail in a society, history is about questioning evidence. Citizenship is essentially an initiation process while history is not designed for this.

History teachers know that there are various problems when it comes to historical explanation. One does not need to be a postmodernist to realize that ‘truths’ uncovered by history are imperfect. The questions historians ask are determined by the questions of their society, reflecting the same apprehensions or optimism of the time rather than the historical period the historian is studying and all this casts serious doubt on the objectivity of history.

All our historical knowledge comes to us in an indirect way. This is true both for evidence coming from primary historical sources and for evidence coming from secondary historical sources. When working with primary sources we are dealing with what survives; other material which did not survive might have produced an entirely different picture. There will always be the possibility of sources being forged and the information they are giving is entirely false. This can also happen through mistakes occurring while the historian is working with the sources, for example mistakes during translations or while deciphering calligraphy. But even if one were to give allowances to these human errors, there exist even more serious problems when dealing with historical material. A truly untouched authentic piece of evidence cannot be said to exist. What we have, all comes to us second hand, even documents, which are often regarded as sacrosanct where facts are concerned, were written by fallible human beings. Even if they were actual eyewitnesses of the events they are reporting, their memory can be faulty.

The account is influenced by the eyewitness's prejudices and biases, which may cause him or her, even if perhaps unconsciously, to exaggerate or modify certain things.

Furthermore even when correct facts can be established, they only start to have meaning once the historian has gone to work on them. Facts are only the raw material, history is a continual process of interaction between the historian and his or her facts. To illustrate this point Carr states that: "To praise a historian for his accuracy is like praising an architect for using well-seasoned timber or properly mixed concrete in his building."⁶ It is a necessary function but not the main *raison d'être* of a historian. Ultimately the job of a good historian is to rigorously check, compare and question all known facts and information about the topic he or she is researching. Then the evaluation process starts, which includes interpreting evidence, explaining, attributing causes, criticism, tracing results and using the imagination. And it leads not to truth – historians can come to different conclusions – but to rather to a valid interpretation.

However, this means that with secondary sources there are now even more concerns since besides the bias to be found in the original source of information there is also the writer's bias to contend with. History teachers know that facts become facts when historians decide to make them so, even when not expressing any judgements or opinions historians are being selective by the very choice of the subject they have picked to work on.

"The facts are not given, they are selected. Despite appearances they are never left to speak for themselves. However detailed a historical narrative may be, and however committed its author to the re-creation of the past, it never springs from the sources ready-made; many events are omitted as trivial, and those which do find a place in the narrative tend to be seen through the eyes of one particular participant or a small group."⁷

For a long time historians thought the history of kings, nobles and great men only was important and therefore our history only dealt with such topics, leaving out whole chunks of the population who because of their race, class or sex did not fit this paradigm. This is especially obvious when it comes to women's history. Women have been for a long time to coin Sheila Rowbotham's famous phrase 'hidden from history.'⁸ With the advent of more and more women historians, women's history began to be written and our perspectives on whole historical periods have changed.

It is also the historians who decide in what order and context to place the facts and as any good journalist knows to influence opinion in one direction you merely have to select and arrange the appropriate facts. Historians are products of their own culture and the society and subject to their own prejudices and values.

History teachers today are aware of the very real difference between 'the past' and 'history' which are often taken to mean by non specialists as one and the same thing, when in fact they are not. It is important to accept that history is merely a discourse about the past but not the past itself and to a certain extent what Keith Jenkins says is correct:

“History as discourse is thus in a different category to that which it discourses about, that is, the past and history are different things. Additionally, the past and history are not stitched into each other such that only one historical reading of the past is absolutely necessary. The past and history float free of each other, they are ages and miles apart.”⁹

For the past 40 years history pedagogy has been developing and today it is dramatically different from the traditional history teaching of forty years ago. The main objective in history teaching is today the teaching of history thinking skills within a historical context rather than mere memorisation of facts and pupils are made aware of the main characteristics of the discipline. It is important to teach in history not just the factual knowledge, but what Bruner¹⁰ calls the ‘structure’ of the subject. Historical method involves historical thinking and it is the analyses of sources in particular, that provide the practice for a mode of thinking similar to what the historian goes through. This approach in history teaching is in fact based on constructivist teaching methods.

Historical thinking is best described as a form of speculation, highly investigative in nature so many of the learning theories are not immediately satisfactory approaches to history teaching. For example Dewey’s problem-solving model perhaps so useful in subjects like science and mathematics might be inadequate for as Watts (1972) says “...because the material of history is uncertain and debatable, it is difficult, if not literally impossible, to solve problems in history...history is much more concerned with problem-raising than problem-solving”¹¹

Lee, Dickinson and Ashby showed that children’s thinking in history is far more sophisticated than previously imagined. After analysing children’s ideas on testing explanations in history, Lee, Dickinson and Ashby advise:

“From the point of view of day-to-day classroom history teaching, our analysis so far suggests that we need to recognise that quite young children can begin to make sophisticated distinctions and develop powerful intellectual tools. We may need both to match such ideas with greater precision in our teaching objectives, and to increase our awareness of assumptions which hold some children back.”¹²

One of the best descriptions of what constitutes good history teaching today is given by Christine Counsell¹³ and her characteristics of what make good history teachers are summed up below:

1. They consider learning as highly structured and very risky – (children need all kinds of structures to think at high level – text one minute, picture the next, activity one minute –teachers need time to learn to teach)
2. They consider variety – (by using many resources to compare sources and interpretations, to access the past and to construct history in different ways)
3. They value knowledge – (critical thinking and reflection do not mean forgetting the importance of knowledge. We have to connect knowledge and skills)

4. They establishing a critical, informed and open discipline of history – (by its practises, its processes, its values. This to practice casual reasoning and to construct casual explanation.)
5. They select the right stuff – (by supplying a framework of thinking about the kinds of questions we ask about the past and the kinds of historical enquiry)
6. They put emphasis on evidence and interpretation – ((the processes of the discipline) this to establish and examine the truth claims that historians make)
7. They give joy - (by historical enquiry which establishes curiosity amongst students)
8. They make possible various encounters to learn all the time – (such as to encounter the other, otherness, the strange and the familiar)

This is a very rewarding, effective but difficult kind of pedagogy of history. A pedagogy that can be very successful when delivered by excellent experienced history teachers but if it is to occur, it has to happen in a subject-centered curriculum and not in an interdisciplinary cross-curriculum one, where the possibility of untrained non specialists teachers is very high.

As can be seen the debate regarding the nature of history and on the best approach to teach it, is quite complex, so considering how volatile history is, how can this be used to pass across the accepted values of a society? Citizenship is concerned with educating pupils on how to become citizens. But what does that mean? Definitely learning values but whose values? In one society citizenship might mean passing across particular dominant religious values, in another it might be ethnic or cultural values and often the top priority of citizenship is to accept the underlying political values. Pushing forward any one set of values no matter how noble they might be is the antithesis of history education.

I accept that as Cajani says “on the methodological level, the comparison of controversial interpretations and the analysis of documents, fundamental in history teaching, provide students with essential skills for the exercise of citizenship.”¹⁴ But one has to be very careful, history pedagogy researchers such as Rosalyn Ashby and Peter Lee never claimed history skills necessarily change a person’s point of view. For example when discussing their findings on children’s understanding and the skill of historic empathy Ashby and Lee advise against making “simple-minded and grandiose claims – that prejudice against cultures or ethnic groups will be dispelled by empathy exercises in history at school. People’s views are in large part based on material interests, fear, and their social relations with others: the presentation of rational alternatives in education is often almost powerless against all this.”¹⁵ I’d like to think that Ashby and Lee is not totally correct and there is truth in Cajani’s statement and I personally definitely believe that history teaching can indeed create people that think on a higher level. With the right history teaching one can get pupils to query the source of their information and its reliability, a trait which is very useful for citizens of a democracy however the objective of history can never be, as it is in citizenship, to uphold any one system of government even if that system of government is democracy.

Criticism of the 'benefits' of an interdisciplinary/cross-curriculum approach

History teaching is hard work and requires the right type of pedagogy which is focused and in depth, unfortunately it is very difficult if not impossible to practice this within an interdisciplinary framework which puts pressure on the very elements that make this possible. But perhaps the benefits of an interdisciplinary approach are worth the effort. So what are these benefits?

Morris (1970) as cited in Ingram (1979) argues that integration is an administrative device, a way of organising the timetable to cope with the expansion of knowledge. But should we abandon good practice for logistical reasons?¹⁶

A stronger argument in favour is that it is child centred¹⁷ and “demands that the curriculum be made relevant, meaningful and so on have been the most potent factor in the development of the idea of the curriculum integration”¹⁸. Thematic interdisciplinary approaches help pupils to understand day to day life and place learning in a context and not compartmentalise a child’s life¹⁹.

There is a huge assumption behind these arguments that subject-centred curriculum resembles one which is authoritarian and where the teacher is the giver of knowledge and the pupils mere recipients, a method which would fall under an Essentialist philosophy, and one which does not take into consideration the child’s needs and interests. But this is a false assumption, a history teacher can use a constructivist, child centered method in a subject- centered curriculum as exemplified by such brilliant history pedagogy as advocated by the work of numerous history teaching researchers²⁰, while respected peer reviewed journals on history pedagogy such as *Teaching History*²¹ and the *International Journal of Historical Learning, Teaching and Research*²² are a showcase of good practice in history teaching within a subject-centered curriculum.

This assumption that better learning occurs in an interdisciplinary curriculum than in a single-subject one is a very strong one, however there does not seem to be any solid empirical evidence which backs the theory. The only research study on the effectiveness of cross-curricular teaching versus subject teaching I managed to find is a study conducted almost 20 years by Yorks and Folio (1993).²³ This study states that students learn better from thematic, interdisciplinary instruction than from a traditional, single-subject curriculum. This conclusion is drawn from testing the engagement rates of 254 students learning social studies, reading and math in a mixed age classroom of 3rd and 4th graders. By observing these rates, it was demonstrated that there was a higher engagement rate during thematic tuition rather than during single-subject lessons. This may be correct, higher engagement may be occurring more in cross curricular activities but this does not necessarily translate in better understanding and learning on the parts of the students. What kind of engagement is really happening?

Is interdisciplinary teaching improving quality of history teaching? It is difficult to say when empirical evidence is missing, however one source of information is the British Education Department, for Britain is one place where integrated

approaches have long been advocated and practiced in classrooms. As early as 1967 the Plowden report was praising this method. "Integration is not only a question of allowing time for interests which do not fit under subject headings; it is as much a matter of seeing the different dimensions of subject work and of using the forms of observation and communication which are most suitable to a given sequence of learning"²⁴.

In Education it takes time before one can see whether a method is producing good results or not, and it was in fact by 1980 that quite unsavoury comments against interdisciplinary teaching methods began surfacing in various reports by school inspectors²⁵. One strong criticism was that there was often no organisation of subject matter and teaching was being done in a random way, thoughtful planning in advance was not occurring. The report of the Scottish Education Department (1980) was very unfavourable. It states that less than half the projects seen were of any real significance where learning was concerned and in an article in the Times Educational Supplement²⁶ 'projects' which had become synonymous with integrated thematic teaching were highly criticised. J.Eggleston argued that topic teaching lacks learning objectives, individual pupil needs are not met and reduces practice to very basic skills. Eight years later T.Yendoll evaluates thematic approaches as "confused thinking, discontinuity, a lack of coherence and progression, suspect classroom organisation, mismatch and weaknesses in assessment and evaluation."²⁷

More recently Annual Reports of HM Senior Chief Inspectors of Schools reported even more alarming results of 'hybrid' integrated courses. In seven of the ten schools visited between 2008 and 2010 in which curriculum changes had been made towards integrated approaches, history, with other foundation subjects, had greatly suffered. For example, as stated in one *Ofsted Report*²⁸.

"a series of themes was created and history teachers were required to make artificial links to them...so the history curriculum lacked coherence and undermined progression"

"schemes of work and lessons were created in which subject specialists had limited or even no input; the result was superficial and simplistic teaching and learning; feedback to students was of limited value because it lacked subject-specific comments about how they might improve"

"the work set was not as challenging as when students were specifically taught history in discrete lessons...with students saying the work was too easy"²⁹

Worrying reports indeed and ones which shouldn't be ignored if the effective history teaching methods achieved in the last 20 years are not to be lost.

Conclusion

I myself was supportive of integrating history within an interdisciplinary integrated approach some 12 years ago³⁰ but the gap between the rhetoric and the practice

has long since made me rethink the validity of this method and I advised³¹ great caution when history in Malta's New National Curriculum became one of five subjects that make up Citizenship Education.

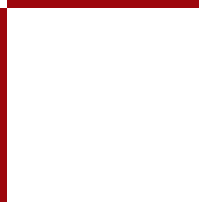
Undoubtedly one of the foremost pioneers and advocates of interdisciplinary approaches is Heidi Hayes Jacobs an American educational consultant on interdisciplinary methods since the early 1980s, it is interesting that even she detects that there can be a problem. As Jacobs (1997) says "Without a commitment to *when* a skill will be taught, there is no commitment. Furthermore, skills are not taught in a vacuum. They are addressed in application to content, and they are evidenced in a product or performance by the learner"³². In explaining the procedures for curriculum mapping Jacobs makes it clear that to be successful a interdisciplinary/cross-curricular method needs to combine content, skills and performance assessment. She gives detailed and complex case studies that build up learning activities step by step in a developmental fashion. But does this happen in our European schools? All experts on implementing such an approach³³ agree that that staff need a lot of support if interdisciplinary approaches are to be successful, unfortunately in many cases there is no guarantee that such support is available. Therefore in the case of history one should proceed with extreme caution when implementing an interdisciplinary cross-curriculum approach, rather than gaining the much hoped for benefits it might in fact prove to be the complete destruction of effective history pedagogy.

Endnotes:

- ¹ See for example Stella Gunning et al, *Topic Teaching in the Primary School* (Croom Helm 1981); Colin Hughes et al, *Inspirations for Cross-Curricular Projects* (Scholastic Publications 1993) and Trevor Kelly, *Cross-Curricular Teaching in the Primary School* (Routledge, 2011) to mention just a few books where arguments in favour of an interdisciplinary approach are discussed.
- ² Joke van der Leeuw-Roord "Europe in the Learning and Teaching of History" in Joke van der Leeuw-Roord (ed) *History for Today and Tomorrow; What does Europe mean for School History?* (Korber-Stiftung, 2001) 22
- ³ Joke van der Leeuw-Roord "History Works: Common Concerns in History Education in G.Cassar & Y. Vella (eds) *History teaching & research: bridging the theory/practice divide* vol 1 (Faculty of Education - ~University of Malta / History Teachers Association Publication , 2006) 38
- ⁴ Robert Stradling Teaching 20th-century European History (Strasbourg, 2001)
- ⁵ Quoting Joke van der Leeuw-Roord referencing to Stradling's work in Joke van der Leeuw-Roord "Europe in the Learning and Teaching of History" in Joke van der Leeuw-Roord (ed) *History for Today and Tomorrow; What does Europe mean for School History?* (Korber-Stiftung, 2001) 22
- ⁶ E.H. Carr *What is History?* (Penguin edition, 1964) 10
- ⁷ John Tosh *The Pursuit of History* (Longman, 1984) 113
- ⁸ Sheila Rowbotham (1973) *Hidden from History* (Pluto Press, 1973)
- ⁹ Keith Jenkins *Re-Thinking History* (Routledge, 1991) 5
- ¹⁰ J.S. Bruner *The Process of Education* (Harvard, 1966)
- ¹¹ D.G. Watts, *The Learning of History* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972) 33
- ¹² Peter Lee, Alaric Dickinson & Rosalyn Ashby "Children making sense of history" pp13-19 *Education 3 to 13* (The Primary Schools Research and Development Group, 1996) 19

- ¹³ Christine Counsell "Curiosity, Critical Thinking and Intellectual Independence: How have History Teachers Changed History Teaching? How does Historical Learning Change Students?" in Philippou, S. & Makriyianni, C. (eds) *What does it mean to think historically?; Approaches to teaching and learning history*. (Nicosia, Cyprus, 2004) 18 - 56
- ¹⁴ Luigi Cajani "Citizenship on the verge of the 21st century: the burden of the past, the challenger of the present" in L.Cajani & A.Ross (eds) *History teaching, identities, citizenship* (Trentham Books, 2007) 7
- ¹⁵ Rosalyn Ashby & Peter Lee "Children's Concepts of Empathy and Understanding in History" in Christopher Portal (ed) *The History Curriculum for Teachers* (The Falmer Press, 1987) 65
- ¹⁶ Ingram, J.B. (1979) *Curriculum Integration and Life Long Education* Hamburg: (Pergamon Press & UNESCO/ Institute of Education, 1979)
- ¹⁷ P.Ranke *Teaching by Topics* (Ward Lock Educational, 1968)
- ¹⁸ A.V. Kelly *The Curriculum : Theory and Practice* (Harper & Row, 1982) 60
- ¹⁹ Arguments put forward by J. Palmer & D. Pettitt *Topic Work in the Early Years* (Routledge, 1993) 138; S.Gunning, D.Gunning & J. Wilson *Topic Teaching in the Primary School* (Croom Helm, 1981)
- ²⁰ See for example the work of Jon Nichols, John Fines, Christine Counsell, Alaric Dickinson, Peter Lee, Terry Hayden, Denis Shemilt, Joan Blyth and Rob Phillips to mention just a few.
- ²¹ *Teaching History* is a quarterly peer reviewed journal published by the British Historical Association since the early 1960s.
- ²² *The International Journal of Historical Learning, Teaching and Research* is a peer-reviewed journal published by the History Education Centre University of Exeter UK since 2000
- ²³ P. Yorks & E. Follo *Engagement rates during thematic and traditional instruction* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service, 1993)
- ²⁴ Plowden Children and their Primary Schools. A report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England) Vol 1 (Her Majesty's Stationery Office London, 1967) 199
- ²⁵ These inspectors report on the progress or otherwise of individual subjects as they observe teaching activities in hundreds of British schools they visit.
- ²⁶ J.Eggleston "The drawback of projects" *Times Educational Supplement* 12.9.80
- ²⁷ T.Yendoll "Project Work its roots and Ancestry; Discovering Discovery Learning" in Colin Conner (ed) *Topic and Thematic Work in Primary and Middle Years* (Institute of Education, Cambridge 1988) 39
- ²⁸ Ofsted (the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) carries out hundreds of inspections and regulatory visits on a weekly bases. They report directly to Parliament and are an independent body.
- ²⁹ Ofsted Report *History for all: History in English schools 2007/10* (March 2011)
- ³⁰ Yosanne Vella "Workshop Report: Thematic and Interdisciplinary Teaching" in J.Giordmaina (ed) *Conference Proceedings National Curriculum on its Way* (Ministry of Education/Faculty of Education Malta, 2000)
- ³¹ Yosanne Vella "History in Peril" *Times of Malta* (20th April 2009)
- ³² Heidi Hayes Jacobs *Mapping the Big Picture; Integrating Curriculum and Assessment K-12* (ASCD Alexandria, Virginia USA, 1997) 4
- ³³ See for example Colin Hughes et al *Inspirations for Cross-Curricular Projects* (Scholastic, 1993) and Trevor Kerry *Cross-Curricular Teaching in the Primary School* (Routledge, 2011)

What is the best
Pedagogy to use
when teaching
the Great Siege
in Maltese History
textbooks? Some
examples of good
practice.



Chapter 2



Introduction

The 'Great Siege' has long been considered as a very important topic in Maltese history and has been included in the syllabi of various classes in both primary and secondary Maltese schools be they State, Private and Church schools. Our history textbooks have almost always included it as one of their main chapters, and without a doubt this event is very much embedded in the historical narrative of our nation and evokes huge national pride. I think the simple straightforward message which has always been passed across to our youths is best represented by how the Great Siege was described in an article which appeared this year in a local newspaper "the epic 1565 battle that made a legend out of a little island that, against all odds, withstood invasion from an empire."¹

Unquestionably the 'words', 'expressions' and 'nationalistic feelings' in our school textbooks regarding the Great Siege warrant whole studies, however this is not the aim of this paper rather I would like to focus on the actual pedagogy of the subject, that is the teaching methods used to teach this topic.

History pedagogies

There are various methods a teacher can employ when teaching history. One approach is known as the 'traditional' method and reflects the positivist stance on history, that is, the notion that there is an absolute truth out there which needs to be learnt and we progress along as new information is discovered. This teaching method can be done by various means. Traditional history teaching can be presented in quite a tedious and boring manner like for example giving notes for students to study or reading narrative directly from a textbook or listening to a teacher talking to the class and giving the 'story' of what happened. On the other hand traditional history teaching can be presented in quite interesting ways especially through the use of IT technology like for example through the use of power point presentations, or 'google' searches. Wikipedia is the perfect example of traditional approaches to history with very interesting up to date information on historical topics. However, this teaching approach always rests on a very important assumption, that is, pupils are presented with the latest finished product – the work of historians. The construction of new thinking is not as highly valued as the ability to demonstrate mastery of conventionally accepted historical knowledge. History is seen as a body of information which has to be passed on to pupils.

On the other hand another approach which is quite different is that which is sometimes called 'Innovative History Teaching' also known by various other titles for example 'New History Teaching' a term used in the late 1960s and 70s in England and still favoured to this day in Malta, as well as 'the Source Method' a term very often used in the European history teaching context. In this approach history is taught as a form of inquiry with a focus on history thinking skills, which school children can use to analyse and interpret historical material. The ability to learn factual information is not the main priority within the framework of this

teaching paradigm, rather it is a teaching method described by R. Ben Jones back in 1973 as a history teaching method that “lays less emphasis on content and more on the process of learning.”² Indeed by the 1980s and 1990s researchers in history pedagogy confirmed the effectiveness of this method, in particular the pioneering work of Denis Shemilt which demonstrated that the historical thinking of secondary school pupils who had been taught through this approach far surpassed those taught by through traditional approach.³ Furthermore Lee, Dickinson and Ashby showed that pupils can indeed benefit from this approach, for children’s thinking in history is in fact far more sophisticated than previously imagined. After analysing children’s ideas on testing explanations in history, Lee, Dickinson and Ashby advise:

“From the point of view of day-to-day classroom history teaching, our analysis so far suggests that we need to recognise that quite young children can begin to make sophisticated distinctions and develop powerful intellectual tools. We may need both to match such ideas with greater precision in our teaching objectives, and to increase our awareness of assumptions which hold some children back.”⁴

History teaching in Malta today

The move towards ‘New History’ or ‘the Source Method’ started to occur in Malta by the late 1980s and the President of Malta’s History Teachers Association could report by 1997 that “Today, it is not a rare occasion for our students to handle photocopies of official documents, letters, diaries or caricatures particularly those dealing with the 19th and 20th century.”⁵

This was further confirmed in a recent research study on history teaching in Malta, where it was observed that “teachers who graduated prior to 1980 rarely, if ever, use *New History* methods, whereas almost all of those who graduated after 2000 often or always use *New History* methods in their classroom”.⁶ By 2008 James Degiorgio’s study indicated that 78 per cent of history teachers were now strongly in favour of teaching history skills and, in particular, to giving students an opportunity to practice the skills of analysing historical primary sources.

Contrary to the traditional approach it is true that to teach in ‘the New History’ approach a history teacher has to be highly skilled and well trained, however it is a very meaningful way of teaching the subject. This method has continually evolved during the past 40 years and history educators today who use this method understand that history teaching must involve historical thinking which is highly speculative in nature and it is the analyses of sources in particular, that provide the practice for a mode of thinking similar to what the historian goes through. The best descriptions of what constitutes good history teaching today is brilliantly summed up by Christine Counsell when she describes what makes good history teachers:

1. They consider learning as highly structured and very risky – (children need all kinds of structures to think at high level – text one minute, picture the next, activity one minute –teachers need time to learn to teach)

2. They consider variety – (by using many resources to compare sources and interpretations, to access the past and to construct history in different ways)
3. They value knowledge – (critical thinking and reflection do not mean forgetting the importance of knowledge. We have to connect knowledge and skills)
4. They establishing a critical, informed and open discipline of history – (by its practises, its processes, its values. This to practice casual reasoning and to construct casual explanation.)
5. They select the right stuff – (by supplying a framework of thinking about the kinds of questions we ask about the past and the kinds of historical enquiry)
6. They put emphasis on evidence and interpretation – ((the processes of the discipline) this to establish and examine the truth claims that historians make)
7. They give joy - (by historical enquiry which establishes curiosity amongst students)
8. They make possible various encounters to learn all the time – (such as to encounter the other, otherness, the strange and the familiar)⁷

Teaching the Great Siege in Maltese schools and textbooks: the Traditional Approach

So what teaching method is presently being used to teach the Great Siege in Maltese schools? I will now describe a few examples from current textbooks and school activities that will demonstrate how this subject is being taught in our schools. *Grajjet Malta* was introduced as the history textbook for State schools in 1975 and was an official textbook up to as recently as five years ago. There are no names of authors of this book but the text was directly plagiarised from Andrew Vella's history books 'Storja ta' Malta' with very slight modifications and with added pictures while the original Andrew Vella⁸ history books contained no illustrations. Today it has largely been discarded by the majority of schools however it is quite possibly it is still being used by some teachers so I will refer to it.

Grajjet Malta is a perfect example of traditional history teaching, basically a comprehension exercise with questions at the end to confirm that pupils have learnt the information given. Compared to what had existed before this book was definitely an improvement and apart from a number of inaccuracies as far as the basic narrative is concerned it is fairly good. However, with regards appearance and teaching approach it can be very heavily criticised:

The many illustrations reproduced in the three books, using colour, were theoretically supposed to enliven the text and support the narrative, but to the contrary, the hues used generally produced a more confusing then comprehensible pictorial message. This is because the colours were in monochrome and the greens,

3 L-ASSEDJU L-KBIR

Il-jum tal-biża' mistenni mill-Maltin u mill-Ordni ta' San Ġwann wasal. Fit-18 ta' Mejju dehret flotta ta' f'it inqas minn mitejn biċċa tal-baħar riesqa lejn Marsaxlokk. Ir-riħ ma ħallihomx jidhlu



fil-port u tefagħhom lejn ix-xaqliba tal-Ġnejna ta' l-Imġarr. Hawn irnexxielhom jinżlu u jieħdu l-ilma. Meta l-ghada filghodu bbnazza, reġghu lura f' Marsaxlokk fejn tefghu l-ankri u nizzlu tlitt elef suldat. Dawn imxew lejn iż-Żejtun u Haż-Żabbar mingħajr ma ltaqghu ma tfixkil kbir.

Il-qawwiet ta' l-art Torok kienu taħt il-kmand ta' **Mustafà** fil-waqt li dawk tal-baħar taħt **Piali**. Mustafà ried li ż-żewġ qawwiet jingħaqdu flimkien



u jaqtghu għal kollox it-triq bejn Sqallija u Għawdex waqt li l-Port il-Kbir idawruh hekk tajjeb li jaqtghuh minn kull għajnuna wkoll mill-Imdina. Izda billi Piali ried jibża' għall-flotta u ma jhallix iġfna fil-beraħ, deherlu li l-Mellieħa u Marsaxlokk fejn kienu ankrati, kienu miftuħa wisq għall-irjieħ qawwija u għal xi ħbit għall-gharrieda minn Sqallija.

167

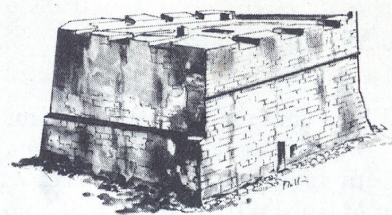
Table 1

Yellows and blues used, in real fact made the recognition of what the pictures and drawings were supposed to be showing rather difficult to decipher. This series of textbooks failed from its origins to meet the requirements of the modern approach to history teaching and learning. Indeed many flaws were evident from the first years of their introduction in the secondary schools.⁹

Another criticism can be levelled at this textbook for its socio-political agenda which seems to have been to "emphasises the various vicissitudes experienced by the Maltese people and how bad and nasty the 'foreigner' was"¹⁰, and this nowhere better shown than in the narrative of the Great Siege saga.

Piali dahhal il-biċċa l-kbira tal-qawwiet tal-baħar fil-port ta' Marsamxett.

Għamlu l-fehma li jaħbtu għall-Birgu u l-Isla. Waqqfu t-tined, stazzjonaw grupp ta' suldati fuq l-gholja ta' San Gwann ta' Ghuxa u ieħor fuq Santa Margerita. Wara, daru għal fuq Kordin biex jaħbtu għall-fortizza ta' San Mikiel. L-artillerija Maltija ma waqfitx tispara fuqhom u l-kavallieri ħabtu għalihom kemm-il darba.



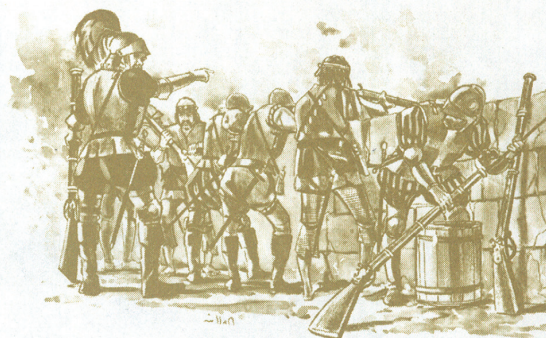
Forti San Mikiel



Il-kavallieri ħargu u ltaqghu mat-Torok

La Valette beza' ħafna għall-ħarsien tal-kavallieri, billi huma biss kienu mħarrġin sewwa għat-taqbid. Hu ried li l-isparar isir minn ġewwa l-fortizzi. It-tliet bastimenti l-kbar ta' l-Ordni, **Capitana, Padrona u San Giovanni**, inħbew fil-foss ta' bejn Sant Anġlu u l-Birgu, biex ma jintilfux.

It-Torok malajr biddlu l-pjanijiet tagħhom. Dawru l-qawwiet tagħhom għal fuq Sant Iermu. Din il-fortizza ħabtu għaliha bl-ikreh minn fuq Xebb ir-Ras, minn fuq il-baħar, u mill-ponta ta' Dragut f'Tas-Sliema (illum Forti Tigné).



Il-qawwa Torka żdiedet meta fis-27 ta' Mejju wasal **Luċċjali** minn Lixandra b'erba' xwieni. Ahbar kerha oħra kienet il-miġja ta' Dragut minn Tripli bi tlettax-il xini oħra u żewġ galjotti. Dan seħħ fit-30 ta' Mejju. Dragut ġie mogħti kmand għoli għax kien fdat u magħruf bħala bniedem ta' qilla u gwerrier liema bħalu. Xejn ma ħa gost bit-tul u bil-pjani tal-mexxejja Torok biex jaħtfu l-ġżira. Izda l-attakk fuq Sant Iermu komplieh bi ħruxija kbira.

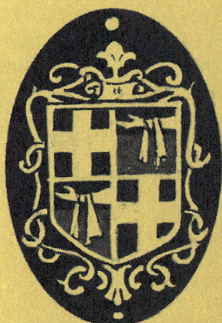
For many years and quite possibly even today somewhere on the island the method used to teach the Great Siege is still direct reading in the classroom by the teacher or a fellow pupil of the story of the event from *Grajjiet Malta* accompanied by some explanation by the teacher and then answering the questions at the end of the chapter (see tables 1, 2 and 3). In various schools one might not actually find the book but instead teachers use it to create their own notes or online worksheets and handouts and produce slightly more interesting versions with more attractive pictures¹¹, although the principle remains basically the same. The word 'sources' might start to make an appearance although it is often used incorrectly to mean all pictures irrespective whether they are actually a historical primary or secondary

TAHRIG

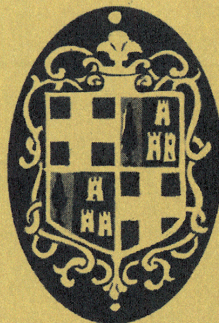
1. Igbor fil-qosor il-punti ewlenin tul l-Assedju l-Kbir.
2. Kieku kont tghix f'dak iż-żmien irrakkonta l-wasla tat-Torok f'Malta. Għid x'seħħ mill-wasla ta' l-għadu sakemm ippruvaw jahbtu għall-Birgu.
3. Għaliex it-Torok ma rnexxilhomx jiehdu l-gżira?
4. X'giegħel lil għadu jitlaq lejn artu?
5. Ikteb liema xena ta' qlubija laqtitek l-iżjed fil-ġrajja ta' l-Assedju.
6. Fisser dan il-kliem:
artillerija, imblokk, ballisti, katapult, kurvetti, braken, rahan, bumbardier, gwarnigjun, tokk, trunċieri.

