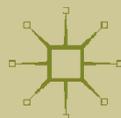




Holocaust Education in Primary Schools in the Twenty-First Century

Current Practices, Potentials and Ways Forward

Edited by Claus-Christian W. Szejnmann,
Paula Cowan and James Griffiths



The Holocaust and its Contexts

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Paula Cowan • James Griffiths
Editors

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macmillan

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The Holocaust and its Contexts

ISBN 978-3-319-73098-1

ISBN 978-3-319-73099-8 (eBook)

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-73099-8>

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018935404

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Cover illustration: Two children speak to Holocaust survivor Martin Stern at The Journey exhibition at the National Holocaust Centre and Museum, UK. Photograph: © David Parry

Printed on acid-free paper

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The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

HOLOCAUST EDUCATION: A PRIMARY OR SECONDARY CONCERN?

The UK broadcast by the BBC in 1972 from the Anne Frank House, Amsterdam, for the popular children's television programme *Blue Peter*¹ heralded the appropriateness of teaching primary aged children about the Holocaust. This eight-minute feature told the story of Anne Frank, and in 1976, *Blue Peter* featured an interview with Otto Frank. While the story of Anne Frank continues to be taught to primary aged children today, there are now many other suitable resources for this age group.

In the late 1990s in Germany, Gertrud Beck and Matthias Heyl (Eckmann et al. 2017, p. 47) debated whether Holocaust education should take place in primary schools. The former argued that primary students already had some knowledge of Nazism and the Holocaust and that early education had a role in diffusing their anxieties and prejudices; the latter argued that primary students could be overwhelmed or traumatized by such learning and that students of this age should be sheltered from knowledge about these topics. While Holocaust education in Germany is predominantly a secondary concern today, German empirical research findings suggest that the Holocaust *can* be taught to younger students.

Since the turn of the century there has been a transformation in school- and museum-based Holocaust education. This is largely due to an increase in Holocaust museum technological developments, new teaching pedagogies, the race to collect and disseminate Holocaust survivor testimony and a growing recognition that the value of Holocaust education to school-age students impacts on their values, human rights and citizenship education, in addition to their understanding of history and a wide range of

other curricular areas. Nonetheless, when we decided to hold an international conference on Holocaust education in July 2016, we did so knowing that bringing together Holocaust educational researchers and school and museum educators from across the globe to focus on Holocaust education for children of primary age (mainly 10–12 years) would be challenging. This is partly due to the ideas expressed in the aforementioned debate in Germany, and indeed elsewhere, but mainly because teaching the Holocaust to students of this age is mandatory in only a few countries, such as Israel and France. In most countries the optional status of Holocaust education confers upon it considerably less importance than in secondary or high schools, where there is an established consensus on its appropriateness and value. This partially explains what we mean by ‘a secondary concern’.

Faced with a possible lack of research and professional interest in this area, we were surprised to find that our main challenge was, in fact, to design a programme that would accommodate the rich diversity of academic papers submitted. These papers demonstrated that transformations of and developments in Holocaust education had not bypassed primary education. The conference aims were to explore issues arising from teaching the Holocaust to young learners and to facilitate a network of educators with a shared interest, namely to contribute to the development of Holocaust education to primary aged students. Building on the conference success, the editorial team, composed of a historian, a former primary teacher and teacher educator/Holocaust educational researcher, and a former history teacher and museum educator, then threw down the challenge of this book. Our backgrounds and multidisciplinary echo the changing landscape of school-based Holocaust education where direct teaching is employed alongside a growing number of virtual approaches and technologies, where fewer Holocaust survivors visit schools and museums to talk to young people and answer their questions, and where the Holocaust is not exclusively taught in schools though history or religious and moral education but across a number of diverse subject areas in the curriculum in museums and schools.

We consider that learning about the Holocaust is important to primary students’ understanding of the Second World War and to their understanding of the world in which they live. At the time of writing we are shocked by the footage of the rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, USA (2017) showing people carrying racist and antisemitic placards, waving

Nazi flags and making the Nazi salute. Sadly, however, one could easily fill this book with other disturbing incidents and developments, including a federal election campaign in Germany that has been marked in some towns by hatred and rage or the recent arrest of three men in Britain, including two soldiers, charged with being members of a banned neo-Nazi group.

It is inconceivable that all primary aged students can be ‘sheltered’ from viewing or hearing about these disturbing events. If school-based Holocaust education is the exclusive domain of secondary schools, then few primary students will understand the meaning of neo-Nazi symbols, and this can lead students to receive mixed and incorrect messages from what they see or hear on the news. This justifies the viewpoint that leaving Holocaust education to secondary school is simply too late.

Our contributors range from countries that have a unique relationship with the Holocaust, such as Germany and Austria (‘perpetrator countries’) and Israel, neutral Switzerland, occupied Holland, and Allied countries from the United States to Canada and Australia. The issues discussed in this book are equally multidisciplinary and wide ranging. Those that focus on school-based Holocaust education include discussions of the impact of teaching the Holocaust to primary aged students (Schweber and Resenly; Hale), teaching pedagogy (Carnes, Street and Wiedeman; Cowan; Duffy and Cowan; Richardson; Mitnik; Richler-Friedman) and primary students’ perspectives of the Holocaust (Mathis, Pech and Achenbach). Those that focus on museum-based education discuss museum pedagogy (De Bruijn; Szejnmann, Griffiths, Mills and Niven; Shachar) and collaborative practices with primary schools (Philips; Strickler).

One feature that is common to many contributors is their acknowledgement that teaching the Holocaust to primary students is not without its critics. It is important that every Holocaust educator recognises and understands this criticism, as the responsibility to teach young learners their first lessons about the Holocaust cannot be overestimated. Irrespective of whether this takes place in a school or museum environment, educators must consider and respond to the complexities and sensitivities involved. This book addresses some of this criticism and provides insight into the diverse ways in which primary aged students engage with Holocaust education. It is unlikely that this book will change critics’ minds, but it will show that as Holocaust education spreads around the world, it is indeed ‘a primary concern’.

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NOTES

1. First aired in 1958, *Blue Peter* is the longest-running children's TV show in the world.

REFERENCE

Eckmann, M., D. Stevick, & J. Ambrosewicz-Jacobs. (2017). *Research in Teaching and Learning about the Holocaust*. Berlin: Metropol.

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PART I

Impact



Curricular Imprints or the Presence of Curricular Pasts: A Study of One Third Grader's Holocaust Education 12 Years Later

Simone Schweber and Irene Ann Resenly

Twelve years ago, at the time of this writing, in the year 2000 a third-grade class was deeply involved in learning about the Holocaust, and Simone Schweber studied them. She was taking up the questions of how old is old enough to learn about the Holocaust and what are the repercussions, morally and educationally, of learning about it at a young age. At the time, a few academics had written about the question theoretically, but none empirically. Harriet Sepinwall emphasized the importance for young children of understanding the Holocaust's themes so as to help create a more just and peaceful world.¹ Samuel Totten countered that Holocaust education necessitated including its "horrific aspects" and was therefore too potentially psychologically damaging for young children.²

In the hopes of providing a nuanced policy recommendation, Schweber sought out and investigated the class of a very experienced and well-respected teacher.³ Her study included interviews with the teacher, with select students from the class, and with their parents or guardians. It also included classroom observations of the entire Holocaust unit as well

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© The Author(s) 2018
C. W. Szejnmann et al. (eds.), *Holocaust Education in Primary
Schools in the Twenty-First Century*, The Holocaust and its
Contexts, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-73099-8_1

as analysis of all the students' work. At the end of the unit, the parents, teacher, and many of the students concluded that it had been appropriate for them; Schweber, however, concluded that on the whole, these students were too young for this particular enactment. Though the teacher was unarguably excellent and the parents tremendously supportive, Schweber argued against teaching about the Holocaust, in depth, to third graders.

The one Jewish student in the class had particularly influenced Schweber's recommendation. Lila understood both the events and the significance of what she was learning and during the unit developed a "real depression" according to her parents. She had nightmares, stopped playing with her brother, and was unable to finish an interview with Schweber because she needed to cry. Schweber remembers asking Lila tentatively at the time whether the interview itself was making her cry or if what they were talking about, the Holocaust unit at school, was. Lila indicated that it was the latter, and Schweber stopped the interview to hug her. While Lila's were not unreasonable reactions, their weightiness pushed Schweber to argue that students should be taught about the Holocaust only later in their formal schooling lives.

Influential at its publication, Schweber's study left many related questions unanswered, such as how old students ought to be when they are first exposed to the topic and what results different kinds of early exposure would yield. Almost a decade later, no other in-depth empirical studies of Holocaust learning in the early grades have been published—though much other research has expanded the scope of the field in powerful ways: how national narratives and Holocaust history shape learning about it,⁴ the connections of Holocaust history to other atrocities,⁵ the challenges in presenting content from victims' perspectives,⁶ "best practices" in Holocaust education,⁷ what takes place when learning about the Holocaust,⁸ and how "heritage learning" is negotiated and interpreted across homes and schools.⁹ And yet very few of these studies focus on the elementary years, despite the fact that many states in the USA mandate the teaching of the Holocaust, even in the early grades.¹⁰ Moreover, of the very few long-term studies of educational impacts,¹¹ none focus on Holocaust education.

The study discussed here reopens Schweber's initial study, considering the long-term effects of Holocaust education, by asking the following questions: What are the psychological and intellectual *aftereffects* of early Holocaust education? How does identity mediate Holocaust education? And, how, if at all, does early experience matter over time? Though this

case does not answer these questions with surgical precision, it does offer insights based on empirical research.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Grounded in a constructionist epistemology,¹² we developed a theoretical framework that draws on the interrelated categories of sensemaking, narrativization, self-perception, and memory. To understand sensemaking, we relied on Vaughn and Weick's notions that new information is taken up within preexisting frames of reference formulated by past experience.¹³ We were also interested in "the narrativization of real events,"¹⁴ how our participants "storied" their memories of that time and its impacts thereafter. Where they "began" the story of what they remembered from that time mattered to us as researchers as it helped us position them as actors in their own memories. Similarly the "middles" and "endings" of their narratives could be rendered as stories of engagement or lack thereof, of confusion, emotion, long-term trauma, or consistent interest. The plotlines of their stories, we imagined, would implicitly express their positions as much as the contents of their narratives explicitly did. As Deborah Britzman writes in her discussions of so-called difficult knowledge, "When individuals narrate experience, they...express their affective investments in knowing and being known, in new editions of old educational conflicts, and in their fragile working of reconsidering what will count as worthy and worthless in teaching and learning."¹⁵

In terms of self-perceptions, we were interested in the subcategories of agency, competence, and belonging,¹⁶ asking how the narrations of that early experience reflected heightened or diminished agency, greater or lesser competence, and shifted or shifting senses of belonging. We were well aware that oppositional identities were simultaneously possible; the same student, for example, might remember experiencing an increased sense of belonging in the classroom by virtue of identifying with what was being taught while simultaneously remembering a diminished sense of belonging by virtue of the classroom dynamics. Or she might experience a greater sense of belonging to one community while simultaneously experiencing a diminished sense of belonging to another, whether "imagined" or real.

Finally, it is worth foregrounding the fact that the entirety of this study plays out within the realm of memory. Because we were asking what participants in that early study remembered about the experience it was based on and how they thought that experience shaped their later learning

and thinking, we were essentially asking *about memory*: how memory works in sensemaking, how it shows up in narrativization, and how it plays out in identity construction. For a theorization of memory, we relied on Michael Rothberg's notion of "multidirectional memory"¹⁷ in which memory can be triggered by and serve in turn as a trigger to the memories of other historical events. As Rothberg explains, "Memories of particular events come and go and sometimes take on a surprising importance long after the materiality of the events remembered has faded from view."¹⁸ Moreover, "an important epistemological gain in considering memory as multidirectional instead of as competitive is the insight...that the emergence of memories into the public often takes place through triggers that may at first seem irrelevant or even unseemly" (ibid). This study, by asking what early Holocaust education catalyzed, aims to explore connections that memory enabled, forged, and repressed.

In thinking about the mysterious workings of memory, we were influenced by Kahneman and Tversky's groundbreaking studies. Kahneman's (2011) distillation of their work together posits a series of "useful fictions" to explain the evolutionary modes of how memory functions. The "peak-end rule," as Kahneman calls it, applies to the emotional valence of the ending of an experience. If the experience ends well, a person will remember it positively, which can trump the unpleasantness of the experience itself as it is occurring, even when prolonged, which Kahneman calls "duration neglect." As Kahneman explains, the selves that remember our experiences make up our identities, *not* the selves that experience what is later remembered. Hence it is all the more important to see how early experiences are remembered for it is precisely remembering that positions our identities in relation to the world. Phrased differently, we were interested in the "strangers" that are our past selves brought to the forefront by our remembering selves in the present.

METHODOLOGY

Methodologically, we relied on both narrative inquiry¹⁹ and portraiture,²⁰ using a so-called enlightened eye²¹ to strike a balance between how participants in the research remembered their pasts and how we as researchers interpreted them. We attempted to be both "...generous and tough, skeptical and receptive [and]...watchful of feelings, perspective, and experience."²²

We conducted semistructured interviews with some of the participants from the original study. The generated data set was then analyzed for both

the categories of interest we had identified going in (significance of the experience, emotions attached to its memory) and for emergent categories of importance (Jewishness, context of learning, sociability). Though we had hoped to interview all of the participants from the initial study, they proved hard to track down twelve years after the fact. This chapter thus focuses on a single, focal student from the first study, Lila, her two parents, and Mr. Kupnich, the remarkable third-grade teacher. Triangulating across these angles of vision results in a rich portrait of what mattered for framing multidirectional memory.

LILA THEN AND NOW

In the third grade, Lila struck Schweber as bright, intuitive, sensitive, articulate, and wise. She was bubbly, intellectually curious, and somewhat precocious. Over the course of the Holocaust unit, though, Lila became distressed and saddened by the content, and because the unit was taught at the end of the school year, Lila ended third grade feeling that way.

Twelve years later, Lila presented as sensitive, self-aware, articulate, and thoughtful. A college sophomore at a Big Ten school, Lila described herself as being invested in social activism, committed to fighting against injustice, and intensely Jewish—all of which she connected to her early schooling experiences. At the time of the interview, she was considering majoring in history in the hopes of becoming a high school teacher upon graduation.

Lila's memories of her third-grade experience were both vivid and abstract. She remembered learning about the Holocaust in Mr. Kupnich's class. She remembered the heaviness of the experience emotionally, and she remembered particular moments with surprising precision. The first open-ended question we posed to Lila as a college student was what she remembered from the third grade generally. Schweber had thought of her third-grade self as well-integrated in the class, a somewhat self-assured leader, a big personality, unafraid of speaking her mind and dedicated to sharing her ideas. In sharp contrast to this impression, Lila described feeling separate from her classmates and very much alone:

Third grade was really hard for me. Elementary school was in general really hard for me. I didn't feel like I had any friends. I didn't feel like I really fit in. I've always been very curious and pretty smart and very caring and also very sensitive. (June 14, 2013)

When asked what she remembered from her third-grade experience of learning about the Holocaust specifically, Lila expanded on her sense of isolation:

I remember being the only Jewish kid in the class. I think that was a really important, that really defined the experience for me. I remember that it was really hard and really emotional....

The distinct memory I always think about is when we watched the movie about Anne Frank. [*Anne Frank: The Whole Story* (2001)]. And then the next day my class went to the zoo and everyone else was like laughing and happy and happy.... I was nine years old and had to sleep with my parents that night because I had really bad nightmares. Then the next day I was sitting on the bus being like, ‘How could everyone just be like having fun and not thinking about it?’ And I was really stuck in it. When I learn about the Holocaust, that’s what I think about....That’s what I remember from the third grade.... (Lila, June 14, 2013)

Lila’s transition from past to present tense in this response was not incidental. Other moments in the interview made clear that when Lila learns about the Holocaust currently, as an adult, she remembers the profound sense of loneliness that characterized her learning the subject in third grade. The shift in tense signifies the trigger of that past; its echo reverberates in Lila’s present learning. Lila also remembered her nightmare from third grade, the one that caused her to crawl into bed with her parents. “I don’t remember it super-detailed, but I distinctly remember that there were Nazis that were coming to get my family,” she said. “I remember that the Nazis were wearing *couture* or some ridiculous clothing,” she elaborated, with a slightly self-mocking chuckle. It was “surreal.” (October 31, 2012)

Lila’s mother, when asked to remember the unit from twelve years earlier, focused on the ways in which Lila’s identity as the sole Jewish student had meant that Lila’s largely non-Jewish peers associated the events they were learning about *with Lila*. In other words, not only did Lila the third grader identify herself with Anne Frank and empathize with other Jewish victims of the Holocaust, but the other students in the class also identified Holocaust victims with Lila, which exacerbated her loneliness. Her mother explained:

So what happened was they [the other students] said—and we even remember talking to Mr. Kupnich about this—they said, ‘Oh this is terrible! This is terrible! [The Holocaust is terrible.] Poor *Lila*.’

It was kinda like this is terrible and this happened *to Lila*....This was personal to her—what the kids would see it as. And it was in some ways. But they didn’t feel it the way she did. And she knew that.... (June 17, 2013)

Lila's sense of being alone in the experience of learning about the Holocaust, then, reflected not only her emotional sensitivity as a person and her acute identification with Jewish victims, but also her peers' taking up that identification. In the third grade, she had said, "I get really sad, and I just...get all depressed and stuff, hearing about these people who, I mean, if I were born 50 years ago, this could have been me!"²³ Twelve years later, her mother explained that Lila's peers had seemed to agree—not in thinking that they themselves could have been victimized, but rather that *Lila might have been*, had they all lived in the ahistorical impossibility of "back then." Lila's mother was claiming that Lila understood that the other students saw her identification as uniquely legitimate, and that it set her apart. Interestingly, Lila did not remember her classmates' reactions vividly except when describing the trip to the zoo. She remembered generally, though, that the unit "affect[ed] them less than it was affecting me..." and "...that they didn't have any background knowledge about the Holocaust" when the unit commenced.

Lila's memories of her third-grade experience were not all negative. Her sense of isolation was mitigated at the time by her teacher's having been Jewish. "I think [that] did make a difference," she said about Mr. Kupnich's religion, continuing, "I think I would have felt much more uncomfortable if he hadn't been Jewish." Lila also remembered having fun learning about Anne Frank: "I remember that we drew our own annex. I remember that I drew mine in Hawaii and all these fun things," she added. But primarily, Lila's sense of being alone and Jewishly alone mattered not only at the time, but powerfully in her memory of that time.

In an attempt to figure out which came first, the religious identity or the sense of isolation, we asked Lila as an adult to reflect on how those were related. We were trying to figure out whether, because Lila was Jewish, she felt alone in the third grade, or whether, because she felt alone, that sense became attached to her Jewishness. Astutely, Lila, the young adult, responded:

I think they were definitely connected—and it's hard to tell which thing caused which, but...one of the reasons I felt different from other kids was *because* I was Jewish. My family did different things than their families. I wasn't part of Girl Scouts because the first meeting was on *Yom Kippur* [a Jewish high holiday]. Being Jewish caused some of my isolation, and being isolated made it really easy for me to identify with a time when people were isolated based on their Jewishness. (June 14, 2013)

It was precisely this sensibility that reverberated in later experiences of Holocaust learning for Lila, simultaneously reifying her Jewish identity and connecting it to her sense of isolation.

Two incidents she described happening later in life echoed the experience she had in the third grade—seeming to situate her on the same emotional terrain as the earlier experience. It was as if the curricular imprint of that third-grade experience either resurfaced in her later experiences or indeed shaped later moments in some subconscious way. Lila recounted sitting in her tenth-grade history class as the teacher was lecturing about the Holocaust. She remembered feeling separate—separate from her peers, in this case distant from her teacher, and again, alone in the experience of learning about the Holocaust:

...I remember just sitting when he was lecturing us and being like, ‘Are people *looking* at me?’ I think there was maybe only one other Jewish person in the class. I remember it also feeling really isolating and feeling really weird to be sitting in a class and being lectured about something that was so emotional and so connected to me. It felt really impersonal to me. (Lila, June 14, 2013)

On the one hand, then, as she had been in the third grade, Lila felt isolated as a Jew in this classroom, one of only two Jewish students in the room wondering whether her non-Jewish classmates were taking sidelong glances at her as though associating historical Jewish victimization with her person in the present. On the other hand, Lila felt isolated by the pedagogical format of lecturing; it was “impersonal” and at least disconnected from the powerful emotional resonance this information triggered for her. The combination of the content and the context in the tenth-grade experience prompted Lila’s feelings of loneliness in the third grade to resurface—possibly predisposing her to feel that way again. (Of course it’s worth noting that the demographics of her largely Christian, Midwestern town didn’t help her to feel less alone.)

Four years later, Lila had the opportunity to visit the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam. With just enough information to contextualize the Franks’ experience, but without so much that it overwhelms viewers, the museum does not need to work at proving “authenticity”; the attic is where Anne Frank and her family (and others) were hidden over the course of World War II. Recounting her visit, Lila shared:

It was really interesting. It’s like a really amazing museum, but really hard and emotional. Also, like the people that I was there with weren’t Jewish

and then it didn't seem like the people around me were Jewish, though I know that's making a lot of assumptions about people, but I think that's always hard for me....Encountering the Holocaust with people who are non-Jews is always a weird experience for me personally. (June 14, 2013)

Traveling with non-Jewish peers, surrounded by people she assumed were non-Jews, and once again identifying with Anne Frank, Lila's tenth- and third-grade experiences haunted her European museum visit in college; it was as if, for Lila, the curricular imprint of her early learning had oriented her to long for Jewish companions later—even as she knew full well that she was idealizing the category of Jews by doing so. She knew intellectually that encountering the Holocaust *with Jews* would not necessarily make the experience a less lonely one since she knew that there were Jews like her and unlike her, who might be moved by the Holocaust or unmoved by it; and yet, in an inverted example of “multidirectional memory,” she could not help hoping for Jewish companionship as an adult, as if such company might provide her third-grade self with a more fulfilling social world and an easier first Holocaust education encounter. When asked whether that feeling of isolation in the museum connected to her third-grade experience, Lila nodded in agreement.

Learning about the Holocaust can always evoke isolation, empathy, identification, and sorrow for Lila—perhaps as a result of having learned about it when so young, or perhaps as a result of having learned about it in the way that she did, but certainly as a result of who she has turned out to be as a person. Lila's sensitivity and empathy, her strong sense of Jewish identity, and powerful identification with Jewish victimization all contributed to her sense of the Holocaust's power to overwhelm.

AVOIDANCE OF CASUAL CONTACT

Discussing her relationship to learning about the Holocaust and genocide in the present, Lila used the term “casual” to describe informal encounters she purposefully avoids:

Because it was such an emotional experience—and came up for me at such a fragile time in my life, whenever I encounter the Holocaust [now], I'm kind of scared to learn about [it], but I've had extensive learning about it since then, like I went to Poland for a week, so I've like really done a lot. But I think learning about the Holocaust is always a really emotional thing for me. I avoid dealing with it casually. I won't read books about the Holocaust, or watch movies about the Holocaust, like even *Inglorious*

Basterds or something that's NOT supposed to be super intense. I just won't do it because they're like really triggering for me.

[Do you think that's because of when you learned about the Holocaust?] "I think that part of it was when I learned it—how I was feeling when I was learning it....But also, I feel a similar triggering when I learn about most things that are really hard to learn about—I don't think it's just this. I think I'm just more scared to engage with the Holocaust *casually*. Other things are equally triggering [for] me. I get equally emotional. It [just] sticks with me more than I've noticed it sticks with other people."

[Did the genocide of the Arawaks stick with you in the same way as learning about the Holocaust?] "I think when I learn about it now it's triggering and upsetting to me, but no, I don't remember learning about it in the third grade—about the genocide of the Arawak Indians."

[How do you think about that? What does that mean to you?] "Ummm...I mean I think ...the connection that I feel to the Holocaust is deeper because of being Jewish—and also scarier because [it means]—I can put myself really easily in the shoes of people then. Especially learning about Anne Frank is really hard because literally that could have been me. It feels more personal." (Lila, June 14, 2013)

Harkening back almost verbatim to her third-grade self, Lila encapsulates the moral lesson she learned at that time, saying now, "Literally, it could have been me," having said in third grade, "This could have been me!"

Whether the result of formidable curricular imprinting or simply a tremendous consistency in attitude, Lila's position seemed almost unchanged over more than a decade. It is as though the seriousness of learning in depth about the Holocaust during the third grade froze her frame of reference toward the subject matter, orienting her to see the Holocaust as self-referential all these years later. Her strong sense of herself as a Jew, in third grade as in college, meant that she considered that aspect of her identity to supersede others when imagining the historical past. While learning about the genocide of the Arawaks "triggered" hard emotions for her, it simply was not the same kind of "trigger" because she herself was not an American Indian.

As this excerpt also demonstrates, Lila currently avoids movies, books, and discussions about the Holocaust because they can be emotionally difficult for her, triggering depressive episodes precisely because she imagines herself victimized. Thus she wisely approaches such media warily. As she repeated during the interview, she tries hard to avoid the Holocaust in particular, not genocide in general, because it is Holocaust contact that prompts the hardest feelings to manage.

LILA'S ADULTS

In reflecting on the third-grade unit, both Lila's parents and teacher remained convinced that the Holocaust unit was appropriate to have taught to third graders, though they wondered about whether the inclusion of the film at the end of the unit was a good choice. That movie, they thought, might have been too much. Nonetheless, Lila's parents still loved Mr. Kupnich for his high standards for student achievement and how well he had taught both their children time management skills. Discussing his legacy, they explained:

He taught the kids things that no other teachers would teach about: the Holocaust, Civil Rights, [the dropping of bombs on] Japan. I remember more about him than about any other teacher the kids ever had. [Lila's little brother also had Mr. Kupnich as his third-grade teacher a few years later.] I thought she had a great year with him. If you had an opinion, he told you to go for it basically. He was a great teacher. (June 17, 2013)

That orientation toward voicing opinions worked especially well for their family because "we're an interesting bunch. We talk loud [and] have our opinions." Remembering how Lila had done in his class, Lila's parents remarked, "She shone. She liked him a lot. He liked her." They remembered how depressed Lila had become at the end of the year, but echoing their opinions then, Lila's parents still supported her having that reaction and learning through it.

In the intervening years, Mr. Kupnich had retired from his thirty-seven-year teaching career and described becoming somewhat "more radical" in terms of his politics. "Watching how much further right the country has gone since 9/11," he quoted a famous line of Benjamin Franklin—"those who give up more liberty for security deserve neither." Especially in light of changes in his state's governance, Mr. Kupnich justified his teaching about the Holocaust. In all the twenty-two years he taught at Lila's elementary school, he reported that he

... never had a student who came back and said you ruined my life with that [genocide education]. Periodically, students would come back and we would talk, and they'd be in college, freshman year, and [realize] "my god, we were using this stuff that *you* were telling us about—in high school or in college." Parents talked to me about how their kids were ahead of stuff because of the spiral curriculum [because they had already encountered this

learning in third grade]. I never had any negative aspect. It's always remembered as part of—an enlightening unit, in the sense of learning about what was going on out there, the importance of dealing with prejudices and stereotypes.... (June 17, 2013)

For Mr. Kupnich, the state of the world justified his teaching choices over a long career. “The fact that you could do a whole unit about Columbus and not mention the Arawak Indians...is almost criminal,” he explained. People, he remarked, “don’t know the truth”: “the truth about history, the truth of continued oppression, and the truth about genocide.” Mr. Kupnich remembered Lila and later her brother amid the many hundreds of students he had taught. And Mr. Kupnich stood by the decision to teach the topic, at that grade level, in the ways he did, to those kids.

REFLECTIONS ON LILA THEN AND NOW

How do students, teachers, and parents make sense of the long-term effects of a third-grade experience with Holocaust education? How do they remember its significance (or lack thereof)? And how do they imagine that early experience played out in later ones? To answer these questions based on the single case of Lila is in some ways unfair; Lila was an unusually sensitive kid, and she remains a thoughtful, somewhat serious, and sensitive adult. She has had to contend with depression, and she is still in the process of figuring herself out. She was, after all, only a sophomore in college at the time of this writing. Moreover, she was one of only a few Jewish students to attend her public elementary school and later one of the few Jewish students to attend her comprehensive, public high school. She is white, has two loving parents married to each other, and in some ways, in those regards alone, she is anomalous. While it may be problematic to base policy recommendations on any single case, it may be especially challenging to consider making policy recommendations based on this one.

And yet there are at least two reasons to consider Lila’s case carefully. The first is pragmatic in that it was available. The second is more compelling; it is precisely Lila’s sensitivity that makes the curricular imprint of her third-grade experience worth examining. Because in third grade Lila so identified with Jewish victimization, because the legacy of that early learning has stayed with her so palpably, and in some sense especially because she is such a special case, Lila’s experience renders the aftereffects in high relief.

The curricular imprint of Lila's third-grade experience can be construed as emotionally laden and somewhat confining. Perhaps the inverse to Kahneman's "peak-end rule," the ending of Lila's third-grade year involved her sitting on a bus, alienated from her cheerful peers, unable to be "happy" about bumping along on the way to the zoo. And in her remembering, it was the Holocaust as a topic that delimited the gulf between herself and her classmates. Lila was still imaginatively mired in the Holocaust even as they were off to visit the animals. Because the ending of the unit and the end of third grade coincided, and because both were so lonely for her, perhaps that unit crystallized within her "remembering self" more rigidly than it might have had she learned about the Holocaust at a different time in the year or in a different year altogether. As it was, though, the Holocaust became, not the "peak end," but what might be called the "low-point stop," an irredeemably difficult position to navigate out of for the third-grade Lila. The constraint of the curricular imprint, what Britzman refers to as "difficult knowledge,"²⁴ meant that Lila repeated that third-grade experience, in some fashion, again in tenth grade and again in college. The curricular imprint confined Lila to a kind of stagnation, a stuckness, rather than a working-through of the difficulty of learning.

Though emotionally rigid, interestingly, Lila's memory of her third-grade unit does not seem to have carried an intellectual frame of reference. Though she attached her learning in the third grade to her social activism, the connection was loose. Lila did not remember or articulate learning a particular moral message or set of historical facts from her Holocaust studies. Instead, the emotional power of her learning overshadowed all else. For Lila then and Lila now, encountering the Holocaust involved a grandeur of feeling, a kind of awe, as if the border that stretched across time and circumstance between Lila's own isolation and what she understood to be Anne Frank's dissolved in the moments she and her peers confronted them in the third grade. In a way, that Lila shrank from learning about the topic later in life is not surprising. It had been scary to her in third grade, and there was no reason to think it would not be so again and again. She had no strategies for distancing the imagined victims from herself, her family, and her identity. Likewise, she projected herself onto that history. In the process, the Holocaust became an exclusively Jewish event—at least her attachment to it was of a decidedly Jewish character—hence, her desire to visit that history in the company of Jews, with the comforting companionship of "imagined community."²⁵ Her sense of being isolated as a Jew, identifying with isolated Jews, magnified her attachment to being Jewish.

But was Lila's avoidance of learning about the Holocaust as an adult the result of learning about the Holocaust when she was too young? Is her avoidance of the topic even to be considered something negative? Lila might have become intimidated by the emotionality of the subject no matter what age she learned about it, given her personality, her emotional logic, and her way of interacting with the world. She might have identified primarily with Jewish victims of the Holocaust whether she learned about it at age 9, 12 or 17. And yet the fact that she remembers her nightmare, however vaguely, haunting her thinking twelve years later, seems more than poignant. It marks one difficulty of apprehending large-scale trauma at a young age. Most of Lila's later learning about the Holocaust seemed to keep her trapped in the frame of identifying only with Jews or at least primarily with Jews; perhaps a more expansive identification would have freed her somewhat from both the scariness of the subject itself and the fear of her own emotional reactions. Perhaps, had her Holocaust education been different, her sense of isolation that the topic triggers might have dissipated. But that said, her Holocaust and genocide educations are not over, no matter how actively she avoids learning about both casually. Lila's remembering self has room to grow beyond her experienced self.

And what Lila remembers will undoubtedly change as time goes on. While Rothberg's notion of "multidirectional memory"²⁶ speaks to how the collective memories of whole populations shape memory across historical events and times, this study suggests that memory's multidirectionality operates within an individual and between real, imagined, and reconstructed collectives across time—which is why it matters whether Holocaust education is introduced in the elementary school curriculum anywhere.

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PART II

Pedagogy



Using Holocaust Testimony in Primary Education: An Initial Inquiry

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and Claudia Ramirez Wiedeman*

Teaching primary students (ages 4–11) about the Holocaust has long been the subject of debate in the field.¹ Those who suggest that Holocaust education has a place in primary school education generally focus on its value for developing civic engagement, tolerance or other values, and diversity rather than the historical experience.² In its permanent exhibit, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum has a section that is designed for children as young as grade four (9–10 years old) but focuses on broader themes and suggests that while the study of the Holocaust can be a dynamic way to engage students in understanding democracy, they recommend that that should occur after age 10.³ Many Holocaust scholars

The findings of this paper are based on two internal reports prepared for USC Shoah Foundation – The Institute for Visual History and Education as part of its monitoring and evaluation program: Gayle Kolodny Cole, “Potential Use of IWitness in Elementary Classrooms” (2016), and Ilene Berson, “Evaluation Report – IWitness Chicago Pilot” (2015). Please do not cite without permission of the authors.

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C. W. Szejnmann et al. (eds.), *Holocaust Education in Primary Schools in the Twenty-First Century*, The Holocaust and its Contexts, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-73099-8_2

remain cautious about the role of teaching the Holocaust to young children. Among the most vocal on this side of the debate has been Samuel Totten, who suggests that approaches to Holocaust education with young children such as those mentioned earlier run the danger of at best offering such a watered down understanding of the Holocaust that it could be misleading or, at worst, traumatizing.⁴ Themes such as prejudice would be acceptable, but not as Holocaust education per se. They might serve as pre-Holocaust education.⁵ Simone Schweber's in-depth case study of one grade three (7–8 years old) classroom suggested that while it was possible to teach the Holocaust to third graders, it was perhaps not advisable given their limited ability to fully comprehend the complexity of the topic or to come to terms with the darkness.

Given this polarization in the research, it is not surprising that very few organizations in the field of Holocaust education have traditionally engaged with primary students. With growing interest in the past decade in this issue, and the pressing needs of education to embrace new forms of learning to fight the rise of bullying and other negative behaviors in primary classrooms, the University of Southern California (USC) Shoah Foundation has begun to explore the possibilities of engaging younger audiences (6–11 years old) with the topics of prejudice and the Holocaust through the use of audiovisual testimony from Holocaust survivors.

Since 2013, USC Shoah Foundation – The Institute for Visual History and Education (henceforth referred to as the Institute) has been exploring the use of audiovisual testimony of survivors and witnesses of genocide in primary education. Through the Institute's educational website, IWitness (iwitness.usc.edu), students engage with the life histories of survivors and witnesses who provide students with first-person accounts of the Holocaust in the form of multimedia lessons. Primary student learning outcomes include developing knowledge and skills, including critical thinking and empathy, to broaden their worldview and be more likely to engage in civic participation and contribution. This chapter explores the initial findings of this work, which is in the preliminary stages, and aims to provide an understanding of the role audiovisual testimony could play within Holocaust education in primary classrooms.

In the context of the pedagogical debate, the USC Shoah Foundation's work examined here is more aligned with what Totten terms pre-Holocaust education than Holocaust education, which focuses on the Holocaust as a unique historical event, although in addressing the context of the testimonies it does not avoid the history. The definition of the Holocaust used in

the activity is based on the generally accepted definition held by historians that the Holocaust applies to the period extending from mid-1941 through 1945. Students are provided with the following description of the Holocaust: “the murder of approximately six million Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators; Sinti-Roma, Poles, people with physical and mental disabilities, homosexuals, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Soviet prisoners of war, and political dissidents were among other victims of Hitler’s regime.” The testimonies from survivors of this period are life histories, however, and speak to a much wider timescale. While there are legitimate concerns about developmental readiness for content specific to genocide in the testimonies, they also offer content appropriate for the primary education classroom.⁶ In the case of the activity used in this pilot classroom, the testimonies focused on the rise of prejudice in the years leading up to the Final Solution.

Very specifically, this investigation was designed to interrogate the use of testimonies or life histories from witnesses to and survivors of genocide, including the Holocaust, in one multimedia lesson. The activity in question was titled *Use Your Voice Against Prejudice*, and it addressed the concepts of prejudice and stereotyping through an exploration of witness testimony. The activity provided some historical context of the Holocaust, as well as witness biographies—practices consistent with effective classroom use of testimony—but historical understanding of the history of the Holocaust was not a specific learning outcome. So while the testimonies were used to deepen students’ understandings of broader themes, they also introduced the students to the historical context and lead-up to the Holocaust, an essential part of Holocaust education.⁷

This investigation reveals not only that testimony-based IWitness activities are relevant for primary school learners, but also that the impact on student learning was significant in many areas, including gains in understanding of prejudice and stereotypes and recognition of the value of personal stories in history. Students expressed an understanding of how prejudice related to their own lives and stated that IWitness testimonies were an engaging and authentic way to learn about the effects of intolerance.

The Institute’s research indicates that deploying IWitness in primary education promoted this ideal by inspiring students to seek out knowledge, engage in problem solving, and feel empowered to stand up against prejudice. It also laid a strong foundation that leads children to continue to want to learn about the topics and themes raised in the activities in an attempt to complete their understanding. In short, it facilitated and activated their curiosity and desire to go deeper into the topics presented.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Theoretical Framing

The methodology for all evaluation is grounded in the Institute's theory of change, which states that "if individuals engage with testimony, then they will experience attitudinal and behavioral changes that will make them more likely to contribute to civil society."⁸ The Institute defines contributing to civil society at minimum as making responsible choices—refusing to tolerate racist ideas or prejudicial treatment, countering attitudes and acts of hatred. To effect this change, the Institute develops educational programs based on a methodology designed specifically to leverage the unique power of audiovisual testimony centered in research. This methodology is applied to the development of testimony-based digital content in IWitness, such as that used in the pilot study explored here, and, as such, requires some elaboration.

The methodology, explained in what follows, involves three elements: the unique nature of audiovisual testimony, constructivist and critical theory and research, and established learning outcomes. These three elements inform the development of testimony-based educational materials and therefore are critical to the elaboration of an evaluation methodology. Each of these is considered briefly in what follows.

The foundation of all USC Shoah Foundation programming is audiovisual testimony. Using the testimony of survivors and witnesses to genocide offers students a learning experience that invites them to critically explore and learn from the past, and consider their role in creating change. The power of the personal story engages students at all levels, including those that may be apathetic and disenfranchised—often the hardest to reach in any educational environment.

Second, testimony-based content development is based on established theory and research in the field of teaching and learning. The theories that most adequately embrace the educational philosophies of the Institute include constructivist theory⁹ and critical race theory.¹⁰ Constructivism simply states that learners actively create meaning and interpret information based on individual differences and experiences as they learn with and alongside other learners. This theory is particularly useful because it validates the nature of testimony as primary source material that can serve to create understanding in learners through their own meaning-making process. The learners also make meaning within a particular context and

receive and understand testimony through certain social lenses. Critical race theory recognizes that hate and intolerance exist in our society and that individuals have multiple identities and experiences that may not be universally recognized in society. It also posits that there are dominant narratives in society that need to be challenged. This theory is particularly suited to the Institute's work because it places legitimacy on individual story as a method for surfacing alternative perspectives, particularly of those marginalized in society. Together, these theoretical perspectives place value on individual difference, individual story—testimony—and affirm that students have the power to create social change.

Third, clear outcomes that can be assessed are essential to the learning process and essential for measuring change. The learning outcomes, which include the development of knowledge, transliteracy skills, critical thinking, empathy, and a motivation to act, are identified specifically as necessary elements of responsible participation. This element of our methodology is critical because it ensures that learners will develop the knowledge, skills, and capacities necessary for them to become more responsible participants in civil society. Every activity in IWitness incorporates some and sometimes all of these learning outcomes.

Description and Methodology of Pilot

The IWitness pilot on which this paper is based was conducted in a fifth-grade (ages 10–11) classroom at Northwest Academy¹¹ in the Midwest region of the United States over the course of three days in November 2014. Northwest Academy, a socioeconomically, ethnically, and racially diverse public school, serves over 800 students from kindergarten through eighth grade. Nearly 50 percent of students are from low-income households. It is a high-performing school—nearly 75 percent of students have met or exceeded standards across all sections of a statewide elementary-level assessment of student performance in reading, math, and science.

The participants included 32 fifth graders, ages 10–11, and represents a typical class at this school. The class was evenly distributed between males and females. The classroom teacher had over 30 years' teaching experience working with diverse students at the elementary to middle grades. The teacher holds a master's degree in curriculum and instruction and has participated in extensive professional development on teaching the Holocaust and using active and engaged teaching strategies.¹²

Students completed the IWitness activity *Use Your Voice Against Prejudice*. This activity focuses on individual stories of intolerance as described by four survivors of the Holocaust. After watching testimony clips in which two women and two men who experienced acts of prejudice between 1932 and 1941, students worked individually or with a partner to construct a poster intended to raise awareness about prejudice and its effects and dangers. In the Consider section of the activity, students were introduced to definitions of the Holocaust and prejudice. The Consider section in the activity prepares students with the knowledge necessary to complete the active portion and to understand what they are hearing in the testimonies. In the Collect section, they were provided with biographies of the survivors that outlined briefly their experience in the Holocaust, including where they were born, their experience, and what happened after liberation. They were asked to read the biography before watching the testimony. This scaffolding introduces students to the Holocaust as a historical event as part of understanding the individual's context—an important element in reading the testimony. Each student had a laptop and listened using headphones as they watched the testimonies. It is worth noting that there was a great deal of discussion among the students as they progressed through the activity. At the time of the activity, they had not been introduced to the subject of the Holocaust in the class. Their knowledge of the event was measured in the presurvey.

The evaluation adopted a mixed-methods design, collecting qualitative and quantitative information.¹³ Data collection measured progress on student learning outcomes and was also designed to inform future work at the primary level. It was part of the Institute's ongoing portfolio of monitoring and evaluation around the world and one of dozens of classroom pilots of IWitness conducted in order to track progress on established student learning outcomes for IWitness.

The Learning Aims identified for the activity did not include developing specific knowledge about the Holocaust as a historical event and focused instead on learning about prejudice and the impact of prejudice using Holocaust survivor testimony. In terms of the evaluation instruments, they measured the following learning outcomes that are consistent across IWitness activities, including the one piloted in the classroom:

- Increase students' content knowledge in target area (prejudice);
- Deepen students' capacity for innovative, creative, and critical thought;

- Develop enhanced problem-solving skills;
- Develop a more complex worldview;
- Foster empathy;
- Develop students' capacity to recognize and value responsible participation in civil society;
- Increase students' knowledge and ability to apply new media skills.¹⁴

The data-collection methods are described in what follows. Table 1 details the timeline of administration and sample sizes for each of the data-collection activities.

Student Pre- and Postactivity Surveys Participating students completed surveys to provide insights about their perceptions of the quality and usefulness of the IWitness activity, as well as the program's impacts on students. The surveys included multiple-choice questions as well as open-text questions. Open-text responses were coded for themes arising from the answers and then coded into larger category sets based on similarity. Multiple-choice questions included a number of five-point scale agreement statements, such as "One person can make a difference if they see an example of stereotyping against a group of people," "Personal stories are important components of history," and "When other people are hurt, it affects my life." A thematic content analysis method guided the analysis of student work products, short-answer responses, and focus group transcripts.¹⁵ The established student learning outcomes guided the identification of higher-level codes in the analysis, and these codes were further broken down into subcodes that

Table 1 Data-collection activities and sample sizes

<i>Data</i>	<i>Timeline of administration</i>	<i>Number of student participants</i>
Student presurvey	Prior to day one instruction	31
Student postactivity survey	After day three instruction	31
Classroom observations	Three consecutive days	32
Transcript of focus group interview	After day three instruction	8
Student comments in IWitness activity	Completed during day one instruction	32
Student worksheets	Completed during day two instruction	4
Student posters	Completed during day three instruction	20

emerged following a careful reading of the data. When the coding was completed, all text passages having the same code were grouped together.

- **Classroom Observation Data:** Classroom activities were observed during 50-minute periods of instruction. Using a structured observation rubric, activities were categorized every 5 minutes to capture the extent to which the observed sessions involved digital skills, creative and innovative thought, critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, or communication skills. Student engagement throughout instruction was monitored, and observation notes further described classroom activities.
- **Focus Group Discussion:** The teacher selected eight students representing a variety of perspectives to participate in the focus group. Topics included questions about the students' comfort in navigating the digital learning activity; perceptions of survivor testimony as a source of information on prejudice; connections between life long ago and contemporary experiences; recognition of how others' experiences affect one's own life; and the role of IWitness in promoting students' knowledge, skills, and behaviors related to individual and social responsibility.
- **Student Artifacts:** Student artifacts included student posters and worksheets as well as student comments submitted as part of the IWitness activity.

Data Analysis

The student survey data, focus group responses, and observation notes were analyzed to document characteristics of program implementation and describe student perceptions of the IWitness activity and their learning. Given that the evaluation highlights data collected from one fifth-grade classroom (i.e., a small sample size), the outcomes were most appropriately measured with descriptive statistics, qualitative analysis, and the compilation of basic data related to implementation.

Responses to all surveys were tabulated, and student work, short-answer responses, and interview transcripts were analyzed using a thematic content analysis method.¹⁶ The primary learning outcomes guided the identification of higher-level codes in the analysis, and these codes were further broken into subcodes that emerged following a careful reading of

the data. One novel approach to analyzing these data came from the use of Wordle.¹⁷ Student comments in the IWitness activity were analyzed using this online tool to produce visually rich output that quickly highlighted differences in responses. The word clouds enabled an understanding of the general composition of frequently used words within a specific context.¹⁸ The resulting clouds provided an overview of themes in the responses to facilitate analysis of individual and group narratives, thereby illustrating the main themes emerging from the data.

FINDINGS

Overall, students reported that working with IWitness was a positive experience for them. In the Post Program Student Survey, 97 percent of participants indicated that they “benefitted from using IWitness.” Highlights of the findings are reported in what follows, with particular emphasis on the outcomes that showed the greatest gains, in order to make the case for the relevance of testimony-based materials to educate about the Holocaust to a primary-age audience.

Increase in Students’ Content Knowledge in Target Area (History, Language Arts, Etc.)

This outcome encompasses content knowledge related to testimony and historical topics, in this case the Holocaust, as well as understanding the concept of prejudice itself. The majority of students demonstrated increases in content knowledge as evidenced in vocabulary development, representation of historical events in their assignments, and survey results measuring interest in historical topics. Knowledge of testimony is particularly important in the context of IWitness, and students showed clear progress in advancing their understanding of testimony.

In a comparison of the pre- and postactivity survey question asking students to define testimony, about half of the class developed a new conceptual understanding of the term, as evidenced in the following sample responses (Table 2).

A smaller group, six students, moved from an original, general familiarity with the term and expanded on their definition, demonstrating a refined conceptualization. Table 3 below highlights examples of this.

As these comments demonstrate, a large majority of students showed progress on their knowledge of testimony.

Table 2 Student pre- and postactivity survey responses defining testimony

<i>Individual students' preactivity survey responses</i>	<i>Same students' postactivity survey responses</i>
I think a testimony is a bunch of people who get pushed around and go and try to stop what people are doing to them	I think a testimony is a video where people state the bad things that happened to them
I have no clue	Someone's experience on something in a first person point of view told by the person
I think the word testimony means to test something	I think that a testimony is a video that teaches about an important person's life
I think it is a kind of rule	It is a video that tells about someone's past experiences

Table 3 Student pre- and postactivity survey responses defining testimony

<i>Individual students' preactivity survey responses</i>	<i>Same students' postactivity survey responses</i>
A speech	A testimony is a speech in witch [sic] telling what happened during an event in history
A testimony is a person's point of view on how they adapted	A testimony is a person's perspective of what happened to them. A first hand account
A document of a persons [sic] life	A document about what happened to a person or an event

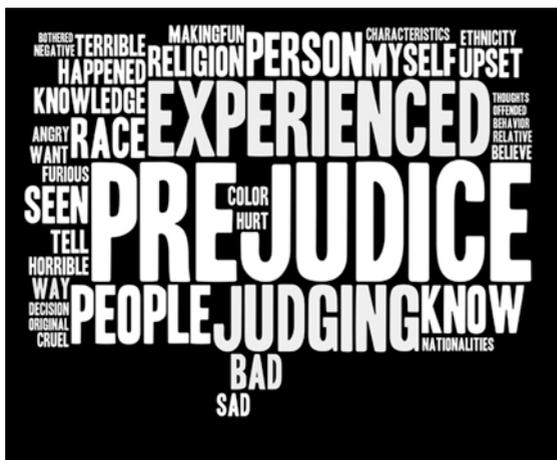
Student survey responses provided additional insight into their expanded knowledge, demonstrating that they not only knew more about testimony but also valued it as a source of information and learning. Based on the survey responses, it was apparent that students appreciated learning by contextualized information in the form of stories. Over 80 percent of respondents to the postactivity survey agreed or strongly agreed that “personal stories are an important component of history,” a gain of 15 percent from the preactivity survey. In fact, nearly half of the students specifically mentioned that testimonies were the most impactful aspect of the learning experience. One student articulates this recurring theme: “I learned that back in the old days we all were not a big happy family but very mean and cruel to our own kind and I’ll definitely remember all the survivors [sic] stories and all of the horrible things they experienced.” Students’ knowledge of the concept of testimony and their valuing of the medium of testimony are two important findings from the pilot and will serve as building

blocks for the higher-order outcomes highlighted in the findings presented subsequently.

Another key building block for the development of the outcomes is increased knowledge of prejudice. Students began the activity with some idea of the meaning of prejudice and demonstrated deeper and more nuanced understanding of it by the end of the activity. Using word clouds to analyze students' written comments in the IWitness activity revealed several trends in the data between sets of responses before exposure to a formal definition for prejudice and a discussion of how prejudice relates to broader issues of individual responsibility and the consequences of our actions. Subsequently, through the testimonies of survivors of the Holocaust, students learned about the manifestations and effects of prejudice. As students progressed through the activity, the word clouds captured the increasing complexity of their thinking and the evolution of connections between prejudicial beliefs and acts of bullying. At the beginning of the activity, students responded to the following prompt:

Before you begin, think about what you already know about prejudice or have experienced. What do you think is the meaning of prejudice? Have you seen or experienced prejudice yourself? If so, how did it make the person or you feel? If not, how do you think it would make you feel?

