Motivation in the history classroom: A Maltese case study

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Abstract: A major concern in education is students' decline in motivation over the school years. Focusing on the subject of history, this paper reports on a case study involving students, aged 15/16, analysing moving-image sources in a Maltese Year 11 history option classroom. Moving images are defined in terms of footage broadcast in news and documentaries and used as sources of evidence in history lessons. Data analysis revealed how moving images supported students' motivational dimensions of interest, competence and relatedness. However, they do not seem to have provided students with a level of autonomy, defined in terms of students' self-directed initiative to find out things for themselves outside the classroom context. It is argued that a possible reason for this could lie in the stakes students attached to the end-of-secondary examinations and in the necessary preparations for them. In this light, it is hoped that the paper offers reflections for discussing further motivation in terms of summative assessment.

Key words: motivation; moving images; history education; Malta

Introduction

A major concern in education is students' decline in motivation as they progress through schooling (Goldspink & Foster, 2013; Ryan & Deci, 2000). This is evidenced, among others, in students' feelings of boredom at school, low-level of intellectual engagement with lessons, and dislike towards particular lessons or subjects (Dunleavy & Milton, 2010; Riley & Docking, 2004; Yazzie-Mintz, 2010). Given that motivation pervades all aspects of teaching and learning (Schunk et al., 2010), addressing this issue has become

an all-important goal. In Malta, through the *Framework for the Education Strategy for Malta 2014-2024* (Ministry for Education and Employment [MEDE], 2014), cultivating student motivation has been placed on the educational agenda. This necessitates a reflection on the part of the educational community about how different subject areas can contribute towards achieving this goal.

Focusing on the subject of history, this paper reflects on a case study involving students (aged 15/16) analysing moving-image sources in a Maltese Year 11 history option classroom, undertaken for my doctoral research. Besides motivation, which is the subject of this paper, this study also looked into engagement and understanding when using moving images. In this study, moving images comprised broadcast historical content shown on newsreels, news and documentaries featuring non-fictional representations of historical events occurring at points throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Their significance lies in the fact that such broadcast material constituted key sources of information about world events (Walsh, 2005). With a syllabus covering twentieth and twenty-first century Maltese and international history (Directorate for Learning and Assessment Programmes [DLAP] 2012), in which events were subjected to extensive media coverage (Stober, 2008), there is legitimate and extensive scope in using broadcast media content for developing historical understanding.

The potential of visuals in the history classroom has long been recognised. Ormond (2011) makes the point that visual imagery may reveal ideas that are not paralleled in text and contributes to students' understanding of the nuances of an era. Regarding film, researchers have reported learning gains in terms of conveying historical experiences and influencing one's historical knowledge (Morgan, 2010; Weinstein, 2001; Woelders, 2007), shaping historical consciousness (Wineburg, 2001), determining popular perceptions (Lang, 2002), and recognising different perspectives of people in the past (Stoddard, 2012). Regarding motivation, however, this area of research evinced limited insights. Focusing on motivational gains of using ICT in history lessons, a component of which are moving images, Walsh (2013) reports a mixed scenario. ICT allows for a degree of autonomy from the teacher, and where websites are concerned, students are eager to find out more for themselves. The study, however, also revealed a level of demotivation with comments showing that ICT adds little to students' enjoyment or learning (Walsh, 2013). Furthermore, while video has been

found to add interest and enjoyment, students may regard this activity as involving little work by way of watching and listening rather than writing (Harris & Haydn, 2006). Indeed, as Walsh (2013) contends, motivation is a complex phenomenon.

From a domain-specific point of view, if students in their history education are to use a wide variety of historical sources to arrive at an understanding of the past (DLAP, 2012), it is opportune to explore student motivation when learning history with moving images. This paper takes up the issue of motivation to see how this plays out in a classroom in which moving images are used in order to understand better students' motivational orientation and what may compromise their drive to learn when in their final year of secondary schooling. From a wider perspective, knowing about students' motivational attitudes towards learning is key to providing a more supportive classroom environment at a critical stage of their education.

Motivation in history

In an educational setting, a motivated student puts effort in learning in order to achieve successful outcomes (Saeed & Zyngier, 2012). A basic distinction is drawn in literature between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is seen as the doing of an activity for its inherent satisfactions, like enjoyment and interest, and extrinsic motivation as the doing of an activity in order to attain a separable outcome, like avoiding parental sanctions (Ryan & Deci, 2000). For educators, since it is very difficult, almost impossible, to categorise motivation as being purely intrinsic or extrinsic (CEP, 2012a), it is important to understand how both types of motivation feed into each other to bring about learning (Saeed & Zyngier, 2012).