X'TISTA' TAGHMEL

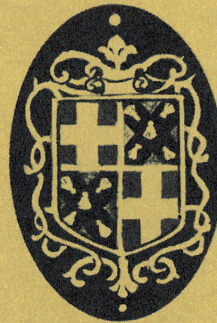
1. Pingi mappa ta' Malta u mappa mdaqqa tal-Port il-Kbir: immarkaw fuqhom l-imkejjen kollha msemija f'din il-lezzjoni. Semmu ċ-chart "L-Assedju l-kbir ta' l-1565".
2. Aghmlu mudelli ta' korazzi, xwabel, ballisti, katapult, bnadar Torok u tal-kavallieri, u xi xwieni li kellhom it-Torok.
3. Żuru dawn il-postijiet; huđu noti u disinji u wara iktbu dwarhom :
(a) L-Armerija;
(b) Is-Swar tal-Birgu;
(c) Is-Swar ta' l-Isla;
(b) Sant Iermu.



Phillipe Villiers de L'Isle Adam



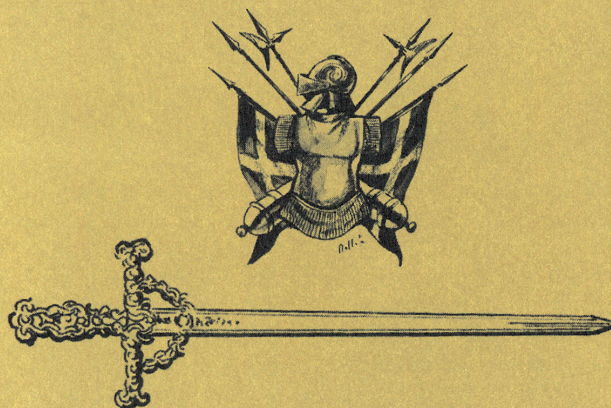
Juan d'Homedes



Claude de la Sengle



Jean de la Valette



Wara l-Assedju l-Kbir is-sultan Filippu II ta' Spanja baghat lil La Valette rigal li kien xabla bil-maqbad mimli ġawhar. Fuq din ix-xabla kien hemm imnaqqax dan: "Plus Quam Valor Valette Valet", li jfisser "Qlubet La Valette hi ishah mill-qawwa tal-qlubija." Din ix-xabla tinsab fil-Mużew tal-Louvre ġewwa Pariġi, Franza.

174

Table 3

source and even when the pictures do happen to be historical sources, there is often no real attempt to get pupils to engage with them. They usually follow the format of a text followed by a 'quiz' where pupils are asked a set of questions which normally take the form of 'fill in the blanks exercises' or 'crossword puzzles' to test the pupils' context knowledge. (See tables 4 and 5)

Similarly traditional history teaching and history textbook today may appear quite 'modern' when compared to *Grajjet Malta*. Most definitely appearance wise there is a huge improvement, a case in point is the book edited by Tony Pace¹² and published by the Education Department (See table 6) . It is a colourful series of

Unit A.5 - The Consequences of the Victory of 1565

1. The immediate (short-term) effects of the Great Siege

The Great Siege of Malta was an important battle in the war between the Christian and Muslim powers in the Mediterranean. Had the Turks won, Malta would have fallen under the Ottomans. The Turks could have used Malta to attack Sicily and Southern Italy. It would have been the end for the Order of St John. For Malta, the victory of 1565 marks the beginning of her modern history.

La Valette came to be seen by the Maltese and by the Knights as their hero and saviour. He received praise and gifts from foreign kings and princes. **Philip II of Spain** gave him a jeweled sword and poniard. The Great Siege remained stuck in the mind of the Maltese for many years. The Turkish threat had served to unite the Maltese with the Knights. The victory of 1565 made the Maltese loyal subjects of the Knights.

During the Siege, the Turks looted and damaged much of the villages and the countryside. There was poverty and hardship amongst the people for some years after the Siege. About 7,000 Maltese and half the Knights had been killed in the fighting. The Order had lost Knights, weapons and money. The existing fortifications were in ruins and the cost to repair them was very high. Notwithstanding all this, La Valette still wanted to make Malta the permanent home of the Order and to build a new city on Mount Sciberras.

2. The long-term results of the Great Siege: the building of Valletta

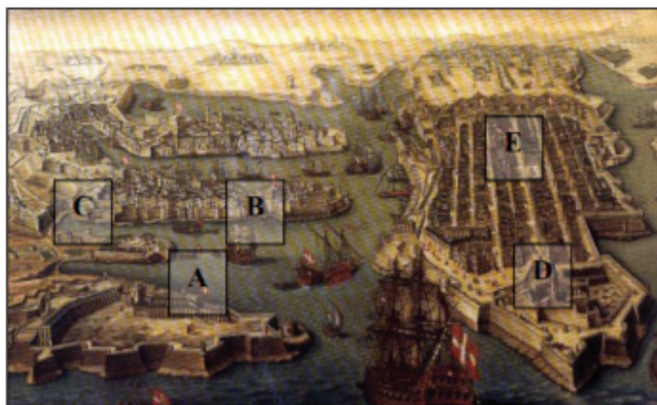
La Valette asked Pope **Pius V** to send a military engineer (**Francesco Laparelli**) to plan the building of the new town. On 28th March 1566 La Valette laid the foundation stone of the new city, named **Valletta** in his memory. The streets were planned on a **grid pattern**. It was to be surrounded by a continuous line of fortifications. The new city gave work to a large number of Maltese. The **Officio delle Case** issued regulations on how the building had to be. In 1571 Grand Master del Monte moved the Convent from **Vittoriosa** (the new name given to Birgu after the Siege) to Valletta. When Laparelli left Malta, the Maltese architect **Girolamo Cassar** (1520-88) took over and continued the work.

Girolamo Cassar built the **Grand Master's palace**, seven **auberges** (inns) for the Knights, the **Holy Infirmary** (Hospital), the **Conventual Church of St John**, two **armouries**, a **bakery** and a **court of justice** (the **Castellania**). Soon two different cultural centres developed: **Rabat-Mdina** as the centre of the village people, **Valletta and the Three Cities** (Vittoriosa, Senglea and Bormla) as the centre of the towns people. The Three Cities and the lower districts of Valletta served for the poor houses of the lower classes. The upper districts of Valletta were kept for the Knights and the Maltese upper classes. Valletta continued to develop in the 17th century. Its streets became packed with all sorts of people: Knights, foreigners, merchants, peasants, sailors and Muslim slaves.

3. A glance look at the rule of the Knights

All these changes were the long-term results of the victory of 1565 against the Turks. The Knights:

- improved the defense of the islands by building more fortifications.
- continued the holy war against the Tuks by keeping a fleet of galleys, an arsenal, a body of fighting men and hundreds of slave rowers.
- Brought European building styles (**Baroque**) in churches, hospitals, palaces, villas, public gardens and new towns.
- set up new trades and industries, such as corsairing, the dockyard and cotton.
- Made Valletta an international city for



This map is of the 1500s, 1600s or 1700s? _____

Name the places shown with letters A to E.

Table 4

textbooks widely used in State secondary schools in forms 1, 2 and 3 and entitled 'Storja ta' Malta', however, once again the traditional approach is the teaching method behind most of these text books.

Tables 7 and 8 demonstrate how 'Fortifications before and after the Siege' are presented, a list of facts giving the information on the changes before and after the Great Siege regarding Malta's fortifications and then followed by an exercise is to

Unit A.3 - Events leading to the Great Siege of 1565



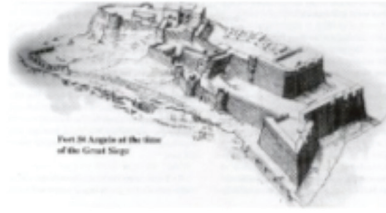
Source A



Source B



Source C



Source D

1. Write a short caption for above sources A to D:

- (A) _____ (B) _____
 (C) _____ (D) _____ (4)

2. Write **true** or **false** to these statements about La Valette.

- (a) La Valette was a man of great vision and leadership. _____
 (b) La Valette was elected Grandmaster after La Sengle. _____
 (c) La Valette led the Order and the Maltese during the Great Siege. _____
 (d) La Valette started building a new city on Mount Sciberras in 1562. _____ (2)

3. Who were these people mentioned in the text:

- (a) Suleiman the Magnificent was _____
 (b) Bartolomeo Genga was _____
 (c) Baldassare Lanci was _____
 (d) Khair ad-Din Barbarossa was _____
 (e) Turgud Reis alias Dragut was _____
 (f) Mustafa Pasha was _____
 (g) Piali Pasha was _____
 (h) Don Garcia de Toledo was _____ (8)

4. What troubles were the **Barbary States** causing the Knights and the Christians states in the Mediterranean?

_____ (1)

5. Why were the years 1560-1565 years of fear and uncertainty for the Maltese and the Knights?

Table 5

look up information from the text or further research from the internet, as it happens from the notes found on the same online teachers' website mentioned previously <http://schoolnet.gov.mt/history/Options/Options.htm>



Table 6

L-Iżvilupp fil-Fortifikazzjonijiet

Nota mill-awtur lill-istudenti

Haġnhekk issibu fil-qosor l-iżvilupp tal-fortifikazzjonijiet prinċipali f'ordni kronoloġiku – tistudjaw xejn bl-amment; ifhmu biss kemm il-Kavallieri taw importanza lill-fortifikazzjonijiet tal-Gżejjer Maltin.



Noti - sett A



Qabel l-Assedju 1530-1565:

Il-Kavallieri saħħew il-qagħda tagħhom madwar il-Port il-Kbir billi:

- għażlu l-Birgu bħala ċ-Ċentru tal-Amministrazzjoni tagħhom; bosta Maltin kellhom iwarbu mill-Birgu u jmorru joqogħdu fl-inħawi ta' Bormla;
- saħħew il-Castello a Mare li issa beda jissejjaħ il-Kastell Sant'Anġlu; il-Gran Mastru għamel id-Dar tal-Kastellan (parti mill-Kastell Sant'Anġlu) bħala l-ewwel palazz tiegħu f'Malta; dawru l-Birgu bis-swar;
- wara l-attakk ta' Dragut tal-1551 bnew il-Forti Sant'Iermu, dawru l-belt ġdida ta' Senglea bis-swar u bnew il-Forti San Mikiel fuq in-naħa ta' ġewwa ta' Senglea.

Noti - sett B



Wara l-Assedju 1566-1600:

Il-Kavallieri bnew il-Belt Valletta u saħħew id-dawra tal-Port il-Kbir u l-Port ta' Marsamxett billi:

- sitt xhur biss wara t-tmiem tal-Assedju, f'Marzu 1566, beda x-xogħol fuq il-bini tal-Belt Valletta. Il-popolazzjoni Maltija wriet xewqa li toqgħod madwar il-Portijiet fejn kien hemm ħafna xogħol u sigurtà;
- il-proġetti kbar bħall-bini tal-Palazz, San Ġwann, il-Bereġ u l-isptar ġibdu bosta ħaddiema u familji lejn il-Belt.

Table 7

Taħriġ A

Ikteb in-numri mill-1 sa 5 fuq pitazz u poġġi dawn il-ħames fortifikazzjonijiet f'ordni kronoloġiku, jiġifieri skond f'liema żmien inbnew.



Il-Forti Manoel

il-Cottonera Lines

is-swar tal-Birgu

Il-Forti Sant'Iermu

is-swar tal-Belt Valletta

Ara l-website:

<http://schoolnet.gov.mt/history/F3/Form3.htm>

fittex sezzjoni B għal informazzjoni dwar il-fortifikazzjonijiet.

- Difiza tal-Gżejjer Maltin: *noti*
- Fortifikazzjonijiet madwar il-Portijiet: *quiz*
- Fortifikazzjonijiet Kottonera: *quiz; Mappa Interattiva;*
- Fortifikazzjonijiet Madwar il-Kosta: *quiz;*
- Torri ta' Wignacourt: *noti;* Torri Sta Marija: *noti;*
Torri Sant'Agatha: *noti;* Forti Chambray: *noti*
il-Batterija Sta Marija Kemmuna: *noti;*
Torrijiet ta' De Redin: *noti u lista;*
Torri tad-Dwejra: *noti;*

Ara mappa interattiva fuq il-website tal-Istorja:

<http://schoolnet.gov.mt/history/F3/MappaPortijiet/MappaInterattivaPortijiet.htm>

Table 8

Teaching the Great Siege in Maltese schools and textbooks: the 'New History' Approach

However, while it is true that traditional history teaching still goes on in our schools especially by the untrained and the weaker history teacher the majority do not use this approach and by far the Source Method is the more common approach. Knowledge in history comes to us through sources therefore the more sources we use the better. One example of teaching the Great Siege in the 'Source Method' approach is best highlighted by a Sec O Level Maltese history textbook entitled *From the Coming of the Knights to EU Membership* (See table 9) a History Teachers' Association publication edited by myself¹³. The writers were all practising history teachers in various Maltese schools and 'New History' tasks and activities chosen for this book were all tried and tested in real classroom situations and conducted by the writers themselves.

Pupils are introduced to visual evidence on the Great Siege in the form of historical maps coming from the 16th century (See table 10a & b). Questions are asked about the viewpoint of the Christian creator of the map for example question 3a:

Look at the map 2. Look at the top part of this map. Identify some of the saintly persons shown. Why do you think the cartographer (map maker) drew them at the top of this map which shows the events of the Great Siege?

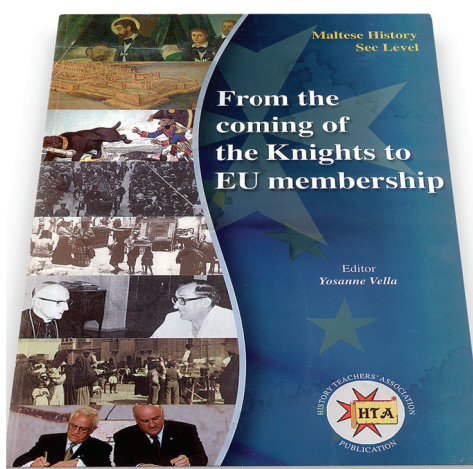


Table 9

Another very interesting task is that of question 4:

Look at map 3. This is a 16th century map of Malta drawn by the Turks. There are only a few places shown on it. Find on this map the entrance to the Grand Harbour, Marsaxlokk Harbour, St. Paul's Bay, Mdina and the Citadella in Gozo. Why do you think the Turks only drew and gave importance to these places?

Here the learning objective behind these tasks is two- fold. One is to provide opportunities to analyse primary historical sources and the other is that of multi-perspectivity. Multi-perspectivity helps pupils to move away from the ethnocentric view of the event and to see it from 'the other' perspective. To mean anything history must give a synthesis based on multi-perspectivity. "It must admit a multiplicity of vantage points, various points of view and several historical accounts and interpretations."¹⁴ Pupils become aware that there were different protagonists who held different values and agendas and by cross-referencing their views reliability in history will increase. While the Christian European maps are complex detailed drawings implying the importance and sophistication of the island and one which had Divine backing, the Turkish view is that of a simple fortified rock and as the ones besieging it, their main concern was naturally the main fort and the good harbour spots!

1.1 Working with 16th century Maps of Malta

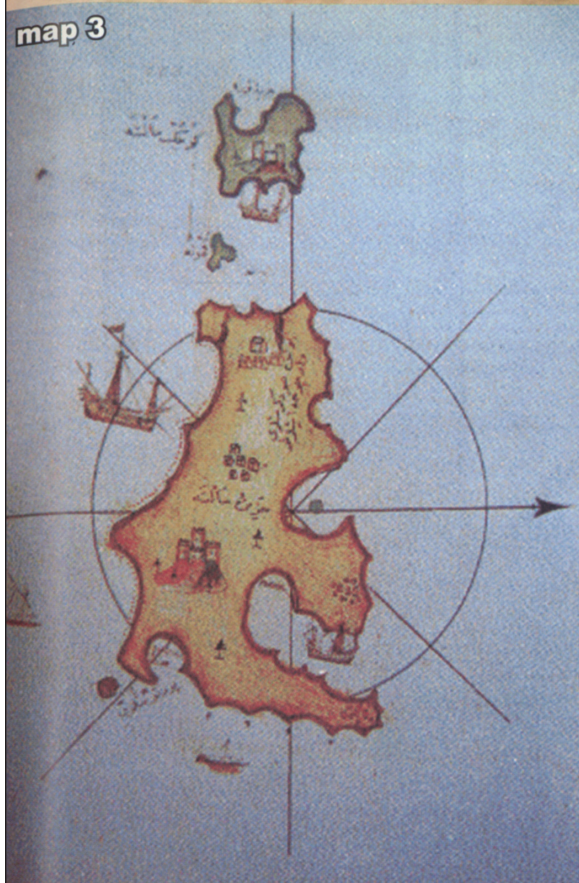
map 1



map 2



Table 10a



- 1.a Look at map 4. Find where Castel Sant Angelo has been drawn. This is a mistake. Where should it have been drawn?
- b Mention three places shown on this map. How can you tell that this map was drawn after the Order took over Malta?
- c Why is Valletta empty?
- d Was St Elmo built when this map was drawn?
- e Why do you think two windmills were drawn on Senglea?
- f 'Pip' is an abbreviation for pepper. The Arab word for pepper is felfel. Give the modern name of this island.
2. Look at maps 1 and 4. Do you think Birgu was fortified? How can you tell?
- 3.a Look at map 2. Look at the top part of this map. Identify some of the saintly persons shown. Why do you think the cartographer (map maker) drew them at the top of this map which shows the events of the Great Siege?
- b Look carefully at the writing at the bottom of this map. Copy out the date of the Great Siege as given by the cartographer. Change the Roman numbers to our form of numerals. Is this date correct or did he make a mistake?
4. Look at map 3. This is a 16th century map of Malta drawn by the Turks. There are only a few places shown on it. Find on this map the entrance to the Grand Harbour, Marsaxlokk Harbour, St. Paul's Bay, Mdina and the Cittadella in Gozo. Why do you think the Turks only drew and gave importance to these places?

Table 10b

An even higher level exercise which unfortunately is not found for this topic in this textbook is getting pupils to contrast different interpretation of the event from secondary sources, that is, how different writers interpret the event. As Terry Hayden et al say:

“Encouraging pupils to be aware of the way historical events, people and situations may be differently interpreted, reduces the opportunities for the imposition of the ‘one version’ history with its potential dangers. An understanding of why such different interpretations occur might make a valuable contribution to the health of a democratic society.”¹⁵

Pupils need to learn how history itself works, it is far from a pristine exercise. There are various problems when it comes to historical explanation, for all our historical knowledge comes to us in an indirect way. This is true both for evidence coming from primary historical sources and for evidence coming from secondary historical sources. When working with primary sources we are dealing with what survives; other material which did not survive might have produced an entirely different picture. There will always be the possibility of sources being forged and the information they are giving is entirely false and an exercise on the Great Siege found in *From the Coming of the Knights to EU Membership*¹⁷ provides an excellent exercise to illustrate this (See table 11). In 1560 on the eve of the Great Siege Guzeppi Callus, a Maltese doctor, wrote a letter of protest against Grandmaster La Valette. This protest led to Callus’ arrest and eventual execution. Huge efforts were made to eliminate Guzeppi Callus from history and through this exercise pupils investigate how despite all the efforts to eradicate this historical figure everything came to light in 1633 when Dun Filippo Borgia wrote about him in 1633 and how this 17th century document was picked up by historians hundreds of years later. This has proved to be a very popular exercise in schools especially the tasks which reveal the actions and motives behind the almost successful cover up which must have occurred in the 1560s. The pupils are then invited to build a picture of Guzeppi Callus by analysing an array of sources (his testament, court cases he was involved in, official letters appointing him Mdina’s doctor, Università documents which show he was present at meetings, contracts and prescriptions he made etc See table 12a/12b) uncovered by historians once the lid was blown away!

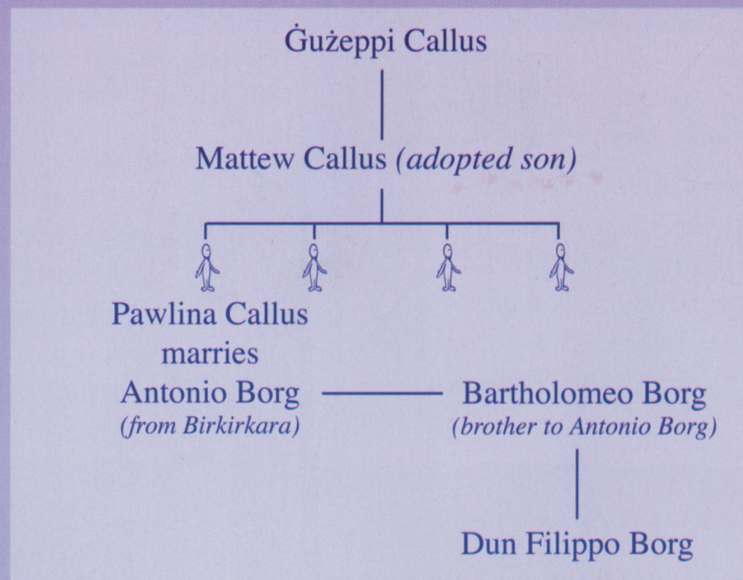
Card activities where pupils have to analyse and sort out different statements about a historical event are proving to be very meaningful pedagogical exercises and such an exercise is found in *From the Coming of the Knights to EU membership* (See tables 13 and 14). ‘Why did the Turks attack Malta in 1565?’ is a causation question, one often asked in history. History by its nature involves reading and writing and producing an analytically well-reasoned written response to such questions is very hard for pupils. Traditionally history teachers set such tasks to pupils with no support whatsoever, pupils were left to their own devices with very often poor or mediocre results. History teachers and researchers are finding that a good sequence for an educator to adopt is that of first engaging the pupils in a card activity which may take many forms, in this case pupils have to physically place statements close to or far away from the question according to their relevance and importance (Counsell, 2011)¹⁷. In turn a writing framework is provided to help the pupils structure their thoughts (See table 15). Writing frames are not a ‘fill in the blanks exercise’ searching for one correct piece of information but rather a

Mystery

A number of records were found which might connect Don Filippo Borg (Borgia), the 17th century writer and Ġużeppi Callus. There is no absolute proof but a possible explanation is proposed by the historian Prof. Stanley Fiorini

Possible connection between Don Filippo Borg and Ġużeppi Callus

(as extrapolated by Stanley Fiorini in his article "X' nafu fuq Callus?" *Min Kien Callus?* (Klabb Kotba Maltin, 2003))



1. How many years had passed since Callus was executed before Don Filippo wrote about it?
2. Look at the above family tree. How would this make Don Filippo related to Ġużeppi Callus?
3. If this connection is correct why was it a very important fact in the story?
4. And is he related by blood? Why?
5. Think of a reason why Don Filippo made the mistake of calling Ġużeppi Callus, Matthew?

What the historian Prof. Stanley Fiorini says about the story of Matthew alias Ġużeppi Callus:

"Despite the obvious efforts carried out to try to make sure that everything remains covered up, the historical figure of Callus could not be erased so easily and in fact some details of what really happened and how his life was ended on the gallows still remain on the shelves of the archives gathering dust."

1. Who do you think would want to hide the Callus story and leave it out from history books? And why?
2. Prof. Stanley Fiorini says: "...we cannot say with exact precision when he died, since his funeral is not listed in the Cathedral register!"
Why do you think his funeral is not listed?

Table 11

1.3 How Historians work

Once historians learnt about the story of Guzeppi Callus from the 17th century document written by Don Filippo Borg, they started to search for this man.

These are some of the details they found in primary sources they uncovered and which they used as evidence to build a picture of what this man was like.

In a court case which he instigated against Pietru Benenatus and his wife Ysabella. It appears that Ysabella worked as a seamstress in Joseph Callus' house. Historians are not sure since part of the document is missing. Probably 1534.

Another court case, this time in 1558 where he is appearing as his brother's heir against his brother's widow Katerinella who had remarried.

In a 1537 Syracusan document where he is found as a citizen of Syracuse.

An official letter by the Università asking the Lieutenant of Grandmaster Juan d'Omedes in the name of Joseph Callus to serve as Mdina's doctor.

His testament, which he wrote when he was 40 years old. In this testament he left all his books to his adopted son Matthew who had come from an orphanage.

The Grandmaster's reply which approved Callus' appointment on the 24th of November 1536. His salary was very high. Sometimes it was shared with other doctors, sometimes it was only for him.

Table 12a

The prescription he wrote for a sick boy in the orphanage of Santu Spirtu hospital in 1547.

Historians found several contracts he had done, with regards to selling and buying of land, houses and fields.

In Università documents which show he was present at meetings. He is often mentioned with regards to medical issues. For example in 1523 when a galley belonging to Antonju Cascun was suspected of carrying the plague. Again he is found in the Università documents a year later when there were fears that the plague had struck Birgu.

We find letters of 1537 and 1558 which he wrote asking official permission from the Grandmaster so that he would be allowed to dig for ancient things and for old treasure.

Historians built a picture of what this man was like from these and similar documents where Joseph Callus appears. Using the above sources write a short paragraph on the character and the life of Joseph Callus, before the events that led to his death took place.

Table 12b

1.4 Why did the Turks attack Malta in 1565?

The following facts or events 1 to 12 all contributed to the Turks arriving on our shore in 1565 however some are more significant than others. Think about each one very carefully. Then, on the opposite page place the number of the box of the ones which, in your opinion, are the most important closest to the question. The ones which you think least important furthest away.

1 The capture by the Order, of the nurse of Suleiman the Magnificent's favourite wife, Roxellane, prompted the mighty emperor to move against the island.

3 In the 1540s, there were European powers who were not hostile towards the Turks. For example Venice made agreements with the Turks so they would not attack Venetian cargo ships. While the French even worked with the Turks and they fought together against Spain!

5 The Ottomans attacked Juan de la Cerda's fleet in 1560 and destroyed a large number of his galleys.

7 Torgud Reis (Dragut) was a brilliant Admiral and his ambition was to take over and control the centre of the Mediterranean.

9 At this time, the 16th century, Malta had great strategic value. If the Ottomans captured Malta, they could use it as a base where they could build their forces and Malta was a territory very close to the Christian Empire.

11 The attacks by the Order's navy on Ottoman territory and shipping was a small but irritating annoyance to the potent Ottoman Empire.

2 Moslem corsairs were part of the Ottoman Empire and with their help the Turks became a strong naval power and were in a strong position to attack any Christian ships or land they wished.

4 The Ottomans had a series of highly successful events against the Christians. For example the great battle of Prevesa, and the capture of Tripoli. They also had victorious attacks on the Lipari islands, Nice, Elba and Reggio Calabria where they raided and stole everything. This made them feel triumphant and invincible.

6 In the summer of 1559 Philip II decided to revenge himself against the Turks for all their attacks against the Christians and planned to attack Tripoli. After failing to do this he attacked the island of Djerba and occupied it. The Christian leader was Juan de la Cerda, Duke of Medina.

8 The Turkish success of the 1551 raid on Malta and the capture of Tripoli, greatly encouraged the Turks and made them think Malta would be easy to capture.

10 The 1560s were the height of the Ottoman Empire. Malta was part of a larger Turkish plan to expand their Empire.

12 After the terrible losses suffered by the Christians at Djerba the Habsburgs naval units were greatly weakened. 1565 was a very good time to strike and attack Christian territory.

Why did the Turks
attack Malta in 1565?



Table 14

Write 400 words to answer

Why did the Turks attack Malta in 1565?

Use the previous exercise and the following framework to answer this question

There were several reasons why the Turks attacked Malta in 1565. Undoubtedly it was the culmination of a number of events which eventually led to the attack of the 19th of May 1565. At dawn of that day the great Ottoman fleet appeared on the horizon towards the south of Malta.

In my opinion one of the most important reasons why the Turks attacked Malta in 1565 was unquestionably
My reason for saying this is.....

Another important reason was certainly the fact that
This was because.....

And undeniably the fact that

greatly contributed to the Siege that unfolded in 1565 because.....

There were various other factors which, although minor, must also have contributed to some extent to the start of the Great Siege.....

Possibly the also played a part in urging the Turks to attack Malta.

Indeed..... must also have encouraged them to attack Malta.....

It is difficult to ascertain with a high degree of certainty why they attacked Malta in 1565 because but possibly.....

I would say that, and were very important factors which lead to the Turks attacking Malta in 1565 and to some degree the andalso contributed to the start of the Great Siege.

Table 15

Write 400 words to answer

Do you think the Great Siege was won because the Maltese and the Order were fortunate (lucky) or because of good planning and good thinking?

Use the previous exercise and the following framework to answer this question

It is true that, in most circumstances, in history there is often a strong element of good fortune, however, in my opinion, there was also a lot of good planning and good strategic thinking on the part of the Order and the Maltese.

Undoubtedly it was good fortune that.....

Good fortune also favoured the Maltese and the Order when.....

The situation also favoured the Order and the Maltese when

It was also timely that.....

And it was by sheer chance that

On the other hand can hardly be attributed to good fortune but rather to a very good thinking ahead strategy.

It was also first-rate thinking that.....

Undoubtedly it was excellent strategic planning when

It was also very good thinking to

As can be seen there are elements of both good fortune and clever thinking and very good planning however, in my opinion, I believe that outnumber Therefore it was more than that produced the success of the Great Siege. Indeed Malta did not follow Rhodes and Tripoli into enemy hands because.....

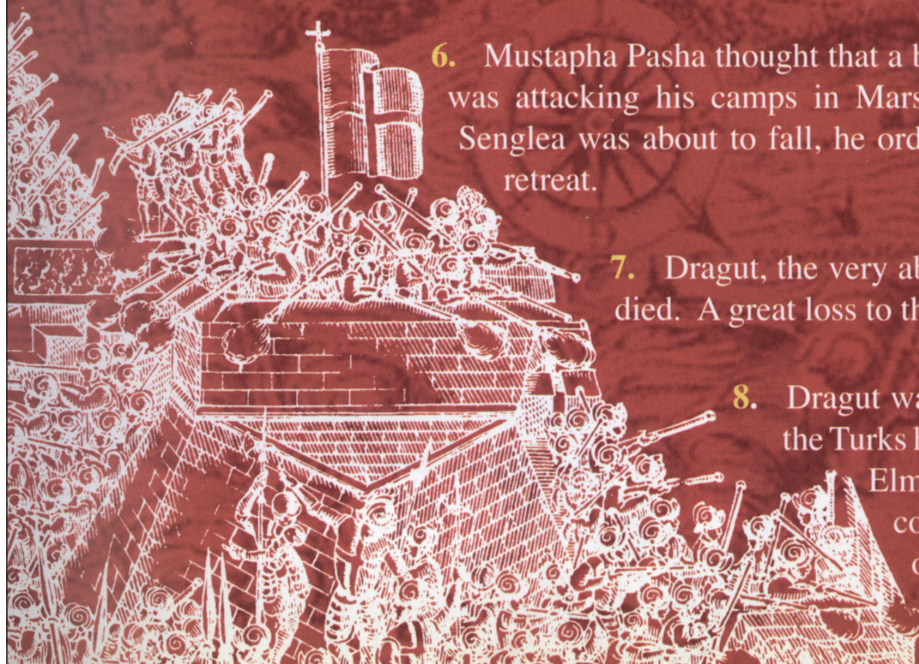
Table 12a

1.5 Why did the Order win?

Do you think the Great Siege was won because the Maltese and the Order were fortunate (lucky) or because of good planning and good thinking?

Read each statement below and then place the statement number in the column where you think it belongs.

1. The Turks decide to start the attack without waiting for Torgud Reis (Dragut).
2. The Viceroy of Sicily Don Garcia de Toledo was contacted by La Valette in the Autumn of 1564. La Valette told him to pass on the message to all the other European powers that the Ottoman Armada was coming to Malta.
3. The Turkish leaders Piali Pasha and Mustapha Pasha did not like each other and were constantly competing with each other. Very often they disagreed and did not get on well.
4. Days before the arrival of the Turks, La Valette gave orders for all the wells in the countryside to be poisoned. When the Turks arrived and drank from them they became sick.
5. In the days before the Siege the fortifications were strengthened and a new fort was quickly built on Mount Sciberras. This was Fort St. Elmo.