Analysis of student comments revealed the following word cloud:



Although only one student reported personal experience with prejudice, two others reported prejudicial acts against loved ones. Their comments noted the emotional pain associated with prejudice:

I have since 1st grade. It made me feel really bad about myself when it happened and about telling someone about it.

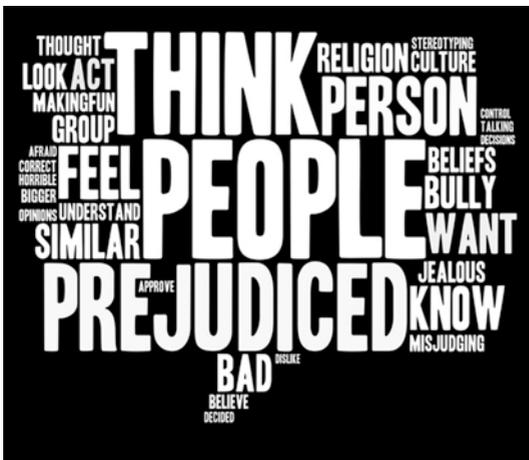
Someone was prejudice [sic] to my mom after 911 and she was so sad when she heard that.

Even without firsthand experience with prejudice, all of the students identified negative feelings (i.e., bad, sad, terrible, angry, cruel, hurt, furious, upset) and connected prejudice with intolerance for diversity of religion, ethnicity, race, color, and nationality.

Prejudice is judging about a group without knowledge of those people. If I have experienced prejudice I would be furious because I hate when people judge me when they don't know anything about me.

I think experiencing prejudice would make me feel like mad and sad because I don't like it when people make fun of me or when people judge me from what they think about me not what is really about me.

In a subsequent prompt, students read a definition of prejudice and responded to the following: "Is this the same or different from your definition? Why do you think people are prejudiced against others?" Analysis of student comments revealed the following word cloud:



As the activity progressed, students' thinking evolved, and they moved beyond defining prejudice as an abstract term to making connections between acts of prejudice and their own lives, referring more often to bullying, for example. Student comments reflected associations with bullying and mistreatment of other students:

I think people are prejudice [sic] about other people because they might not understand their religion or how they live.

I think this because they are making fun of each other because of how they look or how they do something. That is the same thing as bullies do.

People are prejudice [sic] because they want to feed you false information about your group to make you feel horrible about yourself which is why being prejudice [sic] is a form of bullying.

The activity engaged students in learning about the meaning of prejudice, a concept that students immediately connected to bullying behaviors they learn about—and sometimes experience—in their own lives. The fact that students made connections like this is closely linked to another outcome—critical thinking.

DEEPENING OF STUDENTS' CAPACITY FOR INNOVATIVE, CREATIVE, AND CRITICAL THOUGHT AND DEVELOP ENHANCED PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS

Making connections between the contents in IWitness and other knowledge is one important way in which we observe critical thinking in classrooms. Student engagement in IWitness leads to gains related to critical thinking and problem solving—frequently observed in tandem or as complementary activities. Observation data are gathered by a trained evaluator using a specific tool. The evaluator listens to conversations and observes what students are doing throughout the engagement. According to classroom observation data, students were highly engaged during the activity and used multiple elements of critical thinking to move through the activity. In fact, students were so engaged that most of them used IWitness outside of class time, even though this was not a requirement of the assignment. Nearly 66 percent of the students accessed IWitness at home, and among this group, 11 students watched additional videos, ranging in number from 1 to a high of 10 witness testimonies above and beyond those assigned as part of the class learning activity.

Table 4 Student survey results on critical thinking and problem solving: pre/post comparisons

<i>Percentage of “top 10%” and “above average”</i>	<i>Pre (N = 31)</i>	<i>Post (N = 31)</i>	<i>Change</i>
Ability to apply skills and concepts to solving problems	58.1	80.6	+22.5
Ability to consider multiple perspectives when solving problems	45.2	58.1	+12.9
Critical thinking ability	71.0	74.2	+3.2

The classroom observation data show that the students were highly engaged and actively involved throughout the majority of the activity (40–45 minutes of the 50-minute class periods)—they presented as focused on task and engaged in the activity. In addition, students worked both independently and collaboratively during all class periods. Even if they were working on their projects independently, they would often ask their peers some questions. The teacher also asked the class questions about the content of the videos, encouraging students to think about the main ideas of the testimonies they were watching. The observation data also showed that students often utilized critical thinking skills. The evaluator observed the students analyzing arguments, claims, and beliefs, connecting materials in the activity to other ideas, and interpreting information and drawing conclusions.

Results from the pre-/postactivity survey data confirmed the observed data on student skill development and provided additional information on student perceptions of their experiences while engaged in the testimony-based activity. The responses to several survey items detail the change in attitudes of students on several self-perception measures that related directly to increases in students’ capacity for innovative, creative, and critical thinking. As summarized in Table 4, students noted significant enhancements in their ability to apply skills and concepts to solving problems as well as consider multiple perspectives when solving problems.

FOSTERING OF EMPATHY

The activity used in the pilot was designed to teach students about the effects and consequences of hatred and intolerance. Through the activity, students explored their own attitudes about and experiences with prejudice; examined individuals’ roles and responsibilities regarding ethnic, racial, and religious bias; and thought critically about examples of prejudiced attitudes, acts of

prejudice, discrimination, and violence. All of these activities were designed to support growth on learning outcomes related to the development of empathy and the development of a more complex worldview. Gains related to these outcomes are highlighted in what follows.

Measuring empathy is a complex outcome. For the purposes of USC Shoah Foundation's evaluation, the Institute adopts Goleman's definitions of empathy, which include cognitive and emotional empathy, as well as empathic concern.¹⁹ Students demonstrated gains on two survey measures related to this outcome. One of these is student agreement with the statement "When other people are hurt, it affects my life." Students who strongly agreed with this statement increased 60 percent from pre- to postactivity survey. In addition, there was a small increase (9 percent) in the number of students who rated themselves in the two highest categories in "ability to understand people from different backgrounds/cultures" in the postactivity survey. These gains were also evident in the focus group, where students demonstrated all three elements of the operational definition of empathy (cognitive and emotional empathy, as well as empathic concern, which involves being moved to help those you are empathizing with). The following excerpt from the focus group illustrates these three concepts in action:

- Speaker 2: Like you'd hear them and they would say that they felt really sad or something. It makes you want to...like try to make a difference as much as you can. [...]
- Speaker 4: I think that for me it's like hurtful to me that like another human being would like push somebody like that to like oncoming traffic and it's just like really like...terrifying to think of somebody doing it to somebody else.
- Speaker 3: Because you see how they feel because they might feel upset at these people because like with the newspaper where you saw that really ugly picture that was supposed to be a Jew... that really kind of got you there because you saw how the Jews felt about this...about that certain situation and then you've got your own feelings about how it impacts you too. Like with that picture I kind of felt that they were being dis-respected because of these people who didn't like the Jews.

Students showed that they understood the perspective of the witnesses, expressed their feelings in relation to this ("that really kind of got you there...you've got your own feelings about how it impacts you too"), and

even talked about “making a difference as much as [they] can” in reaction to the examples of prejudice they heard about in the testimonies.

In addition to gains on the survey measures and evidence from the focus group, student work also demonstrated emotional empathy. Students’ posters reflected this as they described the pain and suffering associated with victims of intolerance. Many students included images, quotations, and stories from the testimonies to demonstrate what prejudice meant to them. One concrete way that this was reflected both in student work and in open-text comments from the surveys was through the use of the witnesses’ names. For example, when asked “What are the most important things you learned from participating in the IWitness activity in your classroom? What will you most remember?,” several students singled out a specific testimony, indicating a deep engagement with this survivor’s story:

I will remember David Faber’s story the most.

The most important stuff that I learned from this activity is about hearing people judging others because they are Jewish. That really upset me and I think that I will remember the interview with David the most.

The most important thing I learned was about prejudice and how terribly it hurt people. I remember in one of the videos there was a man named David and he had a remarkable story that he got hit by a train and some man told a woman to let him die because he was a jew [sic].

A variety of data sources support the development of empathy in students, indicating that learning about the Holocaust through testimony is a meaningful experience for students that resonates with their developmental age. The development of empathy alongside the gains related to knowledge and value of testimony provide strong support of the Institute’s theory of change.

DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS’ CAPACITY TO RECOGNIZE AND VALUE RESPONSIBLE PARTICIPATION IN CIVIL SOCIETY

Students demonstrated significant gains on measures related to recognizing and valuing responsible participation in civil society. At the conclusion of the activity, 91 percent of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that it is important to speak up against any stereotyping that they see around them—a 47 percent increase from the preactivity survey. Additionally, after the activity, 81 percent believed that one person can

make a difference if she sees an example of stereotyping against a group of people—a 40 percent increase from the preactivity survey. Taken together, these two measures are one important source of evidence that students recognize and value responsible participation in society.

This recognition is further supported in other data. In a free-text question asking about the impact that IWitness had on them, several students commented about learning to stand up against prejudice and support others:

The impact it made on me was seeing how people really react to other people. I think this program will really influenced [sic] me to think about how I act and what I say to people that are not like me or other people with different backgrounds.

It will tell me to stand up to people who are being prejudice [sic] to other people.

It impacted me because now I know how prejudice is way more harmful and I learned to not be prejudice and speak up to people if they are being prejudice [sic].

Evidence of responsibility for active citizenship and enhanced interest in civic engagement was clearly conveyed by the students, with 97 percent confirming their commitment to serving their communities in comparison to 83 percent in the preactivity survey. The posters embodied students' plans of action to empower others to take a stand against prejudice. Among self-perception measures, students showed particularly high gains in interest in civic engagement, with a 58 percent increase in students choosing the top two highest categories from pre- to postactivity survey. Additional measures related to this outcome also showed gains, as highlighted in Table 5 below.

Table 5 Student survey results on participation and civic engagement: pre/post comparisons

<i>Percentage "top 10%" and "above average"</i>	<i>Pre (N = 31)</i>	<i>Post (N = 31)</i>	<i>Change</i>
Ability to work cooperatively with others	87.1	93.5	+6.4
Motivation to make a difference in the world	71.0	87.1	+16.1
Interest in civic engagement (involvement in activities to make a difference in the community)	38.7	61.3	+22.6
Interest in helping others	87.1	96.8	+9.7

CONCLUSION

The pilot demonstrated that not only is testimony-based learning relevant for primary-school-aged learners, but it also offers compelling learning tools. The findings indicate clearly that the experience impacted students' cognitive and social emotional learning, including positive gains in understanding of prejudice, testimony and stereotypes, the role of personal responsibility, and being an active participant in civil society. Students conducted thorough research—including spending additional time outside of class—spent time completing written responses and developing poster presentations, collaborated effectively with peers, and often demonstrated self-initiative and self-direction in their work. The student work also suggested that students benefited from the widened perspective that video testimonies made possible. Students were able to produce posters that incorporated a greater range of applied learning and demonstrated a high level of mastery of concepts.

The evaluation found that exposure to different perspectives through testimony was seen as broadening students' awareness and appreciation of harm caused by prejudice, stereotyping, and alienation—conduct that is often related to bullying behaviors that today's students know and recognize. Based on the project's learning outcomes, students displayed higher levels of engagement than was typical in classroom contexts. The activity had a notable impact on most students' interaction levels and not just during the viewing of survivor testimony. Students reported finding personal narratives interesting and exciting; they enjoyed opportunities to hear authentic stories and to discover diverse views on topics and issues being studied. They were highly attentive in class discussions; however, it is not entirely clear how much of the interest was a result of the novelty of the medium. Students sought out additional information on their own by viewing other videos and resources on IWitness from home, applying pre-existing knowledge/experiences on prejudice as part of their work, or reading other outside resources they found independently.

Testimonies allowed young learners to step into someone else's shoes for a moment and make personal connections between history and their own lives—a fundamental process in the development of empathy. There is scope to instruct students about how to work with primary sources in a developmental staged approach. They can apply methods of the historian to make learning more meaningful through processes of inquiry, asking questions, collecting and examining evidence, and reaching conclusions.

One of the unanticipated outcomes of this investigation was the clear indication that the students needed and wanted more historical information about the Holocaust.

While further enhancements through scaffolded instruction, inclusion of supplementary readings and resources, and expanded use of the technological resources of the IWitness platform may further enhance the guided exploration of students in the upper elementary grades, this pilot suggests that the potential for learning and growth using audiovisual testimonies of survivors and witnesses of genocide in the primary grades is significant. Primary students are clearly able to draw connections and make meaning from the testimonies of the Holocaust.

NOTES

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There's No 'J' in (the) Holocaust: Perceptions and Practice of Holocaust Education

Paula Cowan

INTRODUCTION

In the last 20 years, school-based Holocaust education in the UK has become more mainstream. Previous research in Scotland demonstrated that three factors have contributed to this change: the citizenship agenda in the school curriculum, the establishment of Holocaust Memorial Day (since 2001) and the Lessons From Auschwitz Project (LFAP) (in Scotland, since 2007).¹ Unlike in England, where Holocaust education has been included in the National Curriculum in History Key Stage 3 since 1991, there has never been such a requirement in Scotland.² Its scope for teaching rests largely on the development of citizenship education: 'values and citizenship' was one of the five national (Scottish) priorities for education set by the Scottish Executive (renamed the Scottish Government in 2007) and approved by the Scottish Parliament in December 2000. Since 2004 'responsible citizenship' has been one of the key aims of the Scottish Curriculum, *Curriculum for Excellence* (Scottish

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C. W. Szejnmann et al. (eds.), *Holocaust Education in Primary
Schools in the Twenty-First Century*, The Holocaust and its
Contexts, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-73099-8_3

Executive³), and citizenship education is included in schools' HMI assessment and self-evaluation framework.

The trend towards a larger role for citizenship education is not restricted to Scotland, or indeed the UK. For example, Paula Cowan and Henry Maitles assert that European ministers of education at their annual standing conference emphasise the requirement for a more coherent and sustained approach by schools to citizenship education.⁴ Although there is great variation across countries as to the nature of citizenship education, there is a consensus that it comprises political literacy, community involvement and the development of positive values.⁵ Arguably, Holocaust education can fit neatly into each of these components, and in particular into positive values, developing pupils' understanding of human rights, racism and discrimination (sometimes referred to as 'values' or 'tolerance education').

The contribution of history to developing citizenship education in schools is supported firstly by Gary Clemitshaw in his assertion that 'linking history education with citizenship is essential'⁶; secondly by Peter Hillis whose research demonstrates how history teaching (and a number of respondents used the example of Nazi Germany) can help in developing aspects of citizenship, such as democracy, power and authority⁷; and thirdly by Ann Jordan, Sarah Robinson and Paul Taylor, whose findings demonstrated that students between the ages of 9 and 12 recognised 'the benefits of history in enhancing their understanding of what it means to be a citizen'.⁸ This explains why school-based Holocaust education often includes affective lessons that promote student discussion of moral dilemmas. In doing so, texts that are appropriate to students' age and emotional development are used.

Sarah Jordan's claim that literature is 'one of the best pedagogical tools' for teaching young people about the Holocaust does not distinguish between fictional and informational texts, despite their contrasting contributions to historical enquiry and impact on Holocaust education.⁹ Geoffrey Short states that Holocaust fictional texts alone cannot be relied upon to fill gaps in students' knowledge or to challenge common misconceptions about the Holocaust.¹⁰ This suggests that teachers must demonstrate a great deal of historical knowledge to support their students' learning when using Holocaust fictional texts in the class, irrespective of how well these texts are written or their appeal to students.

Scotland holds a national commemorative Scottish Holocaust Memorial Day event every year, and, unlike in England where it is held in its capital

city, it is a movable event with each of the 32 unitary authorities being encouraged to act as hosts. Ten authorities have, to date, hosted this event, with some hosting it on more than one occasion. In addition, there are numerous local activities across the UK. The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (HMDT) in the UK has recorded an increase in involvement in activities that commemorate the Holocaust in schools and in the wider community in Scotland and across the country. While this supports the mainstreaming of Holocaust education, this day does not exclusively commemorate the events of the Holocaust or the treatment and attempted genocide of the Jews in the Holocaust. It calls for people to remember 'the millions of people who have been murdered or whose lives have been changed beyond recognition during the Holocaust, Nazi persecution and in subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur'.¹¹ It is therefore possible for schools and community groups to remember the Holocaust and engage in Holocaust educational activities while marginalising both the Holocaust and the Jewish experience in the Holocaust. This contrasts with *Yom HaShoah*, the day when Jewish communities across the world focus exclusively on the Jewish experience during the Holocaust and remember and recite prayers for their Jewish friends and family members who were murdered in the Holocaust. Arguably one of the earliest examples of 'de-Judaisation' of the Holocaust in the UK was BBC broadcaster Richard Dimbleby's television report from Bergen-Belsen in 1945. The BBC refused to use Dimbleby's script as it referred 'explicitly to the Jewishness of the victims',¹² and the report stated that 'there are 40,000 men, women and children in the camp of German and half a dozen other nationalities, thousands of them Jews'.¹³

While Dimbleby prefaced this report by saying these were the 'facts', that two-thirds of the survivors at Bergen-Belsen were Jewish was not included as a fact in this report. It is this marginalisation that the aforementioned title is referring to and to which Manfred Gerstenfeld and Michael Gray refer to as the de-Judaisation of the Holocaust.¹⁴ This marginalisation is sometimes referred to as 'universalisation' of the Holocaust. The distinction between the two in learning the lessons *about* the Holocaust is that universalisation *can* acknowledge the centrality and specific treatment of the Jews in the Holocaust within the wider definition. This relies on the approaches and views of teachers and educators. De-Judaisation does not make this acknowledgement and depicts Jews as victims of the Holocaust alongside others. The universal lessons *from* the

Holocaust are also affected as these rely on one's understanding of the society of the past.

Another example of de-Judaisation is President Carter's attempt in the United States to change the official six million figure of the number of people murdered during the Holocaust. His reference to 'eleven million innocent victims exterminated—six million of them Jews' in the context of the proposed United States Holocaust Memorial Museum placed the Jewish experience alongside the experience of many different groups of people and attempted to change the discourse of the Holocaust.¹⁵ Holocaust survivor and writer Elie Wiesel, who was then Chair of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council, challenged the president because the groups of people in the 'five million' were never targets of genocide, and some were actually collaborators in the killings, and pushed for the universal understanding of the Holocaust, as described earlier. Further, US President Trump's statement on the Holocaust on Holocaust Remembrance Day 2017 referred to the 'horror inflicted on innocent people by Nazi terror'¹⁶ and did not specifically mention antisemitism or Jews.

The marginalisation of the Jews in the Holocaust is by no means restricted to the commemoration of Holocaust Memorial or Remembrance Day and extends to visits to Holocaust memorial sites such as the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum (ABMM). On his visit to the ABMM, Lawrence Blum claimed this museum had not adequately recognised the distinctive fate of Jews, or indeed Roma who were targeted for extermination, and did not explain the attempted genocide of the Jews that had taken place there.¹⁷ Further, Isabel Wollaston asserted that this museum preferred to focus on 'the history of the camp...and Polish-Jewish relations'.¹⁸

This article investigates the extent to which de-Judaisation of the Holocaust is relevant in today's Scottish schools by exploring and analysing the perceptions of student teachers and the practice of primary teachers in Scotland. Findings from primary teachers support Thomas Harding's view that 'a fictional Holocaust is increasingly being taught'.¹⁹

PERCEPTIONS OF THE HOLOCAUST

Previous research into the perceptions and understandings of the Holocaust of secondary teachers in England revealed a lack of consensus amongst teachers as to how they define the Holocaust and that the understanding of the term 'Holocaust' shared by more than 50 per cent of

respondents (n = 1976) included 'the persecution and murder of a range of victims' who were 'targeted for different reasons and persecuted in different ways'.²⁰ This understanding does not make the distinction between the murder of European Jews and other groups of people.

The preceding understanding of the Holocaust contrasts with definitions provided by the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and leading Holocaust museums, such as the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Yad Vashem, and the Imperial War Museum. Further, David Cesarani's podcast on the HMDT website²¹ states that while the Nazis persecuted a wide range of groups, 'the Jews were first and foremost on the list of targets, and the Jews occupied a very special place in Nazi thinking, in Nazi ideology'. Understandings of the Holocaust which do not specify the distinctive treatment of the Jews by the Nazis are therefore de-Judaising the Holocaust. Clearly this is important to teachers' pedagogy and classroom practice.

Findings from a large-scale study of secondary students in England suggest that de-Judaisation of the Holocaust in schools should be addressed. Two of the key findings of the University College London study on students' knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust, which included data from more than 9500 students, were that while the majority knew that

Jews were the primary victims of the Holocaust, ... 68 per cent of students were unaware of what 'antisemitism' meant, their explanations often rested on misconceptions about who the Jews were and overlooked the distinctive racial dimensions of Nazi antisemitism and more than 10 per cent of students believed that no more than 100,000 Jewish people were murdered. Further, students 'did not see the Nazi intent to murder all Jews ... as a defining feature of the Jewish experience'.²²

Given that more than 28 per cent of this cohort stated that they had first encountered the Holocaust in primary school, these findings have serious implications for primary and secondary teachers. They raise serious questions about what students' first learning outcomes of the Holocaust should be. Should an age-appropriate, accurate, historical understanding of the primary victims of the Holocaust be a priority for students who are being introduced to the Holocaust in schools, or should an inclusive, general understanding that focuses on all the victims of Nazism be adopted? The latter approach, though correct, is not accurate and can easily lead to de-Judaisation.

Using five definitions of the Holocaust that were used by the Holocaust Education Development Programme (HEDP) in the previously cited research ([Appendix](#)), Cowan and Maitles conducted a similar online exercise with professional graduate primary and secondary teachers ($n = 200$).²³ This demonstrated that like the secondary teachers in the HEDP study, student teachers have contrasting understandings of the Holocaust. Although several student teachers wrote that they understood the specific targeting of the Jewish people in the Holocaust, the largest number of student teachers, 44 per cent, considered the inclusive Statement A, which gave equal importance to every group persecuted by the Nazis and their collaborators to be the statement that closely matched their own understanding. Thirty-two per cent chose the universal Statement B, which specified the treatment of Jews in the Holocaust and recognised the murder of other groups of people by the Nazis. Twenty-three students were unable to decide on one definition from the list and expressed difficulty in deciding between A/B or A/D. One of these emphasised the problematic nature of defining the Holocaust:

I am finding it difficult to decide on any one definition. I would have chosen A or B. This exercise is certainly highlighting how difficult it is to discuss and justify your opinions about controversial issues.

Students' free-text comments provided insight into why they chose the wider 'inclusive' definition and why they rejected definitions B and C, which reflected the distinctive targeting of the Jews in the Holocaust.

Students were divided into 15 groups and encouraged to read the comments of their peers in their group; they also had access to the comments to students in the other groups. This may have influenced the results, for example it might be difficult for a student to write one statement when the majority of student comments in the group indicated another. This may explain the following apologetic comment by a student who chose Statement B:

Student 1

I would start this by openly admitting that my knowledge of the Holocaust, World Wars and History in general is extremely limited (having gone to a secondary school that never actually offered History as a subject, and never having studied even a World War in primary school). I did however visit the Jewish Museum in Berlin this January so forgive me my understanding from coming from a predominantly Jewish viewpoint.

Student 2, whose comment follows, suggests that a lack of knowledge can explain one's initial choice of a wider definition of the Holocaust, yet Students 3 and 4 demonstrate that even with knowledge of the Jewish experience in the Holocaust, their preference is to adopt the wider definition, which does not explicitly refer to the Jewish experience. This demonstrates the complexity of knowledge and the subjectivity of one's historical interpretation.

Student 2

I've always understood the Holocaust to include all groups of people who were persecuted and murdered by the Nazis. I have never fully comprehended the strength of antisemitic sentiment and its causes – to me, the Holocaust was horrific mass murder. How or why a community can be singled out as it was is incomprehensible.

Student 3

Of course Jewish people are a focus but I would prefer a wider picture.

Student 4

From the five provided I feel that D is the best suited for a primary school class as it makes it clear why Hitler and the Nazis – not Germany – conducted the Holocaust against all who were not 'one of them.' I would like to acknowledge that definition D downplays the impact on Jewish people specifically, and should maybe be addressed again in class discussion sessions, but as a whole is the best definition in my view.

The contradictory nature of the contribution of knowledge to one's understanding of the Holocaust was further demonstrated by two students who indicated that they had visited the Jewish Museum in Berlin: one chose Statement A, the other (Student 1) chose Statement B.

Peter Seixas states that teaching history involves the 'critical scrutiny of the strategies by which they (the students) accord significance to these events'.²⁴ Student comments demonstrated that some students rejected Statement B because they considered its focus on the Jewish experience ascribed greater value to one group of people, i.e. the Jews, than any other group of people who were also victims of Nazism. Further, others rejected it because they considered it 'very opinionated', while others thought it to be too narrow, for example 'it only highlights the impact of the Jewish population', 'it neglects the many others influenced'. This helps us to understand the need for Student 1 to apologise for his/her opinion. It is

evident from the students' comments that Statement A was more 'balanced' or more 'neutral', that the elements of equality or fairness are important to their understanding of the Holocaust. Seixas and Peck state that while we require moral judgements in history that evoke our empathy, this should not be at the expense of our misunderstanding of history.²⁵

The importance of neutrality is particularly concerning in this context as it suggests that specifying the Jewish experience in the Holocaust aligns with a particular perspective, or point of view, rather than historical fact. In the context of Holocaust education, this raises the question of whether the Holocaust is important to students and teachers because of the universal 11 million victims, which included Jews, and not because of the attempted genocide of the Jews. Similarly, striving for balance in the Holocaust teaching context may well lead one away from the truth of the scale and savagery that was meted out to European Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators.

This 'downplaying' of the treatment of the Jews in the Holocaust may be due to a perception that all equality projects (in this case the projects are victims of human suffering) should be treated equally, that none should be considered more important than others.²⁶ This would explain student teachers' preference to focus on 'racism' rather than 'antisemitism' in their teaching and a resistance to presenting a hierarchy of victims of the Holocaust that places Jews at the top. One cannot measure or compare 'the suffering of a Roma woman at Auschwitz who saw her husband and children die in front of her eyes against the suffering of a Jewish woman at the same camp who underwent the same experience'.²⁷ The challenge therefore is explaining and retaining the distinction between the different forms of inequality and human suffering.

Feedback from a group interview of four high school students who had visited the ABMM as part of a 4-day trip to Krakow, provides further insight. While students referred to 'discrimination against the Jews' they were unable to reflect on whether the visit to the ABMM had impacted their understanding of antisemitism, as they did not know the meaning of the word 'antisemitism'. Their guide did not mention this word, yet the treatment and murder of Jews (and indeed Roma) at Auschwitz were far more than 'discrimination'.²⁸ The following quote from one of these students is more closely connected to de-Judaisation and demonstrates what the author refers to as an 'inclusive'

understanding of the Holocaust—one in which the Jews are victims alongside other groups of people:

It wasn't really about the Jews, it was about anyone who was murdered there...we know that Hitler hated the Jews. They were the target to eliminate...it was about the amount of people.²⁹

The premise that the Holocaust 'wasn't really about the Jews' but about the number or 'amount' of people murdered by Nazis and their collaborators is problematic. It is reassuring that a clear majority of school students in the English study 'included at least one reference to Jewish people' when freely describing the Holocaust.³⁰ What Cowan and Maitles considered worrying in their study was that many respondents did not regard Nazi policy towards Jews as substantively different to that of other groups of people. This has serious implications as today's student teachers are the teacher workforce of tomorrow.

PRACTICE OF PRIMARY TEACHERS

Paula Cowan and Henry Maitles also investigated the nature of teaching the Holocaust in primary schools in one local authority in Scotland.³¹ Data was obtained from 44 teachers from an online questionnaire, 34 of whom stated that the Holocaust was taught in their school during the 2012–2013 session. In response to the question 'Which resources do you use to teach the Holocaust?', 24 teachers indicated that they used fiction, 22 used non-fiction, 15 used survivor testimony and 10 used resources provided by the HMDT. Data of teachers' perceived frequency of these resources further supported the use of fictional texts as 12 respondents had indicated that they regularly used fiction, while 8 respondents indicated that they regularly used non-fiction. While the data provided no insight into the extent to which teachers used a combination of fictional and non-fictional sources, these findings suggest that fictional sources are commonly used to teach the Holocaust.

These results contrast with earlier findings by Paula Cowan and Henry Maitles into the nature of teaching the Holocaust in primary schools in another local authority in Scotland, involving 21 schools, that demonstrated that teachers predominantly used non-fictional resources, 18 used a topic pack based on survivor testimony and 4 used a topic pack based on the story of Anne Frank.³² This shift from using non-fictional sources to fictional ones

has significant pedagogical issues which require further investigation, and I argue that this shift is leading to de-Judaisation in our classrooms.

For those teachers who commented on the resources used in the classroom, in terms of fiction, 13 teachers used *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*,³³ one teacher used *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit*,³⁴ and one teacher used *Carrie's War*.³⁵ For non-fiction, 12 teachers used *The Diary of Anne Frank* and 1 used *Hana's Suitcase*.³⁶ Thus, a major change over the last decade has been the common use of fiction, with a greater number of primary teachers using *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* to teach the Holocaust than *The Diary of Anne Frank*.³⁷

The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas has received a great deal of criticism from educational researchers across disciplines.³⁸ This criticism is not levelled at the writing style of the book but at its content. It is a story of an imaginary friendship between two young boys which uses the Holocaust as its setting. This book, therefore, may be an effective book for teaching students aspects of English language or literature (in the UK) and for encouraging boys to read, but is problematic for school-based Holocaust education. Wiesel's questioning of the consequence of exploiting the Holocaust for literary purposes, by asking whether it would mean that 'Treblinka and Belzec, Ponar and Babi Yar all ended in fantasy, in words, in beauty, that it was simply a matter of literature' has resonance for teachers.³⁹

The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas is not a story about the Holocaust, and its theme and messages can distort one's understanding of the Holocaust. From its opening pages, the Jewish experience of the Holocaust is marginalised. The author takes readers on an emotional journey in which at the climax the reader feels sorry for the camp commandant's son who has mistakenly been murdered in the camp and the camp commandant—who himself is a leading perpetrator and criminal—rather than the primary victims of the Holocaust, who were Jews. This has clear implications for both primary and secondary students, but I argue that school students' first lessons of the Holocaust should convey accurate facts. Teachers have the responsibility to ensure that their students' first understanding of the Holocaust is accurate; such an understanding includes clarity of who the victims and perpetrators of the Holocaust were. While there is anecdotal evidence from teachers that this book stimulates students' (especially boys') interest in learning about the Holocaust, the 'unlearning' that is required is something that teachers must address in their lesson or topic planning.

Gray's analysis of the effectiveness of *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* as a teaching resource in Holocaust education to students in England aged 13–14 years (n = 298) concluded that this book was 'a curse for Holocaust education'.⁴⁰ One of the findings of his study was that the majority of students interviewed (n = 36) believed this book was based on a true story, while the few who recognised that it was a fictional text considered that it represented a useful source of information on the Holocaust. Gray provides examples of incorrect inferences and misconceptions of the Holocaust that pupils had after reading this book. One of these is a student's written response to the question of why the Nazis' killing of the Jews ended; the student responded: 'I think it ended when one of the Nazi children died in the poisonous gas in the Jew camp.'⁴¹

It is important to emphasise that not all Holocaust fiction for young readers marginalises the Jewish experience during the Holocaust. Novels such as *Once*,⁴² *Hitler's Canary*⁴³ and *The Mozart Question*⁴⁴ are authentic and strive to inform readers about an aspect of the Holocaust. Des Pres' principles for Holocaust fiction are that 'the Holocaust shall be represented, in its totality, as a unique event; that representations of the Holocaust shall be as accurate and faithful as possible to the facts and conditions of the event, without change or manipulation for any reason'.⁴⁵ That said, the principal objective of fictional authors of all texts, historical or otherwise, is to ensure that readers buy and enjoy their books, not to convey information.

It is also important to point out that not all primary teachers agree that fiction should be used to teach the Holocaust. The following teacher comment emphasises the importance of non-fiction in this teaching context and in ensuring that the Holocaust be taught sensitively, in an age-appropriate way, to primary students.

Getting the balance right. Man's inhumanity to man and the depths plumbed, needs to be treated sensibly with younger children or else it can cause anxiety or worse become a horror fest...I am not comfortable with harrowing things hence I couldn't watch *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*!! I like facts – fiction and movies are always someone's interpretation with their spin and opinion.⁴⁶

Bracey et al. demonstrate how historical fiction can engage and motivate students aged 11–12 years in their learning of the Second World War and of controversial issues, such as the treatment of refugees and displaced

children.⁴⁷ Their study-unit approach focused on selected novels, *Safe Harbour*,⁴⁸ which tells of the experiences of the London Blitz, and *Faraway Home*, which focuses on the experiences of two children who fled Vienna for Northern Ireland.⁴⁹ Unlike *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, these texts do not lack authenticity. Teachers integrated informational texts into their students' learning activities, and students were required to engage with the informational texts alongside their reading of the fictional texts. This approach is based on the rationale that students should research the historical context, relating their fictional text to evidence and contributing to the students' historical enquiry. This responds to the concern that is posed by Gray's students discussed earlier, that students who do not have a firm grounding in the specific historical context are unable to distinguish between fantasy and reality in Holocaust fictional texts.⁵⁰

CONCLUSIONS

Teacher, student teacher and student perceptions of the Holocaust are important in school-based Holocaust education. One cannot effectively learn the wider lessons *from* the Holocaust without first having an accurate understanding of the historical lessons *about* the Holocaust. Hence adopting an inclusive understanding which marginalises the Jewish experience can adversely affect both components of Holocaust education and may lead to students' misconceptions of the Holocaust, Nazism, genocide and antisemitism. This is not the place for 'balance' and 'equality', which many student teachers lean towards. Antisemitism, xenophobia and racism must be treated seriously, not tokenistically.

Findings from primary teachers that fiction is a common Holocaust teaching resource, with *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* being widely used, are troubling. While the research findings do not provide information into how teachers use this book in the classroom, the criticism levelled at this book suggests that primary teachers should address the inaccuracies in this book, which include aspects of de-Judaisation. Their failure to do so will inevitably lead to their students having a distorted understanding of the Holocaust. De-Judaisation of the Holocaust has serious implications for the professional development of teachers and other Holocaust education providers. There may be no 'J' in the word 'Holocaust', but the specificity of the Jewish experience is integral to effective Holocaust education.

APPENDIX

Many different understandings of the Holocaust exist. Which one closely matches your own?

- (a) The Holocaust was the persecution and murder of a range of victims perpetrated by the Nazi regime and its collaborators. They were targeted for different reasons and were persecuted in different ways. Victims included Jews, Gypsies, disabled people, Poles, Slavs, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Soviet prisoners of war, black people, and other political and ethnic groups.
- (b) The Nazis and their collaborators perpetrated crimes against humanity on millions of people. The Holocaust was the attempt to murder every last Jewish person in Europe. Other groups were targeted for destruction but, unlike the Jews, there was no plan to murder every member of these other groups.
- (c) The Holocaust was the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of approximately six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators.
- (d) Hitler believed that ethnic Germans were the members of a 'Master Race'. For the sake of their 'new order', which would see this 'Master Race' dominate the continent of Europe, the Nazis attempted to get rid of anyone who was 'different' from them, and this resulted in the mass murder of millions of people. We call this the Holocaust.
- (e) The persecution of Jewish people during the Second World War, which is often referred to as the 'Holocaust', has been exaggerated. The figure of six million killed is too high. While there is no doubt that many Jewish people died during this time, this was in the context of a world war where some 50 million people are believed to have been killed.

Taken from *Teaching About the Holocaust in English Secondary Schools* (2009), Institute of Education, University of London; see www.hedp.org

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Poetry, Charcoal and a Requiem: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Teaching the Holocaust to Primary Students

Graham Duffy and Paula Cowan

INTRODUCTION

This chapter investigates how interdisciplinary teaching in primary schools can be used effectively to develop pupil knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust and pupils' creative skills. Interdisciplinary learning (IDL) refers to an integrated or cross-curricular approach in which a number of disciplines are used to develop an understanding of a subject or topic by students making connections between these disciplines (Boyle and McKinstry¹). IDL, or 'learning across the curriculum', is an important element of the Scottish curriculum, *Curriculum for Excellence* (CfE), which is designed for young people between the ages of 3 and 18 years. Embedding IDL in classroom practice in Scotland is demonstrated by the curriculum framework setting out the following consideration:

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C. W. Szejnmann et al. (eds.), *Holocaust Education in Primary
Schools in the Twenty-First Century*, The Holocaust and its
Contexts, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-73099-8_4

The curriculum should include space for learning beyond subject boundaries, so that children and young people can make connections between different areas of learning. Interdisciplinary studies, based upon groupings of experiences and outcomes from within and across curriculum areas, can provide relevant, challenging and enjoyable learning experiences and stimulating contexts to meet the varied needs of children and young people. (Scottish Government²)

The Scottish curriculum therefore encourages teachers to adopt interdisciplinary approaches to learning (Humes³). Such approaches draw on a range of themes and topics for delivering the curriculum and ‘prioritise pupils’ deep understandings through revisiting learning and considering multiple perspectives’ (Sinnema and Aitken⁴). The contribution of interdisciplinary learning to achieving a depth of understanding is further supported by Robson,⁵ who reminds us that Leonardo da Vinci brought together art, science, engineering and design to produce ‘outcomes that would not have been possible while working within the margins of individual disciplines’. The Leonardo Effect is an approach which promotes the integration of learning of art and science.

Though widely accepted as beneficial in primary school, Laurie⁶ asserts that repetitive, fragmented and superficial styles of teaching are common weaknesses of interdisciplinary learning. This is supported by Snyder,⁷ who argues that teaching pupils songs about Vikings or copying Viking runes develops pupils’ learning of the Vikings through music and art but does not develop pupils’ learning of music and art. This justifies planning for IDL that achieves coherence in learning between the selected curricular areas or subjects and provides meaningful and relevant contexts for developing subject-specific skills and concepts.

History is multidimensional in that it involves learning about a range of aspects of societies from the past. Because these aspects can, for example, include art, literature and music, its teaching involves creativity in other curriculum areas (Cooper⁸). Menter and Hulme⁹ conclude from their study of teachers in Glasgow, Scotland, that teachers in the later stages of primary schools are more receptive to this integrated approach than their secondary peers. Their findings are that experienced primary teachers welcome the move away from the prescriptive approach that constrains creativity to one which allows teachers greater flexibility to exercise professional judgement.

Supple’s¹⁰ support of an integrated approach to teaching the Holocaust to secondary pupils demonstrates that IDL in Holocaust teaching is not something new. This is further supported by Woolley in his recognition

that primary teachers ‘develop effective cross-curricular links as they plan’ and ‘plan a thematic curriculum that makes it possible to spend an extended period of time based around a topic or subject,’ and in his view that these strategies are appropriate for young learners of the Holocaust. Findings in Scotland that the most commonly used resources to teach the Holocaust in primary schools were cross-curricular resources (Cowan and Maitles^{11,12}) demonstrate that primary teachers had regularly adopted this teaching approach prior to the introduction of CfE.

In the Holocaust primary teaching context, IDL has traditionally involved pupil engagement with non-fictional texts, such as *The Diary of Anne Frank*¹³ or *Hana’s Suitcase*,¹⁴ as well as history, which in CfE is one component of social studies entitled *People, Past Events and Societies*. Findings that primary pupils had inaccurate and negative conceptions of Jews (Short and Carrington¹⁵; Short,^{16,17}) suggest that engaging with the Jewish way of life before pupils begin their study of the Holocaust can be beneficial. This promotes the inclusion of religious and moral education in interdisciplinary learning about the Holocaust. Cowan and Maitles¹⁸ suggest that aspects of Judaism, such as the Jewish festival of Purim, can be explored. This festival remembers the attempted genocide of the Jews in the ancient Persian Empire by Haman, one of the king’s advisors, and its story allows opportunities for making connections between antisemitism and genocide in biblical and more contemporary times.

In this study, the Holocaust is taught through three CfE curriculum areas: Social Studies, through exploration of the aforementioned component; languages, through the development of skills in Literacy and English and using *Hana’s Suitcase* (ibid) as a core resource; and Expressive Arts, through the development of skills and knowledge in music and art. This integrated approach is further justified by Robinson’s¹⁹ view that ‘good primary school practice is based on teachers recognising the opportunities to fertilise work in one part of the curriculum with work in another’ and that ‘learning in and about the arts is essential to intellectual development’.

Perhaps the most famous example of integrating art and design into learning about the Holocaust is the Paper Clip Project (1998) undertaken by Whitwell Middle School, in Whitwell, Tennessee, USA (for pupils aged 11–13 years). This involved pupils collecting paper clips and writing letters to people requesting that they send a paper clip, with the goal of collecting six million paper clips, this number representing the estimated number of Jews murdered in the Holocaust. Magilow²⁰ writes that criticism is often

levelled at this and similar projects on the grounds that while young people are trying to honour victims of the Holocaust by this collection, their use of a trivial inanimate object to do so is inappropriate and disrespectful. Magilow emphasises that such projects can often lead to critical reflection, discussion and debate that connects the past with the present. We argue that such visual representations convey to young people the enormity of the Holocaust which a textbook cannot. They also encourage historical reflection and school and a positive classroom ethos and can lead to the emergence of unforeseen educational initiatives. At Whitwell, this led, for example, to the school's delivery of an authentic German rail wagon to house the paper clip collection and pupils reading and discussing the letters they received in response to their letters. In addition to being a form of memory, visual artefacts and representations are a form of Holocaust teaching pedagogy. As the Holocaust recedes further into history, today's pupils become more distanced from the Holocaust and new forms of memory, and teaching approaches are evolving.

Teaching the Holocaust to primary pupils is not without its challenges. The statement in the Historical Association's²¹ T.E.A.C.H. (Teaching Emotive and Controversial History 3–19) report that teaching history 'can be emotive and controversial where there is actual or perceived unfairness to people by another individual or group in the past', implies that all teachers of history should be developing their skills in teaching controversial issues. Yet research by Cassidy et al.²² demonstrated that a student teacher who had planned an integrated topic to introduce human rights issues to a Primary 5 class (pupils aged 9 years) which included learning about the Holocaust, to coincide with Holocaust Memorial Day, was steered away from this topic by her class teacher who thought it was 'a bit controversial'.

SCHOOL CONTEXT

The school is situated in a relatively affluent area in Renfrewshire, Scotland, and its pupils are mainly white. The Holocaust had not been taught in depth in the school previously. The Head Teacher (HT) was highly supportive of the class teacher (CT) and purchased copies of *Hana's Suitcase* for all pupils in the class. The school's recent HMIE²³ inspection report (HMIE 2011:4) states that parents 'support children's learning in Judaism' and that pupils had explored Judaism in Primary 4, 5 and 6. The school is well resourced and pupils use iPads and an interactive whiteboard regularly,

for example on this topic, pupils used *Google Earth* and *Streetview* to take a virtual tour of Theresienstadt.

The CT was a probationer teacher, with a strong background in music. Because he had never taught the Holocaust before, he engaged in a great deal of personal research before planning the topic. This research involved examining Holocaust teaching pedagogy, reading historical texts and (primary) children's literature and exploring websites. He considered *Hana's Suitcase* to be an appropriate text for his pupils because it was based on a true story, juxtaposed from the past to the present, contained archival photographs and documents, and the historical setting of Theresienstadt presented opportunities to integrate the expressive arts into his teaching. After conducting this research, the CT constructed a plan for his interdisciplinary topic entitled *World War II and the Holocaust* and identified the relevant experiences and outcomes in social studies, literacy, music and art.

PLANNING FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY LEARNING

The CT integrated the history of the Holocaust into the chosen topic and identified the learning opportunities that would enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust and the skills that pupils were to develop through poetry, music and art at the planning stage. This ensured that planned learning experiences were meaningful and focused on pupil needs, interests and abilities and that learning outcomes developed pupils' knowledge and skills across the selected disciplines. Planning also included pupils performing their learning to parents at school in a 'Holocaust Tribute'. This allowed parents to see and hear what their children had been learning about.

The CT chose to teach this topic several weeks into the school session. This allowed time for a safe learning environment to be established. Before teaching the Holocaust the CT had engaged in a long and in-depth discussion about the classroom environment being one of safety and acceptance, where individuality and difference would be celebrated with pupils. During this discussion, pupils considered the acceptance of barriers to learning and that each pupil had the right to engage in their personal learning journey. This was supported by the school's use of *BounceBack* (McGrath and Noble²⁴), a social and emotional learning programme, originating in Australia, that is used to support teachers to develop pupils' resilience skills.

It was important that pupils were somehow able to *connect* with the events of the Holocaust, in addition to learning about them. The chosen text (*Hana's Suitcase*) allowed pupils to identify and empathise with the main protagonists, Hana and George, as they were of a similar age to the pupils in the class. As a significant part of this narrative took place in the Theresienstadt concentration camp, learning experiences exposed pupils to creative works of camp inmates. This also provided pupils with opportunities to develop their understanding of daily life inside this camp. This approach is unusual in that educators often argue that Holocaust education in the primary teaching context should not take pupils beyond the gates of the camps (e.g. Wiseman²⁵ 2006). We argue that it was not possible to study and understand this text without doing so. Cowan and Maitles²⁶ recognise that the approach described earlier is not always feasible and cite *Remember the Children: Daniel's Story*, an exhibition with accompanying teaching resources for primary-aged pupils at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's exhibition as an example of an excellent resource that takes young learners beyond the gates of the camp. We argue that the CT's approach was necessary and age-appropriate and enhanced pupils' understanding of Hana's experiences in the chosen text.

The CT had introduced a 'review of the week' earlier in the term, where pupils wrote a review of their learning and other aspects of school life, such as behaviour, every Friday. One of the features of this review was the 'P.S.' (i.e. a post scriptum, or afterthought), which provided a direct route to the CT about issues that pupils did not want to share in public but wanted to share with their teacher. This was in addition to, and not a substitute for, sharing with their teacher personal matters. The CT used this as a safe and secure way for pupils to express their responses about the Holocaust.

The teacher felt it was important to keep the learning of the Holocaust focused, relevant and accessible to his pupils. Exposing primary pupils to too many aspects of one particular topic also prevents deep learning from taking place. Providing too much information in this topic was further problematic as several pupils were naturally interested in aspects of the Holocaust that the teacher did not feel they were ready to explore. Therefore, focusing on and linking different aspects of learning about the Holocaust through the eyes of a child, using *Hana's Suitcase* as a stimulus for learning, seemed an appropriate pedagogical approach.

At the beginning of *Hana's Suitcase*, the reader learns that the Brady family was an artistic family, with a love of art and music (Hana played the

piano), and would often welcome artists into their home. As Hana's story progresses, the reader is taken on a journey into the Theresienstadt camp, where many artists, writers and musicians were held before being sent to Auschwitz. In the text, we learn that Hana attended art classes with other children in the camp. As the CT read the text with his class, he drew natural connections between the historical aspects of the Holocaust, literacy and English and the expressive arts. The teacher took the opportunity to explore the works of writers, artists and musicians within the camp, which provided a stimulus for the pupils' creative work.

The Scottish curriculum encourages teachers to consider pupils' prior knowledge at the planning stage, so that teachers gain an understanding of pupils' existing knowledge and what pupils would *like* to know. Throughout the Holocaust topic, the CT encouraged pupils to lead their own learning and responded to their questions and inquisitiveness. The CT incorporated into his topic plan his pupils' next steps in learning in accordance with their interests. The CT gave serious consideration to the content used in terms of suitability for his pupils and told them that they would learn more about the Holocaust when they were older.

PARENTAL COMMUNICATION

Adeline Salmon,²⁷ coordinator of the educational workshops at the Shoah Memorial in Paris, which reported that 2240 of its participants in 2011 were pupils aged 9–12 years, highlighted the importance of preparing parents for their children's visit to the memorial. Salmon explained that she contacts any parent who has strong reservations about having their child visit the memorial and tries to reassure them. She added that the class teacher communicates with parents to ensure that parents have clear expectations of the visit.

In our study, at the beginning of the term, the CT had written a letter to parents indicating his 'open door' policy, where they could contact him any time on a Monday (during his allocated probationer non-class contact time) or any day after school to discuss matters concerning their child. Prior to teaching *World War II and the Holocaust*, the CT wrote a letter to parents which focused on two classroom initiatives for the term: the classroom economy and the topic, which included aspects of the Holocaust. Combining the two learning programmes together in one letter conveyed to parents that the Holocaust topic was not distinctive; it was simply part of their child's learning programme for that term. The CT's willingness to

answer parents' questions and discuss matters with them at school or on the phone demonstrated that the CT's approach to communication with parents was consistent across both initiatives. The CT discussed the content of this letter with pupils prior to distributing it to parents and the day after the parents had received it. This demonstrates the CT's commitment to involve parents from the very beginning of the planned learning programme. Although no parent raised a concern, the CT was prepared to listen to parental views and adapt the topic in response to them, if necessary.

The first page of the letter explained the operation of a newly introduced classroom economy programme, the expectations of pupil learning, and parental involvement. The second page focused on *World War II and the Holocaust* (Appendix). This had several purposes: to inform parents of the forthcoming teaching programme, to allay potential parental concerns about teaching this sensitive and controversial topic, and to advise parents about supervising their children during their personal research at home.

POETRY

The objective of the two planned poetry lessons was to develop pupils' reading and writing skills, focusing on developing techniques for creating poetry, such as structure, imagery and subtext. Poems included were 'The Butterfly' by Pavel Friedman and 'Jewish Forever' and 'The Garden' by Franta Bass (Burch²⁸). Both Friedman and Bass were Czech Jews who were deported to Theresienstadt before being murdered in Auschwitz. These poems were chosen because, firstly, they allowed pupils to draw on their prior knowledge gained through their study of *Hana's Suitcase*, to 'read between the lines' and understand the content and subtext of these poems, as well as make connections between their experiences and the experiences of George and Hana, and secondly, because they were written by young people: Bass was 11 years old when he was incarcerated in Theresienstadt. Pupils analysed and evaluated the use of language and imagery before applying their learning to create their individual poems.

