



# Continuity and Change:

Ten years of teaching and learning  
about the Holocaust in England's  
secondary schools

A research report from the  
UCL Centre for Holocaust Education

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# About the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education

This research report has been written under the auspices of the University College London (UCL) Centre for Holocaust Education. The Centre is part of the IOE, UCL's Faculty of Education and Society – currently the world's leading university for education – and is comprised of a team of researchers and educators from a variety of different disciplinary fields. The Centre works in partnership with the Pears Foundation who, together with the Department for Education, have provided principal funding since the Centre was first established in 2008.

The UCL Centre for Holocaust Education operates at the frontier of teaching and learning about the Holocaust, nationally and internationally. Its central mission is to transform teaching and learning in schools. Adopting a distinct research-informed approach, the Centre conducts pioneering studies into classroom challenges. Drawing on this evidence base, and the specialist knowledge of its expert staff, the Centre has developed world-leading continuing professional development (CPD) courses and materials for teachers.

In 2009, the Centre published a ground-breaking national study of secondary school teachers' experience of and attitudes towards teaching about the Holocaust (Pettigrew et al., 2009). This was followed in 2016 by a landmark national study with over 10,000 young people which explored their knowledge, understanding and experience of learning about this history in English secondary schools (Foster et al., 2016). In both cases, research findings were used to develop programmes of continuing professional development (CPD) and classroom materials in direct response to the concerns and issues faced by teachers and students encountering this complex and challenging subject in schools.

To ensure that the Centre's work remained relevant and responsive to changing classroom contexts, throughout 2019 and in early 2020, its researchers returned to the field to examine continuity and change in teachers' practice and perspectives over the last ten years. It is the findings from this research that are presented in this report. While this data was collected prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Centre's ongoing work with schools over this period suggests the study's findings remain relevant today.

Teachers who engage with the Centre's landmark research, innovative professional development courses and cutting-edge materials, acquire the confidence and expertise to tackle this complex history within the classroom. In short, the Centre's work has tangible real-world impact. To date, more than 25,000 teachers have participated in the Centre's CPD programmes, including over 8,000 teacher trainees. Consequently, teaching practice in

thousands of classrooms has been transformed, thereby supporting millions of students to develop the knowledge and skills required to understand the Holocaust and related contemporary issues, such as the threats posed by extremism, prejudice, and antisemitism today.

The Centre's wide-ranging educational programme provides opportunities for teachers at all stages of their careers. It offers a national programme of Initial Teacher Education in Holocaust education and a variety of in-depth and subject-specific CPD courses, available online and in person. Additionally, the Centre has developed a unique MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) in partnership with Yad Vashem, *Teaching the Holocaust: Innovative Approaches to the Challenges We Face*.

Amongst the Centre's most immersive and impactful opportunities are the fully accredited taught Masters-level module *The Holocaust in the Curriculum* and the flagship Beacon School Programme. As part of the Beacon School Programme, Centre staff work intensively with around 20 schools across England each year. These schools commit to significantly improve their provision for teaching and learning about the Holocaust. They partner with the Centre to become dynamic hubs serving a network of local schools to improve teaching standards, raise pupil achievement, strengthen Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) provision, enhance safeguarding and support whole school improvement. To date, there are more than 200 UCL Beacon Schools, working with a network of over 1,600 schools across England, annually impacting on the learning of millions of students.

In 2020, Centre staff created the first research-informed secondary school textbook, *Understanding the Holocaust: How and why did it happen?*, to directly confront widespread student misconceptions about the Holocaust (Foster et al., 2020). To date, over 57,000 copies of this landmark publication have been distributed to almost 2,000 schools across England.

All courses and classroom materials developed by the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education are available free of charge to teachers working in England's state-funded secondary schools. Further information can be found at: <https://holocausteducation.org.uk/>

# Acknowledgements and authorship



The authors and research team behind the production of this report are Dr Rebecca Hale, Dr Alice Pettigrew, Dr Eleni Karayianni, Dr Andy Pearce, Professor Stuart Foster, Dr Kane Needham, Luisa Nienhaus, and Dr Arthur Chapman.

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Finally, we are especially grateful to the teachers who participated in this study. We know that teachers are incredibly busy, and yet so many contributed to the survey and interviews, generously giving their time and invaluable insights into classroom practice. We will always endeavour to give teachers a voice in Holocaust education, learning from their experiences in the classroom, and building this into the work we do, the CPD courses we create, and the research studies we conduct. We continue to be extremely grateful to the teachers who support us in so many ways.





Photograph by Olivia Hemmingway, 2014

# Executive Summary

## Introduction – A changing context

In 2009, the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education (then known as the Holocaust Education Development Programme (HEDP) based at the Institute of Education (IOE)) published a landmark national study focused on teaching about the Holocaust in England. The scope of this investigation was extensive, including detailed exploration of secondary school teachers' aims, definitions, content, pedagogy, knowledge, understanding, curriculum planning, challenges encountered and training needs (Pettigrew et al., 2009). The findings from this ground-breaking study (referred to in this report as the 'IOE 2009 study' and 'IOE 2009 survey') provided the foundations for the Centre's world-leading continuing professional development (CPD) programmes. Since then, these programmes have continued to evolve in response to on-going evaluation and further empirical research studies, thereby ensuring that the Centre remains at the leading edge of the field.

This report presents a second national study with teachers (referred to in this report as the 'UCL 2019/20 study' and 'UCL 2019/20 survey') conducted by the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education ten years after its original IOE 2009 study. The UCL 2019/20 study sought to examine how Holocaust education had developed in secondary schools in the intervening ten years. This was a period of transformation both in education more broadly, and in the field of Holocaust education. There were two changes of government (from Labour to a Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition in 2010, and from the coalition to a Conservative government in 2015), five different ministers responsible for education, and extensive revision and reform of the English National Curriculum (with subsequent impact on Holocaust teaching). Meanwhile, a Prime Ministerial Holocaust Commission was established (2014), the House of Commons Education Committee conducted an inquiry into Holocaust education (2015), and plans for the creation of a national Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre within the UK were enacted (2016).

The UCL Centre for Holocaust Education has played a prominent role in each of these three major Holocaust-related initiatives. Its approach to teaching and learning about the Holocaust, programmes of professional development, and the findings of its landmark research, were all championed and directly informed these endeavours. On the ground, the Centre's work has had tangible real-world impact: to date, more than 25,000 teachers have participated in the Centre's CPD

programmes, including over 8,000 teacher trainees. This has meant teaching practice in thousands of classrooms has been transformed, thereby deepening the knowledge and enriching the understanding of millions of students.

At the same time, the day-to-day experiences, pressures and opportunities of both teachers and their students have also been subject to change. The expansion and acceleration of government policies of school academisation for example, as well as growing numbers of secondary aged students, rising rates of teachers leaving the profession, an overhaul of the examination system, and changing expectations of schools' roles in addressing a wide range of real and/or perceived wider socio-cultural threats, have all had impact. Academic and practitioner understandings of the role and status of different forms of disciplinary knowledge within curriculum construction have also significantly altered during this time.

To better understand the possible impact of developments such as these on classroom practice, UCL researchers returned to the field in 2019/20. Extensive survey responses were collected from 1,077 teachers across England and interviews were conducted with 134 teachers from 45 different schools. This report shares key findings from that research.

## Summary of key findings from the 2019/20 study

### 1. A continued commitment to teaching this important history

- Contrary to early concerns that increasing academisation of English secondary schools might weaken the compulsory status of the Holocaust within the National Curriculum, **the Centre's research found no evidence of schools turning away from teaching about the Holocaust within Key Stage 3 history.** Indeed, this concern was explicitly challenged by a number of teachers in interview. **Teachers working in academy status schools reported the same levels of commitment to and support for teaching about the Holocaust as others across the survey sample.**
- Across the research, **teachers resoundingly emphasised the importance of teaching about the Holocaust.** Among survey respondents, 97.0 per cent agreed with the statement, 'it will always be important to teach about the Holocaust' and 97.8 per cent that 'every child must learn about the events of the Holocaust'. Additionally, 89.5 per cent of all respondents agreed that the Holocaust was one of the most important subjects they taught. In interview, teachers regularly described teaching about the Holocaust in terms of its singular importance within their practice.

### 2. Changing curriculum contexts

- As in the IOE 2009 study, the Holocaust continued to be taught within a very wide range of secondary school subjects and extra-curricular contexts, but history remained the subject area in which the majority of all reported teaching about the Holocaust took place. In fact, its dominance over other subject areas appeared to have increased over the last ten years. When survey respondents were asked about the subjects in which they principally taught about the Holocaust, **history classes accounted for 68.0 per cent of all teaching reported in the UCL 2019/20 study compared to 57.0 per cent in the IOE 2009 study.** This was accompanied by a notable decline in reported teaching taking place in religious education. Religious education accounted for 27.0 per cent of all teaching in the IOE 2009 survey but **only 17.0 per cent in the UCL 2019/20 study.** The third and fourth most common subject areas in which teachers principally taught about the Holocaust were English and/or drama (approximately 7.0 per cent of all reported teaching), and citizenship and/or PSHE (approximately 6.0 per cent).

- This shift away from teaching about the Holocaust within religious education was also reflected in exam specifications. In 2009, the Holocaust was referenced within five of the eight available specifications for religious education at GCSE level yet did not directly appear in any of the seven programmes of study offered for examination in 2020.
- **Within history classes, there was also a striking shift in the proportion of teaching that took place with different age groups.** In the IOE 2009 study, 49.7 per cent of all reported history teaching about the Holocaust took place in Year 9, the last year of Key Stage 3, in which students are aged 13–14 years. Only 4.9 per cent of reported teaching took place in Year 8 history classrooms and 2.7 per cent in Year 7. However, in the UCL 2019/20 study, while the proportion of reported history teaching that took place with Year 7 students had risen only very slightly to 3.2 per cent, among Year 8 students this had grown four-fold to 20.7 per cent. The proportion of teaching in Year 9 had fallen to 38.9 per cent.
- In the UCL 2019/20 study, 29.2 per cent of all those who taught about the Holocaust within Key Stage 3 history did so *only* within Years 7 or 8. The equivalent proportion in the IOE 2009 study was just 4.4 per cent. In interview, several teachers explained this shift as the consequence of some schools' decision to 'reduce' or 'condense' their Key Stage 3 curriculum in order to introduce elements of GCSE programmes of study within Year 9.
- There also appeared to be a **decline in both the frequency and volume of teaching about the Holocaust in history among older students in Key Stages 4 and 5.** In the IOE 2009 study, Key Stage 3 teaching accounted for 57.3 per cent of all teaching about the Holocaust within history classrooms compared to 30.6 per cent in Key Stage 4 and 12.0 per cent in Key Stage 5. In the UCL 2019/20 study, the proportion of Key Stage 3 teaching had grown to 62.8 per cent relative to 28.0 per cent in Key Stage 4 and 9.2 per cent in Key Stage 5.
- Teachers reported that, to varying degrees, some recent whole school and/or extra-curricular policy initiatives and frameworks also impacted teaching about the Holocaust. Almost two-thirds (64.8 per cent) of teachers reported that statutory SMSC requirements impacted their teaching about the Holocaust. In the case of PSHE, 44.7 per cent of teachers said it impacted their teaching of the Holocaust, and 43.8 per cent reported that the promotion of fundamental British values had an impact. Prevent legislation impacted the teaching of the Holocaust for 40.2 per cent of teachers. Those who taught about the Holocaust within citizenship and/or PSHE contexts (including assemblies and tutor time) were most likely to feel that their work



was impacted by each of these policies.<sup>1</sup> Teachers expressed various opinions about these policies, however a common theme was that while these policies were related to their teaching about the Holocaust, they were not the primary reason for teaching this subject.