Four dimensions have been found to elicit intrinsic motivation: interest; competence; relatedness; and autonomy (CEP, 2012; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Interest is created when students see the value for completing a task. According to the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), competence, relatedness and autonomy constitute psychological needs which must be met in order for someone to be motivated (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Competence refers to students' ability to adopt and internalise a goal if they understand it and have the relevant skills to complete it (*ibid.*). A sense of relatedness is achieved when students feel respected and cared for by the teacher. Autonomy has generally been defined in terms of one's ability to set goals in undertaking a task and to see a link between effort and outcome (CET, 2012). The classroom

environment can facilitate intrinsic motivation by supporting students' autonomy and competence (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Relatedness and competence are key to promoting the autonomous regulation of extrinsically motivated behaviours (*ibid.*). For a student to be motivated, at least one of these four dimensions must be satisfied (CEP, 2012d). If energy is seen to regulate one's motivated behaviour, by contrast a demotivated person is someone who does not value an activity, does not feel competent to do it or does not believe it will result in a desired outcome (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

These general insights into motivation in an educational context are reflected in research into history education. In the domain of history, researchers have approached student motivation by exploring students' enjoyment of the subject. It is acknowledged that learning outcomes are influenced by pupil attitudes to learning (Haydn & Harris, 2010). Strategies perceived by Year 8 (Key Stage 3) pupils to be enjoyable and through which they feel they learn most effectively in history and geography were: investigative work, group work, use of video, ICT, discussion, debate and fieldwork—which largely facilitate pupil-centred learning (Biddulph & Adey, 2002). The authors report a pupil saying, "It's easier to understand if you have a video or something practical" (Biddulph & Adey, 2002, p.4). In another study, Year 11 (Key Stage 4) pupils mentioned that they appreciate the manner in which discussions were conducted; they enjoyed contributing with confidence while the teacher was always positive (Biddulph & Adey, 2003). Although the term video is not defined, Harris and Haydn (2006) remark that for pupils, video could be "an 'easy' option as it involved little work", however, "… when used well, for example short extracts or to support other activities in the classroom as an introduction or consolidation to an activity, video has a powerful impact on pupils …" (p.322). Significantly, such findings show that students' interest in history has more to do with the learning process rather than the subject content *per* se (Biddulph & Adey, 2002). These active-learning strategies at both key stages prove Hooper (2001) correct in noting that practical and expressive activities are most likely to motivate pupils.

It is to be emphasised that motivation has been researched extensively in relation to engagement (Arief et al., 2012; Martin, 2008). Crucially, high levels of engagement have been found to be indicative of high levels of motivation (Arief et al., 2012). The study set out to explore the use of moving images in terms of motivation, engagement and understanding. In this paper, the focus is on motivation, defined in terms of students' drive to learn history by means

of moving-image extracts, evidenced in their ability and effort to do well in learning, their belief about the usefulness of the moving image extracts to their history education, and their orientation to developing competence and knowledge in their learning.

Methodology

The research design was built around case-study methodology (Gall et al., 1996), allowing for extensive classroom-based research. As such, the study did not purport to establish any claims about causality or to generalise the findings; rather, the aim was to explore and explain the teaching-learning context involving the use of moving-image extracts and discuss their educational role. The study was carried out in a Year 11 history option classroom in a Maltese state secondary school. Three cohorts of students (total = 22 students), including those in the pilot study, were chosen on the criterion that students are in their final year of secondary school following the history option programme. This was the only option classroom for this year group in the school. In this mixed-ability classroom students were fifteen or sixteen years old. Data comprised semi-structured group interviews with students, teacher-student dialogues during whole-class conversations and samples of written tasks, collected over three scholastic years. For the Year 11 cohort, the history option syllabus consists of a balance between Maltese and European and international twentieth and twenty-first century history, spanning from Malta's role during the First World War to terrorist attacks on the U.S.A. in 2011 (DLAP, 2012). As such, this syllabus offers various teaching instances in which students can be given opportunities to analyse moving-image extracts as historical sources. Extracts of moving images were chosen mainly from YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/) channels (e.g., British Pathé) as well as from other websites (e.g., the website of the European Union: http://europa.eu/index_en.htm). Because of the transient nature of web content (Haydn et al., 2015) it was deemed proper to download such extracts in order to have a permanent record and avoid any Internet connectivity issues in the classroom. All moving-image material was not presented in isolated contexts but used in conjunction with other types of sources during lessons spanning the scholastic year. Following a dialogic pedagogy (Alexander, 2008), historical knowledge was co-constructed with students in whole-class discussions (van Boxtel & van Drie, 2013). My role in this study was that of teacher-researcher (Stenhouse, 1975). Although limited by challenges of generalising across contexts (Wilson et al., 2001), teacher