6. Mustapha Pasha thought that a big Christian army was attacking his camps in Marsa and so, just as Senglea was about to fall, he ordered his troops to retreat.

7. Dragut, the very able Turkish leader, died. A great loss to the Turks.

8. Dragut was not pleased that the Turks had started with St. Elmo but decided to continue the attack on the new fort.

Table 16a

9. La Valette ordered that all Turkish prisoners be killed as a sign to the enemy that the Christians will never surrender.
10. On the 6th of September fresh Christian troops under La Corna arrived, they were met by the dispirited Turks.
11. By 1561 La Valette started to take command of the Maltese militia and to reorganise it. He put knights in every village in charge of the Maltese forces.
12. La Valette often used good strategic thinking, for example when the Turks landed he told his troops to retreat into the forts rather than keep on fighting them on open ground.
13. Life in Malta in the few years before the Siege was very hard with historian Carmel Cassar describing La Valette's efforts as 'feverish preparations'.

Go through the statements really carefully. Copy out the table below. In the first column put the statements that you think show that the Maltese and the Order won because they were lucky. In the second column put the statements that show that the Maltese and the Order won because of good planning and good thinking.

Facts which show good fortune	Facts which show good planning

What is your verdict?

LUCKY?



GOOD PLANNING?

Table 16b

‘scaffolding’ exercise to help support pupils’ thinking and indeed at the end of the essay writing activity different essays to the same question are produced.

Another card exercise on the Great Siege is found in this textbook (See tables 16a/16b) and again this is followed by a writing frame (See table 17) addressing the historical question ‘Do you think the Great Siege was won because the Maltese and the Order were fortunate (lucky) or because of good planning and good thinking?’ This time what is required is an explanation and a discussion.

Another book specifically on the Great Siege for school children and which also attempts to use ‘the Source’ method has just been published by Heritage Malta as part of the 450 anniversary of the Great Siege and it is intended that this book is distributed free to all school children. While in my opinion this book is a hybrid between the two teaching methods of Traditional and New History methods. On the one hand it contains long narratives intended to pass on long passages of information to pupils while on the other hand there are genuine tasks which use ‘New History’ teaching where pupils are asked to engage in source analyses.

Conclusion

This paper tried to give an explanation of how the Great Siege is being taught through our textbooks in Maltese schools, of course this is a mere overview perception from personal experience as a teacher educator in the Faculty of Education and from analysing the textbooks or worksheets and handouts themselves. Undoubtedly for a more correct image to emerge this explanation needs to be substantiated by first hand empirical observations of history teaching on the Great Siege in real classrooms and further supported by a synthesis of pupils’ oral and written feedback. It is only then that one can see how what is being advocated and depicted in textbooks is being translated into effective pedagogy. However, from the exercises in the present textbooks there is cause for cautious celebration. There is still a long way to go before the Great Siege is taught in an excellent manner however as shown there are various examples of good practice.

Sources are being used sometimes correctly while at other times unfortunately their potential for being very good tools to teach the Great Siege is not being fully exploited. Textbook writers and history teachers also seem fearful of letting go of the notion of giving reels of information on the Great Siege in the desperate hope that this will make pupils ‘learn’ what happened irrespective of the avalanche of research on history pedagogy which shows that this is a futile exercise, it is not how pupils learn and worse still it is not how history works! At the same time there are also a number of very good tasks such as the card activities which support pupils’ historic understanding and there seem to be a growing understanding on the part of educators that pupils cannot be assigned written tasks without some form of help from the history teacher to his or her pupils which produce better responses.

Kitson Clark back in 1967 said that good history produces people that think about rather than merely accept information: “What is your authority for saying this?

And, as a particular question: How do you know that this happened? They are questions which both historians, and men and women who are not historians, ought to learn to ask much more often than they do.” The teaching of such a riveting event as the Great Siege provides an excellent opportunity to use correct teaching methods that present textbooks as a facilitator of learning and not a mere giver of information.

Endnotes

- ¹ The Independent Thursday, 16 April 2015 ‘The 450th anniversary of Great Siege of Malta to be commemorated between May and September
<http://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2015-04-16/local-news/The-450th-anniversary-of-Great-Siege-of-Malta-to-be-celebrated-as-from-May-6736133915>
- ² Jones, Ben R. (1973) “Introduction: the new history”, in R.Ben Jones (ed.) *Practical Approaches to the New History* London:Hutchinson Educational p.14
- ³ Shemilt, Denis (1987) “Adolescent ideas about evidence and methodology in history” in C. Portal (ed) *The history curriculum for teachers*. pp. 39-61
- ⁴ Lee, Peter, Dickinson, Alaric & Ashby, Rosalyn (1996) “Children making sense of history” *Education 3 to 13* The Primary Schools Research and Development Group pp13-19
- ⁵ Grech, Leonard (1999) “The use of sources in the teaching and learning of history in Maltese secondary schools *Interpreting the Past Using Sources in History Teaching* Euro Clio Publication Bulletin Nr. 11” pp.23 - 24
- ⁶ Degiorgio, James (2008) *History Education in School* unpublished B.Ed (Hons) dissertation, University of Malta p.59
- ⁷ Counsell, Christine (2004) “Curiosity, Critical Thinking and Intellectual Independence: How have History Teachers Changed History Teaching? How does Historical Learning Change Students?” in Philippou, S. & Makriyianni, C. (eds) *What does it mean to think historically?;Approaches to teaching and learning history*. Nicosia, Cyprus,pp 18 - 56
- ⁸ Vella, Andrew (1974) *Storja ta’ Malta Volumes 1 and 2* Klabb Kotba Maltin
- ⁹ Cassar, G and Vella, Y. (2011) “A hundred years of history teaching and learning in Malta” in Cassar, G. and Vella, Y. (eds) *History teaching & research: bridging the theory/practice divide* p.92
- ¹⁰ Cassar, G. and Cassar, P. (1981) The teaching of history in Maltese Secondary schools unpublished B.A. (educ) dissertation University of Malta
- ¹¹ <http://schoolnet.gov.mt/history/Options/Options.htm>
- ¹² Pace, Tony (2008) *Storja ta’Malta* Volume1,2 and 3 Curriculum Management and elearning Department Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education Malta
- ¹³ Vella, Yosanne (2008) From the coming of the knights to EU membership History Teachers’ Association Publication
- ¹⁴ Stradling, Robert (2011) “Developing Historical Understanding: interpretation and multiperspectivity revisited” in G. Cassar and Y.Vella (eds) *History teaching and research:bridging the theory/practice divide* Vol 2 p.67
- ¹⁵ Hayden, T., Stephen, A, Arthur, J. and Hunt, M. (2015) *Learning to Teach History in the Secondary School; A companion to school experience* Routledge p.168
- ¹⁶ Vella, Yosanne (2008) From the coming of the knights to EU membership History Teachers’ Association Publication pp 6 -7
- ¹⁷ Counsell, C. (2011) ‘Generating historical argument about causation in the history classroom: exploring practical teaching approaches’, in Ghusayni, R., Karami, R., & Akar, B. (Eds.). (2012) *Learning and teaching history: Lessons from and for Lebanon: Proceedings of the Third Conference on Education , Lebanese Association for Education Studies*, 25-26 March 2011. Beirut: Arab Cultural Center.

Teaching History in a Multi-Cultural Society

Chapter 3 and Chapter 4

Chapter 3 is the only chapter at the moment of publication of this book not presented at any conference or published anywhere. It is research work I conducted in November 2015 and has yet to be presented, so presently it only appears in this book.

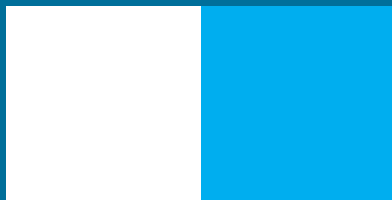
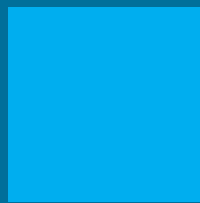
On the other hand Chapter 4 must be my most popular and frequently presented paper. The research for this chapter started in 2011 and was actually carried out in 2012. It was first accepted for publication by Georg Eckert Institute which conducts applied, multidisciplinary research into textbooks and educational media, but subsequently I was also invited by Council of Europe to present it twice, once in Strasbourg at the “Europe and the World” seminar and once in a seminar in Ukraine in November 2013 (a week before the breakout of the troubles unfortunately). Locally I was invited to give this paper by Garden of Knowledge Malta Association/ Gnien Tal-Gherf and therefore this paper was also heard by a Maltese audience. After obtaining permission from Georg Institute where this paper first appeared, it was also published by the Council of Europe with quite a different title in their publication *Shared Histories for a Europe without dividing lines*.

Publication

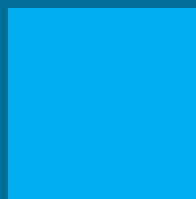
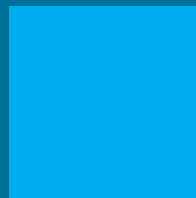
Vella, Y. (2013) “Combating Islamophobia through History Teaching” Erckert Beitrage 2013/3
<http://www.edumeres.net/urn> Germany

Vella, Y. (2014) “Is it possible to change students’ attitudes towards ‘The Other’ through history teaching? A Case Study in a Maltese School” in *Shared Histories for a Europe without dividing lines* Council of Europe Publication
<http://www.shared-histories.coe.int> Strasbourg

Strategies to learn about multiculturalism and diversity through Maltese history



Chapter 3



Introduction

Back in 1999 I gave a presentation at a Euroclio Conference (European Association of History Educators) in Edinburgh on *Heritage and National Identity* where I quite brazenly claimed that “It must be emphasized that Malta is not a multicultural society, on the contrary, it has a quite homogeneous population.” (Vella, 1999 p.13) Quite an uncompromising and straightforward statement but indeed at least where my work place, that is school classrooms, was concerned it was so at the time and had been so, throughout my own childhood school experience. Up to the 1990s a teacher in any Maltese school faced a class of pupils who were ethnically Maltese, Roman Catholic and usually hailing from the villages surrounding the school, and further segregated by gender since co-education in secondary schools only came into existence when a few new Private schools introduced it in the 1990s and then in State schools as recently as 2014. So you either taught at a boys’ school or at a girls’ school and furthermore from sociological studies conducted in the 1980s different social classes gravitated into particular schools (Sultana, 1991; Darmanin, 1991). Therefore in many ways my statement that Malta was a homogeneous society at that point in time was very much a truism.

However, I was not to know back then that 1999 was a very significant year for it was the year preceding the 21st century when it all started to change in Malta as far as population is concerned. Initially it happened very slowly with the first few hundred migrants arriving annually on boats and rafts from Africa but slowly it gained pace until between 2008 and 2012 when compared to other industrialized countries “Malta received, on average, the highest number of asylum-seekers compared to its national population: 21.7 applicants per 1,000 inhabitants.” (UNHRA., 2012, p.13). After joining the EU in 2004, EU members also started to trickle in, followed by Eastern Europeans mainly from the Baltic States.

This has now resulted in quite interesting classrooms; for example a class I recently visited to see one of my student teachers during her teaching practice was a year nine class (13 year olds) where only 3 were ethnic Maltese, there were three Russians, two Pakistani, three Italians, two Serbs and one Libyan. Perhaps this was an extreme case and it is true that in some villages 90% of pupils would still be ethnic Maltese and Roman Catholic, but in others you can get a kaleidoscope of pupils in one classroom just like the one I visited. In Malta today it is not uncommon to have various ethnic groups in the same class.

Multiculturalism in Malta

There is no question in my mind that any country, community or agency that embraces democracy must also embrace multiculturalism. Inclusion of all and acceptance of diversity are fundamental to human rights and democratic values. This is not to negate the challenges that exist and it is here that schools can make huge contributions in meeting these challenges. Politicians and administrators seem to instinctively sense this and whole heartedly push multiculturalism in education,

but it is not an easy route and teachers' apprehensions cannot be ignored. They are very real, and educators and schools in Malta as well as abroad struggle to face the challenges resulting from social and demographic changes brought about by immigration and multiculturalism (Zembylas, 2010).

What makes our multicultural Maltese classrooms quite interesting is that they are a recent innovations, a few immigrant pupils in our classrooms were born in Malta while many others were not. It is quite different from having different ethnic pupils who are second or third generation children of immigrants. In many ways we are at this point in time in uncharted territory. For example one ongoing debate is what language to use, officially we are bi-lingual and most Maltese speak English but many Maltese pupils do struggle with English and much prefer to use Maltese. For all the years I've been in Education the policy for history teaching in Malta was that Maltese was to be used for all instruction during history lessons and I personally was always very strict about this and insisted with my trainees that all teaching materials had to be in Maltese. However, the situation has now changed while official policy has not yet caught up and at the moment there is no official policy on what language to use during history lessons. The advice I was given by the History Education Officer in May 2015 and who seemed as unsure as I am about the situation was to play it by ear and take a decision once you get to know your class. I suppose this makes sense under the circumstance and research has shown that codeswitching is in fact a useful pedagogical tool (Camilleri 1995; Heller and Martin-Jones 2001). One has to adapt to the audience in front of you and one history lesson I observed by a smart multitasking history teacher trainee was conducted in three languages Maltese, English and Italian.

There are a number of sociological, educational and political studies that address the impact of schools on their society where diversity is concerned. Issues of equity and justice are addressed in these studies, as they should, however they often stop short when it comes to answering teachers' very important question 'but what do I do in my classroom?' The position of many of these studies is articulated by La Belle, J. and Ward, C (1994) when they say what their book is not, in the introduction of their now classical work *Multi-culturalism and Education*:

"... nor is it a book about how to teach multiculturalism in the classroom. Although we review pedagogical and curricular approaches to multiculturalism and address the issues of educating the student from differing social and cultural backgrounds, we do not instruct how and what to teach to enhance diversity." La Belle, J. and Ward, C (1994, p.2)

And it is precisely this 'what and how' that is my particular field of interest, working on the assumption that multiculturalism is a good thing this study attempted to find ways how history as a school subject can promote diversity in the real classrooms.

There are moments in history where communities do remain fairly isolated and this may give the false impression that multiculturalism is a recent phenomenon however when looking at the past from a holistic perspective it is in fact the 'isolated' moments that are the rarity rather than the norm. In this study I wanted



'Patriot' protest against integration Malta September 29, 2014



Paris Attacks November 13, 2015

pupils to become aware of Malta as an island that hosted diverse communities throughout its history. People of various ethnic origins did co-exist together with the local community. Few in Malta seem to be aware of this and some people view multiculturalism as a negative notion created by liberal politicians and as a result a number of anti-integration and anti-multicultural demonstrations have occurred. Unfortunately or perhaps fortunately the dates I had chosen together with the head of school to start my history lessons and try out the strategies was the third week of November 2015 starting Monday 16th and the Paris Attacks occurred on the 13th, the Friday before. It was quite unsettling and I considered very much whether it would be appropriate to do the activities.

I decided to go ahead with the lessons and in fact there were no real problems at all.

The Research Design

With some thought history as a school subject can in itself be a means to teach multiculturalism. Of course the worse possible approach is to give a teacher centered power point presentation on multiculturalism in history! Show and tell them what's it all about and 'they will get it'. A great temptation for many teachers but unfortunately that is not how pupils learn and absorb values and notions, one has to use much more effective strategies. It is also not the way language acquisition works, language acquisition being an indirect objective in multicultural classrooms. To learn a language research has highlighted the need to design activities which involve more pupil interaction (Dalton-Puffer, 2005, 2007).

Wonderful ideas on multicultural teaching in history come mostly from Britain mainly Levy and Smart's work on Multicultural Britain¹ and various inspirational papers in Teaching History² journal. In history every statement needs to be backed up by evidence and pupils need to learn this. We can have different interpretations but to be valid they need to be based on sources of evidence and one finds that the most effective history pedagogies in fact make use of historical sources to answer the very important historical question 'how do we know'.

What sources to use?

Paintings are one useful source which often intentionally or unintentionally depict the societies of their time. Visual evidence has been used to target inclusion and diversity in history teaching, and one such pedagogical approach was used by Jane Card when she used the painting of Dido Belle and Lady Elizabeth Murray. This society portrait shows Dido Belle the illegitimate mixed race daughter of Captain Sir John Lindsay, as Card says:

“Visual images such as Dido Belle and Elisabeth Murray portrait are powerful media for pupils to learn contemporary ethnically and diversity issues, concerns, problems and solutions. They are accessible to all pupils; as such they bring the past to life to illuminate the present.” Card, 2013 p. 19



Painting of Dido Belle and Elizabeth Murray attributed to Johann Zoffany, 1779

Similarly I searched and found paintings which while depicting everyday life in the past in Malta also included people of different races (See figures 1, 2 and 3). I then created group work activities (available in both Maltese and English) for each source.

Apart from the visual evidence I wanted to include evidence from prehistory as well as classical times. One illuminating presentation given by Ilona Aronovsky³ at a Heirnet Conference in London in September 2015 gave me the idea on how to focus on one historical site which brings together a number of artefacts belonging to different civilizations. This would show that people were constantly on the move, travelling, immigrating, bartering, trading and generally mixing together in societies that can only be described as multicultural and diverse. One impressive pedagogical tactic used by Aronosky is that of using maps in such a way as to show the interconnectivity presented by the artefacts found in the Sutton Ho site. They show where the things came from and their multicultural aspect. For Malta one multi period site which brings together a huge number of primary sources is the Tas-Silg site at Marsaxlokk a village in the South of Malta. This is a large complex where archaeologists have found remains of Megalithic Temples, Bronze Age settlements, Punic, Hellenistic and Roman Temple, as well as Byzantine remains, with one particular interesting artefact found in the Greek layer from Mesopotamia.



Figure 1: Antoine Favray 1706 – 1789 *The Visitors*



Figure 2 Guiseppe Cali 1846 – 1930 *A re-evocation of 18th Century Malta*



Figure 3 A.W.C. McFall 1862 – 1923 A variety of figures on the Palace Square, Valletta c. 1886



Tas-Silg site

Activities/ Lesson Plan

Title of lesson: People have always been on the move resulting in diversity in all societies throughout history including Maltese history

Tme: Lesson plan covers two sessions of 35 minutes each

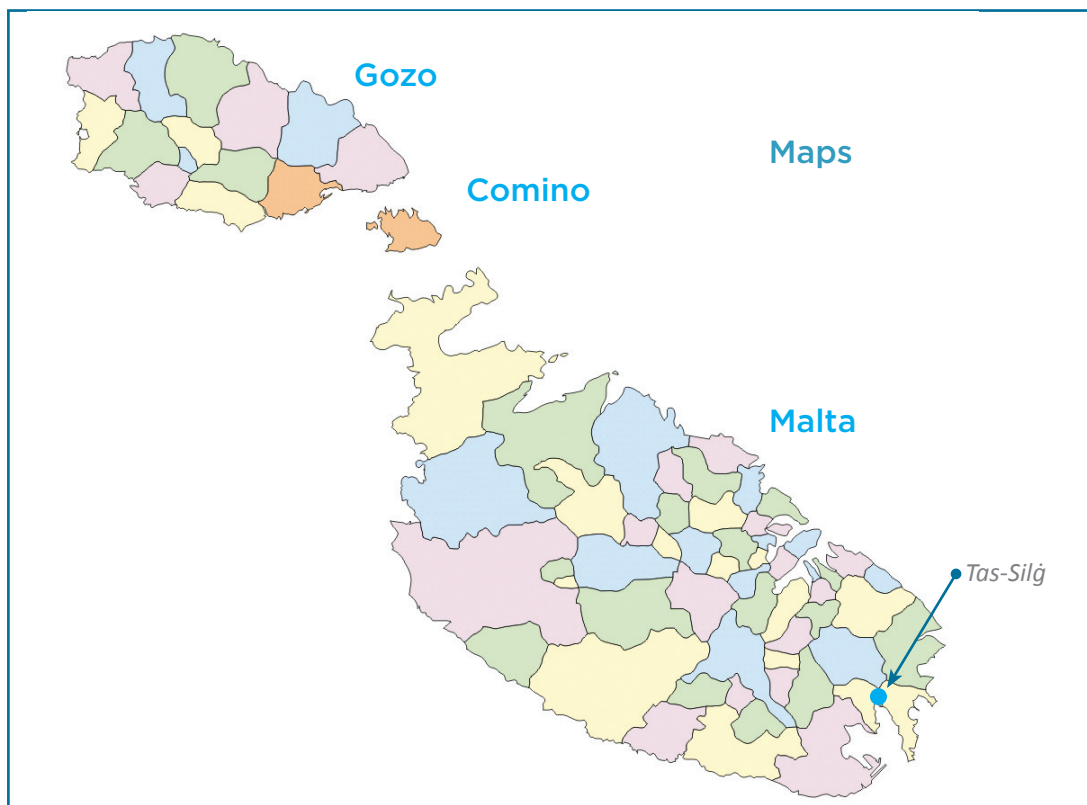
Objective: Analysis of sources archaeological and visual evidence

Historical Evidence from Maltese History

1. Tas-Silg a multi-period site
2. Image of 19th century Malta (McFall drawing)
3. 18th Century painting – Ladies (Favray painting)
4. 18th Century painting – Upper Barrakka (Cali painting)

Resources used

Time line of around when these civilizations were at their height



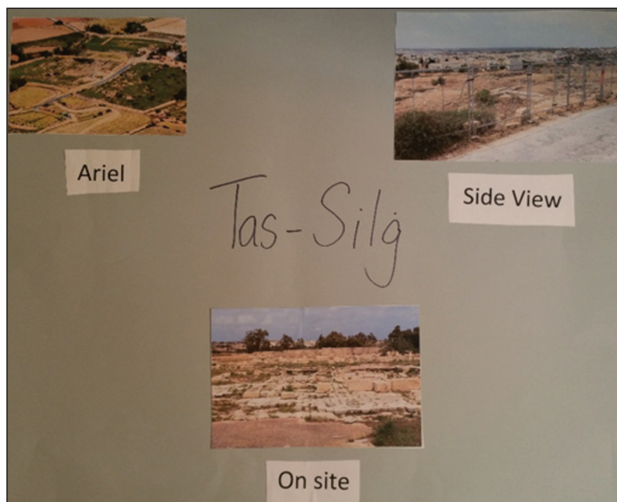
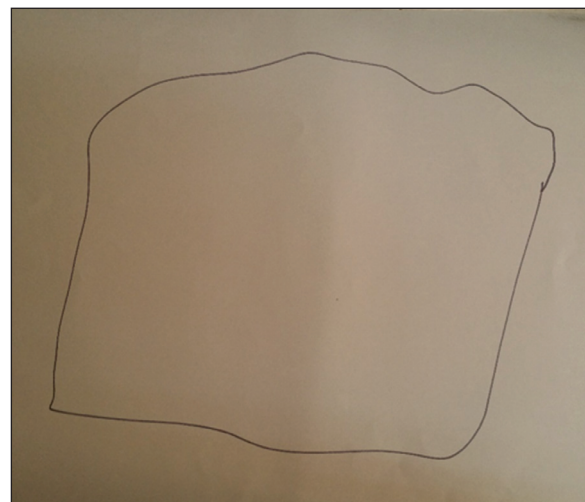


Chart showing on one side view of Tas-Silg from an ariel, from a side and from an on site perspective



Other side of chart showing plot of Tas-Silg where pupils had to place chronologically on top of each other the Primary sources found on the site.

The Primary Sources



Phoenician

Cicero accused Verres of stealing from the temple of Juno at Tas-Silg. Cicero told Senate: "The representatives of Malta, who were sent here by the leaders of their land, give evidence that the theft from Juno's temple; that this person left nothing inside it, that that place, where often the ships of the enemy took refuge, where pirates every year typically spent their winters, but no pirate ever desecrated or destroyed the temple, it is only Verres who emptied it."

Roman



Byzantine



Byzantine



Greek



Megalithic



Mystery
How did it
get to
Tas-Silg?

Mesopotamia found
in Greek layer

Introduction: I put up the words 'multicultural' and 'diversity' up on the whiteboard and the class discussed the meaning of these two words. Then I told them that today we are going to try and investigate whether Malta ever had in the past diverse communities and a multicultural society. It was emphasised that in history your answer should always be based on Evidence. (Photo 1)



Photo 1 Discussing meaning of multiculturalism and diversity

The following three questions are put on the board and class told they will be asked these questions after following a PowerPoint presentation *People on the move* (3 minutes long Photo 2)

- a. Where did the first human beings come from? How do we know?
- b. How come today they are found everywhere?
- c. Why do people move about?



Photo 2 Power Point Presentation

Development

Class divided in groups and each one goes through 5 tasks with teacher feedback and class discussion after every task (See Photo 3)



Photo 3 Class divided in 5 groups

Each group was asked to work through the task and then there was group and teacher discussion/feedback on the answers given by each group.

Step 1: Pupils were asked to work task 1 which was the Tas-Silg Activity – Tas-Silg a multi-period site. Set of artefacts from Megalithic , Bronze Age, Hellenic, Roman Byzantine found at Tas-Silg were given to the pupils. (See Primary Sources in Resources section) The pupils were instructed to place them on plot (see charts in resources section) in chronological order use timeline to help you.

Photos 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 show pupils working on Task 1



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7

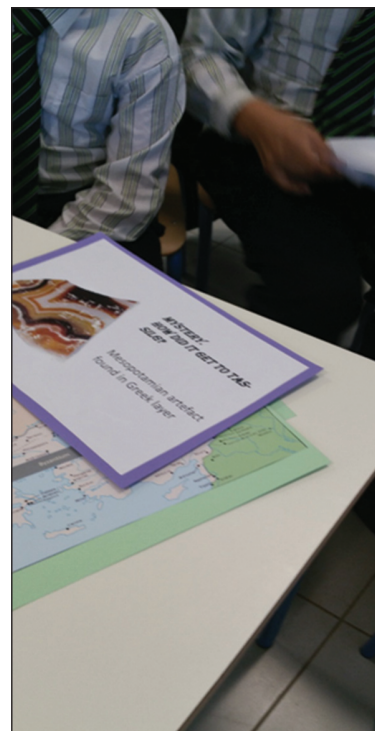


Photo 8

Step 2: Pupils had to work out as a group work task 2 and after task was completed there was class and teacher feedback on the work.

Diversity in Maltese Society

Analysing the painting : Visual Clues



Antoine Favray (1706 – 1789) painting 'The Visitors'.

1. What is the black lady doing? Who might she be?

2. Why would Favray include a black lady in the painting?

Discuss these reasons and give them a mark 1 to 5, 5 being the most significant.

- A. They were part of everyday life and he wanted to show a normal gathering of ladies. ☐
- B. The employment or ownership of a black servant showed the wealth of the people in the painting. ☐
- C. Painters like Favray liked to show off their ability with colour, showing they could paint shadows, shades, dark and light. ☐

Can you think of another reason?

3. Similarity and difference between the ladies standing up and the two ladies near the baby.

The same	Different

4. What does this tell you about Maltese society in the 18th century?

Task 2

Step 3: Pupils had to work out as group work task 3 and after task was completed there was class and teacher feedback on the work.

Diversity in Maltese Society

A.W.McFall "Some Figures at the Palace Square" around 1886



A. Look carefully at the following people and write who they might be and what you think they might be doing

People	What do you think he, she or they are doing
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	

B. Do these people seem surprised to see each other? Why do you think so?

C. What does this tell you about Maltese society in the 19th century?

Task 3

Step 4: Pupils had to work out as group work task 4 and after task was completed there was class and teacher feedback on the work.

Diversity in Maltese Society

Guiseppe Cali (1846 – 1930) A re-evocation of 18th Century Malta



This painting is showing Maltese people enjoying themselves at Upper Barrakka in Valletta. Look at the view that can be seen from Upper Barrakka.

A. Mention 3 things you can see.

B. Can you spot the black man in the picture. Who might he be? Describe his clothes.

C. Do the other people seem surprised to see him? Why do you think so?

D. Why do you think Cali drew him in the picture?

E. What does this tell you about Maltese society in the 18th century?

Task 4

Photos 9, 10 and 11 show pupils working on tasks 2, 3, 4 and 5

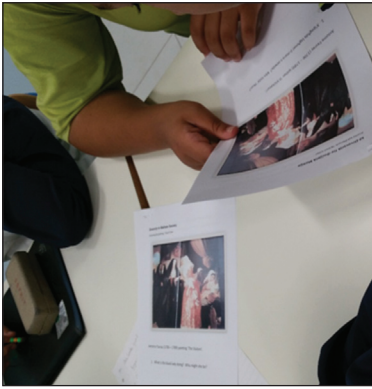


Photo 9



Photo 10



Photo 11

Conclusion of lesson

Last 20 minutes of lesson was done by pupils working individually and answering the following worksheet

People have made the following comments on Facebook, Twitter and Newspaper blogs.

What would you say to them ? Write your answer under each comment and you must use historical evidence to back your answer.

- 1. It is not natural for people to mix. It goes against nature to have a multi-cultural society.**
- 2. *The greatest cultures and nations only had one race of people.***
- 3. *In Malta everyone has always been exactly the same. There was no diversity.***

Analyses of Pupils' Responses

Year 7 (11 year olds) and Year 8 (12 year olds)

The following are a few sample answers given by the two classes. I categorised them into three type of answers. Those that gave very good responses that showed 'Reasoning which make direct reference to sources with detailed explanations', those that gave quite good responses which showed 'Reasoning which just gives general arguments, and only brief reference to sources' and those that gave 'Brief answers with no attempt to use evidence'.