### 3. Significant expansion of support for teachers

- **Over the last ten years, the provision and uptake of specialist support and training has expanded markedly.** An important finding from the IOE 2009 study was that only 26.4 per cent of survey respondents had taken part in any form of Holocaust education training provided by organisations outside of their school since becoming a teacher. Moreover, only 5.5 per cent had received formal training in teaching about the Holocaust in their first year as a qualified teacher (their 'NQT year'), and 22.0 per cent had experienced a specific focus on teaching about the Holocaust in their Initial Teacher Training (ITT) course. **In contrast, among the UCL 2019/20 survey respondents, 61.4 per cent had received training from at least one external organisation, 18.8 per cent had undertaken formal training in their NQT year, and 43.4 per cent received specific input during Initial Teacher Training.**
- **However, the experience of specialist training varies markedly by subject background.** Among the teachers who principally taught about the Holocaust in history, 50.6 per cent reported their initial teacher training included a specific focus on teaching about the Holocaust. This was the case for 38.7 per cent of those principally teaching about the Holocaust in religious education and only 26.8 per cent in citizenship/PSHE. Moreover, 51.2 per cent of those teaching within citizenship/PSHE said they had attended specialist training provided by external organisations since becoming a teacher (compared to 63.3 per cent and 67.2 per cent of those teaching within history and religious education respectively). **The group of teachers least likely to have received any form of specialist training were those who taught about the Holocaust in English or drama.**

### 4. The specific benefits of sustained, collaborative professional development supported by specialist expertise

- **The research provides compelling evidence that the experience of specialist continuing professional development was strongly related to improved**

**subject knowledge, better informed content choices, increased cross-curricular cooperation, improved confidence, and deepened understanding** as detailed further below. Those with experience of specialist continuing professional development were also likely to emphasise different overarching pedagogical aims. These relationships were especially pronounced where CPD met or exceeded the Department for Education's Standards for teacher professional development (DfE, 2016a), as exemplified by the UCL Centre of Holocaust Education's flagship Beacon School and Masters Programmes.

### 5. Improved knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust

- **In the broadest terms, teachers' historical knowledge of the Holocaust has improved** – in some cases quite markedly – from the IOE 2009 study to the UCL 2019/20 study. Eight of the same – or very closely comparable – knowledge-based questions were asked in both the IOE 2009 study and again in UCL 2019/20 study (see Appendix 5 for the rationale for each question). Across all eight of these critical knowledge questions, in 2019/20, the base level of teacher knowledge had improved. In some cases, teachers were twice as likely to answer correctly in the UCL 2019/20 study than they had been in the IOE 2009 study.
- **The overall improvement in accuracy of answers from the IOE 2009 study to the UCL 2019/20 study appeared closely related to this expanded provision of CPD.** Across all questions, those who had taken part in any form of specialist training were more likely than those who had not to answer every question more accurately.
- **The relationship between experience of CPD and accuracy of answers was especially profound amongst those respondents who had taken part in the highest engagement programmes, most notably the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education's flagship Beacon School and Masters Programmes.** For example, only 28.8 per cent of teachers with no formal specialist training in teaching about the Holocaust accurately identified that the Jewish population of Germany in 1933 was less than 1.0 per cent. Among those with any form of specialist training, this rose to 49.0 per cent. However, among teachers who had taken part in at least one of the Centre's flagship, high engagement programmes, 79.8 per cent answered this question correctly. Moreover, only 19.2 per cent of teachers without specialist training correctly understood that the most likely outcome if a member

<sup>1</sup> In most English secondary schools, students belong to a form group (sometimes called a tutor group). This group usually meets for a short period every day (typically at the start of the day and/or after lunch) and their teacher (often referred to as their form tutor) is responsible for taking the register and may spend some time on personal development activities.

of the German occupying forces refused an instruction to kill Jewish people, would be reassignment to other duties. This rose to 48.4 per cent among those with any form of specialist training, whereas, a striking 91.1 per cent knew this information among the group participating in the UCL high engagement programmes.

- Not all teachers were able to benefit from high engagement forms of specialist training, however. Across all 12 multiple-choice knowledge questions asked in the UCL 2019/20 study, there were still **four questions where a majority of all respondents could not correctly identify the most historically accurate answer. There was one further question where only around half were able to answer it correctly. These findings suggest that significant confusion and/or misunderstanding continues to exist around several critically important historical issues including: the chronology of mass murder; the factors that did – and did not – influence perpetrators’ decisions to kill; the minority status of Germany’s Jewish population; and the response of the British government to the Holocaust.**

## 6. Shifting aims and changing practice

- In the UCL 2019/20 study, as in the IOE 2009 study, the most frequently prioritised overarching aim when teaching about the Holocaust, irrespective of teachers’ subject backgrounds, was ‘to develop an understanding of the dangers of prejudice, racism and/or stereotyping in society’. This was chosen by 68.6 per cent of all respondents when invited to select three priority teaching aims from a suggested list of 13 aims.
- However, comparative analysis suggests some notable shifts in their other choices. Broadly, such choices appear to indicate a turning away from generalist invocations to ‘remember’ and/or to ‘learn the lessons’ of the Holocaust towards aims more closely associated with a disciplinary historical approach. Although overall, ‘to learn the lessons of the Holocaust and to ensure that a similar human atrocity never happens again’ was the second most prioritised aim in both surveys, in the UCL 2019/20 study, its relative popularity had fallen compared to the IOE 2009 study. The aim, ‘to memorialise those who suffered’, was also less likely to be prioritised in the UCL 2019/20 study.
- Again, **overarching shifts in teaching aims appear informed, at least in part, by experience of specialist professional training.** For example, in the UCL 2019/2020 study, 50.5 per cent of those who had attended the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education’s high engagement CPD programmes prioritised the aim ‘to explore the roles and responsibilities of individuals, organisations, and governments

when confronted with human rights violations and/or policies of genocide’. This compared to 29.3 per cent of those without any formal training. Almost half (47.4 per cent) of teachers participating in the UCL high engagement programmes prioritised the aim ‘to understand and explain the actions of people involved in and affected by an unprecedented historical event’ compared to 18.5 per cent without formal training. A third of those who participated in the UCL high engagement programmes (32.0 per cent) prioritised the aim ‘to deepen knowledge of World War II and twentieth century history’, in comparison to 21.0 per cent of those without any formal training.

- In contrast to the IOE 2009 research findings, the UCL 2019/20 study found evidence from survey data and especially during follow-up interviews that there was a greater appreciation among teachers of the distinctive contributions to be made through different disciplinary approaches.
- Comparative analysis between the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 surveys also revealed **a number of changes in content typically covered and/or prioritised while teaching about the Holocaust.** In both surveys, teachers were asked how likely they were to include 32 different content areas within their teaching. Overall, the highest ranked (and most commonly included) content across all teachers in both 2009 and 2019/20 was ‘the experiences of individual men, women and children who were persecuted by the Nazis’ followed by ‘Auschwitz-Birkenau’. Additionally, ‘Kristallnacht’ and ‘propaganda and stereotyping’ were included within the five highest ranked content areas among both groups of survey respondents. However, elsewhere within the two rankings there was considerable movement. Teachers responding to the UCL 2019/20 survey were more likely than their IOE 2009 survey counterparts to include within their teaching: ‘Jewish social and cultural life before 1933’, ‘resistance to Nazi policies by Jews’, ‘Nazi ideology’, ‘the Einsatzgruppen’ and ‘the Wannsee Conference’. In the UCL 2019/2020 study, teachers were comparatively less likely than their IOE 2009 study counterparts to include: ‘the choices and actions of rescuers’, ‘other genocides’, ‘exploring the concept of suffering’ and ‘human motivation and behaviour’. The most notable fall in comparative ranking of content from 2009 to 2019/20 was ‘combatting current racist ideology’.
- Once again, the experience of specialist professional support and/or training bears relation to the content teachers are most likely to include. **Among the UCL 2019/2020 survey respondents, those who participated in the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education’s high engagement programmes were almost twice as likely than those without formal training to include ‘the long history of antisemitism’ and ‘the experience of Holocaust survivors since 1945’ within their teaching.** Teachers who took part

in the UCL high engagement programmes were around twice as likely to include discussion of ‘Jewish social and cultural life’, ‘Jewish resistance in the camp system’ and ‘the contribution of the Jews to wider European culture and society before 1933’. Additionally, they were three times more likely to include ‘Operation Reinhard’ than those without formal training.

## 7. New and enduring challenges

- In the UCL 2019/20 research, the most commonly encountered challenges were ‘insufficient curriculum time’, ‘teaching this subject to students in Year 7 or 8 because of a two-year Key Stage 3 curriculum’, ‘students believing information they find on the Internet regardless of the source or accuracy of the information’ and ‘students becoming emotionally distressed by the topic’.
- Among history teachers completing the UCL 2019/20 survey, almost 30.0 per cent experienced ‘Teaching [the Holocaust] to students in Years 7 or 8 because of a two-year KS3 curriculum’ as a challenge that they ‘often’ or ‘always’ encountered (a further 13.5 per cent encountered this as a challenge ‘occasionally’). In interview, some teachers spoke of the ‘reduced’ and ‘restricted’ opportunities this presented to teach about this history in all its complexity. Some expressed concern that this had direct impact on historical understanding and worried that younger students were ‘just not equipped to deal with it’.
- A total of 14.5 per cent of respondents across all subjects indicated that they at least occasionally encounter ‘Holocaust denial among students’ (within this group, 0.6 per cent indicated they encountered it ‘often’ and 0.4 per cent ‘always’). Teachers’ free-text responses in survey and in interview discussions suggest that this can take the form of students’ questioning the scale and/or importance of the Holocaust, along with the circulation of antisemitic myths, tropes and conspiracy theories. In addition, 40.1 per cent of teachers indicated that they encounter ‘students articulating antisemitic attitudes at least occasionally’ (including 2.5 per cent who encountered this ‘often’ and 0.2 per cent who encountered this ‘always’). This challenge appeared connected with the issue of ‘students believing information they find on the Internet regardless of the source or accuracy of the information’. A total of 25.8 per cent had encountered this challenge either ‘always’ or ‘often’, and the vast majority (74.9 per cent) had encountered it at least occasionally.
- In the survey’s free-text responses, where teachers were invited to raise any additional challenges they encounter, **the lack of cross-curricular cooperation was frequently discussed**. This was also reflected in interview. In most cases, cooperation was reported as a challenge due to multiple subject specialists teaching the subject from different angles or with different objectives and having trouble making their approaches or aims compatible. Frequently, teachers – especially history teachers – expressed their dissatisfaction that colleagues in their school taught elements of the topic to Year 7 or Year 8 in other subjects. In many instances, teachers complained that the early and uncoordinated introduction to the topic created misconceptions that had to be rectified later. This was particularly the case with the use of John Boyne’s book, *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, in English lessons.
- Encouragingly, teachers who had been given the opportunity to take part in specialist programmes of continuing professional development appeared more likely to purposefully coordinate cross-curricular approaches and collaborate with colleagues across different subject departments. A third (32.9 per cent) of teachers who had taken part in the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education’s high engagement programmes coordinated their teaching about the Holocaust with colleagues in at least three subject areas in addition to their own, twice as many as those without formal training.
- The Holocaust’s strong presence in the curriculum creates another challenge which was mentioned in some interviews: the teaching of the Holocaust by teachers who were delivering the topic within a subject or context they were not specialists in (sometimes referred to as out-of-field teaching). There was concern these teachers might fail to see the significance of the topic, be unable to answer students’ questions or struggle to recognise and address misconceptions. In this regard, it is salutary to remember that **the majority of those teaching about the Holocaust outside of history and/or religious education classrooms have not received specialist professional support to do so**.

## Implications and Recommendations

Many of the Key Findings of this report have significant implications for the field of Holocaust education and those who work under its auspices. Chapter 9 provides a detailed exploration of what these are and duly forwards a number of recommendations. Broadly speaking, the findings and recommendations can be grouped into three categories: a) Knowledge and understanding; b) Curriculum trends and trajectories; c) Practices and approaches. Within these areas, the following recommendations have particular salience.

### Knowledge and understanding

1. Teachers who engage in Holocaust education CPD have better levels of historical knowledge and understanding. Since subject knowledge is critical for effective teaching and learning, all teachers who teach about the Holocaust in some way should have access to high-quality CPD.
2. Not all CPD programmes are the same. CPD which is research-informed, robust, and sustained – like the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education's Beacon School Programme – has the most transformative effect on teachers' subject knowledge. It is vital the government continues to invest in such programmes.
3. Further research is required into the impact that teachers' own professional development has on their teaching practices. Developing suitable methodologies should also take into consideration how the experience of online CPD affects the advancement of teachers' knowledge and understanding.
4. Many teachers hold some enduring misconceptions and misunderstandings about key aspects of Holocaust history. Since these reflect wider societal trends, those involved in public history initiatives and activities must consider how their work addresses prevailing mythologies.