Following a period of pupils engaging in developing their skills in textual analysis, pupils participated in a group 'graffiti' exercise. The objective of this was to develop pupils' critical thinking skills and writing skills to support their poetry writing. Pupils were required to write ideas using descriptive language on their understanding of life in Theresienstadt, using age-appropriate archival photographs of this camp that were sourced

from images on Google. These included images of male prisoners in regimental form, wearing striped uniforms, now known as ‘striped pyjamas’, and of groups of prisoners standing at barbed wire fences with expressions of uncertainty and fear. After this activity, pupils were encouraged to consider what happened immediately before and after the photographs were taken. There were planned opportunities for sharing pupils’ ideas about the content of the photographs. These discussions were planned to provide pupils with a strong foundation on which to build ideas before attempting to write their individual poems.

ART-CHARCOAL DRAWINGS

The sources used were charcoal drawings created by inmates of Auschwitz and postcards of the interior of the barracks that had been purchased during a colleague’s visit to Auschwitz. Planning involved the selection of appropriate images to use as stimuli for discussion and analysing how this artwork could be used as a way to further enhance pupils’ knowledge of life inside a concentration camp. It was vital that the images selected not be distressing or too graphic for pupils. The objective of this activity was for pupils to analyse Holocaust artwork by the CT demonstrating how the artists used line, tone and texture to convey both a narrative and emotion in their drawings. Pupils’ understanding of the artists’ skills contributed greatly to the next activity, in which pupils were to create their own individual charcoal drawings. The objective of the individual drawing activity was to use line, tone and texture to convey life inside the concentration camp, based on their knowledge.

Though the images had been carefully selected by the CT, opportunities for pupils to inform their teacher if they found images too upsetting were included in the CT’s planning. If such a situation arose, the teacher would stop the lesson and modify planning to revisit an adapted, more accessible lesson the following day. The flexible nature of the primary timetable provides primary teachers with more opportunities to respond to their pupils than secondary teachers and allows for incomplete lessons to be followed up or amended the following day or at a different time on the same day (Cowan and Maitles²⁹). The relationship formed between the class teacher and his/her primary pupils can make a valuable contribution to eliciting and responding to pupils’ emotional responses.

MUSIC

The CT was inspired by the life of Romanian composer and musician Rafael Schächter (1905–1944), who organised singers and musicians to perform Verdi's *Requiem* at Theresienstadt. Involving approximately 50 singers and 4 soloists, the *Requiem* was performed for the delegates of the Red Cross on their visit to Theresienstadt in 1944. This was Schächter's last choir as he and several other musicians in Theresienstadt were soon transported to Auschwitz where they were murdered on arrival.

The CT planned a series of lessons on Schächter and the features of a requiem mass, which led to opportunities in pupils developing their general listening skills as well as their skills in music appreciation, technical musicianship and musical notation. The CT identified suitable extracts of Verdi's *Requiem* and music in the Phrygian dominant scale, a modal scale featured in some Hebrew prayers. The teacher's preparatory research had included watching the documentary *Defiant Requiem* (Shultz³⁰), in which surviving members of the choir told of Schächter instructing the choir to 'sing to the Nazis what they could not say to them'. This demonstrates that the CT had planned for the integration of music to help pupils understand that the events of the Holocaust, though distressing, were uplifting.

RESULTS

Pupils demonstrated less resistance than usual to writing poetry, and their poems demonstrated an improvement in their writing. This was true of pupils who required support with writing and pupils with additional needs. Pupils drew on their prior knowledge of the Holocaust and of poetry and used their textual analysis to create emotive and mature pieces of writing. The poems that follow show that some pupils placed themselves in the situations of both the children who had written the poetry and the children in the class text (Pupils A and C) while others (Pupil B) placed themselves in an external position.

'Field of Flowers' by Pupil A

I see fields of flowers
fragrant and colourful,
dancing peacefully in the sun.
Even if I was to die watching them,

'Holocaust Poem' by Pupil B

They stood there, in the grimy gritty dirt.
Being told what to do,
poor Jews, they were well talented,
all going to waste. Broken,

I wouldn't mind,
as long as the seasons live.

Soon enough, my time will come.
I will close my eyes and wait,
thinking about the yellow, grassy fields
flowing all around, examining every detail.
Waiting, waiting, waiting.....

Untitled poem by Pupil C

There I am eating my food,
nothing else, nothing good.
There I am flying high,
my only dream; the beautiful sky.

There I stand there and cry.
Nothing to do, I couldn't try.
I wipe my tears, no time to spend
This time, this time, this time is the end.

they are.
They see no freedom, within
the walls of the ghetto.

They stood there, distraught.
Not knowing if they would live,
or be destroyed.
Death was before them, in the
walls of the ghetto.

Pupils were given free choice to write from an inmate's point of view or to comment externally. In most cases, pupils were able to apply their learning from their lessons using complex writer's craft techniques, such as careful use of enjambment to create images or placing emphasis on words and ideas, as demonstrated in both Pupil A and B's poems. Some were able to write pieces which required reading between the lines, using interesting metaphors to create powerful images. For example, Pupil A chose to explore the impending end of an inmate and how they made peace with this using a calming image of a 'Field of Flowers'. Pupil C used the analogy of the sky as the only 'dream' left to dream, as she/he moved closer to death. This pupil also used repetition in the final line of the poem as a means of emphasising both the waiting and the assurance that she would meet her end 'this time'.

Pupil B used alliteration to emphasise the conditions of the ghetto and made clever use of enjambment to emphasise the idea that the inmates were physically and mentally 'broken'. The pupil did this by placing the word 'Broken' on its own and completing the sentence on a new line. This pupil used a similar technique to emphasise, and yet simplify, the idea that inmates were left with two situations—to live or be 'destroyed.' Most pupils achieved the desired learning, writing mature, complex pieces of writing. It is clear from the written evidence that as a result of the final

pieces produced, attainment in writing improved significantly through exploring and analysing poems written by children who had been imprisoned in Theresienstadt during the Holocaust.

The Deputy Head Teacher included the following strengths in her written report of this observed lesson:

[The CT was] highly knowledgeable about the development of creating a context using poetry from the Holocaust to evoke an emotional response from the children, engaging the children in the task using a wide range of stimuli from this context of poetry, photographs and drawing on prior learning to enrich the use of vocabulary, punctuation, structure and content.

The use of resources was creative and stimulated lots of discussion to provide a rich variety of ideas, words and structure to be used in the creation of [the children's] own individual poems. The context of learning, Holocaust poetry, was particularly poignant and capitalised on children's prior knowledge to further their writing. IDL approaches are best when they hold a strong connection for the application of skills, and this lesson was an excellent example.

The CT's questioning, prior to the individual charcoal drawing activity, prompted pupils to think about the people or items in the drawn images and the person drawing the image, e.g. *Why do you think the artist chose that particular person/item to draw?* This helped the children understand that the drawings were a documentation of life inside the camps and, hence, that artwork can be important historical sources. It also contributed to pupils' understanding of the humanity within the camps and that prisoners in the camp were individuals as well as members of a group identified by their religious, cultural or sexual identity. The CT also encouraged pupils to describe the art using a single sentence or word. He displayed an image showing inmates marching in unison under an imposing 'Arbeit Macht Frei' entrance gate, with equally imposing Nazi officers standing to the side gazing at the spectacle. When asked the question what the scene was about, one pupil responded that it was about *control*. This pupil indicated that in the background of the image was a small figure, a musical conductor with a baton in his hand; this represented 'control'. This pupil further commented that the Nazi officers were drawn taller and more imposing than the inmates. Pupils then commented that everything within the image pointed to the idea of control, from the harsh angles of the inmates' marching legs to the threatening sign above them, and the simple, yet effective, image of the conductor controlling both the orchestra and the pace at which the inmates marched. In addition to demonstrating

that pupils were able to respond to the artist's work, this demonstrates that the pupils made the connections between their music and art lessons.

As pupils worked on their individual drawings, the CT encouraged them to consider what the viewers of their work would see, in terms of both content and technique. It was evident from pupil engagement that they were motivated to produce quality pieces of work for display. These drawings, which included piles of suitcases and barbed wire fencing, were displayed in a school corridor, and their peers, teachers and parents commented positively on the quality and emotional content of this artwork. The pupils adopted some of the techniques used in the analysed drawings, such as using the edge of a piece of charcoal to create varieties of line, tone and texture, and used shading and smudging to create perspective.

Development of pupil skills in music appreciation, technical musicianship and musical notation were demonstrated through their learning to play music together and perform in public. With the knowledge that two pupils were learning the violin, the CT composed a piece of music for two violins, 31 glockenspiels and a piano (for the CT) for the class to learn. Like Schächter, he taught the piece by rote, taking pupils through every note and explaining where it was on their instrument and how it was to be played. Most pupils had not learned how to read musical notation or played an instrument as part of an ensemble, prior to this learning activity. One of the violinists recognised the complexity of the violin part and took the initiative to rearrange it to suit his peer, who was not as advanced as he. He was therefore credited as a co-arranger of the piece.

Pupils titled the piece 'A Tribute to Hana' and learned it over a six-week period. This allowed pupils to understand that playing music to performance level requires an exhausting amount of perseverance and commitment. As they developed a feel for the music, pupils discussed Schächter and his musicians and how they must have felt when learning the *Requiem*. Pupils were able to empathise with the artists in Theresienstadt through the power of music. Pupils also demonstrated a commitment to perform the piece to a very high standard, both as a duty to Hana and as a mark of respect for all who suffered in Theresienstadt and elsewhere in the Holocaust. Robinson's³¹ view that 'the potential of the arts for developing a sense of excellence and quality...can transform an individual's expectations of him/herself' is supported by pupils' raising expectations of themselves, individually and collectively, during their performance of this music to their parents.

CONCLUSIONS

It is evident that IDL is an effective approach to teaching the Holocaust and that the arts have an important contribution to make in this approach; pupils developed their historical knowledge of the Holocaust and their skills and knowledge in literature, art and music. This study demonstrated the significance of planning for effective IDL and showed that this involves a range of aspects. These include the teacher's researching and acquiring knowledge about the Holocaust, identifying appropriate resources that respond to the needs and interests of pupils, designing suitable learning experiences which will help pupils achieve the expected outcomes within the time available and giving serious consideration to communicating with parents.

While this study is a single case study, and one must be cautious and cannot generalise the results, its findings challenge a commonly held view (e.g. Wiseman) that primary pupils should not engage in learning about the camps. The results discussed earlier should not be misinterpreted as justification for exposing young learners to horrific images such as those of death pits (Supple³²) or gas chambers. In this study, information on the camps was crucial to pupils' understanding of the chosen text and delivered in an age-appropriate and relevant manner, and parents were informed of the CT's plan to include this in his teaching at the initial stages of the topic's delivery.

It is worth noting that the CT believed that the teaching of the Holocaust enhanced the school's culture of care and acceptance within the classroom and that it provided a sound basis for classroom ethos for the rest of the year. This is supported by one parent's comment at parents' night that this topic 'was a good way to start the first term in p7'. This study also highlighted the importance of obtaining the Head Teacher's support at the planning stage, as this was essential in purchasing new resources for pupils. These planning considerations have implications for teachers in both the primary and secondary sectors.

APPENDIX

This term, as part of Social Studies, Primary 7b will be exploring and researching World War II. We will be learning about the cause of war, the rise of the Nazi party and Adolf Hitler, the Home Front, and aspects of the Holocaust. Our novel study will be 'Hana's Suitcase', a factual account

of a school in Tokyo researching the life of a young girl who was taken to Theresienstadt, a concentration camp located in what is now the Czech Republic.

Within this camp there were many talented musicians, writers and artists. We will be exploring some of their works and stories in line with Hana's. The topic will allow children to make comparisons to life in the world today, as well as cover aspects of expressive arts, religious education, literature and citizenship education.

Following a discussion with the class last week, it is clear that the children are looking forward to learning about the events of World War II. However, I am aware that learning about aspects of this period in history can be rather sensitive and upsetting. We will be researching Theresienstadt and the people within it, as well as looking at the moral issues surrounding Hitler's 'Final Solution'.

Naturally, some children are very inquisitive about World War II and will want to carry out personal research at home. Researching events of the Holocaust online may expose children to upsetting and distressing images that I would not choose to show in the classroom. Therefore, I would appreciate it if you could monitor your child's personal research to avoid exposure to such images.

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Transformative Transition: The Case for Religious Education in Cross-Curricular Holocaust Education Across the Primary/ Secondary Divide in English Schools

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This chapter sets out to explore the role played by religious education (RE) in English primary and secondary schools and how this does (or could) relate to teaching and learning about the Holocaust. While RE tends to be taught as a discrete subject by specialists in secondary schools, primary school teachers are almost always cross-curricular experts, with little deliberate co-ordination between these age phases. This chapter considers the opportunities and challenges presented by these differing approaches across the primary/secondary divide. It presents a way forward for educators willing to embrace difference and willing to work creatively and collaboratively between disciplines and phases for the good of their pupils' learning.

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C. W. Szejnmann et al. (eds.), *Holocaust Education in Primary
Schools in the Twenty-First Century*, The Holocaust and its
Contexts, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-73099-8_5

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN ENGLAND

Following the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939, it was assumed that education would be of little or no interest to the national coalition government formed to guide the UK through the ensuing years. Prime Minister Winston Churchill was certainly cautious of educational legislation, having witnessed first-hand the disastrous political fallout from his own party's 1902 Education Act, which effectively endowed Anglican and Catholic school provision whilst ultimately contributing to the party's defeat at the hands of the Liberals at the 1906 General Election. Despite this concern, Conservative President of the Board of Education (now Secretary of State for Education) Richard Austen Butler began optimistically fashioning a consensus-building, cross-party piece of legislation that set out a vision for post-war education in England and Wales. Butler was at the time a young and idealistic politician, a pragmatist who realised what could be achieved if he worked with—rather than in spite of—his pre-war political opponents and those with influence from within the Anglican and Catholic churches. Butler's approach had the added bonus of being contagious; even the most ardent anti-church educational reformers had to concede that his proposal was 'the right policy' for the time.¹ The war years had inadvertently brought diverse and disparate social groups together through shared service and suffering. This, together with the example set by the national government, brought about 'a shifting social climate'² that enabled an appetite for coalition-building and interventionist welfare legislation. The churches' collaboration came at a price, however, both financially and ideologically—but it was a price political and social reformers were willing to pay. Butler agreed not only to having the state effectively pay for church schools but also to the law ensuring that the school day would begin with an act of collective worship and to allowing the churches to set their own curriculum for religious instruction (as it was then termed). The current education system in England and Wales finds its roots in the principles established in this 1944 Education Act, although much has changed in the intervening years through various other Acts of Parliament. Heralded remarkably as both a victory for progressives and a triumph of paternalism, the Act established free state education for all up to the age of 15 and transfer to a tripartite provision at age 11 (based on academic aptitude). Religious instruction was the only subject specifically legally defined in the Act. Together with collective worship,

they have remained central (if controversial) tenets of compulsory schooling in England and Wales to this day.

Religious instruction is now widely referred to as religious education (RE) and sits within the wider parameters of the devolved National Curriculum for England as a statutory subject for students 5–18 years old. Described as ‘a subject in a particular place and time’,³ its meaning, nature, intention and indeed its very name have changed considerably over the last 80 years. In 1944, religious instruction was intended to be ‘non-denominational’, but this meant non-denominationally Christian, rather than religion-neutral. Now, children from their earliest years of schooling encounter a subject that involves studying different religions, beliefs, worldviews and philosophical viewpoints. It both encompasses and embraces moral and ethical discussion, debate and the application of religion to contemporary issues and contexts. Whether discussing ‘special books’ in the early years of primary school or analysing the most complex philosophical texts prior to university entrance in secondary school, it is a place where pupils of all faiths and none can come together to share ideas, challenge their thinking and learn about and from the beliefs and practices of others.

RE, CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES AND THE HOLOCAUST

The desire to include controversial issues in the curriculum has been widely advocated and discussed.⁴ Robert Stradling asserted that ‘controversial issues [were] an integral and inescapable part of the secondary school curriculum’.⁵ Teachers were deterred from embracing opportunities to discuss such issues, however, by the prescriptive tones of the 1996 Education Act, although this was perhaps an overreaction to a piece of legislation that dichotomously closed down discussions about partisan politics whilst at the same time advocating ‘a balanced presentation of opposing views’ in the classroom.⁶ Two years later, the report of the Advisory Group on Citizenship (led by Professor Bernard Crick) clarified the government’s position that in preparing children for the complexities of adult life, ‘Education should not attempt to shelter our nation’s children from even the harsher controversies.’⁷ This exposition facilitated an increasingly ‘more promising political climate for teaching controversial issues’.⁸ As a result, much of the content of the current secondary curriculum has been until recently overtly geared towards evaluative discussions of such issues. Specifications for public examinations in RE over the last

decade have illustrated how teaching about controversial issues had become a core part of this subject (although recent changes have seen a return to a more knowledge-based focus). As Crick had observed, RE embraced ‘the very essence of controversy’.⁹ Amongst the myriad of controversial issues one might encounter in the RE classroom are matters of life, death, justice, tolerance, prejudice and religious freedom—indeed topics as diverse as the human condition embraces.

Undoubtedly, the Holocaust is one such subject that might be embraced within RE. The Holocaust Education Development Programme’s research¹⁰ into secondary school teachers’ attitudes and practices in Holocaust education certainly found this to be true, arguably to their surprise (given their declared focus on history teaching). Their data revealed the naivety implicit in their assumptions, with 92 per cent of *all* teachers indicating that they facilitated debate and discussion of the issues raised by the Holocaust, not just the historical facts of it. These outcomes echoed earlier findings around the cross-curricular intentions of Holocaust education,¹¹ although these studies also focused almost exclusively on secondary education. This is not to say that any one subject is better placed to study issues of morality, ethics or historical facts. It is, rather, to suggest that different disciplines can and should learn *from* and work *with* each other, for the mutual benefit of all pupils. This is, on the whole, a problem more evident in secondary schools (where different teachers are likely to teach different subjects) than in primary schools (where a single teacher is likely to teach across subjects). However, research indicates that collaboration is less enthusiastically embraced in practice in secondary schools, with evidence suggesting that the relationship between the disciplines of history and religious education is not always clearly defined (if at all).¹² There may be a lack of communication between the two, which at worst may even manifest as active suspicion or hostility between departments that teachers¹³ and pupils¹⁴ perceive as being of different status. What emerges at present, then, might be a somewhat messy picture of competing curricular claims on the Holocaust in secondary schools—one that arguably benefits neither teachers nor learners. I do not believe that this discord warrants retreat, however. Ultimately, the Holocaust is not a one-dimensional entity, and any suggestion that it can be tackled or understood by teachers or learners from a single discipline seems as flawed in its arrogance as it is myopic. Foster and Mercier¹⁵ reminded us how ‘the religious dimension’—as much as any other aspect of this multifaceted event—is vital if pupils are to attempt to ‘piece together the many parts of the puzzle’ of

the Holocaust. Primary teachers, it would seem, have a clear advantage here, given that they tend to be interdisciplinary in their expertise. They can be less concerned with any need to compartmentalise learning within the narrow confines of a single discipline. This enables them to present topics such as the Holocaust within the context of different themes, relatively free from the subject or timetable constraints of their secondary counterparts. This is an opportunity (in its collegiality) to explore the various aspects of a complex topic such as the Holocaust from different perspectives, in a way secondary colleagues often cannot.

The discussion so far would seem to lead to two conclusions: first, that the Holocaust has a place in the RE classroom (as the evidence suggests), certainly as much as it does in the history classroom. Second, we might conclude that wherever it is being taught, the Holocaust is being presented to some extent as a moral or controversial issue. In secondary schools, it might be considered a moral concern by an RE teacher (for example) who focuses on issues of prejudice or discrimination relating to the Holocaust. Similarly, a secondary history teacher might explore issues around the origins or motivations of the Holocaust. In a primary school, this might be reflected in the cross-curricular approach taken by the teacher, for example, discussing the story of Anne Frank in terms of the historical and moral actions of those concerned. In any of these school contexts, the benefits of cross-curricular study are self-evident. As a teacher of RE, I agree with Hector's¹⁶ opinion that the topic of the Holocaust sits 'particularly comfortably' within the RE curriculum because RE teachers feel 'a little more confident' in teaching difficult issues such as this. This relationship can be 'hazy',¹⁷ however, and these are issues I shall return to later. Regardless, there can be no doubt that the Holocaust is as much a part of the RE agenda in English primary and secondary schools, as religion is a part of any academic discussion of the Holocaust.

The second assumption (stated earlier) is problematic, however. I find fault in the assumption that the Holocaust should be viewed as a *controversial* issue. This is because of the lack of clarity evident in the literature concerning what exactly a *controversial* issue might be. Whilst many have attempted a definition,¹⁸ only minimal consensus has emerged. If we return to the Crick Report, we are told that:

A controversial issue is an issue about which there is no fixed or universally held point of view. Such issues are those which commonly divide society and for which significant groups offer conflicting explanations and solutions.

There may, for example, be conflicting views on such matters as how a problem has arisen and who is to blame.¹⁹

My response to this description would be to question whether this definition fits with a contemporary understanding of the Holocaust in England. It is for historians to debate the minutiae of the historiography of the events surrounding the attempted extermination of European Jewry, but I would argue that—from a western European perspective at least—it is not a topic that fits Crick’s criteria. There are certainly fixed or universally held points of view on the Holocaust; we can agree at least that it was *wrong*, for example. The Holocaust does not commonly divide society, nor do ‘significant groups’ offer conflicting explanations, not in the mainstream at least. Historians might debate the origins of the Holocaust, but these subtleties elude most of the general public. A simple search for a dictionary definition of the word *controversial* reveals explanations centred on the concept of *disagreement*, and I do not believe such divergence exists around the Holocaust in the public sphere in England, the UK as a whole, or in the National Curriculum. This is where I would suggest a subtle but important difference in the language employed (particularly in the educational sphere) in favour of addressing the Holocaust in schools as a *sensitive* issue, rather than a controversial one. A sensitive issue might be defined by the threat it poses to those interacting with it,²⁰ and learning about a sensitive issue will undoubtedly ‘be an uncomfortable experience’ (if not necessarily an educationally unproductive one²¹). While academics might debate areas of historical controversy or contestation (such as the debate around the uniqueness of the Holocaust in the context of contemporary genocide), I feel drawn to assert that teaching and learning about the Holocaust in the classroom more correctly falls within the parameters of a sensitive issue. In clearly asserting it as such, I can continue to build my case in defence of the role of RE in teaching about the Holocaust.

TEACHING THE HOLOCAUST IN RE: A CONTEMPORARY CONCERN

The nature of Holocaust education in English secondary schools has been the focus of much scrutiny in recent years.²² The growing body of research on the topic lies in sharp relief to what came before, exemplified by the UK’s derisory Country Report to the Task Force for International

Co-operation on Holocaust Education Remembrance and Research in 2006.²³ Whilst scant academic evidence from the previous decade gave little cause for serious concern about the place of the Holocaust within the secondary curriculum, it did suggest that provision was somewhat variable and dependent upon individual teachers' expertise and enthusiasm (and fairly non-existent in primary schools). Defined by the extensive work of Geoffrey Short at Hertfordshire University,²⁴ the socio-political landscape prior to 2006 facilitated three key developments in Holocaust education: the introduction in 1997 of one-day visits to Poland for 17-year-old school students with the Holocaust Educational Trust (the *Lessons from Auschwitz* Project), the establishment 4 years later of 27 January as Holocaust Memorial Day in the UK and the development of citizenship as a cross-curricular area within the National Curriculum from 2002.²⁵ The inclusion of this final development illustrates the influence of Short's preceding work and exemplifies a difficult relationship for many historians.

Lucy Russell's work²⁶ picked up on that of Husbands²⁷ in her consideration of two traditions in secondary school history. These could broadly be seen as the *great tradition* and the *alternative tradition*. The former focused on the cultural capital to be gained through the acquisition of historical knowledge in the belief that this and the demonstration of such knowledge (facts) were a prerequisite to success in the adult world. The latter tradition focused on the gaining of skills for future life and employment, viewing the study of history equally in terms of the transferable skills pupils could gain from its study. Demonstrably, Short's work had been illustrative and supportive of the latter tradition. This is clearly exemplified in his consideration of how a study of the Holocaust might contribute to anti-racist outcomes with school pupils,²⁸ in which he explicitly linked the Holocaust with anti-racist, pro-citizenship, pro-social outcomes. Indeed, it is his perceived failure of these intentions that are evident throughout his more recent retrospective evaluation of his own work, the work of others and the developing social and educational contexts within which Holocaust education had evolved over the last 25 years.²⁹ In this later piece, Short lamented what he concluded had been the abject 'failure' of Holocaust education in secondary schools. On reflection, Short believed that Holocaust education had been unsuccessful in fulfilling its anti-racist objectives (which he had promoted), that its teachers were still poorly equipped to teach the topic and that not enough curriculum time had been devoted to the topic. These views had been reinforced—albeit for varying intentions—by Pettigrew et al.'s analysis of current trends in

practices and outcomes in secondary schools six years previously.³⁰ However, Short's conclusions add to the evidence in their apposition to Pettigrew's—whilst Short had long been an advocate of the anti-racist potential of Holocaust Education, Pettigrew's research centre unmistakably had not. Whether the appropriation of the Holocaust as a means for teaching contemporary lessons is desirable (as Short suggests) or undesirable (as Pettigrew et al. suggest), the evidence from both suggests it *is* happening. With explicit curriculum requirements only in place for the study of the Holocaust in secondary schools, it is reasonable to suggest similar intentions might prevail in primary schools—with the possibility that such anti-racist intentions might be even more to the fore given the age of the children.

In their extensive survey of secondary teachers from various disciplines, Pettigrew et al. found that whilst an overwhelming majority of respondents agreed that the Holocaust should remain a compulsory part of the secondary curriculum, the most commonly cited goal in their teaching (from the limited range offered to them) was 'to develop an understanding of the roots and ramifications of prejudice, racism and stereotyping in society'.³¹ Their second most cited reason was 'to learn the lessons of the Holocaust and to ensure that a similar human atrocity never happens again'.³² The findings suggest that the majority of teachers were gearing their lessons towards societal/actionable objectives and outcomes. Such intentions would appear to be more naturally the purview of subjects such as RE or citizenship than history (or at least to fall broadly across the disciplines rather than exclusively within one). However, of these two other subjects, only RE has a defined syllabus across primary and secondary education which must be followed by primary and secondary pupils. Citizenship is a statutory foundation subject, with a prescribed programme of study only for 11- to 14-year-olds (the programme of study for 5- to 11-year olds is non-statutory, as is the subject). RE, however, has a syllabus defined across compulsory schooling by local agreement or religious body to be followed by *all* pupils in *all* state funded primary and secondary schools. So it is that whilst primary teachers are *encouraged* to provide a citizenship curriculum for their pupils, they *must* provide a RE curriculum. This article does not seek to promote RE above other foundation subjects (such as citizenship or history), but it does aim to point out the opportunities best provided by this statutory subject at all ages. As Short observed, 'religious education (RE) has the potential to make a distinctive and valuable contribution to students' understanding of the Holocaust',³³

and it is uniquely positioned to do so, with a legally enshrined reach over pupils from 5 to 18 (no other subject in the English National Curriculum has such a provision). However, such claims to the centrality of RE in teaching about the Holocaust are widely contested by the historical establishment (perhaps reflecting the hierarchy of subjects already alluded to here). Gregory summed up this consensus in observing that ‘at the very heart of teaching about the Holocaust must be an accurate account of what as a matter of brute fact happened’.³⁴ Significantly, however, in so doing he also acknowledged that this would necessarily include an exploration of issues of ‘prejudice, racism, discrimination and stereotyping’. The issue, then, may be one of priorities. It might be plausible to assume that a secondary school historian would teach about the Holocaust primarily to convey issues of factual history, whilst an RE teacher (or a primary school teacher) might place the topic of the Holocaust within a moral parameter, such as ‘racism and prejudice’. This might illustrate an incongruity of priorities, but teachers and academics must consider whether these aims are mutually exclusive.

SUPPORTING THE LEARNER THROUGH RE: A TRIPARTITE APPROACH

The majority of the research in Holocaust education in England has focused on secondary teachers’ perspectives. This seems to me to be a somewhat hierarchical, *top-down* approach to the problem—simultaneously foregrounding secondary education over primary education, and teachers over learners. My doctoral study³⁵ focused on the experiences of the learner, a *bottom-up* approach (albeit only in a secondary setting). Based on interviews with 48 students aged between 13 and 17 in a single English school, the study revealed a number of significant inconsistencies in pupils’ learning. These included factual inaccuracies in subject knowledge, confusion over the wider contemporary and historical contexts of the Holocaust and a need for more emotionally supportive Holocaust education. The school of my study appeared to be fairly representative of Holocaust education in English schools insofar as the History Department took the lead, with the RE Department also contributing, but with little co-operation between the two departments concerning their delivery. The History Department arranged for pupils to have the opportunity to hear from a Holocaust survivor each year, whilst the RE Department took the

lead with the school's annual Holocaust Memorial Day chapel service (a whole school act of collective worship). Unsurprisingly, the head of the History Department was primarily concerned with issues related to conveying historically accurate content (such as pupils being able to use the correct terminology), whilst the head of RE felt his lessons were more 'empathetic' in tone.³⁶ Despite the evident lack of communication with his neighbouring department, the head of RE did try to plan lessons that complemented their learning in history. He also felt it was important to allow his pupils the space to feel they could freely discuss wider issues around the topic. Ultimately, however, he did not feel they quite connected with the topic, reflecting that they found it 'slightly divorced from their frame of reference, I guess'.³⁷ Thus, the two departments illustrated exactly the tensions already discussed earlier, with explicitly divergent aims and intentions, exercised in isolation. Furthermore, the pupils picked up on this disciplinary segregation to some extent, often showing a need to justify its inclusion in RE (which they did in terms of studying moral issues, good and evil, or—less frequently—the roots of antisemitism, or in studying Judaism more broadly). Notably, there was a lack of clarity in their minds as to the extent to which the Holocaust had been covered in RE at all. Their understanding of how (or whether) the Holocaust fitted into their RE was uneven, but it was consistent with the wider research findings in the field—history dealt with the factual, whilst RE dealt with the emotional and moral. While all of this reflected the haziness Burke³⁸ referred to in describing the relationship between the disciplines, any such interdisciplinary confusion—or, indeed, tension—has the potential to be educationally unproductive as pupils get caught in the middle of a timetabling power struggle of sorts. Most tellingly, this was articulated by 15-year-old Declan, who described this tension as being between an outcome-dependent subject (history, where success was exemplified through examination results) and a process-focused subject (RE, where success was demonstrated through discussion and debate). His views were compounded by his observation that the latter subject was 'not work pressured'³⁹ in the same way that the former was. What Declan alluded to here was evocative of Stradling's⁴⁰ distinction between the product-based and process-based approaches to teaching difficult issues, and the pupils seemed unclear as to which was more important—or more useful—to them or the school.

As educators, we might choose to see evidence of these explicit distinctions between our subjects as at best unhelpful and at worst a professional

threat in an already heavily marketised educational climate (particularly for the subject that is seen as *inferior* by the student as the customer). However, I would prefer to see these distinctions as *opportunities*, despite any risks this might involve to our perceived professional fiefdoms. If we are being candid, it may be reasonable to assume that most RE specialists are by definition not historians, and vice versa. Rather than speak of the skill sets we *do not* have, I would argue that it is more helpful to open the conversation in terms of the skills we *do* have and how these might complement one another. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) guidelines *What to Teach About the Holocaust*⁴¹ specify three outcomes for teaching about the topic. They advocate that Holocaust education should (in general):

1. Advance knowledge about this unprecedented destruction
2. Preserve the memory of those who suffered
3. Encourage educators and students to reflect upon the moral and spiritual questions raised by the events of the Holocaust and as they apply in today's world.

IHRA justifies these three outcomes from their bases within the three widely accepted definitions of the Holocaust offered by the Imperial War Museum (London), Yad Vashem (Jerusalem) and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (Washington, DC). While I acknowledge the contested nature both of these stated outcomes and of these three definitions, I think IHRA offers the best we have at a unified opinion. Yet these three outcomes do not sit easily together, and those from different disciplines might find them deeply divisive. In an effort to ease these tensions, I offer in what follows an outline as to how the outcomes might more comfortably complement each other through the support of RE:

Outcome 1: It starts before it begins—introducing young learners to Judaism

In my extensive experience as a teacher in both primary and secondary schools, the majority of my career has been spent in the age groups bridging the traditional primary/secondary divide (teaching 10- 13-year-olds). During my career I have become weary of secondary school teachers' trite laments that their pupils don't seem to have learned anything in their subject at primary school. The reality is that primary schools *do* teach about Judaism—and anecdotal evidence suggests they do so probably more

often than any other comparative world religion, except perhaps Islam. It is generally accepted that an essential element of effective Holocaust education is that pupils are taught about pre-war Jewish life.⁴² As Short noted, ‘any misunderstanding which contributes to the alien characterisation of Judaism must be a matter for concern. Teachers of religious education obviously have a major responsibility here’.⁴³ His concerns, based on empirical evidence, were that pupils either failed to relate to them (they saw them as ‘other’) or that they did not understand the complexity inherent in someone identifying (or being identified) as ‘Jewish’. Short’s evidence was based on the responses of 11- to 14-year-olds, furthering the case for more complicated teaching of Judaism in primary school, particularly in the years immediately before transition across the primary/secondary divide. RE in primary schools must therefore address issues around the self and the other (supported by any programme for citizenship education that might exist in a school), but also around the multifaceted nature of Jewish identity. Without such an understanding as a precursor, they will not understand the nature of Jewish persecution during the Holocaust or the rich diversity of pre-war Jewish life as anything other than a perfunctory recall of a distant (and distanced) community. Successful RE around Judaism—particularly in the primary school—will have the effect of enabling the school to ‘do what they can to develop their pupils’ ability to see things as others see them’.⁴⁴ This will, in turn, equip pupils with the skills to be able to *connect* with the Jews of the pre-war communities across Europe and with the victims of the subsequent Holocaust. If the first (or second) steps are missing or inadequate, then the pupils might only identify with the victims by their persecution (if at all), thereby locking them into a perpetrator-led, ‘othered’ narrative that is both distancing and unhelpful.

Outcome 2: It continues after it ends—inviting young learners towards acts of remembrance and commemoration

In the two years prior to Britain’s first formal marking of Holocaust Memorial Day in 2001, the government’s consultation process became embroiled in an ‘unsavory’ debate over its definition, intentions and practicalities.⁴⁵ At the heart of this debate were tensions around the political intentions of the day and whether or not we should commemorate the event at all (given that it did not happen here directly). It is self-evident that knowledge does not require action per se, but surely schools are

places that are more than sites of knowledge acquisition, since they are about helping to shape the next generation. Although it is perhaps now a custom more broadly honoured in its spirit than in strict observance of the law, English schools are still under a legal requirement to hold a daily act of collective worship for pupils of all ages. As such, acts of worship, reflection, prayer and commemoration should be commonplace in our schools and are legally intertwined in the very essence of English schooling (given its roots in church-led education, discussed earlier). Some would argue that this is unhelpful—harmful even—in the cause of sound Holocaust education because they feel that ‘too much emphasis has been placed on the duties of memory and commemoration’⁴⁶ over factual knowledge. Certainly, one could argue that the organisation charged with curating national commemoration in England (Holocaust Memorial Day Trust—HMDT) is *at least* as concerned with remembrance as it is with promoting knowledge about the events of the Holocaust. HMDT’s annual report for 2017⁴⁷ showed there were 7700 commemorative activities in the UK, including a wealth of creative arts and memorial events. Whilst most of these events are aimed at older pupils and adults, HMDT has always endeavoured to produce resources aimed at primary-aged pupils, including lesson plans, worksheets and suggestions for acts of collective worship. For the youngest pupils, these resources have often blurred the lines between Holocaust education and citizenship education in their understandable efforts to protect a young audience from the horrors of the Holocaust. Whilst this could leave resources exposed to criticism for their possible lack of historical rigour in favour of citizenship, I would argue that this is not necessarily a bad thing. Rather than distracting from a singular aim, this duality could facilitate transformative outcomes in both. Schools are places where collective memories are shaped and communicated with children, and this process can help them understand the significance of the events of the Holocaust, even if they are not aware of the full reality of those truths just yet. If the aims of the first outcome (discussed earlier) have been successfully met, then the aims of this second outcome might seem to be a natural expression of them.

Outcome 3: It ends before it starts—inoculating learners against repetition

In my opinion, whether a particular teacher subscribes to the view that the Holocaust has contemporary moral lessons or not has become irrelevant to the debate. The evidence suggests overwhelmingly that it is

happening, and has been for many years—so maybe the profession’s energies would be better spent focusing on *how* these lessons can be drawn out and how they can be effectively *communicated* to pupils of every age. Evidence suggests that the Holocaust is ‘held’ in different ways in the collective memory of different groups and nations.⁴⁸ How the Holocaust as an entity settles into a collective memory is not always an easy (or desirable) process,⁴⁹ but undoubtedly it does. This process will likely be shaped through various influences, such as the passage of time, international political relations and historical actions (or inactions). As the group’s academic community, media, public and politicians shape the memory within the public sphere, they are likely to be expressed in its education system through its teachers, the explicit curriculum and textbooks. How history is presented is by its nature a moral and ethical process⁵⁰—we want our children to hold views that are broadly in keeping with our own constructions in an effort to sustain the moral consensus of our society. If the aims of the first and second outcomes are met (knowledge and commemoration), then those of the third outcome might be seen as a natural, desirable corollary—if pupils know about it and commemorate it, they will therefore strive to stop it from happening again.

ENVISIONING THE TRIPARTITE APPROACH

Implementing a tripartite approach such as this in Holocaust education would undoubtedly be messy. Co-operation between primary and secondary schools or between secondary school departments can often be at best limited, at worst non-existent. Just as the Holocaust is jealously guarded by those who define it within the transnational sphere, so too can there be a form of suspicious silence between age phases and departments in schools as to who ‘owns’ which aspects of Holocaust education. But I believe we must set aside these quarrels in the interests of our young learners, in favour of a joined-up, holistic educational experience that is cross-phase and interdisciplinary. Harris⁵¹ reminded us that the Holocaust is a subject we must teach ‘under pain of judgment’, and I suggest that the only way we can settle this argument is to work co-operatively, acknowledging both each other’s strengths *and* weaknesses and embracing both to create a truly interprofessional approach to this most complex of topics.

Eckmann⁵² recognised that ‘history cannot be transposed to the present in a linear way’. Even if it could, I don’t think it would be an uncomplicated matter, if indeed it were desirable. So if we try to simply

manipulate history to teach us moral lessons, we do an injustice to both past and present. In this chapter I have tried to set out a rationale for the inclusion of RE in the process of educating young people about the Holocaust in an effort to both support and (necessarily) complicate teaching and learning. In her paper, Eckmann evoked the work of the Swiss thinker Johann Pestalozzi (1746–1827)—in particular his philosophy that education should be a triangular enterprise of head, heart and hands. She advocated an approach to Holocaust education that similarly involves the head (subject knowledge), the heart (memory and commemoration) and the hands (human rights education). She calls these three ‘cardinal points’, whilst recognising the ‘complex tension’ that may exist between them.⁵³ I agree but suggest that rather than seeing a tension, we can marry these ‘cardinal points’ for their mutual benefit and the benefit of the children in our primary and secondary schools, as follows:

Holocaust Education and the Head: Historical knowledge about the events of the Holocaust is of principal importance. History specialists in primary and secondary schools should take the lead in developing and delivering these schemes of work, in collaboration with their RE specialist colleagues, to ensure a consistent and accurate historical knowledge base across a diversity of subject areas and topics.

Holocaust Education and the Heart: The nature of this content will necessarily disturb the young learner’s sensibilities. RE specialists can support this learning through their teaching of various appropriate topics, from primary school upwards. These topics will include themes such as Judaism, antisemitism, racism and prejudice, morality, human rights education, death education, tolerance and so forth at age-appropriate, emergent levels. By working with their history colleagues, RE teachers can help embed a deeper understanding for their pupils on an emotionally constructive level.

Holocaust Education and the Hands: If a pupil’s learning is to have resonance within their understanding of their place in society, they will need to express their learning within the public sphere. This might be through an act of memorialisation or commemoration, such as a Holocaust Memorial Day activity. Both history and RE specialists (and others) can contribute to expressions of Holocaust education within the public sphere in school, drawing on their mutual strengths and expertise.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has undertaken to establish a case for RE in Holocaust education through a consideration of its unique position within the English curriculum and its particular suitability for teaching and learning in this most sensitive of issues. It has sought to highlight the advantages of a cross-curricular approach—more naturally achievable in primary schools, but not impossible in secondary schools. The curriculum, like the majority of contemporary research in the area, focuses on Holocaust education in the latter stages of compulsory schooling. Yet a focus on prevention, attitudinal change, anti-racist education or memorialisation must surely begin earlier. The tripartite approach put forward here (with the suggestion of a marrying of head, heart and hand) cannot be left until secondary school. It must begin with primary schools, or else teachers' attempts will be frustrated. This approach will not be without its critics—both philosophically and in practice in schools. The reality is that teachers from different age phases or disciplines are as likely to be well equipped (or not) at different aspects of this tripartite methodology. I am advocating a cross-phase, cross-curricular approach to Holocaust education in which RE plays a significant, *supportive*, collaborative and continuous role. Some educators and academics advocate the primacy of history, and I don't disagree with them. Others believe in the appropriateness of using the Holocaust to teach contemporary lessons, and I don't disagree with them. Others debate the appropriateness (or not) of teaching about the Holocaust in primary schools, and I don't necessarily disagree with this, either. But where they disagree with each other, I take issue. What I am advocating is a need to embrace *all* of these points of view, and that to fail to do so is in fact a form of gross negligence. The history of the Holocaust is contextualised by the moral choices made within it, but those moral actions are equally contextualised by their place in history. It is only by leading pupils towards a complex understanding of this 'bi-directionality'⁵⁴ that they can start to make sense of the context, the actions and their relevance to their contemporary lives, expressed through knowledge, empathy and commemoration. This can be effective only if begun early in their schooling, and it cannot be done effectively without recognising the bi-directionality that can and should exist between history and RE and between primary and secondary schooling if Holocaust education is to be truly effective and transformative.

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Holocaust Education in Austrian Primary Schools: A Plea for Teaching the History of National Socialism to 9- and 10-Year-Olds

Philipp Mittnik

INTRODUCTION

When it comes to Holocaust education in Austrian primary school education, there remains quite a bit of room for improvement. Although curricula vary widely, National Socialism is not a required subject in either England or Austria. This chapter will discuss two issues related to the topic. First, in England there is still an emphasis on the prevailing collective narrative of being the victor over Nazi Germany. Most of the discussions in English secondary textbooks are—compared to Austrian or German textbooks—extremely simplified and incomplete. The view of this history, in an educational context, is different from that in German-speaking countries (Mittnik 2017). This is not noticeable in English primary school textbooks. In contrast, in Austria, the prevailing collective narrative is that of the so-called “first-victim paradigm.” This means that the self-perception of the Austrian people has been shaped by the interpretation that Austria was Hitler’s first victim. This will be discussed in more depth in a subsequent section of this chapter.

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C. W. Szejnmann et al. (eds.), *Holocaust Education in Primary Schools in the Twenty-First Century*, The Holocaust and its Contexts, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-73099-8_6

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Second, the aspect of visual perception must be taken into account in the Austrian context. Particularly in urban areas like Vienna, Salzburg, or Graz, the relicts of the Nazi era shape the reflection of citizens, where remaining buildings, monuments, and memorial sites refer to the crimes of the National Socialist past on a daily basis. For example, flak towers are located in parks (Augarten, Vienna), and hundreds of stolpersteins, which are cobblestones that commemorate individual persons at exactly the last place of residency—or, sometimes, work—which was freely chosen by a person before he or she fell victim to Nazi terror, can be found throughout the city of Vienna.

This chapter focuses on the appropriateness of teaching the topic of National Socialism to pupils aged 9 to 10 years old and the pedagogical principles that must be considered in teaching it. The first part of the chapter will present a short summary of recent relevant academic discourse, and the second part will focus on the results of empirical research conducted in Austrian primary schools. The final section will delineate possible parameters for teaching Holocaust to 9- and 10-year-olds and classify those parameters.

TRIVIALIZATION OR OVERLOAD? ACADEMIC REFLECTIONS ON HOLOCAUST EDUCATION AT THE PRIMARY SCHOOL LEVEL

Most of the academic discourse on teaching the Holocaust at the primary school level focuses on two major aspects. The first has to do with the question of whether a Holocaust education that is really age-appropriate can actually meet the requirements of presenting the singularity of National Socialist crimes. The central questions in this connection are the following:

- (1) *Groundlessness*: there was no apparent victim–perpetrator relation
- (2) *Inapplicability*: no strategy, whether assimilation, collaboration, or complete submission, could save Jews from extinction
- (3) *Totality*: no escape from extinction for Jews (as defined by the Nazis)
- (4) *Internationality*: almost all allies of Nazi Germany participated in the Holocaust
- (5) *Globality*: National Socialist criminals considered “systematic mass murder” as their global duty¹

Second, could it just be too overwhelming for 9- and 10-year-olds to be confronted with such horrific crimes against humanity? Gertrud Beck and Matthias Heyl put forth two contradictory positions on teaching the Holocaust in the primary school context. Beck argues that doing so only constitutes a breach of taboo for parents, since children usually lack the necessary preconceptions. Furthermore, she assumes that children have prior knowledge. Not putting the Holocaust into context could lead to fears and insecurity. Heyl, on the other hand, is of the opinion that early exposure to the topic would overwhelm children cognitively and emotionally. A summary of their main points can be found in the following Table 1.²

Although these positions have changed in recent decades, counterarguments based on Wenninger's "theory of prematurity"³ from 1949 still exist. Wenninger's opinion was that children of primary school age are simply too young (without proving that statement) and a confrontation with that part of history would negatively affect children. Another factor to be considered is the discomfort teachers feel when teaching children

Table 1 Debate about pro and con arguments; teaching National Socialism in primary school

<i>Pro arguments</i>	<i>Con arguments</i>
Covering the topic only in secondary school is far too late to contextualize the issue, since it is part of outer-school reality	(mental) overload of students
Other angst-inducing topics are already being covered, e.g.: sex, religion, death,...	Danger of overwhelming or even traumatizing students
Children ask questions and have a right to answers	
Children are more open to controversial topics than most adults	Using the topic to teach general ethical principles constitutes an instrumentalization
Developmental-psychological findings are rather irrelevant	Children need trust in their environment, which could be endangered/destroyed
The concept of childhood has changed; sheltered environment ideas are out of touch with reality	
Elementarization or didactic reduction is necessary with every subject matter taught (at this age level)	Dealing with the Holocaust in primary school without thematizing mass-murder equals trivialization

about this topic, especially since adequate resources and textbooks are not available in Austria.⁴ Apart from the alleged danger of “prematurity,” discussion among history educators has been dominated by the concept of trivialization. The “inability to tell” could lead to a downplaying of the National Socialist regime. This inability is based on the notion that students from grades 1 to 4 are not able to understand the dimensions of the Nazi crimes and that they are further unable to handle, at an emotional level, the subject matter.

Since students would learn soon enough about the cruelty of the world, primary school educationalists should focus on “comfort and security.” Heyl further argues that the Holocaust remains a taboo subject in Germany, so children would not ask questions if there was no impetus from outside.⁵ However, this is a rather questionable argument, since children in Austria and Germany—particularly, as noted, those from urban regions—are exposed to traces of National Socialism and World War II on a daily basis.

The pro arguments are based on an experiential realm, where there already is at least some knowledge of National Socialism and its crimes.⁶ In 1999, Mugrauer had already shown that primary schoolchildren actually have some prior knowledge of National Socialism.⁷ Flügel argues that her findings do not sufficiently prove that dealing with the National Socialist period overwhelms children. However, Flügel is of the opinion that children are capable of approaching the topic of National Socialism and its cruelties without losing their positive attitude toward life.⁸ Those findings were scientifically confirmed by a project led by Becher.⁹ Thus, Pech claims that the Holocaust and National Socialism must be part of the *Sachunterricht* or “general science.” Learning history is the basis for personal development, which in turn is needed to reflect upon the impressions of one’s own realm of experience.¹⁰

However, Pech further argues that dealing with this topic in a strictly historical manner could lead to trivialization or even traumatization, because children lack the necessary prior knowledge. He supports the idea of “teaching Auschwitz without Auschwitz” in order to foster and support the development of empathy and tolerance. That means that students at that young age should not be confronted with the cruelties of the Nazi crimes, but they should learn for example about the effects of excluding others or of scapegoating entire groups of people.¹¹

Approaches to teaching based on the “after Auschwitz without Auschwitz” principle can be found in primary school curricula in the

Netherlands. The focus there lies in teaching tolerance, with reference to discrimination during the Nazi era.¹² There is still disagreement among academic historians whether teaching the Holocaust can actually contribute to a more open, tolerant, and empathetic society. Ehmann argues that learning about National Socialist history does not qualify as teaching children about current racism directed at foreigners or prejudice against refugees.¹³ Thus, Holocaust education as a didactic and methodological principle is by no means noncontroversial.

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS ABOUT HOLOCAUST EDUCATION IN AUSTRIAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

One approach to escaping unpleasant discussions is briefly to mention the topic of the Holocaust and avoid in-depth treatment.¹⁴ To talk instead with children seriously about the topic would support children's understanding as well as their independent reflection on present and future problems, but it would at least help at sensitizing students to the issue.¹⁵ Another crucial question is how much and in what depth this topic should be covered in primary school. Like Rohrbach, Ehmann and Rathenow argue it is not reasonable to separate the Holocaust from National Socialism because this again would constitute a trivialization of the topic.¹⁶

To learn more about the historical understanding of how children relate to the topic of National Socialism, three different studies, conducted in Austria by the author, will be presented in this chapter. The first describes insights into the historical consciousness of children 9 and 10 years of age. The second deals with the historical and political understanding of primary school teachers, and the third presents a study about the contents of primary school textbooks related to National Socialism.