Reasoning which make direct reference to sources with detailed explanations	Reasoning which just gives general argument and only brief reference to sources	Answers with no attempt to use evidence
Statement 1	Statement 1	Statement 1
<i>It is not natural for people to mix. It goes against nature to have a multi-cultural society.</i>	<i>It is not natural for people to mix. It goes against nature to have a multi-cultural society.</i>	<i>It is not natural for people to mix. It goes against nature to have a multi-cultural society.</i>
	<p>No not against nature because at other times people with dark skin used to mix and in paintings they were painted in.</p> <p>You're wrong because in the 18th century there were multi-culture and I know because people in the 18th century left evidence</p>	<p>Not true because before we were always mixed not by two but many people and we always did well and moved ahead.</p> <p>What you say is incorrect! Coloured people have existed for a long time. They are people like us.</p> <p>I know you are wrong! What if your great grandparents were multicultural ? If it is not natural you wouldn't be here.</p> <p>It is natural since someone from your family could be from Italy so how come it is not natural.</p> <p>Natural that people mix because there are those that come from other countries for a journey or because of war</p> <p>No because before there were different people and society always moved ahead.</p> <p>Not true. Human beings always mixed and emigrated.</p> <p>Not true. People always mixed.</p> <p>Yes it is natural that people mix because everyone is the same and everyone is human.</p>

Reasoning which make direct reference to sources with detailed explanations	Reasoning which just gives general argument and only brief reference to sources	Brief answers with no attempt to use evidence'
Statement 2	Statement 2	Statement 2
<i>The greatest cultures and nations only had one race of people</i>	<p><i>The greatest cultures and nations only had one race of people</i></p> <p>This is false because the Greeks, Romans and others all mixed with the Maltese.</p> <p>No Romans always mixed.</p> <p>Not true because both the Greeks as well as the Romans were mixed and in fact they did very well and they were the best in the world.</p>	<p><i>The greatest cultures and nations only had one race of people</i></p> <p>Not true because everyone is made different; and there are many races where we came from</p> <p>No they mix because if they do not mix there would not be communication</p> <p>Not true because there were people in other countries. Maybe they mixed because of war.</p> <p>No. The best race was multicultural and we have evidence.</p> <p>No they are never of one race.</p> <p>Not true because you and your family came no from one race but many.</p> <p>It is nice to say 'Hey I'm half Italian and half Australian'</p>

Reasoning which make direct reference to sources with detailed explanations	Reasoning which just gives general argument and only brief reference to sources	Brief answers with no attempt to use evidence'
Statement 3	Statement 3	Statement 3
<i>In Malta everyone has always been exactly the same. There was no diversity.</i>	<i>In Malta everyone has always been exactly the same. There was no diversity.</i>	<i>In Malta everyone has always been exactly the same. There was no diversity.</i>
	No, you are wrong because we mixed with many people including Arabs and English and so we were and still are people of many nations	<p>Really! That's what you think?</p> <p>In Malta loads of people coming from various parts of the world</p> <p>In Malta we were never the same because we were always mixed with other people.</p> <p>300 years ago there was multiculture already</p> <p>No this is not true because they mixed and there is evidence</p> <p>No not everyone was the same because all were different and there was diversity everywhere.</p> <p>At the moment in Malta there are immigrants and this has been happening for many years.</p>

Reasoning which make direct reference to sources with detailed explanations	Reasoning which just gives general argument and only brief reference to sources	Answers with no attempt to use evidence
Statement 1	Statement 1	Statement 1
<i>It is not natural for people to mix. It goes against nature to have a multi-cultural society.</i>	<i>It is not natural for people to mix. It goes against nature to have a multi-cultural society.</i>	<i>It is not natural for people to mix. It goes against nature to have a multi-cultural society.</i>
<p>"It doesn't go against nature because in a painting by A.W. McFall we can see a Turkish man with Maltese women in ghonellas. And nobody is doing anything to him. Even in the Roman period the Roman Army had many men from different countries and the Roman Empire was one of the strongest"</p> <p>I say you are wrong about it eve4ryone is equal in history people of mix cultural in McFall picture. There are people in the Palace Square around 1886.</p>	<p>Not true. You are wrong there is evidence everyone can mix and part of nature. The paintings found say that everyone is mixed. Example Antoine Favray's painting.</p> <p>No you are not right! Because if you don't know we are all the same because we all originated from Africa, so we are basically all the same and it doesn't go against nature. There are are many good benefits from being in a multi-cultural society like: we are going to learn from other cultures</p> <p>It is natural that society is multi-cultural because we immigrate and we mix and we've been mixing from the start with different cultures and we have evidence from tas-Silg and many other places that left remains that we mixed with many different people of different cultures.</p> <p>No it does not go against nature</p>	<p>In historical times it was natural for people to mix because black and white people together work better than being apart.</p> <p>No, you're wrong. Nature isn't about having all the same people. Have you never heard of migration? Well it's when people move to other places and no it's not true, it does not go against nature to have a multi-cultural society, because we have looked at evidence of the past to show that it does not go against nature to have a multi-cultural society</p> <p>It is natural because now we are multi-cultural. We have to respect others. In paintings of the past you could see mixed people.</p> <p>Don't agree with him/her because from beginning of lesson we learnt that from the beginning all people started to go everywhere and they get encouraged by others.</p>

<p>People get fed up in the same place</p> <p>They have a right to be happy</p> <p>If we want to we can go where there are black people. First people came from East Africa and started to spread around the world.</p> <p>I think you are saying wrongly because people are part of nature and you have black people. In the 18th century Favray drew picture which has in it people of multicultural society and they talked to each other</p>	<p>No you are wrong. It is good for people to mix because I think that the people can get to meet different cultures. Because they can get to understand more cultures, religions and languages ...</p> <p>No because everyone is human and we have evidence</p> <p>Don't agree because humans are made to travel. Also it is good that we mix because we can mix with other cultures.</p> <p>Don't agree with you, colour of skin should not effect everyday life.</p>
---	---

Reasoning which make direct reference to sources with detailed explanations	Reasoning which just gives general argument and only brief reference to sources	Brief answers with no attempt to use evidence'
Statement 2	Statement 2	Statement 2
<i>The greatest cultures and nations only had one race of people</i>	<i>The greatest cultures and nations only had one race of people</i>	<i>The greatest cultures and nations only had one race of people</i>
<p>You are wrong everyone mixed 'multicultural' everyone mixed. With the evidence we found after Rome took every country everyone mixed and everyone lived with everybody. In the painting by Antoine Favray even people of dark skinned worked with whites.</p> <p>I don't think so because everybody had different ideas from different cultures. I know this because before in the 18th and 19th century there was already a mixture of cultures and our evidence is the paintings that Antoine Favray and A.W.Fall did.</p> <p>The greatest cultures and nations were made of different races and we know this because people in the past left paintings which show different races like the painting of A.W.Fall 'Xi figure f'Misrah il-Palazz' which was painted in 1886.</p>	<p>I say it is wrong because the ancient Romans were not just just Italians these were people from different nations and cultures in Rome.</p> <p>That's legend you should go back to school and learn all over again like roman empire was one of the greatest empire was made up of different races and all co-operated and made a great nation.</p> <p>There was never one race look at McFall's painting.</p> <p>You are never going to find a country with one race. In McFall's painting you find people from different countries</p>	<p>The greatest cultures and nations have lots of races because without some races we couldn't get to where we are.</p> <p>No it couldn't be because with help of migration people have moved all around the world. There isn't a country with only one race.</p> <p>If nations and cultures mix we will have people with more talents and learn new things.</p> <p>No because one of the greatest were the Romans and these were mixed multicultural</p> <p>You are wrong look at places like America and how strong they are together with diversity</p> <p>No because we have evidence best races are mixed.</p>

Reasoning which make direct reference to sources with detailed explanations	Reasoning which just gives general argument and only brief reference to sources	Brief answers with no attempt to use evidence'
Statement 3	Statement 3	Statement 3
<i>In Malta everyone has always been exactly the same. There was no diversity.</i>	<i>In Malta everyone has always been exactly the same. There was no diversity.</i>	<i>In Malta everyone has always been exactly the same. There was no diversity.</i>
<p>Not true everyone was different. For example black eyes and others blue. Everyone was different like in the paintings we found like of Antoine Favray and McFall everyone different.</p> <p>I have to disagree with you because in history there are remains of things from other contries and it proves that a lot of races have been in Malta and another thing is the language because it has Arabic, Italian, English, Phoenician etc that's another proof.</p> <p>No, you're wrong because evidence says otherwise. Evidence says that in 1886 (circa) we were already mixed. A.W.Fall drew a painting with different races which look like to be Arabic, Egyptian and Turkish and more.</p> <p>I don't think it's true because we have evidence at tas-Silg. There were remains from the time of the Greeks, Prehistory, Medieval and other remains from other times. That way we know there was diversity.</p> <p>In Malta there was always diversity and we know this because we have evidence in paintings of Antoine Favray 'The Visitors' and of Guiseppe Cali 'Memory of Malta' which show people of different races in Malta together.</p>	<p>I would say that isn't true because there were people with coloured skin in two paintings and even now people have different skin colour and races.</p> <p>You're wrong because in history we know that Sicilians came before anyone else so we have diversity we have English, Bulgarian, Italian and African people and the fact that Malta has been ruled over by a lot of different countries.</p> <p>Not true Phoenicians, Arabs, Normans, French etc they are all different, that's way Malta is multicultural.</p> <p>People from different countries came to Malta and we can tell that because otherwise we wouldn't have got the plague.</p> <p>False because there are lots of painting showing blacks and whites together.</p>	<p>In Malta not everyone was the same because people were born from different families and people from all over the world got mixed.</p> <p>It's not true, Malta has changed a lot. There is evidence people move to other places you can't just say that without looking at the evidence.</p> <p>I do not agree because people in Malta are all different because people came from everywhere like they had done a long time ago from Africa.</p> <p>Yes there was the proof in paintings</p> <p>I don't think so because people on voyages must have stopped here.</p>

Conclusion

There were no students who agreed with the statements on the handout and while some of the pupils' answers were simple straight forward comments as to why they were against the statements, there were others who also backed their arguments with evidence from the past which they had come across during their activities in these lessons or sometimes even using evidence from their own personal history knowledge. The pupils' statements are all valid arguments even those that fall within the weak brief response category but of course we as educators should aim for getting responses which fall within the 'Reasoning which make direct reference to sources with detailed explanations' category. Those in this category were not few in number although the age difference between year 7 (11 year-olds) and year 8 (12 year-olds) surprisingly did have quite a significant effect, with year 8 pupils on the whole giving better responses. Year 7 showed they did understand the idea that there was always multiculturalism in the past and we have evidence to prove it but they could not actually mention the specific evidence from the exercises they did in class. This shows that repetition of similar tasks and more teacher support is needed for 11 year-olds. On the other hand many of the 12 year-olds did mention very specific evidence and did recall quite a lot from the tasks they had done.

In both cases however it is evident that the class activities and teacher support had a very direct influence. This means that teaching approaches do indeed effect pupils' performance for the better. I had two main aims in this whole exercise, first I wanted to pass over the concept of multiculturalism being a phenomenon that is as old as humankind and not a modern one at all and by using historical sources from different centuries I believe this was achieved. This concept is of course one interpretation in history but a valid one for it is not a mere statement but one backed by historical sources that give us the evidence. This leads us to the second aim of this study, which was to transfer this precious history idea to the class, that is, that in history one can have a valid interpretation only as long as it is based on evidence. Similarly attitudes, values and opinions should only be formed after looking at the evidence rather than mere unfounded emotions. Through historical evidence one is also in a position to challenge incorrect information on social media today. From the pupils' responses this concept was clearly understood by those who did not just pass comments but backed them up with specific historical evidence.

This short study was not based on one particular topic from the Curriculum but purposely used model tasks from various historical periods which can easily be adapted to any topic or title. The tasks were closely linked to the objective of the lesson and this together with the interaction and pupils' attention during the lessons show it was a successful exercise; further validated by the pupils' written feedback which show that a sizeable number did in fact back their arguments with examples from the past. Diversity and multiculturalism cannot be taught in one history lesson or by giving a lecture using particular topics which are deemed to be appropriate like for example 'Human Rights' and 'Immigration' . On the contrary strategies similarly to those employed in this study should be integrated in whatever the historical topic and time period being taught is and should become an integral part of the repertoire of skills of a competent and effective history teacher.

Notes

1. See Roger Levy and Dean Smart's *Multicultural Britain Teacher Resource Book* nelson thornes 2002 publication
2. Primary History Issue 65/ Autumn 2013 *Historical Association publications 2000 – 2013 Diversity in history; exemplar lessons* p.12 and 13
3. Presentation at Heirnet Conference London 2015 by Ilona Aronovsky *Sri-lanka to Stton Hoo Tracking the Garnet Trail. What can we learn from Gold and Garnet Artefacts 5th to 7th Centuries CE? Designing an Enquiry for KS2*

Reference

Asylum Trends 2012; Levels and Trends in Industrialized Countries United Nations Refugee Agency Publication p.13

Camilleri Grima, A. 2003. "Do as I say, not as I do." Legitimate language in bilingual Malta! In *Transcending monolingualism. Linguistic revitalisation in education*, ed. L. Huss, A. Camilleri Grima and K.A. King, 5566. Lisse, The Netherlands: Swets & Zeitlinger.

Card, Jane (2013) 'Slavery in Britain and the portrait of Dido Belle and Lady Elizabeth Murray' in *Primary History Inclusion and Diversity Issue 65* p. 18 –p.19

Dalton-Puffer, C. (2005) Negotiating interpersonal meanings in naturalistic classroom discourse: directives in Content and Language Integrated Classrooms *Journal of Pragmatics*, 37 (8) pp. 1275 – p. 1293

Dalton-Puffer, C. (2007) *Discourse in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) Classrooms* John Benjamins, Amsterdam, Philadelphia

Darmanin, Mary (1991) 'Schooling and Class' in Ronald G. Sultana (Ed) *Themes in Education* Mireva Publications p.253 –p.297

Heller, M., and M. Martin-Jones, eds. 2001. *Voices of authority. Education and linguistic difference*. Westport: Ablex.

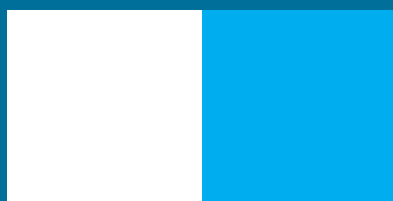
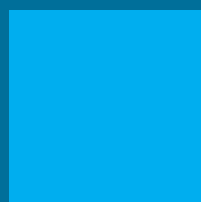
Llinares, A. & Pastrana, A. (2013) CLIL students' communicative functions across activities and educational levels *Journal of Pragmatics Volume 59 Part A*, p.81 –p.92

Sultana, Ronald (1991) 'Social Class and Educational Achievement in Malta' in Ronald G. Sultana (Ed) *Themes in Education* Mireva Publications p.209 –p.252

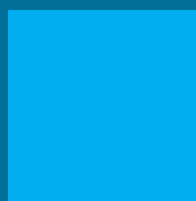
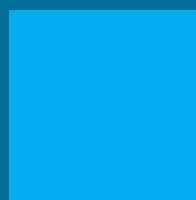
Vella, Yosanne (1999) 'Heritage and national identity in Maltese schools' in *Heritage and National Identity Bulletin Nr 12 – Summer 1999* European Standing Conference of History Teachers' Associations - EuroClio Publication p.13

Zembylas, Michalinos (2010) 'Teachers' emotional experiences of growing diversity and multiculturalism in schools and the prospects of an ethic of discomfort' *Teachers and Teaching: theory and practice Volume 16, Issue 6*

Combating Islamaphobia through History Teaching



Chapter 4



Introduction

Islamaphobia has long been a phenomenon in Malta due to the island's strong Catholic culture and long history of conflict, with Muslim Arabs or Turks frequently regarded as "the enemy". Today with the appearance of irregular immigrants from Africa who started arriving in Malta after 2000, the local population is now faced with a new situation, that is, with the presence of a small but growing Muslim community on the island. This paper details an attempt to use history teaching as a possible tool to combat prejudice and one-sided images of "the other" within the Maltese context using a topic from the Maltese history National Curriculum, that of the Great Siege of Malta in 1565.

The history learning activities were carried out in a co-educational private school with three different classes of Year Eight students (12/13 year-olds), a total of 74 pupils. These classes consisted of mixed achievers and were not set or streamed in any way ; the pupils' social backgrounds were reasonably homogeneous, with their parents tending to come from an upper middle class background. The vast majority of pupils are Catholics and the school offers compulsory Catholic Religious education, although it exempts pupils from attending Religious classes if their parents formally request that their children opt out. This school educates pupils from the ages of 3 to 16 and most subjects including history are taught in English.

Phobias based on religious affiliation in the 21st century

A phobia is an extreme or irrational fear or dislike of a particular situation, animal, thing, or, as in this case a group of people. This phenomenon of Islamaphobia, is, of course, not solely a Maltese concern; in most Western societies Islamaphobia is a growing problem. One might even, posit the view, that today Islam has replaced communism as the perceived global enemy to the West. Ali A. Mazrui goes as far as to describe the situation as a 'Global Apartheid', and calls it a new form of tribalisation (Mazui, 2007). International events like the ongoing war and conflict in Afghanistan and Iraq have contributed to an Islamaphobic atmosphere, fanned further by the publication of the infamous Danish satirical cartoons in 2005. More recently, we have observed, European states taking measures to contain the perceived Islamic threat by such political moves as the referendum in Switzerland on the banning of minarets and the proposed ban on burkas in France. This fear is not always irrational; for one cannot deny the fact that religious affiliations can in extreme cases lead to brutal acts. Violent interpretations of Islamic jihad are on the increase, fueling hatred of Christian and Westerners, among radicalized fanatics who according to Irshad Manji writing in *Newsweek*, describe moderate Muslims as the "near enemy" and Westerners as the "far enemy" (Manji, 2008). Similarly, some Christian extremist affiliations promote a doctrine that the white race will one day take over and secure complete dominance after a cataclysmic war against other races and religions (Barkun, 1994) a belief exemplified in the reasons given by Anders Brevik for the massacre he committed in Norway in 2011.

There is no doubt that a phobic attitude towards a group of people based on their religious beliefs or affiliation, whether this attitude is held by Christians or Muslims, can have an impairing and damaging function in a democracy, quite apart from the real danger that this type of phobia can lead to hate-motivated conduct which inflicts harm on society. Since in the case of Islamaphobia the constructed enemy profile encompasses various diverse nations, cultures and societies, the prejudice is not limited merely to interpersonal dynamics but infects relations between and within larger social groups. All this implicates more than one country and needs a global response, ours is an interdependent age in which the 'other' is always present. A response is needed which involves new forms of cooperation based on respect aimed at everyone's interest. Therefore it is important that the negative experience of this phobia is replaced by a more realistic perception based on rationality. A strategy is needed that recognises that ordinary Muslims and Christians are indispensable partners in the fight against prejudice and xenophobia.

The unique contribution of history teaching and learning

A correct approach to the teaching of history can offer unique opportunities to experience the perspective of the "other". The theory of constructivism describes the process of change that occurs in one's thinking as learning occurs. Traditionally, knowledge has been treated as a collection of facts and information; however 'knowing' also involves organising information and the forming of concepts. The very process of collecting information brings about new frames of thought into which, the knowledge can fit. Knowledge itself is not fixed, but rather is continually transformed with each new discovery. There is the view that, combined with the correct pedagogical approach, history in the classroom can be "the most overtly constructivist subject" (Copeland, 1998 p. 119).

Lee, Dickinson and Ashby (1996) have shown that children's thinking in history is far more sophisticated than previously imagined: they propose that the attainment targets in the English National Curriculum for history radically underestimate children's cognitive thinking ability. After analysing children's ideas on testing explanations in history, Lee, Dickinson and Ashby (1996) advise:

"From the point of view of day-to-day classroom history teaching, our analysis so far suggests that we need to recognise that quite young children can begin to make sophisticated distinctions and develop powerful intellectual tools. We may need both to match such ideas with greater precision in our teaching objectives, and to increase our awareness of assumptions which hold some children back." (Lee, Dickinson and Ashby, 1996, p.19)

The theory propagated by Vygotsky, known as a socio-historical approach to learning has contributed much to the constructivist movement in education. His well-known contribution to teaching and learning is his idea of the zone of proximal development, which refers to the relationship between pupils' developmental level when working on their own and their potential development through problem solving under the guidance of adults or peers who know more. Another

of Vygotsky's concerns was the over use of and over-importance given to, testing to measure children's abilities, these which Vygotsky believed produces a static rather than a dynamic learning environment.

Vygotsky (1978) emphasises the role of the teacher as facilitator. Absorbing skills and concepts on one's own is a slow process; however under structured guidance the learner can reach a higher attainment.

According to Vygotsky (1962) teaching and learning are inseparable from their social context. Keith Barton and Linda Levstik's work in America on children's learning in history is significant in highlighting the importance of the social context. Beside cognitive developmental stages and children's experiences of school, they describe how other factors such as relatives and media, influence children's thoughts processes and learning. (Barton 1994, 1997; Barton & Levstik 1996)

Human beings are capable of cultural and cognitive behaviour which Vygotsky called "semiotic mediation", this belief led Vygotsky to place great importance on the role of instruction in children's learning. Thus the intervention process is crucial and the teacher who knows his or her pupils well is best placed to instigate learning. Today we frequently refer to this process as "scaffolding" to describe the interactions between adult and child, which constitute the support provided as children learn how to perform a task they previously could not do on their own.

Transferability of thinking skills and concepts used in history

While attempts to readdress the balance in societies and to teach about groups perceived as the "other" through history teaching projects run by such agencies as the Council of Europe and Euroclio (European History Teachers Network)¹ are commendable, it is rather naïve to expect change in content to be the whole solution. A shift in topics will not cause a shift in thinking; placing "Immigration" and the "History of Human Rights" instead of more traditional topics such as the "French Revolution" or the "First World War" will not necessarily make people respect human rights or sympathise with the plight of newcomers in their homeland. Unfortunately, prejudice endures even after considerable exposure to logical cognitive reasoning, or as G.W.Allport famously said: "Defeated intellectually, prejudice lingers emotionally". (Allport, 1955, p.311)

Projects such as *Historiana* and *Navigate*¹ are a step in the right direction, for they do go hand in hand with a pedagogy based on thinking skills. This is important because unlike facts and content information which could be classified as "content", skills are not tied to the topic being studied, but the concepts and knowledge experienced may be transferred to other, unrelated topics.

If one assumes that learning can be applied to new settings one must also believe in this transferability of learnt skills. The research described in this paper was designed with the hope that the skills pupils learn during the activities the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century, will in fact be transferred to the way they view

Muslims or Christians today. There are various studies in existence which emphasise the idea that much of what is learned is specific to the situation in which it is learned (Lave, 1988; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Greeno, Smith, and Moore, 1992). Carraher, Carraher and Schlieman (1985) gave accounts of Brazilian street children who could not work certain mathematical computations in the classroom but were performing similar ones everyday while selling in the streets supports this. These studies appear to imply that particular skills practised in one situation do not transfer to other situations.

It would appear that in certain occasions the human mind does compartmentalise tasks for particular situations and transfer of these skills to another situation does not occur. However, it does not follow from this that transfer of skills cannot occur at all. Many of the examples which support strictly situated learning come from the field of mathematics, while it is obvious that some skills, like reading, are continually transferred from one context to another. As Anderson, Reder and Simon (1996, p.6) say “The fact that we can engage in a discussion of the context-dependence of knowledge is itself evidence for the context-independence of reading and writing competence.” In history education Barton and Levistik’s work showed that the cultural situation their pupils were coming from determined their historical thinking (Barton and Levistik 1996). The skills learned in a non-school setting, the family and the media were being used to work out the tasks given by the researchers in a classroom exercise. Therefore transfer of historical knowledge as well as skills such as understanding chronology did in this case occur.

History does not repeat itself; there are too many variables at work for exactly identical situations to arise. However, similar patterns can be detected in history. David Theo Goldberg certainly sees racism as specific to a particular situation and not as a clear-cut fixed emotion “race is irreducibly a political category... and there is no generic racism, only historically specific racisms each with its own sociotemporally specific causes.” Goldberg (1993, p.90). On the other hand, Bodenhauser, Mussweiler, Gabriel and Moreno seem to be correct when they state that “pervasive, culturally embedded forms of social conditioning tend to produce consistent patterns of affective reactions to certain social groups.” (Bodenhauser, Mussweiler, Gabriel and Moreno, 2001, p.321) There does seem to be a mechanism that puts into action an automatic response which is triggered off when a group is negatively evaluated, regardless of circumstances and temporal context. For example, there are many parallels between historical and present-day hate crimes; racially motivated acts are born out of racist attitudes, making those attitudes powerful predictors of subsequent hate crime (Hamm, 1993) Other similarities between past and present hate crimes include characteristics of the crimes, perpetrators and victims (Petrosino, 2003).

Islam and Christianity are two religions which each have their own set of beliefs, rituals and practices; historically these two organised religions were communal systems which historically defined two blocks of empires. One was either a believer or an infidel, one either belonged to the group or not; interestingly both groups used very similar terms to describe themselves and the “other”. It was a division into two comprehensive domains, a division which unfortunately may take on a central significance even today in history classes in Maltese schools.

Exploring identity, diversity and multi-perspectivity in the teaching and learning of history is an acute current concern of history pedagogists² In some ways the researcher is fortunate in that while Islamophobia is very much a present day phenomenon, the topic chosen here for the classroom. that of 'the Great Siege', is not related to a present ongoing conflict situation. Therefore there is not the added difficulty of an on going conflict situation when it can be very difficult to address the 'other' perspective as attested by the work of Eyal Navah ³ and Alan McCully⁴.

A key part of a democratic process is understanding different points of view, learning to tolerate uncertainty and gaining awareness that history holds very few cases in which guilt and innocence can be assigned unambiguously to one particular side of a conflict. Cognitively understanding shades of grey can be a very difficult concept for students to achieve and a very hard concept to teach. As Christine Counsell says, "Teachers need time to learn to teach in ways that are challenging and pupils need careful training if they are to get used to the idea that the history lesson is the place where you learn to tolerate uncertainty." (Counsell, 2004, p.29)

Maltese society

Malta is a predominately a Catholic island. Its constitution clearly states:

1. The religion of Malta is the Roman Catholic Apostolic Religion.
2. The authorities of the Roman Catholic Apostolic Church have the duty and the right to teach which principles are right and which are wrong.
3. Religious teaching of the Roman Catholic Apostolic Faith shall be provided in all State schools as part of compulsory education.

(Constitution of Malta Act, 1964 line 2)

This notwithstanding Malta is a member of the European Union and functions as a democracy, which grants freedom of conscience, to individuals. Unfortunately this does not safeguard against fundamentalist religious views which do exist and these distort images and misconceptions of "the other". Borg and Mayo describe this basic lack of knowledge of the culture of "the other" in the case of Malta in the following way:

"...the term 'Turk' is often used interchangeably with 'Muslim'. The imagery generated by the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literature dealing with the 'traditional enemy' (read:Turks) is that of 'the sons of Mohammed', who regarding the Maltese as 'wicked', were bent on 'enslaving' Malta to convert it to Islam and to replace the Bible with the Qu'ran."

(Borg and Mayo, 2007, p. 181)

The various minor racist incidents against Moslems that occur in Malta, undoubtedly owe their roots to this and similar depictions in the Media with regards Moslems.

For example in May 2009, a small group of Moslem men as a form of protest, after being refused the use of a flat to gather together and pray, decided to pray outside on a popular seafront promenade. This provoked a major incident in Malta with numerous newspapers and blog sites being inundated with complaints at this perceived provocation, and the fifteen Moslem men “needed the presence of two police officers to ensure they were not attacked, insulted or otherwise harassed.” (Caruana Galizia 2009, 13)

The design of the research

The objective of this research study was to readdress the negative depictions of ‘the Muslims’ in Maltese society and to offer pupils in one school an opportunity to explore history through the perspective of “the other” .

The author decided to work within the topic of ‘the Great Siege of 1565’, which is one of the topics on the school’s curriculum. The 1560s were the heyday of the Ottoman Empire and Malta was part of a larger Turkish plan to imperial expansion. At this time, Malta had great strategic value, for if the Ottomans captured Malta, they would be able to use it as a location where they could build their forces and Malta was territory very close to the Christian Europe. However, rather than the usual presentation of the “Turks” as the invaders who suddenly make an appearance in the narrative, I gained the permission of the school and class history teacher for the class to include an extra lesson on the ‘Great Ottoman Empire’ as an introduction to the topic.

The aim of this study was to provide an opportunity for these students to learn about the Ottoman Empire by understanding different perspectives and learning about the complexities of human motivation. The medium through which this was done was by the analysis of primary historical sources.

The study

A few days before the session, the pupils in each of the three classes was asked to answer in writing the following questions *“What do you think Malta would have been like in the 16th century , as a place to live in, had the Ottoman Turks won the Great Siege in 1565?”* and *“Why do you think this?”* A few days later the following lesson on the Ottoman Empire was carried out.

The teacher introduced the lesson by showing a timeline to explain the time period during which the Ottoman Empire existed. (See figure 1).

This was followed by a teacher-centered Powerpoint presentation on the Ottoman Empire (See figure 2). This was basically a short 10-minute narrative accompanied by maps and sources to show the expansion of the Empire placing particular focus



Figure 1 Teacher explaining timeline



Figure 2: Powerpoint presentation on the expansion of the Ottoman Empire and the Fall of Constantinople in 1453.

was placed on one event, that is, the fall of Constantinople in 1453. The pupils were told how the Ottoman Empire is important because many states which are now in the Balkans, in the Mediterranean, in the Middle East and Arabia were under the control of Ottoman Empire which means that at one time the people of these regions were all citizens of one Empire. Besides this, people who have different religious and identity used to live together in peace for a long time as a citizen of the Ottoman Empire. The presentation further explained that besides this, people with different religious affiliations and identities had lived together in peace for a long time as citizens of the Ottoman Empire, and that for this reason, the Ottoman Empire is one important example of peaceful multi-cultural coexistence.

Passages from secondary sources were used to narrate Mehmet's entrance into St. Sophia's church. The teacher explained how historians agree on the story that Mehmet, the Ottoman Muslim leader, bent down to scoop up a fistful of earth, pouring it over his head to symbolise his self-abasement before God. Hagia Sophia was the physical embodiment of imperial power; and now it belonged to him. He declared that it was to be protected and was immediately to become a mosque. Historians say that an imam was called to recite the call to prayer. The teacher gave particular attention to the fact that Mehmet was also a man of the Renaissance, an intellectual who recognized Hagia Sophia's greatness and saved it. The teacher commented on how remarkably, the sultan allowed several of the finest Christian mosaics to remain, including the Virgin Mary and images of the seraphs, which he considered to be guardian spirits of the city.

The class was then divided into four groups and each group was given a set of primary sources (see Appendix 1) on the Ottoman Empire (see figure 3) as follows:

- Group 1: Artefacts**
- Group 2: Politics**
- Group 3: Buildings**
- Group 4: Society**



Figure 3: Each group was given a pack with primary sources on the Ottoman Empire

These sources (Appendix 1) had been chosen by a group of Turkish secondary history teachers during a teachers’ workshop conducted in Ankara, Turkey by the author in 2009. During this workshop the author had explained the objective of this research project and asked the Turkish teachers to choose the most suitable primary sources which would in their opinion best represent the splendor and richness of the Ottoman Empire (see figure 4). This workshop was a very good opportunity for the author to obtain Turkish history teachers’ insightful perspective on the Ottoman Empire, and the occasion generated a great deal of feedback and discussion. One particular concern of the Turkish history teachers was that only the positive aspects were being presented and therefore the Maltese Catholic students would be presented with a biased view. However, after much discussion it was decided that because of the strong negative images of the Ottoman Empire that prevailed in Malta up to now, it was necessary to re-address the issue. By presenting the positive aspects the teachers concluded that in fact a more balance view would result.

Together with the primary sources the pupils were given the following grid which they had to fill in after they analysed the sources (see figure 5), sample of students’ responses (Appendix 2).



Figure 4: Turkish history teachers discussing the best primary sources to show the splendour and richness of the Ottoman Empire through its artefacts, politics, buildings and society. The chosen sources were then eventually presented to the Maltese school children as part of the activities. Ankara 2009

After the 20-minute group work session, each group reported back to the class on what they could say about the Ottoman Empire from the set of sources they had been given (Figure 6) . A sample of their replies can be found in Appendix 2.

A few days after this lesson, pupils were then asked again to answer in writing the same question they had been asked before the lesson: “What do you think Malta would have been like in the 16th century , as a place to live in, had the Ottoman Turks won the Great Siege in 1565?” and “Why do you think this?”

Look carefully at the Ottoman-Turk sources				
What can you say about these people from your pack of sources				
Society	Religion	Politics/Leaders	Arts/Music	Others



Figure 5 Pupils working in groups on the Ottoman primary sources



Figure 6: Pupils talking about what the Ottoman Empire after analysing their sources

Description and analysis of students' responses

Analysis of *“What do you think Malta would have been like in the 16th century, as a place to live in, had the Ottoman Turks won the Great Siege in 1565?”*

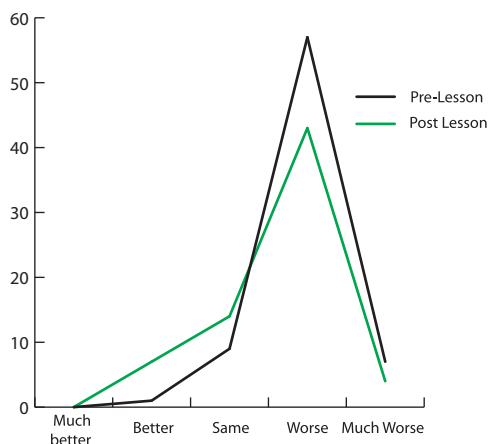
The students' response to the first part of the question produced the quantitative data. The Likert scale was used to analyse the pre-lesson and post-lesson responses.

“What do you think Malta would have been like in the 16th century, as a place to live in, had the Ottoman Turks won the Great Siege in 1565?”

- ▶ A much better place to live in
- ▶ A better place to live in
- ▶ The same
- ▶ A worse place to live in
- ▶ A much worse place to live in

	Much better	Better	Same	Worse	Much Worse
Pre-lesson	0	1	9	57	7
Post-lesson	0	7	14	43	4

Table 1: Results of analysis of students' responses to the first part of the question



From Graph 1 comparing the pre-lesson results (blue) to the post-lesson results (red), we observe that after the lesson fewer students selected worse/much worse and more selected better/the same than before the lesson.

Graph 1: Students' responses to the first part of the question displayed as a line graph

Another way of representing the pre- and post-lesson results is to assign the following values to the different responses and then calculate an average score for each case:

A much better place to live = 1

A better place to live = 2

The same = 3

A worse place to live = 4

A much worse place to live = 5

This gives a mean score of 3.95 for the pre-lesson vote and a score of 3.65 for the post-lesson vote. These figures indicate that in the pre-lesson results, the average score was almost at “A worse place to live”, while the post-lesson results lie around midway between “The same” and “A worse place to live”, indicating a shift of 0.3 in the mean from pre- to post-lesson results.