### Curriculum trends and trajectories

1. With the Holocaust increasingly taught to younger students, there is a pressing need for teachers to be provided with specialist CPD and bespoke materials that suitably cater for 11–12 year olds. This should be accompanied by expert guidance for teachers in terms of curriculum mapping and progression.
2. Further research into how the Holocaust is taught to Year 7 and Year 8 students is required, together with a better understanding of the effect this learning is having on these students' emotional and cognitive development.

3. It is essential that the position of the Holocaust at Key Stages 4 and 5 is secured and enhanced. Exam specifications should be revised in a research-informed manner and augmented by a comprehensive package of support for teachers and examiners – including tailored CPD programmes and resources.

### Practices and approaches

1. With emerging issues around disciplinary approaches to teaching the Holocaust, it is integral that non-history teachers in particular are provided with CPD courses and classroom materials specifically designed for their classrooms.
2. More research should be conducted into how the Holocaust is taught in different subject contexts, and how these varying disciplinary encounters come together to shape young people's knowledge, understanding and consciousness of the Holocaust.
3. Senior leaders in schools and across Academy Trusts should be given opportunities to broaden their subject and pedagogic knowledge of Holocaust education in order to empower them to affect institutional change.
4. The perennial challenge of curriculum time means that teachers and senior leaders require help in considering what curriculum opportunities for deepening Holocaust education currently exist and can be created.
5. All who are interested and active in the field of Holocaust education must take heed of young people's increased vulnerability to unreliable sources of historical information and erroneous truth claims. This requires initiatives to improve students' critical faculties, and a broader commitment to embed metacognition in approaches to teaching and learning about the Holocaust.



Photograph by Olivia Hemingway, 2011

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# Introduction: A changing context

## Key points

- The intervening years between the IOE 2009 study and the UCL 2019/20 study, saw significant changes in the education policies and governance of schools in England.
- This included: the introduction of new National Curriculum content with greater focus on content knowledge, an overhaul of the GCSE and A-level examination structure, the introduction of the English Baccalaureate, the creation of the Progress 8 accountability measure, the directive that schools should promote certain values referred to as fundamental British values, the expansion of the academies programme, and a shift towards school-led initial teacher training.
- Evidence suggests that to varying degrees, these policies and initiatives have had an impact on teachers' practice when teaching about the Holocaust.
- There has also been significant expansion in specialist Holocaust education training for secondary school teachers. Notably, the launch of the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education continuing professional development programme (CPD) in 2009, which transformed the field through its innovative research-informed approach, heralding a turning point for CPD provision in Holocaust education.

## Background to this report

In 2009, the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education (then known as the Holocaust Education Development Programme (HEDP) based at the Institute of Education (IOE)) published a national study of Holocaust teaching in England. The research, *Teaching about the Holocaust in English Secondary Schools: An empirical study of national trends, perspectives and practice* (Pettigrew et al., 2009), aimed to:

- provide a more comprehensive empirical portrait of Holocaust education in English secondary schools than had previously existed;
- investigate teachers' initial training and professional development in Holocaust education;
- examine individual teachers' aims, approaches, understandings and knowledge base when teaching about the Holocaust;
- identify any challenges and/or opportunities encountered or perceived by teachers when teaching about the Holocaust.

It was the first large-scale national study to investigate teaching about the Holocaust in England and was used by the IOE HEDP as the foundation for the world's first research-informed programme of work to support schools and teachers in this area.

In 2012, the IOE HEDP was awarded Centre status by the University of London and renamed the Centre for Holocaust Education, becoming the UCL Centre for Education in 2014 when the IOE merged with UCL.<sup>2</sup> In 2016, the Centre published a second seminal study, a national portrait of young people's experiences learning about this complex history, *What do students know and understand about the Holocaust? Evidence from English secondary schools* (Foster et al., 2016). This led to the review, revision, and further development of the Centre's CPD offer; an offer described in a UK Government Education Select Committee Inquiry as being 'of an especially high standard' citing the relationship between research and teaching as a contributing factor (House of Commons Education Committee, 2016, p. 9). To date, the Centre has worked with over 25,000 secondary school teachers, providing expert guidance and lesson resources to support

<sup>2</sup> IOE is no longer known as the Institute of Education, but as IOE, UCL's Faculty of Education and Society.

classroom practice, and enriching the knowledge and understanding of millions of England's secondary school students. A summary of the Centre's programmes is provided in Chapter 2.<sup>3</sup>

As the ten-year anniversary of the original IOE HEDP approached, the Centre recognised that the landscape of teaching and learning about the Holocaust in England had changed considerably since the publication of its 2009 research. The Labour government that, together with the Pears Foundation, had initially committed to funding the IOE HEDP's ambitious programme of work were replaced in 2010 by a Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition and in 2015 by a Conservative government. While each has remained committed to funding the Centre's centrally important work, between 2009 and 2019, four different Prime Ministers and six different Secretaries of State responsible for education have overseen a series of very significant changes in wider policy direction.<sup>4</sup> Amongst other things, these have impacted on curriculum content and assessment, teacher recruitment, and the structure of funding and governance for all schools.

The position of the Holocaust in both popular and political culture has also changed during this time, most notably with the appointment in 2014 of a Prime Ministerial Holocaust Commission (GOV.UK, 2014a) and the subsequent creation in 2015 of the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation (UKHMF) (Cabinet Office, 2015a). This cross-party committee within the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government was tasked to deliver a prominent National Memorial to the Holocaust and accompanying Learning Centre in central London. At the time of writing, ongoing legal dispute and opposition to the proposed location of the memorial in Victoria Tower Gardens (Sherwood, 2022) means that building work on the project, initially intended for completion by 2024, has not yet begun. However, both the Conservative Government (GOV.UK, 2021a), and Labour Party remain firmly committed to the original plan (Murphy, 2020; Norris, 2022).

A further important function of the UKHMF is its response to the urgent need to record and preserve the testimony of British Holocaust survivors and concentration camp liberators. Indeed, the passing of the last generation able to share in person, first-hand accounts of the Holocaust with students is arguably one of the most important – and certainly the most sobering – changes framing teaching in this area over the last ten years.

Finally, it is difficult to overstate the influence of the establishment and success of the IOE HEDP/UCL Centre for Holocaust Education itself in transforming this field. When the data for its 2009 study was first collected, there were some important and well-established organisations

working in various ways to provide young people with educational encounters with this history. And yet, although the Holocaust had been listed as essential content in history for secondary schools since England's very first statutory National Curriculum came into effect in 1991, almost 20 years later, very few teachers had received any form of specific training in this field.<sup>5</sup> There was no national programme of CPD available and very little further support to help teachers consider exactly *what* they could – or *should* – be teaching about the Holocaust, *how* they should do so or *why*.

In 2012, the UK delegation of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research (ITF, now the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA)) referred to the Centre's research as 'world class' and reported that the IOE 2009 study (Pettigrew et al., 2009) had 'informed all in the field in the UK and raised pertinent issues overseas' (ITF, 2012, p. 2). The UCL Centre for Holocaust Education's student-focused research (Foster et al., 2016) was equally impactful with the President of the Association of Holocaust Organisations describing both studies together as 'both a model and an invaluable guide for those of us in the field of Holocaust education' (Shulman, 2015).

Over the last ten years, the CPD offer and wider educational programmes of organisations such as the Holocaust Educational Trust, Imperial War Museum and National Holocaust Centre and Museum have also significantly expanded. In many cases in response to key issues raised, and for the first time empirically documented, by the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education in its IOE 2009 study (Pettigrew et al., 2009) and its national research with students (Foster et al., 2016).

In sum, a great deal has changed over the last decade and to remain responsive to the current needs and experiences of teachers, a new empirical baseline was required. This report reflects on data collected during 2019 and 2020. Since then, the COVID-19 pandemic caused delay to the full reporting of this research and more importantly, dramatically changed everyday practice in schools across the country, with online teaching and learning becoming ubiquitous. This was also the case for many CPD providers. Indeed, in order to support teachers during this time, the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education quickly adapted its programme to an online offer.

At the point of writing, over two years later, the effects of the pandemic continue to impact on teaching and life in schools (see for example, Weale, 2022). It is difficult to anticipate if or when work in schools – and work supporting schools – will return to pre-pandemic norms. The authors recognise that the data and analysis shared

<sup>3</sup> Also see the Centre's website for details about current courses: <https://holocausteducation.org.uk/>.

<sup>4</sup> Under the Labour Government, the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families had responsibility for education policy up to the age of 19. Ed Balls held this title from June 2007 until May 2010. The Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition renamed the department to the Department for Education (DfE). The secretaries of State for Education from 2009 to 2019 have been: Michael Gove (May 2010–July 2014), Nicky Morgan (July 2014–July 2016), Justine Greening (July 2016–January 2018), Damian Hinds (January 2018–July 2019), Gavin Williamson (July 2019–September 2021).

<sup>5</sup> The first statutory National Curriculum for primary and secondary schools was introduced by the Education Reform Act 1988, with staggered implementation for different Key Stages and subject areas from September 1989. Programmes of study for history were rolled out from 1991.



in this report describe a world in many ways different to the current 'post-pandemic' period. However, the Centre's ongoing work with schools suggests the study's findings remain relevant today. The authors also recognise and celebrate the extraordinary commitment and resilience of the teachers whose voices are presented in this report. The Centre shares in their determination to support their students' learning about the Holocaust as fully as they are able through continually changing and challenging circumstances.

## A changing policy landscape for secondary teaching

### The educational policy landscape of 2009

In order to adequately contextualise and make sense of the key points of departure between the portraits of secondary school teaching about the Holocaust captured in both the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 studies, it is important to first outline some of the most significant developments and directions taken in English education policy more broadly during this time.

The classroom practice described by teachers in 2009 had been framed by a Labour government in office since 1997. Throughout this period, Labour articulated its overarching goals for education in terms of 'rais[ing] achievements overall in the interests of a more competitive economy and to reduce inequalities in the interests of both economic competitiveness and a more inclusive and fairer society' (Lupton and Obolenskaya, 2013, p. 6). While it is, of course, not possible to detail 13 years of government in just a few short paragraphs, key features of the Labour government's education policy during this time included:

- A continuity with their Conservative predecessors in framing education primarily in terms of potential economic growth and international competitiveness, as well as placing importance on notions of 'choice' and 'diversity' as exemplified by the school academisation programme introduced in 2000 (Lupton and Obolenskaya, 2013, p. 10).
- An increasingly interventionist role for central government in relation to both national target setting and guidance (Lupton and Obolenskaya, 2013, p. 14).
- An increased focus on reducing inequality and tackling disadvantage with education positioned as 'a means to create a socially just society' (Blair in Tomlinson, 2005, p. 153).
- From 2004 onwards, a 'shift towards a broader agenda for childhood, incorporating mental and physical health, participation and enjoyment as well as educational achievement and economic goals' (Lupton and Obolenskaya, 2013, p. 15).
- Revision of the National Curriculum in 2007, reflecting their desire to enable greater flexibility 'by being less prescriptive about knowledge content and promoting understanding and skills' (James, 2018).

As reported in the IOE 2009 study, the Holocaust itself was retained as statutory content for inclusion for Key Stage 3 history.

## The educational policy landscape since 2009

In May 2010, Britain's Labour government was replaced by a Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition led by David Cameron as Prime Minister. Michael Gove was appointed to lead the newly recreated Department for Education (replacing Labour's Department for Children, Schools and Families). Gove was later moved from this post in the 2014 cabinet reshuffle. Between then and 2020 (the last phase of data collection for this report), there were four Conservative successors.<sup>6</sup> However, during just four years in office, Gove's impact as Secretary of State for Education was profound. Many of his most ambitious policy decisions continued to significantly shape schooling across England long after his departure and his overarching vision of reform was, in many respects, shared and kept alive by fellow MP Nick Gibb who served as Minister of State for Schools for most of the period 2010–2021. Finn (2015) noted that Gove's 'formidable legacy' includes radical reform to: the school system, initial teacher education, school curricula, the Ofsted inspection regime, the examinations system and the introduction of new school types. It is a legacy with much potential import for teaching and learning about the Holocaust at secondary school.

### The curriculum structure of England's schools

A single national curriculum in England for all students aged between 5 and 16 was introduced by the Education Reform Act 1988, with staggered implementation from September 1989 into the mid-1990s (House of Commons, 2009). It is delivered across four 'Key Stages'.<sup>7</sup> At the end of Key Stage 4, students typically sit a selection of GCSE (General Certificate of Education) examinations. Advanced (A) level programmes of study and examinations can be taken by older students during post-compulsory Key Stage 5.