Survey of Elementary School Students Related to Their Historical and Political Awareness

In Austria, there is nearly no research on the historical and political attitudes of children of elementary school age. The Center for Civic Studies at the Teacher University of Vienna aims to change this. Thus, a study was conducted by the author (2014) whose findings (Fig. 1) revealing unreflective notions in Austrian elementary schools.¹⁷ In this study 142 students from 6 different elementary schools in Vienna aged 9 and 10 years

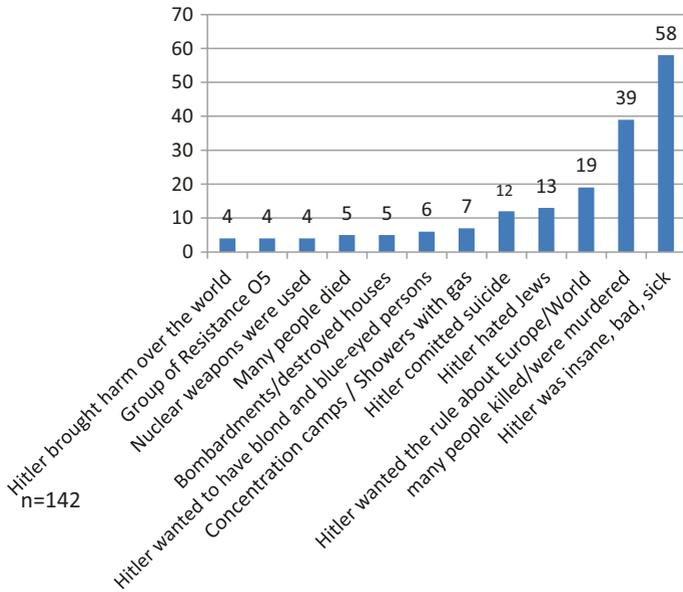


Fig. 1 Notions of elementary school students, Vienna (Philipp Mittnik, “Politische und gesellschaftliche,” p. 34)

were asked in a written questionnaire what they knew about World War II, National Socialism, and the Holocaust. As can be seen in the results, the students focused significantly on Adolf Hitler.

These findings underline the necessity of discussing history with students. Even if one agrees with Enzenbach that this topic is too complex or too difficult to discuss with younger students, teachers must talk with students about this issue to allow children to avoid fears stemming from this historical content.¹⁸

The personification of evil in the name Adolf Hitler was, as seen in the diagram, very often mentioned by the children. Even the fact that *he* killed a lot of people was mentioned by the pupils. Hitler is in the German language a synonym for an unreflected description of National Socialism. The science of the didactics of history in German-speaking countries aims to change this view on the singular crimes of National Socialism. Because it is not just children at that age who evoke Hitler’s image when talking about National Socialism. Even history textbooks in secondary schools present Hitler as the principal offender. Kühberger analyzed textbooks in this context and showed that Hitler was in some books mentioned over 20 times per page as an explanation of the system of National Socialism.¹⁹

There seems to be a consensus that school is one of the most important places for learning about National Socialist cruelty and Holocaust remembrance.²⁰ History lessons in school (*Sachunterricht* or “general science” in primary school) are considered to play a pivotal role in transferring historical knowledge, as well as supporting the moral and political socialization of adolescents. Apart from supporting social integration, history lessons should establish historical responsibility for remembrance, where students learn about National Socialist history to shed light on current and future problems facing society.²¹

Study of Political Attitudes of Teachers in Vienna

Another aspect that has not really been taken into account among Austrian historians is the question of the vocational education of teachers and their own personal socialization to the subject matter. The presented data come from a 2014 survey. The Center of Civic Studies wanted to learn more about the political attitudes of teachers. In total, 201 primary teachers and 275 secondary teachers were surveyed. In this chapter, only primary teachers are discussed. They are nearly not educated enough to teach the topic of National Socialism, but they should teach it. Even textbook presentations include some information about that time period. Thus, professional training in Austrian universities on historical issues for primary teachers, even on the Holocaust, would improve the historical knowledge of new generations of teachers significantly. If teachers think in historical and political categories, they are likely to incorporate relevant aspects into their lesson plans. However, most primary teachers in Vienna do not feel adequately educated. Statistical analysis shows that there are basically two attitudes, which could be called “participative” and “reserved” teachers.²² Participative teachers are characterized by a strong political and historical interest. They show a relatively high confidence in their own political understanding and in the general impact of participation. This type considers interest in politics a crucial basis of a functional democracy. Moreover, such teachers consider politics not just to be party politics. Fifty-two percent of Viennese primary teachers can be considered to be type 1. Reserved teachers, on the other hand—type 2—show a rather limited interest in politics and therefore also consider political interest of minor importance for a functioning democracy. Hence, they perceive politics rather as party politics and regard political interest or the impact of participation as being less important.²³

Especially type 2 teachers limit their political and historical engagement to the personal level. Presenting children with complex historical and political issues is, in their view, inconceivable. This study makes it clear that Austrian teacher education should improve the development of personal historical and political skills by newly minted teachers. If students at the university learned to think in historical categories at an extended level, they would be able to give their students more lessons on historical issues.

Analysis of Austrian Textbooks for Elementary Schools

In the German-speaking world, a so-called textbook analysis concerns itself with the particular importance of textbooks.²⁴ Certain parameters must be taken into account when creating a textbook. Pohl provides an almost metaphorical definition of what a textbook should be: “If there is any intellectual product of major importance for society which is particularly hard to create, it is a textbook.”²⁵ Lässig points out that textbooks are a political issue around the world. They reflect the values and the most important knowledge a society wants to pass on to future generations. This, of course, is defined by certain elites, in our case historians and historical educationalists. In a rarely cited quote Lässig states that “Textbooks are...constructions as well as constructors of social order and societal knowledge.”²⁶ Lücke and Brüning developed a concept of how to implement National Socialist topics into primary school education. The following points, however, are adaptable as guidelines for the creation of primary teaching materials:

- Reprocess prior knowledge into a structured, historical understanding
- Create an atmosphere to developing a historical consciousness
- Develop an action-orientation, which is the only way of tackling National Socialist lethargy.²⁷

In 2014, the author examined the depiction in all Austrian primary textbooks of the Nazi era. All books that were approved by the board of education were analyzed by Mayring according to the principles of content analysis. In accordance with the method, categories were created that reflect reoccurring topics/issues/themes that can, or should, be found in the respective textbooks.²⁸

The full analysis of primary textbooks—including the documentation of all steps of analysis—can be found in the previously published, longer version of this chapter.²⁹ The previously mentioned points are, hence,

exemplary and mainly focus on the central findings relevant for the discussion. A quantitative analysis of the structure of textbooks has shown that all but one textbook—*Ideenbuch*³⁰—discuss National Socialism and World War II. However, the word count varies from 39 to 194 in the National Socialism-specific sections. Two out of five the the textbooks analyzed do not present any visual images at all, while the other three contain at least one visual image. Surprisingly, only two textbooks actually mention the name Adolf Hitler. One feature that all the textbooks have in common is that none touches upon the concept of the Holocaust or even uses the word “Jew” or “Jews.” Only one book discusses the role of Austrians as perpetrators or accomplices to the Nazis. In conclusion, it can be asserted that from a methodological standpoint, the quantitative analysis demonstrated absolutely insufficient coverage of National Socialist topics in Austrian primary textbooks.

The depiction of the historical topics in Austrian *Sachunterricht* can, by all means, be judged as unreflective. With the exception of the book *Tipi*,³¹ in all the books, methodological aspects like multiperspectivity and contemporary relevance are either neglected or even entirely ignored. Germany and the German Reich are characterized as the aggressor, attacking the defenseless Austria. Phrasing like the “disappearing Austria” closely relate to the concept of Austria as the “first victim,” which rather confirms a historical perspective that was falsified by historians decades ago.³²

The question as to whether the crimes of the National Socialist regime should be taught in primary school will and should remain a matter of discussion among history educators. Nevertheless, it is self-evident that Austria’s complicity in Nazi Germany should at the very least be included in primary textbooks. Only *Tipi* mentions that parts of Austrian society welcomed the Nazis. This can be seen as a mild form of admission of guilt. Equally distorted are the depictions of the end of the war. Accounts of the defeat of German troops mention no Austrian involvement.³³ In addition, the highly constructed “spirit of optimism” at finally having been freed draws a rather unreflective picture of Austrian compliance during World War II. It was not until 1991 that Austria officially abandoned the “first victim” myth and accepted a share of the blame.³⁴ That neglects most historical findings of recent decades showing that Austrians were in fact overrepresented among Nazi perpetrators. Austrian historical research has proven in the last four decades that Austrians (formerly called people from the *Ostmark*) represented a very high percentage of perpetrators in the National Socialist genocide.³⁵ John Weiss analyzed the nationalities of various Nazi organizations. He showed, for example, that 14 percent of

the SS, 40 percent of the personnel of the death camps, and 70 percent of the staff of Adolf Eichmann were Austrians. This is remarkable because Austrians made up only 8 percent of the German Reich.³⁶

The analysis of Austrian *Sachunterricht* textbooks illustrates that a serious discussion of National Socialism or the Holocaust does not happen in Austrian primary education. Approved by historical educationalists, primary textbooks in Austria still have a rather uncritical “history of mentioning” an approach to the topic. This is by no means adequate for contemporary textbooks. It could be shown that all the relevant studies indicate that fourth graders (9–10 years old) in Austrian primary schools do have at least some knowledge of the system of both National Socialism and the Holocaust. It is undisputed among educationalists that children should not be left to deal with their angst alone. School should offer them a platform whereby complex topics and their accompanying fears and uncertainties can be dealt with adequately. For the creation of future textbooks it is of vital importance to take into account recent scientific findings in order to provide a better and more profound perspective of National Socialism and the Holocaust in Austrian textbooks.

NATIONAL SOCIALISM IN PRIMARY SCHOOL: A CRITICAL RECOMMENDATION

This section summarizes recent findings on what methodologically adequate history classes on the Holocaust could look like. As previously mentioned, the findings of the scholarly community are mostly based on empirical data, or the question of if, not how, the Holocaust should be taught. German-speaking literature on the issue is scant or even nonexistent. Therefore, it is necessary to create a catalog of methodological principles based on skills as defined by history pedagogy. The existing materials, however, have been created mostly for a secondary level, which causes frustration among primary school teachers, who often complain about the high level of complexity.

The following pedagogical approaches should build a basis for future academic discussions, at least for the German-speaking world:

- *Individual cases*: Show students individual suffering, without dwelling on cruelties. Talk or read about children their own age who lived at that time, and be prepared to talk with students about death and

murder. Develop connections to the present, as with stories about exile and refuge.

- *Antisemitism*: The increasing number of antisemitic criminal acts in Austria and Germany demonstrates the importance of this issue. Teachers should combat student prejudices by explaining the nature and purposes of stereotypes. Point out that societies of Europe import Arab-informed antisemitism because of immigration.
- *Austrians as perpetrators*: Explain the historical truth that previous generations committed many war crimes, without speaking about them in detail; stress social responsibility. Dispel the myth that most Austrians were involved in resistance movements.
- *Contemporary significance*: Explain the approach of Austrian society to events of the past since many issues are important today, including the use of language, the awareness of public space, and democracy. Also, children need to be educated about human rights.

To achieve the goal of a more reflective learning experience about National Socialism for elementary-school-aged students, three general principles are relevant. First, students should develop empathy for the victims of that time and be able to understand the suffering of people in the present. Second, and probably most important, is to develop an interest in this era in elementary schools. By the time they are 14 years old, students have the impression that they have a broad knowledge of the Holocaust and that the topic is boring.³⁷ Simone Schweber reported comparable results of an empirical study.³⁸ It is necessary to dispel these impressions by creating increased interest among students. Third, it is essential to present this topic to students in a way that helps them to recognize its significance for Austrian society. Students should learn about their own national history, even if it is sometimes unpleasant, and this can be done without moralizing or shocking them with images of cruelties.

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Teaching About Trauma Without Traumatizing: Yad Vashem's Spiral Pedagogical Approach in Light of Developmental Psychology

Yael Richler-Friedman

INTRODUCTION

Various educational researchers have noted the great risks and educational potential inherent in the powerful subject of the Holocaust.¹ When considering how to broach the topic of the Holocaust, teachers face a fundamental educational question. The Holocaust can call into question the very things education stands for, such as the validity of moral values, the role of culture and knowledge, human solidarity and goodness, and even belief in God. This is even more sensitive for primary school pupils who are at the stage where they acquire the basic elements that they will use to gain psychological resilience and develop their moral beliefs. On the other hand, educators and researchers argue that avoiding complex educational issues is inadvisable, especially in primary school, because the task of the educator is to provide young children with ways to cope with those complexities rather than ignore them.²

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C. W. Szejnmann et al. (eds.), *Holocaust Education in Primary Schools in the Twenty-First Century*, The Holocaust and its Contexts, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-73099-8_7

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The aim of this chapter is to examine whether a solution can be found to the educational dilemmas inherent in the teaching of the Holocaust in primary schools, based on studies in developmental psychology, and in the teaching of history and controversial issues. At the same time, we will examine a curriculum proposed by the International School for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem, together with the Israeli Ministry of Education, entitled “In the Paths of Memory,”³ which aims to help teachers cope with Holocaust-related dilemmas using a theoretical–educational approach.

This curriculum integrates theoretical concepts, practical experience, and actual dilemmas that teachers face and offers teachers of primary schools rational guidelines and actual materials, all available online. This curriculum reflects the pedagogical philosophy of Yad Vashem. The educational dilemmas involved in teaching the Holocaust in primary schools can be divided into the following basic questions:

1. What can we expect to gain from an encounter with this charged issue in primary school?
2. Is it possible to teach a complex historical subject like the Holocaust in primary schools?
3. How can an encounter with such a traumatic issue *not* traumatize pupils?

WHAT CAN WE EXPECT TO GAIN FROM AN ENCOUNTER WITH THIS CHARGED ISSUE IN PRIMARY SCHOOL?

In a series of studies conducted in Scotland, Paula Cowan and Henry Maitles found that teaching the Holocaust in primary school had a positive effect on the ethical precepts of pupils.⁴ However, they also concluded that this effect was only for the short term.⁵ Louise Jennings found that procedural learning that integrates a discussion of value-oriented terms adapted to the level of 10- to 11-year-old pupils elicited impressive results in terms of empathy, acceptance of the other, and moral thinking.⁶ In contrast, Simone Schweber, in a case study of a Holocaust educational process with 8–9 year olds pupils in the USA, found that despite the efforts of a teacher who skilfully adapted content matter to pupils’ cognitive and affective abilities, pupils’ understanding was, in her opinion, superficial, and therefore no educational or value-oriented goal was attained. Her research even described some signs of restlessness. The pupils in this

research were younger than in Cowan and Maitles and Jennings' studies.⁷ In another study, Schweber warns that early exposure to the subject can cause what is called "Shoah [Holocaust] fatigue."⁸ Short, in contrast, contended that if educators want to encourage moral values and goals, such as the acceptance of others, strengthening democracy and humanism, primary school pupils have an affective advantage over junior and senior high school pupils. Younger children can still be influenced by adult figures such as teachers, while older pupils are more influenced by their peers.⁹ It should be noted that Michael Gray, in his review of this issue, points out that a few researchers have questioned the moral value of Holocaust education.¹⁰

However, the list of aims defined in the *In the Paths of Memory* curriculum mentioned earlier is applicable to studies that do accept the moral aspects of Holocaust education:

*Instilling Jewish and universal values and strengthening democratic society, the values of tolerance, and sensitivity to others.*¹¹

In addition to universal moral aims, the curriculum also sets out a number of aims specifically connected to the Israeli and Jewish case:

To create a constructive link to a significant chapter in the past of the Jewish nation by focusing on concrete, clear content processed according to the age of the children.

*Instilling cognitive and affective tools for dealing with the issue of the Holocaust.*¹²

When reading these aims, it should be remembered that the Holocaust is a component of identity for most of the Jewish population in Israel.¹³ In the USA, the importance of the Holocaust in Jewish identity is also considerable. According to the results of a study conducted by the Pew Institute, 73 percent of the Jews in the USA mentioned the Holocaust as the first component of their Jewish identity.¹⁴

Young children in Israel are exposed to the Holocaust through the media and "Yom HaShoah," the national Holocaust Memorial Day of Israel, with its two-minute siren.¹⁵ The underlying educational assumption of the writers of the curriculum at Yad Vashem, as reflected in these aims, is that engaging in the Holocaust in class will allow children to create the tools to contain it. In Piaget's terms, it will allow them to construct a new

conceptual schema, which will keep this difficult subject within nonthreatening boundaries instead of its fitting into an existing but unsuitable schema. According to Lev Vygotsky¹⁶ and Jerome Bruner,¹⁷ since the dialogue pupils have with society plays a major role in the pupils' development, it is important that education facilitate this process by referring to the issues that are central to their culture.

According to studies of the role of education facing traumatic subjects¹⁸ and issues of debatable emotional suitability,¹⁹ the role of teachers is to facilitate safe discourse, based on the dissemination of reliable information, to avoid feelings of uncertainty and anxiety.²⁰ Preserving the emotional health of pupils was not among the aims defined in the various aforementioned studies in Europe and the USA.²¹ Although they presented the need for emotional adaptation of content matter, the affective principle was presented as a tool, or as a condition and not as an aim. The definition of emotional protection as an end in itself should be seen, as indicated earlier, as part of the unique Israeli-Jewish context in which pupils are in any case exposed to the Holocaust.

Since Yom HaShoah is an annual intensive experience for pupils, the spiral curriculum, as it was called by Jerome Bruner,²² is essential. According to Bruner, the return to the same issues, from different angles and higher levels, as the pupils grow up and develop will allow them a deeper understanding of complex issues.

Lev Vygotsky taught us that for a concept to gain depth of meaning, it must undergo a process in which meaning is given and examined, which requires time to develop.²³ Therefore, familiarity with basic concepts became an end in itself, in a curriculum based on the spiral nature of learning.

According to Laurence Kohlberg, affective, cognitive, and moral development are integrated entities.²⁴ While his critics contended that no universal, unidirectional, linear process could be found to connect them, neither could they be separated.²⁵ Thus a subject that is so sensitive in terms of each of these characteristics and whose development during primary school age is critical should receive suitable attention from a young age. This is reflected in a special comment that was added to the In the Paths of Memory curriculum:

*At these ages [7–12], pupils are in a process of shaping and building their world of values. Therefore it is important that the story of the Holocaust be learned in a manner that fits into this process.*²⁶

We are not talking here about a simple process of development. Because the aim is to deepen the various elements of moral thinking at each stage, this is essentially spiral development, where the term “spiral” refers to a repetition of subjects or terms with deeper and more expanded comprehension at each stage. Thus, the developmental spiral paradigm does not represent a method in this concept but rather an element in the rationale for teaching the Holocaust, as well as one of its aims: for the appropriate moral aims to be attained at each age, it is important to begin learning about the subject from a young age and from there to continue and delve more deeply into the material.²⁷ For this reason, cognitive development is an inherent element, and we must examine what the research says about the ability of pupils to learn about such a complex historical subject in primary school.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO TEACH HISTORICAL SUBJECTS IN PRIMARY SCHOOL?

The question of the cognitive perception necessary for understanding a historical event like the Holocaust is based largely on the fundamental question of whether young children have the ability to understand historical processes and learn history at all.²⁸ Arguments drawn from Jean Piaget’s studies²⁹ contend that pupils do not have the ability to understand historical development or a time line because this requires multicomponent abstract thinking, for which they are still not ready.³⁰ This line of thinking led to the removal of history lessons from the primary school curriculum in some places in the USA, and the few historical issues that remained in the syllabus were included in the social studies curriculum.³¹ At the same time, Lev Vygotsky maintained that it was possible to develop historical thinking among children by setting challenges.³² Later empirical studies indicate that it is indeed possible to develop a certain historical thinking among pupils.³³ Nancy Dulberg contended that a deeper understanding of Piaget’s theory about thinking patterns among children would support this approach.³⁴

In discussing the cognitive ability of pupils to understand the Holocaust story, Totten adopted the approach that 10-year-old pupils do not have the ability to understand historical thinking. He argued that young pupils cannot understand the complexity of the Holocaust story and its context, and therefore there was no reason to even talk about teaching the Holocaust

until fifth grade (ages 10–11).³⁵ Geoffrey Short, in contrast, held that more recent studies in developmental psychology have refuted this contention.³⁶

It should be noted that even Samuel Totten, in his critical article against teaching the Holocaust, noted that it was possible to have pupils encounter stories from the Holocaust period. This, he felt, would be considered “pre-teaching the Holocaust”—a certain preliminary tool for approaching the issue until such time as it could be learned in depth.³⁷ Thus, his approach actually corresponds to the one proposed by advocates of dealing educationally with the Holocaust issue in primary schools. These studies call on educators to use stories as a means of dealing with the cognitive difficulty of historical perception in primary schools.³⁸ The advantage of stories is that they provide pupils with a clear framework. An encounter with a historical concept is concrete for young children and does not require them to engage in thinking levels higher than their ability. It also allows teachers to limit the details given to children and avoid difficult and unpleasant descriptions. For example, in the story “My Doll,” pupils learn about the concept of “ghetto” with words selected by the protective mother to explain the situation to her son:

“My sunshine” – she always used to call me ‘sunshine’ – “we need to leave our house and move to the ghetto.”

“Ghetto? What is a Ghetto? Where is it?” I asked. And mother explained to me: “The ghetto is here in Warsaw. It’s an area for Jews only. That’s what the Germans decided, that the Jews will live separately.” “And what about our furniture, and my toys?” I asked.

*“We have to leave everything here. We’ll take with us only a few family photos. But never mind, my darling sunshine, I’ll make sure you won’t get bored in the ghetto.”*³⁹

The child learns about being closed in and experiencing shortages in the ghetto, but he also hears the mother’s encouragement that she will find a solution to the problem. In this case, a story is chosen in which the mother actually succeeds in keeping her promise, with the help of imagination and sufficient creative skill to create a world of interest in the ghetto.

In light of this, it is clear that the choice of story will be guided by the spiral cognitive development of the pupil.⁴⁰ According to Piaget’s theory, primary pupils undergo a process in which their cognitive abilities develop from concrete to abstract thinking. Critics of Piaget indicate that

the process is more complex than his description and that it can be influenced and accelerated by means of appropriate mediation. Others point out that the structure outlined by Piaget does not operate in the same manner in all cultures. Nevertheless, the overall structure of the transition during primary school years from the concrete and focused to the abstract and complex is still generally accepted.⁴¹ The stories that were selected for the In the Paths of Memory curriculum can illustrate this spiral development. This is illustrated by the way in which the Jewish world is depicted in a Holocaust movie with different materials. The description of the pre-Holocaust Jewish world is an important element in the educational concept of Yad Vashem because encountering figures before they become victims can facilitate the development of greater empathy. Further on, this issue will be significant for becoming familiar with the rich and complex world that was lost. In the programme for third and fourth grades, Chana Gofrit relates:

My parents and I lived in a house on the main street. Another Jewish family, the Neuman family, lived across from us, and my aunts lived in Jewish neighbourhoods. My good friends were Marisha, Yanek and Basha, my Polish neighbours. I loved playing hide and seek with them, and to hide between the branches of the trees in the orchard behind our house [...] A river flowed by the town's border. During winter, when the water froze, we skated on the ice.⁴²

Here the child encounters very concrete and familiar experiences that create close ties to the heroine of the story.

Marta Goren's story, intended for fifth- and sixth-grade pupils (ages 10–12), also has warm, nostalgic descriptions of childhood. But along with them we can also see the pre-Holocaust Jewish world described in greater depth:

Once upon a time there was a Jewish community in the city of Czortkow in Eastern Poland. Czortkow is a small city on the banks of the Seret River. The Jews of Czortkow lived there for hundreds of years together with Ukrainians and Poles. The Jews spoke Yiddish and Polish and many also spoke Hebrew. Some were Zionists and waited for a permit to immigrate to Eretz Israel, while others waited for the coming of the Messiah and prayed that he would come quickly and take them to Eretz Israel. And then there were other Jews who just wanted to continue living in Czortkow.⁴³

This description makes discourse possible about a rich and varied cultural world that is reflected in the many languages spoken, different aspirations, and multiple points of view. Another function is added here to the motif of spiral development. It is not only part of the rationale as presented earlier but also a method for resolving the question of cognitive adaptation.

HOW CAN ENCOUNTERING THIS TRAUMATIC SUBJECT NOT CREATE TRAUMA IN CHILDREN?

Various researchers, as mentioned earlier, indicated that children's literature makes it possible to present complex historical issues to young children and thus resolve the cognitive problems of perceiving historical complexity. This is relevant to the question of trauma because it is clear that what is perceived by children as meaningless or not understandable can potentially create emotional stress. The story is not only told in language that children can grasp cognitively, but it is also a familiar medium with defined boundaries. Stories can serve as a tool for channeling feelings in a way that will not overwhelm the child. The child can show empathy for the hero of the story and even identify with him, but that hero will always remain in the story world. The story is and has always been a tool through which society deals with and processes complex questions and negative forces.⁴⁴

Nevertheless, to assure constructive processing and prevent encounters with an emphasis on the negative and the traumatic, it is important to ensure that the stories selected are about people who were actually saved from the Holocaust. The children will feel safer in developing empathy for a character if they know in advance, for example, that the character was saved.⁴⁵ Thus, for example, in Marta Goren's story, they learn at the beginning of the story that she was saved. In the chapter entitled "Instead of starting with the past," she relates:

I live in Rehovot, Israel, with my husband, Amos. Our children are already adults and we are proud grandparents....I love my relatives and friends very much and I think I am a good grandmother. I enjoy entertaining and playing with my grandchildren....I love learning and am writing a dissertation on Czortkow, Poland, my birthplace.⁴⁶

The pupils not only know that the heroine was saved; they also understand that she succeeded in building a life for herself filled with interests and continuity. The ability to create empathy is, of course, a main tool in any development of moral thinking.⁴⁷ Philip Zimbardo, who dealt extensively with the question of the absolute evil that is reflected in the story of the Holocaust, sought ways to enable discourse about good in a world in which such evil exists. He coined the phrase “the banality of heroism” (as a counterpoint to Hanna Arendt’s “banality of evil”) and called upon the educational establishment to offer examples of people who represented the ultimate good, in order to make it an option.⁴⁸ In the case of Holocaust literature for children, choosing the right story and a child who was saved makes it possible to highlight stories of the savers, who risked their lives for others, the *Righteous Among the Nations*, and thus also to implement the principle of the “banality of good.”

Similarly, because of the traumatic potential inherent in dealing with the Holocaust, educators must choose stories that facilitate discourse about elements of emotional strength, such as how the hero uses internal personal powers to deal with events and mutual assistance that emphasises sharing and a feeling of affiliation.⁴⁹ The contribution of these concepts to a feeling of strength is dependent on the cultural and social context,⁵⁰ and therefore educators who work in the same social context as their pupils play a central role in mediating and intensifying these concepts. Their presence as adults with a deep and continuous relationship with the pupils will imbue the children with a feeling of security.

Educators who are familiar with their pupils’ past and background are better able to select the proper words and examples. At times, their very presence will radiate a feeling of security and strength. Two examples will illustrate the point.

One of the teachers at a teacher in-service course said that she could not use the story “My Doll” (mentioned earlier) because the emphasis, as I presented it, is on the great support the mother gave her daughter. For two of the children in her class, the teacher said, the term “mother” was problematic and highly charged (in one case because of family violence and in the other because of loss). I discussed the importance of this sensitivity with the teacher and with all the teachers in the group. Afterwards, we approached the same story from the perspective of the strength that the child gained from taking care of the doll her mother had given her. We focused on how she processed her bad feelings and fears by endowing her

doll, in her imaginary world, with the powers to cope. This was the active process she engaged in as part of her therapy; she sought words of encouragement to counteract her fear, she found them and voiced them, and hearing them gave her strength. The teacher's analysis of the emotional state of her class allowed her to choose certain chapters from the book and even to select what to highlight in subsequent discussions.

A second example of the role educators can play comes from a teacher in-service course that was held in a city in southern Israel. The pupils in this city had lived for years under the threat of missile attacks from Gaza. At times, they had to run to shelters several times a day because of rockets fired at their city. In the emotional discussion that developed among the teachers during the course, some of them felt they could not discuss the upcoming Holocaust Memorial Day with their young pupils at all. "These kids have enough stress in their lives," they reasoned. Other teachers wondered how they would explain the memorial siren that would be sounded throughout the country and how it differed from the air raid sirens they heard daily that sent them running to the shelters. In discussions with these teachers, we raised the importance for the pupils of having a teacher they know. We examined a hypothetical situation: Suppose that the Ministry of Education instituted a teacher exchange programme for Memorial Day so that teachers from the centre of the country would take charge of classrooms in the south. How would the children feel if they heard a siren and a person they didn't know told them to stand with their heads bowed? Would the atmosphere in the class be significantly different if the teacher standing in front of the class was one who had actually run with these pupils to the shelters during school hours and was now bowing her head with her pupils to show respect for the dead? The same subtle nonverbal codes of support and sharing that are created between teachers and pupils over time serve as the main connecting lines that enable pupils to accept the important feeling of security when encountering upsetting subjects.

These teachers did not compare situations and levels of helplessness. Instead, discussions centred on their feelings of mission and efficacy, on being required and able to imbue their pupils with the feeling of safety needed for every educational activity. Discussion and feelings are important for all teachers and all pupils, everywhere in the world.

Thus, teachers who are aware of their pupils' backgrounds can imbue them with a feeling of security by their choice of words and examples, and their presence in the centre of educational activities can help to calm their pupils. Similarly, difficult questions often

arise a few days after pupils are exposed to complex issues. If the person who accompanied them in the process is present, the pupils will find it easier to ask those questions. Moreover, the emotional difficulties that arise from this exposure are not always expressed as direct questions but rather as unconscious behaviours. Only teachers who know their pupils can diagnose such behaviours, and only teachers who have been with their pupils for an extended period of time can address questions that truly bother them. The teacher that pupils meet every day, the one who is familiar with their cognitive and affective abilities, social circumstances, and private lives, can provide the best answers to their questions.

Above and beyond the use of adapted children's literature, and sometimes in addition to it, studies⁵¹ have indicated the need for emotional, creative, and artistic processing when dealing with traumatic issues. Creative processing can work on internalized feelings and provide an outlet for action in a subject like the Holocaust, which is characterized by many elements of helplessness. However, because of the many forces intrinsic to the subject, actions must be taken with caution. Teachers must carefully construct activities in such a way that pupils engage in strength-building concepts and do not experience trauma.

As a member of the committee that examines various projects for an educational prize awarded by Yad Vashem, I have reviewed countless and for the most part inspiring examples of teacher creativity. It is obvious that those submitting their works do so from a desire to perpetuate the memory of the Holocaust in a way that is meaningful and committed. But often enough I have seen projects that, from an excessive desire to illuminate the past, have crossed the line into the world of the traumatic (e.g., dark crowded rooms, unexplained shouts and cries). I have also seen projects that take creativity to strange places, projects that arouse in me the burning question: What are the children in this project activity doing—what does this activity bring? For example, young girls took part in a dance project choreographing a mother's love for her daughter and, eventually, the separation of mother and daughter (in order to be hidden and saved). The young girls played mothers and the babies were represented by dolls. The dance dealt with the act of saving the babies, but in the active part played by the girls the emphasis was on the tragedy of separation. Important questions must be asked: What educational-artistic process did these girls undergo in order to express separation in dance? What did the teacher tell them to think as they danced the separation? What message did these girls take home with them?

One of the climactic moments of the story “I Wanted to Fly Like a Butterfly,”⁵² when it becomes clear that a Polish girl has succeeded in saving herself and her mother, concludes with the following words: “We danced a dance of the victory of the Good over the forces of Evil.” If those girls had tried to create or recreate this dance as part of the educational process, wouldn’t their deepest feelings at the end of the production have revolved around the concepts of good and joy, and not of the wrenching feeling of separation?

This raises another question of principle that faces every educator who deals with the Holocaust: the question of simulations. Views on the subject are sometimes extreme.⁵³ Some researchers and educators oppose the use of simulation because of its great potential to cause trauma.⁵⁴ If the aim of simulation activities is to evoke an authentic emotional response, in other words the question of authenticity is paramount, then any attempt at authenticity should be viewed as invalid. We must acknowledge that it is impossible to give pupils the true feelings of oppressed Jews in ghettos and camps. Even simulations such as wearing a yellow star cannot create verisimilitude. The act is limited in terms of time and effect. Children will not wear them for years or experience the extremes of social isolation suffered by Jews who had to wear them.

On the other hand, Maitles and McKelvie⁵⁵ found that teachers sometimes succeed in constructing an activity in a way that does not cause trauma among pupils and that also has moral-educational value mainly for those pupils assigned to the groups of “affected parties” (the isolated children in the case cited earlier). Pupils who were in the marked group reported understanding the symbolization and could even develop empathy toward others who were marked. But what about the group that was not marked? What did those young pupils learn about themselves, about their covert character or about human nature in general? Could their feelings be channelled to stimulate emotional strength or the ability to empathize?

Studies have shown that feelings, especially fear, can hinder cognitive abilities.⁵⁶ For this reason, and out of fear of trivializing the memory of the Holocaust, the educational concept of Yad Vashem also opposes the use of simulations.⁵⁷

It should be noted that relevance—often the underlying rationale for simulations—can be attained in other ways. If educators select materials adapted to the children’s emotional and cognitive stages, and/or materials that

raise issues that are meaningful to the children's developmental stage, then relevance will also be achieved. For example, we saw earlier that, according to developmental psychology, younger children tend toward the concrete. If the examples in the materials at the centre of the story are close to pupils' lives, matters like play, family, friendship, imagination, and so forth, and if the child in the story is close to the age of the learner, the teaching can be relevant without being trivial or comparative. The same applies to older children, of junior high school age, who are occupied with questions of building identity: materials touching on similar matters should be chosen from the vast stores available about the Holocaust. Following this spiral process, it will be possible to dig deeper into substantial issues in high school, so that questions of morality and its validity and learning will remain relevant because they enable pupils to engage in issues that touch upon their inner world. The spirals reveal new angles at each stage that make the Holocaust relevant and prevent Shoah fatigue.

This is the essence of engaging in the Holocaust in terms of spiral development. It entails examining what is relevant at each stage, what is suitable emotionally and cognitively, and then integrating a complex subject into encounters with pupils at their own stage of development. Although the subject has the potential to upset children, integrating the proper materials that are adapted to the children's abilities at each age will act to block trauma and encourage learning and discourse about basic, essential concepts that form the foundations of morality and sensitivity to others—and all at a grassroots level that learners can absorb and internalize. Thus, the spiral, which is both an end and a means to teaching a historical subject, serves also as a road to emotional containment that emphasises the relevance of learning a complex, controversial, and traumatic historical subject like the Holocaust.

By adopting the main lines of thinking in developmental psychology regarding the links among cognition, affect, and moral concepts, the educational concept of the curriculum *In the Paths of Memory* written by Yad Vashem concurs with the significance of these three motifs in educational encounters with the Holocaust. In its educational approach, Yad Vashem has also made the spiral motif into an objective: integration of the Holocaust as a subject in the spiral development of personal identity and morality, and also as a means, a tool for understanding historical complexity, creating relevance, and avoiding trauma.

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PART III

Museum Education



Transcending Moral and Emotional Engagement: The Use of Holocaust Heritage in Primary Education

Pieter de Bruijn

In many Western countries, cultural heritage is used as a resource in educational practices. Museums, archives and memorial centres develop educational resources and activities to open up their collections and expertise to school groups. Education officers often argue that cultural heritage could render the past more tangible, motivating pupils and stimulating their historical consciousness.¹ These heritage institutes use many different strategies and techniques to bring the past closer and stimulate various forms of engagement.²

The history of the Holocaust poses an interesting challenge in attempts to generate proximity and engagement because it can be considered a rather sensitive history that from a pedagogical perspective could be rendered too personal or engaging. The goals and aims of Holocaust education, moreover, have always been strongly linked to those of citizenship and human rights education.³ Research on both the secondary and primary school context provides evidence that teaching about the Holocaust can indeed positively contribute to pupils' awareness of human rights

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issues and to their attitude towards active citizenship.⁴ Theories from history teaching methodology and citizenship education, however, also emphasise the importance of critical thinking and reflection that requires a certain level of distance and detachment towards the subject.⁵ The fact that teaching about the Holocaust is often associated with a moral imperative of preventing genocide makes taking a distant approach that focuses on critical thinking rather difficult.⁶

The relationship between the fields of Holocaust education and the goals and aims of citizenship learning was made explicit when it gained a strong formal basis in the 1990s thanks to an international initiative to stimulate the study of this history in the context of more recent human rights violations.⁷ The Stockholm Conference in 2000, which resulted in a declaration advocating the preservation of the memory of the Holocaust in order to combat racism, antisemitism and genocide, testifies to a development in which education, remembrance and research of this history are strongly tied to a moral framework and attributed present-day relevance.⁸ In the Netherlands, education about World War II to promote peace and warn against dictatorship, discrimination and fascism has an even longer tradition.⁹ Recently there has been a governmental interest in explicitly relating the history of the war and the Holocaust to the goals and themes of citizenship education.¹⁰

More than with other histories, the ethical dimensions of the Holocaust have hence been given much attention, with the subject often being seen as a vehicle to address present-day social issues. This is also evident in the definition of Holocaust education as presented by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA)—established in 1998 as the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research—which states that teaching about the Holocaust has three aims: advancing knowledge, preserving the memory of those who suffered, and encouraging reflection on moral and spiritual issues raised by the Holocaust.¹¹ The IHRA guidelines of *how* to teach the Holocaust, however, advocate an approach of critical thinking in which distinguishing between historical and contemporary events and reflecting on commemorative practices is also emphasised.¹²

The IHRA's description of what to teach about the Holocaust and how this should be achieved points to a disconnect between the three aims of stimulating knowledge, remembrance and moral development. The aim of remembering the Holocaust and inciting empathy with the victims of this history in order to arrive at the moral imperative that this should never

happen again does, for instance, not necessarily coincide with skills of critical thinking and multiple perspective-taking, which, according to history teaching methodology theories, are essential concepts in order to do justice to the full complexity of the past.¹³ In theories on citizenship education, concepts of critical thinking and maintaining a detached stance have also been highlighted as important aspects of developing democratic citizenship, which would go against the notion of instilling moral values.¹⁴ Some scholars have specifically pointed to the importance of historical enquiry and studying the Holocaust in all its complexity in order not to draw simple lessons that do not do justice to both the historical and present-day context.¹⁵

This contribution seeks to reflect on the relationship between the diverse aims of Holocaust education through an analysis of how two heritage institutes in the Netherlands construct distance, proximity and engagement in their educational resources aimed at children in the age group of 10–12 years and how their approaches influence the construction of multiple perspectives.

THEORY AND METHOD

Based on a study of the exhibitions and educational resources on the Transatlantic Slave Trade, World War II and the Holocaust of fifteen museums, archives and memorial centres in the Netherlands and the UK, I have developed an analytical framework that provides insight into the effects of different narrative and display strategies on the experience of the nearness or distance of the past (temporality) and the level of emotional, moral and ideological engagement.¹⁶ The framework comprises two main strategies.

The first strategy, narrative emplotment, refers to the way in which the narrative plotline of a historical representation and the perspectives that have been embedded within it influence whether the past is perceived as distant or nearby and configure the degree to which people feel emotionally, morally or ideologically engaged. Presenting history as a story of progress or decline, for instance, configures temporality and engagement in a different way than recounting it as a series of rises and falls. Emotional engagement can also be stimulated by providing a personal perspective on history, which allows for a different way to relate to it than when it is told through the eyes of several different historical actors. Secondly, temporality and engagement can be configured through techniques of mnemonic

bridging, which refers to the creation of a link between the past and the present through, for instance, the use of physical objects, the emphasis of 'same place' through time, historical analogies or practices of imitation and replication.¹⁷

This chapter uses this analytical framework to reflect on the dialogue between the strategies of distance and engagement and the construction of multiperspectivity in the educational resources for primary school groups of two heritage institutes in the Netherlands. The Dutch cultural heritage landscape regarding the Holocaust is strongly shaped by the fact that the country was occupied by the Germans from 1940 to 1945, which led to the deportation of over 100,000 Jewish people to concentration and extermination camps in Eastern Europe. Since then, most former camp sites have been memorialised, which often coincided with the establishment of a memorial centre.¹⁸ The history of the Holocaust is explicitly included in the Dutch curriculum for primary education. Pupils need to learn about the 'distinctive features' of several time periods, including that of 'global wars and the Holocaust', while the Holocaust through the story of Anne Frank is also included as an event in the canon of Dutch history that teachers are required to use to 'illustrate these time periods'.¹⁹

The Westerbork Memorial Centre was established in 1983 and houses an exhibition that provides some background information on Westerbork and its related history. The centre is located a few kilometres from the actual site where the transit camp was once located and from where more than 100,000 people were transported to concentration and extermination camps in Eastern Europe. After the war, people who had collaborated were interned in the camp, and subsequently refugees from the Dutch East Indies and Moluccan soldiers who had fought in the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army found a temporary home at Westerbork.²⁰ For primary school groups the centre offers guided tours of the site, a self-guided tour of the exhibition and a graphic novel that can be downloaded from the website for use in the classroom as preparation for a visit to the Memorial Centre.

The Amsterdam Resistance Museum was established in 1984 and is located in a part of Amsterdam that borders what was formerly the city's Jewish Quarter. It is housed in a building that had once served as a centre for the Jewish Choral Society. Just a few hundred metres from the museum one finds the Hollandsche Schouwburg, a theatre that was used by the Germans as a deportation centre. In 2013 the museum opened a perma-

ment exhibition space, called the Junior Resistance Museum, which is specifically aimed at children in the age group of 9–14 years, thus including the later years of primary education.

For the content analysis of the museums' exhibitions and educational resources, a qualitative scheme of analysis based on the theoretical framework outlined earlier was used to study the extent to which techniques of mnemonic bridging were employed, as well as narrative references to present-day events or processes other than historical analogies. Furthermore, the scheme was used for narrative analysis of the various plot structures present in the exhibitions and activities, using the ideal typical plotline categories of Eviatar Zerubavel to characterise narratives as progressive, declining, zigzag (combination of decline and progress) or rhyme (fusion of past and present).²¹ In addition, the exhibitions and resources were studied with regard to the use of multiple perspectives by examining references to differing historiographical viewpoints, breaking down the historical events that were included and using the point(s) of view of the particular historical actors through which they were narrated. In this analysis a distinction was made between the use of external focalisation, in which the point of view lies with an anonymous agent outside the text, and character focalisation, in which the perspective lies with characters within the text.²²

WESTERBORK MEMORIAL CENTRE: EMOTIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Although the former site of the Westerbork transit camp provides the opportunity to bridge the gap between past and present through the bridging technique of 'same place', which refers to the process of establishing continuity through people's physical surroundings,²³ the terrain of the site makes it difficult to render the past closer and engaging as it contains very few actual traces of the wartime period. This present-day appearance of the site, which is little more than a grassy field in the middle of a forest well connected by bike paths and footpaths, is a direct result of post-war developments in which former concentration camp sites in the Netherlands were repurposed, for instance as refugee camps, and demolished in order for the memory of the Holocaust to be forgotten.

In the case of Westerbork, a national monument was established in 1970, but the remains of the camp were demolished and the Netherlands

Institute for Radio Astronomy was allowed to install huge radio telescopes, which remain on the site to this day.²⁴ Owing to criticism over the removal of the barracks, several abstract memorial signs were constructed in the early 1990s to indicate the historical significance of the terrain. The former features of the camp have been made visible through landscaping techniques and a small number of reconstructions, including a perimeter fence, an access barrier and a few watchtowers.²⁵ The plaques indicating the various places at Westerbork also present a quite detached approach, as they only indicate the former function of these places in one or two words. This is one of the more distanced approaches towards the ‘same place’ bridging technique, as presentation strategies can also, for instance, focus on people connected to particular histories, which is more common with cultural heritage and educational resources on the Holocaust.²⁶

This is why the Memorial Centre is planning several new reconstructions and has recently installed two train wagons from the 1940s and parts of an original barracks on the site, while the former residence of the camp’s commander has been preserved in a glass structure. To compensate for the current distanced and detached approach, in all of its educational activities the Memorial Centre focuses on personal stories. Besides highlighting the perspective of individual victims in guided tours of the site, the Memorial Centre also provides specific educational resources focusing on primary schools. It is interesting to note that the Memorial Centre has chosen not to devote much attention to the story of Anne Frank, who was transported to Westerbork in 1944. Although people in general, and primary school pupils in particular, could probably easily relate to this iconic victim of the Holocaust, the Memorial Centre reasons that too strong a focus on her story would make her too important with respect to the other (more than 100,000) people who passed through Westerbork.²⁷

Personal Perspectives and Declining Narrative Plotlines

One of the educational resources that the Memorial Centre designed as an introduction to a visit of the site for primary school groups is a short graphic novel that was published in 2015. The novel is based on a diary of two Jewish brothers, Léon and Simon Magnus, who passed through and lived in the Westerbork transit camp in 1943. The visualisation of World War II and the Holocaust in graphic novels has a long tradition, with Art

Spiegelman's 1980s series *Maus* being the most famous example. In 2003 and 2007 the Anne Frank Foundation produced two graphic novels on the subject that focus on daily life in the occupied Netherlands and the Jewish persecution.²⁸ Memorial Centre Camp Westerbork's graphic novel was designed specifically for the later years of primary education and follows the story of a real German-Jewish family that migrated to the Netherlands in 1937.

The narrative plotline of the graphic novel can be characterised primarily as a decline, as the Magnus family, which features in it, increasingly suffers from the rise of fascism in Western Europe. Eventually being transported out of Westerbork, their journey ends in the Theresienstadt concentration camp. The story, moreover, is told solely through the personal perspective of this Jewish family. This declining narrative plotline in combination with the singular and personal perspective may engage pupils emotionally, fostering feelings of sadness and empathy for these Jewish victims. Although the narrative does refer to the resistance of Jewish and Dutch people and to the fact that some Dutch people collaborated with the Germans, it does not focalise through these perspectives. One scene in the graphic novel, for instance, depicts the Magnus family overlooking a crowd with Léon remarking to his brother that some Dutch people appear to be happy with the German occupation, with his father responding that they are traitors.

Although the narrative plotline in general can be characterised as a decline, the graphic novel still ends on a rather positive note explaining how the two brothers were reunited with their parents and, despite having lost their grandmother, were able to build a happy life in the Netherlands after the war. This stark contrast is highlighted by the use of brighter colours for these scenes. The more horrific aspects of the family's story, such as the death of their grandmother, are framed through recollections of one of the brothers who tells youngsters about his story at the former site of Westerbork in the present day, ending with the phrase that 'this should never happen again', which has become iconic of the moral message attributed to learning about the Holocaust.²⁹ While this framing and change in the narrative plotline may somewhat soften the emotions elicited, the message communicated at the end of the booklet by a survivor of the Holocaust, although fictionalised, can instil a moral engagement that may be hard for pupils to transcend.

It is interesting to contrast the approach taken in this graphic novel with a discontinued educational resource for primary school groups in

which the Memorial Centre presented the story of one Jewish victim, the young Leo Meijer. Contrary to the graphic novel, the narrative of this resource can be characterised as a full declining narrative plotline, as it addressed how Leo and his mother were put to death in Auschwitz-Birkenau. While the graphic novel introduced the mass killings through the perspective of one of the surviving brothers looking back at what had happened, generating a little more distance, the resource about Leo Meijer made it very personal and combined it with the strategy of material relics, as the resource was meant for use as a self-guided tour in the Memorial Centre's main exhibition. Besides more general objects, the resource pointed pupils to artefacts that directly related to Leo Meijer's story, such as a drawing he had made and letters he had written about his life in Westerbork.

The emotional engagement fostered by this resource may be even stronger than that of the graphic novel because the narrative plotline represented a full decline and the personal story is connected to real, authentic artefacts. Research has provided evidence that objects related to these kinds of personal narratives are an important vehicle for stimulating emotional engagement.³⁰ Although it is important not to simplify the history of the Holocaust too much for primary school pupils and completely ignore the most horrific aspects, the combination of strategies could emotionally engage the pupils too strongly, limiting the opportunities for contextualisation and reflection.

Between Education and Remembrance

All the educational resources of the Westerbork Memorial Centre show a strong commitment to fostering emotional engagement through a personal perspective, which is deemed necessary by the centre, as the memorial site does little to stimulate an experience of the past.³¹ According to the Memorial Centre's educator, the focus on everyday individuals is a way of showing that people can make a difference in making small choices.³² This aim, however, does not shine through in the centre's resources for primary education owing to the strong focus on the point of view of the Jewish victims of the Holocaust, while the perspectives of other historical actors are not touched upon.

The Memorial Centre seeks out opportunities to address the point of view of the perpetrators as well, which, according to history teaching methodology theories, would be important for pupils to acquire a better

understanding of the complexity of the historical process in which people have diverse motives and make different choices. Since it is a memorial centre, however, this will probably not be its primary focus. One of the best-preserved objects at the memorial site is actually the former camp commander's residence, which was used as a regular house after the war. The recent encasing of this house in a glass construction, to better preserve it and to be able to organise activities around it, poses an interesting challenge as it provides a tangible perpetrator perspective in a field that contains few references to the victims. How this object could be used to create a balanced multiperspective narrative for school pupils is a question that remains unanswered.

The emotional engagement fostered by the personal stories in the educational resources of the Westerbork Memorial Centre may help pupils empathise with the victims of the Holocaust and can contribute to advancing the moral message that an event like the Holocaust should never happen again. This strong commitment to developing emotional and moral engagement coincides with the aim and mission of the Westerbork Memorial Centre, but it also raises the question as to the extent to which its educational resources actually work towards Holocaust *education* instead of purely *remembrance* and *commemoration*. Acquainting pupils with multiple points of view is essential for them to acquire a better understanding of this historical event. Although it could be argued that introducing pupils to multiple perspectives with a sensitive history like the Holocaust would fit better in a later stage of their school career, an analysis of Junior Resistance Museum's educational resource in Amsterdam shows that offering a multiperspective approach to the Holocaust is also possible with primary school groups.

JUNIOR RESISTANCE MUSEUM: ENGAGING MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES

Being a modern exhibition, the Junior Resistance Museum relies on a combination of material relics and immersive-experience-based types of display to bring the past closer and stimulate emotional engagement. The project was developed by the Amsterdam Resistance Museum, which was established in the 1980s at the end of a trend in which museums mainly focused on the military aspects of World War II and the role of resistance movements in the Netherlands.³³ This trend related to the cultural mem-

ory of the war that carried a strong nationalistic and future-oriented tone with memorials and commemorations emphasising how people had shown courage and sacrifice by resisting their oppressors.³⁴

The Junior Resistance Museum can be accessed from the back of the main exhibition, where visitors first watch a film that seems to transport them back in time. The exhibition consists of four separate ‘houses’ in which the story is told of four different children who lived in the Netherlands during the war. While the Resistance Museum, with this set-up, has opted for a personal approach similar to that of the Westerbork Memorial Centre, the focus on four different children allows for a more contextualised and multiperspective narrative of World War II and the Holocaust.