research can improve one's teaching practice, increase students' learning and gain an understanding of students' perspectives and needs (Cheruvu, 2014).

For motivation, which is the focus of this paper, data were derived mainly from semi-structured group interviews as well as student comments during lessons. Students' opinions were solicited about their drive to learn history by means of moving images. As noted by Pintrich and Schunk (2002), motivation cannot be observed but rather inferred from behaviours of choice of tasks, effort, persistence and verbalisations. These interviews were carried out at two stages of each scholastic year: in November, which is a month into the scholastic year and in March, following the Year 11 end-of-year examinations with the aim of capturing students' opinions at different times and see whether their opinions changed, and if so, how. Questions prepared in advance helped the interview take the form of a guided conversation (Yin, 2009). Concerning motivation, questions sought to shed light on issues resulting from the literature. Thus, students were asked about: their enjoyment of the subject and attitudes towards the subject (e.g., Why have you chosen history as an option subject? Do you feel you have made a good choice?); using moving images in class (e.g., Do you think these sources help you understand history better? How?); their interest and involvement in the lessons (e.g., What do you find particularly interesting in these historical moving-images? Do they make history more enjoyable?); and their strategies for analysing pieces of moving image (e.g., How do you usually go about analysing a piece of moving image? Do you think that by using pieces of moving images you are developing skills that will help you do better in exams?).

The coding scheme for analysing the data was based on both the literature and emerging themes from the interviews, and various categories were finalised. 'Interest and enjoyment' was derived from students' comments about their enjoyment in using moving images to learn history. The 'usefulness' of moving images to understand history were categorised according to those concerning 'understanding history' in terms of aspects of the past; those concerning 'procedural knowledge'; and those about the 'sensory appeal' of moving images. 'Competence' resulted from comments about how students go about analysing moving images and the skills they develop for examination purposes. Other comments related to students' own initiative in finding out more on their own by means of moving images were grouped under 'autonomy'. 'Amotivation' concerned those comments in

which students showed a lack of motivation in using moving images. Although the sub-category 'wider context' was not directly related to the objectives of the study, it was felt that this should be worthy of consideration because students' views about their subject interest and future utility, their motivation for the end-of-school examinations and the visual dimension in history carry suggestions about their general motivational attitudes towards history and schooling, and therefore about how this might impact their more specific motivation for using moving images in learning history. To ensure reliability, the coding scheme and a sample of data were moderated.

Data analysis was carried out using the software QSR NVivo 11. Data was analysed qualitatively and quantitatively. Ethical procedures (BERA, 2011) were followed by explaining to students the aims of the research, verbally in class and in writing on the consent form, their right to withdraw at any time from the study and how data was going to be used. Parental/guardian signatures were obtained and student anonymity was maintained by replacing real names with pseudonyms.

Findings

Five aspects related to motivation emerged from the data analysis: enjoyment and interest, usefulness of moving images to learn history, competency, autonomy and amotivation (Table 1). This section will present findings in relation to each of these aspects.

Table 1: Aspects of motivation

Category	Description	Number of coded references
Enjoyment and interest	Utterances showing students' enjoyment and interest in using moving images to learn history	33
Usefulness	Comments about the usefulness of moving images to understand history	181
Competence	Comments related to developing abilities and skills in history	119
Autonomy	Utterances about self-directed initiatives to find out more on their own using moving images	21
Amotivation	Utterances showing lack of motivation	27

Enjoyment and interest

Students' comments during the interviews showed that moving images appeared to have elicited a level of enjoyment and interest (Table 2).