The National Curriculum specifies the inclusion of different school subjects at different stages: while maths, sciences, English and physical education must be taught across all four Key Stages, history, for example, is only included in Key Stages 1–3 and becomes an optional subject for study in Key Stage 4. Citizenship is currently only included within the National Curriculum in Key Stages 3 and 4. The National Curriculum itself 'forms [only] one part of the school curriculum' and sits within an overarching statutory framework wherein every state-funded school in England has a legal duty to 'offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based and which:

- promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at school and of society, and

- prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life' (DfE, 2014a, p. 5).

And so, although it is not included in the National Curriculum at any Key Stage, state-funded schools must also deliver religious education (RE) across all Key Stages, and must 'make provision for personal, social, health and economic education' (PSHE) throughout students' school careers (DfE, 2014a, p. 5).<sup>8</sup> The extent to which individual schools are successful in meeting these duties is assessed as part of the UK government's school inspection framework through the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted).

While neither Gove nor any of his successors fundamentally altered this structure, under their direction, the specified content and format of both the National Curriculum and examined programmes of study for GCSE and A-level have changed in significant ways, as has assessment of individual schools' provision of a 'broad and balanced curriculum'.

### Curriculum reforms

On coming into power, Gove's Department for Education announced that a major review of the National Curriculum was necessary to provide a 'tighter, more rigorous model of the knowledge which every child should expect to master in core subjects at every stage' (DfE, 2010a, p. 10). This review was conducted across all subjects and Key Stages. In early 2013 the government published a fully revised draft curriculum, which was finalised later that year for first teaching from September 2014.<sup>9</sup>

The history curriculum which came into effect emphasised the central importance of content knowledge, and seven prescribed areas of study in which compulsory topics were accompanied by optional suggested subjects. Strikingly, 'the Holocaust' stands alone as the only named compulsory content across the whole curriculum document within the Key Stage 3 thematic focus of 'Challenges for Britain, Europe and the wider world 1901 to the present day'. Other key twentieth century events – both the First and Second World Wars, women's suffrage, the end of Empire, for example – are included only as non-statutory suggestions (DfE, 2013a, p. 4).<sup>10</sup>

### Examination overhaul and revised accountability measures

In the context of history, the implications of Gove's 'overhaul' of both the GCSE and A-level examinations were also profound (Burn, 2015). For GCSE, this included a mandatory increase in the proportion of exclusively British

6 Nicky Morgan (July 2014–July 2016), Justine Greening (July 2016–January 2018), Damian Hinds (January 2018–July 2019), Gavin Williamson (July 2019–September 2021).

7 Key Stage 1 is taught at primary level, to children aged 5–7 (in School Years 1 and 2), and Key Stage 2 is taught to primary school children aged 7–11 (in School Years 3–6). Key Stage 3 is taught at secondary level to students aged 11–14 (in School Years 7–9). Key Stage 4 is also taught at secondary level to students aged 14–16 (in School Years 10 and 11).

8 It is recognised that many teachers and examination awarding bodies refer to religious studies (RS) rather than religious education (RE). However, as the National Curriculum refers to religious education, this is the term used throughout this report for consistency.

9 In acknowledgement of the short timescales and implications of these extensive changes, the introduction of new programmes of study in some subjects at Key Stages 1 and 2 (primary school) and Key Stage 4 (GCSE) were staggered throughout 2015 and 2016.

10 For a detailed reflection on the position and framing of the Holocaust within this and all earlier iterations of England's National Curriculum, see Pearce (2017).

history content (from 25 to 40 per cent) and a study of history:

- 'from three different eras: Medieval (500-1500), Early Modern (1450-1750) and Modern (1700-present day)
- on three different timescales: short (depth study), medium (period study) and long (thematic study)
- on three geographical contexts: a locality (the historic environment); British; and European and/or wider world settings' (DfE, 2014b, p. 4).

The implication of these requirements for coverage of the Holocaust at GCSE level is reported in Chapter 3.

More broadly and across all subjects, Gove's reforms were widely interpreted as making GCSE courses 'tougher' for many students (Busby, 2019). Indeed, they were very intentionally conceived to 'restore rigour, and bring standards up to match the best around the world' (DfE, 2015a, p. 8) through: changed, often expanded, course content; increased or total reliance on end of course examinations in place of modular coursework assessments; and the introduction of a new grading scheme to further stretch and differentiate between the highest achieving students (Ofqual, 2013).

One immediate impact of these extensive and rapidly implemented changes was heightened pressure and increased workload for many classroom teachers. Evidence suggests they also had further reaching and often unintended consequences, especially in relation to the introduction of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) in 2011 and Progress 8 measures from 2015/2016 (Neumann et al., 2016).

By way of brief summary, the English Baccalaureate was not a new discrete programme of study but rather an additional measure awarded when students complete GCSE studies in a particular combination of 'core' subjects constituting what might be conceived as a traditionally 'academic' curriculum. The rationale was that the combination of EBacc subjects – English, mathematics, science, a foreign language and either history or geography – will 'keep [young people's] options open for further study and work' (DfE, 2015a, p. 31) and increase the international competitiveness of England's school leavers. It also serves as a tool to compare individual schools' performance based on how many students achieve GCSE passes in EBacc subjects and how well they do. It was the government's ambition that 75 per cent of all pupils will study the EBacc subject combination at GCSE by 2022 and 90 per cent by 2025 (DfE, 2019a).

Progress 8 is more explicitly an accountability mechanism providing a single measurement of student progress between the end of Key Stage 2 (end of primary school) and the end of Key Stage 4 (GCSE examinations). It is calculated by looking at the difference between individual students' projected outcomes (based on standardised national testing in English and maths at the end of primary school) and their actual attainment across eight differently weighted GCSE subjects. These are English and maths (both double weighted), any three further EBacc subjects

and then any three further subjects within the school curriculum (Neumann et al., 2016, p. 11).

According to research conducted with 1,800 members of the then National Union for Teachers (NUT), together the revised GCSE examinations, EBacc and Progress 8 measures have had significant implications for the curriculum on offer in individual schools, the allocation of resources across subject areas, and for pedagogy and classroom practice (Neumann et al., 2016, p. 6). For example, the majority of teachers surveyed by Neumann and colleagues (2016) reported that the EBacc had contributed to the narrowing of the Key Stage 4 curriculum offer in their schools and reduced the number of GCSE subjects students could choose from. The same study found that religious education was often removed or made optional. A more recent report produced by the Independent Assessment Commission concurs that '[u]ndoubtedly[,] Progress 8 and the English Baccalaureate [...] have narrowed the range of qualifications student take at 16' (IAC, 2022, p. 16).

Many teachers described the deepening or emergence of a 'hierarchy' of subjects within their schools in terms of the allocation of both school resources and of curriculum time. This seems to have impacted more severely the creative and vocational subjects as well as citizenship, PSHE, RE and some other humanities and technology subjects (Neumann et al., 2016, p. 24). For example, Andrade and Worth (2017) reported that between 2010 and 2015 the average amount of time schools spent teaching PSHE had almost halved.

Evidence also suggests the increased emphasis on student performance in some subjects over others combined with the content-heavy new GCSE courses, have impacted on student choice. Burn (2015, p. 55) reported that while the inclusion of history as an EBacc accredited subject increased student uptake in history at GCSE level, it also contributed to some schools deterring young people least likely to achieve at least a grade 'C' equivalent from taking the subject. Conversely, the relative importance of some GCSE results over others in terms of school rankings led to some students effectively being 'forced' – or very actively encouraged – to take subjects which they were not really very motivated to study and did not enjoy (Neumann et al., 2016).

In the case of religious education, surveys by the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) revealed a complex picture because provision varied by key stage, school type and religious character. In 2019, for example, almost 40 per cent of community schools and 50 per cent of academies without a religious character did not meet the legal requirements for RE provision at Key Stage 4. Whereas, at Key Stage 3, across all school types, compliance was higher, and perhaps predictably, compliance was very high across faith schools (NATRE 2019). Those working in the field have argued that the decline in RE teaching is because the subject is not a key performance indicator (Theos, 2017). The 'devaluing' of the subject has also led to patchy access to high quality CPD, exacerbated by shrinking school budgets (Theos, 2017, p. 4).

Finally, the expanded demands of new GCSE content together with the increased salience of student examination outcomes within these new performance measures, appear to have impacted on the organisation of the Key Stage 3 curriculum. In a study undertaken by Ofsted in 2017, almost half of the schools visited had reduced their Key Stage 3 offer from a three-year to a two-year programme. Furthermore, data collected from the websites of 171 schools showed that in around a quarter, students were being asked to select their GCSE options at the end of Year 8 (rather than Year 9) (Spielman, 2017).

### **Citizenship, character education and 'fundamental British values'**

Citizenship is a comparatively new addition to the English National Curriculum, only included as a compulsory subject in the Labour party's revised National Curriculum of 2002. From then on, citizenship education was awarded significant support from the Labour party throughout their 13 years in government (Davies and Chong, 2016). Indeed, the UK Government became the first in Europe to offer initial teacher education (ITE) in the subject (Weinberg, 2021).

However, with the election of the Conservative-led coalition of 2010, the subject experienced a 'vision shift' and the significant and immediate reduction of governmental support for it (Weinberg, 2021). Although the subject ultimately survived the National Curriculum review, its curriculum was substantially slimmed down and became character-heavy, abandoning the promotion of civic and political participation in favour of activities such as volunteering, money management and understanding the role of law (Weinberg and Flinders, 2019). This focus on character – which was given strong support from consecutive education secretaries – emphasises 'personal ethics rather than public ethics and advances a very individualist approach to addressing important moral and political issues' (Jerome and Kisby, 2019, p. 5). It is worth noting here that in the United States for example, character education is explicitly considered as an appropriate vehicle for teaching and learning about the Holocaust (Stambler, 2008). However, Weinberg and Flinders (2019) argued:

The concept of 'character' has been operationalised in English education policy [...] as a narrower, more instrumental set of 'traits, attributes and behaviours that underpin success in education and work' [...] the character agenda developed in the UK since 2010 downplays, in particular, the democratic competences of criticality, active participation and political literacy (pp. 185–6).

The teaching of citizenship – together with the delivery of schools' statutory PSHE and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) provision – has also been significantly affected by the incursion of wider counter terror and

'anti-extremism' legislation into schools (Starkey, 2018). The UK Counter-Terrorism and Security Act of 2015 introduced a new legal duty for teachers (and all public sector employees) to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism' (UK Government, 2015, p. 18). This followed instruction from the Department for Education in 2014 that 'schools should promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs' (DfE, 2014c, p. 5). The Department produced non-statutory recommendations that fundamental British values (FBV) should be promoted through schools' SMSC provision (DfE, 2014c). As a consequence, the position of both SMSC and FBV within the wider school curriculum have become increasingly important within the Ofsted inspection framework over the last ten years.

School-based research conducted by Weinberg and Flinders (2018) found that citizenship had been marginalised in recent years, in particular by the Prevent programme and FBV. While some potential interconnections between these new policy directives and citizenship education were identified, when writing in 2019, the authors argued:

these policies carry more resource and incentive than discrete citizenship education lessons and at the same time reinforce minimalist conceptions of citizenship. [...] Prevent not only portrays citizens as passive recipients of politics [...] but reduces the democratic space for disaffected youth to question, debate and interrogate ideas openly (Weinberg and Flinders, 2019, p. 187).

Both Prevent and the promotion of uniquely and fundamentally 'British values' have proven deeply contentious and contested policy areas (Revell and Bryan, 2018; Hunter-Henin and Vincent, 2018; Jerome et al., 2019). However, as Critchell (2018) has identified,

Schools increasingly share their commitment to the promotion of [...] so called British values in the public arena as proof of their adherence to the Prevent programme and it is apparent that the Holocaust, already utilised as an example to show where extremism might lead, is also being increasingly viewed as a vehicle through which to promote these British values in the classroom (p. 96).

## The academies programme

The idea of ‘academy’ status schools was first introduced by the Labour government in 2000. Schools rated by Ofsted as requiring ‘special measures’ were removed from local education authority control and appointed independent sponsors. The expectation was that the greater independence given to these schools would allow them to pursue innovative policies and the experience of the sponsor would help to drive up standards and attainment (Gillard, 2018).