Reconstructions and Multiple Stories

The exhibition is a stylised ‘in situ’ reconstruction of the houses in which the four children would have lived and is highly interactive. Visitors enter the houses through the front door, with the objects and information being displayed as part of the decor of the house. Audio clips simulating specific historical scenes play when visitors open certain drawers, closets or doors. After entering a reconstruction of a hiding place, for instance, visitors hear sounds of German soldiers executing a raid on the house. This display strategy aims to provide visitors with an immersive experience of the past, stimulating a feeling of nearness.³⁵

With its focus on the story of these children, the museum provides a narrative of the war through character focalisation, in which the point of view lies with characters that are participants in the events narrated.³⁶ This strategy generates temporal proximity and emotional engagement, which is reinforced by text panels and object labels written in first-person narrative mode, supporting the immersive nature of the exhibit. At the same time, the fact that the exhibition tells four of these personal stories allows for an exploration of the actions and motivations of different historical actors. The exhibition presents the story of Jan, whose parents were active in the resistance movement; Eva, an Austrian refugee who eventually was deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau; Nelly, whose parents were active members in the Dutch National Socialist Movement; and Henk, whose family helped people hide from the German occupiers. Although the exhibition does include these multiple perspectives, it does not cover the global scale of the war and the Holocaust. Apart from information on the effects of the

war on the Dutch East Indies, experiences of people in other countries are not included in the exhibition.

Regarding the narrative plotline of the exhibition, it is interesting to note that the most horrific aspects of the Holocaust are touched upon in a general sense but are not tied into the personal story of Eva. The exhibition narrates how Eva and her family are transported to the Westerbork concentration camp, but her story actually ends on a positive note. Although the family ends up in Auschwitz-Birkenau, Eva and her mother survive this experience and are able to return to Amsterdam after the Russian army liberates the camp. The fact that her father and brother do not survive the war, however, is covered in a different section of the exhibition. The educational resource for primary schools does not include that fact, probably because it is considered to be too emotional for this particular age group.

Moral Messages in Dialogue

This primary school educational resource allows pupils to guide themselves through the exhibition and primarily encourages them to distil factual information about the personal stories from the text panels and objects on display. When it comes to moral issues, however, the resource allows pupils to reflect and give their own opinion on the issues raised. This is most apparent in the story of Nelly, who also participated in the youth movement of the Dutch Nationalist Socialist Movement. When she describes how she does not understand why she and her family were imprisoned after the war, because ‘they hadn’t done anything wrong’, pupils are asked whether they agree with this statement or not. Both the exhibition and the resource present a rather factual, biographical account of the children’s personal stories and do not pass judgement on the ideas and actions of people in the past.

Although the core exhibition of the Junior Resistance Museum does not explicitly convey a moral message, this perspective does come up at the very end of the exhibition. At this point the exhibition features interviews with the four children in the present who are now adults and in video interviews reflect on questions about the possibilities of learning from the war, freedom, human rights and democracy. Visitors can digitally vote on whether they agree with the statements of the four eyewitnesses and submit their thoughts on the exhibition. According to the museum’s educator, the designers deliberately put the narrative plot and message through

which the main characters frame their story at the end of the exhibition, which was primarily motivated by the idea that this would be too difficult for young people to understand.³⁷ An interesting side effect of this choice, however, is that the narratives about the war and the present-day framing are strictly separate from each other, allowing the historical narratives to speak for themselves.

In contrast to the Westerbork Memorial Centre, the Junior Resistance Museum thus combines a focus on personal points of view, which fosters emotional engagement, with a multiperspective approach, showing that negotiating multiple perspectives is also possible with primary school pupils. Although it could be argued that the museum, through its focus on children, presents a somewhat limited multiperspective approach, since all children featured in the exhibition can be seen in a way as victims of the war, the exhibition provides a more multilayered narrative that will help school pupils develop a better understanding of the war and the workings of an occupied society.

The way in which both the educational resource and the exhibition handle the moral dimensions of dealing with the history of the Holocaust supports this approach of contextualisation, as the pupils are asked for their own opinion on specific situations, which allows them to engage in dialogue about the moral aspects that come up in the exhibition. The end of the exhibition is somewhat problematic in this regard, however, as the voice of the four adults looking back on their childhood can prove too strong and overpower any opinions and ideas that pupils themselves might have. It is here that too easy parallels between the past and the present are also drawn, as the set-up of the exhibition may make it seem as if today's issues with human rights, democracy and rule of law are inherently similar to those of the wartime period. Through its combination of multiple personal perspectives and focus on open dialogue, however, the resource appears to negotiate a good balance between an engaging experience and detached contextualisation.

CONCLUSION

In this contribution I have sought to analyse the ways in which exhibitions and educational resources on the Holocaust for primary education can configure temporality and engagement in order to reflect on the impact of these strategies for the various aims of Holocaust education. Both the Westerbork Memorial Centre and the Junior Resistance Museum display a

strong focus on personal perspectives to bring the past closer and stimulate emotional engagement. The use of this narrative strategy reflects a wider trend in museums to look at the experiences of children in both world wars, but specifically relates to developments in the cultural memory of the Holocaust, which can be characterised as being primarily victim-oriented.³⁸

Just like in many educational resources for secondary school groups, however, the Junior Resistance Museum has opted to combine this strategy of engagement with a multiperspective approach that allows for better contextualisation. Through this combination the Junior Resistance Museum may contribute not only to skills of historical thinking but in effect also to aims of citizenship education. In research on the skill of historical perspective-taking, it has been argued that actually understanding the actions of other people within the context of their specific place and time in combination with multiple points of view in itself contributes to democratic citizenship. Reconstructing the thoughts, feelings and ideas of people in the past based on historical evidence can help in recognising other values, beliefs, attitudes and intentions.³⁹ Furthermore, it shows how people have responded in many different ways within specific political and social structures.⁴⁰ Through its multiperspective approach the Junior Resistance Museum transcends the moral and emotional engagement that initially engrosses pupils and provides them with a basic understanding of people's actions in the war that can be developed further in later years.

A question that remains unanswered, however, is whether the combination of these two strategies actually helps pupils in developing a better understanding of the Holocaust. It has been argued that the affective aspects of learning about the Holocaust easily overshadow a more cognitive understanding of this event, as dealing with the perspective of specific historical actors could be clouded by feelings of compassion or outrage, making it impossible to gain a better understanding of fundamental questions like how such an event could have happened.⁴¹ The fact that this educational resource also conveys a moral message (both implicitly and explicitly) could very well hinder primary school pupils in using the emotional engagement that is fostered by the exhibition towards their cognitive skills in order to acquire a more contextualised historical understanding.

In order for Holocaust education to reach its full potential, it might therefore be useful to encourage pupils to study *why* remembering and commemorating the Holocaust and the preservation of heritage related to

this history is considered to be so important today. Why is it that the Westerbork Memorial Centre has such a strong focus on the victim perspective in all of its activities? Why are there so many (resistance) museums on World War II in the Netherlands today? And why do people think it is important to commemorate a historical event that every year is becoming more distant in time? Studying this cultural memory in itself raises moral issues and dilemmas associated with the history of the Holocaust. In this way, Holocaust education in the primary school context not only builds a foundation for studying the complexities of this history in secondary education but also provides knowledge and skills that are part of democratic citizenship.

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Diversity and Difference. Changing People's Attitudes and Behaviours Through a School and Community Based Holocaust Education Project

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James Griffiths, and Bill Niven*

This chapter comments on work undertaken by the National Holocaust Centre and Museum (NHCM), which set out to examine, challenge and change people's attitude towards people of difference. The vehicle for this work was a project entitled 'In Our Hands' (IOHP), conducted between 2012 and 2015. The chapter draws upon an evaluation report produced by independent consultants (Icarus)¹ and in addition sets out to examine

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C. W. Szejnmann et al. (eds.), *Holocaust Education in Primary
Schools in the Twenty-First Century*, The Holocaust and its
Contexts, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-73099-8_9

some of the key issues from the project and place the findings from the work in broader contexts of Holocaust education. The project was in many respects unique and involved work with school pupils, parents/carers and people in the wider community. At the heart of the project was a series of pre and post workshops which ‘sandwiched’ a visit to the NHCM.

CONTEXT

In the current climate of Brexit, nationalistic revival, refugee crisis and terrorist attacks, difference and diversity can quickly lead to hatred and violence. Whilst the Western world has increasingly used the Holocaust as a unique metaphor to confront such issues, the Holocaust and how to teach it is at a crossroads. We have nearly reached the ‘Post-Witness Era’ and with it ‘soon *de facto* the absence of “a sense of living connection” with the Holocaust’.² This has injected ‘a sense of urgency and relevance to *why* the genocide of the European Jews should be kept alive in contemporary public consciousness’ (ibid.) and will impact on how we might teach the Holocaust once we no longer have any witnesses to tell the story. As Holocaust education changes, we also need to consider the political agenda that drives many initiatives. In Britain, the government (or governments of the four devolved nations) is playing a central role in how the Holocaust is remembered.³ Prime Minister David Cameron’s ‘Promise to Remember’ in early 2015 not only constitutes a significant drive to invigorate Holocaust education but aims to cement the memory of and lessons to arise from studying the Holocaust as a central component of national identity. As part of this vision, the Holocaust is seen as an integral part of teaching the values of British society.⁴

Our knowledge of the state of Holocaust education in Britain has made impressive strides over the last decade. After publishing a massive survey of teachers on the way the Holocaust is taught in English secondary schools in 2009,⁵ the Centre for Holocaust Education published in 2015 an even larger survey exploring Holocaust education from the perspective of around 10,000 secondary school students that measures pupils’ knowledge and attitudes.⁶ This survey has been described as the largest study of young people’s knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust to date⁷ and will play a crucial part in shaping Holocaust education in British schools in the foreseeable future.

Most studies about Holocaust teaching in Britain are based on teaching children in secondary school aged 12–15. In England children are taught

about the Holocaust as part of the Key Stage 3 History curriculum at the age of 13–14, and then, for those who carry on with History as part of the General Certificate of Secondary Education or A-level, the Holocaust is part of some examination syllabuses. In Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland there is no formal requirement for Holocaust education, but the Holocaust is nonetheless widely taught.⁸ It is not surprising, then, that a recent textbook in the field addresses children ages 11–18.⁹ The growing body of literature on Holocaust education in secondary schools, both empirical and theoretical studies, combined with effective continuing professional development, has certainly better positioned teachers to exploit numerous opportunities that study of the Holocaust might engender. The impact of visits to memorials sites and museums/exhibitions for pupils is also significant and potentially ‘life-changing’, e.g. see the ‘Lessons from Auschwitz Project’ run by the Holocaust Education Trust. Recent scholarship from Germany highlights great potentials but also challenges and ambiguities.¹⁰ However, an area of growing consideration and importance in Holocaust education and one less well served by research and pedagogical guidance is the work within primary schools and working with younger pupils (9-, 10- and 11-year-old pupils).¹¹ The Journey exhibition at the NHCM is testimony to the potential of such work and highlights the need for further research and the practical help required for those teaching at this level. The interactive audio-visual exhibition charts the experience of one fictional boy, Leo, who was part of the *Kindertransport* from Germany to Britain 1939.

One of the few studies about Holocaust teaching in primary schools in Britain was conducted by Henry Maitles and Paula Cowan in Scotland in the late 1990s.¹² It is based on a relatively small sample of five in-depth interviews with experienced teachers who had frequently integrated Holocaust history into their curriculum. The authors argued that there are a number of good reasons for teaching the Holocaust to primary pupils, including cross-curricular and multidisciplinary approaches, ‘allowing pupils to reflect on what they have learnt in a history lesson through, for example, art/craft and/or drama’ (ibid, p. 265). The authors concluded:

With the appropriate methodology, the Holocaust is a successful, stimulating area of study for pupils of primary 5 upwards. Once they have done so, teachers are keen to teach the Holocaust again. This challenges any notion that the Holocaust is too harrowing a study for primary pupils. (Ibid, p. 270)

These findings echo the views of many experts. However, there are significant challenges. Encountering the Holocaust in everyday life necessitates an appropriate engagement with the topic, requiring educators to employ age-specific approaches and resources and to think specifically about what year 5 and 6 pupils (ages 9–11) need to know and understand about the Holocaust. Clear aims and objectives, often expressed in good key enquiry questions, are essential, and educators must anticipate unpicking complicated historical and moral issues. There is also a need to think about the level of support that primary school teachers may need when they are teaching the Holocaust, especially given the case that many will not have a specialised background in the teaching of history and Religious Education (RE).

However, there is a chance, through teaching the Holocaust, to engage with the special sensitivity of that age group and move pupils towards values such as justice and equality and to exploit this in the social-political sphere. Vera Hanfland's detailed empirical study about three primary school classes with age 10 pupils in different schools in the German town of Münster (like Britain, the Holocaust is not a compulsory subject in German primary schools) highlighted the following didactic reasons for teaching the Holocaust at the primary school level:

1. Primary schoolchildren encounter the topic Holocaust already in their everyday life and fragmentary information could lead to anxieties and problematic interpretations;
2. Children in the final year of primary school possess competent skills for historical interpretations that serve as a good platform for a first encounter with that topic;
3. School lessons provide opportunities to foster sensibilities in this age group to the principles of equality and justice for historical-political learning, potentially making an important contribution in the fields of human rights and peace education.¹³

According to Hanfland, our society often underestimates primary schoolchildren's capabilities for academic thinking, and there is a need to start a rethink.¹⁴ There is a general consensus, however, that specific training for teachers on this complex and challenging topic is essential.¹⁵ To be clear, though, opinions about teaching the Holocaust at primary schools vary, and divisions and controversies remain. Opponents warn that primary schoolchildren are emotionally and cognitively overburdened by the Holocaust and that the necessary didactic reductions lead to a trivialization

of the Holocaust.¹⁶ Also, teaching the Holocaust so early raises issues of fatigue, reactance and whether it is feasible to pursue the 'substantial preparatory work needed to apprise young children of the nature of Jewish culture and identity and the Jewish roots of Christianity'.¹⁷

Work carried out in the USA in the late 1990s also adds to this emerging picture of teaching the Holocaust to primary school pupils. Harriet Sepinwall's work recognised that through teaching the Holocaust, pupils could learn about tolerance and respect for difference. Sepinwall looked at the teaching of the Holocaust in New Jersey where there was an emphasis on developing respect for difference, an appreciation of diversity, developing self-esteem and gradually incorporating key aspects of the Holocaust. This work was conducted through a curriculum that was taught to kindergarten through grade 8. Further, anecdotal evidence raises additional attributes that arise from teaching the Holocaust '...that children in new Jersey enhanced their critical thinking skills and displayed more considerate behaviour towards others'.¹⁸

It is clear that teachers who introduce primary schoolchildren to such a complex and difficult topic as the Holocaust need to apply appropriate pedagogical approaches. Hanfland offers nuanced pedagogical views and advice.¹⁹ She argues that once narrative capabilities have been fostered on less complex historical and non-historical topics, even a complex topic such as the Holocaust acquires historical meaning for primary school pupils when approached with a narrative structure. Biographical access to history is essential for this age group. In particular, the topic of human rights, and more specifically the Holocaust, benefits from this approach. Accordingly, the life story of one historical person forms the narrative strand in which historical events and their impact on the person are explored in varying intensity. Hanfland insists that a differentiated view of history requires biographies that are not polarised into good and evil or friend and foe but favour more complex personal representation. Also, she stresses the importance of discussing options and room for manoeuvring when people live in repressive systems and wish to help persecuted people, as well as exploring their fear of being discovered and punished. At its heart, the lesson should focus on multiple perspectives and the discussion of moral dilemmas. To make this work, it is crucial to hold regular group discussions during class time that foster the development of historical methods and moral consciousness. Discussing the biography of a victim fosters empathy, the development of solidarity and tolerance, and insights into the universality of moral principles and the principles of social justice.

THE RELEVANCE OF HOLOCAUST EDUCATION FOR CITIZENSHIP AND HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

The relevance of Holocaust education for citizenship and human rights education, and as a means to foster tolerance and understanding of diversity, difference and multicultural societies, raises key questions: What is the role of schools in developing positive attitudes amongst young people? How can controversial issues be raised in the classroom? How do we develop critical citizens?²⁰ Whilst there is a broad consensus that ‘it is the responsibility of schools to teach about democracy and prepare pupils to be effective democratic citizens’, there is some scepticism about the effectiveness of citizenship education and, more broadly, about how effective schools are in turning pupils into active citizens.²¹ Paul Salmons has recently reiterated the difficulties of proving empirically the effects of education interventions on social attitudes, with or without Holocaust education.²² Also, the meaning of citizenship values is a contentious issue. A study of teachers in 38 countries worldwide found that the most important aim in citizenship education ranged from ‘promoting knowledge of citizens’ rights and responsibilities’ and ‘promoting students’ critical and independent thinking’ to supporting the development of effective strategies for the fight against racism and xenophobia’ and ‘preparing students for future political participation’.²³ Henry Maitles concludes:

We need to do more research into the effectiveness of citizenship in the development of positive values. However, it is also clear that we have to keep some kind of realistic perspective on the influence of education for citizenship or any kind of other civic or political education. Education for citizenship throws up the central questions as to what sort of education we want. However, while there are clear benefits from education for citizenship programmes, we must be clear that no programme of education can guarantee democratic participation nor an acceptance of societal norms.²⁴

Whilst there is no room here to do justice to this complex topic and the rapidly growing scholarship associated with it,²⁵ we want to draw attention to some issues relating to the contribution of Holocaust education as a medium for developing and fostering positive citizenship values and, within this, pupils’ understanding of diversity and difference. In 1997, Bruce Carrington and Geoffrey Short, pioneers of Holocaust education in Britain, drew the following conclusion:

Teaching about the Holocaust can provide a meaningful context for raising a number of these issues. In particular, the subject lends itself to developing in students a global perspective in respect of human rights. It should help them to appreciate that human rights violations, on grounds of 'race', ethnicity, nationality or religion, can ultimately lead to genocide. In addition, such teaching may serve to deepen their understanding of both the causes and consequences of such stereotyping and scapegoating. But while an expanded knowledge of racism may be a necessary condition of active citizenship in a participatory democracy, it is clearly not sufficient. Students will also need to reflect upon the strategies needed to combat it. Discussion should, of course, form an integral part of Holocaust education.²⁶

In 2008, Henry Maitles and Paula Cowan surveyed existing research from secondary schools and found convincing 'evidence that Holocaust education can make a significant contribution to citizenship in developing pupils' awareness of human rights issues and genocides, the concepts of stereotyping and scapegoating, and general political literacy, such as the exercise of power in local, national and global contexts'.²⁷ However, the impact of Holocaust education in this area is far from straightforward. When the same authors analysed the relationship between learning about the Holocaust and the development of positive citizenship values among 200 pupils from predominantly white rural communities in a longitudinal study in Scottish schools, they found improvements in citizenship values and understanding of active citizenship in the face of racism.²⁸ However, when they attended the same secondary school 3 years later, a complex picture emerged suggesting that short-term benefits are greater than longer-term ones with some 'generally welcome attitudes relating to attitudes towards minorities' and new major issues emerging relating to gender differences.²⁹

THE IN OUR HANDS PROJECT AT THE NATIONAL HOLOCAUST CENTRE

The NHCM has more than 23,000 visitors every year, with approximately 19,000 of these being schoolchildren. In 2015, 6,300 pupils in years 5 and 6 visited the Journey, which is Britain's only permanent exhibition which teaches about the Holocaust to primary-aged children, whilst 13,203 pupils in years 9–13 visited its main exhibition to learn about the Holocaust and contemporary genocides. The IOHP ran between September 2012

and March 2015 and used an outreach model to deliver learning to 419 primary pupils, 460 secondary pupils and 181 parents in Nottinghamshire regarding attitudes towards people of difference. A key aim of the project was to develop an innovative initiative which focused on geographic areas with high levels of hate crime and low levels of community engagement and try to bring about change by working with schools and the wider community to reform attitudes and behaviours. Children and parents from primary and secondary schools visited the Holocaust Centre, and both parents and children undertook parallel learning experiences. These visits were followed by workshop visits to the schools that were run by the museum's education staff. The innovative nature of the project focuses on the involvement of parents and raising awareness of the role of individuals in the Holocaust and how this might reflect on their role within their communities. The project was developed with a consideration of the government's Hate Crime Strategy and its Prevent Strategy.³⁰

Icarus, an independent consultancy, delivered evaluation support to the IOHP between April 2013 and March 2015 and then submitted to the NHCM a Final Evaluation Report in July 2015.³¹ This section summarises the key points of the report under various headings. The complete report (66 pages), including data, methodology and evaluation framework, can be accessed on the NHCM's website in conjunction with the publication of this chapter.

Description of IOHP The project worked through educational institutions (children's centres, primary and secondary schools) in communities in Nottinghamshire where concerns existed regarding attitudes towards people of difference: 'The goal of the project was to make meaningful connections for primary-aged participants between a study of the events of 1938/9 which culminated in the *Kindertransports* and for secondary-aged and adult participants with the truths of the Holocaust with the day-to-day lives of families, and the changes being experienced in the communities in which they live. The core model of delivery used within the project was a set of workshop activities delivered in schools which sandwich a visit to the NHCM. This enabled both preparatory work to be undertaken prior to the visit, and reflective follow up work after the visit. The NHCM developed materials and teaching approaches throughout the project in partnership with the schools and other institutions they worked with. The teaching resources and materials developed focus on identity and belonging (pre-visit) and connecting learning about the Holocaust to

the present day and the communities in which participants live (post-visit). The project was developed as a pilot to enable the NHCM to assess the potential of using an outreach model to deliver values based education that offers Holocaust focused learning and an exploration of difference and otherness intended to influence the attitudes and behaviour of participating children, young people and parents.³²

Evaluation Framework The evaluation framework set out the key outcome of the project as learning around aspects of difference, and shifts in attitude and behaviour by children and parents towards people seen as different by participants. The key question agreed for the evaluation was:

*In communities where attitudes towards people who are different are of concern, has involvement with the learning programmes of the Holocaust Centre influenced the attitudes and behaviours of local children, young people and parents towards people of difference, and if so, what has been key to bringing about those changes?*³³

In particular the NHCM wanted to understand 'how involvement with the learning programmes of the Holocaust Centre can influence attitudes towards difference in UK communities today; how the Holocaust Centre and schools can collaborate in order to enable children's learning about difference; the potential for the work of the Holocaust Centre to encourage parental engagement in children's learning; whether the depth and quality of learning for children has been added to through parents' involvement.'³⁴

Visit to the NHCM 'During the trip to the Holocaust Centre, the children visited either the interactive audio-visual Journey exhibition that charts the experience of children who were part of the Kindertransport from Germany to the UK from late 1938 (primary pupils), or the main Holocaust Exhibit (secondary pupils) and had the opportunity to meet and listen to a Holocaust survivor. The project also engaged parents through the inclusion of a parallel visit to the Holocaust Centre, and opportunities in school, such as assemblies, where children shared the work they had undertaken within the project.'³⁵

Function of Evaluation Report Icarus claims that the report offers ‘the Centre and other stakeholders an impartial, constructive analysis of: (a) the impact of the In Our Hands project for children, parents and communities; (b) the approach used within the project to enable learning and influence, in particular, the efficacy of the “sandwich” model of learning and visit to the Holocaust Centre, and the effectiveness of the methods used to enable influence with parents and communities’.³⁶ The methods used during the evaluation included gathering both quantitative and qualitative information from the stakeholders involved.³⁷ During the most important phase of the project, attitudes towards three different out-groups were studied: people with a different skin colour, people from another country who come to live in Britain and disabled people.³⁸ In relation to appraising impact,³⁹ the report emphasises the importance of placing the evidence gathered concerning impact in the context of various factors, including the challenging cultural and ethical environment within the communities targeted by the project, the suggestion of evidence-based literature that ‘interventions can be successful in the short-term in shaping people’s views about target groups and related social issues’ without necessarily producing a lasting change in attitudes or behaviour, and variations in the scale and intensity of the inputs.⁴⁰

A selective literature review of ‘theories linked to group attitudes and behaviour, and studies of other interventions which have sought to promote positive attitudes towards difference suggests there are certain features linked to successful prejudice reduction approaches’,⁴¹ including ‘offering multiple and successive activities over time; encouraging active participation from beneficiaries; emphasising similarities rather than differences; integration within a curriculum if school based; including contact with groups seen as different, or shared work with such groups; reflection on personal experiences and relating this to local circumstances’.⁴² This guidance affirmed numerous methods and approaches pursued by the IOHP, including ‘the practice of working with some beneficiaries over a longer period of time’; ‘the participative style of learning deployed by the project’; ‘the merit of aligning the work clearly with the school curriculum’; ‘the approach taken by the project in seeking to connect learning about the Holocaust with the everyday lives of children and parents’; finally, it ‘suggests opportunities for contact with people seen as different would add value to future projects’.⁴³

The report concludes that there was 'strong evidence that validates the basic structure of the In Our Hands Project (pre visit work, visit to the Holocaust Centre, post visit work), as an effective approach to generating opportunities for learning around difference and otherness', and 'identified the visit to the Holocaust Centre as an essential part of that structure'.⁴⁴ In relation to the overall impact of the IOHP the report states: 'The evaluation has recorded strong evidence that the In Our Hands Project has enabled parents and children to learn about difference. There is good quantitative evidence that children's and young people's attitudes towards people who are different to them (in particular people with a different skin colour and people who have come here to live from other countries) have been positively influenced through involvement in the project. There is also good qualitative evidence that affirms this influence and indicates a level of openness, optimism and empathy from children and young people towards people who are different to them. There is some evidence that the project has had a positive influence on the behaviour of children and young people and of their intent to behave more positively, though the evaluation is not in a position to comment on the sustainability of any changes in behaviour'.⁴⁵ Furthermore, the report concludes: 'There is good anecdotal evidence that the project has enabled learning for parents about difference, and some evidence of positive influences on parents' attitudes'.⁴⁶ For example, a parent from the Children's Centre said: 'It [the visit] confirmed for me that we are all essentially the same. I'll be more tolerant now of some groups I've previously been judging'.⁴⁷ There is also anecdotal evidence of parents realising that they live in insular communities and are too protected, with one parent commenting: 'Workshop is a bubble – most of us who live here are white, we don't come across people from other ethnic groups – we're too protected'.⁴⁸

Finally, the report's conclusion states: 'The evaluation has identified that concerns and anxieties exist for children and young people regarding people who are different to them. The strongest anxiety was that people who were different would be bullies. There is also evidence that strong negative views exist among some children and young people toward specific groups that are seen as different. The strongest negative views expressed concerned gypsies and travellers. There is good evidence that the project has provided learning about the Holocaust and increased understanding of the Holocaust for children, young people and parents'.⁴⁹

CONCLUSIONS

The IOHP offers some crucial insights and lessons for Holocaust education and verified the value and potential of Holocaust education in contemporary society, in particular in relation to primary schools, outreach work and citizenship and human rights education as a means of fostering tolerance and understanding in ethnically diverse societies. The relevance of Holocaust education in primary schools was reaffirmed by the report's observation about the existence of stereotypes in young children ('the responses suggest that some children have, by the age of 10 or 11, acquired a stereotypical view of certain outgroups, in particular gypsies and travellers, but also asylum seekers and refugees'⁵⁰). Crucially, it has been argued that the most effective anti-racist education would 'preferably be conducted in the primary school where any opposition from the peer group is easier to deal with'.⁵¹ By comparison, experts emphasise the difficulties of prejudice reduction intervention amongst adults.⁵²

The IOHP was set up as an innovative pilot 'with the intention to learn through delivery, and use that learning to develop and refine an effective model of social education with the potential for wider application'.⁵³ Arguably the most valuable part of the report is the section 'Learning about methods and approaches', which provides a detailed analysis of what worked well and what worked less well in three areas—partnership with schools and Children's Centre's involvement in the project, the structure of the programme, and the methods used and the content of the programme—before considering the effectiveness of the project in enabling and encouraging community action.⁵⁴

Further insights gained from the IOHP include the following: 'The Holocaust Centre's initial ambition for the In Our Hands project was one that envisaged a radiating influence in which the work with children and young people generated interest and engagement from parents, who then undertook action or activities, with support from the Centre, to influence and educate others within communities.'⁵⁵ Whilst there were some impacts on that front, overall this vision was challenging to realise owing to a number of factors, including time constraints, limited capacity of partners and complexities of skills required to engage pupils, parents and adults in communities.⁵⁶ Though the evaluation indicated that parental involvement adds to learning for parents and potentially for children, the evaluation also suggested that, where engagement has been good, it is likely that those who have engaged are predisposed to support initiatives of this

nature and that further work is needed with schools to develop a genuinely far-reaching model of parental involvement.⁵⁷

The IOHP also raises a number of questions which await further investigation. Strictly speaking, the subject of the *Kindertransport* exhibition at the NHCM is not the Holocaust, but the period before the Holocaust. The aim is for primary schoolchildren to learn about the process of antisemitic discrimination between 1933 and 1939, not the Holocaust understood as the murder of European Jews between 1939 and 1945. Leo, after all, the boy diarist at the centre of the exhibition, escapes on the *Kindertransport*. He represents the fate of the refugee, not that of the Holocaust victim. The unstated belief behind the IOHP and the Journey exhibition is that the Holocaust would actually be 'too much' for primary schoolchildren, whilst the ultimately positive tale of one individual who endures hardship but escapes before the Holocaust begins is seen as a more appropriate point of entry to the history of Nazi antisemitism. These assumptions need to be brought out more clearly and rationalised.

Another issue concerns apparent contradictions revealed by the IOHP. Schoolchildren who participated in the project, at the primary and secondary levels, were positively influenced through their involvement, particularly with regard to people of a different skin colour. Yet the report also points to a relatively significant number of negative comments relating to asylum seekers and gypsies.⁵⁸ More research is needed into how schoolchildren or indeed adults can respond with tolerance when asked generic questions about people of a different skin colour yet continue to harbour prejudices against specific groups like travellers and asylum seekers. For example, we only have limited knowledge about the impact of the media, and in particular social media platforms, on influencing the attitudes and behaviours of children and parents. The heightened awareness of the need for tolerance as a general principle fails to translate into actual tolerance in relation to a specific group, especially one with which the participants have personal experience. The answer to this mismatch may be to include specific outgroups such as asylum seekers and gypsies in any future Holocaust education projects.

The data gathered for primary schoolchildren indicated a statistically particularly significant change in attitude for one outgroup: people who are disabled.⁵⁹ Yet the IOHP leaves us guessing as to why this might be the case as disabled children—most importantly, the practice of Nazi sterilisation and euthanasia of the mentally and physically disabled is not explicitly addressed within the IOHP—do not feature in the *Kindertransport* exhibi-

bition. There does seem to have been a transfer of empathy from one group to another, but the process itself needs further illumination. Arguably, this transfer of empathy could be explained by the pre- and post-visit workshops that wrap around the visit to the Journey exhibition. The pre-visit workshop allows pupils the space to begin to address key questions regarding their own and others' identities. By examining their individual identity, as well as that of their school and their local community, pupils are able to consider the importance of knowing what makes us who we are and how well we relate to others. Whilst visiting the exhibition the pupils learn specifically about Leo's identity as a German Jew who later becomes a refugee. During the post-visit workshop pupils explore the issue of stereotyping and the effect that it had on the Jewish community in the 1930s and how it affects people today. On returning to school and possibly with limited personal connection to refugees, pupils transfer their learning to other groups that they are familiar with—children with disabilities.

Elsewhere, the Icarus report leaves open questions as to how understanding has occurred and what form this understanding actually takes. When year 8 students say they understood more about the Holocaust following a visit to the NHCM,⁶⁰ *what* exactly had they understood? We need to know more about the interpretations of the Holocaust which result from education and visits to memorial sites and exhibitions. The comment by a primary schoolchild to the effect that 'even though people are different, you can't blame things on difference'⁶¹ is heartening to hear. But the whole point of the Kindertransport exhibition is to show that Jews were NOT different until the Nazis decided to construct them as such. Learning to respect difference is important; just as important is the need to learn that difference is often a cultural construct, a term by which a group can be encircled and isolated and then even murdered. German Jews like Leo, after all, were assimilated. They were *Germans*. The Icarus report gives us much ground for optimism in that children have learnt to respect difference. Learning to beware of false distinctions and scapegoating would also be important.

THE WAY FORWARD

Based on the foregoing findings, we recommend setting up long-term projects following primary schoolchildren into secondary schools and then colleges that use Holocaust education in a multicultural setting and

exploit it as a tool for education in human rights and citizenship values that pursue the following aims:

1. Embedding human rights and citizenship values via Holocaust education in pupils from ethnically diverse communities. Values of tolerance and understanding have to be fostered amongst the youth of all communities to immunise them against prejudices and hatred against those who are different. We believe that teaching about the Holocaust in a multicultural society should become a vehicle offering educational opportunities rather than causing the Holocaust to be seen as a problem.⁶² Also, the many prejudices about Muslim youth's attitude towards learning about the Holocaust⁶³ should be overcome, and if there are issues, they should be tackled head on. To make this happen, there is a need to acknowledge individual and collective histories of those that have immigrated to Britain and to take this as 'a positive starting point for teaching about the Holocaust'.⁶⁴ We believe that a flexible (and not a 'one-size-fits-all') approach to teaching the Holocaust that responds to the diverse make-up of classrooms, makes connections to other histories of violence and persecution and one's own life', and discovers 'what language is necessary to communicate with a new generation' (e.g. the language of racism or the language of human rights) opens up exciting opportunities.⁶⁵
2. Building partnerships between different ethnic groups and communities in society. Icarus conducted additional research through the evaluation and suggests that 'there may be merit in developing practice to include contact with people from groups seen as different as part of future projects'.⁶⁶ There is a need to explore this further, building on the consensus that getting to know 'the other' and encouraging different groups to work together ('contact hypothesis') can be a crucial action to counter prejudicial attitudes and foster cooperation, tolerance and respect.⁶⁷ Peer education would play an important part in building partnerships. Two experts explain: 'Though young people are more prone to make historical mistakes or mismanage a discussion, peer education promotes a learning process that engages young people and challenges them to develop the knowledge, attitudes and skills to teach others and take responsibility for their own teaching. The end result is deeper reflection and learning, as well as important leadership skills'.⁶⁸

3. Pursuing long-term projects and measuring the short-term and long-term impacts on pupils' values and behaviours. As noted previously, short-term impact does not necessarily lead to long-term impact, and the long-term effectiveness of 'one-off' prejudice reduction programmes have been seriously questioned.⁶⁹ Meanwhile, the Icarus report 'affirms the practice of working with some beneficiaries over a longer period of time',⁷⁰ and other studies have emphasised the importance of 'long-term engagements' in supporting 'children in building understandings over time, and varied opportunities for making meaning together'.⁷¹
4. Identifying productive approaches to generating influential community activity and action.
5. Trying to involve parents more systematically.
6. Trying to roll out series of pre- and post-visit workshops which 'sandwich' a visit to the NHCM.

NOTES

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16. *Ibid.*, p. 33 f.
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52. Hill and Augoustinos, 'Stereotype'; Blincoe and Harris, 'Prejudice'.
53. Icarus, *In Our Hands Project*, p. 12.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 32–44.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
58. *Ibid.*, pp. 20, 22.

59. Ibid., p. 50.
60. Ibid., p. 29.
61. Ibid., p. 29.
62. Elke Gryglewski, 'Teaching about the Holocaust in multicultural societies: appreciating the learner', *Intercultural Education*, 21 (2010), pp. 41–49; Dienne Hondius, 'Finding common ground in education about the Holocaust and slavery', *Intercultural Education*, 21 (1) (2010), pp. 61–69; Barry van Drill and Lutz van Dijk, 'Diverse classrooms – opportunities and challenges', *Intercultural Education*, 21 (2010), pp. 1–5.
63. Short, 'Reluctant'.
64. Gryglewski, 'Teaching', p. 48.
65. Van Drill and Van Dijk, 'Diverse', pp. 1–3.
66. Icarus, *In Our Hands Project*, p. 42.
67. Blincoe and Harris, 'Prejudice'.
68. Van Drill and Van Dijk, 'Diverse', p. 3.
69. Hill & Augoustinos, 'Stereotype'.
70. Icarus, *In Our Hands Project*, p. 41.
71. Louise B. Jennings, 'Challenges and possibilities of Holocaust education and critical citizenship: An ethnographic study of a fifth-grade bilingual class revisited', *Prospects*, 40 (2010), pp. 35–56.



Holocaust Education in the Museum Space: An Israeli Perspective

Madene Shachar

INTRODUCTION: THE ROLE OF HOLOCAUST MUSEUMS

Holocaust museums have become a prominent venue for perpetuating a collective memory of the Holocaust. These museums, like other “memory museums”¹ reflect the culture within which they exist. With the opening of more and more Holocaust museums and exhibitions around the world, there has emerged a critical dialogue on how these institutions represent the Holocaust and how they construct Holocaust memory. This is part of a larger dialogue concerning the role of memory museums that represent traumatic histories in constructing and perpetuating national trauma.² Each institution has its unique way of presenting and commemorating the Holocaust and faces an on-going challenge to keep this history relevant from generation to generation via formal and non-formal educational programs.

Though Holocaust museums reflect culture-specific ideologies and narratives, they all deal with the same question of how to represent the Holocaust in the museum space in order to promote a collective memory of the past that is relevant to their visitors in the present. Moreover, as

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Ghetto Fighters’ House Museum and Yad Leyeled Children’s Memorial
Museum, Western Galilee, Israel

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C. W. Szejnmann et al. (eds.), *Holocaust Education in Primary
Schools in the Twenty-First Century*, The Holocaust and its
Contexts, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-73099-8_10

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Hansen-Glucklich claims, “Museums that exhibit the Holocaust face a particular challenge: they seek to simultaneously provide witness, facilitate remembrance, and educate their visitors.”³

In her research on memory museums, Simine has identified a paradigm shift concerning how memory museums represent traumatic histories, persecution, and violence and their adoption of a more experiential approach:

...visitors are supposed to gain access to the past through the eyes of individuals and their personal stories, by “stepping into their shoes,” empathizing and emotionally investing in their experiences, (re-) living a past they have not experienced first-hand and thereby acquiring “vicarious memories.”⁴

This paradigm shift is also evident in Holocaust museums. The question is: Do we want Holocaust museums, especially those that have an educational program for primary schools, to ask their young visitors to step into the shoes of victims or relive the past of the victims of the Holocaust? The ability to empathize, being able to see and reflect on the situations of others, is not the same as being able to vicariously relive the trauma of Holocaust victims.

The shift toward a more experiential visit in Holocaust museums poses to museum educators many challenges concerning the pedagogical methods implemented in the museum space. Messham-Muir claims that many Holocaust museums have developed more performative display strategies that are constructed to engage young visitors on both an affective and a cognitive level, focusing primarily on the emotional level with the aim of “producing moving experiences for visitors.”⁵ Such an experience, he continues, enables the visitor to identify empathically with the victims. Exhibitions like “Daniel’s Story” in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum,⁶ “The Journey” in the National Holocaust Centre and Museum⁷ in England, and “The Jewish Child during the Holocaust” exhibition at the Yad LaYeled Children’s Museum in Israel⁸ are examples of exhibitions at Holocaust museums that are specifically geared to primary- aged visitors. They each present the story of children who lived during the Holocaust through a child’s perspective as a way to encourage young visitors to take an interest in the subject, using authentic artifacts, texts, and photographs that relate to the world of children. For example, “The Journey” and “The Jewish

Child during the Holocaust” exhibitions are based on the story of one composite character, but also incorporate authentic child survivor video testimonies. Yad LaYeled, on the other hand, presents authentic child testimonies throughout the core exhibition “The Jewish Child during the Holocaust.” “Remember the Children: Daniel’s Story” and Yad LaYeled use spatial strategies like changing the floor texture along the path of the exhibition. What makes these exhibitions more performative than historical is their incorporation of interactive three-dimensional (3D) and realistic installations (like the depiction of a Jewish store with a broken storefront glass window symbolizing *Kristallnacht*, houses in a ghetto, or hiding places) that immerse young visitors in a spatial, tactile, evocative experience along a specific physical and contextual path or journey, engaging the young visitor’s senses—seeing, hearing, and kinesthetic sensation.

What needs to be taken into consideration is the emotional impact these moving experiences can have on young visitors in Holocaust museums. Salmons reminds us that “We need strategies for moving students without traumatizing them...” Salmons also claims that these experiential programmes may “inadvertently reinforce stereotypes and prejudices.”⁹ Therefore, the main challenge is to create programs that encourage young visitors to learn about the Holocaust without compromising authenticity and a nuanced understanding of historical events.

This chapter will explore the educational philosophy of Yad LaYeled, the children’s Holocaust memorial museum in Israel, and how various media are used as pedagogical tools to evoke empathy in young visitors while constructing their personal and collective memory of the Holocaust via survivor testimonies.

HOLOCAUST MUSEUMS AND HOLOCAUST EDUCATION: AN ISRAELI PERSPECTIVE

According to Dan Porat, “the Holocaust is an event that stands at the core of what it means to be a Jewish Israeli” and has become “a defining memory, an event that was studied and discussed throughout the school year, a piece of history that formed the core of students’ national identity.”¹⁰ This is easy to understand considering that children in Israel grow up in a society where they are continuously exposed to the Holocaust as it is represented and interpreted in school, informal settings, and the media (newspapers, radio, television, and the Internet). The Holocaust is

discussed in Israel in the news almost on a daily basis, and Israeli children hold a memorial ceremony in school on the National Holocaust and Heroism Remembrance Day¹¹ starting in kindergarten.¹² Therefore, as Brutin suggests, in Israel it is important to start teaching about the Holocaust at an early age, as well as develop pupils' empathy.¹³ Though teaching the Holocaust has been incorporated into elementary, junior high, and high school curricula, the Education Ministry introduced the first National Curriculum from kindergarten through to 12th grade only in 2014.

In Israel, Holocaust museums are an integral part of the national commemoration of the Holocaust. The Ministry of Education recommends visiting a Holocaust museum in Israel as an appropriate medium for supplementing Holocaust education in schools.¹⁴ The two major Holocaust museums in Israel are Yad Vashem and the Ghetto Fighters' House (*Beit Lohamei Haghetatot*). Both were established in the first years after the establishment of the State of Israel. Furthermore, Israel has been a pioneer in establishing the first Holocaust children's museum, Yad LaYeled (in English "Memorial to the Child"), which was founded in 1995.

The educational philosophy and practices at Yad LaYeled can provide insight into Holocaust education for primary-aged pupils in a museum environment. The children's museum is located on the same campus as the Ghetto Fighters' House, which was the first Holocaust museum in the world, and established on April 19, 1949, the sixth anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising (in which some of the founders of the kibbutz and museum played an active role). The museum was established concurrently with the kibbutz (unique to Israel, the kibbutz is a Jewish agricultural settlement based on the ideology of a cooperative community). The physical connection between museum and living community was the concept of those Holocaust survivors who established the kibbutz and the museum.

Yad LaYeled, whose full title is "the living memorial to the Jewish children of the Holocaust," is an extension of this concept. Its purpose is to provide children between the ages of 10 and 14 (fifth–eighth grade in Israel) with a "meaningful and stimulating meeting with the Holocaust" (as stated in the museum's brochure), as well as to memorialize the 1.5 million Jewish children who perished in the Holocaust. Yad LaYeled was created, therefore, in order to provide elementary and middle school pupils a venue through which they can explore the subject of the Holocaust in an age-appropriate manner, as well as foster empathy and

expand their knowledge about the world of the Jewish children who lived during the Holocaust.

YAD LA YELED'S EDUCATIONAL CONCEPT

Yad LaYeled's educational concept of teaching the Holocaust places young learners—their needs and abilities—at the centre of its attention, and this was the goal throughout the whole process of creating the museum—from its inception in the 1970s through the development of the architecture, the exhibitions, and the workshops in the early 1990s.¹⁵ The museum's aim is to acquaint young visitors with the world of the children who lived during the Holocaust. This mission sets the tone for understanding the museum's content and didactic methods.

Establishing the basis for an ongoing dialogue between Holocaust survivors and young visitors is at the heart of Yad LaYeled's educational concept, which is based on three core principles:

1. The Holocaust will be presented through the stories of children who lived during that period, and not on the traumatic experience of death. When a child of today learns about a child that lived during the Holocaust, he is more capable of feeling empathy about those children's actions, reactions, and behaviour.
2. The museum presents these stories through authentic materials—diaries, testimonies, artifacts, photographs—that are age appropriate and put an emphasis on the lives of Jewish children during the Holocaust.
3. Young children cannot grasp the complex historical continuum. Therefore, the multiple and various child testimonies and the stories of child survivors that are presented in the core exhibition together construct a clear beginning (life before the war), middle (life during the war), and end (life after the war).

The ultimate goal of Yad Layeled is that during the visit to the museum, young visitors will construct knowledge about the lives of Jewish children during the Holocaust via the exhibitions. They will also develop awareness of the experiences of children who lived during the Holocaust via personal testimonies. After the visit, they will feel comfortable continuing to learn about the Holocaust in both formal and informal venues.

THE CORE EXHIBITION: CREATING THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

In the core exhibition, “The Jewish Child during the Holocaust,” historical events are revealed through excerpts from child testimonies. Multimedia installations, including audio and video testimonies, are an integral part of the museum experience, as are 3D dioramas, authentic photographs in lifelike proportions, and artifacts from the world of children—a doll, a stuffed toy, a wooden toy horse, and a child’s drawing pad. Together, they serve as a backdrop for themes such as life before the war, life in the ghetto, and life in hiding. Complementing a visit to the core exhibition are creative workshops and theatrical plays, as well as a permanent exhibition about Janusz Korczak and a rotating exhibition. All are pedagogical strategies used to engage visitors and invite them to become secondary witnesses to the experiences of the children represented in the exhibition.

THE USE OF SURVIVOR TESTIMONIES

On small television screens, which are strategically designed and placed throughout the core exhibition, survivors tell their personal story of struggle and survival via video. The survivor testimonies are located in thematic alcoves, for example an installation that looks like a church or one that looks like the trunk of a tree in the forest. Each testimony reveals the story of one child and how he/she coped with his/her specific situation. The testimonies, approximately 5–6 minutes in length, illuminate different aspects of survivors’ experiences as children during the Holocaust, including life under a false identity, going to an underground school in the ghetto or hiding in the barn of a Christian family.

Though child survivor testimonies were always an integral part of Yad LaYeled’s core exhibition, ten years ago museum educators decided to re-evaluate the use of these testimonies. Many of the survivors who had given testimony had passed away, and at the time, the museum educators encouraged young visitors to correspond with them. Since this correspondence was an important part of the museum’s philosophy, the educational staff looked for child survivors who were willing to be interviewed and filmed, keeping in line with the core themes and the installations in which the testimonies would be screened. Museum educators also took a look at where testimonies were being screened, and relocated certain testimonies that dealt with specific subjects, re-evaluated how the survivors were interviewed and decided to replace the studio

based and blue background style with a more natural setting. All new testimonies in the core exhibition were held at the survivor's home—with the understanding that their testimonies were the human connection and not just another display tool in the museum space. For that reason, the museum also doubled the number of testimonies in the core exhibition, with two or three testimonies in each installation and five testimonies in the last section of the exhibition, the Eternal Flame installation. This compensates for the limitation of the museum space and the installations that were created to house the testimonies. The museum now presents eighteen first-hand testimonies of child survivors who experienced the war and the Holocaust at different ages and in different countries. Together, these testimonies present a diverse and complex story of how Jewish children lived during the Holocaust.

The personal testimonies become empowering texts for young visitors. Since the focus of the core exhibition is on life, the encounter with the story of one child, learning about his/her personal world, family, hobbies, and the ways he/she had to cope, invites young visitors to expand their knowledge about the world of children who lived during the Holocaust. The placement of the testimonies in thematic settings gives young visitors an opportunity to connect to the story visually and physically, as well as emotionally and cognitively, without trying to immerse them in a simulated experience. Instead, they give agency to the survivor's story in his own words. These testimonies are not another prop in the exhibition that is placed in order to evoke an emotional response by young visitors. Instead, the survivor testimony of child survivors is, as Rubin Suleiman claims, a "personal, subjective expression in which the experiences of children in the Holocaust can most memorably be communicated."¹⁶

SURVIVOR TESTIMONY BEYOND THE EXHIBITION

We will now look at the way one survivor's testimony—that of Nili Goren—is situated in the core exhibition and then expanded upon and explored by young visitors in a workshop activity as part of a 3-hour school programme at the museum for pupils between the ages of 10 and 14.

Goren's testimony is located in the section of the core exhibition that presents the interim period between the outbreak of World War II and the deportations to ghettos and the implementation of strict anti-Jewish laws. In this period, many families made the decision to send their children into hiding under false identities.

In her testimony, Goren describes the anti-Jewish rules that are established in Holland following the invasion of the German army. She also describes how she and her sister are given false identities by their mother, having to say good-bye to her parents, and her experience living in the home of a Dutch doctor and his wife, Dr. and Mrs. Kohly, while pretending to be their niece, Lienke.

The main focus of Goren's testimony is how her father, Dr. van der Hoeden, who was hiding in another part of Holland, was able to keep in touch with his daughters throughout the family's period of hiding. She describes how he created decorated and colorful letters, filled with humor and secret messages. He would then bind the illustrated letters to make little booklets, which were passed between the hiding places by the Dutch underground. Nili warmly and lovingly talks about the booklets as "a little scent" of her father that helped to diminish her fears about the welfare of her family. She explains that her father had instructed Dr. Kohly to destroy all the booklets after she had read them.

What the children do not learn from Nili's testimony in the core exhibition is what happens after the liberation of Holland, when her father came to the Kohlys' to pick her up. This part of her story is the starting point in a creative writing workshop that was developed based on Nili's personal story. The young visitors discover that all of the booklets her father had written to her were not destroyed but secretly hidden by Dr. Kohly (Fig. 1).¹⁷

Fig. 1 Cover: a birthday letter for Lienke



USING SURVIVOR TESTIMONY IN A WORKSHOP ACTIVITY

The workshop is an integral part of the museum experience for school visits and reflects the educational philosophy of Yad LaYeled that sees creative activities as a unique and essential part of its pedagogy. The workshops provide a communicative language that encourages critical thinking and empathy and facilitates learning about the complex events of the Holocaust.