This is quite a reasonable positive result considering such the small scale of the experiment; it is very encouraging to note that a slight shift in attitude occurred after just one lesson. Of course there might be various variables at play which affect students’ responses, such as students picking up the enthusiasm of the teacher in favour of the Ottoman Empire and therefore re-thinking their response the second time round to conform more to what they think is the “expected” response rather than what they really believe. However, it is also possible that they might genuinely have responded differently because they now have a better insight into the Ottoman Empire and their awareness has been raised to other possibilities.

Analysis of “Why?”

The students’ responses to the “Why?” in the second part of their question was of great use as qualitative data, which shed further light on students’ thoughts on the topic. It was evident that a major concern which influenced students’ responses¹ was undoubtedly the issue of religion. According to many students, whether Malta would have been a better place or not after a Turkish conquest depended on whether the Maltese would have been allowed to practice or not their religion. As one student commented before the lesson was conducted it taking the view that it would have been a much worse place to live in *“I think it would be bad because the Order (the Christian leaders of the Maltese, the Knights of St. John) was a very generous environment and the Turks were not so we would probably be living in a place full of hate and cruelty against the God that we believe in.”* The following are more examples of students’ comments before the lesson on why Malta would have been a worse place to live in where the apprehension of losing one’s religion is clear:

“because the Order of St. John were kind while the Turks were cruel and maybe wouldn’t have the right medicines and our religion would change”

"I think Malta would be a worse place to live in because the Turks are ruthless and they would have made Malta slaves possibly converting our religion, which would have a big impact on our countrys heritage"

Despite a shift towards less extreme views, after the students participated in the lesson, as indicated in graph 1, religion still remained the primary concern of the students albeit now tempered with positive remarks such as the comment that the Turks were "good at medicine" and would not destroy churches but convert them. However, this would apparently have been insufficient to prevent Malta becoming a worse place to live in.

"I think that if the Ottomans won the Great Siege, it would a worse place to live in because they would probably put up more taxes and change some of our charges and cathedrals into mosques"

"The Turks will kill all the catholic people but the Turks are advanced in medicine."

"Because we would have had to learn another different religion and live a completely different lifestyle to now."

After the lesson which showed that Muslem leaders such as Mehmet could act responsibly one student did not think this was enough and was of the view that Malta would have been a much worse place to live in because *"A worse place to live in because although Mehmet let some christian items in the church stay up he would have made them convert to Islam and made them their slaves and would have to pay harsh taxes to the Ottoman Turks."*

Nobody either before or after the lesson said Malta would have been a much better place to live in had the Turks won; before the lesson only one student from the three classes answered that Malta would have been a better place to live in had the Turks won. She said *"I think it would have been a better place to live in because the Turks were good people"*. On the other hand, after the lesson there were 7 students who said that they thought Malta would have been a better place to live in. These are their responses to the "Why?" question:

"As the Ottoman Turks had a very interesting culture, it would add much more to the Maltese culture and add to its architecture"

"The Turks respected all religions in Malta the majority of the populace was Christian only some of the populace was Muslim, the Turks wouldn't change the populace, they would respect our religion no matter what"

"I think it would be different and so I would like to try it and it would be different"

"I think it would be better because the Ottomans are very peaceful and hard working people. They are also musical, artistic and rich."

"After learning a bit about them I think that they are very good rulers and they were a very large empire. The only problem is that they were a monarchy."

Again there are no guarantees that the answers represent an actual change in attitude however, the statements are accompanied by information students gained during the activities of the lesson, specifically mentioning the areas they analysed in their primary sources. It would appear that indeed knowledge does bring about more nuanced judgements and a more complex understanding of a historical situation. There is also an acknowledgement that while the Ottoman Empire was different from Malta it was not necessarily a "bad" difference but an interesting one - as one student said *"and so I would like to try it"*. Greater knowledge did not always give rise to less hostile attitudes towards the Turks; indeed, newly acquired knowledge was used by some students to justify why Malta would have been a worse place to live in: *"It really depends but if the turks used it for a port or something we would have become slaves and have to build Mosques and our religion will have to change and lots of confusion and wars to get Malta back to the Order"*.

The reasons given by those students responding that Malta would have been the same, neither better nor worse, were also highly illuminating. Before the lesson, we recorded simple and superficial answers such as: *"It would be the same because everyone will still be happy, even if our religion changes."* as well as the slightly confused response which again hinges the interpretation of such a change as good or bad on whether the religion of the Maltese people would have been subject to changes: *"I think it would have been the same because perhaps the Turks would have been like the knights just wanting the Maltese to convert to Islam. They could have justly done the conditions if you want to convert to Islam or not."* A practical as well as a nationalistic reason was given by one student who said that he chose "the same" *"because whether a Maltese leader or a Turkish leader won the Great Siege it wouldn't make a difference. I would have preferred a Maltese leader obviously because we live in Malta. If the Muslims took over Malta would probably be very rich because Muslims come from Libja and Libya are very rich"* After the lesson, the responses that said Malta would have been the same after a Turkish conquest, were more in number and tended to be more detailed and revealed more historical thought such as this example *"I think it would have been the same because the Turks would have taught us different things like medication; but then again we would probably have had to change Religion yet again. We might not have been able to be under English rule so we might not be speaking English now. They could have also used the poor as slaves."* and *"Because the knights helped the Maltese live a good place but even the Ottomans would because when they showed mercy in Rhodes to the knights they most probably would have done the same to Malta. Also they show a lot of mercy as they did when they conquered Constantinople."* Other comments considered that Malta would be the same because *"I think it would stay the same as the Ottoman Turks are very cultured but I think the only thing which would change are the religion and the way we are governed"* and *"The Ottoman Turks would have brought a lot of different culture to the Maltese Islands and the Turks where decent people."*

While change of Religion was the most frequently cited as a reason for Malta being a worse place to live in after a hypothetical conquest; it was not the only

consideration; captivity and slavery were fears before and after the lesson. Students said *"I think this because the Turks wanted Malta probably to make the Maltese slaves"* *"Because if you were a Christian you would be slave"* (before lesson) and *"because we could have been slaves for the Turks"* (after lesson). There is also the concern that it would be *"a much worse place to live in because there will be fighting!"* and that Malta would be caught up in wars and fighting. One student explained the confusion that would follow a Turkish conquest by alluding to several historically and in our times military considerations *"It really depends but if the turks used it for a port or something we would have become slaves and have to build Mosques and our religion will have to change and lots of confusion and wars to get Malta back to the Order"*.

For history teaching it is also worth noting students' understanding or lack of understanding, of the concept of long term and short term consequences in history. The question *"What do you think Malta would have been like in the 16th century, as a place to live in, had the Ottoman Turks won the Great Siege in 1565?"* and *"Why do you think so?"* actually asks for students to name short-term consequences, as it was deemed too complex to ask 12/13 year olds about the long-term consequences spanning hundreds of years which would be necessary if one asked about how an Ottoman victory in the Great Siege would have affected Malta today. Indeed some student responses did focus only on the short-term consequences as in this example *"Because the Turks would want to capture other Islands and make Malta a base of war and make them fight with them"* and *"Because at the time things were harder and there was always a risk. It was easy to lose a family member and easy to lose your house. Freedom and happiness was also hard to gain as if the Turks would have won everything would change and they would destroy the Maltese spirit and do everything there way and how they want it and Malta would have no rights."*

However, analysis of the responses indicates that many of the responses of the students, when thinking about the consequences, pictured Malta today. Many students were not thinking of the short-term consequences for Malta in the 16th century; rather for many of them there was an immediate shift to today. More specifically it is evident that their thought processes focused on how this would effect *"us"/ "me"* (the Maltese/me a Maltese person) today. It is interesting to note the frequent use of pronouns like *'I', 'we'* and *'our'* even when referring to the 16th century the students are indentifying with the Maltese population of that time as *"us"* and analysing the situation in a very personal and subjective way. For example:

"I think that if the Turks won the Great Siege Malta would be a worse place to live in because our culture would be changed completely and we would probably have to follow new rules and religions and probably dress in different ways and there would be a lot of Arabic buildings and artifacts."

"I think Malta would be a worse place to live in because of the cruel masters. Maybe our religion would have changed and our life wouldn't be the same as it is now."

"I think that it would be a worse place to live in because there won't be much Christianity, no more freedom and I am happy to be Maltese."

Some even attempted to relate the effects of a hypothetical Ottoman conquest in Malta in 1565 not to today or the immediate short term but to other historic events, such as Malta becoming an British colony in the 19th century : *"We might not have been able to be under English rule so we might not be speaking English now."* And the student who said *" Because if they won in 1565, then there might've been war more often, and Malta wouldn't have much independence"* is most probably thinking of Malta's independence in 1964. One student even explicitly referred to a perception of the Turks to today *"Because the Turkish countries nowadays are in war and are having a lot of problems"* although the student was probably referring here to the Arab uprisings which were current news when this research was conducted, therefore the student is evidently making the typical Maltese mistake of mixing up the Turks with the Arabs.

Conclusion

One cannot change hundreds of years of "us" and "them" mentality overnight. However, by moving away from "lecture-type" traditional history teaching towards a more constructivist approach , some progress in terms of attitudes in this study, did occur. In this study students were not presented with a collection of facts but they participated in the construction of the narrative.

Students created different interpretations from primary historical sources, which greatly helped to create new frames of thought and a sense of ownership of the interpretation. This can be seen from the frequent reference in their statements after the lesson to their "discoveries" on the Ottoman Empire which came about from their class tasks on the sources. It is evident from this that the teacher was not doing the thinking for the pupils; but by conscious support and key questions allowed learners' change of perception to gradually emerge. In Vygotskian terms, the teacher was the facilitator of the learning. It would seem that what is actually happening in this instant was that learning is occurred piece by piece, one part at a time with fresh knowledge is absorbed while old information was discarded and conflicts resolved as the students constructed new conceptual frames of reference.

Strategies learnt in history lessons have an immediate importance outside history; history is not an inert discipline, but rather affects the whole way in which we see the world. In this case the students became acquainted with the Ottoman Empire, which is traditionally figured as "the enemy", and they became making sense of a world that was alien and foreign to them and how it interacts and impacts on their world. All this notwithstanding one must thread very carefully and not blithely assume that history teaching can automatically change attitudes. Roselyn Ashby and Peter Lee present a forceful argument warning against "simple-minded and grandiose claims – that prejudice against other cultures or ethnic groups will be dispelled by empathy exercises in history at school. People's views are in large part based on material interests, fear, and their social relations with others: the

presentation of rational alternatives in education is often almost powerless against all this.” (Ashby, R & Lee, P. p.65)

Nevertheless from students’ responses in this study one can detect evidence of a deeper historical understanding taking root after the lesson, and a change in attitude did occurred, although it is difficult to say how significant and long-term that change will be.

More studies are needed to produce empirical evidence to support the notion that communication promotes awareness and that in turn this knowledge about “the other”, acquired through such awareness, will make society more democratic and more humane. One possible way of achieving this, is through education, and in this case specifically history education.

Notes

1. *Historiana* is an ongoing project by Euroclio, the European History Teachers’ Association, started in 2010. It is an attempt to create the first ever online history interactive textbook for the whole of Europe. While *Navigate* is a similar online history interactive site for school children produced by the Council of Europe.
2. For example Euroclio (European History Teachers’ Association) 2008 Conference was entitled “The Past in the Present: Exploring Identity, Diversity and Values through History Teaching”. Similarly Euroclio (European History Teachers’ Association) 2009 Conference was entitled “Taking the Perspective of the Others: Intercultural Dialogue, Teaching and Learning History”
3. Professor Eyal Navah attempted to use history teaching to produce a common narrative of Israel and Palestine. This project was explained in his paper “First steps towards reconciliation: a two narratives approach of history education in an inter-conflict situation: Palestinians and Israelis” Paper given at Euroclio April 2008 general conference.
4. Alan McCully used history teaching to analyse the Northern Ireland conflict with school children. See for example “They took Ireland away from us and we have to fight to get it back”: Using fictional characters to explore the relationship between historical interpretation and contemporary attitudes’ (with N. Pilgrim), *Teaching History* (2004) 114, 17-21; History Education’s Responses to a Divided Community: the example of Northern Ireland, *Storia e Memoria* (2005) xiv (1), 97-106; Teaching controversial Issues in a Divided Society: Learning from Northern Ireland, *Proprio*, (2005), 11 (4), 38-46
5. Students responses are quoted verbatim including grammar and spelling mistakes

References

Allport, G.W. (1954) *The nature of prejudice* New York:Anchor Books

Anderson, John R., Reder, Lynne M. and Simon, Herbert A. (1996) “Situated Learning and Education” pp.5-11 *Educational Researcher*

- Ashby, Rosalyn and Lee, Peter (1987) "Children's Concepts of Empathy and Understanding in History" in Christopher Portal (ed) *The History Curriculum for Teachers* The Falmer Press p. 63
- Barkun, M. (1994) *Religion and the racist right: The origins of the Christian Identity movement* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press
- Barton, K.C. (1994) "Historical understanding among elementary children' Unpublished PhD Lexington University of Kentucky
- Barton, K.C. (1997) "Bossed around by the queen: Elementary students' understanding of individuals and institutions in history" *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 12 pp290-314
- Barton, K.C. & Levstik, L.S. (1996) "Back when God was around and everything :The development of children's understanding of historical time" *American Educational Research Journal* 33 pp.419-454
- Bodenhausen, G.V., Mussweiler, T., Gabriel, S., & Moreno, K.N. (2001) Affective influences on stereotyping and intergroup relations. In J.P. Forgas (Ed.), *Handbook of affect and social cognition* (pp.319 –343). Mahwah, NJ:Lawrence Erlbaum
- Borg, Carmel and Mayo, Peter (2007) "Toward an Antiracist Agenda in Education: The Case of Malta". In Gupta et al (Eds) *Race and Racialization* Canadian Scholars' Press Inc; Toronto p.179 - p.187
- Caruana Galizia, Daphne (2009) "We are very to(l)erant but ..." *The Malta Independent on Sunday* 10th May 2009 issue p.13
- Carraher, T.N., Carraher, D.W. & Schliemann, A.D. (1985) "Mathematics in the streets and in the schools." *British Journal of Developmental Psychology* 3, pp.21-29
- Copeland, Tim (1998) "Constructing history:all our yesterdays." pp119-130 in Michael Littledyke and Laura Huxford, (eds) *Teaching the Primary Curriculum for Constructive Learning* David Fulton.
- Counsell, Christine (2004) "Curiosity, Critical Thinking and Intellectual Independence: How have History Teachers Changed History Teaching? How does Historical Learning Change Students?". In Stavroula Philippou & Chara Makriyianni (Eds) *What does it mean to think Historically?* Nicosia, Cyprus Association for Historical Dialogue and Research p.29
- Goldberg, David (1993) *Racist Culture:Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning* Oxford:Blackwell, p.90
- Greeno, J.G., Smith, D.R. & Moore, J. L. (1992) "Transfer of situated learning". In D.Dettermann & R.J. Sternberg (Eds) *Transfer on trial: Intelligence, cognition and instruction* (pp 99-167) Norwood, NJ: Ablex
- Hamm, M.S. (1993) *American Skinheads:The criminology and control of hate crime* Westport, CN:Praeger
- Lee, Peter, Dickinson, Alaric & Ashby, Rosalyn (1996) " 'There were no facts in those days': Children's ideas about Historical Explanation" in *Teaching and Learning in Changing Times* Blackwell p.19
- Lave, J. (1988) *Cognition in practice: Mind, mathematics and culture in everyday life*. New York: Cambridge University Press
- Lave, J. & Wenger, E. (1991) *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation* Cambridge University Press
- Manji, Irshad (2008) *Newsweek* article entitled "To Fix Islam, start from the Inside" December 2008 Issue p. 51-52
- Mazrui, Ali A., (2007) "Global Apartheid? Race and Religion in the New World Order" . In Gupta et al (Eds) *Race and Racialization* Canadian Scholars' Press Inc; Toronto p.95 100
- Petrosino, Carolyn "Connecting the Past to the Future Hate Crime in America" pp.9-27. In Barbara Perry (Ed) *Hate and Bias Crime* Routledge;New York

Piaget, J. and B. Inhelder (1971) *Psychology of the Child*. New York:Basic Books

Shemilt, Denis (1987) "Adolescent ideas about evidence and methodology in history" pp. 39-61. In C. Portal (Ed) *The history curriculum for teachers*.

Phillips, Rob (2002) *Reflective Teaching of History 11-18* Continuum p.46

Smith, E.R. (1993) Social Identity and social emotions:Toward new conceptualization of prejudice. In D.M.Mackie & D.L. Hamilton (Eds) *Affect, cognition and stereotyping: Interactive processes in group perception* (pp. 297-315) San Diego, CA: Academic Press

Vygotsky, L.S. (1962) *Thought and language* (E.Hamfnann and G.Vakar, translations) Cambridge, Mass.:MIT Press and Wiley

Vygotsky, L.S. (1978) *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes* (M.Cole, V.John-Steiner, S.Scribner and E.Soubermann, eds) Cambridge, Mass:Harvard

Appendices

Appendix 1

The Sources in the Packs students worked on in groups

Group 1 Artefacts



Group 2 Politics



Group 3 Buildings



Group 4 Society



Appendix 2

What can you say about the Ottoman Turks from the sources found in your group pack?

Their Society	Their Buildings	Their Politics	Their Artefacts
			<p>Carpet They had They had They had different materials Crown- They were very rich For a trumpeter they liked music</p>

GRD 47

What can you say about the Ottoman Turks from the sources found in your group pack?

Their Society	Their Buildings	Their Politics	Their Artefacts
<p>1 their civilized, 1 cultured, 1 wealthy, 1 great capability, 2 great sense 2 of 2 architecture, 2 devoted to 2 their city 2 religious. multi cultural</p>			

What can you say about the Ottoman Turks from the sources found in your group pack?

Their Society	Their Buildings	Their Politics	Their Artefacts
<p>They were big</p>	<p>They were big by the water Powerful Rich beautiful have a dome nicely decorated with gold</p>		

What can you say about the Ottoman Turks from the sources found in your group pack?

Their Society	Their Buildings	Their Politics	Their Artefacts
		<p>The King made the decisions. You have to be of a certain title to vote. Maybe they had the Feudal System. Maybe they had their meetings in a certain temple.</p>	

Writing in history teaching

Chapter 5 and 6

Presenting research work on workable and effective practical strategies which can be used by history teachers in their classrooms are always very popular sessions at history teaching conferences and my intention was to write these papers based on the dissertations of Rosaline Caruana and Kimberly Caruana (similar surnames but no relation) and then to co-present with my ex-B.Ed students at Heirnet Conferences; one in summer 2014 in Slovenia and the other in the following summer of 2015 in London. Alas, both Rosaline and Kimberly were unavailable to attend these conferences and I had to give the presentations alone. Still the important part, that is, the ideas generated by these papers were very well received by the audiences at both conferences and indeed have since been adopted as teaching methods in other countries, and are currently being used in both history classes in schools and in university teaching courses on history pedagogy abroad.

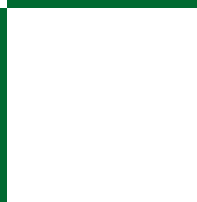
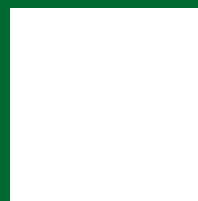
Chapter 5 was published in Heirnet's 2015 journal while chapter 6 is in print and should appear in Heirnet's next journal of 2016.

Publication

Vella, Yosanne and Roseline Caruana (2015) "Raising Performance In History Teaching While Improving Secondary Students' Essay Writing Skills" in *International Journal of Historical Learning Teaching and Research* Volume 13.3 pp 118–131
www.history.org.uk

Vella, Yosanne and Kimberly Caruana (in print) "An investigation into finding effective ways of presenting a written source to students." In *International Journal of Historical Learning Teaching and Research*

Raising performance in history teaching while improving secondary students' essay writing skills



Chapter 5



Introduction

Essay writing has always been an integral part of history teaching in secondary school. It is often used as a way of assessing students' understanding of a particular aspect of the historical topic being studied. All experienced history teachers know that good pedagogy during the lesson will probably result in better student response in their answers in essay form, however the authors of this paper wanted to find tangible evidence of this actually happening. It was also the aim of this small scale research activity to try and raise students' understanding in history lessons by giving the essay exercise more attention. Normally after history lessons the essay is given once, corrected by the teacher and the students eventually receive their mark or grade. In this case the authors wanted to create a situation where there is a more gradual development into the learning and the class activities and essay writing revisited under different forms before the final result is produced by the pupils. While at the same time firmly keeping in mind real classroom situations where time constraints are often an issue in history lessons.

Permission was granted from the Malta's Education Department in order to carry out the research with a year 9 class (13 year olds), the Head of School and the history teacher of the class were both willing to help in this research by allowing the researchers to carry out the history lessons in the school and in the classroom respectively.

In all there were four lessons of 45 minutes each and the topic which was taken from the National Curriculum and which is part of the syllabus for this class was 'The building of Valletta, Malta's capital city'. The main objective of the lessons and the eventual titles of the essays were 'Why was Valletta built?' and 'What were the consequences of the building of Valletta?' So basically the history thinking skills the researchers needed to focus on were in fact the concepts of cause and consequence.

Cause and consequence are two major concepts in history. It has been said that they "are arguably the most complex of the key concepts . . . They are difficult to teach because it is easy to make assumptions about the extent of your pupils' understanding of cause and consequence." (Haydn et al, 2008, p.105)

Many debates have arisen over the concept of causation "One of the major reasons for debate here is that causation is rooted in contingency and uncertainty." (Phillips, 2002, p.42) There could be many causes which eventually lead to an event. However, it is difficult to say whether event one and event two were the sole causes of the final event; or whether there was another event which was not major, as the others, but could also be seen as a cause. It can often happen that the teacher chooses certain causes over others and presents them to the class however, history pedagogical research (Counsell, 2004; Hayden, 2008; Phillips, 2008) suggests that it is much better to create a learning situation where students decide to highlight which causes and consequences are more important after careful analyses of evidence. Then they need to link them together, sort them under long-term causes/consequence and short term causes/consequence and then organize them according to their level of importance as causes of the final event. In the case

of causes Calleja (2003, p.35) suggests that “The learner must understand how the different causes and motives have worked together to make one event, or several events, happen.” Students find all this quite difficult especially when it comes to linking causes together and to understand that an event happened due to multiple causes and not just one cause. Students also tend to believe that the last cause which precipitated the event is the most important one “events were ‘inevitable’”. It is almost as if, given a certain combination of causes, an event was ‘bound to happen’. (Haydn et al, 2008, p.106)

This simple ‘clean’ explanation takes away the issue of doubt or uncertainty and therefore is more comfortable for students to think in this way and only a few students can actually make a difference between the predictability of scientific causation and the unpredictable historical events which are manipulated by individuals. In this regard it is in the teacher’s remit to remind students to be cynical concerning conclusions that a certain event was inevitable. By studying history we are studying events planned by human beings; hence we cannot be certain about their purpose and objectives behind each event.

If students are able to master the difference between the motives or hidden agendas and the real cause, then they are able to understand and work through the concepts of cause and consequence. Haydn et al (2008, p.107) argue that despite the fact that every event is ‘unique’, pupils should use key “words such as ‘social’, ‘political’, ‘economic’, ‘technological’ and other adjectives” to help them understand and categorize causes and consequences, always, keeping in mind that these terms may be used in diverse events.

The survey

The following is the format of the four lessons conducted consecutively over a period of just over a month. According to the school timetable Maltese history lessons occur once a week.

Lesson 1

Step 1: First the researcher introduced herself to the students and explained the research she will be carrying out. (2 minutes)

Introduction: The teacher showed a picture of Valletta to the students and asked why was it built? (5 minutes)

Step 2: A PowerPoint was presented to the students with possible reasons as to “Why was Valletta built?” The researcher explained the powerpoint presentation while answering any queries. (15 minutes)

Step 3: After listening to the causes which led to the building of Valletta, the students were presented with a traditional format essay sheet. The sheet included the title of the essay: “*Why did the Order of Saint John build the city of Valletta?*”

and students were asked to write the causes that led The Order of Saint John to build the city of Valletta around 200 words(18 minutes)

Step 4: The researcher collected the essay sheets and the students were thanked for their collaboration. (2 minutes)

Lesson 2

Introduction: The researcher showed the students a picture of Valletta on the Interactive Whiteboard and asked them “What was that place?” and “Why, did they think, it was built?” (5 minutes)

Step 1: After few minutes discussing their answers, the class was divided in 5 groups with 4 students each. Each group was given a set of causation cards and the question “*Why was Valletta built?*” Each group was carefully chosen so as to have a mixture of achievers in each group. Where possible, students were grouped as follows: two high achieving students and two low achieving students. This helped in supporting each others’ learning (5 minutes)

Step 2: For the first task each group had to put the causation cards in a line according to their importance. The group members discussed each cause together and started from the most important to the less important ones.(10 minutes)

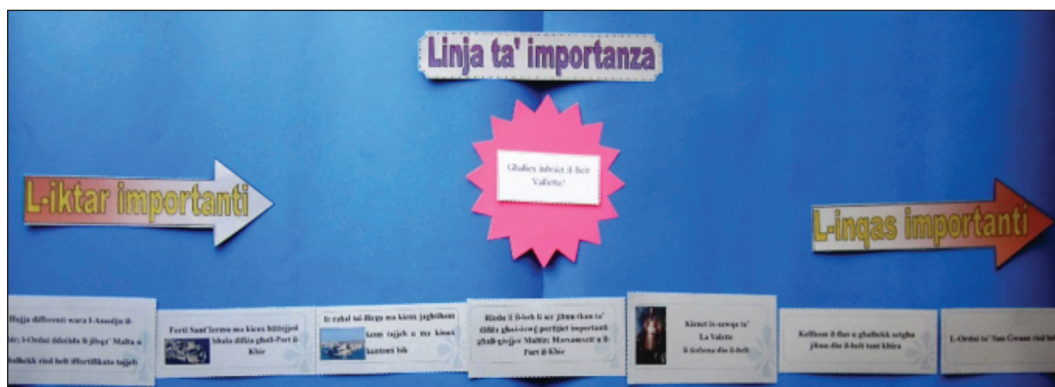


Figure 1 - Causes Line of Importance

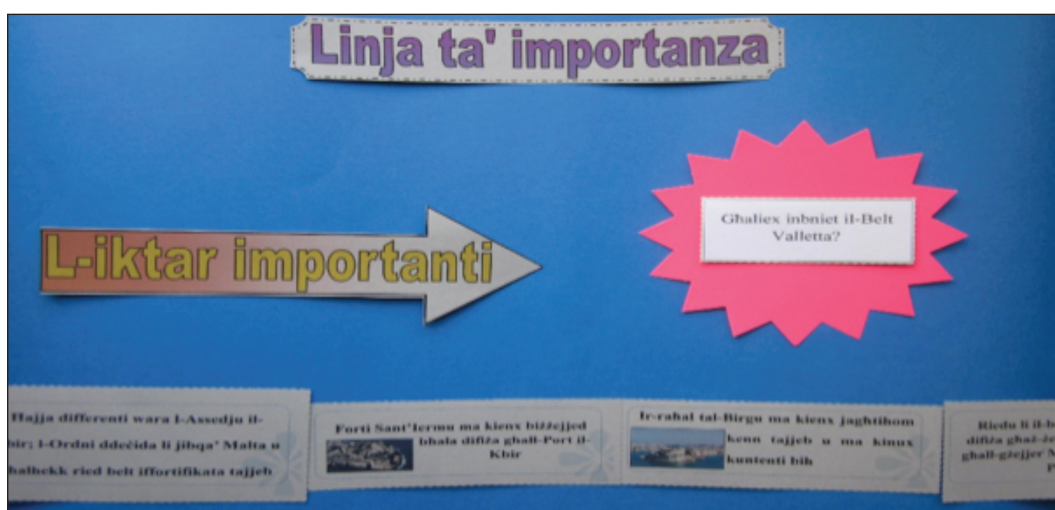


Figure 2 - Most important Causes in the Line of Importance

Step 3: After each group finished placing the cards in the line of importance, each cause was discussed together in class, as groups. Throughout the discussion, students from each group came out and placed the causes in the line of importance on the Interactive Whiteboard. (15 minutes)

Step 4: For the second task students had to put the same causation cards in the inner or outer square, according to their importance. The causes which the students considered as ‘most important’ were placed in the inner square, while those causes which they considered as ‘less important’ were placed in the outer square. (10 minutes)



Figure 3 - Causes Christine Counsell Task

Why was Valletta built?

There were several causes which led to the building of Valletta. One could mention _____

This was important because _____

However, on the other hand, one must not forget that another cause was _____ which led to _____

Without any doubt, there was _____ which led to _____

Among others, there was _____ this helped _____

Another cause of the building of Valletta was _____ this cause was important because _____

As could be observed, there were several causes which led the Order of St John and the Grand Master La Valette to build the city of Valletta.

Step 5: The teacher together with the students discussed the answers of each group. Also, during the discussion, students from each group placed the causes on the Interactive Whiteboard, according to what they had discussed in their group. The researcher also provided students with feedback during the discussion. (15 minutes)

Step 6: All the cards were collected and the students were presented with a guided writing frame with the title “Why was Valletta built?”