In July 2010, the new Coalition government passed the Academies Act 2010. This enabled many more schools to become an academy by removing the requirement that a school must be struggling before conversion. Academies were funded at a comparable level to maintained schools, but their funding would go straight to the school to purchase services, rather than through the local authority. The Act also removed local authorities’ power to veto a school becoming an academy and parents’ and teachers’ legal right to oppose such plans, and allowed ‘outstanding’ schools to ‘fast-track’ the process of becoming academies (Gillard, 2018). Up until May 2010 there were 203 academies in total (DfE, 2013b), but today 39.0 per cent of primary schools and 80.0 per cent of all secondary schools – 9,836 primary and secondary schools in total – are academies or free schools (National Statistics, 2022).<sup>11</sup>

The relative independence given to academy status as opposed to state-maintained schools allows them considerable freedoms regarding teacher recruitment and pay as well as student admissions and curriculum design. As a consequence, academisation has proven a source of considerable debate, contest and controversy (see for example, Andrews et al., 2017; Hutchings and Francis, 2018; Martindale, 2019; Sodha, 2018). The National Education Union (NEU) has officially stated its opposition to academisation. The Union cites evidence that academies do not raise educational standards or attainment, highlights concern over transparency and accountability to parents and the community, argues vital support and resourcing previously provided at Local Authority level is lost, and that staff terms and conditions of employment are undermined (NEU, 2021).

Although the expressed intention of the academies programme was always to provide individual schools with much greater independence and autonomy, in practice, the regulatory powers and control previously held at local authority level has been replaced by complex and diverse governance structures (West and Wolfe, 2018). Since 2011, the existence and growing governmental support for the further development of multi-academy trusts (MATs), has played an increasingly important role within this landscape (Simon et al., 2019; West and Wolfe, 2018). By 2015, two-thirds of academies were governed as part of multi-academy chains. As West and Wolfe (2018) explained,

Each school provided by (or run by) the MAT is, in law, simply the local site through which the MAT delivers the provision required by the central contract. Local staff and any local ‘governing body’ or similar have only the role given to them, including any decision-making role that is given to them by the MAT board itself (including potentially acting in only an advisory role with no decision-making role at all) (p. 16).

The Government have argued that MATs are better than standalone trusts and maintained schools because they can ‘share good practice, support their schools to improve, and provide opportunities for staff’ (Haves, 2022). In MATs comprised of at least ten schools, they can achieve better financial stability through economies of scale (Haves, 2022). Schools’ inspector Ofsted, on the other hand, has expressed concern that the system places considerable power and influence in the hands of CEOs who remain largely unaccountable to the wider public and are insufficiently scrutinised (Ofsted, 2019, p. 23). MATs can, for example, directly determine the admission arrangements in individual schools, or standardise curriculum content and other school policies to be delivered across all the academies they run. In practice, this provides *less* freedom and flexibility than the schools had when they were maintained by local authorities (West and Wolfe, 2018).

The extent to which academy status schools do ‘make use of their autonomy’ was investigated in a 2014 Department for Education research report (Cirin, 2014). Among their survey of 720 academies, 55 per cent had changed their curriculum since conversion and a further 24 per cent planned to implement change. In history, research has found that most state-maintained schools broadly follow the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum for history suggesting that academies and free schools are not generally creating their own curriculum (Burn et al., 2019). However, given the much greater curricular freedom awarded to academies, those working in the field have highlighted that academisation represented a potential threat to the relatively secure position of teaching and learning about the Holocaust in England’s classrooms (Foster et al., 2016; House of Commons, 2016; Pearce, 2017).

Yet despite concerns that the Holocaust might be marginalised from the curricula in academies, at the time of writing there was no compelling evidence of this. Indeed, the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education recently announced a landmark partnership with two of the leading academy chains. This indicates that within MATs, senior leaders value Holocaust education and are supportive of teachers participating in specialist CPD. Similarly, many teachers in MATs are enthusiastic about teaching the Holocaust and - like other teachers - are keen to develop professionally.

<sup>11</sup> Both academies and free schools are state-funded, non-fee-paying schools in England, independent of local authorities. Free schools are new state schools, whereas many academies are converter schools that were previously maintained by local authorities (Roberts and Daneshi, 2019).

## Teacher training, recruitment and retention

### Recruitment and retention

Since the publication of the IOE 2009 report, and in concert with the significant educational changes outlined above, schools have also experienced a variety of issues concerning teacher recruitment and retention. It is teachers who most immediately – and often most acutely – experience the impact of multiple and changing policy demands (Ball et al., 2012). In headline terms, teacher numbers since 2010 have not kept pace with increasing pupil numbers (Long and Danechi, 2021). In part, this issue can be explained by rising student numbers (Claymore, 2018). But the number of teacher vacancies has also risen; over a third (38 per cent) of headteachers in England pointed to a shortage of qualified teachers as the greatest barrier to providing high-quality teaching in their school (Education Policy Institute, 2019).

Rates of teachers exiting the profession have also increased since 2009. By 2018, the Education Policy Institute (2018) reported that only 60 per cent of new teachers remained in post in state-funded schools for at least five years after beginning their careers. Research suggests a variety of contributing factors to the retention crisis, including teachers' pay falling in real terms (Cribb and Sibieta, 2021), and teachers working 8–9 hours more than the OECD<sup>12</sup> average (Jerrim and Sims, 2019, p. 79). Similar findings were echoed in the National Audit Office's 2017 report within which 67 per cent of school leaders identified workload as a significant barrier to teacher retention. Although Perryman and Calvert (2020) found that notions of 'performativity' and 'accountability' were crucial factors in decisions to leave the profession rather than the volume of work alone.

The educational climate of 'performative accountability' refers to the overarching expectation that teachers and schools be held to account on the basis of their ability to document and demonstrate performance against a series of external (often national) standards (Perryman and Calvert, 2020). This issue was already emerging in the IOE 2009 study and is a trajectory shared by many education systems across the world (Gore et al., 2022). However, the accountability reforms exemplified by the introduction of the EBacc and Progress 8 measures, alongside countless other changes (Parameshwaran and Thomson, 2015) have clearly had significant impact on both the increased volume and changing nature of teachers' workload.

### Initial teacher education

Finally, it is pertinent to briefly consider changes to initial teacher education (ITE) or, as those in government are more inclined to conceive it, initial teacher training (ITT) that have occurred in England over the last decade. Chief amongst them has been the shift of responsibility for ITE away from universities and towards schools (Clarke and Parker, 2021). Foster (2019, p. 18) describes how reforms have included:

- A significant expansion of the 'Teach First' programme (an independent, charity-led, 'on the job' two-year training programme that encourages candidates with strong degree-level qualifications to begin teaching in low-income communities)
- The launch of the School Direct programme and an increased prioritisation of ITT funding on providers that involved schools in training programmes
- The launch of the Troops to Teachers programme for ex-service personnel
- Ongoing reform of Ofsted's inspection framework for ITT providers
- Making the successful completion of the professional skills tests a prerequisite for *beginning* an ITT course (at the discretion of the ITT provider)<sup>13</sup>
- Increased targeting of financial support in particular subject areas, and on individuals with higher class first degrees

The past decade has also seen an independent review of existing provisions commissioned by Gove (GOV.UK, 2014b) and further reforms which continued the move towards school-led initial teacher training under Nicky Morgan's White Paper Educational Excellence Everywhere (DfE, 2016b). This continued the expansion of increasingly school-led ITT provision as well as new quality criteria for ITT providers (Foster, 2019).

As the present report will demonstrate, some trainee teachers receive formal Holocaust education training as part of their ITE course. This training, as well as other specialist Holocaust education training offered throughout teachers' careers, is related to teachers' knowledge of this history and pedagogical approaches used when teaching about it. Thus, the expansion of ITE providers is likely to impact on the quality of Holocaust education delivered, especially in the case of school-led provision where the knowledge and experience of mentors in relation to Holocaust education will be diverse.

12 OECD is the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. It is an international organisation with 38 member states. It works with governments, policy makers and citizens to establish evidence-based international standards and find solutions to social, economic, and environmental challenges.

13 In 2020 the DfE launched a new system of provider-led assurance to assess the fundamental English and mathematics skills of trainee teachers. Initial Teacher Training (ITT) providers are expected to make an assessment of English and mathematics knowledge of a trainee before Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) can be awarded. It is down to the teacher training provider to assess whether a trainee has these skills either during the selection process or later during the training programme (TES, 2020).

## The Holocaust in wider political culture

Before closing this first chapter, it is worth reflecting upon the changing position the Holocaust has occupied within a wider political context in England and within what we might consider the nation's popular consciousness or national imagination.

The IOE 2009 study described how the Holocaust had become increasingly prominent since the early 1990s (Pettigrew et al., 2009). This was the case for the school curriculum, and the wider awareness of the general public citing popular films such as *Schindler's List* (1993) and *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* (2008) as well as regular coverage in print and broadcast media (see also Russell, 2006; Short and Reed, 2004). There was also growing political investment in both 'commemorating' and 'learning from' the Holocaust in various high-profile forms. At that point in time, the then Labour government were already investing £1.5 million annually in the Holocaust Educational Trust's flagship 'Lessons from Auschwitz' programme and indeed had just further committed to co-funding the establishment of the IOE HEDP itself. The first permanent Holocaust gallery had opened at London's Imperial War Museum in 2000 and, perhaps most conspicuously of all, from 2001, 27 January had been publicly marked as an annual, national Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) (Pettigrew et al., 2009).

The change of British governments through the coalition to today's Conservative parliament has not led to any diminishing of the political importance placed on teaching and learning about this history. On the contrary, while in office, David Cameron established a cross-party Prime Ministerial Commission to ensure that 'the memory and lessons of the Holocaust remain central and relevant' (Davis quoted in GOV.UK, 2014a) and subsequently proposed and later confirmed the establishment of a national memorial and learning centre on the recommendations of the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation (UKHMF) (Critchell, 2018). There are, however, at least two perceptible shifts in how the Holocaust is politically framed and both are worth noting here. The first, also recognised by Critchell – and very much in keeping with wider socio-political concerns – is an increased emphasis upon a specifically *British* relationship to the memory and meaning of the Holocaust. This is expressed clearly in the final report of Cameron's Holocaust Commission entitled 'Britain's Promise to Remember' which declares, '[e]nsuring that the memory and the lessons of the Holocaust are never forgotten lies at the heart of Britain's values as a nation' (Cabinet Office, 2015b, p. 9).

The elision of a national commitment to 'remembering' the Holocaust with a typically somewhat triumphalist contemporary discourse of British values here, raises potentially difficult and often deeply contentious questions

concerning Britain's relationship with its own national past. This is in part intimated by the government's determination that Britain's National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre should occupy a site allowing it to 'stand beside Parliament as a permanent statement of our British values' (GOV.UK, 2016). It is arguably also evident given the government's stance that '[i]n recognition of its significance, the Holocaust is *the only* historic event which is compulsory within the history curriculum' (DfE, 2021, emphasis added). This is in juxtaposition to the growing arguments from various community and race-equality organisations, educators and young people, that histories of empire, slavery and migration must also be taken more seriously in schools<sup>14</sup>. It is neither necessary, nor perhaps prudent to position this point either side of the so-called 'culture wars' which currently enflame and risk distorting so much popular and political discussion regarding the teaching of our national past. It is however instructive to consider how framing a history as complex as the Holocaust so determinedly within a discourse of 'national values' could serve to obscure precisely that complexity. It also ignores the powerful educational potential of recognising the many connections and distinctions between the Holocaust and other histories of genocide, colonial violence, and/or racial ideology (see for example, Andrews, 2021; Rothberg, 2009).

The second shift relates to the position of 'knowledge' in relation to educational encounters with this complex past. In January 2016, a UK Government Education Select Committee reported findings from its inquiry into Holocaust Education in the UK. The inquiry focused on the quality of teaching about the Holocaust in schools including its place in the curriculum, its impact on students, and available training for teachers. The final report included strong support for 'high quality teacher training above and beyond the training available for discretionary topics' (House of Commons Education Committee, 2016, p. 10). The conclusions and recommendations also referred to the very familiar phrasing that, 'Holocaust education can lead students towards being active and informed citizens' alongside the altogether less familiar formulation (at least at governmental level) that,

high-quality Holocaust education [...] requires a detailed knowledge of the subject including when, why, where and who as well as an understanding of the roles of perpetrator, victim, bystander and rescuer (House of Commons Education Committee, 2016, p. 8).