The goal of all the workshops at Yad LaYeled, including art, music, creative writing, and drama, is to give young visitors the opportunity to work out and express their feelings as part of the museum experience. Young visitors are not just passive spectators but are able to express their impressions and feelings. Each child is allowed to choose between two workshops that are offered on the day of the class visit.

The workshop can be the first, middle, or last activity of a 3-hour class visit. Therefore, the creative writing workshop on Nili Goren's booklets can be an orientation activity by zooming in on one particular story that the children will see as they visit the core exhibition. The workshop can take place after visiting the core exhibition and hence will give pupils the opportunity to focus on a particular story after hearing a number of fragmented stories.

The workshop on Nili Goren's story deals with her life before, during, and after the war, focusing on the little booklets that her father sent her while she was in hiding. The structure of the 1-hour workshop includes three activities:

1. **Storytelling:** The facilitator tells the story of Nili Goren before, during, and after the war. Sharing a story assists children in many ways, for example, cognitive and affective skills increase, as does one's ability to listen and be able to follow a sequential pattern of events.¹⁸ More importantly, telling a story about the life experiences of those who are usually marginalized or not included in the grand narrative of the Holocaust, namely children survivors or survivors who did not experience ghettos or camps, helps develop visitors' empathy with a more nuanced perspective.¹⁹
2. **Interaction with the booklets:** The pupils are introduced to the booklets (via facsimile reproductions with a translation into Hebrew) that Nili received from her father, and a discussion is held on what the workshop participants understand from the letters.

Making contact with an authentic object can have a personal impact on the pupils through a sensory and emotional engagement.²⁰

3. **Creative writing activity—letter writing:** The pupils are asked to write a letter to Nili using the same techniques her father used, including colourful graphic lettering and drawings. They need to write a little about themselves and then ask Nili a question or two about her life before, during, or after the war. The letters written by the pupils are then sent back to school with their teacher, where they can mail them to Nili Goren, who then responds to the pupils' questions in a return letter.

The following two sample letters are written by young visitors on a class visit to Yad LaYeled. The letters show how the pupils are able to reflect on Lienke's situation and try to relate to her experiences in an empathetic way.

Letter 1

In the first letter, a sixth-grade student writes the following:

Shalom Nili, I am...I live in Lotem and I go to school in Misgav in 6th grade. I play soccer and the guitar and love animals, like you!! When I read your story, I immediately thought to myself how does a girl around my age get along without her parents, successfully hide her identity, and manage to concentrate on her studies!

I think your story shows a lot of courage. I am not sure that I would be able to do that. I want to ask you a few of questions:

Were you scared that the Nazis would come and discover you?

If so, did you reach a point where you didn't want to go on? And if so, how did you get through it?

Letter 2

The second letter is also from a sixth-grade student:

Lienke,

I want to let you know that I am in a school play about you!

I read the part when you get sick with dysentery and had to be hospitalized and Nazi soldiers came to your house but ran away when they saw the sign.

Your story is fascinating! I would love to hear more and get an update on the details.

I wish you much success in your life!

Though the young visitors do not get to meet Nili face to face, writing her a personal letter does give them an opportunity to ask questions and to let her know how they reacted to her story. This writing experience is different from listening to a survivor give testimony in front of an audience or in a classroom setting, or even in the museum space. The writing workshop allows all the pupils to contact Nili, and she answers everyone's questions personally. Moreover, the pupils are not inhibited about asking difficult questions, and in her letters of response to them, Nili responds to their curiosity about her fears and her coping methods.

What follows is an excerpt from one of Nili's response letters to a class that participated in the workshop and prepared letters that she received via snail mail.²¹

I received written and decorated booklets from a number of you and am very happy that you went to see the little booklets that my father sent me and that you were moved by them...

Leah wrote a nice letter. How nice that you have medals in artistic gymnastics. That is a nice sport. I have to admit that I was quite a bad athlete, so I am very impressed.

You asked: "What do you like to do today?" –

So, I like music. I listen a lot and sing in a choir...

Shilav asked: "Was it hard to be with a family that you did not know?" –

Of course, especially at the beginning. I had to learn how to get used to all the customs and behaviour, since every family acts a little different from the other. I learned not to stick out and I watched from the side until I learned what was good and what was not acceptable in the family that I lived with...

Noam asked: "How could you be without dad and mom?"

So, Noam, when there is no choice everything is possible and...I was always loved and I was taken care of in my hiding places. You asked if I knew about the war while I was hiding. Of course I knew a lot of things, but not everything. In other words, I knew that if I was caught and they know who I was, then either they would kill me and the people hiding me immediately on the spot – or they would send me to a terrible place far away. I didn't know exactly what happens there – that was unclear but very bad.

The ability for a child survivor like Nili to communicate with a group of primary school-aged children is a crucial stage in the workshop activity. An important aspect of the final stage of the workshop is that the pupils receive Nili's letter outside of the museum space. The young visitors

receive her response to their questions at school, and the facilitator is now their teacher. The learning process is now extended to the classroom, allowing pupils to further process their museum visit as well as their understanding of Nili's personal story. Furthermore, through her letters, Nili can provide more nuanced details of her story that may not have emerged in the video testimony or in the booklets. This is particularly true concerning Nili's life after the war.

CONCLUSION

Holocaust museum educators in the twenty-first century have come to realise that museums are not only spaces for creating collective and personal memory; they are educational institutions as well. The challenge is to develop exhibitions and educational activities that stimulate emotional and cognitive experiences, while trying not to be spectacular, traumatic, or oversimplified. Because educational institutions want to provide young visitors with a meaningful learning experience, it is important to evaluate all components of the process in the museum space.²²

In a 2015 survey,²³ museum educators asked teachers ($n = 32$) and students from grades 5 to 8 ($n = 1154$) to rate on a scale of 1–5 various aspects of their museum visit that included a tour of the core exhibition “The Jewish Child during the Holocaust” and a workshop activity. Though the survey was geared toward examining the guided tour of the core exhibition, some information appears at the beginning concerning the students' feelings about their workshop activity. As a result of this survey, the educational staff at Yad LaYeled is preparing a new and more detailed survey of the workshop activities at the museum.

When asked to rate the tour of Yad LaYeled's core exhibition, teachers rated very highly their students' learning about how children during the Holocaust dealt with the reality of the Holocaust (4.5), acquired new knowledge about the lives of children during the Holocaust (4.5), and how their students played an active role in the discussions with their guides (4.2). The teachers also rated the workshop activity very highly for giving students the ability to express their experience learning about Jewish children during the Holocaust (4.3) and for allowing the students to express themselves (4.2). The students also highly rated their museum experience. When asked if they had learned about the life of Jewish children during the war, the average rate was 4.2. The average rating of the activities at the museum and their contribution to the students' discovering new information

about Jewish children during the war and their fate was 4.0. In the open-question section of the survey, 57 percent of the students thought the workshop was interesting and educational and 50 percent described the workshop as “enjoyable” or “fun.”

The museum space and the workshop at Yad LaYeled are a part of a long and continuous practice of remembrance that includes both collective and personal memory. As the survey shows, both teachers and students believed that the core exhibition, as well as the workshop activities, added to their understanding of the Holocaust, specifically about the lives of Jewish children during the Holocaust.

On one level, this is a particular example in a particular museum. But there are universal principles and practices (as detailed earlier) that can provide the guidelines for teaching the Holocaust at the primary level, both in the museum space and in the classroom. Examining the placement of the personal testimony of Nili Goren in the core exhibition and the workshop that complements her story is one example of how Yad LaYeled presents Holocaust child survivors and their personal story to young visitors—not through simulating the trauma or by asking the young visitors to identify with the suffering of the children who lived during the Holocaust, but by examining the survivors’ personal experiences to which children of today can relate and with which they can empathize.

Discovering the personal story of a survivor like Nili Goren before, during, and after the Holocaust can all be part of a process in which young students begin to understand that the survivors were real people who had normal lives just like them and how the Holocaust changed their destiny and that of European Jewry. Furthermore, by being introduced to the booklets Nili received from her father, preparing letters with direct questions to Nili, and then receiving her answers, the students have an opportunity to make a personal connection, as well as expand, in a more nuanced way, their knowledge about the lives of Jewish children who lived in Europe during the Holocaust.

With the understanding that this type of correspondence between the museum’s young visitors and Holocaust survivors like Nili Goren will be impossible in the near future, the Yad LaYeled educational staff is looking for new ways to provide affective experiences to the museum’s young visitors. One direction, which has actually been a part of the museum programme since its founding, is the incorporation of short plays that deal with the lives of child survivors whose testimonies are found in the core exhibition.²⁴ The next few years will be very challenging in this respect, and educators at

Holocaust museums will have to continue to find activities that provide a meaningful experience without compromising authenticity.

NOTES

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2. See Dominik LaCapra, *Writing trauma, writing history* (Baltimore, 2001), and Hayden White, 'The modernist event in V.C. Sobchack (ed.), *The persistence of history: Cinema, television and the modern event* (New York and London, 1996), pp. 17–38.
3. Jennifer Hansen-Glucklich, *Holocaust memory reframed: Museums and the challenges of representation* (Rutgers University, 2014), (pp. 19–20).
4. Silke Arnold-de Simine, *Mediating memory in the museum: Trauma, empathy, nostalgia* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 11.
5. Kit Messham-Muir, 'Dark visitations: The possibilities and problems of experience and memory in Holocaust museums'. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Art*, 5(1) (2004), 97–112.
6. For more on-line information about 'Remember the Children: Daniel's Story': <https://www.ushmm.org/information/exhibitions/museum-exhibitions/remember-the-children-daniels-story>
7. For more online information about 'The Journey' exhibition: <https://www.nationalholocaustcentre.net/journey-exhibition>
8. This chapter deals specifically with Yad LaYeled's exhibition 'The Jewish child during the Holocaust'. For more online information about the museum and the exhibition: <http://www.gfh.org.il/eng/?CategoryID=362>
9. Paul Salmons, 'Moral dilemmas: History, teaching and the Holocaust'. *Teaching History* 104 (2001), pp. 34–41.
10. Dan Porat, 'From scandal to the Holocaust in Israel education'. *Journal of Contemporary History* 39 (2004), pp. 619–636.
11. The Holocaust and Heroism Remembrance Day in Israel was established by law in Israel 1953 and is recognized on the Hebrew date 27 of Nissan (April/May). The first commemoration day was on April 19, 1949, on the founding day of the Ghetto Fighters' Kibbutz and Museum in recognition of the sixth anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising during the Holocaust. Because the uprising started on the first day of Passover, the date of the memorial day was moved forward 8 days.
12. The Ministry of Education in Israel created a new Holocaust curriculum in Hebrew for K-12 called 'In the Paths of Memory' ('B'shvilai Hazikaron') in conjunction with Holocaust institutions in Israel, including the Ghetto Fighters' House: (<http://cms.education.gov.il/EducationCMS/UNITS/Moe/Shoa/hpnew.htm>).

13. Batya Brutin, 'Hora'at HaShoah B'beit sefer yisodi b'Israel: Sugiot v'Etgarim' in Nitza Davidowitz & Dan Suan (eds.), *Zikron HaShoah: Questions and challenges* (Ariel, 2011), p. 298.
14. Julia Resnik, "Sites of memory' of the Holocaust: Shaping national memory in the education system in Israel'. *Nations and Nationalism* 9(2) (2003), 297–317. There are two major Holocaust museums in Israel, Yad Vashem, which is the national museum, and the Ghetto Fighters' House Museum on Kibbutz Lohamei Haghetat. There are also two smaller institutions with exhibitions, Massuah Institute for Holocaust Studies, located on Kibbutz Tel Yitzhak, and Yad Mordechai Museum, on Kibbutz Yad Mordechai.
15. To read more about the development of Yad LaYeled, see Nadav Heidecker, 'Yad LaYeled at the Ghetto Fighters' House: A museum about children in the Holocaust or a museum for children about the Holocaust?' *Dapim: Studies on the Holocaust*, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23256249.2016.1240845> or go to the museum's website: <http://www.gfh.org.il/eng/?CategoryID=362>
16. Susan Rubin Suleiman, 'The 1.5 generation: Thinking about child survivors and the Holocaust'. *American Imago* 59(3) (2002), p. 291.
17. All of the booklets that Lienke received from her father were on loan at the Yad LaYeled museum, at which time they were translated into Hebrew and professional facsimiles were created for the purpose of the workshop created on the basis of Nili Goren's story of hiding during the Holocaust. The translation of the Hebrew into English is by the author [M.S].
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21. All documentation of letters from students and from Nili Goren is located in the Yad LaYeled museum.
22. John H. Falk and Lynn D. Dierking, *The museum experience revisited* (Left Coast Press, 2013), p. 24.
23. This is a nonpublished survey by Tali Chipalsky from 2015. The questionnaires (in Hebrew) and all the survey results are available at Yad LaYeled.
24. More information on theater programs at Yad LaYeled can be found on the museum's website: <http://gfh.org.il/eng/?CategoryID=96&ArticleID=701>



Teachers' Use of Montreal Holocaust Museum's Pedagogical Material Aiming at Primary School Students' Engagement Through Human Stories

Cornélia Strickler and Sabrina Moisan

INTRODUCTION

The Holocaust is not only part of world history but also of Canadian history and cultural norms. Yet teaching the Holocaust is not mandatory in high schools and totally absent from primary school programmes in Quebec. Despite this, many primary school teachers choose to teach this difficult subject every year to their oldest students, from 10 to 12 years old. These teachers are generalists, and the history of the Holocaust is not addressed in their history training. Therefore, their familiarity with the subject and the reasons motivating them to teach it vary greatly.

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C. W. Szejnmann et al. (eds.), *Holocaust Education in Primary Schools in the Twenty-First Century*, The Holocaust and its Contexts, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-73099-8_11

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Holocaust education is not easy work.¹ As a difficult and sensitive subject, the Holocaust can be hard to imagine. What does six million victims mean? Teaching about the Holocaust means addressing difficult feelings and issues such as hatred, murder and genocide.² As a complex historical period, it is not easily simplified to suit elementary school pupils (10–12 year old).

To support these teachers, the Montreal Holocaust Museum (MHM) developed diversified educational materials. Resources available online or on loan are offered free of charge and are widely used. However, how they are used is little known, preventing us from understanding the real impact of these resources, which leads us to formulate the following question: Why and how do elementary teachers use educational resources offered by the MHM?

To answer this question, we will first examine the Canadian context and its links with the history of the Holocaust and present the features of the Quebec Education Program (Government of Quebec) and the MHM. Secondly, we will present the museum's pedagogical approach and its educational programmes for elementary schools and their use by teachers. Finally, we will review the experience of teachers who use the museum's pedagogical materials to develop proposals and guidelines for the future.

CONTEXT

The Holocaust in Canadian History

Despite the subject's absence in textbooks,³ the links between Canadian history and the Holocaust are multiple and sometimes ambiguous in nature. For example, despite the fact that the prime minister of Canada at the time, William Lyon Mackenzie King, wrote in his diary that he felt sorry for the Jews, he did nothing to help the refugees between 1930 and 1945. He feared that welcoming Jewish refugees would scandalize a large part of the population, particularly in Quebec, and that this would jeopardize the country's unity.⁴ Canada entered the war against Nazi Germany in September 1939 and participated in the liberation of the Netherlands and the transit camp of Westerbork. However, between 1940 and 1943, 2300 German and Austrian Jewish refugees were sent as prisoners of the British Empire and confined in internment camps in Canada. Canada and the United Kingdom considered them 'enemy aliens', possible spies in the

service of the enemy. Part of the Canadian population and local Jewish organisations nevertheless became involved in trying to release them. Their attempts were relatively successful.

Prior to the war, Canada had already taken a position on the question of the victims of Nazi antisemitic policies. Indeed, Canada had closed its doors to Jewish refugees, in a context of antisemitism but also of economic crisis. Canada finally opened its doors to war refugees in 1947, allowing the immigration of tens of thousands of Jews in the following years. These survivors have made Canada their adoptive country and played an important role in the adoption of the law against hate propaganda. They have also actively participated in Holocaust education and commemoration, and they established the MHM.

The Montreal Holocaust Museum

The MHM was founded in 1976 by Holocaust survivors and young members of Montreal's Jewish community. In 1979, the MHM opened its doors to the public. It was amongst the first historical museums on the subject in North America. It remains the only recognised Holocaust museum in Canada. Its mandate is 'to educate people of all ages and backgrounds about the Holocaust while sensitizing the public to the universal perils of antisemitism, racism, hate and indifference. Through its museum, commemorative programs and educational initiatives, the Museum is committed to promoting respect for diversity and the sanctity of all human life.'⁵

Since its inception, the museum has reached out to Quebec schools and offered education and sensitisation through survivor testimony, educational materials, a museum and eventually recorded survivor testimony and the use of digital technology. The museum's educational work frames the central role of the organisation. The richness of the collection enables the museum to base much of its educational work on personal stories through the use of primary sources and testimonies.

The Museum's Collection

The collection is composed of more than 10,000 artefacts and documents, mostly from Holocaust survivors who immigrated to Canada and more particularly to Montreal. These artefacts document Jewish life in Europe before, during and after the Holocaust, but also the immigration of

survivors to Canada and their role in Canadian society. The collection includes personal belongings, official documents and Nazi artefacts. Finally, it also includes more than 700 videotaped testimonies recorded from the early 1980s through to the present day across Canada. These are testimonies of Holocaust survivors of various origins, some Jews who managed to immigrate before the war but also veterans, rescuers and even a member of the Hitler Youth, highlighting a variety of experiences.⁶

Holocaust Education in Quebec School System

Education in Canada is under provincial jurisdiction. In Quebec, as well as in other provinces of Canada, teaching and learning about the Holocaust is not state-mandated. The history of the Holocaust is completely absent from the primary school history programme.

However, the Quebec Education Program, developed from a socio-constructivist perspective, gives more flexibility to teachers in the choice of subjects to teach and emphasises the development of student competencies.

Many aspects of the Québec Education Program, particularly those related to the development of competencies and the mastery of complex knowledge, call for practices that are based on the constructivist approach to learning. This approach sees learning as a process and the student as the principal agent in that process. The situations that are seen as most conducive to learning are those that present a real challenge to students by obliging them to re-examine their learnings and personal representations.⁷

Teaching about the Holocaust can help develop skills in various disciplines in primary school, mainly through ethics and religious culture, geography, history and citizenship education and language courses (Table 1).

The Holocaust can also be taught for the purpose of developing cross-curricular competencies such as exercising critical judgement and communicating appropriately.

Despite its absence in school programmes, the data collected by the museum shows that some teachers teach the Holocaust and choose to do so in the context of these courses (Table 1). It goes without saying that the objectives, the time allowed for study and the approach to the issue vary greatly depending on the school subject. This large variation complicates the work of the MHM in its effort to support Holocaust education.

Table 1 Subject-specific competencies in Québec Education Program

History, geography and citizenship education (social sciences)	Cycles two and three (Grades 3–6): To perceive the organisation of a society in its territory To interpret change in a society and its territory To be open to the diversity of societies and their territories
Ethics and religious culture programme	To reflect on ethical questions To demonstrate an understanding of the phenomenon of religion To engage in dialogue
Français, langue d'enseignement	To read various texts To write and produce texts To interact orally
English language arts	To read and listen to literary, popular and information-based texts To write self-expressive, narrative and information-based texts To represent one's creativity To use information and communications technologies To develop one's personal identity To work with others
Anglais, langue seconde (English, second language)	To interact in English To reinvest understanding of texts To write and produce texts
Français, langue seconde (Programme de base)	To interact in French, to become familiar with the Francophone world To write and produce texts
Français, langue seconde (Immersion)	To interact in French in discovering the Francophone world through texts and disciplines To write and produce texts

This mandate is all the more necessary, since no teaching materials or training is provided by the Ministry of Education. Similarly, research on Holocaust education shows that this issue is complex and difficult to teach, and many educational practices can be problematic because they tend to sanctify, trivialise, shock or oversimplify.⁸ Bossy proposes a list of some bad practices⁹:

- Use of the pedagogy of the extreme (shocking images);
- Judgemental approach;
- Presentation of the Holocaust as the antithesis of our current reality, morally and politically;
- Repeating slogans (never again);
- Emphasising duty to remember rather than working on memory and history.

The MHM supports teacher professional development by offering an in-depth historical exploration that puts particular focus on the historical context, the many causes leading to the genocide of the Jews and the various actors involved.¹⁰

MHM PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH AND MATERIAL FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The MHM addresses the need to produce quality teaching materials and to promote the teaching of the Holocaust in educational institutions and with teachers. Its pedagogical tools and educational events are designed to develop critical thinking and historical methodology, citizen reflection and human rights education, pluralism, tolerance and democracy. All the tools meet the standards of the Quebec Education Program.

For elementary school pupils, the MHM promotes learning Holocaust history through the study of personal stories from archival documents and testimonies from the collection.

By studying these stories, students approach this complex and violent history in a measured manner in which both their sensitivity and cognitive skills are respected. These stories personalise the history of the Holocaust by transcending the statistics and understanding the impact on individual lives. They allow students to understand history-related concepts that may appear abstract to them.¹¹ Teachers coming to the museum and meeting survivors often say that getting to know a person who has experienced the Holocaust arouses children's curiosity and makes them want to learn more about these events in general and why a particular child became a victim of Nazi persecution.

Life stories allow students to more easily identify with people from the past and to better understand the meaning of historical events. However, in an educational perspective and to make sure that the students not only identify but also understand and analyse events from the past critically, this identification must be accompanied by a distancing process.¹² This process consists in working on the historical context and values of the time. It will at the same time help address pupils' presentist tendencies by promoting the development of historical empathy as defined by Endacott and Brooks: *'the process of students' cognitive and affective engagement with historical figures to better understand and contextualize their lived experiences, decisions, or actions'*.¹³

By exploring the lives of people with different backgrounds, students also understand the complexity and diversity of experiences during the Holocaust: children who were killed, children who survived, young adults in the camps, stories from the ghetto, and resistance. The MHM emphasises examples of individual actions that helped save lives. These examples support the empowerment of students, who understand that individuals can have the choice to act when witnessing violence or injustice.

Children discover the lives of these people by exploring primary and secondary sources because, as Amy Von Heyking wrote:

Children must use a range of primary sources of evidence and a variety of secondary accounts – both nonfiction and fiction – in order to gain the depth of knowledge required, confront problems of interpretation that must be solved, and begin to appreciate ways of thinking unlike their own – skills all essential to historical thinking.¹⁴

The MHM proposes a complete educational package for grade six pupils (10–12 years old) that starts with the story of a child victim, continues with a guided tour of the museum and testimony from a Holocaust survivor and ends with an activity that focuses on emotional resistance, action and open-mindedness.

Methodology

The data collected for this article come from one study conducted by the MHM followed by in-depth interviews:

During the 2014/2015 school year, a survey was conducted amongst teachers of all levels and disciplines who visited the museum's permanent exhibition with their class or listened to a survivor testimony at the museum. Fifty-eight primary teachers completed a questionnaire consisting of nine questions, which aimed to assess their satisfaction and how they prepared their students for the tour. The questionnaire was distributed to teachers in a systematic way, on their arrival at the museum and completed at the end of the visit.

At the same time, another questionnaire composed of 12 questions was distributed to 22 primary school teachers who listened to a survivor with their group. The objectives were to understand the expectations of

teachers, see how they prepared their students and determine their level of satisfaction with their experience. The last three questions focused on the use of video clips as an alternative to live testimony.

Following this survey, six interviews were conducted by telephone with primary school teachers in 2015 to obtain a deeper understanding of the use of materials to prepare students for the tour.

In the spring of 2016, four more interviews were conducted with primary school teachers in order to obtain a better understanding of how they teach about the Holocaust. The interviews were semi-structured and included questions on the class profile, preparation (duration, content, pedagogical materials from the museum or other resources), student reactions and feedback on the museum's pedagogical offerings. Two of the interviews were followed by an observation of the group during the permanent exhibit tour.

For this article, we have focused on answers to the questions that help us better understand how teachers use educational resources developed by the museum. Similarly, the individual interviews conducted allow us to obtain a more detailed understanding of the use of the resources and of teachers' motivations in choosing to teach the Holocaust.

In this chapter, we will explore teacher feedback in relation to the Hana's Suitcase educational project, the guided tour, the live testimony of a Holocaust survivor and the Heart from Auschwitz activity, which are the museum's resources used by primary school teachers.

Hana's Suitcase

The Hana's Suitcase educational project is based on Karen Levine's eponymous book. It relates the story of young Hana Brady, who was murdered in Auschwitz, as was discovered by the students and director of the Tokyo Holocaust Education Resource Museum. The project was created by the MHM as a tool to initiate students in the study of key facts about the Holocaust from the perspective of the persecution of the Jews and the impact on the lives of the Brady family; it also encourages students to reflect on the consequences of discrimination in the past and in contemporary society.

The activities proposed stimulate students to make the connection between Hana's story and their own world and, hence, develop their abilities to connect the past to the present and influence their understanding and attitudes about living with other cultures.

This resource follows the guidelines put forward by the *Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement Supérieur* (Ministry of Education and Higher Education), complying with themes of citizenship and community life in the broad areas of learning. This module reflects the aim of the Ministry of Education to ensure that 'students take part in the democratic life of the classroom or the school and develop a spirit of openness to the world and respect for diversity'.

Primary school teachers seem to be interested in this resource: downloads increased by 47 per cent in the last 2 years. There has been a 51 per cent increase in the number of students using Hana's Suitcase borrowed by teachers. If the download numbers are impressive, they cannot convey information on how teachers use the project or whether they are indeed using it at all. To better understand these issues, we interviewed several teachers over the last few years.

Two of the teachers surveyed noticed that the old suitcase drew their students' attention and piqued their curiosity. The suitcase, a reproduction of Hana's, is a physical object, and tangible items are essential to the teaching of history to 10- to 12-year-old students. The activity invites students to immerse themselves in the story of this girl, who was the same age as they are now. It is hoped that they will be able to easily identify with Hana and want, first, to find out more about her, and then to learn about the Holocaust and why Hana's life was disrupted and eventually brutally ended.

The first observation that can be made about the use of the materials provided by the MHM is that all teachers surveyed add other resources or another approach angle to the study of Hana's Suitcase. For instance, one teacher chooses to first introduce the Jews and Judaism before talking about the Holocaust. He wants to portray the Jews as a people like any other and not simply as victims and uses his own materials to do so.

Another teacher complements the Hana's Suitcase kit with a UNICEF activity that enables children to learn about their rights, differentiating them from their needs and wants. In addition, the pupils meet Mr Vanderheyden to discover the impact of war on a non-Jewish child born in the Netherlands whose house was requisitioned by the Germans. Vanderheyden recounts his childhood experience and how the brief stay of an Austrian girl with his family in 1948 allowed him to make peace with 'the enemy'. He also shares the views of the Austrian child and her experience during the war. He stresses the importance of reconciliation and

positive actions of ordinary people, such as those of his mother and other Dutch families who welcomed 40,000 German and Austrian children into their homes after the war.

By the end of the session, students will have studied the life of a Jewish child, a child living under occupation and a ‘child of the enemy’ (term from Vanderheyden). They will have understood the importance of small positive actions and children’s rights through time.

Finally, almost 14 per cent of primary school teachers who visit the MHM use the Hana’s Suitcase project as preparation for a museum visit. The teachers surveyed combine activities of Hana’s Suitcase kit with others they have developed, or they use only some of the activities. Unfortunately, we have no data on the activities of the project that are most used. Further investigation would be useful in this regard and might be undertaken in the years to come.

Guided Tour

After the completion of the Hana’s Suitcase programme, teachers are encouraged to bring their students to a guided tour of the museum. The permanent exhibition enables students to discover life before, during and after the Holocaust.

Throughout the exhibition, artefacts, photographs and video testimonies reveal the personal destinies of victims and survivors and the diversity of their experiences during the Holocaust. They give a personal dimension to persecution but also to hope, resistance and the struggle for human dignity. The role of Canada is elucidated at different steps of the exhibition. The exhibit is designed to help students understand the relevance of the Holocaust to Canadians.

The MHM recommends visiting the permanent exhibition only from grade six (11–12 years old) onwards. All elementary school groups that come to the museum follow a guided tour, which promotes new insight into what has been learned in class. It can be easily integrated into the ethics and religious culture, history and citizenship education and language courses.

During the 2014/2015 year, 1441 primary school students visited the permanent exhibit of the museum.

According to the 2014/2015 survey, 98 per cent of the teachers indicated the guided tour met their expectations. Unfortunately, teachers were not asked to define their expectations. Ninety-eight per cent of the

respondents asserted that the visit met curricular requirements and were likely to bring students back to the museum.

The museum guides observed that grade six classes were usually the most participatory groups and have often been well prepared for their visit because teachers are perhaps more concerned that they will be shocked by the subject matter. They always show great interest in artefacts and testimonies.

Out of the four teachers surveyed in 2016, three visit the museum with their students every year. The fourth does not for budgetary reasons. The three that are regular visitors prepare their students, one with the Hana's Suitcase kit, another with the Heart from Auschwitz activity and the third with the book of Hana's Suitcase and the movie *The Book Thief*.

Two of the three teachers explain that their students' interest in the subject is one of the main reasons for coming to the museum. For one, it is the fact that the Holocaust and World War II are high-profile events that nurture students' curiosity and make them ask lots of questions. For another, it is the activity—the Heart from Auschwitz—that makes them want to know more about the Holocaust and especially to see the real artefact (see the section on the heart). The third teacher did not explain why she teaches the Holocaust.

During both visits observed, students showed a good understanding of the subject considering their age. Not only did they correctly answer the majority of the guide's questions, but they also asked relevant questions such as: Did everyone have to fight the Jews? Why did Croatian Jews wear a yellow circle instead of a yellow star? Is Poland still occupied today?

Immediately following a museum visit, about half of primary school groups meet a survivor and listen to his or her testimony.

Testimony

Students meet a Holocaust survivor who shares his or her story with them and answers their questions in a session that lasts about an hour. While visiting the permanent exhibition serves as a general introduction to the history of the Holocaust, the testimony is intended to allow students to meet a witness of this historical event and to understand the impact that it had on him/her.

These witnesses to history personalize the numbers of those murdered and the losses sustained by those who survived. They speak of families and communities. History becomes part of the present. The consequences of

antisemitism are tangible and human. It puts students in personal contact with an incomprehensible part of history.

During the 2014/2015 school year, 810 elementary school students heard a Holocaust survivor testimony. During the survey conducted in the same year, to the question: *When you book a testimony, what are you looking for?* 81 per cent of primary school teachers answered: *meeting with someone who directly experienced the Holocaust*, 81 per cent *emotional impact*, and 48 per cent *historical content*. This corresponds to the objectives defined by the museum for testimonies that are to put a human face on facts, dates and numbers and help students understand that history is made and experienced by individuals and has an impact on their lives. According to the same study, 95 per cent of respondents believe that the presentation was appropriate for the age of children and has met their expectations.

One hundred per cent of teachers reported that their students were alert during the testimony, which shows the interest of students in these meetings, as illustrated by the testimony of a teacher interviewed in 2011:

My students' responses have been outstanding. They have remarked that this was indeed the best part of our trip. The survivors were personal, engaging and relevant. My students and myself thoroughly enjoyed hearing about the Holocaust from a first-person perspective, a witness, because it made our studies real. My students have suggested that now when they think of the Holocaust they will always see the survivor's face present and therefore it is more real for them... .

To conclude their lesson on the Holocaust, teachers are encouraged to use the Heart from Auschwitz activity after their visit to the museum.

The Heart from Auschwitz

The Heart from Auschwitz activity is intended to conclude the study of the Holocaust in a soothing manner. This activity was designed to allow students to study the Holocaust in the classroom adopting a reflective approach centred on the themes of living in society in harmony and engaging in dialogue, competencies that are part of the school programme.

The activity draws students' attention to an artefact on display in the MHM. This special object is a symbol of spiritual resistance (against dehumanisation) created by a group of Jewish female prisoners at the Auschwitz

concentration camp. Risking their own lives despite the prohibitions imposed by the Nazis, who sought, by all possible means, to deny their humanity, these women succeeded in creating an origami-like heart-shaped birthday booklet for one of their friends. This reflective and artistic project enables students to draw on a positive element in their study of the Holocaust.

The project leads the students to the action phase: They are asked to carry on the message of empathy that the Heart from Auschwitz conveys. Students construct a heart, write their messages in it and, if they so decide, offer it to the Holocaust survivor whose testimony they heard or to any other individual.

Every year, a dozen schools borrow the activity, with many more downloading the digital tool. The last 2 years have seen a 41 per cent increase in schools downloading the digital tool, from 1771 downloads in 2013 to 2492 in 2015.

One of the teachers interviewed in 2016 spoke about her positive experience with students in her Ethics and Religious Cultures class. They loved the documentary and the story so much that they asked their teacher to visit the museum to see the real heart and to learn more about the Holocaust. They also decided to make a heart for one girl in the school who had just lost her father in a tragic accident. At the time they did the activity, Brussels was under attack. Three students, one from Belgium, one from Poland and a Muslim student from Egypt, decided to make a heart together and to write the messages in their mother tongue. They offered it to a teacher on sick leave. These students have clearly demonstrated emotional empathy, went further and gave meaning to their lesson on the Holocaust.

The survey conducted with teachers in the last 2 years allows us to better understand how the history of the Holocaust is taught by some and to explore new avenues for the future.

ASSESSMENT AND FUTURE AVENUES

Assessment

Teachers who use the museum's resources are satisfied with them and appreciate the fact that they support their teaching of the Holocaust. However, to our knowledge, no teacher follows all the activities or programmes mentioned. The main reason given is the lack of time. Indeed,

the study of Hana's Suitcase requires at least 2 weeks to allow time for the children to read the book and do all the activities, the guided tour and testimony last 3 hours in addition to travel time, and finally, it takes 4 to 5 hours to complete the Heart from Auschwitz activity. Other reasons are fear of fatigue on the part of students and the desire to explore other topics with them.

Three out of six primary school teachers interviewed in 2014/2015 use resources developed by the museum to prepare their students to visit the permanent exhibit. Others use alternative materials or do no preparatory work.

A majority of teachers, whether or not they use the museum's resources, explore other avenues and materials to develop links with the rest of the curriculum, to go further or to adapt to the reality of their class. For instance, one teacher might talk about the residential schools and the aboriginal communities after her lesson on the Holocaust, while others might address the situation in Quebec after the war or the International Convention on Children's Rights.

Although we now have a clearer picture of how the Holocaust is taught, we do not know how those teachers who were not interviewed approach the subject or the total number of those teaching it.

Future Avenues

The museum offers two turnkey educational tools for elementary students, in addition to the museum visit and testimony. It also offers, through donors, scholarships for the seminar in Yad Vashem, the Belfer conference at the USHMM and teacher training activities and workshops.

Despite the fact that these tools and seminars are popular, they do not reach all teachers, and the museum is unable to assess how the tools are used in class by most teachers. However, information gathered during interviews with primary school teachers and meetings of the Education Committee (composed of nine members, all teachers or retired teachers) show that there are new avenues that the museum could explore.

Our results, although exploratory, show that teachers tend to adapt resources based on their current needs and their goals. They will choose activities *à la carte* rather than follow a whole programme. This favoured approach illustrates the need for the museum to propose more general and standalone activities. Indeed, to ensure that teachers develop good practices, the museum must provide versatile content:

- Which makes it possible to understand the historical context: maps (including French ones), annotated bibliography and filmography, timelines, and so forth;
- Accompanied by guidelines on how to teach the Holocaust (we suggest the guide by Moisan, Hirsch and Strickler¹⁵ and IHRA's¹⁶);
- Which provide primary source examples accompanied by analytical tools:
 - excerpts of videotaped survivor testimonies with an analysis sheet and adaptable activities;
 - artefacts, documents and photographs from the collection along with analysis sheets.

The museum has an ideal opportunity in the coming months to try out these new avenues, thanks to the development of many projects, including a new version of the museum's website, virtual exhibits and a project highlighting Canadian testimonies of Holocaust survivors. The work will be done in partnership with the museum's Education Committee, teachers and university partners.

CONCLUSION

The history of the Holocaust is not part of the primary school curriculum; hence, there are neither materials nor training developed by the Ministry of Education for teachers. However, many teachers consider it very important to teach this historical event. To ensure the quality of Holocaust education, teachers need support, which they will find at the Montreal Holocaust Museum. But this is not a one-directional relationship. The development of a real partnership between the museum and teachers is necessary because teachers' participation is essential to the development of tools and training that will be relevant to them.

The museum believes in the vital importance of using personal stories to develop historical knowledge and historical empathy in primary school classes. For if historical empathy is understanding someone from the past and the '*past is a foreign country*',¹⁷ it opens students to other ways of thinking and other perspectives. It thus helps develop acceptance and appreciation of diversity as well as social harmony today, another important aspect of the museum's mission and of the Quebec Education Program.

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‘Hide and Seek: Stories of Survival’: Solving the Problem of the Pencil

Lisa Phillips

INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with an anecdote told to me by a colleague, who was a teaching assistant in a class of 8-year-olds in a Jewish day school in Melbourne, Australia:

It was *Yom Hashoah*, Holocaust Memorial Day, and the teachers had decided to create a programme based on the story of Anne Frank.¹

The children were told the story and learned, as part of the story, that Anne, who wrote with a fountain pen, dipped the nib of the pen in ink to write her diary. They were also told that she did not have a pencil case full of stationery. After listening to the story the pupils were invited to ask questions.

The first child put her hand up and asked, “Did Anne have a pencil?”

The teacher responded, “Possibly.”

Then all the hands went up.

The next question, “Did Anne have an eraser?”

The teacher responded, “Quite possibly.”

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C. W. Szejnmann et al. (eds.), *Holocaust Education in Primary Schools in the Twenty-First Century*, The Holocaust and its Contexts, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-73099-8_12

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What did Anne do when her pencil broke? Did she have a pencil sharpener? And so on, and so on.....

Finally the teacher said, “Students, there are so many hands up. That is enough questions about the pencil. If you have a question about the pencil, please put your hands down so that I can answer all the other questions.”

At that point every child who had raised a hand put their hands down.

As this anecdote highlights, the children were unable to connect to the Holocaust and the Anne Frank story except for her writing equipment. The Anne Frank story was beyond their comprehension. This is the same issue faced by the Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC) education team when trying to convey meaningful messages to primary-aged students. We also wanted to address the following questions:

- How do we create an entry point into the Holocaust with younger students? Is it possible and desirable to educate primary-aged students about this topic?
- Is it possible to connect young students with their peers from the past in a meaningful way, without oversimplifying the Holocaust and traumatising students?
- How do we plant the seed in the minds of young students about lessons of the Holocaust, to contribute to the creation of a tolerant society, a society devoid of bigotry, prejudice and discrimination, and one in which they will never be bystanders?
- Could we, in a museum environment, move younger students ‘beyond the pencil’ and create a ‘transformational’ learning experience?

These questions became our challenge when creating an age-appropriate programme for the primary years.

The JHC opened in Melbourne in 1984, becoming Australia’s first community Holocaust museum dedicated to memorialisation, education and remembrance.² From its early days, the JHC has grown to become a significant Holocaust-focused institution. The education branch has developed into a senior secondary school programme that annually educates 22,000 students from over 730 schools. These students range in age from 14 to 18 years, study a range of topics including English, history, ethics, religion and psychology. A key feature of the education programme is survivor testimony, and although many survivors are now elderly, a strong contingent of survivors continues to speak weekly.³ These personal

stories enable students to engage with history and events that would otherwise be difficult to comprehend. They illustrate the human tragedy behind the facts and statistics, that the Holocaust happened to everyday people, who after the genocide made Melbourne their home. In 2014, we began examining ways to reach out to a larger range of ages as a result of enquiries and interest from younger students, including those in the primary years.

WHEN SHOULD THE HOLOCAUST BE INTRODUCED?

The question of when children should start learning about the Holocaust has been long debated among Holocaust educators. Lionel Kochan argues against the introduction of the Holocaust in the primary years, because of its inherent horror,⁴ while Totten recommends that it is inappropriate as the subject matter is far too complex for students 9 years old and younger.⁵ Totten contends that to teach the Holocaust in a simplified way to a younger audience does not do justice to the complexity of the subject matter and could possibly lead to misconceptions.⁶ Also suggesting caution, Simone Schweber's empirical study has led her to advocate that it is not appropriate to introduce the Holocaust to Year 3 and below.⁷ On the other hand, Paula Cowan and Henry Maitles, from their study on the introduction of Holocaust Memorial Day, suggest that there is a place to teach the Holocaust to upper primary students.⁸ These conflicting arguments as to the appropriate level at which to introduce the topic of the Holocaust and the questions of whether we are educating or traumatising younger students was of deep concern to the JHC development team.⁹ Daniel Spock writes: 'Children powerfully identify with the distress of other children just as they also identify with seeing the exultations of other children's victories and play.'¹⁰ The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), when discussing age appropriateness, claims, 'While elementary age students are able to empathize with individual accounts, they often have difficulty placing them in a larger historical context.'¹¹

This view is confirmed by the educators at Yad Vashem, who recommend a 'spiral approach' starting with the individual, family and community and increasing the historical knowledge as the students get older, 'relying on a safe but principled accumulation of knowledge about the Holocaust itself'.¹² Cognisant of these views and arguments, the JHC

development team decided the target audience for the ‘Hide and Seek’ programme would be students between the ages of 11 and 13 years. Consequently, the principles of how to introduce the Holocaust to this age group needed to be addressed, specifically, the selection of age-appropriate content and the design of activities that would, on the one hand, not traumatise but, on the other, not simplify the Holocaust to this younger audience.¹³

The Australian Curriculum

Within the Australian context, Holocaust education has traditionally been allocated to the senior years as part of twentieth-century history, the teaching of Holocaust texts in English or ethics in religious education. The time spent and coverage have been solely dependent on the initiative and interest of individual teachers. Attempts were made starting in 2008 to create a national curriculum in Australia, where the Holocaust was mandated for all Year 10 students (15 years old). In addition, history was introduced in the primary years as a stand-alone subject. This initiative was short-lived. As a result of changes in the federal government, Australia in 2016 has reverted back to state-controlled curriculum. This has led to each state in Australia doing something slightly different with Holocaust education. In Victoria, location of the JHC, Holocaust education is specifically allocated as an optional component at Year 10 (15 years old).¹⁴ As there is no mandated curriculum for teaching the Holocaust in the primary years, the JHC development team decided that the civics and citizenship and English curricula were relevant vehicles for primary schools to visit the JHC. According to Nina Burridge et al., ‘The youngest of school students have well developed albeit perhaps self-centred concepts of fairness.’¹⁵ These concepts of fairness are developed in the Victorian curriculum strand of ‘ethical capability’, whereby students at the end of their primary schooling must have achieved the following stated achievement standards:

Evaluate the meaning of ethical concepts and analyse their value, identifying areas of contestability. They explain different ways to respond to ethical problems and identify issues related to these.

Students identify different ethical issues associated with a particular problem. They identify the basis of a range of ethical principles and explain the role and significance of conscience and reasoning in ethical decision-making.¹⁶

The capability strands within the Victorian curriculum provided strong connections to pursue this further. Anecdotally, younger visitors to the museum are more open and able to question, without the self-consciousness often seen in older students. The USHMM's contention that 'elementary school can be an ideal place to begin discussing the value of diversity and the danger of bias and prejudice'¹⁷ resonated in particular as the impact of learning about hatred and prejudice could help develop more informed future citizens when started in the primary years. Further, according to Paula Cowan and Henry Maitles from their study in whether a change in attitudes could be achieved with 11- and 12-year-olds by studying the Holocaust, found evidence that 'pupils' self-perceived knowledge and values/attitudes improved after learning about the Holocaust'.¹⁸

THE ORIGIN OF THE IDEA AND INFLUENCES

The Centre developed and piloted the programme 'Hide and Seek: Stories of Survival' in 2014 and 2015 before being formally introduced in 2016. The credit for identifying the need for a programme tailored for primary school students (11–13 years) belonged to Zvi Civins, the Centre's former Director of Education. Until the creation of 'Hide and Seek', the senior secondary school programme was modified for younger student groups. This included not showing graphic images and using appropriate survivor testimony. This programme was adequate for some younger student groups, but it was apparent that it could be improved via age-appropriate pedagogy. A development team was set up comprising the JHC curator, director of education, education officers and experts who were brought in as needed.

The main catalyst for the creation of primary-aged programme came in 2013 when the JHC held a temporary 'Anne Frank' exhibition that attracted a wider range of schools, many of whom had not visited the JHC. The Anne Frank story is accessible to a younger audience and represents the Holocaust as a case study, particularly the experiences of some children and teenagers. For many young readers, *The Diary of Anne Frank*¹⁹ is their first encounter with this topic. The inordinate success of the exhibition reflected in the high number of school bookings was the trigger prompting the JHC to develop and implement the 'Hide and Seek' programme.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The JHC development team considered the appeal of Anne Frank and how this appeal could be used as the foundation of the ‘Hide and Seek’ programme. The team’s conclusions were as follows:

- Firstly, Anne Frank’s diary captures her voice from the ages of 13 to 15. This means that the pre-teen or teenage reader is presented with an authentic voice of a child of similar age. As Bedford writes, ‘A good narrative has authenticity; we believe in it, because it resonates with our understanding of the world.’²⁰
- A diary is a method for recording ideas and feelings, and this is accessible to younger students as a form of narrative. A diary transcends technology; it can be written on paper or on a computer or mobile device using social media. These forms of communication are readily accessible and understood by students today.
- Finally, Anne’s diary captures her responses to her changing world, as well as to universal themes, including prejudice and racism. Importantly, Anne writes about the role of those who stood up to racism and assisted those in peril, those we know as the Righteous Among the Nations.

The success of the temporary Anne Frank exhibition could partly be explained, as Leslie Bedford discusses: ‘As children focus on individuals and the emotions that inspire them to act in certain ways they gain understanding of the emotions that humanity shares.’²¹ Anne’s story has a universal appeal, as evidenced by Zlata in her diary recording her life in war-torn Sarajevo²² or Bana al-Abed using Twitter from Aleppo in the recent Syrian conflict.²³ Both Zlata and Bana, like Anne, were children living through the horrors of war. Each girl has been able to engage an outside audience through their first-hand, personal accounts via a diary or social media.

The themes raised in *The Diary of Anne Frank* have strong links with both senior primary and middle school curricula (ages 11–13) in Australia²⁴ as students develop their ethical understandings and civic responsibilities. In addition, the plethora of primary school literature written on the Holocaust could be utilised as a launching pad for introducing this topic. As Sharon Shaffer writes, ‘Storytelling or narrative is a critical strategy that supports a child’s way of thinking and constructing knowledge.’²⁵ Utilising personal accounts of the Holocaust and historical fiction appeared to be a powerful way for the development team to move forward.

In addition to *The Diary of Anne Frank*, another influence included the work of popular Australian author Morris Gleitzman, who has written a series of books on the theme of the Holocaust, beginning with *Once*,²⁶ a novel suitable for upper primary students based on the story of a fictional Jewish boy, Felix. Felix's story in *Once* and its sequel *Then*²⁷ articulated the experiences of hiding and assuming false identities. These are recurrent themes in many of the stories told by the JHC child survivors, leading the JHC to recommend this series. This presented the opportunity to create a programme that utilised set texts like the *Once* series, explored moral and ethical issues, used original museum artefacts to practise historical skills of analysis and, most importantly, a chance to hear witness testimonies from Holocaust survivors who had been of an age similar to that of their audience. Survivor testimony was essential to the programme in order to create an authentic learning experience for the students. Further, using the form of personal narrative would be an important vehicle to engage younger students with the topic of the Holocaust.

The programme was also developed to comply with the State of Victoria curriculum requirements. A key learning objective was to empower young pupils to understand that all individuals can have a positive influence on the people around them and have the power—within a democratic and multicultural society—to combat racism through the recognition of prejudice and hatred. The JHC team aimed to contribute to the personal development of resilience and hope in the face of adversity, even bullying, through the positive attitude of survivors, whose testimony had the potential to inspire students to believe that, despite adversities, life could improve. The JHC team aimed high with these objectives, with the goal of moving students 'beyond the pencil' and creating behavioural change.

Essential to the design of the programme was the utilisation of a constructivist model of learning that created accessible entry points to this challenging topic for younger students. Much of this was based on the Project for Enhancing Effective Learning (PEEL),²⁸ particularly the teaching procedures and Principles of Teaching for Quality Learning.²⁹

PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Over the course of 6 months, the development team began with some formal strategies. Internationally, there are many successful children's programmes and spaces at other Holocaust museums, including Yad LaYeled, the Children's Museum at Lohamei HaGeta'ot, the Ghetto Fighters'

Museum in northern Israel, *Remember the Children: Daniel's Story* at the USHMM in Washington, and *the Journey* at the National Holocaust Museum in the UK. We were not fully familiar with the details of these programmes, but these museum spaces set an important precedent for the Centre, demonstrating that it is possible to educate a younger audience. Further, according to Leslie Bedford, *Daniel's Story* successfully achieves what many history exhibitions set out to accomplish—to translate a difficult adult story into a narrative for children or intergenerational audiences.³⁰ Thus, the Centre needed to apply these important templates to the Australian context and audience.

To create a meaningful learning experience in a museum environment, a number of primary school programmes were observed and studied at various Melbourne museums and institutions, including the Shrine of Remembrance, the Victorian War Memorial Museum and the Melbourne Immigration Museum.³¹ This demonstrated the possibility of using artefacts in age-appropriate ways to enhance students' understanding of narratives of the past. Artefacts are central to the museum experience, yet, as Mary Jane Taylor and Beth Houting explain, children can be 'as varied in their tastes and interests as adults'.³² This also created a challenge for the education team to overcome: catering for various interests and learning styles and deciding which artefacts would be included as part of the programme.

As described earlier, numerous hurdles had to be overcome to implement a successful primary school programme. This included choice of artefacts, designing age-appropriate activities and making a challenging topic accessible to a younger audience without oversimplifying the event or traumatizing the children. What follows is an exploration of each challenge and an explanation or reasoning behind the decisions taken by the JHC development team to address these challenges.