Table 1: Issues and number of references coded in relation to 'Enjoyment and interest'

References to aspects of enjoyment and interest	Number of students who made reference to aspects of enjoyment and interest at least once	Total number of coded references for each aspect of enjoyment and interest N = 33
Puts you in the picture	9	10
Fun	1	1
Interest/value	5	6
Surprise	2	2
Curiosity	2	2
Do away with reading	4	12

Students typically commented that the moving images transported them back in time and allowed them to see for themselves what was happening, "as if you are there". As Kelvin put it, "It's not that you don't believe what you read but you see how things were at that time". A sense of enjoyment was also derived from using moving images. An element of fun was specifically highlighted by Gavin according to whom a lesson in which a moving image is not used would be slightly monotonous, though not entirely boring. Two students appreciated that moving images hold an element of surprise, with Daniel pointing out that "in a moving image there is always something that you don't expect to happen". Moving images were found to kindle students' curiosity by wanting to know more about the topic at hand. Students frequently indicated their preference of using moving images over written sources. Four students mentioned that having to always read through written sources is boring. For them, by using moving images they can do away with reading whereas others recognised the importance of written sources. Noel's comment represents what students meant by this: "In a document you might find that there were many people, they tried to pull down the [Berlin] Wall, while when you are watching these [moving images] you can see what was there and you would interest yourself more".

Usefulness

Interview comments revealed that students found moving images to be useful in three ways: for understanding the past; for understanding the study of the past; and for their sensory appeal (Table 2).

Table 2: Issues and number of references coded in relation to 'Usefulness'

References to each aspect of usefulness	Number of students who made reference to each aspect at least once	Total number of coded references in relation to each aspect N = 181
Understanding the historical content	14	55
Understanding the study of the past	14	84
Sensory appeal	10	42

First, students appreciated the strong social aspect present in moving images, as revealed in many comments about students understanding the past way of life by making inferences about people's behaviours, reactions and emotions as shown in moving images. In the interviews, not only did students comment about the behaviour of the man-in-the-street, but also about politicians' demeanour when giving speeches. For instance, Kelvin noted how from Gorbachev's conferences in the West, "there starts emerging the difference between him and Khrushchev".

Second, moving images appeared to have been of value in enhancing students' understanding of the study of the past. All students pointed out that moving images are insufficient on their own to understand a particular event and do not tell us all that we need to know about an event. The reason given was that moving images might present a one-sided view of events (e.g., British Pathé newsreels). Thus students stressed the need for moving images to be corroborated with other moving images, possibly those coming "from the other side", and other historical sources (e.g., books, historical photographs, newspapers or interviews to contemporary people). Students remarked that moving images were more appropriate for understanding what happened during the course of an event rather than for understanding its causes or consequences, with Daniel remarking that in such a case one need only search for the appropriate moving image. Moreover, students recognised that not all moving images helped them understand the context of

an event or the concomitant changes that occurred. Simon noted that only in exceptional circumstances did they do so. To compensate for this, students suggested once more the necessity to consult other sources.

Third, students found in moving images a sensory appeal. The visual and auditory elements of moving images make history "more interesting" and "simpler to learn". Four students specifically referred to the importance of the senses in learning by means of moving images. Daniel pointed out that "videos are better [than pictures] because you are listening and watching at the same time ... I believe that the more senses you use the more you will learn". Charlo observed that even if one may not understand the commentary he would still get something out of the moving image because "at least you are watching". The advantages of moving images over historical photographs were highlighted by students. For them, moving images provide additional details than photographs do because as the name implies, they are moving images and "show events in real time". Being still images, photographs only show a particular moment in time and one is left wondering "what happened a minute later". It was occasionally mentioned that because of the visual and auditory appeal of moving images, one is able to remember them more than if they had to read through something. That moving images "would stay more on your mind" because one would not be reading but watching and listening was a view shared by many students.

Competence

Students' comments about how they go about analysing moving images and whether they encounter any difficulties revealed the extent to how much analytical students became in this process. Table 3 shows that source investigation was the most favoured approach to analysing a moving image. Students mentioned that "you ask why", "what might happen", "who filmed it", "if I were there ... how would I react". Others pointed out that one must focus one's attention on particular aspects, like "where [the event] took place, the historical figures" and "how people react". Other approaches included commenting while watching and listening and watching the moving image more than once.