On one level, this emphasis on 'detailed knowledge of the subject' was to be expected given Gove's, Gibb's and others' prodigious defence of 'knowledge'. However, it was also at odds with all previous and existing government legislation and policy documentation. The insistence that all English secondary students must, in effect, 'know that the

14 See, for example the Runnymede Trust's 7 Actions to Change the History Curriculum Campaign (Lidher and Elias, 2020).

Holocaust happened' had been enshrined in every iteration of the National Curriculum.

In fact, the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education's 2016 research with students had clearly identified both the dominance and potential consequence of a well-intentioned yet reductive moral 'lessons from' approach to the Holocaust uncritically promoted by many educators, non-governmental organisations and policy makers in government. Within this approach, the Holocaust is presented primarily as a warning of where racism, prejudice, or discrimination can lead and secure, accurate historical knowledge is not typically prioritised. The research, therefore, presented an important and far-reaching challenge to this orthodoxy, arguing with empirical illustration that, when students are able to draw from secure, substantive historical knowledge, their understanding of the Holocaust itself is deeper and the connections made with contemporary issues better informed and more profound (Foster et al., 2016). The inclusion of this statement within the Holocaust Education Select Committee's final recommendations is also testament to the Centre's work in beginning to shift and challenge the dominant paradigm.

## Summary

In summary, the intervening years between the IOE 2009 study and the UCL 2019/20 study saw significant changes in the education policies and governance of schools in England. While evidence suggests these changes have had an impact on teaching about the Holocaust, prior to this report this had not been rigorously investigated or documented. Education policy changes, as well as the expansion of CPD provision for Holocaust education, notably with the launch of the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education's own CPD programme in 2009 (and to date, with over 25,000 teachers having participated in this programme), were the impetus for consulting again with teachers in 2019/20. Exploring teachers' aims, definitions, content, pedagogy, knowledge, understanding, curriculum planning, assessment approaches, challenges encountered and training experiences, this study provided a portrait of Holocaust education in 2019/20. It also enabled exploration of any continuities and changes that had developed since 2009. As described in the next chapter, this detailed investigation was conducted through a mixed methods approach using a comprehensive survey and a series of interviews.





2

# Methodology

## Key points

- This research was a mixed-method study using both quantitative and qualitative methods.
- A survey to explore multiple areas of teachers' practice was completed by 1,077 secondary school teachers in England, giving a rich portrait of Holocaust education in 2019/20, and enabling exploration of how this differed from the situation in 2009.
- Analysis in this report focuses on the 964 teachers who had taught about the Holocaust in the three years before completing the survey.
- Forty-nine individual and group interviews were also conducted with 134 teachers in 45 schools.

## Overarching research aims

The central aim of this research study (henceforth referred to as the UCL 2019/20 study or UCL 2019/20 research) was to examine the ways in which teaching about the Holocaust in England's secondary schools had changed in the ten years following the publication of the IOE HEDP's seminal, *Teaching and Learning about the Holocaust in English Secondary Schools* by Pettigrew et al., (2009), (henceforth referred to as the IOE 2009 study or IOE 2009 research).

A series of inter-related research questions guided the UCL 2019/20 study, including:

- In which areas of the curriculum does teaching about the Holocaust take place?
- At what ages are students taught about the Holocaust?
- How much time is spent teaching about the Holocaust across different subjects and year groups?
- What content is most commonly included in this teaching?
- What pedagogical approaches are taken?
- How well supported are teachers in this work?
- To what extent does school type appear to influence the form and content of teaching about the Holocaust at secondary level and in what ways?
- How knowledgeable about the Holocaust are those who currently teach about it at secondary school level?
- How do teachers define or understand the Holocaust?
- What are teachers' aims when teaching about the Holocaust?
- What challenges and opportunities do teachers encounter in doing so?

Where possible and appropriate, analytic comparisons with the portrait presented in 2009 were prioritised to consider the further question:

- How might we begin to explain any continuities and changes in the overarching landscape of teaching about the Holocaust between 2009 and 2019/20?

As the IOE 2009 research itself played a foundational role in the inception of the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education's CPD programme, the UCL 2019/20 study also provided an opportunity to critically consider the Centre's own influence on the field. Thus, the study sought to provide illustrative evidence of the influence of the IOE HEDP/UCL Centre for Holocaust Education programme upon individual teachers, schools and the wider field of teaching and learning about the Holocaust.

The research was approved by the UCL Institute of Education's Research Ethics Committee and followed the ethical guidelines of the British Educational Research Association (2018). Data collection, storage and analysis were all completed in line with the UK's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

## Relationships between the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 studies

The methodology used in the UCL 2019/20 research largely replicated the methodology used in the IOE 2009 study to facilitate meaningful comparisons. Both studies employed a mixed methods approach comprising large-scale, national surveys and follow-up interviews. Table 2.1 summarises the phases of research and participant numbers. The primary analysis reported in 2009 focused on 1,038 teachers who had personal experience of teaching about the Holocaust within the last three years. This is comparable to the equivalent group in the UCL 2019/20 study with 964 teachers.

Throughout this report, analyses are presented to compare the findings from the two studies. Some of the findings from the IOE 2009 study presented in this report differ to those outlined in Pettigrew et al. (2009). The differences are typically small and have occurred in the present report because of focusing on different subsets of teachers from the IOE 2009 study.

It should also be noted that the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 studies were conducted as separate entities with different participants. Thus, the research was *not* designed to be a longitudinal impact study and is not able, nor intended, to establish causal relationships between variables at the two time points. Nonetheless, the data does enable relationships between variables to be explored, both in terms of areas of continuity and change between 2009 and 2019/20, and when investigating the nature, scope and application of Holocaust education in 2019/20.

**Table 2.1** Phases of research and participant numbers for the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 studies

Study details	IOE 2009 study	UCL 2019/20 study
Phase 1	Online survey November 2008 – February 2009	Online survey December 2018 – August 2019
Phase 2	Follow-up interviews March – April 2009	Follow-up interviews March – July 2019
Phase 3	Not conducted	Reopened phase 1 online survey July – September 2020
Teachers who were the focus of survey recruitment	Any teacher in English secondary schools with an interest in teaching about the Holocaust	Teachers in English secondary schools with recent relevant experience of teaching about the Holocaust
All survey respondents total	2,108 teachers	1,077 teachers
Survey respondents who taught the Holocaust within three years	1,038 teachers	964 teachers
Total follow-up interviews	24 interviews with 68 teachers in 24 schools	49 interviews with 134 teachers in 45 schools

## UCL Centre for Holocaust Education's CPD programme

In the sections that follow, references are made to elements of the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education CPD programme. To provide context and aid understanding about what the programme involves, Figure 2.1 summarises the structure and content of the programme from 2009 to 2019.<sup>15</sup>

Figure 2.1 The structure and content of the UCL Centre for Education CPD courses and programmes from 2009 to 2019

<p><b>Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launched in 2011 and represented in all the major routes into teaching</li> <li>• Key themes included: the current state of Holocaust education in England, pre-war Jewish life, and the legacy of the Holocaust</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Core CPD</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launched in 2009 as a two-day programme</li> <li>• To increase accessibility for busy teachers, it ran as a one-day programme 'Unpacking the Holocaust' from 2014 (until 2020 when an online offer was created)</li> <li>• Covers essential aspects of effective teaching and learning about the Holocaust</li> <li>• Content changed over time but across the ten years amongst other topics, included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-war Jewish life</li> <li>• What was the Holocaust? An interactive timeline</li> <li>• Legacy of the Holocaust</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Additional CPD</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional CPD to complement core CPD, enabling teachers to update their knowledge and skills, and ensure progression in professional practice.</li> <li>• Largely run as short after-school 'twilight sessions'</li> <li>• Sessions have included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unlocking antisemitism</li> <li>• Being human?</li> <li>• Pursuit of Justice</li> <li>• A Space called Treblinka</li> <li>• British Responses to the Holocaust</li> <li>• Authentic encounters</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Beacon School Programme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launched in 2012</li> <li>• Approximately 20 Beacon Schools every year. Each builds a network of local schools</li> <li>• Immersive programme initially for one year, followed by ongoing opportunities to work with Centre</li> <li>• Personal Centre mentor supports teachers to develop scheme of learning</li> <li>• Four-day study visits to London and Poland (pre-pandemic)</li> <li>• Teachers gain knowledge and expertise, engage in cutting edge pedagogy, and improve student outcomes</li> </ul>	<p><b>Online Masters module 'The Holocaust in the Curriculum'</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launched in autumn 2011</li> <li>• Accredited fully online Masters-level module designed for teachers who aspire to lead the way in teaching about the Holocaust</li> <li>• Validated by UCL, with a chief examiner from the University of Oxford</li> <li>• Gives teachers an in-depth understanding of Holocaust education</li> <li>• Strengthens academic knowledge and professional practice in teaching and learning</li> </ul>

<sup>15</sup> Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020 the Centre's CPD courses were adapted to online modes (although the Centre's Masters module was fully online from its inception in 2011). Data collected for this study were based on teachers' experiences and practice before the pandemic. From 2022, the Centre is reintroducing some in-person courses where safe to do so.

## Online teacher survey

### Development of the survey

The methodology and instruments used in the IOE 2009 study informed the approach used in the UCL 2019/20 study. Where possible, the survey questions were replicated to increase the validity of comparisons made between the two studies.

Most of the survey questions used in 2009 were retained or subject to only minor revisions. However, a small number needed more substantial re-working or were entirely removed. New questions were also added to reflect changes in the wider socio-political and policy level context of schools (as outlined in Chapter 1).

The survey was piloted with 16 teachers during a residential for the Centre's Beacon School Programme in October 2018. The survey was also sent to two expert external advisors, who highlighted some important considerations to enhance the survey content. Appendix 1 includes the full survey used in 2019/20.

### Final content of the survey used in the UCL 2019/20 study

The 2019/20 survey was completed entirely online using the Survey Monkey web-based platform. It began with an introduction which explained the purpose of the survey and outlined how data would be processed (in line with the UK's General Data Protection Regulations). Teachers answered a series of consent questions and were invited to indicate interest in taking part in a follow-up interview.

All survey respondents were then asked to describe, in their own words, what they thought the Holocaust was. This was followed by an important branching question that asked individuals about their own experience of teaching about the Holocaust. Those who indicated they had never taught about the Holocaust were then presented with a much shorter series of follow-up questions intended to capture potential personal, institutional, or other obstacles or disincentives.

The remaining teachers were routed through three separate sequences of questions which covered much of the same content but worded slightly differently depending on whether they:

- a. had taught about the Holocaust during the past three years
- b. had not taught about the Holocaust within the last three years but had done so in the past, or
- c. anticipated teaching about the Holocaust for the first time in the next 12 months

A small number of questions were only asked of those who had taught about the Holocaust in the previous three years. Appendix 1 indicates the branching of the full survey instrument.

Subsequent sections of the survey asked teachers about:

1. The **classroom context(s)** in which they taught about the Holocaust (for example, in which subjects, with which year groups, and for how long).
2. Their **teaching practice**, for example, their teaching aims, their pedagogical approaches, content covered, resources used and the challenges or obstacles they faced.
3. Their **specialist training**: this included questions about both formal and informal training and explored teachers' work with specialist providers. An extended series of questions was used to capture any prior experience of specific content provided by the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education.
4. Their **confidence** in teaching about the Holocaust with regard to their perceived preparedness including subject knowledge.
5. Their **historical knowledge about the Holocaust** as tentatively 'measured' through 13 multiple-choice questions and a small number of free-text questions.
6. **Demographic information about individual teachers and schools** including the route taken to becoming a teacher, their role in school, as well as the region and type of school in which they taught.

### Recruitment of respondents

Both the IOE 2009 and the UCL 2019/20 studies sought to reach as many teachers as possible across England through engagement with a broad range of subject associations, educational networks, and adverts in educator magazines such as *Teaching History* and *RE Today*. In 2009, every school in the country was notified about the survey through the Department for Children, Schools and Families' (DCSF) electronic newsletter. Whereas in 2019/20, all secondary schools in England were contacted using email addresses provided by the Department for Education (DfE).

The most significant departure from the recruitment strategies used in 2009 was the use of social media such as Twitter to recruit teachers to the UCL 2019/20 research. Additionally, in 2019/20, the Centre drew on its own network of teachers, for example, the Beacon School Programme lead teachers, to directly invite them to take part.