CHALLENGE 1: ADDRESSING STUDENTS' PRIOR KNOWLEDGE IN A MUSEUM SPACE

Educators in museum spaces need to work with students with whom they have no background or rapport. Further, there is some trepidation for Australian students entering the JHC building, with the flame of remembrance and the daunting sculpture *Pillars of Witness* out front (Appendix 1). As a result, the JHC development team decided it was essential to begin the programme with an icebreaker activity. Students answer three

questions on Post-It notes and place them on butcher paper around the room. The questions include:

- Why am I here today?
- What is one thing I know about the Holocaust?
- What is one thing I am grateful for today?

This introductory activity is designed to bring the students into a new learning space and create an active, safe learning environment. By asking these same questions at the beginning and end of the programme, we created a tool to measure the immediate understandings gained by the students and for us to gauge the immediate impact of each activity. Although this tool was by no means perfect, it did provide a sense of the learning that took place during the programme.

In addition, some students participating in the programme come with prior knowledge—and misconceptions. A museum educator needs to access these in order to pitch an education programme appropriately.³³ The JHC educator needs to facilitate the learning experiences so the students make links and connections with their prior knowledge or correct misconceptions and then build upon these foundations if meaningful learning is going to occur. Consequently, the icebreaker activity is followed by a short 10-minute introduction using multimedia which links the students' texts and pre-learning context to the museum programme and ensures there is a basic understanding of the terms 'Holocaust', 'Aryan race', 'antisemitism' and 'propaganda'. Connecting students' prior learning and linking it to the museum experience is important so the programme is not seen as an isolated learning task but part of a holistic learning experience.

CHALLENGE 2: WORKING WITHIN THE PHYSICAL SPACE OF THE MUSEUM

One of the key challenges for the development team was how to utilise the museum's limited space and create an area in the museum which felt safe and was conducive to the programme, away from the more confrontational and harrowing imagery which features in the main museum. As Leslie Bedford writes, 'The role of exhibition design is to create or to enhance narrative without words.'³⁴ The perfect place presented itself for the physical hiding activity; the background diorama used to re-create Anne Frank's room remained in position in a small room in the JHC

building complex. Placing cushions on the floor in dim lighting conditions, the students would enter a room that created a sensory experience to stimulate curiosity and enhance the narrative of the hiding story. This experience is scaffolded with carefully structured questions to stimulate the students' thinking process. Students are challenged with an age-appropriate dilemma—they are presented with a suitcase of various objects, from photographs to warm clothes, based on listening to oral survivor testimony. The education officer gives the students, who are in pairs, a challenging question: What is the one object that would be useful in hiding? Once they have chosen their artefact, the different pairs share their choices and reasoning. Students are able to develop their understanding of the restricted movements of those who were forced into hiding and develop a sense of empathy. This is reinforced when the students listen to survivor testimony and have the opportunity to pose questions to the survivor. This is obviously the highlight of the programme and reinforces all the learning activities that preceded this activity, where the survivor pulls the various threads of the programme together. Students' questions reflect the learning activities that preceded listening to the testimony, which indicates deep learning has taken place.

In the initial planning stages, much discussion focused on how best to use artefacts with primary-aged students. Initially a visit to the museum was not scheduled as the JHC development team thought that students might be traumatised by the explicit exhibits. To overcome this, it was planned to create a series of facsimile artefacts for students to touch and observe, but all the teachers from our pilot schools were keen for the students to have a 'museum experience'. By creating a set pathway of exhibits to visit in the museum, the development team was able to avoid the more confrontational areas. Students visit specified sections that reinforce the hiding stories. This includes *Hiding, Evading & Escaping; Other Victims; Acts of Courage; Rise of Nazism and Humiliation*. Indeed the interaction with the actual 'real' evidence is a vital element of the programme which transforms the programme from 'imaginary' to 'reality.'

CHALLENGE 3: MAKING THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE MEANINGFUL WITHOUT TRAUMATISING

To cater for different learning styles and utilise artefacts the JHC development team designed an activity that explores hiding by changing one's identity. False identity cards (based on the Nazi authorised identity card, the *Kennkarte*) were created to model the original *Kennkarte*. The students are

issued a new identity, with biographical details that they have to memorise. They are then tested on the details, which highlights the challenges of assuming a new identity. This also demonstrates how fascist laws, enforced by prejudice, necessitated the denial of one's heritage. For instance, when Halina Zylberman was 10 years old, she assumed the identity of a Christian Polish girl during the Holocaust. When speaking to students, she relates her difficulty after the war accepting her Jewish identity.³⁵

The JHC development team was concerned with utilising simulations as part of the programme. It is argued that simulation in Holocaust education might build up empathy but is considered pedagogically unsound for trivialising the Holocaust, distorting reality, reinforcing negative views and disconnecting the Holocaust from the context of European and global history.³⁶ Further, role-playing and simulations can create false paradigms for students.³⁷ Simone Schweber explains that those who argue against simulations believe that by making an activity fun, one is losing reverence for the tragedy of the Holocaust and trivialising it.³⁸ Through her study of Kate Bess's ninth and tenth grade simulation, Schweber concludes that one needs to draw distinctions between constructive and destructive simulations.³⁹ Paula Cowan and Henry Maitles contend that 'exercising caution and putting the simulation explicitly and appropriately into its historical context can work very well'.⁴⁰ The activities described previously in the 'Hide and Seek' programme are neither open-ended simulations nor role-play, but carefully designed learning activities to create specific historical understanding and empathy for the implications of hiding to students with limited prior knowledge of the historical events. Without these rigorously scaffolded activities in an Australian context and working in a museum environment, JHC educators believe that students would not have the same ability to relate to the survivor testimony, which forms the most important part of the programme. This is reflected in the students' level of engagement and quality of questions that move beyond the students' known world experience to specific details they have learned about the Holocaust in the 'Hide and Seek' programme shown in the variety of responses listed below, to the question 'What is one thing I have learnt about the Holocaust today?'

- Some people didn't hide but used fake identities instead
- Six million Jews died
- Hiding can be very boring
- Life was really hard and you had to go to extremes
- People made false identities
- False identities are hard to remember

- Halina survived
- Not everyone survived on a fake identity
- The Jews who did survive were very lucky
- You can be in hiding for a very long time
- She (Halina, the survivor who gave testimony) couldn't talk to her friends
- You couldn't talk loudly in the hiding place⁴¹

These activities neither trivialise the Holocaust nor traumatise the students but, rather, create meaningful connections for the students to understand the Holocaust in order to build on their previous understandings. This is reflected in the following four teachers' reflections about the programme.

The time flew, the students showed valuable insights during their reflection and the staff were very impressed with what was offered.

The kids learnt so much it's hard to summarise!

The students were very engaged. It was very age appropriate.

The 'Hide and Seek programme' is a creative programme that our students enjoyed participating in this year. Many enjoyed interacting in this programme as it was 'hands on' and also fun. The fact that the emphasis was to teach students about the people who helped Holocaust victims survive was an important lesson for our students to learn. Students particularly talked about the Identification activity and also the opportunity to sit and experience 'Anne Frank's room'. This programme was pitched appropriately to a Year 7 student and allowed for physical and sensory interaction.⁴²

After both hiding activities, students have an opportunity to debrief to ensure that they are not adversely affected and that they understand the historical connection. The Holocaust survivors who address the students as part of the programme are often present during these activities. This creates a concrete link between the activity and the survivor's personal experiences, a reality that transcends the performative. The personal testimony enables students to connect to the historical details.

IMPLEMENTING AND EVALUATING THE PROGRAMME

During the first phase of piloting 'Hide and Seek', there were two things that needed to happen—seek funding for the programme and find pilot schools to test the efficacy of the programme. Financial support was provided

for our pilot programme from a well-established Australian charitable organisation, Gandel Philanthropy. This organisation has committed itself to continue funding 'Hide and Seek' for a further 3-year period. Fortunately, each of the pilot schools came to the Centre looking for a programme to enhance the learning in their classrooms. This demonstrates that the Holocaust was being taught to students aged 10–13. The six pilot schools who were involved in the trial phase in 2014 were carefully monitored. The activities utilised were evaluated after each session by firstly surveying the teachers for their feedback about each of the activities and their views about the programme (Appendix 2), as well as assessing whether there was any increase in the students' specific knowledge by their responses on the Post-It notes. This process was essential for the later adjustments and modifications made to the programme. This feedback meant that museum educators later included an activity examining the topic of discrimination in Nazi Germany as a result of misconceptions that the development team saw were present. Museum educators also added a museum tour to the programme as a result of teacher requests and held a debriefing discussion after the two hiding activities to help students deal with issues they had found difficult.

The JHC development team is constantly reflecting, reviewing and refining the programme's delivery. External consultants (including a primary school headmistress and a psychologist) were invited to review and give feedback to ensure that the programme was suitable and age appropriate. Their feedback was encouraging, and the programme was tweaked to include activities such as introductory icebreakers rather than making major structural changes to the programme. These external professional opinions confirmed that the activities were not intrinsically traumatising for an Australian student aged 11–13 years. Museum educators were cautioned that, as with all students, whatever their age, not knowing their personal circumstances or background, especially if they are from a refugee background or have experienced violence means that any learning about the Holocaust can be a trigger to previous traumas. Yet, the external professional advice received meant that the learning activities in the museum space were intrinsically safe.

The responses from teachers and students to date have been exceptionally positive, as already highlighted. Four of the six pilot schools returned in 2015 to participate in the programme, with all five returning in 2016 and with a number of new schools joining 'Hide and Seek'. Return 'customers' in a museum context is one way to measure success. There are 15 schools with approximately 1200 students who have committed to the programme, and it is now time to develop the pro-

gramme further. This is logistically problematic as the space required within the current building is limited.

During the pilot phase, the Centre carefully evaluated the comments made by students on the Post-It notes before and after the programme. Their responses, although limited to one sentence, highlight a definite shift in the majority of students' knowledge and understanding. The varied responses given by students suggested that they were more comfortable in responding to this question after the programme. This is illustrated in Table 1 below, where the majority of student comments indicate a shift from general or limited knowledge, and sometimes incorrect knowledge, to more specific and nuanced understandings, related to the activities they had participated in, as well as from listening to the survivor testimony. Teacher feedback also indicates student knowledge has been deepened, as shown by the following response, which is typical: 'I just wanted to say THANK YOU to you and your team for all their help, insights and encouragements to our students. They had a great time and learnt so much!'⁴³

At the end of 2015, the 'Hide and Seek' programme received the Victorian Government Multicultural Award for Excellence in Education. The Centre has moved beyond the 'question of the pencil' but is yet to know the full impact of this programme. More empirical evidence needs to be gathered and evaluated to ascertain with as much certainty as possible the efficacy of starting Holocaust education in the primary years through a museum-based programme.

Table 1 Pre- and post-programme responses to the question: *What is one thing I know about the Holocaust?* Pilot School Year 5, September 2014

Pilot school 4 – year 5 students (10–11 years) – September 2014

What is one thing that I have learnt about the Holocaust?

<i>Before the programme</i>	<i>After the programme</i>
Nothing or not much x13	Halina is a survivor
It was a bad thing or horrible – 13	Not everyone survives on a fake identity
WW2 –	Different stories of Jews hiding
That the Germans hate the Jews x2	The Jews who did survive were very lucky
The Germans disliked the Jews	You can be in hiding for a very long time
The Nazis tortured the Jews	That she (Halina) couldn't talk to her friends
They killed Jews x5	You couldn't talk loudly in the hiding place
Six million Jews were killed	That Jewish people were treated really bad
Germany killed many Jewish people	That it was horrible
Many people died x3	About Jewish Children
Hitler killed the Jews in gas chambers when new ones came in	The Nazis were very mean to the Jews
The Jews lived a bad life	About the Holocaust
The time when Hitler killed Jews	More about the Jews
Every Jewish kid was in a concentration camp	That Jews were harmed a lot
	How harsh life was
	Anne Frank could not leave the house
	Some people didn't hide but used fake identities instead
	Jews were smart and hid their identity
	That Germans took away their suitcases
	Six million Jews died
	Hiding can be very boring
	Surviving is difficult x4
	Life was really hard and you had to go to extremes
	People made false identities
	False identities are hard to remember
	False identities x6
	Halina survived

APPENDICES

*Appendix 1: Entrance to JHC – Pillars of Witness Sculpture
by Andrew Rogers*



NOTES

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43. Teacher email (name withheld) to Lisa Philips, JHC Director of Education (3 November 2016).

PART IV

Student Perspectives



Reflections on What Year 7 Students Know and Understand About the Holocaust: An Argument for Empirical Research in English Primary Schools

Rebecca Hale

INTRODUCTION

Since 1991, the National Curriculum for history in England has stipulated students in Key Stage 3 (those aged 11–14 years) must study the Holocaust.¹ In practice, not all schools have to implement this mandate, as some 60 per cent of schools in England are academies (publicly funded independent schools) and do not have to follow the National Curriculum.² Even so, successive Westminster governments have continued to highlight the importance of this topic being taught in school, and many teachers are committed to teaching this subject.³

In England, there is no requirement to teach about the Holocaust at Key Stage 2 (children aged 7 to 11 years), but this does not preclude teachers from doing so.⁴ In one of the few studies conducted in English primary schools, Short and Carrington (1995) found that pupils had

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C. W. Szejnmann et al. (eds.), *Holocaust Education in Primary
Schools in the Twenty-First Century*, The Holocaust and its
Contexts, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-73099-8_13

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discussed the Holocaust with their teachers.⁵ More recently, Foster and colleagues (2016) found that 28.5 per cent of young people reported they had first learned about the Holocaust before year 7 when they were in primary school.⁶ This study involved almost 8,000 secondary school students from across England, providing a good indication of the prevalence of Holocaust education in primary schools. Nevertheless, primary schoolchildren did not participate, and there is a dearth of empirical research in this field, making it difficult to identify the true scale (and nature) of Holocaust education in English primary schools.

Research in other countries has also indicated that Holocaust education is delivered to children in primary/elementary schools. For instance, Paula Cowan and Henry Maitles discussed the Holocaust educational activities of 21 primary schools in Scotland,⁷ and Simone Schweber conducted a case study of one teacher's approach to Holocaust education in an elementary school in the United States.⁸ Despite this, there remain too few empirical studies in this field, contributing to a myriad of unknowns including the extent to which the Holocaust is part of the primary school curriculum; how the topic is approached; the knowledge of non-history specialist primary teachers delivering this subject; the impact that learning about the Holocaust has on children (including their emotional, attitudinal and cognitive responses); and, consequently, if or how it should be taught to children of this age.

Although empirical studies in this area have been limited, commentary from academics and educators has been forthcoming, revealing a number of different stances. These debates encompass considerations that resonate with work done across a number of countries as well as issues that are specific to particular national contexts and frameworks. For instance, Schweber discussed the process of 'curriculum creep' occurring in Holocaust education where increasingly younger students encounter this topic at school, facilitated by the availability of books and films.⁹ Of particular concern for teaching in England is the prominence of the film *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, with 70 per cent of year 7 students reporting that they had watched it.¹⁰

Those highlighting the merits of teaching about the Holocaust in primary school have argued for its potential to teach children about tolerance and respect for others who are different, learning about the consequences of prejudice, and recognising individual responsibility and accountability.¹¹ Researchers from Scotland found that learning about the Holocaust in the final year of primary school could have a positive impact

on children's attitudes and values, including more positive attitudes towards refugees. Moreover, attitudinal change continued to hold when children were reassessed in their first year of secondary school.¹²

Timetable and curriculum constraints in secondary schools mean there is a risk that Holocaust education will become cursory. Even where teachers are able to allocate a number of lessons to Holocaust education, the breadth of topics they could include and the time and attention required for these topics present a challenge. Accordingly, it has been suggested that foundational work can be done in primary schools.¹³ That said, in light of the paucity of empirical research in primary schools, it is not known what this foundational work should look like or how effective it would be in preparing students for future study of the Holocaust.

Samuel Totten (1999) has disputed the appropriateness of Holocaust education for younger students on a number of grounds, including concern that major concepts would be ignored or simplified (e.g. Christian antisemitism, political antisemitism and racial antisemitism); that the historical context would be distorted or ignored (e.g. results of the First World War and Germany's reaction to the Versailles Treaty); the complexities of how people acted would not be considered (e.g. personal and societal pressures); and the true horror of atrocities committed by the Nazis would be concealed to protect children.¹⁴ Totten argued that teaching about the Holocaust without any of the context limits students' understanding of what happened; however, including this in the primary curriculum means that children are exposed to material which they are too young to cope with.

Other educators and academics have highlighted concerns related to this position. For example, Elaine Culbertson cautioned against pedagogical practices which draw on *The Diary of Anne Frank* without teaching the relevant history to students.¹⁵ This includes ensuring that students understand that hiding was not an option for most Jewish people and learning about what happened to Anne after her last diary entry. Simone Schweber documented the emotional responses of 8-year-old children learning about the Holocaust for the first time, including their distress, shock and dread as they learned about what happened to people in concentration camps.¹⁶

The concerns expressed by some academics and educators also highlight considerations about how Holocaust education in primary schools could contribute to the formation of misconceptions. Misconceptions have been defined as conceptions which are strongly held, differ from

expert conceptions, can hinder effective learning and need to be avoided or addressed for students to gain accurate knowledge and understanding.¹⁷ This is likely to be a concern where material is simplified to make it accessible to younger students. Knowledge acquisition is never a passive process, and when students encounter new information, they will seek to make sense of it, and this process is likely to incorporate existing frames of reference.¹⁸ Thus, any misconceptions formed during primary school may be resistant to change when students encounter the Holocaust in secondary school because their existing frames of reference colour or distort new information presented to them. Indeed, evidence has shown that the core content of secondary students' collective conceptions of the Holocaust were consistent irrespective of whether or not they had been taught about the Holocaust in secondary school.¹⁹ This suggests that pre-existing conceptions (including muddled ones) are very resistant to change and can become entrenched by the time students learn about the Holocaust in secondary school. In situations where students have sound knowledge and understanding, this is not problematic. However, where this is not the case, the strength of embedded misconceptions, the challenges of addressing them and the importance of avoiding their formation in the first place need to be confronted.

Undeniably, numerous factors outside the classroom contribute to the acquisition and maintenance of such misconceptions, including contemporary representations of the Holocaust and the beliefs of family and friends. In some cases these factors may influence students' thinking long before they encounter the subject in primary school. Moreover, primary schoolchildren are typically aged 11 years and younger, and this will influence their ability to acquire substantive knowledge and second-order conceptual understanding of the past, especially where the teacher's subject speciality is not history. Consequently, students will have gaps in their knowledge and conceptual frames, making them liable to misunderstand material. Collectively, these issues draw attention to considerations about if or how the Holocaust should be taught in primary schools.

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss all of the disparate standpoints and research evidence pertaining to Holocaust education in primary schools. The examples provided aim to give some sense of the discourse in this area, but it is important to recognise how complicated this field of work is. That said, it has been suggested that positions on the appropriateness of Holocaust education in primary schools can roughly be categorised into three schools of thought.²⁰ Firstly, younger children

should be protected from learning about the Holocaust because the topic is too complex and traumatic for them. Secondly, while children would not grasp the full complexities of the Holocaust, they could learn about it in a simplified format and, thus, be more intellectually and emotionally equipped for learning about the full extent of the Holocaust when they are older. Finally, the Holocaust should be taught without simplifying the content, with students benefitting from learning about the subject in a structured, informed and sensitive manner, rather than haphazardly from film, television, the Internet or friends.

This chapter does not seek to align itself with one particular position. Instead, it draws on research conducted by Foster and colleagues focusing on the survey responses of year 7 students (aged 11–12 years) who indicated that they had learned about the Holocaust in primary school but not yet learned about it in secondary school. The chapter aims to explore what this subsample of students knew about the Holocaust and some of the misconceptions they appeared to have.

METHOD

In total, 7,952 secondary school students aged 11–18 years from 74 schools across England completed a survey to explore their knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust.²¹ The majority of the questions were presented in a multiple-choice format where students had to select one answer from a number of options. For ease of reading, the answer most appropriate will be referred to as the ‘correct’ answer. However, Foster and colleagues (2016) emphasised the most appropriate answer for students to select was the one deemed congruent with current historical research and scholarship, recognising that many issues are open to debate.²²

Students who reported learning about the Holocaust in school were asked to indicate what year group they were in when they had first learned about it. The results showed that 1,603 students had first learned about the subject at primary school. Of these students, 243 of them were in year 7 at the time of completing the survey and also indicated that they had not yet learned about the Holocaust while at secondary school. Thus, for this subsample of students it appeared that their school-based learning experiences of the Holocaust had so far only occurred while at primary school.

This survey did not include questions about learning experiences in primary school, and students’ learning may have been supplemented by experiences outside of school through books, film, the Internet or conver-

sations with friends and family. Thus, while the findings discussed in this paper give insight into what students know about the Holocaust following learning about it in primary school, they cannot provide pathways of causation. For example, it is not possible to say that students knew particular pieces of information as a direct consequence of whether (or how) material was covered in their primary school.

In the subsample of 243 students, 131 (53.9 per cent) were girls and 112 were boys. The majority of students were White, and the second largest ethnic group was Asian/Asian British (12.2 per cent). A small proportion of students (5.9 per cent) identified themselves as Black, African, Caribbean or Black British. The remaining students were from Mixed/Multiple ethnic group categories. Given the volume of data collected for this study, it is not possible to present findings for all survey questions. Instead, a selection of findings is presented to give illustrations of students' secure knowledge and areas where knowledge was incorrect. Additionally, the influence of incomplete or incorrect knowledge on the formation of misconceptions is discussed.

FINDINGS

Figure 1 shows the percentage of students who selected the most appropriate answer for the multiple-choice questions. Students were most likely to identify the correct answer to 'when did the Holocaust happen?' and 'approximately how many Jews in all of Europe were killed during the Holocaust?' They were less likely to know what percentage of the German population was Jewish in 1933, what happened when the British government found out about the mass murder of Jews, which historical event preceded the mass murder of Jews, or what happened if the military or police refused an instruction to kill Jewish people.

Who Were the Victims?

Students were asked 'who were the victims of the Holocaust?' This was an open question, where students gave their own unmediated responses. The length of responses varied from a single word to several sentences, and they were coded to explore the victim group(s) that students identified.²³ In the national sample the majority of secondary students gave a relevant answer: 52 per cent of students identified solely Jews/Jewish/Jewish people and 39.7 per cent identified Jews plus at least one other victim group.²⁴

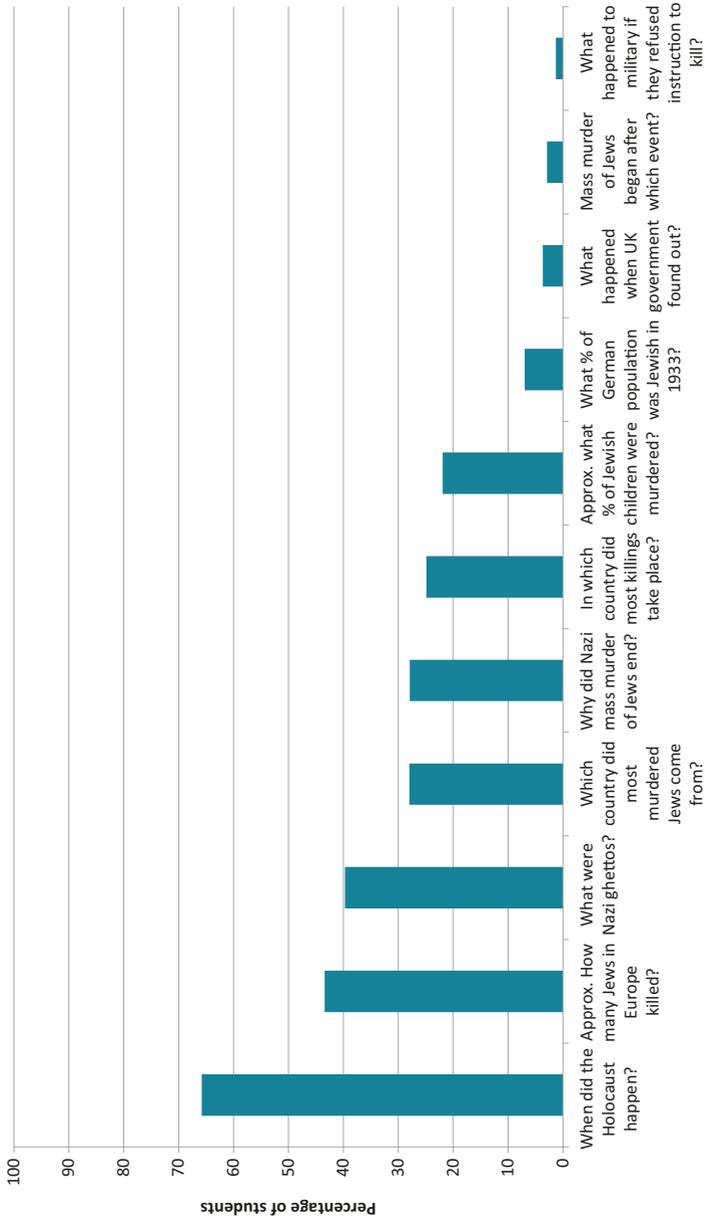


Fig. 1 Percentage of year 7 students who answered each question correctly

In the subsample of students that is under discussion here, 64.2 per cent identified Jews/Jewish/Jewish people and 26.3 per cent identified Jews and at least one other victim group. The other victim groups most frequently identified were homosexuals (12.1 per cent), disabled people (9.5 per cent) and Roma/Sinti (6.9 per cent). In the national sample, these victim groups were also the most frequently cited.²⁵

Figure 1 shows that for the question ‘In 1933, what percentage of the German population was Jewish?’, only 7 per cent of the year 7 students gave the correct answer (that less than 1 per cent were Jewish). Instead, just over a third of students thought that Jewish people accounted for 15 per cent of the German population, and 39.3 per cent of students put the proportion of Jewish people at more than 30 per cent. In these cases where students had overestimated the population, 35.4 per cent were confident in their estimation. A similar trend was found in the national sample; the majority of students overestimated the population, and 15.9 per cent of students selected the correct answer.

Students’ responses to these questions highlight considerations about what they have learned and how this might relate to the formation of misconceptions. For example, Nazi propaganda sought to drive the belief that Jews were a dominant group in Germany, intent on destroying the country from within. If students have incorrect or incomplete knowledge about the proportion of Jewish people living in Germany in 1933, there is a risk that they will be unable to recognise how deceptive and defamatory this propaganda was, so misconceptions could develop.²⁶ This was illustrated by the focus group findings of Foster and colleagues, where students who overestimated the pre-war Jewish population were more likely to speculate on the role of a large Jewish population being a causal factor for the Holocaust and thus having a sense that Jews were partly to blame.²⁷ Furthermore, since some commentators argue that issues related to prejudice and discrimination can be explored through Holocaust education, then understanding the extent that the Jewish population was in the minority is surely an essential component of students’ learning.

Antisemitism is a key concept for any explanation of the Holocaust, and it is essential that students understand Nazi antisemitism and its genocidal intent towards Jews.²⁸ In the survey, students were asked to identify what was meant by the term antisemitism, as well as what was meant by the terms racism, homophobia, genocide and Islamophobia, to allow for making comparisons (Fig. 2). Only 16 per cent of the year 7 students knew what antisemitism meant, and 26.7 per cent knew what

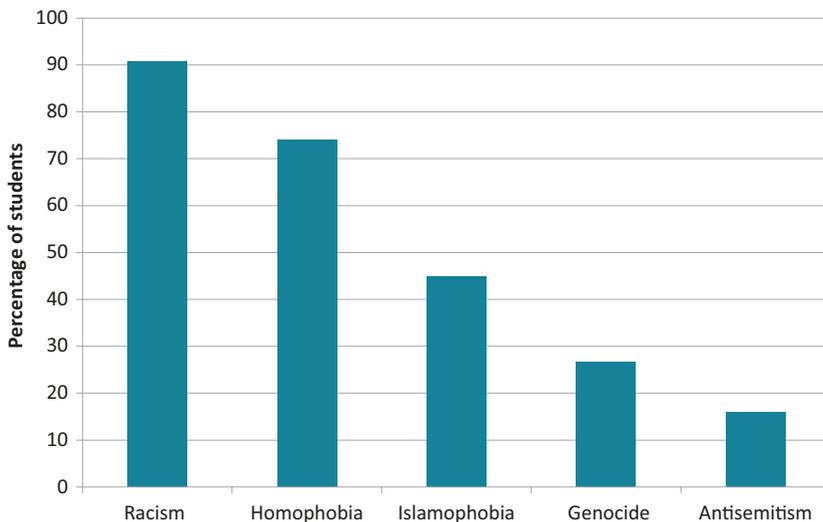


Fig. 2 Percentage of year 7 students who correctly identified the meaning of terms

genocide was. This compared to 44.9 per cent who correctly identified the meaning of Islamophobia, some three-quarters of students who knew what homophobia referred to and 90.7 per cent who knew what racism was. A similar trend was found in the national sample, with 31.8 per cent understanding the meaning of antisemitism.

These findings indicate that understanding important concepts like racism and homophobia is not beyond the capability of young students. Yet what is striking about these data is that students who had learned about the Holocaust in primary school did not understand what was meant by the term antisemitism. Given that some educators and academics have argued that primary school Holocaust education could provide a means of teaching about tolerance, respect and the consequences of prejudice and discrimination, then perhaps the very least we should expect students to be able to understand is what antisemitism is. This includes being able to identify the term and understand what it refers to.

This appears to be an ongoing issue. Geoffrey Short and Bruce Carrington found that children aged 10–11 years generally lacked knowledge and understanding of contemporary Judaism. They cautioned that misconceptions about contemporary Judaism could fuel hostility and

antisemitism.²⁹ Research conducted by Maitles and colleagues also found that primary school students tended not to know what antisemitism was, though the teachers reported their students did understand what antisemitism referred to, even if they did not recognise the term.³⁰ This reminds us that consistent use of the term antisemitism is needed in the classroom, as is learning about the history of antisemitism, to aid students' understanding of why Jews were targeted, and recognising the totality of the genocidal intent towards Jews.

Who Were the Perpetrators and Who Was Responsible?

To explore students' knowledge and understanding of culpability during the Holocaust, they were asked 'who was responsible for the Holocaust?' This was an open question requiring students to give their own answers. The students' answers were coded for their content.³¹ This process revealed that the most frequent relevant response was to ascribe responsibility to Hitler alone (62.2 per cent), with 89.6 per cent of these students being confident in their answer. Just under a fifth of students (17.2 per cent) identified Hitler and the Nazis, and 7.7 per cent of students identified the Nazis alone. In the national sample, there was less attribution to Hitler alone, with 50.7 per cent citing him. A fifth of the national sample identified Hitler with the Nazis, and 10.6 per cent said the Nazis alone.

In the survey, students were presented with a list of historical people, places and events and asked to indicate (by responding 'yes', 'no' or 'don't know') whether each person/place/event was connected to the Holocaust. The list included Adolf Eichmann, the SS and Adolf Hitler. The responses of the year 7 subsample are shown in Fig. 3. The majority of the subsample identified that Hitler was connected to the Holocaust, but recognition of the other two agents was much lower. In the case of the SS, 22.7 per cent of students said they were connected to the Holocaust, and a similar proportion (23.2 per cent) of students correctly indicated that Adolf Eichmann was connected. Findings for the national sample were similar for Hitler and Eichmann (91.4 and 23.2 per cent respectively) but differed for recognition of the SS (44.4 per cent).

The students were also asked 'if a member of the military or police refused an instruction to kill Jewish people, what do you think would be most likely to happen to them?' Undoubtedly, this is a complex issue; however, the options were designed to reflect the current historical record and scholarship. Results for the national sample found just 5 per cent of

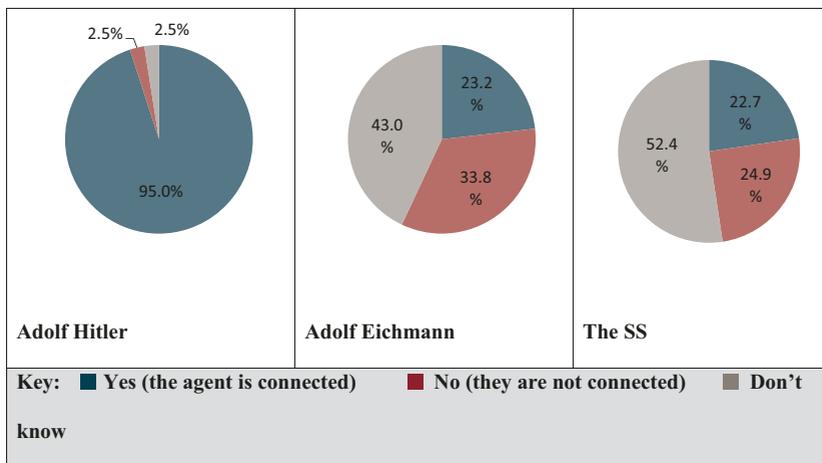


Fig. 3 Year 7 students' responses to whether a given agent was connected to the Holocaust

students correctly indicated that 'they would be given another duty instead'. The majority (66.5 per cent) said that the military or police would be shot for refusing to obey an order, with two-thirds of them saying that they were confident this was the correct answer. A similar pattern emerged for the subsample of year 7 students. As shown in Fig. 1, only 1.3 per cent of them selected the correct answer. The majority of the subsample (73.3 per cent) thought that the military and police would be shot, and 75.9 per cent indicated they were confident in this answer. Almost a quarter of students (23.8 per cent) thought that the military or police would have been sent to a concentration camp, and of these students 59.7 per cent were confident of this. In sum, most students giving incorrect answers thought they were in fact correct answers (that is, they reported being confident in their answers rather than reporting they did not know the answer and had made a guess). This suggests that by year 7, these ideas have become accepted and absorbed into students' historical consciousness.

It is of course noteworthy that some students appeared to have a basic understanding of who the perpetrators were. Issues surrounding culpability in the Holocaust are complex, and it would be unrealistic to expect primary schoolchildren to comprehend all of the different agents/agencies and the acts perpetrated. However, these findings suggest a Hitler-centric

focus. If primary school students can identify Adolf Hitler as being connected to the Holocaust, then it is perhaps reasonable to expect them to have some awareness of the names of other individuals who were involved, like Adolf Eichmann. A Hitler-centric view also increases the likelihood that students will overlook the role of others and how complicity contributed to the unfolding of the genocide. Certainly, labelling different individuals, groups and organisations as ‘perpetrators’, ‘collaborators’ and ‘bystanders’ is a simplistic means of categorisation, but it is an important first step in facilitating young people’s awareness of the nature and complexity of culpability (and the validity of these categories can be discussed with students as their understanding develops). If one of the principal aims of Holocaust education in primary schools is to challenge intolerance, then students need to move beyond ascribing sole responsibility to Hitler and understand the roles of different agents (including the attitudes and actions of German society).

The belief that the police or military would be shot for refusing an order to kill was held with conviction by both primary and secondary students. This misconception is prevalent in public discourse and may account for this belief rather than incomplete information learned at school. Nonetheless, it has detrimental consequences on students’ understandings of the Holocaust, especially when educators speak of students ‘learning the lessons of the Holocaust’ through learning about people’s actions at the time. Consideration is also needed for what students learn if they surmise that Nazi perpetrators feared for their lives if they refused to obey an order. Students are likely to become confused and draw erroneous conclusions about accountability, the role of individuals in taking responsibility for their actions, the need to confront intolerance and injustice, and the true nature of Nazi perpetrators who chose to kill Jewish people.³²

When and Where Did the Holocaust Take Place?

Figure 1 shows that the year 7 subsample students were most likely to identify the correct answer for the question ‘when did the Holocaust happen?’ Two-thirds of students correctly identified the 1940s, although a sizeable proportion (19.8 per cent) opted for the 1920s. As these students reported they had learned about the Holocaust in primary school, this is a surprising finding. In the national sample, Foster and colleagues similarly found that up until year 9 around a fifth of students believed the Holocaust took place in the 1920s, and focus group discussions revealed that even

when students identified the 1940s, they typically found it difficult to give more accurate chronological detail.³³

When responding to the questions ‘which country did the largest number of Jewish people murdered during the Holocaust come from?’ and ‘in which country did the largest number of killings of Jewish people actually take place?’, students were most likely to identify Germany (48.6 and 65.6 per cent respectively). Of these students almost three-quarters were confident in this answer. For both questions approximately a quarter of students said Poland (i.e. German-occupied Poland). Thus, the year 7 students lacked secure knowledge in relation to the geographical range of the Holocaust. Given that most students overestimated the size of the pre-war Jewish population in Germany, it follows that they also thought that most Jews killed came from Germany.³⁴ This demonstrates the centrality of Germany in students’ Holocaust consciousness, although we should not overlook the students who did identify (German-occupied) Poland, which is encouraging.

It is important for students to know the sequence of relevant events in the pre-war period and the war years, and the significance of these events and how they are related to each other. As the Holocaust developed, its geographical scope also increased across Eastern Europe, and it is important for students to be aware of this so that they recognise it as a continent-wide process and not something concerned with Germany alone.³⁵

SUMMARY

These findings provide insights into what year 7 students know about the Holocaust before they learn about it in secondary school, and they raise some fundamental concerns about Holocaust education in primary and secondary schools. Students’ survey responses indicated that their only school-based experience of learning about the Holocaust had occurred during primary school. However, these students were not specifically asked about primary school learning experiences, so the data presented in this paper should be interpreted with caution, especially in relation to any conclusions about the specific topics that primary school teachers appeared to be teaching (or not teaching). Notably, the subject context and amount of time spent learning about the Holocaust are unknown. It is apposite that in Scotland, the primary curriculum includes interdisciplinary studies where individual projects are drawn from a number of subject areas.³⁶ It is likely that the Holocaust is taught within this framework and the amount

of history covered is unclear. It is probable that the same approach applies to primary school Holocaust education in England, though further research is needed to verify this. Additionally, many primary school teachers are unlikely to have history as their subject speciality. Collectively, these issues will further complicate any attempts to use the data to draw conclusions about the nature of the material covered by teachers in primary schools.

It is inevitable that primary school students would not have extensive knowledge and understanding of the historiography of the Holocaust, and instead this will develop over time. Likewise, the subsample was taken from a data set of young people aged 11 to 18 years who completed a survey pitched at secondary school students and focusing on Holocaust topics which one would expect teachers to include as part of a secondary school curriculum rather than a primary school curriculum. As Geoffrey Short points out, it is unwise to extrapolate from research with adolescents to the situation in primary schools.³⁷ Consequently, the findings presented in this paper are likely to be of particular relevance to secondary school teachers as they begin teaching students about the Holocaust. The similarities in trends between the subsample of year 7 students and the national sample could be interpreted in a number of ways, for instance that primary school Holocaust education may contribute to emergent misconceptions that are resilient to change in secondary school, that secondary Holocaust education needs to improve to build upon what is learned in primary school, or that misconceptions are principally informed by external sources like books and television and will cause issues at both the primary and secondary levels. It is almost certainly a combination of factors, and therefore the identification of simple pathways of causation is neither feasible nor appropriate.

Nevertheless, that does not detract from the usefulness of the findings to illustrate fundamental considerations about what these students learned in their primary school, especially given their level of conviction on some of the survey questions, and how this could herald misconceptions taking root in their historical consciousness. The wider cultural context also needs to be considered, as well as how contemporary representations of the Holocaust serve to create or reinforce misconceptions from an early age. Overall, the findings give insight into students' knowledge when they start learning about the Holocaust, as well as misunderstandings or misconceptions that could colour or distort how they interpret new information presented to them in the secondary school classroom. For

educators and academics who advocate the introduction of this topic to primary school curricula, thoughtful and critical consideration is needed to determine what should or could be expected from children of this age. Consequently, teaching aims need to clearly show why the Holocaust is being taught and teachers should reflect on whether the issues and skills they want to address could be achieved through other means.³⁸

Foster and colleagues' national research revealed that 28.5 per cent of students had first learned about the Holocaust in primary school. Therefore, whether one supports or rejects the notion of Holocaust education for this age group, the reality is that some English primary schools do teach about this subject. The aim of this paper was not to support or contradict particular viewpoints, though the nature of the findings presented (for example, gaps in students' knowledge) does resonate with concerns of simplified and incomplete information being used in primary schools. The findings from Foster and colleagues similarly demonstrated that many secondary school students did not have secure knowledge and understanding of the historiography of the Holocaust.³⁹ Consequently, it would appear that irrespective of whether students learn about the Holocaust in primary school or secondary school, there are numerous examples where students are unclear, confused or lack basic knowledge about the subject. However, the findings for the subsample of year 7 students force us to confront some serious and compelling considerations about what is happening in English primary schools, the impact that this is having on students' knowledge and understanding, and the influence this exerts on the collective conceptions that some of the youngest students in the school system are formulating.

Acknowledgements Sincere thanks are due to the students who took part in this research and to Dr. Andy Pearce for his invaluable feedback when I was writing this paper.

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2. Parliament UK. *Academies and Free Schools: Key issues for the 2015 Parliament* [online]. 2015 [cited 30 September 2016]. Available at: <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/research/key-issues-parliament-2015/education/academies-and-free-schools/>

3. Stuart Foster, Alice Pettigrew, Andy Pearce, Rebecca Hale, Adrian Burgess, Paul Salmons and Ruth-Anne Lenga, *What do students know and understand about the Holocaust? Evidence from English Secondary Schools* (London, 2016) p. 203.
4. Key Stage 1 refers to children aged 5 to 7 years and Key Stage 2 to those aged 7 to 11 years. In England these Key Stages are typically covered while children are in primary school. However, several terms used in England refer to schools attended by children aged 5–11 years, including infant school, first school, junior school and primary school. Some children go to middle school at age 9, while some stay at primary school until they are 11 years old and then move to secondary school. In other countries, terms such as elementary school signify schools attended by children under the age of 11. In this chapter, primary school is principally used as a catch-all term to refer to children aged 7–11 years.
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12. Henry Maitles, Paula Cowan and Eamonn Butler, *Never again! Does Holocaust education have an effect on pupils' citizenship values and attitudes?* [Online]. 2006 [cited 3 June 2016]. Available from: <http://www.gov.scot/resource/doc/147037/0038530.pdf>
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20. Simone Schweber and Debbie Findling, *Teaching the Holocaust* (Los Angeles, 2007), pp. 12–13.
21. Foster et al., *What do students know and understand about the Holocaust?*, pp. 23–34.
22. For a review of the literature pertaining to the multiple-choice questions, see Foster et al., *What do students know and understand about the Holocaust?*
23. For further information about coding see Foster et al., *What do students know and understand about the Holocaust?*, p. 251.
24. Foster et al., *What do students know and understand about the Holocaust?*, p. 107.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 108.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 126.
27. *Ibid.*
28. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
29. Short and Carrington, 'Antisemitism and the primary school', p. 22.
30. Maitles et al., 'Never again! Does Holocaust education have an effect on pupils' citizenship values and attitudes?', p. 26.
31. See Foster et al., *What do students know and understand about the Holocaust?*, p. 251.
32. *Ibid.*, pp. 139–168.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 174.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 191.
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 176–177.
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‘... They Locked Them Up in Houses and Let Gas in’: Swiss Primary School Pupils’ Conceptions of the Holocaust

Christian Mathis

Should the Holocaust be taught as a subject in primary school? In Switzerland, more often than not, the immediate response is ‘no’.¹ However, what if pupils broach the subject themselves? How do you react when pupils ask whether it is true that six million people were gassed, murdered or annihilated? Or when a pupil tells his classmates about an ‘incredible’ film that she secretly watched with her older brother called *Schindler’s List*?

In everyday life, primary school pupils are confronted time and again with historical narratives and portrayals of the past, as well as sources and authentic testimonies. These include those about National Socialism and the Holocaust. News about Neo-Nazi attacks, swastika defacement, narratives told by older siblings and friends, video games and films and so forth give children fragmentary information about National Socialism and the Holocaust era, which leads to random development resulting in diffuse ideas. Given different methodological approaches and theoretical assumptions, some studies originating from Germany in recent years have shown

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C. W. Szejnmann et al. (eds.), *Holocaust Education in Primary Schools in the Twenty-First Century*, The Holocaust and its Contexts, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-73099-8_14

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that primary school pupils are surprisingly knowledgeable about the Holocaust and have more or less differentiated ideas about it.²

Primary school pupils, therefore, do not attend class as ‘empty vessels’ or ‘black boxes’ but instead have varying differentiated common knowledge on any given subject. These ideas allow them to perceive, order and understand the world and control their actions therein. In terms of academic achievement, there is broad consensus in educational psychology that pupils’ prior knowledge plays a key factor—if not the decisive factor—in absorbing new knowledge.³ History education has meanwhile recognized the importance of pupils’ conceptions and ideas regarding a historical subject for historical learning.⁴ In educational psychology and in this context of learning, one speaks of learning as change of concepts or ‘conceptual change’.⁵ The objective here is to follow up on children’s conceptions in class and to be able to change, supplement or correct their notions: ‘in order that educational processes and processes of knowledge exchange can proceed successfully, it is essential to know the concepts of those learning or seeking clarity. Only with the knowledge of these ideas – sometimes called pre-conceptions – is it possible to decide whether or not to attempt to reinforce or soften, simplify or enrich, correct or differentiate the existing concepts’.⁶

We must therefore firstly clarify what conceptions pupils have on the subject, so as to answer the question of whether the Holocaust should be taught as a subject in primary school. The study presented here serves to investigate this question.

THE EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT IN SWITZERLAND

In the German-speaking states of Switzerland, historical learning takes place in the first six years of primary school in an integrated and multidisciplinary subject called ‘nature, human beings, society’ (in German: *Natur, Mensch, Gesellschaft/Sachunterricht*).⁷ Hence, history didactics for historical learning at the primary level must always be orientated towards the principle of primary school education. One of its main principles is that tuition should focus on children’s everyday life, on their questions and ideas, their previous knowledge and interests.⁸

If, for example, fifth graders pose the question in a classroom as mentioned earlier—whether or not Hitler murdered, gassed and incinerated almost as many people who live in Switzerland—the teacher must respond. In principle, the Holocaust should be addressed as a subject in Swiss

primary schools given a real-life orientation towards education. The answer, however, is not that simple—and rightly so, as the issue of the relevance of this subject for primary schooling is impossible to answer based purely on real-life orientation.⁹

When asked whether the Holocaust should be addressed in primary school, many uncertainties and fears arise. Can children grasp such a complex issue at all? Can they handle the cognitive strain? From a historical, social and moral point of view, is a child-orientated version of events justifiable, and what might that be? How do children deal with information about death, violence and oppression? Does this have a traumatic effect on them?¹⁰ These questions have been heatedly discussed in recent years in primary school teaching, in history didactics and educational studies, without, however, reaching a ‘unified position concerning a clarification as to why, when and whether or not the Holocaust can and should be a subject in the primary school classroom’.¹¹ Consequently, the question of *how*—i.e. what teaching skills are needed—is still secondary, since the issue of whether it makes sense to teach the Holocaust at the primary school level remains a contentious one.¹² Von Reeken referred to the discussion about the ‘ifs’ and the ‘pros and cons’ as ‘largely exhausted’ because all arguments have been on the table for years.¹³

For Switzerland, von Reeken’s statement is only partially true since no discussions on these issues have been held and, not least important, there are currently only a few research findings on primary school pupils’ knowledge respectively of their conceptions.¹⁴

For this reason, we think it makes sense to reproduce the debate about pros and cons, as depicted here in tabular form (Table 1).¹⁵

Gertrud Beck primarily sees what opportunities and possibilities an exchange of this topic can have in childhood years. What is of particular importance for this study is the statement that children already have prior knowledge. This is supported by the findings of this research study.

THE STUDY

The research questions are as follows: What do fifth-grade pupils (aged eleven to twelve years) know about the Holocaust? What ideas do they have on the subject? How do they explain this historic event, who do they know who was affected by it, and who do they hold accountable for what? Seven pupils (four boys and three girls) from the fifth grade were interviewed using semi-structured one-on-one interviews. The teacher and

Table 1 Debate: Gertrud Beck (1998, 110ff.) vs. Matthias Heyl (1998, 120ff.) (translated by Mathis)

<i>Gertrud Beck (Pro)</i>	<i>Matthias Heyl (Con)</i>
At the primary school level education must be conducted with the awareness that Auschwitz must never happen again Children have prior knowledge	Primary schoolchildren can be emotionally and cognitively overwhelmed, even traumatized Children do not face what actually happened, we should not confront them too soon
The Holocaust is a taboo subject for adults, not for children By addressing the issue early, the emergence of diffuse anxieties and the formation of prejudices can be prevented Children are more open to the subject, Primary school age is particularly well suited for a first approach to the Holocaust	Adults run the risk of being led astray when looking at the complexity of what happened We need to make children feel safe and secure; anything that leaves them feeling cold, makes them close their eyes and cover their ears must be avoided Innocent children cannot be expected to cope with this rupture in civilization
Educational objectives include human dignity, tolerance and openness in terms of personality formation and self-cultivation It must and can be allowed to give impressions of the complexity of these historical events	Problems such as minorities and majorities, objectives like tolerance and open-mindedness do not require discussions of the Holocaust; there is a risk of exploitation The complexity of the Holocaust needs precise, painstaking and radical self-reflection. 'Auschwitz requires all our efforts in thinking'

then the headmaster of a primary school in the area of Wohlen AG were asked about the interview beforehand. Parents were informed in writing of the intention of the study and were assured that the children would not be confronted with atrocities and that these would only be addressed when the children broached this subject themselves.¹⁶ The conversations were recorded and then transcribed. The transcriptions were analysed using the grounded theory method, i.e. theoretical coding.¹⁷ In what follows we present some of the most relevant pupils' conceptions on the subject. The children's names are pseudonyms.¹⁸

HISTORICAL CULTURE AND EVERYDAY LIFE

Almost all children name their grandparents as a source of knowledge about the Holocaust: *'I always think of my grandfather, because he was born in World War II and repeatedly told me about World War II'* (Natascha:

42). It seems that grandparents told their grandchildren quite often about World War II, whilst parents—particularly mothers—respond more to specific questions asked by children, as Nicolas puts it: *‘We just asked because our older cousins talked about it and then we thought, what’s that about, and then they didn’t want to say anything and then we asked our mum’* (Nicolas: 64). Besides parents, older friends and relatives also bring up the subject in the daily lives of children. The children named the television as a further important source of historical culture. If the pupils are allowed to watch a documentary on television about the Holocaust, their father is often with them. Some children have already seen a film that documents the Holocaust in some way. Even books, mostly checked out of the school library, are mentioned: *‘...and then I browsed through the book a bit and then there was a page on the Holocaust and they locked them up in houses and let gas in’* (Micha: 61/62). Others come up with computer games as a resource, although some of them are unauthorized for their age group: *‘...my cousins have a play-station game which takes place during this period. Around the time of the World War, like where they fought against each other.... The Americans against the Germans.... I played the Americans’* (Nicolas: 65). Unfortunately, the pupils could not provide specific information on the programme, movie titles, or names of the games or books. However, the examples show clearly that children are confronted in an extracurricular context with the Holocaust and World War II—whether accompanied by an adult or not.