Figure 4 - Causes Guided Writing Frame

Lesson 3

Introduction: The researcher showed the students the first slide of the PowerPoint which was a picture of Valletta and asked students if they remembered the causes which led to the building of Valletta. (5 minutes)

Step 1: A PowerPoint was presented to the students, this time with the possible consequences of the building of Valletta “What were the consequences of the building of Valletta?” In a similar way to the first lesson, the researcher read all the consequences and explained them one by one in further detail, while answering any questions. (15minutes)

Step 2: For this step of the lesson students were required to write, in a traditional form essay, the consequences of the building of Valletta. Students were presented with an essay sheet including only the title “What were the consequences of the building of Valletta?” They were asked to fill in the sheet by writing the consequences that came about due to the building of the city of Valletta. (20 minutes, around 200 words)

Step 3: The researcher collected the essay sheets and the students were thanked once again for their collaboration. (2 minutes)

Lesson 4

Introduction: The researcher showed the students a picture of Valletta and conducted a brainstorming session of the situation in Malta after the building of Valletta. (5 minutes)

Step 1: The class was divided in 5 groups with 4 students each. Each group was given a set of consequences cards and the question “*What were the consequences of the building of Valletta?*” (5 minutes)

Step 2: For the first task each group had to put the consequences in a line according to their importance. Starting from the most important consequence to the less important ones, the students discussed them together and arranged them accordingly. (10 minutes)

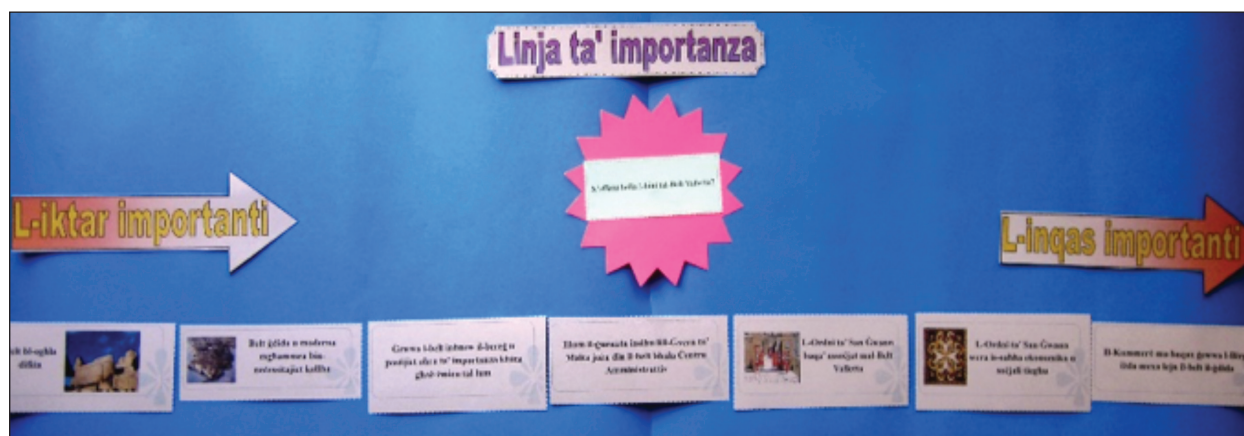


Figure 5 - Consequences Line of Importance

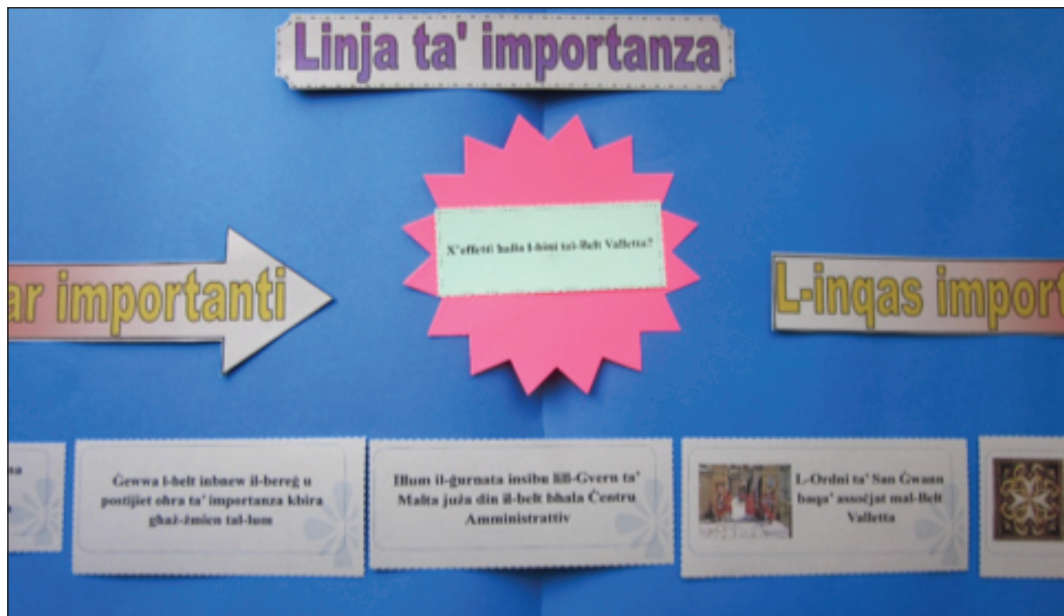


Figure 6 - Most important Consequences in the Line of Importance

Step 3: After each group finished placing the cards in the line of importance, each consequence was discussed together in class, as groups. Throughout the discussion, students from each group came out and placed the consequences in the line of importance on the Interactive Whiteboard. (15 minutes)

Step 4: For the second task students had to put the same consequences cards in the inner or outer square, according to their importance. The consequences which the students considered as 'most important' placed them in the inner square, while those which they considered as 'less important' placed them in the outer square. (10 minutes)

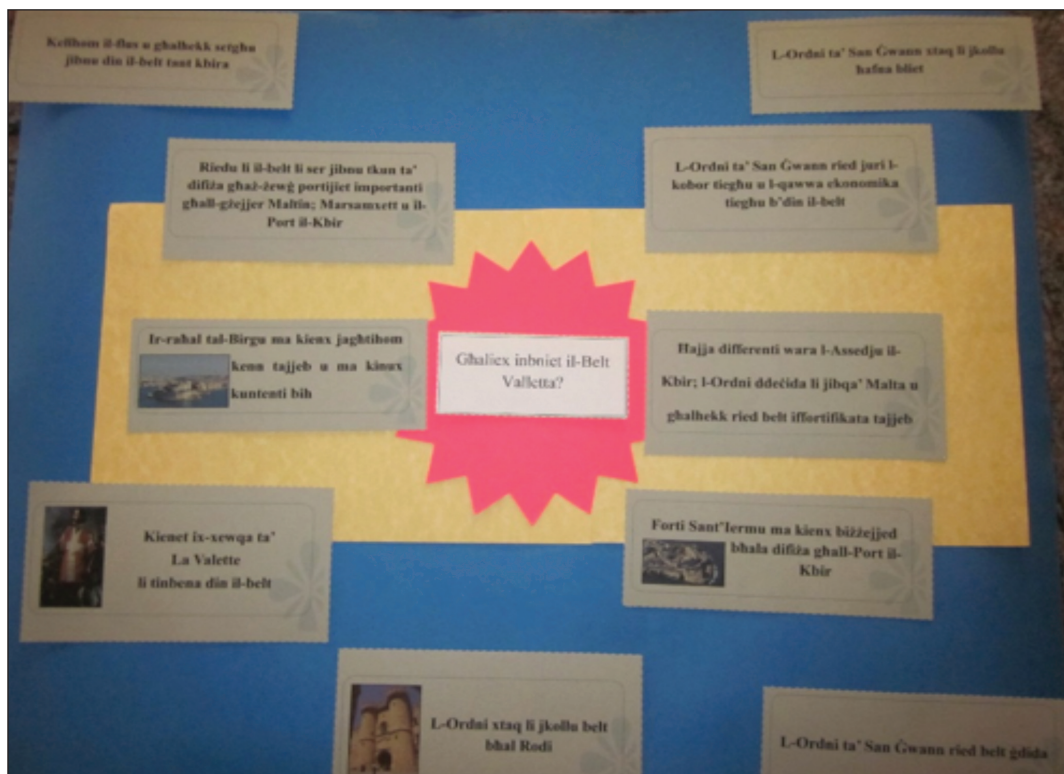


Figure 7 - Consequences Christine Counsell Task

What were the consequences of the building of Valletta?

The building of Valletta left several important consequences, such as _____.

This was important because _____.

Another consequence of the building of this city was _____.

which led to _____.

Without any doubt these effects brought about other consequences, such as _____.

However, on the other hand one cannot forget that there was also _____.

because this helped _____.

Among others, there was also _____.

_____ which led _____.

Today, Valletta is the capital city of Malta, which provides the government of Malta with an administrative centre.




Figure 8 – Consequences Guided Writing Frame

Step 5: The teacher together with the students discussed the answers of each group. Also, during the discussion, students from each group placed the consequences on the Interactive Whiteboard, according to what they had discussed in their group. The researcher also provided students with feedback during the discussion. (15 minutes)

Step 6: All the cards were collected and the students were presented with a guided writing frame with the title “*What were the consequences of the building of Valletta?*”. (20 minutes)

Step 7: The researcher collected the students’ writing frames and they were thanked for their collaboration. (2 minutes)

Analysis of students’ responses

Students’ essays (total of 4 essays one produced at the end of every lesson) were marked according to a prepared criteria. This marking criteria was set up so as to allocate marks for each mentioned cause and consequence. Each mentioned cause and consequence held one mark, while two marks were allotted for an elaborated explanation of the cause or consequence. This was an open marking scheme hence there was no maximum number of marks a student could get. The more elaborated causes and consequences, the student mentioned, the more marks were allotted.

The marks acquired for each mentioned cause in the students’ essays, after lesson 1 and after lesson 2 were gathered and a graph was plotted for each cause given. The following is a table with all the causes presented by the students:

Causes
Fort Saint Elmo did not offer proper defence for the Grand Harbour
After the Great Siege life was different: the Order decided to stay in Malta and thus needed a good fortified city
The Order wanted to build a city which could protect two important harbours; Marsamxett and The Grand Harbour
The village of Birgu did not give them good shelter anymore
It was La Valette’s wish to build a new city

The Order of St John had the money, therefore they could build this big city
The Order of St John wanted to show their greatness and economic power with this city
The Order wanted a city like Rhodes
The Order wanted to have lots of cities
The Order wanted a new city

Table 1 - All Causes mentioned in Students' essays

Similarly marks acquired for each mentioned consequence in the students' essays, after lesson 3 and after lesson 4 were gathered and a graph was plotted for each question. The following is a table with all the consequences presented by the students:

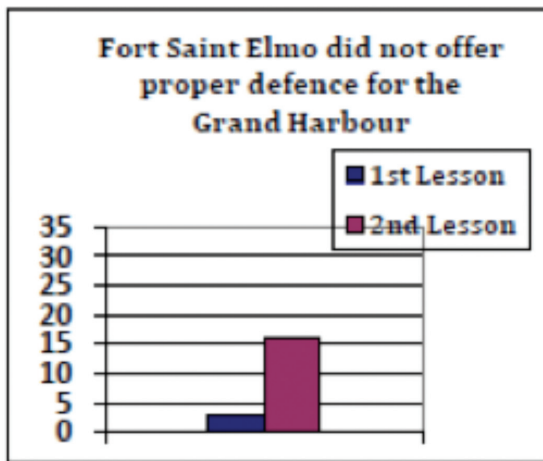
Consequences
Commerce moved from Birgu to the new city
A new city equipped with all the necessities
City with the highest defence
Mdina and Birgu lost their importance
Auberges and places of great importance surviving up to today where built inside this new city
The Order of St John remained associated with the city of Valletta
A city that became the capital of Malta where you find shopping centers, bars and shops among others
The British, who were the successors of the Order, used this big city
Today, the government of Malta uses this city as an administrative centre
The Order of St John showed their economic and social power with the building of this city

Table 2 - All Consequences mentioned in students' essays

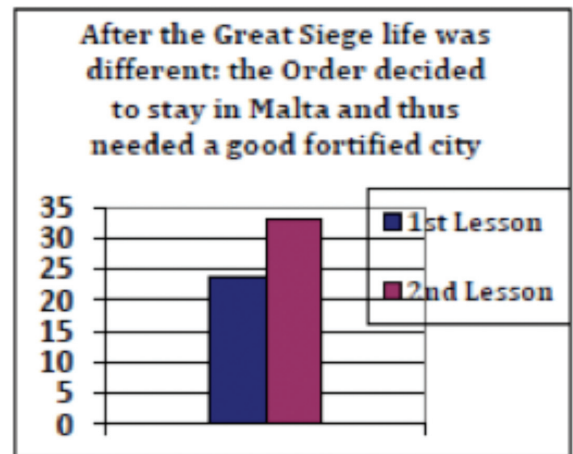
Comparing essays after lesson 1 and after lesson 2

The graphs comparing the average class marks achieved in the essays after the first lesson and the average class marks of the essays produced after the second lesson clearly show quite a significant improvement in the average marks of the class. Table 1 shows the criteria used for marking. There is a general overall improvement. The extra lesson revisiting the causes by means of interactive tasks appears to have greatly aided in getting pupils to give more causes and to accompany these with explanations.

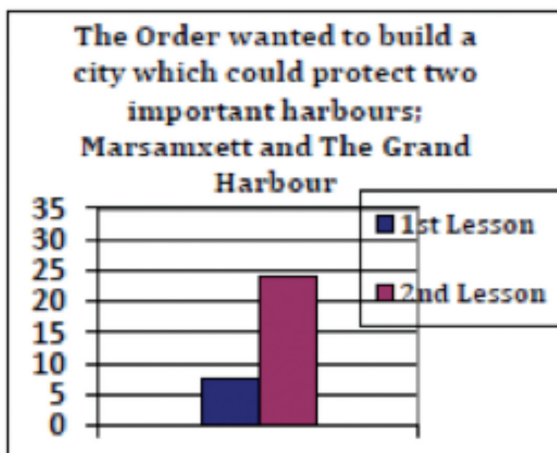
Pupils picked up information mentioned in the PowerPoint and then discussed them during the tasks in the second lesson like for example "Fort Saint Elmo was not enough to protect the Grand Harbour" and which was later reproduced in their essays.



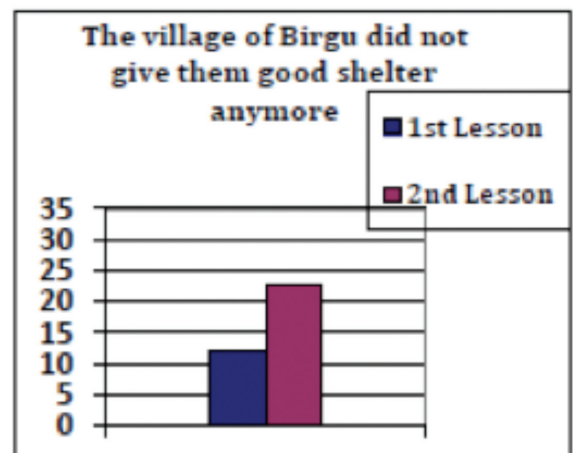
Graph 1



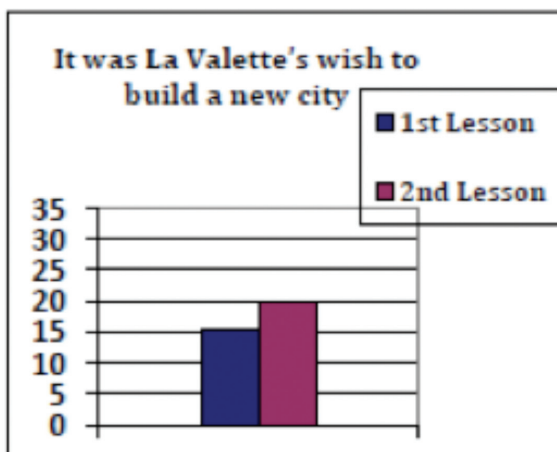
Graph 2



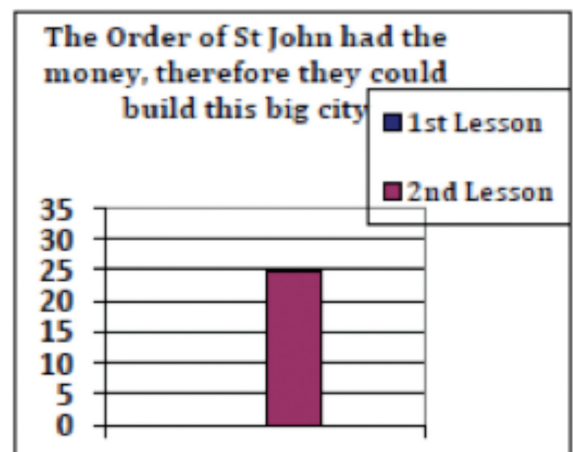
Graph 3



Graph 4



Graph 5



Graph 6

It was however common for students when writing down causes which they remembered to do so in very short sentences or phrases, sometimes even four word sentences such as: "Saint Elmo is not enough." This hindered them from gaining marks because it showed that they did not understand the real cause but they only remembered bits and pieces of it. On the other hand, they did use long sentences after the 2nd lesson when they tried to link causes to each other,

although still often failing to explain the causes correctly.

The 'bound to happen' reasoning Hayden, 2008 talks about occurred with the cause that stated that "After the Great Siege life was different: the Order decided to stay in Malta and thus needed a good fortified city" where students discussed how life had changed after the Great Siege, when the Order decided to stay in Malta and thus wanted a strong fortified city. Many students were inclined towards attributing this as one of the major causes for the building of Valletta and they did this before and after all the lessons.

It is encouraging to see that some causes not mentioned at all or mentioned very briefly in the first essays started to appear in an elaborated way in the second essays. For example, this happened with the following cause "The Order wanted to build a city which could protect two important harbours; Marsamxett and The Grand Harbour" In spite of the fact that this is a very important cause, students failed to explain it well, or did not mention it at all after the first lesson while it gained a fair amount of importance in the essays after the second lesson. In their first essay most students just mentioned the cause in fact at this stage only one student added an explanation to this cause in her essay. In comparison after the second lesson there were 9 students who elaborated this cause, moreover, there was a difference in the language usage of some students. For example "On the other hand, one must not forget that another cause was that the order of Saint John wanted to build a city which would protect the two most important harbours of Malta, those of Marsamxett and The Grand Harbour." This student had in her previous essay not mentioned this reason at all, this would imply that through the activities she gained more insight and now not only mentioned it but added an explanation.

As the lessons progressed especially during the class interactive card activities, students were directly involved in the decisions on which causes were most important and which were less important. Through discussions and debates, students reasoned the causes together and agreed as a whole group where it was best to put these. The class discussion was very important when it came to students' understanding of each cause and one could notice during the task that students were elaborating their answers by recalling what had been said in class. This was clear when students first discussed how "...the Order was afraid of being attacked again, he had to do something to protect the people..." and wrote "...the Order feared an attack and thus they wanted a city which could protect them."

"The village of Birgu did not give them good shelter anymore" was quite familiar to the students and they referred to it in all the essays. However, it is interesting to note that in the first essays many students were not assigned marks for this cause not because they did not mention it, but because they did not use the correct wording or explanation. A considerable amount of students described Birgu as: "broken", "fallen", "not good anymore". Using only these words, students did not succeed in explaining the cause. One student, showed that she was aware that Birgu was not needed anymore by the Order but did not know or did not mention why, however, the same student in her second essay wrote "Another cause of the building of Valletta was that the Order realized that Birgu was not of any good use for them anymore, hence they wanted a new city."

This confirmed, yet again, the importance of involving students in decision-making tasks, in order to achieve complete understanding and mastering of skills. Those who mentioned it elaborated it very well, giving the full cause with further explanation. The interactive conversations and discussions held between students during the tasks facilitated mutual learning as they supported each others' understanding. The students were definitely learning from each other and evidence for this can be seen from the essay answers after lesson 2 when students often used similar words such as "feared an attack" and "St Elmo was heavily damaged".

There were causes like "It was La Valette's wish to build a new city" which were very popular and appeared in all the essays both after the first and second lessons. In fact there is only a nominal difference between the marks obtained in both essays. (see graph 5) This is probably because Valletta being named after La Valette is easy to remember.

The cause which stated that "The Order of St John had money, therefore they could build this big city" caused much debate. During the group work there were different opinions within the groups, some students said that the Order did not have money, while others said that they did not have enough money because they requested additional funds from the Pope and other European Kings. Three out of five groups opted to place this cause between the most important and the less important. Hence, they did not agree whether it was an important cause or not. The other two groups decided that it was one of the most important causes which led to the building of Valletta. This was clearly reflected in the marks assigned where the total added up to twenty five marks. It is interesting to note that twenty marks were assigned for an elaborated cause, while the remaining five marks were assigned for mentioning the cause only. This meant that students' answers in the essay reflected their opinions expressed in the class group discussions.

The following causes "The Order of St John wanted to show their greatness and economic power with this city", "The Order wanted a city like Rhodes", "The Order wanted to have lots of cities" and "The Order wanted a new city" were introduced in the study with the purpose of serving as possibly less important causes.

Discussions during the tasks took the form of a real debate in which students presented their opinions, while also explaining why they thought other student's reasons were wrong. The common perception among students was that the Order did not specifically build the city of Valletta to show its power or to show that it had a lot of money and as the graph 6 shows this was a common student perception before the second lesson. The activities in the second lesson seem to raise the students' awareness to human motivation and hidden agendas.

Students did not know where the city of Rhodes was and this created an atmosphere of curiosity among students in the groups. Unfortunately since they did not know anything about this city and its connection with the Order, students concluded that this was not an important cause which led to the building of Valletta. Hence, every group placed this cause as the least important, in the line of importance and made sure it was touching the outer edge of the second task which meant that it was not important as cause.

The same result was obtained in “The Order wanted to have lots of cities” which students only obtained three marks in. This cause stated that the Order wanted lots of cities. During the discussions students unanimously substantiated that this was not a valid cause for the building of Valletta. Hence, the majority of students decided to exclude it from their essay.

“The Order wanted a new city” was a cause which stimulated mixed feelings among students. This was due to the fact that some of the students linked this cause with another cause which stated that: “The Order decided to stay in Malta and therefore needed a fortified city.” They argued that since the Order wanted a fortified city then they also needed a new city according to their needs. However, during the discussion students debated among themselves that as a cause on its own it did not represent the real need of the Order. As a result, only six students mentioned it in their second essays, with no one elaborating it further.

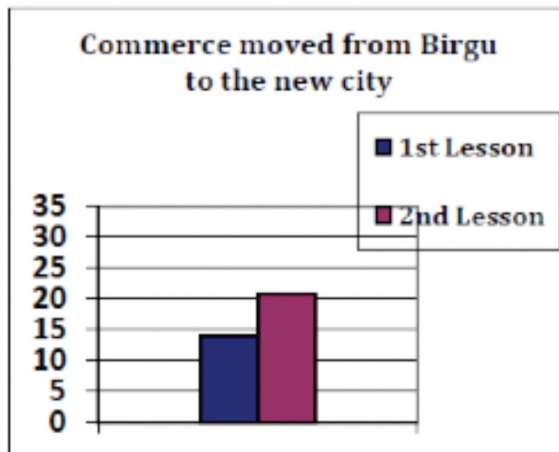
Comparing students essays after lesson 3 and after lesson 4

Similarly, as with the case of the causes, at the end of lesson 3 and 4 students were asked to write an essay mentioning the consequences brought about by the building of Valletta. Each consequence mentioned, both after the third and fourth lesson according to the criteria (Table 2). The graphs comparing the average class marks achieved in the essays after the third lesson and the average class marks of the essays produced after the fourth lesson once again register an improvement in the average marks of the class. It would seem that the pedagogy used in lesson 4 similar to the pedagogy used in lesson 2 helped students to produce better essays, this time on the consequences of the building of Valletta.

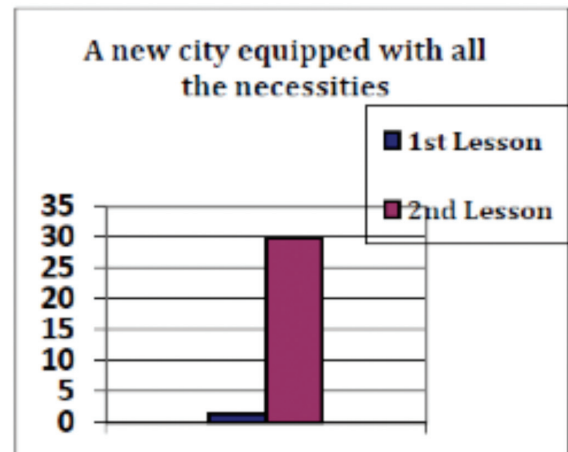
In both essays students mentioned various consequences, for example, they often mentioned the moving of commerce from Birgu to the new city as one of the effects of the building of Valletta.. Quite a few students mentioned this consequence, one of them even elaborating it further, explaining that the new city attracted people and became a hub of commerce. However, in the second essays a higher mark was assigned, due to the fact that almost all the students mentioned this consequence and also a higher number of students elaborated it further. One particular student who mentioned this consequence in both her essays described the consequence in this way: “Among other things, there were people who went to live in the new city. This is because there they were protected through the fortification and could also find work. This in turn led the moving of commerce to the city of Valletta where people started selling and buying their products.”

The discussions which took place in class during lesson 4 involved the interactive card tasks and these provided students with opportunities to share each other’s ideas regarding each consequence. These gave students a wider context of thinking and linking effects of an event with one another and this helped them to obtain much higher marks for their second essay on consequence.

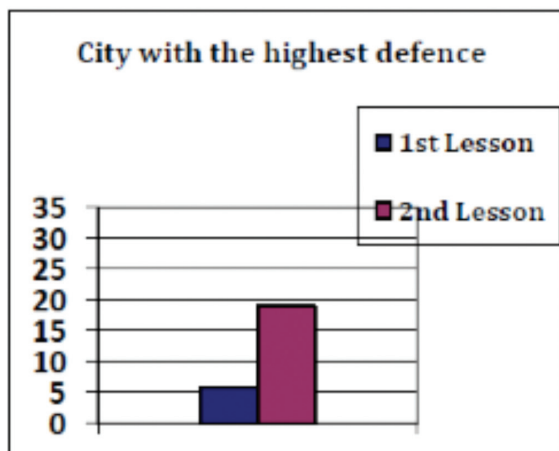
The consequence of the building of Valletta was that “ the Order and the Maltese could enjoy a new city which catered to all their needs” obtained only one and a half marks in the first essay and thirty marks in the second essay. Despite being one of the most logical consequences of the building of Valletta, students failed to



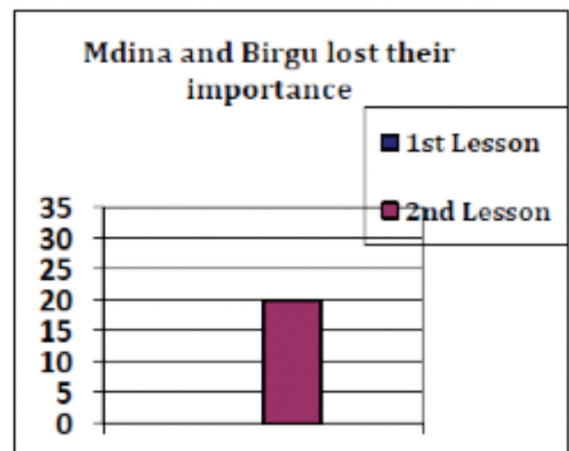
Graph 11



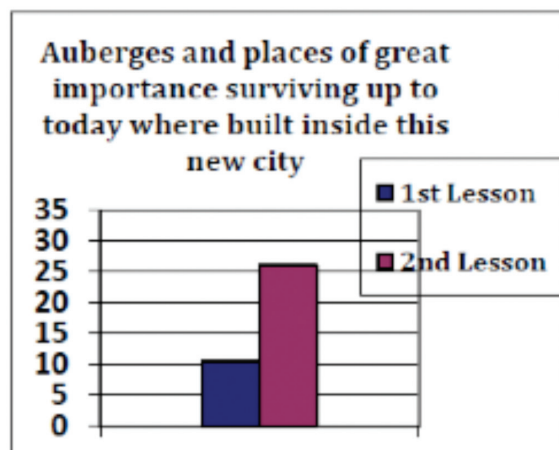
Graph 12



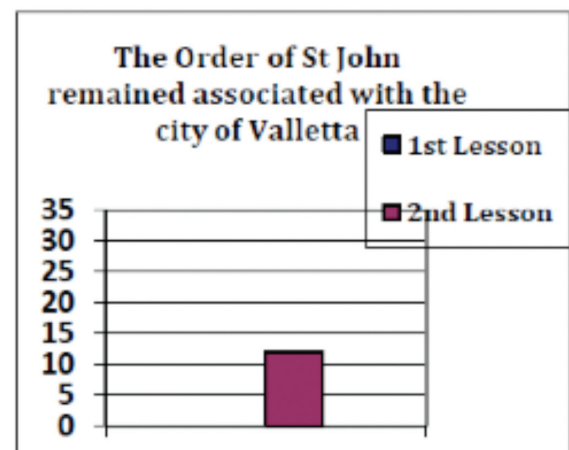
Graph 13



Graph 14



Graph 15



Graph 16

mention it in their first essay. On the other hand, in the second essays high scores were achieved for mentioning it and adding elaborated reasoning. Second time round students showed quite a high level of understanding in their essays with such statements as "Another consequence of the building of Valletta was that they built a new city where they had everything they needed, shops, fortification to

protect them from attacks. Consequently people did not have to walk from village to village in order to buy food but they had everything catered for in one city.” Other good statements produced by the students were “The building of Valletta brought about very important consequences, amongst which is the strong fortified city.” and “Without any doubt these effects brought about other effects, given that they wanted a fortified city to protect them from any attacks, they built a new fortified city which led to protect them from the enemies.” This suggested that students not only understood the consequence, but also identified and linked causes which brought about certain consequences.

Remarkably enough, the fourth consequence which stated that Birgu lost its importance, was not mentioned at all in the first essay on consequence. By contrast in the second attempt the mark assigned for this consequence was twenty. This reflected the lack of understanding through a mere PowerPoint explanation where students acted only as listeners and observers. In their second essays such answers as “The building of the city of Valletta left important consequences, amongst which the loss of importance of Birgu, this was important because it led to the building of a new fortified city, through which they could protect themselves.” and “Without any doubt these effects brought about additional consequences such as the consequence that the importance of Birgu and Mdina started decreasing because many people moved to the new city” appeared. Through these sentences it was evident that students had discussed this consequence extensively among themselves, expressing their acquired knowledge in their choice of words and elaborated answers.

The consequence that “Auberges and places of great importance surviving up to today where built inside this new city” brought an unexpected result in the first essays on consequence. Quite a few mentioned it in their first essays and many in their second attempt where there was a very visible change in the words used in order to describe this consequence. During the explanation of the third lesson, one student asked the researcher what did “bereġ” mean and the researcher explained by mentioning “Il-Berġa ta’ Kastillja” the office of the Prime Minister. This gave a reference point to the students and thus it was an effortless answer to write and mention the current Prime Minister in their essays instead of mentioning “il-bereġ”. During the tasks in the fourth lesson students had the opportunity to discuss this among themselves and explain to each other what were the “bereġ” and the rest of the important places, such as the Co Cathedral of St. John. This, in turn, refrained student’s need to mention the Prime Minister in their essays and describe clearly the proper consequence.

One of the outcomes of lesson 4 was that students mentioned for the first time that a consequence of the building of Valletta was that the Order of St. John remained associated with this city. Students explained how the Order of St. John remained till this day associated with the city of Valletta and how the Order, especially Gran Master La Vallette, was remembered every time students visited this city.

One of the most popular consequence mentioned by students in all the essays on consequence was that it “ became the capital of Malta where you find shops, bars and shops among others” . Although there was still there was a difference on how the students wrote about it during the fourth lesson. From “The city of Valletta is

the capital city of Malta nowadays” in her second essay one student gave a better answer with “However, on the other hand one cannot forget that there is the city of Valletta, which nowadays is the capital city of Malta where one can find shops which sell everything. This in turn led to the building of commercial centres.” The latter statement was more complex than the former and the general response to this by the class is also reflected in the graph 12.

The British, who occupied Malta after the Order, had their own plans for the city of Valletta. This was clearly explained to the students during the third lessons, however only nine students reported it in their essay with no explanation after the fourth lesson students showed from their answers that they were well aware of who succeeded the Order, that is, the British and what buildings they made use of. This was confirmed through the graph 16.

Conclusion

This study has various limitations and by far does not address all the facets of how students can achieve higher standards when writing history essays which deal with the concepts of cause and consequence. This research does not begin to address in depth the problem of ‘contingency’ and ‘uncertainty’ mentioned by Phillips (2002) which is a very important issue for causation in history. There were no students who showed during the lesson or in their essays deep understanding of the cause/consequence concepts. It is doubtful whether any students could actually make a difference between the predictability of scientific causation and the unpredictable historical events which are manipulated by individuals.

It is also debatable how much the students were in fact actually coming up with the causes/consequences themselves, what they were actually doing was getting more involved in the selecting and discarding process of the given causes/consequences and this is very useful for it helped them to produce essay writing of a higher level but ultimately the causes/consequences were given and at no point did they come up with the causes/consequences themselves as advocated in excellent history teaching.

However, students were able to remember more of what was done during the lessons and to produce better answers. Moreover, key words found in the cards of the causes and consequences were significantly used by the students in essays. This implies that students were aware of what was written in the causes and consequences cards and made use of them. The discussions and debates among students put them in a stronger position when it came to writing of the essays. It is evident, from the graphs, that students were not able to deliver elaborate structured statements after just following the explanation of the researcher/teacher during the lesson. This traditional teacher-centred approach gives little space for students to be involved and therefore to be able to investigate their own learning.

In their second attempts they were able to mention more possible causes/consequences and more importantly to support these with reasons and

explanations. This is an achievement for it shows a significant move away from giving a mere short list of causes/consequences towards more categorising and reasoning of causes/consequence. The class activities helped produce better history understanding, and it is a good start towards helping students produce better and more meaningful essay answers.

References

Calleja, G. (2003) The Teaching and Learning of Some Historical Concepts in Option Groups in Junior Lyceums Unpublished Masters' Dissertation University of Malta p.35

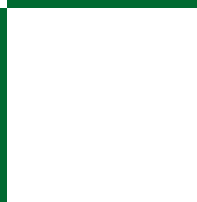
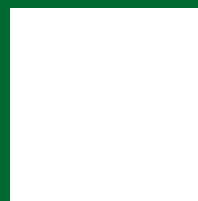
Counsell, C. (2004) Building the lesson around the text:History and Literacy London:Hodder Murray

Hayden, Terry, Arthur J., Hunt M, & Stephen A. (2008) Learning to Teach History in the Secondary School RoutledgeFalmer p.105

Phillips, I. (2008) Teaching History. Developing as a Relective Secondary Teacher London Sage Publication

Phillips, R. (2002) Reflective Teaching of History 11-18 London:continuum p.42

An investigation into finding effective ways of presenting a written source to students



Chapter 6



Introduction

Written historical sources are often used in history teaching and learning, apart from being an integral part of routine history lessons they also come up in the form of summative assessment in annual exam papers. Students are required to show comprehension of the text, knowledge about the period in general and any other skills such as the analysis of the source where the student has to be able to detect bias and comment on reliability of text. Therefore, there is a real need to train well our students on how to work with written sources. Many students find it difficult to comprehend the written source for various reasons however if the right teaching takes place, students can tackle and analyse written sources.