Regarding the analysis of moving images four issues came to the fore. The first concerned the commentary. Students noted that sometimes it was difficult to understand the commentator because of a particular accent, the use of difficult words, or because he spoke too fast. Students also raised the issue of having to detect propaganda. Although pointed out by only four

students it nevertheless assumes great importance because, as they explained, one has to see whether the person speaking is telling the truth or whether the commentary is biased.

Table 3: Issues and number of references coded in relation to 'Competence'

Aspects of competence	Number of students who made reference to each aspect at least once	Total number of coded references in relation to each aspect
Analysing moving images		N = 83
a. Source investigation	12	30
b. Commentary	10	22
c. Detecting bias	4	8
d. Omission	3	4
e. Quality of footage	9	19
Skills for exam		N = 36
a. Remembering	10	21
b. Revising	9	15

A further issue concerned the clarity of the footage. It was evident that the quality of what was watched and heard mattered a great deal to students. The moving image in which Winston Churchill was seen delivering the Iron Curtain speech was mentioned twice as lacking visual and audio clarity. The fourth issue was the omission factor. Three students remarked that due to the short duration of the moving image, certain information which one might encounter in the notes would not be included. If left unchecked by the teacher, such difficulties could undermine students' motivation.

While nobody seems to have been aware of having developed any skills in using moving images for examination purposes, students said that if they forget something, they would recall the moving images. Clive's comment captured this shared view: "If, maybe, you forget what your notes say, you might still recall the picture from the moving images. You might remember from them, not just from writing". Students suggested that moving images can be used for revision purposes and that one can make short notes about the moving image watched.

Autonomy

In the context of this study, autonomy was taken to mean students' self-directed initiatives to learn and find out more on their own using moving images.

Table 4: Issues and number of references coded in relation to 'Autonomy'

Aspects of autonomy	Number of students who made reference to each aspect at least once	Total number of coded references in relation to each aspect N = 21
Watch moving images at home	4	10
Would watch the same moving image again	5	6
Would search for a related moving image	3	5

In discussing the question, "Would you watch the moving images we watched in class again on your own?" only 21 comments were coded under this category and students did not go into much detail about this (Table 4). Two students mentioned that they had already watched moving images related to a topic in Year 11 at home; Gavin said that he had previously watched footage about the fall of the Twin Towers and Kyle had made a YouTube search about terrorism. Kelvin said that at home he likes to search for moving images from the Second World War period. Adrian said that he does sometimes search for more moving images "because I would want to know more about something". Three other students observed that they would not watch the same moving image at home having already watched it in class, but would watch another one related to the same topic so as "to see [things] from a different angle and to learn something new".

'Amotivation'

The behaviour of an amotivated person shows a lack of intentionality and a sense of personal causation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Lack of motivation as expressed by students in this study fits within this definition.

Comments suggesting 'amotivation' came from students in the second cohort (Table 5). Simon seemed to least value using moving images in lessons, and his views in this regard remained constant in both interviews. In his view, moving images do not necessarily help one understand what happened

during an event, although they do show how daily life was like. This, however, did not imply that Simon lacked competence in using moving images to learn history.

Table 5: Issues and number of references coded in relation to 'Amotivation'

Aspects of amotivation	Number of students who made reference to each aspect at least once	Total number of coded references in relation to each aspect N = 27
Not useful	2	15
Would not watch the same moving image again	4	8
Do not remember any moving image	1	2
Do not like the syllabus topics	2	2

Despite these comments, Simon was aware that moving images make history more interesting and enjoyable. As he confided, by means of moving images "it is easier to imagine what was happening". Noel did not see moving images as helping him to understand the causes of an event or what people thought at the time, and would not watch a moving image again at home. Neither would six other students. Charlo said that he does not ask more questions when watching a moving image.

Discussion

In terms of the four dimensions of motivation, namely, interest, competence, relatedness and autonomy, for a student to be motivated at least one of these dimensions must be satisfied, however the more dimensions are met the greater the motivation will be (CEP, 2012d). As findings showed, while moving images can be motivational by sustaining levels of interest, competence and relatedness, they do not seem to have provided students with a level of autonomy, defined here in terms of students' self-directed initiative to find out things for themselves outside the classroom context.