## Survey respondents

As outlined in Table 2.1, in the UCL 2019/20 study there were two waves of data collection for the survey. In the first wave, 961 respondents completed the survey. Of these, 848 had taught about the Holocaust within the previous three years. This compared to 1,038 teachers in the IOE 2009 study. Given the primary importance of this specific cohort of teachers in terms of making comparisons between the two points in time, the second wave of data collection was focused on increasing this group. This led to an additional 116 teachers who had taught about the Holocaust within the previous three years of completing the survey. The data from both waves of the UCL 2019/20 survey data collection were combined giving a final sample of 1,077 teachers.

This final combined sample included 42 teachers who had never taught about the Holocaust, 42 teachers who had last taught about it more than three years before completing the survey, and 21 teachers who anticipated teaching about the Holocaust for the first time within the next year.<sup>16</sup> The focus of the analyses reported here are those with recent relevant teaching experience. In total, 964 teachers reported they had taught about the Holocaust during the previous three years, and it is their demographic data which is described below.

Table 2.2 describes the UCL 2019/20 survey sample based on ethnic group (n=754). The majority of teachers (85.8 per cent) described their ethnicity as White (British, English, Welsh, Scottish or Northern Irish). A further 7.0 per cent were Irish or another white category, and 3.2 per cent of teachers preferred not to give their ethnicity. The remaining 4.1 per cent of respondents were split across the other ethnic groups. Statistics held by the DfE for the wider school workforce suggest 81.3 per cent of secondary teachers were White British, 6.5 per cent were Irish or another white category. The remaining 11.0 per cent of teachers were split across the ethnic groups and 1.1 per cent declined to provide information about their ethnicity (GOV.UK, 2021b).<sup>17</sup> The IOE 2009 study sample largely reflected the workforce at that time. Broadly, this was also the case in the UCL 2019/20 research, although the percentage of participants describing themselves as 'White British' was slightly higher than the national workforce.

Table 2.2 Breakdown of the UCL 2019/20 survey sample by ethnic group (%)

Ethnic group	Percentage (n=754)
<b>White</b>	
British, English, Welsh, Scottish or Northern Irish	85.8
Irish	2.5
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	-
Any other white category	4.5
<b>Asian / Asian British</b>	
Indian	0.8
Pakistani	0.3
Bangladeshi	-
Chinese	-
Any other Asian background	-
<b>Black / African / Caribbean / Black British</b>	
African	0.4
Caribbean	-
British	0.3
Any other Black / African / Caribbean background	0.3
<b>Mixed / multiple ethnic groups</b>	
White and Black Caribbean	0.1
White and Black African	-
White and Asian	0.4
Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background	0.7
<b>Other ethnic group</b>	
Arab	-
Any other	0.8
<b>Prefer not to say</b>	<b>3.2</b>

Table 2.3 provides further details about the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 survey samples with regards to gender and religion. It highlights that the proportion of females was larger in 2019/20 compared to 2009, and that those stating they did not belong to a religious group also increased in 2019/20.

<sup>16</sup> Eight teachers skipped the branching question.

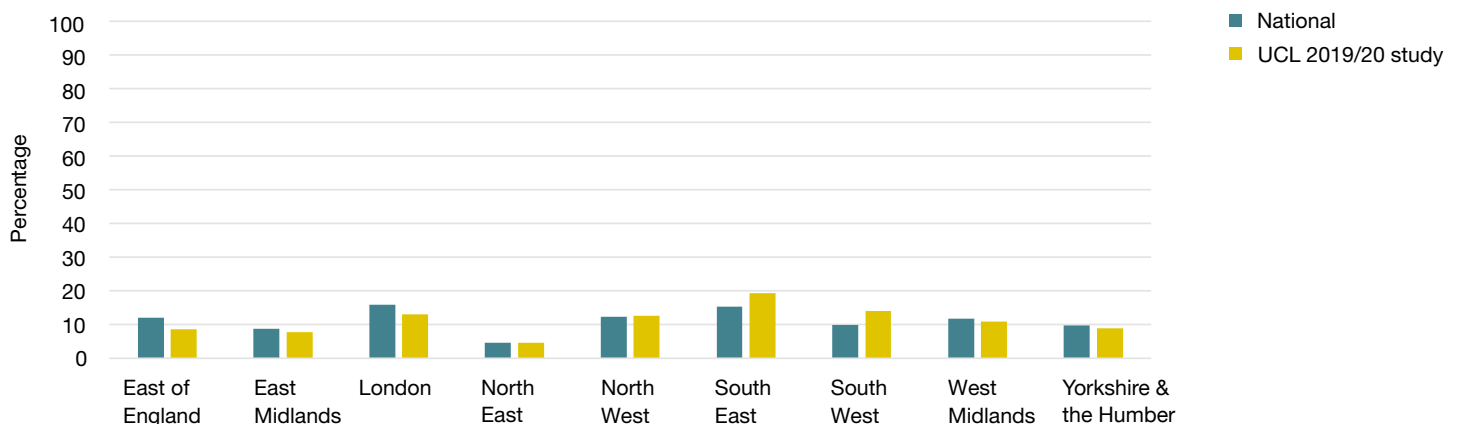
<sup>17</sup> Percentages are based on teachers where this data is available.

**Table 2.3** Gender and religious belonging in the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 studies (%)

IOE 2009 study	UCL 2019/20 study	Commentary
<b>Gender (n=1,019)</b> Female: 59.5 Male: 40.5	<b>Gender (n=751)</b> Female: 64.8 Male: 34.0 Remainder preferred not to say or self-described	The gender breakdown in the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 studies mirror the wider secondary workforce at the time. The increase in the proportion of females from 2009 to 2019/20 also reflects a broader national trend.
<b>Religion (n=996)</b> Christian: 59.9 No religion: 30.2 Jewish: 3.5 Buddhist: 1.0 Muslim: 0.9 Sikh: 0.3 Hindu: 0.1 Preferred not to say: 4.0	<b>Religion (n =750)</b> No religion: 47.3 Christian: 39.2 Jewish: 2.4 Sikh: 0.5 Buddhist: 0.4 Muslim: 0.4 Hindu: 0.3 Preferred not to say: 6.5 'Other': 2.9	The increase in reports of not belonging to a religious group in the UCL 2019/20 study is reflected in the wider workforce. A survey of almost 3,786 teachers found that 61.0 per cent indicated they did not belong to a religious group (Teacher Tapp, 2019).

Figure 2.2 presents the regions in which teachers were based in the UCL 2019/20 study and compares this to the national picture (GOV.UK, 2021c). Overall, the largest proportion of teachers in the study were in the South East (19.3 per cent) and the smallest proportion were in the North East. In some instances, the study sample is representative of the distribution of all secondary school teachers across England, for example, in the North West. For other regions, however, like the South West, teachers were overrepresented in the study compared to the national dataset. The reverse is true in London and the East of England where the proportion of teachers in the study sample is underrepresented.

**Figure 2.2** Percentage of teachers from the UCL 2019/20 study who were based in each region of England (n=778) compared to the national workforce data for the proportion of teachers in each region in 2019/20



Compared to the equivalent reporting in the IOE 2009 study, the geographical representativeness was broadly similar to what was seen in the UCL 2019/20 study. In 2009, the survey respondents were most likely to be based in the South East (20.5 per cent) and London (16.2 per cent). A smaller proportion were working in the East Midlands (7.1 per cent) and the North East (4.6 per cent).

Table 2.4 summarises information about teachers' initial education/training and experience. While the University-led PGCE was the most common route into teaching in the UCL 2019/20 study, there has been an expansion in ITE provision in recent years. The average number of years respondents had been teaching was around 13 years in both studies, and while history was the ITE subject most frequently cited in both studies, it was much more prevalent in the UCL 2019/20 study.



**Table 2.4** Respondents' training and teaching experience in the 2009 and 2019/20 studies (%)

IOE 2009 study	UCL 2019/20 study	Commentary
<p><b>Main routes in teaching</b> <i>Not asked in the IOE 2009 survey</i></p>	<p><b>Main routes into teaching (n=775)</b> University-led PGCE after degree: 77.7 Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP): 4.9 School-centred initial teacher training (SCITT): 4.8 School Direct (tuition fee): 3.1 Bachelor of Education with QTS: 1.9 Other named courses: 4.8<sup>18</sup> Other: 2.8</p>	<p>In the UCL 2019/20 survey, teachers qualifying before 2000, typically obtained a PGCE. This remained the dominant qualification up to and including those qualifying in 2018. Courses like the Graduate Teaching Programme were increasingly identified from 1999 to 2013. From 2010, the variety of qualifications further expanded and included SCITT, Teach First and School Direct courses. This expansion of ITE routes is a departure from the situation in 2009.</p>
<p><b>Total years teaching (n=981)</b> 1–5 years: 28.7 6–10 years: 23.9 11–15 years: 14.0 16–20 years: 11.1</p> <p>Mean: 13.1 years Median: 10 years Mode: 4 and 5 years</p>	<p><b>Total years teaching (n=766)</b> 1–5 years: 19.2 6–10 years: 26.1 11–15 years: 21.7 16–20 years: 16.9</p> <p>Mean: 12.8 years Median: 12 years Mode: 4 years</p>	<p>The mean and mode figures for the two studies were similar. However, on balance the UCL 2019/20 sample was comprised of a more experienced cohort of teachers than in 2009 within which almost a third of respondents had taught for five years or less.</p>
<p><b>ITE subject (n=1,004)</b> History: 54.0 Religious education: 23.9 English: 6.9 Geography: 3.0</p> <p>In the case of all other school subjects, each one was identified by less than 3.0 per cent of teachers as forming part of their initial teacher education.</p>	<p><b>ITE subject (n=774)</b> History: 69.5 Religious education: 19.4 English: 9.0 Citizenship: 5.4 PSHE: 3.4</p> <p>In the case of all other school subjects, each one was identified by around 2.0 per cent (or fewer) of teachers as forming part of their initial teacher education.</p>	<p>The most striking difference between the two studies was the proportion of teachers who trained in history, with this being higher in the UCL 2019/20 study than the IOE 2009 study. Figures for the other subjects were broadly similar.</p>

Teachers were also asked to indicate which type of school they worked in and 778 responded to this question. The options were not mutually exclusive, for example, teachers could work in an academy, which was also a faith school. The most frequently selected school type was academy, with just over half of the teachers (55.5 per cent) reporting they worked in an academy (either selecting this option alone or selecting it with another option like faith or grammar school). Once those selecting 'academy' were excluded, the next most common type of school was comprehensive with 15.9 per cent selecting this option, followed by independent schools (10.5 per cent), faith schools (5.5 per cent), community schools (3.3 per cent) and grammar schools (3.3 per cent).<sup>19</sup> The proportion of teachers working in academies appeared to be underrepresented in terms of the national picture. In 2019/20 in England, 77.1 per cent of secondary schools

were academies (Local Government Association, N.D.).

As a reflection of the changing national picture over the last decade, the profile of school types in the UCL 2019/20 research differed from the IOE 2009 research. In 2009, out of the teachers who had taught about the Holocaust in the last three years, 53.0 per cent taught in comprehensive schools, 12.8 per cent taught in a community school/college, 7.8 per cent in a secondary modern and 5.6 per cent in a grammar school. Only 2.9 per cent of teachers worked in an academy. As reported in the previous chapter, over the last ten years the proportion of academy secondary schools has increased substantially. In 2010, around 6.0 per cent of secondary schools were academies (DfE, 2010b), this increased to almost two-thirds in 2015/16, rising again to just over three-quarters of schools in 2019/20 (Local Government Association, N.D.).

<sup>18</sup> Data can be obtained by contacting the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education.

<sup>19</sup> In these cases, the percentages given are for teachers who select this option as their only option.