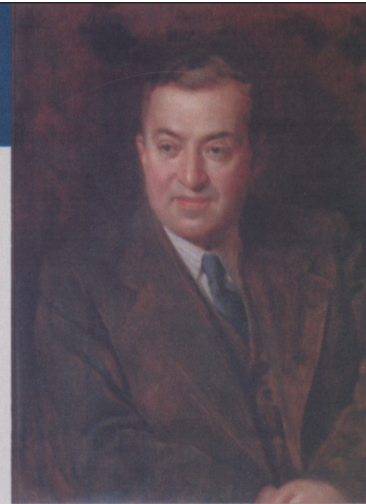
There are many problems the teacher needs to be aware of, for example students might not have enough background information and knowledge about the subject in general and hence, they find it impossible to understand what the text is all about. The teacher needs to set the context at the beginning of the lesson before giving the students the written source for them to analyse (Blyth & Hughes, 1997). Sometimes, there might be cultural differences which the children find incomprehensible and this might confuse their whole understanding of the text. Wassermann (2013) emphasises the importance of the “cultural memory” which changes the historian’s perspective of whoever is analysing the particular source. The teacher needs to ensure they know about such cultural differences before s/he presents a source to the class. Moreover, language may be archaic and some words might have changed their meanings over time and this leads to unnecessary confusion and the style and the form in which the text is written might render a historical text incomprehensible to secondary school children. There may also be legal jargon or words and phrases in a foreign language which they might not understand. Furthermore, there might be too many unnecessary details in a text. Sometimes texts might be too long and this might make the students lose interest. D’Amato, carried out an action research project to find out why her low-achieving thirteen-year old male students were not motivated to learn history. From the research carried out, she concluded that:

The close relation between language and teaching-learning of history was one of the strongest barriers...I noted that the linguistic demands of the subject of history, the language used when communicating with the students, along with the demands placed on their use of language created barriers and hindered their learning (D’Amato, 2008, p.58-59).

All this shows that one of the main problems students face when tackling written sources is the language barrier and students also experience difficulties when the historical term they need to understand is a theoretical higher order concept and not tangible such as movements (slave revolt); institutions (the Church) and different cultures (medieval). Research work on language difficulties in history teaching and learning, have long been documented (See for example Bernbaum, G. 1972; Banham, D. 2000; LeCocq,, H. 2000; Smith, P. 2001).

This short study tried to find ways of how a complex, long, written source can be made palatable to secondary school children. It attempted to find practical ways how a written source can be made easier by adopting the right pedagogical approach.

A miller, Antonio Cassar Torreggiani wrote a letter to his grandchildren many years after the events of 1919 had occurred. Below is the original letter (typing errors included!) Read carefully and then answer the questions.



A lamentable episode in the aftermath of World No.1 developed in Malta on the 7th June 1919 resulting in deplorable shooting, arson of flour mills, and pillage of private houses.

The causes of the disturbances, were various, the background including the introduction of Succession duties without proper representation, the agitation of a National Assembly for Self Government, and the exasperation of the high cost of foodstuff and the low standard of living.

The movement for proper representation was started by the Chamber of Commerce, when Col J.L. Francia M.V.O. was President, and the writer Secretary of what was then, and I believe still is, the premier constituted body in the Island. The President invited to a meeting at the Exchange, then known as the "Borea", the presidents of all the Constituted bodies of the Island, and the local representatives of the Council of Government. A letter was written to the Secretary of state for the Colonies requesting that a more ample and liberal Constitution be granted to this Island on the plea of "No taxation without representation".

As no result appeared to be forthcoming, the movement was subsequently taken up by Dr. Filippo Sciberras, who aided by his friends set up a National Assembly, which held its first meeting on the 7th June at the Circolo Giovine Malta, Kingsway, corner with St. Lucia Street in Valletta. All the Constituted bodies were represented, including the Casino Maltese, whose members, the writer was then elected as representative.

On my way to the Circolo Gwan Malta, I was accosted by some intimate friends, who asked where I was going to, and to whom I replied I had prepared a fine speech on "No taxation without Representation, which I was to read at the Assembly. I was told I had better change my mind, for apparently I was no longer wanted at the National Assembly, and that riots had broken out. They further pointed out, my house in Valletta had been attacked, has been literally sacked, and that three bodies of unfortunate Victims lay prostrate dead before my door. I was literally stunned, the first thing I thought of were my children, and I turned round succeeded to take them to a place of safety.

I should now at this stage, be excused, if for no other motive but that of history, I relate to the background of one of the causes of the riots, the high cost of foodstuffs in which I had incidentally been involved. As one of the leading millers of Malta, I was ordered to act as flour control Officer and to import the wheat requirements of the Island, which by the Grace of God I succeeded to do, and for which I am sure my country is grateful to this day. The difficulties of those times, however should not be forgotten.

To keep down the price of bread, I imported a shipload of wheat which was loaded and carried by my ship, the S/S Aut Cassar, from Philadelphia to Malta, a cargo of Durum wheat purchased from Messrs. Facey & Co. On arrival of the ship at Gibraltar, it was rumoured that the Mediterranean was infested with German submarines. I cabled to London for a war insurance quotation, and my London agents Mr. Hick & Co. Of St. Helens London, telegraphed 60% premium, I repeat 60%, which would have raised the price of bread by 3 pence per rotolo. I risked the greater part of my family belongings not to raise the price of bread, and did not insure. The convoy from Gibraltar to Malta consisted of 17th steamers, 15 of which were sunk by enemy action, the remainder, one of them the "S/S Aut Cassar" unexpectedly arrived safely to Malta after a long delay, with a low priced wheat cargo, but with no gratitude from any quarter.

My ship S/S Aut Cassar was subsequently torpedoed and sunk by German submarines, off Grimsby just before Armistice Day, on the 6th November 1918, and subsequently freights were almost doubled through through the scarcity of ships remaining afloat.

In March 1919, the price of wheat had gone up considerably, and the local millering Industry was faced with the dilemma, either to buy at a high price and face the public with a rise in bread up to 9½d. Per rotolo, or decline to import the wheat requirements of the Island. Lord Methuen, the Governor of Malta at the time, received me on several occasions in company with the Lieut. Governor Sir Robertson. My pleadings and exhortations to suspend the bread tax until more favourable times were of no avail, as the current Government expenditure had risen over £800,000 and Lord Methuen would on no account give way to suspend the bread tax.

Capt. Ingham, who was Lord Methuen's adjutant at the time, and whom we have the pleasure to have among us at the time, was helpful in arranging my meetings with Lord Methuen.

No alternative appeared open to me at the time, and I had to decide either to import wheat at the current high price, or leave the Island without breadstuff, the first necessity of life. I decided to face the situation but could not easily get the millers to decide. I asked the Lieut Governor S/S Robertson to guarantee the millers against any loss in money or possible riots, and with this object in view, I had the valuable assistance of Sir Arturo Mercieca who made out

Figure 1a

The chosen text is an exercise found in a History Sec O Level textbook *From the Coming of the Knights to EU Membership* (Vella, 2009). This exercise presents a written source in the form of a letter which dates back to 1959-60 and is about the events of the Sette Giugno which had occurred 43 years prior and it is written by a mill owner of the time, Antonio Cassar Torreggiani. After being asked to read

the necessary contract, on the Signature of which, a cargo of wheat was afloat secured per "S/S Priestfield through which it was made possible to continue the supply of bread without any interruption. Having been refused the suspension of the bread tax, I again insisted that some sort of other assistance should be forthcoming, and when I mentioned a subsidising I was herided as having asked for something unheard of, for something more than the suspension of the bread tax, for something that did not exist in any country of Europe. Times however have shown I was right, for a subsidy on bread was introduced, throughout the whole of Europe, and still exists in Malta, after 15 years that Second World War is over, a policy which beyond any doubt has justified my pleadings for the suspension of the bread tax in World War No.1.

Col J.L. Francia who originated the movement to obtain proper representation on changes in local taxation, after the imposition of Succession duty, received no thanks from the mob rule on the contrary coerced by other political factions, the mob sacked the house and his valuable furniture was carried away to the disgust of responsible opinion, my house in Ol Bakery Street was likewise looted, and some fine oil paintings by Maestro Cali, which I miss to this day, were torn and trampled upon.

Strange enough, after the lapse of one year of one year, several men whom I always held as friends, especially a trader in the import of potatoes, whom I had assisted and financed on several of his enterprises, at last came to my office, and kneeling before me, confessed of the prominent part he had taken in burning my house, asking for pardon, which I willingly gave him, telling him however that I forgive, but do not forget.

Messrs, L. Farrugia & Sons, who were conspicuous millers at the time, and who are now the loading brewers in the Island, had their flour mills burned down, St. Georges Flour mills were also attacked by the mob, but the arson failed, as my employees were a happy crew and defended the mills with crow bars and byonets. The diplomatic manager Mr. W. Chetcuti told the crowd, "you want have any bread if you burn down this mill. They took a bag of flour each as it was thought better than putting their comrades out of employment by burning down the mills. A man who attempted arson had his arm pinned down by a byonet, and several men were wounded in the defence of the mill which was miracolosly saved, by men who are still in the service of the country.

After three days rioting Lord Methuen ordered me to leave the Island, and I left Malta by the S/S Iris, bound for Marseilles. Captain Roberts who was in command, was very courteous there, and later he became Capt. Of my ship the S/S Knight of Malta.

On arrival in London, and on entering my hotel, I was accosting by a fine looking gentleman, who informed me I was wanted at 10 Downing Street. The gentleman took me there and I was ushered in a room where Lord Morley received me in a kind and courteous way.

He wanted to know from me what was happening in Malta, and I related to the best of my ability the causes which in my opinion had lead to the disturbances. My mind at that time reverted to the speech I had to deliver at the Circolo Giovane Malta, and I tried to explain in my way that after all there was no harm, if the little Malta a form if Self Government be instituted to ensure the imposition of local taxes by local representation. Lord Morley was in a good mood, and I felt he was agreeing with what I said, and encouraged in this way I ventured to suggest the necessity of a House of Review. I was told a House of Review without the power of the purse is of little use.

1. There is no date on this letter. Find out when it was written by reading the last sentence in paragraph 11.
2. What in the opinion of Cassar Torreggiani were the causes of the disturbances of 7th June 1919?
3. Why was Cassar Torreggiani on the National Assembly (read paragraph 4)
4. Where was he going when he was informed that his house in Valletta had been attacked?
5. Go through paragraphs 7 to 11 and then make a list of Cassar Torreggiani's efforts to keep the price of bread down. Say why he was unsuccessful in each case.
6. He says that the flour mills of L. Farrugia & Sons (Farsons) were burnt down but his flour mills at St Georges were attacked but not burnt down. How were Cassar Torreggiani's mills saved?
7. Why did he go to London and what happened there?
8. This primary source might revise how the disturbances of the Sette Guigno are viewed. Why do you think so?
9. How reliable do you think this source is? Why do you think so?

Figure 1b

the letter the pupils are requested to analyse the source by answering a set of questions. (See Figure 1a and 1b) The researcher chose this particular written source after a conversation with the editor of the book herself, Vella pointed out that there was a problem with this exercise since teachers had complained to her that students found it hard and difficult to do, while at the same time it presented

valuable historical evidence and therefore it would be a great loss if the exercise was put aside. This research work provided a good opportunity to create resources to support students' learning by helping teachers to present this exercise in such a way that their students' reception to it would improve and ultimately their written responses would be of a higher level.

The exercise was analysed to see what was making it so difficult. There was a linguistic barrier for there were difficult terms such as 'bourgeoisie' which would pose a barrier for the students' understanding. Moreover, it was a real possibility that teachers were giving the exercise without first giving enough background information on the historic contextual events referred to in the letter. Presentation of a source can definitely make a huge difference as to how it will be received by pupils and presentation of this exercise as found in the textbook is not very good. Despite the colour image of Antonio Cassar Torregiani the letter is an authentically reproduction of the original typed letter. It is long and tedious to read and needs quite an effort to read it at one go, apart from the fact that due to its length finding the correct answer to the questions asked of it can be quite a daunting task. Better organisation and management of this source was needed.

The activities created were aimed at tackling the mentioned problems and it was hoped that through these adjustments and alterations this written source would become more comprehensible to students. History classes in a girls' Secondary State school were used to try out the activities. The researcher used history lessons to try out the new tasks and to see how the students would perform before and after they had tried out the tasks on this source. Students' answers were then corrected by three teachers (See Appendix 1 for the Marking Criteria used) and an average mark for the students before and after the lesson was calculated to see whether the changes had had any impact.

The Study

The lessons were spread over two double history option lessons: one with a form 3 class and the other with a form 4 class (the topic of this letter 'the Sette Giugno Riots' is part of the Sec O Level three year course in secondary school and may be taught at any stage). There were four form 3 students (13 year-olds) and five form 4 students (14 year-olds).

The researcher who carried out the fieldwork was not familiar with the students however she knew the teacher and hence there was full help and collaboration to test out the methodological variables created by the authors of this paper. The teacher helped by giving the class the exercise from the book to work as class work during one of their lessons before the new activities. Behaviour-wise the form 3 students were quite restless while the other class consisted of a mix of students. A good working relation was established with all the participants and consent to carry out the study was attained from the ethics board and school administration informing all participants and their guardians as well as teachers and the Head of School of the study's purpose and giving them their right to drop out of the study

if they wished without giving a reason. Confidentiality was ensured throughout the whole study.

The Different Strategies

1. An authentic-looking letter (Figure 2) which had a yellowish background (to make it look old) was given to the students in an envelope together with a magnifying glass. Each student was given the letter in an envelope individually. When they opened the letter, there were exclamations of how lovely the letter looked especially when compared to how it is presented in the book. They inquired about how such an artefact had been created and this showed that their interest had already been captured. When they were using the magnifying glass, one student was heard saying that she will be using the tool a lot in the future when she becomes an archaeologist.

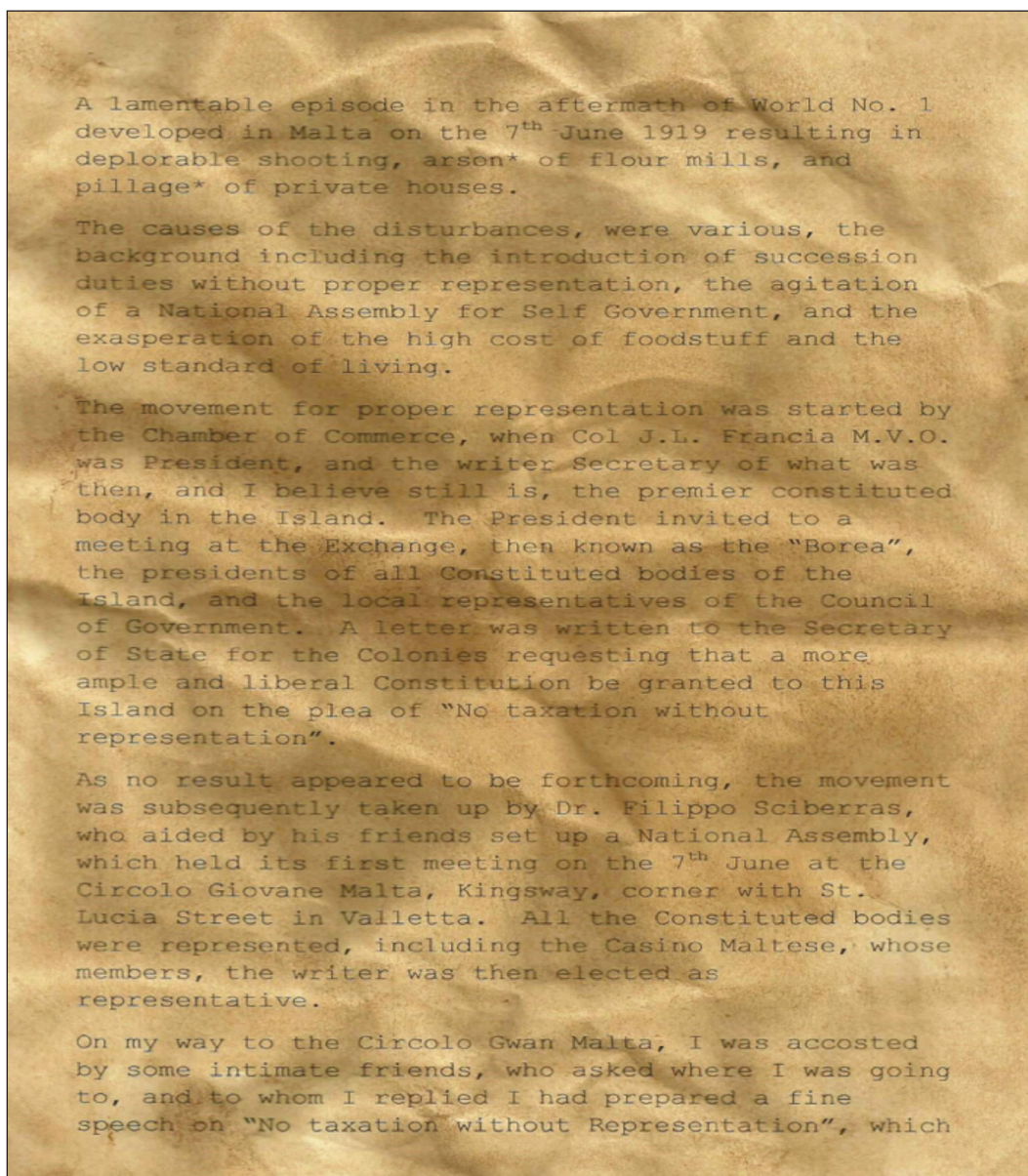


Figure 2

It was smeared with a teabag so as to look old and wrinkly. This idea was obtained from reading books on how to make artefacts attractive to school children mainly

Murphy (2005) and Andreetti (1993). The font was enlarged but the same style was kept as this is the same as the typewriter's font. Then, they were instructed to read it individually and five minutes were allowed.

2. Then the text was read by the researcher and some words which were thought to be difficult in English were given Maltese translation and sometimes rather than a mere translation a short Maltese explanation was given (Figure 3)

VOCABULARY HELP	
(In order of how they appear in the source)	
I.	Miller/wheat importer- xi ħadd li jimporta l-qamħ minn barra. Kellhom pożizzjoni important fis-soċjeta' għax il-poplu kien jgħix minn fuq il-ħobż
II.	National Assembly- għaqda li kienet ġiet iffurmata min-nies Maltin li riedu li l-Maltin ikollhom Kostituzzjoni ahjar
III.	Mob- għaqda ta' nies
IV.	Dilemma- sitwazzjoni diffiċli sabiex tagħzel u tiegħu deċiżjoni
V.	Suspension- twaqqif għal xi żmien
VI.	Aftermath- bħala riżultat
VII.	Disturbances- kunflitti
VIII.	Succession duty- taxxa
IX.	Low standard of living- għajxien fqir
X.	No taxation without representation- sabiex ikun hemm taxxa kellhom jaqblu magħha l-Maltin ta' klassi għolja wkoll. Din kienet haġa li riedu l-Maltin
XI.	Aided- mogħti għajnuna
XII.	Freights- goods, affarijiet ta' bżonn li kienu jiġu impurtati
XIII.	Scarcity- nuqqas
XIV.	No avail- għalxejn
XV.	Subsidy- sapport finanzjarju normalment mingħand il-gvern; sussidju
XVI.	Bayonet- arma

Figure 3

3. The students were then given another copy of the source: this time round it was printed on hard card board and it also had enlarged font size and line spacing (Figure 4). Moreover, some phrases within the text were in bold or highlighted so as to draw the students' attention to them as there are many unnecessary

details in the text. Furthermore, the paragraphs were numbered and an empty textbox was added on top of each paragraph. The tasks were the following:

- a. The students were provided with a number of subtitles/ headlines which they had to determine whether they deem fit or not to fit in the empty boxes on top of each paragraph. (Figure 5)
- b. The students had to work this together so as to peer assess and help each other. In addition, pictorial sources were added aiming to enhance meaning to the text. (Figure 6)
- c. They were asked to give a name or a description to the pictorial sources . A vocabulary box was also added at the end of the source so the students have a constant reference to the meaning of the difficult vocabulary

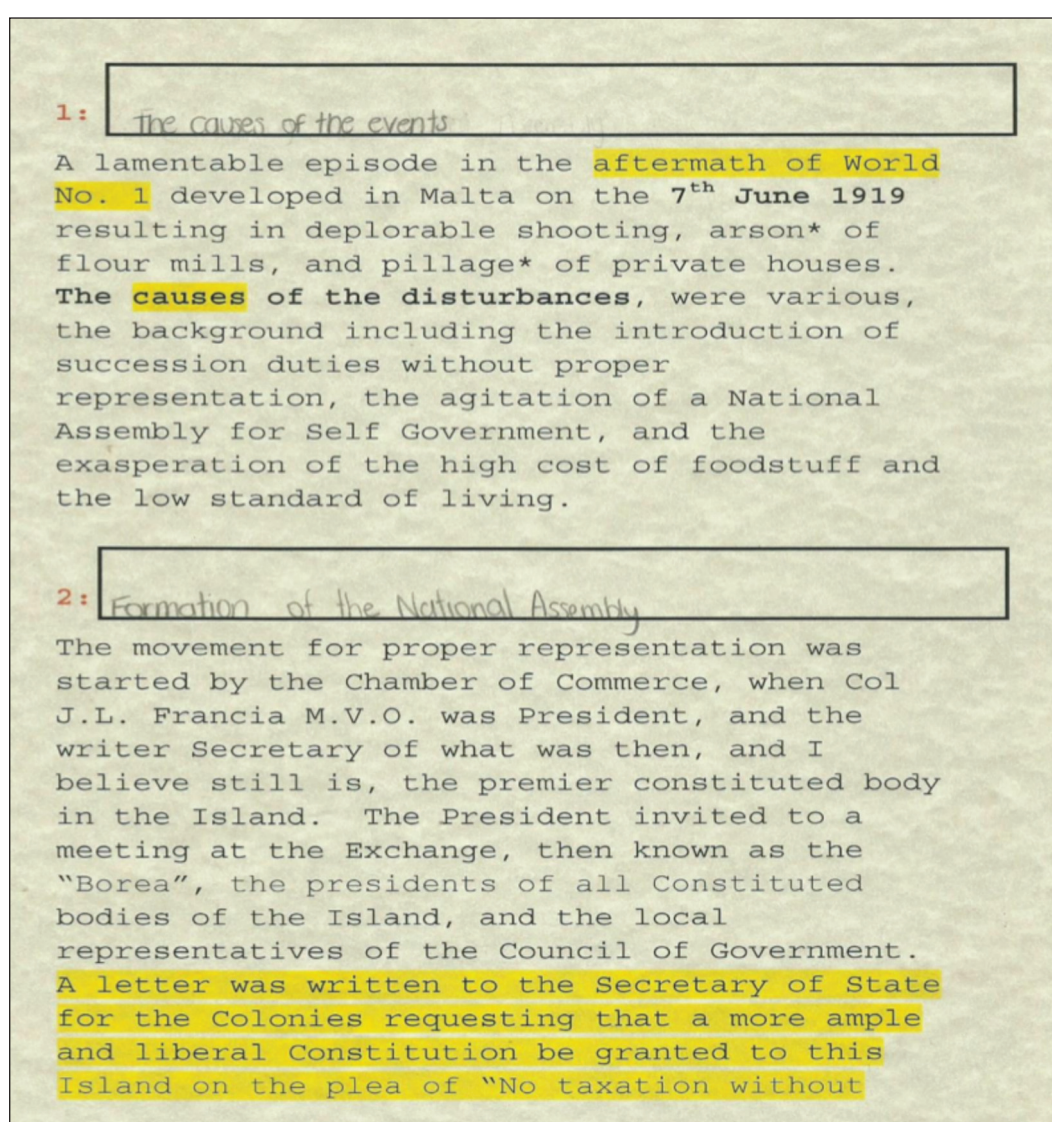


Figure 4

4. Questions from the book were given to the students but the chronology order was changed. The reason behind this was that the sequence of the questions in the textbook did not follow any chronological pattern which made it necessary for students to search for answers in a haphazard fashion. By placing the


TASK- C.W.

TASK 1

The following is a mixed-up list of 15 subtitles which you need to fit in the missing blanks of the letter below.

1. Formation of the National Assembly
2. The mob shows no gratitude
3. "Riots had broken out"
4. First meeting of National Assembly
5. Torreggiani's work and risks as a wheat importer
6. The causes of the events
7. The dilemma
8. Reason behind the high food costs
9. Torreggiani's meetings with Lord Methuen
10. Friends' betrayal
11. Torreggiani leaves Malta
12. Attacks by the mob
13. Torreggiani meets the British Lord
14. Supply of bread continued at a very high price without any suspension of the bread tax
15. Torreggiani tries to request more representation

Figure 5



Source 2:

4:

On my way to the CircoloGwan Malta, I was accosted by some intimate friends, who asked where I was going to, and to whom I replied I had prepared a fine speech on "No taxation without Representation", which I was to read at the Assembly. I was told I had better change my mind, for apparently I was no longer wanted at the National Assembly, and that **riots had broken out**. They further pointed out, my

Source 3:




Figure 6

questions chronologically the task was made easier and less confusing. Hence, questions 1-3 can be answered by reading paragraphs 1 till 4, questions 4-5 by reading paragraphs 5 till 9 while questions 6-7 by reading paragraphs 10 till 13.

The numbering of the questions in the book as they appear in a parallel way to the researcher's version

Question on book	Question on researcher's version
1	4
2	1
3	2
4	3
5	5
6	6
7	7
8	8
9	9

All these exercises had to be worked in groups (See Figures 7a and 7b)

GROUP WORK
(to focus on specific parts of the letter)

Group 1:
Read from paragraph 1 till paragraph 4

1. What in the opinion of Cassar Torreggiani were the causes of disturbances of 7th June 1919?
2. Why was Cassar Torreggiani on the National Assembly (read paragraph 3)
3. Where was he going when he was informed that his house in Valletta had been attacked?

Group 2:
Read from paragraph 5 till paragraph 9

4. There is no date on this letter. Find out when it was written by reading the last sentence in paragraph 9
5. Go through paragraphs 5 to 9 and then make a list of Cassar Torreggiani's efforts to keep the price of the bread down. Say why he was unsuccessful in each case.

Analysis of data

E a c h
s t u d e n t
s h o w e d a n

Group 3:
Read from paragraph 10 till paragraph 15

6. He says that the flour mills of L. Farrugia & Sons (Farsons) were burnt down but his flour mills at St. Georges were attacked but not burnt down. How were Cassar Torreggiani's mills saved?
7. Why did he go to London and what happened there?

As a whole class:
(All letter)

8. This primary source might revise how the disturbances of the Sette Guigno are viewed. Why do you think so?
9. How reliable do you think this source is? Why do you think so?

Figure 7b

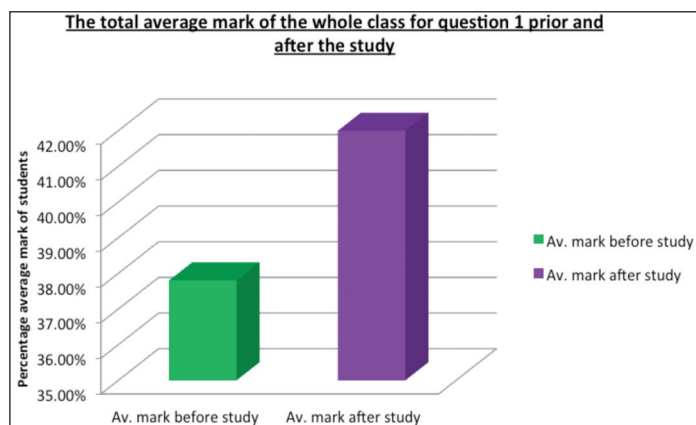
improvement after the teaching had been carried out in class. The low-achieving students and also the high achievers improved their mark and this was the case for every question. The average total before the tasks had been that of 12.72 out of 50 meaning 25.4% and the average total after the tasks was that of 24.3 out of 50 resulting in a 48.6%. Hence there was an increase of 23.2% in the mark. The average mark student mark almost doubled. Apart from source presentation, the way in which the activities were managed and organised also probably helped the students understand and cooperate more, another factor which might have contributed was the peer work. One can note the improvement below as data from answers for each question are discussed as well as displaced as percentages, tables and graphs .

Question 1: There is no date on this letter. Find out when it was written by reading the last sentence in paragraph 11

The question has 5 marks. The average mark of the students before the study is 1.89 (37.8%) while the aftermath is 2.1 (42%) and hence there is a discrepancy of 4.4%

Table 1: Average mark of the whole class for question 1 prior and after the study

	Av. mark before study	Av. mark after study
Actual mark	1.89	2.1
Percentage mark	37.80%	42%



Graph 1

Discussion of answers before the study

Many of the students confused the date of when WWII was over and this led the researcher to realise that it should be pointed out during the explanation or while reading the letter to the students. Others tended to avoid the maths part and quoted Cassar Torregiani by saying that the letter was written fifteen years after WWII. This was considered as correct but did not receive the full marks.

Discussion of answers after the study

An improvement was noted after the study. Prior to the study, the students were getting lost in the original source as there was no numbering of the paragraphs and they had to count them until they found which paragraph is the eleventh. After the study, the paragraphs were numbered and the font was increased and hence, it was easier for the students to immediately find out which one it is. The researcher followed suggestions made by Vest (2005) and these seemed to improve student achievement (see Chapter 2, p. 11).

Furthermore, the questions given to the students after the lesson are not in the same chronology order as can be found in the book even though they are the same questions.

Question 2: What in the opinion of Cassar Torregiani were the causes of the disturbances of the 7th June 1919?

The question had 8 marks. The average mark of the students before the study is 3.96 (49.5%) while the aftermath is 4.4 (55%) and hence there is a discrepancy of 5.5%.

Table 2: Average mark of the whole class for question 2 prior and after the study

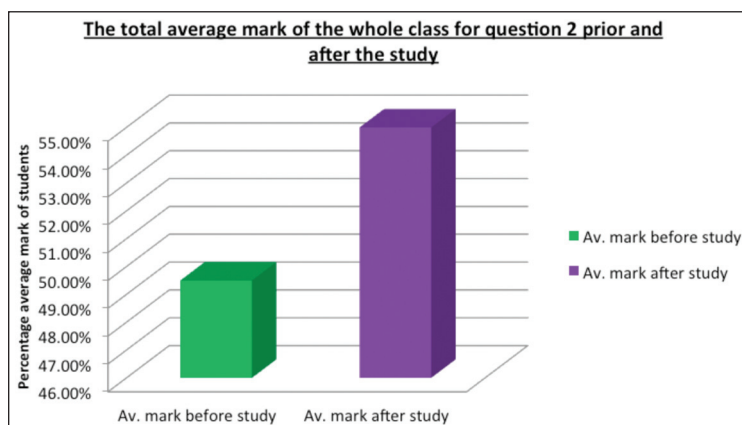
	Av. mark before study	Av. mark after study
Actual mark	3.96	4.4
Percentage mark	49.50%	55%

Discussion of answers before the study

Students had to mention four of these causes. The answers varied and prior to the study, many of the students did not give the four reasons and hence lost marks; in fact many of them simply mentioned one or two of these causes. There was only one student who answered in full but the majority referred to a few. For instance, the following are the answers which two students gave to this question:

“the causes of disturbances were various and the exasperation of the high cost of foodstuff and the low standard of living” and “the background including the introduction of succession duties without proper representation, the agitation of a National Assembly for self-government”.

Discussion of answers after the study



Graph 2

After the study, it is noted that students mentioned more causes than they did in the first time they answered this question. This may be because the text had an enlarged font and the causes were easier to find and it the student could read the text with ease apart from the fact that it was more inviting. The bold text helped them focus even more on the important parts of the text rather than to petty detail and they could easily spot the causes they had to mention.