Pintrich and Schunk (2002) note that "the common generalisation is that people will learn or do well if they are interested, and they will not learn or perform if they are uninterested" (p. 289). Moving images appeared to have

fostered situational interest among students by creating a feeling of being present in the event being reported. Students appreciated that moving images put them in the event being reported. Jean's comment that "you feel as though you are in that situation" reflects a similar response in a study by Harris and Haydn (2006): "When we watched a video about the plague … you could really see what it was like to be there, and to feel what they were feeling" (p. 322). That students consider watching videos an enjoyable learning experience was noticed by Biddulph and Adey (2002) who reported a student saying, "If you're watching a video … it's not just us being lazy but you learn more" (p. 4).

Competence refers to students' belief that they are capable of doing something (CEP, 2012a). A general motivation principle expounded in the self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1993) is that students who doubt their capacities to do well in learning will not be as academically motivated in terms of effort, persistence and behaviour (Pintrich, 2003). In this context, I argue that moving images may support student motivation if they are commensurate with students' skills of historical analysis but may weaken the motivation of other less able students if the content goes beyond their abilities. Data from this study revealed that moving images were useful in helping students understand both the historical content and the study of the past. This accords with literature about using film for developing subject-specific competencies (e.g., Marcus, 2005; Weinstein, 2001; Woelders, 2007).

Developing such competencies is an important objective of the history option syllabus in relation to the evaluation and interpretation of evidence, which includes, for instance, placing evidence in context, analysing and detecting bias and pointing to gaps and inconsistencies (DLAP, 2012). In terms of historical content, students were struck by how people behaved and reacted in different events. In the context of understanding the study of the past, it was evident that students developed a range of competencies, like focusing on specific details and asking questions, detecting bias and considering omitted details. Also, students were aware that moving images do not tell us everything that needs to be known about an event, hence the necessity to corroborate sources, not only with different moving images but also with other kinds of sources. It may thus be suggested that although most students were able to handle the analytic approach to moving images quite competently, thereby possibly increasing their control and confidence in

learning, there may be students who might struggle in this process and thus their competence would be undermined.

An environment in which students feel socially interconnected and supported increases feelings of relatedness, thereby improving their academic motivation (CEP, 2012c). If, as data from this study suggest, students felt comfortable getting involved in peer exchanges, it could be argued that moving images may have helped foster feelings of relatedness among students, which is a key component of motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). As explained, this study was carried out in the context of a dialogic pedagogy (Alexander, 2008) which involves classroom talk that encourages challenge and debate (van Drie & van Boxtel, 2011). By and large, students in this study were appreciative of the fact that their opinions were valued by both peers and teacher. Having small student cohorts could have mattered a great deal. It is known that the smaller the classroom size, the more likely it is for the teacher to give students individual attention (Ehrenberg et al., 2001). Having a healthy teacher-student rapport contributes towards fostering motivation. As found by Harris and Haydn (2006), the quality of the human interaction with pupils influences the degree to which pupils enjoy history.

Given that students' responses to interview questions showed that they did not seem to have followed up on what was done in class by watching more moving images at home, whether by watching again the same extracts or by searching for related ones in relation to the topic at hand, it could be argued that moving images did not seem to foster autonomy among students. This was surprising for three reasons. First, browsing the Internet for moving images at home seemed to be a common practice among students. Even though this could have been done for reasons disconnected from school matters, this not only showed that students have the time but also that they are interested in moving images. Second, students had already searched for moving images about specific topics at home. This implies that students may come to the classroom with some background knowledge about a historical event formed by watching a moving image. This accords with Card's (2011) opinion about students' readiness to deploy their media savviness in the classroom. Third, according to Gavin's perception, today's generation prefer to carry out searches on the Internet rather than from books. He even regarded the material on the Internet as being more reliable because "it is always updated". Gavin's opinion underscores some students' preferred research style and supports Walsh's (2005) contention that young people live

in an age in which the television and the Internet are used as their main sources of information. Although certain students pointed out the importance of searching for moving images other than those watched in class to get a different perspective of events, at no point in the interviews or the lessons did they mention that they actually did so.