CONCEPTIONS OF THE HOLOCAUST

Our study also demonstrates that primary school pupils do have prior knowledge about the destruction of the Jews, for example they express on their own that the Jews were gassed, without being asked the question. Whilst being interviewed, the pupils called the Jews a group of victims. They were then asked the question of what actually happened to the Jews. It is striking that almost all of the children use in their first instance words like ‘hunt’, ‘shoot’ and ‘gas’. Only one girl answered rather vaguely: *‘Well, I think they murdered a lot of them as well’* (Natasha: 80). The boys seem to comment mostly on the gassing: *‘...and they locked them up in houses, let gas in and then they died’* (Micha: 61). Most mention this at the beginning, before the firing squad is mentioned: *‘Yeah, I think he locked them up and killed them with gas or something. And maybe shot them as well’* (Timo: 47). However, the pupils hardly mention aspects of the systematic exclu-

sion of the Jews, of the isolation and of deportation.¹⁹ They are not aware of the fact that the situation of the Jews gradually got worse and worse.²⁰ Their conceptions prove less developed regarding the reasons for the murder of the Jews. The majority of pupils believe that Hitler wanted to destroy the Jews because of their faith: ‘...and he was against the Jews, because they had a different faith’ (Nicolas: 61).²¹ This is where Adolf Hitler as a person plays a central role in children’s conceptions, which takes us to the next section.

HITLER(CENTR)ISM

The pupils have a great deal to say about Hitler. Andrea Becher spoke in this context of ‘Hitler(centr)ism’.²² On the one hand there is great focus on the person of Hitler. He is *overpowering*, the *seducer*, the *feared one*, the *Jewish persecutor* and the *main perpetrator*. On the other hand, ‘Hitler’s ubiquitous presence in the children’s statements’ is significant. Becher argues: ‘His doings, his thoughts and courses of action are the linchpin to a child’s perception.’²³ This is enhanced in the last two aspects of *resistance* and *war*.

Hitler the mis-leader: When asked what they know about Hitler, about half the children respond in some detail. Furthermore, some children try to explain why Hitler could become so powerful. For example, Micha says: ‘So yes, he/I mean a lot of people didn’t have any jobs in World War II and then he promised them a job and then everyone went to him and then he was able to conquer the world/well he tried to conquer the world’ (Micha: 58). Timo puts it somewhat superficially, pointing out that Hitler, who was originally an Austrian, was chosen by the Germans as a leader because they thought that he was ‘*the right man for the job*’ (Timo: 46).

Hitler the mighty: Hitler is described by the pupils as being ‘very powerful’ and ‘power-crazed’. In response to a question about his objectives, many of the children answer that he not only wanted to conquer ‘more land’ but also wanted to ‘get rid of the Jews’ (Noah: 55). Most of the children did not know which countries were finally occupied and conquered by Germany. However, they assume that there were ‘a lot’. Micha (58) elaborates that except for Switzerland, Hitler occupied ‘nearly all the neighbouring countries’ to Germany.

The pupils explain quite often that Hitler’s great power contributed to the German population’s passiveness: ‘Well, I would say that there were

people who were against it, but I don't think they would have somehow dared to say anything because they already knew that Hitler was very powerful...' (Natascha: 45).

Hitler the dreaded: As already mentioned, the children describe the fear Hitler instilled in people as an explanation for why the rest of the population looked the other way, stood idly by or actively co-operated. Noah's example demonstrates this: *'The [Germans, A/N] to some extent were quite normal and they had to participate or they had to die themselves. He just said, "Either you cooperate or I'll kill you", just like that'* (Noah: 57). The children's ideas are clear here—that those people who did not share Hitler's view or resisted him were 'immediately' murdered (Natascha: 45).²⁴

Hitler the persecutor of the Jews: Fundamentally, the pupils share the idea that Hitler was active in persecuting the Jews, as an executioner in the Holocaust. He 'hunted', 'imprisoned', 'tortured', 'shot', 'gassed' and 'killed' the Jews. Nicolas puts it this way: *'For example, he put them in a room and then gassed them'* (Nicolas: 62). The idea that Hitler acted as a historical protagonist at all levels in the destruction of the Jews is clear to the children. This may be connected to the fact that the pupils are not aware of how the destruction was organized. They do, however, mention in this context a number of reasons for his actions. Whilst most are content to think that Hitler 'for some reason didn't like the Jews' and that they did not fit into his world (Noah: 55; Sandra: 65), Micha brings in another aspect, the stereotype of rich Jews: *'So uh, the Holocaust, the Jews/tried to kill them because they were rich businessmen and of course they had money and oil'* (Micha: 59).

Hitler the perpetrator: According to the children, the following passage contains all the actions for which Hitler is responsible. *'Hitler just wanted... A single race group'* (Timo: 47). Hitler is described as 'the initiator and engine of the war'.²⁵ In their conceptual ideas, he is solely responsible for World War II, the persecution of the Jews and other events in the Third Reich. However, some children make it quite clear that Hitler could not have been responsible for this war alone, yet they repeatedly refer to his sole guilt and in doing so actually unburden the thinking and actions of the civilian population at the time of National Socialism. Nevertheless, the pupils know that Hitler had 'followers', as Timo explains (48): *'It probably wasn't just him but I don't really know anyone else actually. Only a few. They call them "Nazis"'* (Natascha: 43; Noah: 56).²⁶

The resistance to Hitler: According to the pupils, this concept was difficult to fathom: 'So ... I'd say that there were people who were against it, but I don't think they would have dared say anything anyhow because they knew that Hitler was already very powerful...' (Natascha: 114). The children's ideas are such that there were indeed people in Germany who did not agree with the events, yet for fear of Hitler, most had taken a passive approach. When asked whether all the Germans were against the Jews, Micha answers: 'No, I don't think so'. And on the question of whether he thinks there were people who helped them during this time Micha goes on: 'No, I don't think so, because they would have been afraid of being murdered' (Micha: 61).

Some pupils do know, however, that there were people in Germany who tried to help the Jews or contributed to the resistance against Hitler, as Noah explains (57): 'Yeah – there were one or two that I think...I think there were people who hid a few'. It is in this context, however, that the ambivalence of the subject is shown. For example, take Micha's view when asked about the options of the resistance: '...an attempt to assassinate Hitler. There were a few things that they tried. I think they tried about 23 times, but it didn't work.... Yeah. They just realized that he was up to a lot of nonsense and perhaps they might not have liked the Jews at first but they did realize that he was up to no good' (Micha: 61).

Although the children are aware that no one person can be responsible for a war, they ultimately assign Hitler the blame by saying that the rest of the population had to join in because otherwise they would have been murdered. The children are also aware that not everyone agreed with the events, yet all of them are of the opinion that no one could undertake anything to bring the almighty Hitler down.

Hitler and the war: The pupils' ideas about World War II relate mainly to Hitler as a person.²⁷ When asked what World War II was about, most children respond with 'world domination', 'conquer the world', 'enlarge his Reich', 'more countries', 'more glory' (cf. for example, Natascha: 42; Timo: 47; Lionel: 51). In the eyes of the children, World War II ended with Hitler's death (cf. Sandra: 68; Micah: 59).

The pupils regard Hitler as the personification of evil. Lionel tries to illustrate this by comparing and making a reference to the present. '...He's the one who really started World War II. And eh, actually a terrorist' (Lionel: 51).

This Hitler(centr)istic, personalized mode of interpretation outweighs the idea about people being involved in the war against their will. The

pupils’ conception of Hitler(centr)ism unburdens Hitler’s followers and the passiveness of the German population.

CHILDREN’S IDEAS ABOUT SWITZERLAND’S ROLE

As this study serves to investigate what conceptions Swiss primary school pupils have about the Holocaust, the role Switzerland played in World War II is also of relevance. Most children know that Switzerland permitted Germany to ship goods by railway. They are therefore well aware that the ‘uninvolved’ Switzerland is far from being uninvolved.²⁸ The children state that the main reason the country was not uninvolved was their fear of being occupied by Germany. This fear legitimizes Switzerland’s behaviour during World War II, the way it manoeuvred between adaptation and resistance. Ultimately the children, however, do not cast doubt on Switzerland’s non-involvement or its neutrality.

IDEAS ABOUT THE JEWS

Ideas on what precisely is ‘Jewry’ become of interest with regard to the pupils’ ideas about the Holocaust.²⁹ According to the pupils’ conceptions, a possible reason for their persecution was the Jewish faith—it was ‘different’: *‘yeah that...well yeah we’ve got a faith...well we believe in God and we are either Reformed or Catholic for example. And they simply had a different faith. I think Hitler had something against the fact that they didn’t have eh our faith, yeah’* (Natascha: 43). The children believe that Jews are different to ‘us’ mainly because of their faith.³⁰ The children, however, have no clear concept of what this ‘other religion’ is. *‘In Christ they didn’t believe or in Jesus, did they?’* (Timo: 48). *‘Uh (4) I actually think they also believe in God’* (Noah 55). *‘In Jesus as well but I don’t think they believe in God’* (Nicolas: 62). *‘I think they’re a bit different, they worship something like Buddha? No, that’s somewhere else’* (Lionel: 53). *‘Yeah, they are the ones, who...I mean who still...Christians actually came from the Jews, so to speak. Originally’* (Noah 55).

There are, however, children who hold the idea that this distinction is also reflected in their appearance: *‘I don’t think that they are white, but are darker, and then he wanted to wipe them out because basically he [Hitler, A/N] only wanted to have one race of people – the whites’* (Timo: 47). Timo adopts the arguments of the Nazis here and refers to the Jews as a race. It is also apparent that the pupils associate ‘we’ with the whites and the Jews

are the ‘non-whites’.³¹ It becomes obvious that some pupils spread antisemitic stereotypes: *‘Well uh, the Holocaust, attempt to kill the Jews because they were rich businessmen and had money and oil of course.... Yeah, oil, that’s part of it too so yeah, that means money too’* (Micha: 59).

SUMMARY

Raul Hilberg explains that the destruction process unfolded in ‘an inherent pattern’ that proceeded in ‘three organic sequential steps’: ‘definition-concentration-destruction. This is the structural determinism of a fundamental process, as no group without prior concentration of a victim or its imprisonment can kill and no victim can be killed before the perpetrator knows to which group he belongs’.³² Our study shows that pupils have ideas, particularly about the third stage, destruction. They lack, however, almost entirely ideas about the systematic persecution and murder of people that took place under the structures and mechanisms of the Nazi regime. Only when using sample material and by digging deeper are we able to go into the substance of the processes of exclusion and discrimination, and even then the responses are vague: As Natascha says (45): *‘It was probably really terrible for the Jews because they weren’t allowed to go anywhere else really.’*

The Holocaust, according to the studied primary school pupils’ conceptions, is one consequence of Hitler’s will to persecute and destroy, which is based primarily on his religiously embossed ‘antipathy’ towards the Jews. The person Adolf Hitler is a central pivotal point of the pupils’ conception. On the one hand, this Hitler(centr)ism is a reason for focusing on the phase of destruction. On the other hand, it rejects the ideas of the structure of the Nazi regime and, thus, the enforcement of its Jewish policy.³³

It has been shown that children aged eleven to twelve years have acquired some kind of knowledge on the subject outside of school. They relate it from conversations between and with adults, from the media, from books and from other sources of historical culture. This is why the Holocaust should be an issue for primary schools, particularly if children broach the subject at school themselves by way of asking questions or through conversation.³⁴

It is therefore incorrect to believe that all children first come into contact with the Holocaust in secondary school. Making this subject taboo in primary schools is unhelpful. Children’s impressions, their fragmentary

knowledge and the conceptions described must be used for further learning. Admittedly, one must think long and hard about how this difficult subject can be taught to primary schoolchildren without overwhelming them mentally or emotionally, on the one hand, and without significantly reducing the history of the Holocaust and therefore playing down its importance, on the other.

Thus, materials for Swiss primary teachers have been developed.³⁵ These focus on learning about the Shoah with biographical stories from Jewish refugees who as children fled to Switzerland during the time of National Socialism. The goal was to do this in response to pupils’ prior knowledge and conceptions presented here, in the context of Switzerland as a bystander country, and in the context of primary school pedagogical principles.

Therefore, personal stories with positive values based on survivor testimonies have been collected and written addressing life before, during and after the Holocaust. The learning materials contain pictures, official documents (e.g. passports), letters, postcards and so forth. On the level of didactics, an inquiry-based learning (self- and task-regulated) approach is applied (www.lehrplan.ch), i.e. the focus is on comparisons, first between life stories and materials providing historical contexts (e.g. refugee policy, Red Cross, churches, Swiss antisemitism, Nuremberg Laws) and, second, with the contemporary legal basis, e.g. the UN convention on the rights of the child.³⁶

NOTES

1. The Holocaust is viewed as a ‘hot potato’ for primary teacher students at the University of Applied Sciences and Arts of Northwestern Switzerland (FHNW) and should therefore be steered well clear of. First and foremost the fear of burning their fingers because of parents’ complaints, for example, is great. Second, they fear they are not able to teach the subject in a child-friendly manner and therefore will fail. Only in third place were the anxieties of overwhelming the children emotionally with the subject. This is based on an unsystematic survey of students at the School of Education FHNW in Liestal by Mathis in 2009–2011.
2. Cf. Vera Hanfland, *Holocaust – ein Thema für die Grundschule? Eine empirische Untersuchung zum Geschichtsbewusstsein von Viertklässlern* (Berlin 2008); Andrea Becher, *Die Zeit des Holocaust in Vorstellungen von Grundschulkindern. Eine empirische Untersuchung im Kontext Holocaust Education* (Oldenburg 2009); Alexandra Flügel, *Kinder können das auch*

- schon mal wissen...’ Nationalsozialismus und Holocaust im Spiegel kindlicher Reflexions- und Kommunikationsprozesse* (Opladen/Farmington Hills 2009); Christina Klätte, ‘Frühes historisches Lernen über Nationalsozialismus und Judenverfolgung. Familiäre Bedingungen, Interessen und Wissenserwerb bei Viertklässlern’ in Isabel Enzenbach, Detlef Pech, Christina Klätte (Hrsg.), *Kinder und Zeitgeschichte: Jüdische Geschichte und Gegenwart, Nationalsozialismus und Antisemitismus* (= 8. Beiheft von *widerstreit-sachunterricht.de*) (Berlin 2012), pp. 85–99.
3. Already in the 1960s, Ausubel stressed the importance of existing knowledge and knowledge activation as follows: ‘If I had to reduce all educational psychology to just one principle, I would say this: The most important single factor influencing learning is what the learner already knows. Ascertain this and teach him accordingly.’ David P. Ausubel, *Educational psychology: A cognitive view* (New York 1968), VI.
 4. Cf. Hilke Günther-Arndt, ‘Historisches Lernen und Wissenserwerb’ in Hilke Günther-Arndt, Meik Zülsdorf-Kersting (Hrsg.), *Geschichtsdidaktik. Praxishandbuch für die Sekundarstufe I und II* (Berlin 2014), pp. 24–49. Christian Mathis, ‘Irgendwie ist doch da mal jemand geköpft worden’. *Didaktische Rekonstruktion der Französischen Revolution und der historischen Kategorie Wandel* (Baltmannsweiler 2015).
 5. Cf. Wolfgang Schnotz, ‘Conceptual Change’ in Detlef H. Rost (Hrsg.), *Handwörterbuch Pädagogische Psychologie* (Weinheim 2001), pp. 75–81; Hilke Günther-Arndt, ‘Conceptual Change-Forschung. Eine Aufgabe für die Geschichtsdidaktik?’ in Hilke Günther-Arndt, Michael Sauer (Hrsg.), *Geschichtsdidaktik empirisch. Untersuchungen zum historischen Denken und Lernen* (Berlin 2006), pp. 251–277; Margarita Limón, ‘Conceptual change in history’, in Margarita Limón, Lucia Mason (Hrsg.), *Reconsidering conceptual change. Issue in theory and practice* (Dordrecht/Boston/London 2002), pp. 259–289.
 6. Peter Gautschi, ‘1. Sektion: Vorstellungen von der Shoa in der Schweiz heute’ in Béatrice Ziegler, Bernhard C. Schär, Peter Gautschi, Claudia Schneider (Hrsg.), *Die Schweiz und die Shoa. Von Kontroversen zu neuen Fragen* (Zürich 2012), pp. 13–17, p. 14 here (translated by Mathis).
 7. The various terms of this subject in Switzerland and their underlying conceptions cf. Markus Kübler, ‘Sachunterricht in der Schweiz – Lehrpläne zwischen Föderalismus und Zentralisierung’, in Markus Peschel, Pascal Favre, Christian Mathis (Hrsg.), *saCHen unterriCHten. Beiträge zur Situation der Sachunterrichtsdidaktik in der deutschsprachigen Schweiz* (Baltmannsweiler 2013), pp. 21–40.
 8. Cf. Dagmar Richter, *Sachunterricht – Ziele und Inhalte. Ein Lehr- und Studienbuch zur Didaktik*, (Baltmannsweiler 2005), pp. 76–103.

9. Detlef Pech also expresses this position and speaks of an ‘incapacitation process’ when socially important issues such as the Holocaust and National Socialism are withheld from primary school pupils: ‘Holocaust and National Socialism must be subjects taught in General Studies (i.e. *Sachunterricht*), because they are relevant out of a lifeworld orientation perspective and in regard to Bildung.’ Detlef Pech, ‘unfassbar(,) ungeklärt. Reflexionen über sachunterrichtliche Bedeutungen einer Auseinandersetzung mit dem Holocaust in der Grundschule’, in Detlef Pech, Marcus Rauterberg, Katharina Stoklas (Hrsg.), *Möglichkeiten und Relevanz der Auseinandersetzung mit dem Holocaust im Sachunterricht der Grundschule*, www.widerstreit-sachunterricht.de, 3. Beiheft, (Frankfurt am Main 2006), p. 58.
10. Cf. Hanfland, *Holocaust – ein Thema*, p. 9 f.
11. Becher, *Die Zeit des Holocaust*, p. 34 (translated by Mathis).
12. Cf. Detlef Pech, Andrea Becher, ‘Holocaust Education als Beitrag zur Gesellschaftlichen Bildung in der Grundschule’, in Diethard Cech, Hartmut Giest (Hrsg.) *Zwischen Grundlagenforschung und Unterrichtspraxis. Erwartungen an die Didaktik des Sachunterrichts* (Bad Heilbrunn 2005), pp. 87–102, p. 90 here; Becher, *Die Zeit des Holocaust*, p. 36. Flügel’s opinion on the pro–con debate: ‘To what extent developments will take place in the end has much to do with the fact of how primary education and the individual teaching methodology will devote time to the discussion about possibilities and difficulties...and continue further research.’ Flügel, ‘*Kinder können das auch schon mal wissen...*’, p. 175 (translated by Mathis).
13. Cf. Dietmar von Reeken, ‘Holocaust und Nationalsozialismus als Thema in der Grundschule? Historisch-politisches Lernen im Sachunterricht’, in Dagmar Richter (Hrsg.), *Politische Bildung von Anfang an. Demokratie-Lernen in der Grundschule* (Bonn 2007), pp. 199–214, p. 211 here.
14. An exception can be seen for example in two BA theses supervised by Christian Mathis at the School of Education FHNW. Cf. Christoph Graf, Remo Sprenger, *Schülervorstellungen von Primarschülerinnen und Primarschülern zum Holocaust – Eine empirische Erkundung*. Unpublished Bachelor thesis, submitted at the School of Education FHNW (Liestal 2011); Natalie Urech, *Holocaust – ein Thema für Schweizer Primarschulen? Chancen und Grenzen*. Bachelor thesis, submitted at the School of Education FHNW (Zofingen 2012).
15. The history of the discussion of the pros and cons and this tabular account was taken from the thesis written by Andrea Becher. Cf. Becher, *Die Zeit des Holocaust*, pp. 32–37, p. 35 here. The table is based on Gertrud Beck, ‘Der Holocaust als Thema für die Grundschule’, in Jürgen Moysich, Matthias Heyl (Hrsg.), *Der Holocaust. Ein Thema für Kindergarten und Grundschule? Kongress: Internationale Tagung ‘Der Holocaust – ein Thema*

- für Kindergarten und Grundschule?* in Hamburg 1997 (Hamburg 1998), pp. 110–119 and Matthias Heyl, ‘Nein, aber... oder: Warum?’, in *ibid.*, pp. 120–141. Reference point of the whole discussion to date is Adorno’s broadcast speech from 1966 with the central statement: ‘The prime demand upon all education is that Auschwitz not occur again’, Theodor W. Adorno, ‘*Erziehung nach Auschwitz*’, in Theodor W. Adorno, *Erziehung zur Mündigkeit. Vorträge und Gespräche mit Hellmut Becker 1959–1969* (Frankfurt am Main ¹³1971), p. 88 (translated by Mathis). Often forgotten here is that Adorno emphasizes in this speech that education, which wants to prevent a recurrence of the Holocaust, has to focus on early childhood. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
16. For information regarding sample and the research methods see Urech, *Holocaust – ein Thema*, p. 14. The guideline was inspired by Becher, *Die Zeit des Holocausts*, p. 104.
 17. Cf. Anselm Strauss, Juliet Corbin, *Grounded Theory: Grundlagen Qualitativer Sozialforschung* (Weinheim 1996), pp. 39–147. Although the results of Andrea Becher were known and gave direction, the principle of openness was paid attention to, so as to remain sensitive to new codes and categories. Cf. Becher, *Die Zeit des Holocausts*.
 18. The results presented here focus on the information relevant for the question of Natalie Urech’s bachelor’s thesis students’ conceptions. Cf. Urech, *Holocaust – ein Thema*, p. 14. Certain categories are not ‘saturated’. Cf. Anselm L. Strauss, *Grundlagen qualitativer Sozialforschung* (München 1998), p. 49. Here it is necessary in the sense of ‘theoretical sampling’ collection and evaluation of further interviews see Barney G. Glaser, Anselm L. Strauss, *Grounded Theory. Strategien qualitativer Forschung* (Bern 2005), pp. 53–83.
 19. This has some similarities with Foster et al., *What do students know and understand about the Holocaust? Evidence from English secondary schools* (London, 2016), pp. 194–198.
 20. One possible reason why children know nothing about the deportations could be, for example, that they have no idea of where the Jews were living at that time. The majority of the children were neither aware that the Jews were living in Europe nor that they were identified as Jews, taken away and murdered by deportations, and that only after the war, many of them went to Israel. Some pupils believed that the Jews lived in Israel at that time: ‘Well, I...well I don’t know...well, if you look at the world map, then more in the East’ (Lionel: 54).
 21. Cf. Becher, *Die Zeit des Holocausts*, pp. 205–207 and Foster et al., *What do students know*, pp. 129.
 22. Cf. Becher, *Die Zeit des Holocausts*, pp. 142–150.
 23. The results are roughly consistent with those of Foster et al., *What do students know*, pp. 46–50, 146–151 and Becher, *Die Zeit des Holocausts*,

- pp. 142–150, pp. 196–200 (translated by Mathis). The name of the swastika as ‘Hitler Cross’ illustrates this as a kind of narrative abbreviation (Rüsen).
24. Apart from the murders, the pupils also know the term of confinement. To some extent it shows a concept of National Socialist terror and of totalitarian dictatorship. Von Reeken calls for this to be addressed in primary school classrooms. Cf. von Reeken, ‘Holocaust und Nationalsozialismus’.
 25. Cf. Becher, *Die Zeit des Holocaust*, p. 144.
 26. Some children’s perceptions mix up the idea and the objective of a pure race with the existence of one. In this case, Hitler supporters are not only supportive for his racial theory, the idea of a pure race, but they also belong to it, as Lionel’s quote shows: ‘I don’t know what it’s called, but I think there are. I think all had blue eyes and – ehm – had blonde hair./ Interviewer: His supporters or all the Germans?/His army I believe’(Cf. Lionel: 51). The term ‘Aryan’ was sporadically dropped in this context (Cf. Micha: 58).
 27. Again a great similarity can be seen with Becher’s results. Cf. Becher, *Die Zeit des Holocaust*, p. 150.
 28. Similar findings can be found in the study by Nicole Peters and Nicole Burger on communicative memory respectively on dealing with memories of the Holocaust in intergenerational dialogue. Cf. Nicole Peter, Nicole Burgermeister, ‘The Holocaust and Switzerland: Competing reminders in intergenerational dialogue’, in Béatrice Ziegler, Bernhard C. Schär, Peter Gautschi, Claudia Schneider (Hrsg.), *Die Schweiz und die Shoah. Von Kontroversen zu neuen Fragen* (Zürich 2012), pp. 19–28.
 29. Here, similar ideas are shown like those of Becher, *Die Zeit des Holocaust*, pp. 175–179.
 30. Cf. Foster et al., *What do students know*, pp. 119–120, 129.
 31. No statements can be made on the basis of the interviews regarding the pupils’ concept of ‘race’.
 32. Raul Hilberg, *Die Vernichtung der europäischen Juden. 3 Bände* (Frankfurt am Main 1999), p. 1067. (Translated by Mathis).
 33. Cf. Becher, *Die Zeit des Holocaust*, p. 210 with reference to Hilberg, *Die Vernichtung der europäischen Juden*, p. 57 and Rainer Zitelmann, ‘Hitler images in Transition’, in Karl Dietrich Bracher, Manfred Funke, Hans-Adolf Jacobsen (Hrsg.), *Germany 1933–1945. New studies on the Nazi rule* (Bonn 1993), p. 502.
 34. This is supported by Foster et al., *What do students know*, pp. 203–210.
 35. See Christian Mathis, Urs Urech, *Verfolgt und vertrieben. Lernen mit Lebensgeschichten* (Zürich 2018).
 36. Also being discussed is a stronger anchoring of Holocaust education in primary teacher studies at the School of Education FHNW by implementation of these teaching materials in (pre-service) teachers’(continuing) professional development courses.



What Do Children Ask? What Do Children Know?: Awareness, Knowledge and Contemporary History

Detlef Pech and Christine Achenbach

BACKGROUND CONTEXT

Reconstructing children's perspectives on problems, questions or factual relationships has become a central task of research in primary education for the last 20 years in Germany. This is justified by the pedagogical theoretical assumption that issues raised in lessons must be compatible with the notions of children in order to adequately model teaching-learning processes. Various terms, such as prerequisites for learning, prior knowledge, widespread beliefs, pre-conceptions¹ and so forth, have been suggested to characterise these notions.

In general studies in primary school education (called *Sachunterricht*),² research in this subject is widely available in the area of natural sciences, with a particular focus on physics-related learning. The focus of this research is on the initiation of 'conceptual change', and investigations into how widespread beliefs can be supplemented with academically viable models in teaching-learning processes.³

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C. W. Szejnmann et al. (eds.), *Holocaust Education in Primary Schools in the Twenty-First Century*, The Holocaust and its Contexts, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-73099-8_15

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There is little research dealing with questions raised by cultural and social sciences in general studies in primary schools.⁴ There is therefore a need for more research in this area.⁵ Based on attempts to understand children's perspectives on social problems and questions, it was recommended that research move away from an emphasis on preliminary knowledge (e.g. prior knowledge, preconceptions) in children's perspectives, as these concern subjectively viable models which have been verified by everyday experiences and are transferred to new challenges. Pech (2006) refers to this as *erfahrungsgebundene Eigentheorien* ('experientially bound personal theories').

The democratic constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany, as well as the opportunity for citizens to participate in German society, is directly linked to their experiences of National Socialism. The consequences of these historical events are experienced in the present time, not just in the form of memorial sites and the naming of streets and public squares, but also in terms of the constitutionality of the Federal Republic of Germany.⁶ Therefore, supporting children in their quest to find their orientation in the world in order to participate in a democratic society requires developing children's understanding of issues such as National Socialism and the Holocaust.

These approaches can be generalised to the question of contemporary history. Just as successful understanding in present-day Germany is linked to knowledge about National Socialism and the Holocaust, equally necessary is an examination of one's personal orientation towards the history of the partition of Germany. The argument, therefore, is that the narrow focus on a single historical aspect should be extended to an examination of contemporary history when working with children⁷ and thereby give children the opportunity to understand personal history as historically situated.⁸ The necessity of this widening of perspectives becomes clear in the empirical examination of children's perceptions, which don't include any systematic ordering of historical phases, but rather link fragments of knowledge and narratives. For example, children of primary school age repeatedly create a direct link between Hitler and the building of the Berlin Wall.⁹

It has also been shown by empirical studies into children's questions concerning contemporary history that a personally motivated interest rather than a systematic interest is initially present.¹⁰

Current findings indicate that from a research perspective, it makes sense to extensively examine the things children consider relevant and

meaningful. This means examining how children combine and connect impressions and bodies of knowledge in order to structure information and personal perceptions on the basis of their experiences. The research approach of phenomenography¹¹ has been demonstrated in several projects to provide a viable framework in this area.¹² The goal of this approach is to develop a theory of awareness of contemporary history and the conditions which lead to contemporary-historical learning for children in primary schools.

COURSE OF DISCUSSION¹³

Since 1996 there has been continual development of the discussion about the reasons and broader opportunities which the topics of the Holocaust and National Socialism present when working with children in primary schools. Facilitated by Gertrud Beck, the *Grundschulzeitschrift* ('primary school journal') published an issue in 1996 discussing this theme. The timing of this discussion is to be viewed in connection with a fundamental change in public discourse—particularly in the media—about discussing National Socialism and the Holocaust, following the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Germany in 1995.¹⁴

The discussion was stimulated by a congress which took place in Hamburg in 1997 titled 'The Holocaust: A subject for kindergartens and primary schools?' Papers from this congress were published in 1998 by Jürgen Moysich and Matthias Heyl. In the following years, many articles appeared regarding lessons, teaching projects and diverse teaching practices in primary teaching journals.¹⁵ However, these were generally not well-founded in terms of either subject knowledge or educational practice.¹⁶

An academic and empirically driven chapter regarding the importance of including these issues in lessons was presented in 2001 by history educator Rita Rohrbach in a book published by Klaus Bergmann. She included not only perspectives on different participants (e.g. Hitler Youth, Resistance) in her proposal for the first four school years, but also threw the spotlight on developments in the Weimar Republic.

The work of Heike Deckert-Peacemann from 2002 was the first German study to empirically examine non-German approaches, specifically American approaches, to Holocaust education with children. This study analysed the potential significance of US methodology to the German discussion of the issue. In subsequent years, most publications

presented potential educational justifications for bringing up these issues.¹⁷ In 2006, Waltraud Holl-Giese published a report on a project in which the theoretical basis involved connections to memory discourse and in which a visit to a memorial site (the former concentration camp Wiesengrund, an outpost of the Natzweiler concentration camp) by a primary school was described for the first time.

Since 2005, several publications by Andrea Becher and Detlef Pech have described a concept known as ‘learning via biography’. It includes the idea that learning from the biography of children makes it easier for children today to understand what persecution means in daily life. This approach was implemented in Lower Saxony using the biographies of Marion and Albert Blumenthal in cooperation with the Bergen-Belsen memorial site.¹⁸ The viability of this approach has since been demonstrated through empirical studies.¹⁹ Consequently, a discussion regarding the use of this approach took place and a consensus was reached on using this approach in the teaching of social science in schools. Examples of this are the contributions made by Gertrud Beck and Matthias Heyl to the collection published by Moysich and Heyl in 1998. Dietmar von Reeken also advocated this approach in a summary of the discussion published in 2007.

In 2008, research papers were published which focused on empirically understanding the perspectives of children on National Socialism and the Holocaust. Up to that point there had been only smaller studies, using questionable research methods, on the ‘prior knowledge’ of children regarding this subject, such as the previously mentioned study by Rohrbach (2001). The studies of Andrea Becher and Alexandra Flügel (both 2008) show that children in years three and four (9- and 10-year-olds) already possess extensive knowledge about National Socialism and the Holocaust. These children already demonstrate the central problems we also find in adult perspectives:

- A centring on Hitler as the lone protagonist and person responsible (‘Hitlerism’) (in Becher and Flügel)
- A description of National Socialism as a totalitarian regime in which no resistance took place because it was hopeless (Becher and Flügel)
- A description of Jews as ‘other’, particularly non-German (in Becher)
- Firm and detailed knowledge about destruction and persecution, but not about their origins (in Becher).

Both Flügel and Becher make it clear that in contrast to the assumption formulated by Beck in 1996, National Socialism and the Holocaust are no longer taboo topics between children and adults. This may be attributable to the possibility that primary schoolchildren talk to their parents about the crimes of National Socialism. Furthermore, the findings from Flügel's interviews with children demonstrate that they wish to know more about National Socialism and the Holocaust. Some children stated that they felt that nothing should be kept from them because they don't want to be 'protected' from events that take place in the world.

The third study in this area,²⁰ published by Vera Hanfland, indicates that these historical issues can be tackled from year four onwards, although Hanfland is more cautious in her approach owing to her research orientation and particularly her position on developmental psychology.

Research by Isabel Enzenbach (2011) closed two further gaps in the literature. She demonstrated that primary schoolchildren are both cognitively and emotionally capable of dealing with questions of contemporary history. Enzenbach further demonstrated that although the primary school curriculum in the majority of Berlin primary schools doesn't include this subject, the Holocaust and National Socialism are already being dealt with in many classroom discussions.

These developments, and a growing acceptance of the value of bringing up contemporary historical issues in work with younger children, are supported by the fact that several publishing companies have produced teaching material on these subjects.²¹ This is an important development for further research, because it shows that the possibility of raising contemporary historical issues with younger children has become acceptable in pedagogical practice.

While there is now substantial research into and development of children's perceptions of and levels of knowledge about National Socialism and the Holocaust, and teaching materials on the subject are now widely available, there is comparatively little research into the area of East and West German history. Only a few studies, such as that by Sabine Moller (2008), deal with this subject in relation to primary schoolchildren. In this regard, an initial attempt to formulate the possibilities of addressing the issues of East and West German history was made in 2010.²²

Smaller, exploratory publications about the possibilities of linking social science teaching with memorial sites have appeared only recently.²³ Currently, a comprehensive empirical study which investigates this pos-

sibility is being carried out by Julia Peuke.²⁴ The first conference to take up the idea that children's approaches to contemporary history have no systematic differentiation of historical events in children's perceptions was held in 2015 under the title 'Anne Frank, the Berlin Wall and me' by the Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (National Centre for Political Education), the Anne-Frank-Zentrum Berlin and the Humboldt University of Berlin.²⁵

In conclusion, it would seem that there is a growing and evolving field of research regarding German primary school children's knowledge and awareness of National Socialism and the Holocaust. Furthermore, the first examples of didactic educational materials are currently being published for this age group. However, despite these advances, it is still not possible to describe the extrapolatory context of this pedagogical approach and how it might extend to learning about contemporary history.

RECENT FINDINGS AND PERSPECTIVES

Since 2009 research at the Humboldt University in Berlin has been furthered along two different lines.

The first involves a quantitative study²⁶ that focuses on levels of knowledge among children in year four concerning National Socialism before this issue is formally introduced in lessons (according to the curriculum). Almost 1000 children in Berlin, Brandenburg and North Rhine-Westfalia were tested. Essentially, this study confirmed the previous findings of qualitative studies that Hitler, symbols of National Socialism and so forth were known to around three-quarters of the children before they were introduced via the formal school curriculum.

This study also uncovered a significant new finding in relation to historical learning. What the study found is that there were no differences in terms of an interest in history that could be identified between children from families with or without a history of immigration. In fact, in the group of children from families with a history of immigration, the interest was slightly—although not statistically significantly—higher. However, the level of knowledge about National Socialism among children from families with a history of immigration was—unsurprisingly—lower than that of other children. Analysis of the data shows that children from families with a history of immigration speak significantly less often about National Socialism at home. Speaking about this at home was shown to be one of the central predictors explaining an individual's level of knowledge.

Furthermore, in school classes made up of more children from families with a history of immigration, teachers were also less likely to make this era a subject area for classroom discussion.

We can, therefore, speak about a double disadvantage in this area of historical learning, as children who don't benefit from the passing on of knowledge through discussions in the family may also not be exposed to certain contemporary history issues in school lessons.²⁷ This aspect of a double disadvantage was also recently examined in Germany in the area of early political learning, even if it isn't referred to as such. Van Deth et al. (2007) studied the knowledge levels of children in their first year at school (roughly age six) in a large-scale quantitative empirical study. They found that children from families with a history of immigration knew significantly less about the political system in Germany than children from families with no history of immigration. One would assume that with entry into school and the systematic learning that entails, these differences would be levelled out. However, the findings of van Deth et al. (2007) showed exactly the opposite. After the first year of school, the difference in knowledge levels between these groups in terms of knowledge about politics had grown rather than shrunk.

When we combine these findings with our model, we find that it is not a question of student interest but rather one of which families these children come from and what knowledge they already possess. Additionally, these subjects are less likely to be introduced into classrooms with a higher proportion of children from families with a history of immigration.

On the other hand, a project financed by the German National Ministry for Education and Research investigated what children actually view as relevant phenomena which require political understanding.²⁸ Using a phenomenographic research approach, this empirical study interviewed children about their awareness and understanding of war in order to ascertain what aspects children consider to be important in their understanding of these conflicts. The results revealed evidence corresponding to those of studies on children's perceptions and levels of knowledge about National Socialism. These highlight a failure to tackle the issue of the development and origins of conflicts, both in terms of the beginning of military activities as well as the end, while also indicating that children focus particularly on the major players. The dimension of negotiation, in the case of conflicts between states, for example the United Nations and others, is not considered by primary schoolchildren. Instead the major

players are personalised. They are not understood in their function as governmental leader or president, but as a person. This form of personalisation has been described many times in research on political socialisation.²⁹ In the literature on political education, this perspective among children is often considered problematic. In a phenomenographic approach this assessment is transformed because this approach moves children's own perspectives to the centre of the pedagogical narrative. What research shows, therefore, is that children are aware of an aspect of the political situation which is relevant for them—even if it has not been sufficiently developed from an academic point of view. Rather than considering this a problematic perspective, the logical consequence for teaching practice is to give children opportunities to develop their awareness, integrating further aspects relevant to their understanding of the situation.³⁰

If we place the central assertions of both strands of research in parallel, we find the following:

- Children of primary school age understand political-historical events on the basis of their experiences.
- Children of primary school age focus their attention on concrete, tangible events, not on the origins of political-historical events.
- Children of primary school age personalise the major players and assign concrete individuals responsibility and power, without taking societal negotiation and participation processes into account.
- Children of primary school age benefit from the development of their perceptions of societal and historical process from narratives told in both school and the family, as these enable them to contextualise themselves in relation to the events.

The outcome of this description is to direct future research towards an explicit focus on the awareness of political-historical events and processes, as well as to abandon the focus on concrete historical events, in order to generally describe children's experience of contemporary history.

Assuming the viability of the findings thus far, it is possible to assume that the way in which children structure their perspectives of historical events must also be found among children in other countries in relation to their perceptions of central contemporary historical events in their own country. To this end a comparative research project between South African and German primary schoolchildren is proposed.

PROSPECTS: CONTEMPORARY HISTORY AND CHILDREN. APPROACHES IN GERMANY AND SOUTH AFRICA

‘The fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of apartheid in South Africa has come to be inextricably linked in popular imagination, typified by newspaper headlines and editorial comment in South Africa commemorating the 20th anniversary.’³¹

Because the fall of the Berlin Wall followed the release of Nelson Mandela from Robben Island, many have used these significant historical events to make the connection between a racial wall and a physical wall that has fallen, both of which can be considered the fall of an ideology in both countries; they represent ideological walls that were removed within a short time of each other.³² ‘The greatest connection between the two events is in the shift in popular and wider political perceptions...’³³

In both cases, the countries experienced radical changes in social structures at almost the same time in history. The end of Apartheid can be considered to have had at least an equally far-reaching impact on the South African population as reunification had on the German population. Today, more than 20 years after these two significant historical events, their ongoing impact continues to influence the populations of both countries.

In Germany, for example, you still hear about ‘walls in the heads of people’. In South Africa racial separation is still visible in the education sector, since, despite the fact that schools are now racially integrated, the quality of basic education continues to differ depending on the school that a child attends.³⁴

What do children ask about the fall of the wall and the end of Apartheid? What do they know?

An empirical consideration of the structures found within children’s historical conceptions could provide an understanding about the facilitation of childhood conceptions and awareness of contemporary history.

In the development of the research questions, children’s questions are taken into consideration as many children also have questions concerning contemporary historical developments. However, not only do their questions differ among themselves, but they also vary in their range and complexity.³⁵

A theory of children's conceptions and awareness of contemporary history could allow an adaptation of learning settings and teaching of contemporary history, based on the needs of children, with the goal of them developing democratic competencies. Because both countries face ongoing challenges regarding democracy, the importance of children developing democratic competencies in order to be able to participate in a democratic society has become increasingly clear.

Recent South African studies have investigated the potential for including the study of democracy in South African schools in the curriculum to not only improve the general quality of education but also enhance national unity.³⁶ Similarly, the need for democratic education is a significant topic, highlighted by the recent establishment of political groups and parties like PEGIDA and AFD in Germany. The belief that democracy is the best existing form of government also differs between West Germans (80 per cent agreement) and East Germans (60 per cent agreement).³⁷ Thus, both South Africa and Germany are struggling to resolve tensions created by historical events, and both are hoping to advance a focus on democratic education within primary school populations.

CONCLUSION

Research conducted in Germany over the last 10 years shows that primary school (ages 9 or 10) German children already have considerable knowledge about National Socialism and the Holocaust. They are aware that this period is important in German history, but they can't describe why or explain how it happened.

While didactic materials have been published, there is still little discussion about the context of learning in relation to contemporary history. This is surprising, because the history of the former East Germany (German Democratic Republic) is relevant to an understanding of German society in the present day.

The published studies on the perspectives of children show that there may be a common structure inherent in children's awareness of historical and political events. This postulate will be investigated through a comparative empirical research project conducted in primary schools in South Africa and Germany.

NOTES

1. Gläser, Eva, *Arbeitslosigkeit aus der Perspektive von Kindern. Eine Studie zur didaktischen Relevanz ihrer Alltagstheorien* (Bad Heilbrunn, 2002).
2. *Sachunterricht* is a German school subject for children in years one to four, which includes all social and natural sciences. The academic society for the teaching of general studies (Fachgesellschaft der Didaktik des Sachunterrichts) translates the term as 'general studies in primary education'. *Sachunterricht* and its didactics are understood here as a pedagogical discipline which examines the learning of children in the school subject *Sachunterricht*. In the use of the term *Sachlernen*, reference is made to the idea that this discipline can also raise the subject of the relationship between child, object and the world in preschool and out-of-school education.
3. Concerning conceptual change, see Duit (1997), Max (1997) and Kaiser (2008).
4. For an example of this research see Moll (2001), Gläser (2002), Kalcziacs et al. (2011) and Götzmann (2015).
5. Pech, Detlef, 'Gesellschaftliche Bildung im Sachunterricht', *Grundschulzeitschrift*, 264 (2013), pp. 16–19.
6. Aly, Götz, *Hitlers Volksstaat. Raub, Rassenkrieg und nationaler Sozialismus* (Frankfurt, 2005).
7. Pech, Detlef, 'Zeitgeschichte, Deutschland, Kinder – Annäherungen zum zeitgeschichtlichen Lernen in der Primarstufe', *LaG-Magazin*, 10 (2012).
8. This position is based on the argumentation of Rüsen (1996) concerning the significance of narratives in the development of a sense of history (see also Musenberg and Pech 2011).
9. Peuke, Julia, 'Zeitgeschichte im Sachunterricht – Zwischen Kompetenzorientierung und Lebensweltbezug' in Giest/Goll/Hartinger (ed.), *Sachunterricht – zwischen Kompetenzorientierung, Persönlichkeitsentwicklung, Lebenswelt und Fachbezug* (2016), pp. 202–209.
10. Hempel, Alexa and Pech, 'Detlef, Kinder erforschen Geschichte – Zeitzeugeninterviews zur deutschen Teilung', *Zeitschrift für interpretative Schul- und Unterrichtsforschung*, fifth series (2016).
11. Marton, Ference and Booth, Sherley, *Learning and Awareness* (Mahwah, NJ, 1997).
12. Pech, Detlef, Schomaker, Claudia, Lüschen, Iris and Kiewitt, Nina, 'Phänomenografische Untersuchungen für den Sachunterricht,' (Wiesbaden, 2012), pp. 221–228.
13. See Pech (2012a) for a comprehensive discussion of this.
14. Concerning the significance of media presentations of 'cultural memory' in this connection see Flügel (2008a).

15. For example Rodenhäuser (1996), Fege and Matthey (1999) and Schwarz (2001).
16. Alongside this branch of the discussion, there was a differentiated discussion particularly in German education about children's books about the Holocaust and National Socialism triggered by works published in the 1980s: 'Rosa Weiss' by Robert Innocenti and 'Judith und Lisa' by Elisabeth Reuter (Thiele 1988; Dahrendorf 1999, 2004; Wyrobnik 2007).
17. Deckert-Peaceman, Heike, 'Warum gibt es immer noch Nazis?', Michalik, Kerstin (ed.) *Geschichtsbezogenes Lernen im Sachunterricht. Sachunterricht konkret* (2004), pp. 71–86; Pech, Detlef, 'Lernen in Konfrontation mit dem Grauen? Zur Auseinandersetzung mit dem Holocaust in der Grundschule', Kaiser, Astrid, Pech, Detlef (ed.), *Die Welt als Ausgangspunkt des Sachunterrichts* (2004), pp. 145–151.
18. Pech, Detlef and Becher, Andrea, 'Holocaust Education als Beitrag zur Gesellschaftlichen Bildung in der Grundschule', *Probleme und Perspektiven des Sachunterrichts*, (15), (2005), pp. 87–102; Becher, Andrea & Pech, Detlef, 'Am ,Du' die Welt entdecken – Ein Zugang zur Geschichte durch Lernen an Biografien', *Grundschule Religion* (2005), pp. 7–9; Becher, Andrea, *-ingesammelt- Ein Unterrichtsprojekt zum Lernen an Biografien im Sachunterricht der Grundschule* (Frankfurt, 2006), pp. 17–34.
19. Weddehage, Karen, 'Dem (eigenen) Leben auf der Spur... Lebensentwürfe und biografisches Lernen im Sachunterricht', Wittkowske, Steffen/von Mahltzahn, Katharina (ed.), *Lebenswirklichkeit und Sachunterricht. Erfahrungen-Ergebnisse Entwicklungen* (2013), pp. 126–134.
20. Hanfland, Vera, *Holocaust – ein Thema für die Grundschule? Eine empirische Untersuchung zum Geschichtsbewusstsein von Viertklässlern* (Münster, 2008).
21. For example Anne-Frank-Zentrum, *Nicht in die Schultüte gelegt. Schicksale jüdischer Kinder 1933–1942 in Berlin. Ein Lernmaterial zu historischem Lernen und Kinderrechten* (Berlin, 2014); Bischoff, Claudia and Nagel, Cäcilia, *Deutschlands dunkle Jahre. Materialien zum Thema „Drittes Reich“ ab 3. Klasse* (Augsburg, 2012).
22. Pech, Detlef and Wulfmeyer, Meike, 'Wie war das damals? Zeitgeschichte als Bereich des historischen Lernens in der Grundschule', *Grundschule*, 7/8 (2010), pp. 6–9.
23. Simon, Toni & Pech, Detlef, 'Gedenkstätten – (k)ein außerschulischer Lernort für die Grundschule?', *Schulpädagogik heute*, 15 (2015), pp. 139–152.
24. Peuke, Julia, 'Zeitgeschichte im Sachunterricht – Zwischen Kompetenzorientierung und Lebensweltbezug', Giest/ Goll/Harteringer (ed.), *Sachunterricht – zwischen Kompetenzorientierung, Persönlichkeitsentwicklung, Lebenswelt und Fachbezug, Zeitgeschichte im Sachunterricht –*

- Zwischen Kompetenzorientierung und Lebensweltbezug* (2016), pp. 202–209.
25. see <https://kindzeit.hypotheses.org/>
 26. Klätte, Christina, ‘Kenntnisse von Grundschulkindern zu Nationalsozialismus und Holocaust – eine empirische Untersuchung in der vierten Jahrgangsstufe’, Giest, Hartmut, Kaiser, Astrid, Schomaker, Claudia (eds.), *Sachunterricht – auf dem Weg zur Inklusion* (=Probleme und Perspektiven des Sachunterrichts, Bd. 21) (2011), pp. 169–173; ‘Klätte, Christina, Frühes historisches Lernen über Nationalsozialismus und Judenverfolgung. Familiäre Bedingungen, Interessen und Wissenserwerb bei Viertklässlern’, *Widerstreit Sachunterricht* (2012), pp. 85–99; Klätte, Christina, ‘Opa hat gegen das Böse gekämpft. – Kenntnisse von Grundschulkindern über Nationalsozialismus und Judenverfolgung’, Hellmich, Frank, Förster, Sabine and Hoya, Fabian (eds.), *Bedingungen des Lehrens und Lernens in der Grundschule und Perspektiven* (2012), pp. 253–256; Koch, Christina, *Zeitgeschichtliches Lernen von Kindern im Grundschulalter* (2017).
 27. Teachers certainly have reasons for this. They point out that in these classes, questions of social learning are mostly dominant and there is no time for such issues.
 28. Kiewitt, Nina, ‘Krieg und Frieden als Thema des Sachunterrichts. Vorstellung eines qualitativen Forschungsvorhabens zum politischen Lernen im Sachunterricht’, *Widerstreit Sachunterricht*, 14 (2010); Kiewitt, Nina, ‘Kindliches Erleben politischer Phänomene – Vorstellung eines phänomenografischen Forschungsvorhabens’, Giest, Hartmut, Herandörr, Eva and Archie, Carmen (eds.), *Lernen und Lehren im Sachunterricht* (2012), pp. 167–174.
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