Question 3: Why was Cassar Torregiani on the National Assembly? (read par. 4)

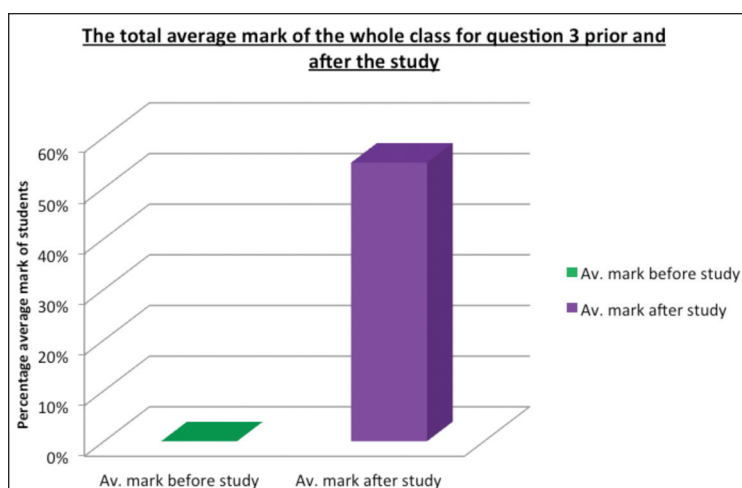
The question has 4 marks. The average mark of the students before the study is 0 (0%) while the aftermath is 2.2 (55%) and hence there is a discrepancy of 55%.

Table 3: Average mark of the whole class for question 3 prior and after the study

	Av. mark before study	Av. mark after study
Actual mark	0	2.2
Percentage mark	0%	55%

Discussion of answers before the study

All of the students got this question wrong the first time round. The reason behind this may be because they mistook the paragraph from where they had to get the information as due to the small font and lack of line and paragraph spacing, it is difficult to determine which paragraph is which and where one ends and the next one starts. It may also be because they did not understand what Torregiani was trying to explain.



Graph 3

Discussion of answers after the study

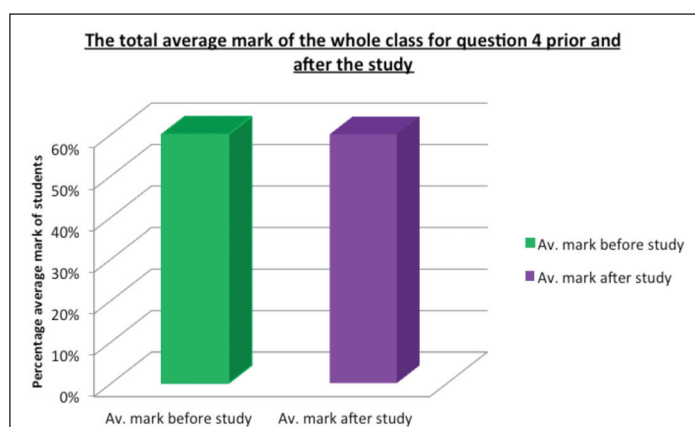
After the study, the mark increased by 55%. This is probably due to the paragraphing and the bigger font which eases the difficulty and makes one more comfortable while reading. Moreover, the students were told the context during the study and hence, they knew better what they were reading about and hence had a fuller comprehension of the text.

Question 4: Where was he going when he was informed that his house in Valletta had been attacked?

The question has 2 marks. The average mark of the students before the study is 1.2 (60%) while the aftermath is 1.2 (60%) and hence there is no discrepancy (0%).

Table 4: Average mark of the whole class for question 4 prior and after the study

	Av. mark before study	Av. mark after study
Actual mark	1.2	1.2
Percentage mark	60%	60%



Graph 4

Discussion of answers before and after the study

The students achieved a similar result prior and after the study when answering this question. This was not a very challenging question as they could easily understand where Torregiani was going. However some of them still gave incomplete answers and hence the marks were halved. There were also some who answered with 'to London' looking at the second half of the text even though the

questions given by the researcher had the paragraphs from where they had to extract the answers indicated to them.

Question 5: Go through paragraphs 7 to 11 and then make a list of Cassar Torregiani's efforts to keep the price of the bread down. Say why he was unsuccessful in each case.

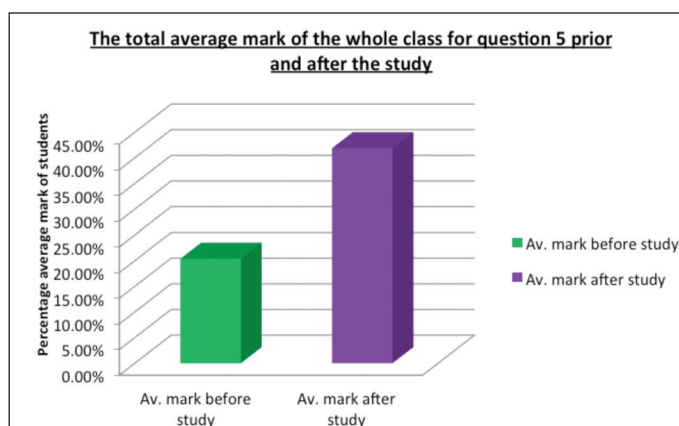
The question has 16 marks. The average mark of the students before the study is 3.26 (20.375%) while the aftermath is 6.7 (41.875%) and hence there is a discrepancy of 21.5%.

Table 5: Average mark of the whole class for question 5 prior and after the study

	Av. mark before study	Av. mark after study
Actual mark	3.26	6.7
Percentage mark	20.38%	41.88%

Discussion of answers before the study

Before the study was carried out many students were only giving one or two answers. For instance, the following is an answer which a student gave to this question: “he imported a shipload of wheat which was loaded and carried by his ship”. There were many who left it blank and this reflects that many of them had given up or could not understand what was expected out of them. In fact, one student answered with: “the riots still happened, people still died” which is clearly out of context. No one gave the full answer and the reason behind this may also be the discomfort the students felt while reading the text and while trying to look for answers. Moreover, as no explanation had been given, students may not have understood the efforts and work Torregiani was doing to keep the price of bread down. The difficulties in the level of English may have been of a hindrance too for the students to comprehend and answer better this question and this proves D’Amato’s work on the students’ language barrier when faced with a written source with difficult vocabulary.



Graph 5

Discussion of answers after the study

After the study, the average mark doubled and there were more attempts at answering the following questions. All students had an attempt at it, unlike the first time when there were some who just left it out or gave up before this question. Marks varied however, there were those who got full marks as well and everyone seemed to have understood that Torregiani was making an effort in order to help the Maltese.

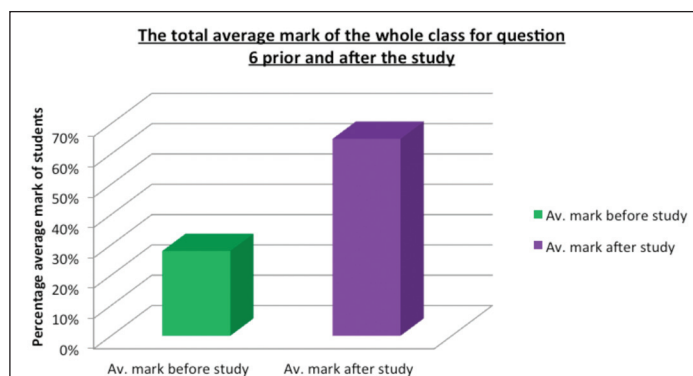
Question 6: He says that the flour mills of L. Farrugia & Sons (Farsons) were burnt down but his flour mills at St. Georges were attacked but not burnt down. How were Cassar Torregiani’s mills saved?

The question has 2 marks. The average mark of the students before the study is 0.56 (28%) while the aftermath is 1.3 (65%) and hence there is a discrepancy of 37%.

Table 6: Average mark of the whole class for question 6 prior and after the study

	Av. mark before study	Av. mark after study
Actual mark	0.56	1.3
Percentage mark	28%	65%

Discussion of answers before the study



Graph 6

Many of the students were writing invalid answers prior to the study and there were some who left it blank. This reflects the students' lack of understanding of the text and the difficulty in the English language in the studied source. In fact, some answer examples prior to the study are as follows: "by the English soldiers", "they were saved by the mob" or "they were saved because maybe no one attacked them".

Discussion of answers after the study

After, the majority of students gave the full answer and mentioned that the mills were saved because the workers gave them a bag of flour each and also protected the mills with bayonets. There were some who lost half the mark because they mentioned that the mills were protected with bayonets only without mentioning the bag of flour or vice versa.

Question 7: Why did he go to London and what happened there?

The question had 3 marks. The average mark of the students before the study is 0.22 (7.33%) while the aftermath is 1.57 (52.33%) and hence there is a discrepancy of 45%.

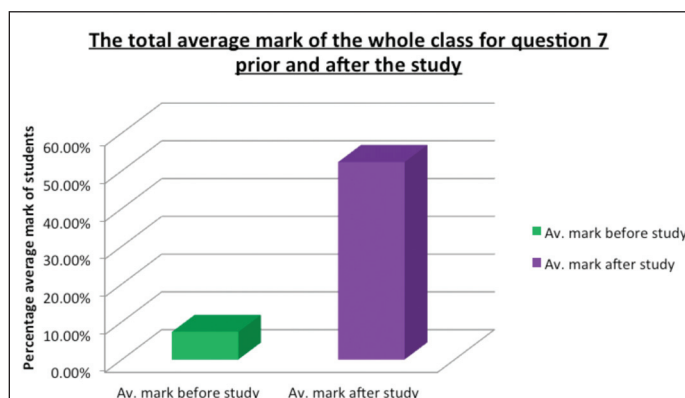
Table 7: Average mark of the whole class for question 7 prior and after the study

	Av. mark before study	Av. mark after study
Actual mark	0.22	1.57
Percentage mark	7.33%	52.33%

Discussion of answers before the study:

There were two students who left this question unanswered prior to the study. Another student invented the answer and wrote: "he was afraid and he talked to the King" while another student wrote that the reason behind going to London was to go to the hotel. The reason behind this probably is that the students were disheartened with the length of the source and its unfriendly presentation before the study. Moreover, there were others who were falling into the trap of recounting a story and the list of events that happened in London in chronological order instead

of going straight to the point leaving the important part out. For example: “He was ushered to a room where Lord Morley received him with a kind and courteous way” simply extracting part of the text and pasting it down. It seems that the students did not understand the text and the question itself and hence, did not manage to go into the heart of the matter when answering. They did not answer the ‘why’ part of the question.



Graph 7

Discussion of answers after the study

On the other hand, after the study was carried out, the students were answering the question more directly and mentioned the facts that Torregiani was ordered to leave Malta to recount what was happening here and there were a few who mentioned that he ended up giving the speech he had to give at the National Assembly on the 7th of June. However, the habit of recounting the events as happened in chronological order still appeared in the students’ answers.

Question 8: This primary source might revise how the disturbances of the Sette Giugno are viewed. Why do you think so?

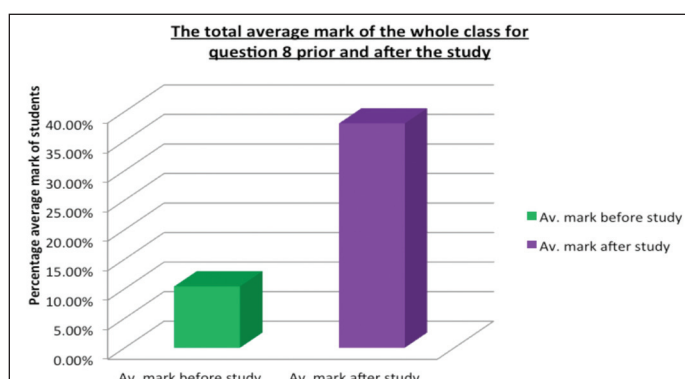
The question has 5 marks. The average mark of the students before the study is 0.52 (10.4%) while the aftermath is 1.9 (38%) and hence there is a discrepancy of 27.6%.

Table 8: Average mark of the whole class for question 8 prior and after the study

	Av. mark before study	Av. mark after study
Actual mark	0.52	1.9
Percentage mark	10.40%	38%

Discussion of answers before the study

This proved to be challenging as the students could not extract the answer from the text. The answer to this reflects whether the students have fully understood the text or not. Students have to be skilled at detecting bias to answer this question and prior to the study answers were confusing. For example, “I think that this is original” and “primary source might revise the disturbance of the Sette Giugno”. There were three students who left this question unanswered.



Graph 8

Discussion of answers after the study

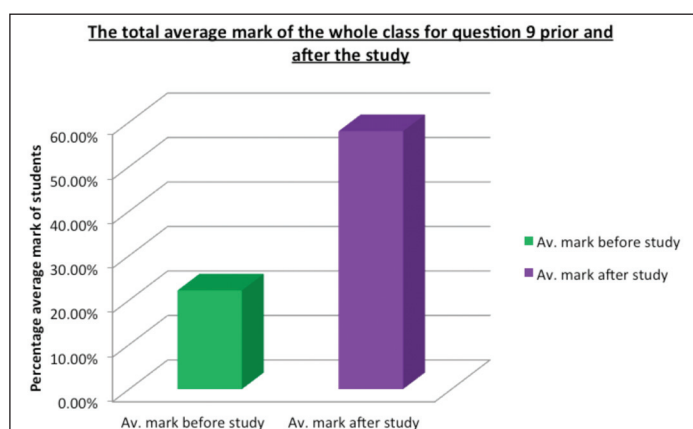
After the study, the answer varied and some students pointed out that Torregiani is writing, that it is a primary source and that it's from the point of view of a miller. The students would not have concluded likewise hadn't the question been discussed in class. The students suffered when it came to expressing themselves in this question. The attempt at answering can be seen for example: this reflects that they need to be aided more when it comes to their language skills in order to avoid any form of language barriers as D'Amato (2008, p.13) emphasises.

Question 9: How reliable do you think the source is? Why do you think so?

The question has 5 marks. The average mark of the students before the study is 1.11 (22.2%) while the aftermath is 2.9 (58%) and hence there is a discrepancy of 35.8%.

Table 9: Average mark of the whole class for question 9 prior and after the study

	Av. mark before study	Av. mark after study
Actual mark	1.11	2.9
Percentage mark	22.20%	58%



Graph 9

Discussion of answers before the study

Answers prior to the study varied and there were some invalid ones for example: "because it has an old font" or "because that was what I thought". However, there were some answers which mentioned "biased" and Torregiani's "point of view".

Discussion of study after the study

During the study this question was discussed in class with the students. The students did not get the full marks because it was felt that some of them could not express themselves well. For example: "you cannot trust his words, because we don't know if it's true or not". However, there were some quite valid answers such as: "I don't think it is very reliable as it is taken from a biased point of view and not that of the whole nation". The facts that there was a comparison with other views made the answer a very valid one. Moreover, the student did not answer with a 'yes' or a 'no' and hence, indirectly replying that there were some truths in the source. Any answer was marked good as long as the student managed to support the answer with a valid reason. Through class discussion during the study the

students briefly debated on what they think about the subject and the researcher encouraged them to make use of the text as proof to back their answer with a valid reason.

Conclusions from the study

The purpose behind the work done for this dissertation was to improve the teaching and the presentation of the written source and for the students to understand how to analyse the text in more detail. The aim of making the text in the question more inviting was reached and the students were motivated and understood the source more.

The researcher tried to eliminate the problems students face when trying to tackle a written source. The problems found when tackling this particular written source and which may constitute potential problems in other written sources were as follows:

1. The linguistic barrier

Certain language in the source was outdated and students were not knowledgeable enough in English and needed extra help in order to comprehend the full text. Specific history terms such as a 'House of Review' and 'National Assembly' also posed a problem as students did not know what they mean.

2. The cultural barrier and the lack of background information

Time changes people and cultures. The students may find it difficult to understand social life during warfare as they are used to a different lifestyle and conditions. Hence, it is quite challenging to empathise and understand the time of when the source was written. Anachronisms of values and ideas may also hinder the students from a full comprehension of the context of when the source was written.

3. The presentation of the source

The technique in which the source was primarily presented troubled the students as well. The source had a small font and was presented to the students as a chunk of incomprehensible words. This made the students weary and the majority gave up in finishing the entire task.

4. The presentation of the questions based on the source

The source was merely given to the students without any scaffolding techniques. The students felt inept as there were no other preceding tasks helping them answer the questions on the source. The students hence ceased to make an effort to answer the set of questions based on a source which they have never done any work about. There was no teacher management or organisation in the source presentation.

Student	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S av.
Question 1 av	0.7	0.7	1.3	5.0	1.3	0.0	4.0	4.0	0.0	1.89
Question 2 av	7.0	6.0	4.7	4.7	4.7	2.3	2.0	2.7	1.7	3.96
Question 3 av	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.00
Question 4 av	1.8	2.0	0.0	1.3	0.0	1.0	1.3	1.7	1.7	1.20
Question 5 av	12.0	12.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.3	1.0	3.26
Question 6 av	1.3	1.3	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.56
Question 7 av	0.7	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.22
Question 8 av	1.7	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.7	0.3	0.3	0.52
Question 9 av	2.0	3.7	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.3	1.3	1.11
Total mark	27.2	28.0	8.0	11.0	6.0	3.7	8.0	16.7	6.0	12.72

Table 10

Student	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S av.
Question 1 av	0.7	1.7	1.7	5.0	2.7	0.0	4.0	4.0	0.0	2.1
Question 2 av	8.0	1.0	8.0	3.3	4.0	2.7	3.3	6.0	2.7	4.4
Question 3 av	2.7	7.3	0.7	0.3	0.7	1.7	1.3	4.0	1.3	2.2
Question 4 av	1.3	1.3	1.7	0.0	0.0	1.3	1.7	2.0	1.3	1.2
Question 5 av	14.7	16.0	4.7	4.7	3.3	1.0	0.0	14.7	1.0	6.7
Question 6 av	1.0	2.0	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.0	1.0	1.3	1.0	1.3
Question 7 av	2.7	2.3	2.0	2.3	2.0	0.3	0.3	3.0	0.3	1.7
Question 8 av	1.3	4.3	2.7	2.3	2.0	0.0	0.3	3.7	0.0	1.9
Question 9 av	3.3	4.0	2.3	2.0	2.3	3.7	0.0	4.7	3.7	2.9
Total mark	35.7	40.0	25.0	21.3	18.3	11.7	12.0	43.3	11.3	24.3

Table 11

Tables 10 and 11 show the breakdown of average mark before and after tasks for each question and the final total average class mark before the activities (12.7) and the total average class mark after the activities (24.3)

Recommendations

It is the authors' opinion that the following changes to the presentation of this written source played a strong, important part in the students' improved performance, an improvement of 23.2% after the study was carried out (See Appendix 2 for one example of a student's written work which shows the improvement before and after the new tasks). Therefore the following recommendations which may be useful to teachers when preparing any written source.

1. In order to solve the linguistic barrier, archaic words should be explained to the student during reading and a vocabulary/translation sheet may be given to the students for them to refer to during reading. In the sheet there may also be the explanation of specific history register.
2. To avoid a possible cultural barrier, it is recommended that the teacher asks students questions about the time when the written source was written. Moreover, more information may be added by the teacher about the period in order for the student to have a clear idea of the time and the culture of this time when the source was written. The researcher recommends a setting of the context for the students as suggested by Blyth (1997) and Hughes (1997). In fact, during the study, it could be observed that the students seemed more at ease when the context was set.
3. For a better presentation of the source:
 - a. Present students with authentic old looking paper which may be smeared with a teabag to get a brownish hue. Moreover, when dried the paper may be crumpled for it to look older. This is done for the students to be put in the picture and appreciate the source more.

- b. The font and the line spacing need to be increased for the students to read the text with more ease.
 - c. Pictures and a description alongside them may also be added especially for visual learners. However, the authors suggest that teachers need to be careful not to add a lot of pictures as this may lead to the students getting distracted from the written source itself.
 - d. The important parts of the text which the students need to focus on may be highlighted and put in bold. Parts of the text can also be changed to another colour to grab the students' attention more.
 - e. The paragraphs may be numbered. This helps the students not to get lost and flustered while reading the text or trying to answer any of the questions.
 - f. A magnifying glass may be used to scrutinise the source better, this proved to be quite motivating and exciting to the students.
5. Prior to the questions based on the source, the authors suggest giving the students scaffolding tasks which help them when it comes to answering the questions individually. Tasks may vary and one may be matching a subtitle from a list provided to the student with its respective paragraph. In fact, in the 'Note from the Editor' section in the textbook, *From the coming of the Knights to EU membership* from where the studied source was taken, the editor suggests that some exercises can be used as a preparation task to something else or as a conclusion to a topic. In fact, the editor of the book points out that:

The objective of this textbook is not to create an all-encompassing coverage of the SEC syllabus to be regimentally followed by the class teacher. On the contrary it is meant only to offer a supplement to the syllabus to be used in conjunction with various other activities. The practical examples purposely only touch a few of the sup-topics in the syllabus (Vella, 2008).

6. Moreover, the students probably do better when there is more teacher management and a better organisation of the lesson in class. Peer work and class feedback via an interactive whiteboard prior to the final exercise where the students had to work individually were carried out and these were definitely an asset.

This study has shown that there can be a marked improvement in students' responses when the correct pedagogical strategies are employed, with the right approach a tedious exercise was transformed into an exercise which Counsell (2004, p.18) would describe as one of those that "give joy - by historical enquiry which establishes curiosity amongst students".

References

Andretti, K. (1993) *Teaching history from primary evidence* London: David Fulton

Banham, D. (2000). 'The return of King John: using depth to strengthen overview in the teaching of political change.' *Teaching History*, Issue 99, pp. 22-32.

Bernbaum, G. (1972). 'Language and history teaching.' In, Burston, Green et. Al (eds) *Handbook for history teachers*. 2nd Ed. London: Metheun Educational, pp. 39-50.

Blyth, J. & Hughes, P. (1997) *Using written sources in primary history* London: Hodder & Stoughton

Counsell, Christine (2004) "Curiosity, Critical Thinking and Intellectual Independence: How have History Teachers Changed History Teaching? How does Historical Learning Change Students?" in Philippou, S. & Makriyianni, C. (eds) *What does it mean to think historically?; Approaches to teaching and learning history*. Nicosia, Cyprus, pp 18 – 56

LeCocq, H. (2000). 'Beyond bias: making source evaluation meaningful to Year 7.' *Teaching History*, Issue 99, pp. 50-56.

Murphy, J. (2005) *100 ideas for Teaching History* London: Continuum

Schembri D'Amato (2008) "Language and the teaching of history in an area secondary school" in Y. Vella (ed) *Transforming history teaching – Transforming society* Allied Publication House pp. 59 -70

Smith, P. (2001). 'Why Gerry now likes evidential work.' *Teaching History*, Issue 102, pp. 8-13.

Vella, Y. 2009 *From the Coming of the Knights to EU Membership* History Teachers' Publication pp. 59-60

Wassermann, J. (2013) *Teaching and learning history by means of political cartoons some theoretical and practical considerations* Paper presented at the Michael Sant Memorial Lecture no.12

Appendix 1

Marking Criteria for the three teachers correcting the students' answers and on which the average mark was produced

1. There is no date on this letter. Find out when it was written by reading the last sentence in paragraph 11

Total of 5 marks		
1-2	3-4	5
If students answer '1950s'. This is because in the introductory page, it says 'written in the 1950s'	If students show working but the addition is incorrect (error is in the maths)	If students show correct working and ans Students need to add together 1945 (the year when WWII was over) and 15 years i.e. 1945+15= 1960

2. What in the opinion of Cassar Torregiani were the causes of the disturbances of the 7th June 1919?

Answer:

- a. Introduction of succession duties without paper representation
- b. Agitation of National Assembly for Self Government
- c. Exasperation of the high cost of foodstuff
- d. Low standard of living

Total of 8 marks	
For each causation mentioned student is given 2 marks. If the 4 causes are mentioned, student gets 8 marks.	
1 mark	2 marks
If students write down only one or two words without giving the full answer. For example they simply write 'succession duties' or 'agitation of National Assembly' without saying that this was to fight for 'self-government' or if students reply only with 'self-government'.	If students give the full comprehensive answer

3. Why was Cassar Torregiani on the National Assembly? (read par. 4)

Answer:

He was a representing the constituted body of the 'Casino Maltese'.

Total of 4 marks
Students need to mention whom he was representing

4. Where was he going when he was informed that his house in Valletta had been attacked?

He was on his way to the Circolo Giovine Malta, the place where the National Assembly was going to hold their first meeting

Total of 2 marks	
1 mark	2 marks
If students do not mention the Circolo Giovine Malta e.g. to first meeting of the National Assembly	If students give full answer as shown above

5. Go through paragraphs 7 to 11 and then make a list of Cassar Torregiani's efforts to keep the price of the bread down. Say why he was unsuccessful in each case.

Answer:

Total of 16 marks	Effort 2 marks for every effort	Unsuccessful 2 marks for every reason
Give 2 marks for effort and 2 marks for reason. If answer is not full e.g. 'no insurance' only, give 1 mark	He risked the greater part of his family belongings and did not insure his ship so as not to raise the price of bread	Wasn't successful because his ship was torpedoed and sunk leading to a doubling of prices of freights (goods). Insuring the ship was far too expensive.
Give 2 marks for effort and 2 marks for reason. If answer is not full e.g. 'bread tax' only, give 1 mark	He pleaded the British to suspend the bread tax until more favourable times.	However, this was futile as Lord Methuen didn't want to suspend the bread tax
Give 2 marks for effort and 2 marks for reason. If answer is not full/too brief, give 1 mark	When faced with a decision either to import wheat at the current high price or to stop the importations, Cassar Torregiani decided to continue importing	He couldn't get the other millers to decide easily
Give 2 marks for effort and 2 marks for reason. If answer is not full/too brief e.g. 'subsidy', give 1 mark	He insisted on a subsidy on the bread tax; a suspension of this tax	But this wasn't accepted and looked at as something unheard of

6. He says that the flour mills of L. Farrugia & Sons (Farsons) were burnt down but his flour mills at St. Georges were attacked but not burnt down. How were Cassar Torregiani's mills saved?

Answer: He says that his employees were a happy crew and they defended his mills with crow bars and bayonets. Moreover, they offered the crowd bags of flours if they don't burn the mills down.

Total of 2 marks	
1 mark	2 marks
If students answer only with "they offered the crowd bags of flours if they don't burn the mills down" without mentioning that fact that they defended the mills with bayonets	If students give the full comprehensive answer as shown above

7. Why did he go to London and what happened there?

Answer: He met the British Lord Morley there who wanted to know what was happening in Malta and why was there unsettlement. At that moment Torregiani remembered the speech he had to give at the Circolo Giovine Malta and tied to explain about their wish for a self-government to ensure imposition of local taxes by local representation. Moreover, he suggested a House of Review.

Total of 3 marks	
1-2 marks	3 marks
If students refer only to the British who enquired about the happenings in Malta	If students mention the British enquiries and also Torregiani's pleadings for the self-government

8. This primary source might revise how the disturbances of the Sette Giugno are viewed. Why do you think so?

Answer: This source gives us an idea of how the disturbances of the Sette Giugno are viewed from the point of view of the miller not of the crowd as per usual in other sources. Usually the millers get the blame and in this case, we see how this miller is defending his position by telling us about his efforts for the people and his experiences

Total of 5 marks		
1-2	3-4	5
If students' answer is very brief such as 'Torregiani is writing'	If students mention Torregiani's point of view	Students need to mention that the point of view is different and distinguish with the usual sources about the Sette Giugno which are from the point of view of the other people not the millers

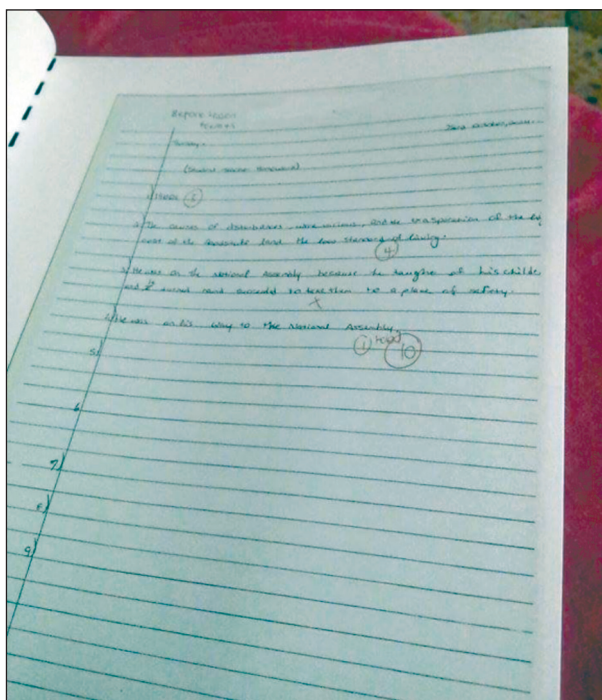
9. How reliable do you think the source is? Why do you think so?

Only to a certain extent. There are some true facts to it but it is told from the point of view of someone who wants to defend his name and position and hence, may be biased as well.

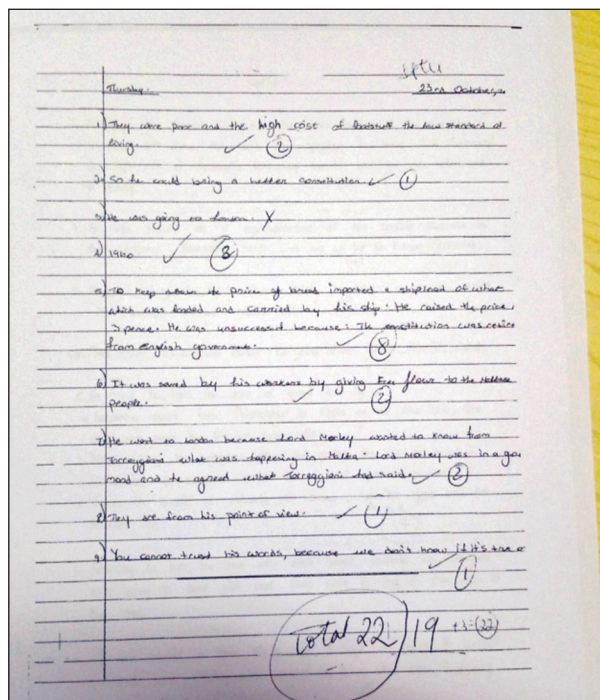
Total of 5 marks			
1-2	3	4	5
If students answer with only 'yes' or 'no'	if students answer 'yes' or 'no' without backing it up with a reason which is good enough for examples 'yes, because it is in the past'	If students answer 'yes' or 'no' backing it up with a valid and a good reason such as 'no, because he is biased' or 'yes, because there are some facts which are true'	If students answer that it is valid to a certain extent or 'yes' and 'no' backing their answer, they get full marks

Appendix 2

One students written answers before and after the new tasks



Before new tasks



After new tasks

The Author



Yosanne Vella is an associate professor in history pedagogy in the Faculty of Education at the University of Malta. She is a history teacher trainee and she lectures on various topics on history teaching. She was part of the Committee of the Education and Culture of NGOs at the Council of Europe up to 2014, she was one of the editors of the online textbook *Historiana* published by Euroclio, the European History Educators Network, and she is one of Euroclio's ambassadors. She is also on the editorial board of a number of journals including Heirnet's *International History Teaching Journal*.

She has published various books, textbooks, papers and teaching resources on history education, as well as history papers on women in Malta in the 18th century.

She is the Vice-President of both the Malta History Society and of the Maltese History Teachers' Association.

She was recently on Sabbatical leave in Australia where she gave papers to undergraduate and Masters' students as well as to fellow academics. The presentations were given at Melbourne Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne, at Victoria University's Centre for Cultural Diversity and Wellbeing, Victoria and at the Faculty of Education of Newcastle University in New South Wales.



This timely publication sheds fresh light and illuminating insights into major issues for history educators. Interdisciplinary approaches, multiculturalism and the Development of literacy skills are all pertinent issues needing support and research based approaches. As ever Professor Vella offers critique which challenges assumptions and develops thinking and practice.



Neil McLennan is the former President of the Scottish Association of Teachers of History (SATH). He is now senior lecturer and Director of Leadership at the University of Aberdeen.