Being in their final secondary school year, a possible reason for what could have undermined this aspect of motivation might be their focus on the end-of-secondary school examinations, as their concerns regarding these examinations indicate. At this stage of education, students were aware of how critical this scholastic year was to their future educational paths. As most students remarked, the prospect of attending post-secondary education was their primary goal. Generally, on the outcome of these examinations students make important decisions: an overall pass secures them entry into a post-secondary institution and the grades obtained would determine which educational institution they can enter and which subjects they can choose to study. Possibly, the challenge posed by examinations could have undermined their sense of autonomy, and rather than being inquisitive to find out things for themselves, they preferred instead to concentrate solely on material necessary for the examination. In preparing for the history examination, for example, Kelvin explained, "I prefer reading and know what is happening rather than watching [moving-image extracts]". Given this performance-goal mind-set, "it is no surprise that some students respond by feeling anxious or frustrated, fearing failure, and generally becoming unmotivated" (CEP, 2012b, p. 7). This was evident in Simon's comment: "We have a lot of work. I don't know what is [the] normal [amount of work to study]; I don't know". Gavin, in the second interview, expressed his feelings thus: "The coming five weeks taste like death to me … because the last bit, you know, you want to finish things". Besides revealing frustration and anxiety, Gavin's comment also showed 'a need for closure' (Webster & Kruglanski, 1997), which is "the desire of the mind to end states of uncertainty and resolve unfinished business" (Konnikova, 2013, p.138). Taking this broad angle, it is interesting to speculate whether students would have appreciated more the use of moving images were these to be incorporated into formal assessment.

Analysis of data also showed levels of 'amotivation', whereby students did not think they could draw benefit from using moving images in their learning. Following Ryan and Deci's (2000) characterisation of 'amotivation', 'amotivated' students were those who did not believe using moving images

would result in a beneficial outcome, like utility for the examinations, and did not value the use of moving images for particular purposes, like learning second-order concepts. Simon was the one who in both interviews said that, apart from helping him see what "exactly happened", moving images were useless. Simon explained: "Moving images give you unnecessary details, like how the [Berlin] Wall looked like. Text is more simple. For the exam it's more important how the Wall was built rather than how it looked like". Thus, for Simon, moving images have more incidental details than crucial ones and he is not willing to give those details any weight. In addition, some students did not find moving images to be necessarily useful to understand concepts like causes, consequences or changes. Interestingly, in contrast to Deci and Ryan's (1985) comment that behavioural outcomes of 'amotivation' lack competencies and commitment towards participation, data from this study showed a different trend; students showing 'amotivation' towards moving-image sources where nevertheless participative in lessons and showed levels of competencies in using moving images to learn history both in terms of substantive and procedural knowledge. Within this context, however, it may be remarked that comments revealing 'amotivation' may add some strength to Walsh's (2013) speculation that, for some students … "technology is a useful tool in low level cognitive operations (initially engaging interest, finding things out, writing) but less valuable as a tool for higher cognitive operations – thinking about concepts such as causes and consequences or the significance of particular events or competing interpretations" (pp. 134-135).

Given that most students in this study did not appear to be using moving images explicitly in ways that might specifically benefit them for the examinations, and therefore not to attain a separable outcome, but found in moving images a sense of enjoyment and interest and appreciated their visual appeal, it can be argued that moving images supported students' intrinsic motivation to a great extent. As Ryan and Deci (2000) explain, "intrinsic motivation will occur only for activities that hold intrinsic interest for an individual—those that have the appeal of novelty, challenge, or aesthetic value for that individual" (pp. 59-60).

Conclusion

A decline in student motivation over the school years is a cause of concern (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Motivation has a major influence on student achievement (Robinson, 2015), and for Maltese students in Year 11, with

examinations round the corner, the stakes are at an all-time high. This study has shown that there are positive indications in using moving images in history lessons in terms of interest, competence and relatedness. Moving images seemed to have provided students with interesting and enjoyable experiences in learning history to a considerable extent, thus increasing their interest. Feelings of competence could be fostered because students demonstrated the necessary knowledge in analysing moving images, and could practise this knowledge each time they analysed moving-image extracts. Moving images encouraged interaction in discussing the evidence, thus supporting students' feelings of relatedness. However, autonomy seemed to be lacking. While many variables can be at play in determining how much self-directed students are, this paper has argued that a possible reason which could have accounted for this was students' focus on the examination. Aware that this is one interpretation of what went on in a particular history classroom and that generalisations cannot be made, nevertheless this should provide grounds for reflection about how high-stake end-of-secondary summative assessment impacts student motivation. At this stage of education, attending to students' needs in terms of motivation could hardly be a more pressing matter. Knowing about students' drive to learn, with all the complexities that this entails, offers teachers a more rounded understanding of who students are.

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