In the UCL 2019/20 research (but not in the IOE 2009 study), teachers could indicate their role(s) in school. Overall, 773 teachers responded to this question, occupying the following roles:<sup>20</sup>

- head of department (39.3 per cent)
- teacher with qualified teacher status (QTS) (27.8 per cent)
- subject leader (13.3 per cent)
- head of faculty (11.8 per cent)
- assistant/deputy headteacher (6.7 per cent)
- head of year (5.3 per cent)
- newly qualified teacher (3.8 per cent)

## Survey data analysis

The survey data was transferred from Survey Monkey to a database in SPSS (a statistical analysis software package). Additional preliminary coding and/or re-coding was applied to create new and/or composite variables to aid specific analyses. For example, a primary lens for analysis and reporting in both the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 studies was variation based on the subject or curriculum area in which the Holocaust is taught. In the IOE 2009 survey, respondents were asked to select *only one* subject in which they principally teach/taught about the Holocaust, and analysis was initially conducted based on five key subject areas: history, religious education (RE), English, citizenship and PSHE. Whereas in the UCL 2019/20 survey, *multiple subjects* could be selected. Thus, to enable reliable comparison *between* subjects, individual 2019/20 responses were recoded so that wherever possible only one subject per teacher was identified.<sup>21</sup>

As part of this process, a composite category, reported here as ‘citizenship/PSHE’ was created to acknowledge the considerable overlap, entanglement and inconsistency in how statutory citizenship education, PSHE and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) content is delivered in different schools. Undoubtedly, it is very important to recognise the distinctive contributions of both citizenship and PSHE and to acknowledge that in some schools these are discrete and separately time-tabled entities. However, in many other schools they are very closely interconnected and often delivered simultaneously, in some cases also through collapsed time timetable events, ‘tutor time’, and/or assemblies (see Keating et al., 2009). In order to facilitate comparative analysis across the two studies, the original IOE 2009 data was also recoded to reflect this change. A further composite subject category, ‘English and drama’, was also created for both studies. This was to reflect the

overlap between the work teachers of these subjects were doing in relation to the Holocaust. An additional important lens for comparative analysis and reporting in the UCL 2019/20 study but not the IOE 2009 study was teachers’ experience of specialist training. Both surveys presented respondents with a short series of questions asking whether they had received specific input on the Holocaust in:

- their initial teacher education
- their NQT year
- relevant departmental, INSET or CPD courses
- courses offered by organisations from outside of their schools

Responses to these questions were combined to create a new composite variable ‘no formal training’ or ‘any formal training’ which could be applied consistently across the data collected in the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 studies. It should be noted that by creating the ‘any formal training’ category in this way, all types of training undertaken were combined. This variable also did not distinguish between CPD providers or the duration of courses.

In the UCL 2019/20 study, the survey also included a series of questions exploring teachers’ participation in the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education’s high engagement programmes. Findings based on some of these questions are explored in Chapter 8.

## Interviews

### Development of the interviews

In the IOE 2009 study, group interviews were conducted in 24 secondary schools, typically involving three teachers from each school. In total, 68 teachers participated, with 54 teaching about the Holocaust in history, nine teaching it within religious studies/education and five teaching about the Holocaust in other subject areas. These interviews sought to add depth and complexity to the survey data and give teachers the opportunity to articulate their thoughts and experiences in greater detail than the survey allowed. A semi-structured interview guide was designed and generated discussion around five key areas:

- teachers’ definitions of the Holocaust
- teaching aims
- the practical ‘nuts and bolts’ of classroom activity
- support from Holocaust education organisations

<sup>20</sup> All other roles were cited by less than 1.0 per cent of respondents.

<sup>21</sup> The majority of teachers did select only one subject. Where more than one subject was cited, the researchers reviewed their survey responses. It became apparent in some instances that one of the subjects chosen was a principal subject, while the other subject(s) were additional subjects. For instance, throughout their survey, including in the open-ended questions, teachers made reference to one subject being the main subject in which they taught about the Holocaust and their answers were based on this. In this situation, their survey response was recoded to reflect one principal subject. This was not always possible, and for some teachers, it was either unclear if one of their chosen subjects was principal to the other, or equal weighting appeared to be given to all subjects cited. In these instances, the teachers were assigned a code to denote them as having multiple principal subjects.

- challenges perceived or encountered in this area of work

The interview phase of the UCL 2019/20 study sought to replicate the IOE 2009 study approach as much as possible. However, as discussed below, some adaptations were included in the 2019/20 interviews to reflect the changing wider context of teaching about the Holocaust over the intervening ten years.

## Participant selection

In the UCL 2019/20 research (as in the IOE 2009 research) survey respondents could express an interest in participating in interviews. However, in contrast to 2009 which in the first instance specifically targeted history teachers, the UCL 2019/20 research sought to invite teachers from a range of disciplines. The main reason for this was that the Centre's work with teachers, particularly those in Beacon Schools and their networks, had demonstrated that many aspire to implement cross-curricular and whole-school approaches in their schools. In reviewing survey responses to identify potential interviewees, it was important to ensure teachers were recruited from across the country, with a variety of CPD backgrounds and with varying levels of teaching experience. Potential interviewees were approached by email and asked to form a group with approximately three other teachers from their school who had experience of teaching about the Holocaust.

Eleven out of the 49 discussions were individual interviews at the request of the teacher, usually because of challenges in bringing a group of teachers together (for example, because of timetable clashes). It is recognised that methodologically, there are different considerations and issues associated with individual and group interviews, which can influence the data generated. For instance, in group interviews, the interactions between group members play an important role in the content and direction of discussion. This can provide a valuable opportunity for individual participants to present alternative, at times competing perspectives, encouraging debate and reflection and often generating rich data. However, it is arguable that in individual interviews, the teacher has a platform to candidly discuss their opinions and experiences in a way which they may not feel comfortable doing in a group interview.

## Interview participants

Overall, in the 2019/20 research, 49 interviews took place with 134 teachers from 45 schools. Eleven of the interviews were individual interviews, and 38 were small group interviews which varied in size from two to nine participants, although typically there tended to be two or three teachers. Table 2.5 presents more information about the interviewees.

Table 2.5 Summary of interview participants

### Principal subject<sup>22</sup>

History: 73 teachers  
 Religious education: 27 teachers  
 English/drama: 9 teachers  
 Geography: 5 teachers  
 Citizenship/PSHE: 4 teachers  
 Modern foreign languages: 2 teachers  
 History and politics: 1 teacher  
 Maths and PSHE: 1 teacher  
 Computing: 1 teacher  
 Design and technology: 1 teacher  
 Psychology: 1 teacher  
 Science: 1 teacher

### Role in school<sup>23</sup>

Trainee teacher: 3 teachers  
 Newly qualified teacher (NQT): 4 teachers  
 Teacher: 77 teachers  
 Head of department / subject leader: 33 teachers  
 Head of faculty: 3 teachers  
 Assistant headteacher: 7 teachers  
 Headteacher: 2 teachers  
 Other leadership role: 2 teachers

### Region

*(One interview per school unless otherwise stated)*

East of England: 11 schools  
 East Midlands: 4 schools  
 London: 4 schools  
 North East: 1 school  
 North West: 8 schools (including 2 discussions at one school)  
 South East: 5 schools  
 South West: 3 schools (including 4 discussions at one school)  
 Yorkshire and the Humber: 5 schools  
 West Midlands: 4 schools

### Type of school

30 Academies  
 10 Comprehensive schools  
 4 Independent schools  
 1 Selective grammar

<sup>22</sup> Missing data for 8 teachers.

<sup>23</sup> Missing data for 3 teachers.

## Conducting the interviews

Researchers from the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education facilitated the discussions using a semi-structured interview format.<sup>24</sup> They posed a small number of questions and invited elaboration on responses given, but in general, teachers led the discussions and were given opportunities to contribute anything they thought was relevant. On average, interviews lasted for 45 minutes.

Three pilot group interviews were conducted to ensure that questions were comprehensible, generated rich discussion, and could be sufficiently covered within an hour. The interview questions did not require amendment and therefore, the pilot data were included in the main dataset of interviews.

The UCL 2019/20 study used the IOE 2009 study's interview guide as its starting point and overall, both studies explored the same areas:

- Definitions of the Holocaust
- Teaching aims
- The nature of the Holocaust education curricular taught in the school, including the content of the lessons, teaching approaches, number of lessons taught and the year group(s) receiving the lessons
- How the context of their school influenced the Holocaust education delivered
- Experience of specialist Holocaust education CPD
- Challenges encountered

In addition to this, in the UCL 2019/20 study, teachers were asked to reflect on how they thought the field of Holocaust education had changed over time (for a list of the interview questions see Appendix 2). Even though similar topics were covered in the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 interviews, it should be noted that questions were sometimes framed or worded differently. Consequently, direct comparisons between the two cohorts to equivalent questions were not always possible, and it is acknowledged that even minor changes to the wording can influence the nature of responses given. However, because both studies collected rich data, from multiple schools across England, exploring the same themes, there was plentiful scope for detailed analysis of the landscape of Holocaust education in 2019 and reflection on how this compared to the landscape of 2009.

An NVivo database containing all transcripts was created. Initially, the transcripts were coded by interview question and then in response to emergent findings from the UCL 2019/20 survey data. The core themes of continuity and change – both in individual teachers' practice and across the decade – were also explicitly explored. A full thematic

and/or inductive analysis of the complete interview dataset is yet to be completed. Instead, within this first reporting, extracts of interviews are primarily utilised to corroborate, exemplify and/or provide further context and important nuance to the survey findings.

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<sup>24</sup> Several researchers were involved in data collection, but it was only ever one researcher at an interview.

## Summary

The UCL 2019/20 study sought to replicate as far as possible the methods and instruments used in the IOE 2009 study, utilising comprehensive surveys and interviews in both studies. As outlined in this chapter, some changes were necessary for the more recent study, however these were kept to a minimum in order to enable meaningful comparisons between the two studies. Additionally, it was crucial to create variables to indicate the subject in which teachers principally taught about the Holocaust, and whether the teachers had participated in formal Holocaust education training (and the specific nature of this training). Thus, in the chapters that follow, the analyses consider if and how Holocaust education developed from 2009 to 2019/20, variations in teachers' practices related to the subject in which the Holocaust was taught, and variations in practice related to their experience of formal Holocaust education training.



3

# The overarching landscape of teaching about the Holocaust in English secondary schools

## Key points

- The Holocaust remains a compulsory component of the National Curriculum for history at Key Stage 3.
- There is no statutory requirement for the Holocaust to be taught in other subjects, but the UCL 2019/20 study data showed almost a third of the survey respondents had taught about the Holocaust in religious education, citizenship/PSHE and English/drama.
- In both the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 studies, the survey respondents were most likely to report teaching about the Holocaust principally in history. The prevalence of teaching this topic in history was even greater in the UCL 2019/20 study and this was accompanied by a notable decline in reported teaching taking place in religious education.
- The proportion of teaching taking place in Year 9 history classes decreased from the IOE 2009 study to the UCL 2019/20 study, and this was accompanied by an increase in the proportion of teaching taking place in Year 8 history classes. In the UCL 2019/20 study, there was also evidence to suggest that Holocaust education was being linked to whole school policies such as the Prevent duty, the promotion of fundamental British values (FBV), Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) provision and cross-curricular PSHE.

## Introduction

As described in Chapter 1, during the intervening years between the IOE 2009 and the UCL 2019/20 studies there was significant revision of both the National Curriculum and examination structures at GCSE and A-level, as well as wider educational policy reform. While research literature indicated the potential ripple effect of some of these changes on how and why teachers were covering material about the Holocaust in their curricula, there had not been any rigorous, large-scale studies to provide specific empirical evidence of this. Drawing on data collected in the UCL 2019/20 survey, this chapter begins to explore not only how Holocaust education developed in the ten years after the IOE 2009 study, but also to position these developments within the broader context of education policy and governance.

In the IOE 2009 study, teaching about the Holocaust was most likely to occur within history lessons, although there was also considerable coverage in other subjects. Moreover, students were most likely to learn about the Holocaust when they were in Key Stage 3, typically during Year 9. Analyses in this chapter show that, while broadly, some trends found in the IOE 2009 study continued into the UCL 2019/20 study, when drilling down into the detail, there have been some notable shifts in relation to where and when young people encountered the Holocaust. These changes are mapped out in this chapter to present a revised picture of the overarching landscape of teaching about the Holocaust in England's secondary schools. In particular, consideration is given to some of the most significant contours of change across the four key subject areas in which most of this teaching takes place: history, religious education (RE),<sup>25</sup> citizenship or PSHE and English and drama.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> While examination awarding bodies and many teachers refer to religious studies, the term religious education is used for reporting findings from the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 studies because this is the terminology used in the National Curriculum.

<sup>26</sup> For an explanation of the composite subject categories for citizenship/PSHE and English/drama see earlier discussion in Chapter 2.

## Formal curricular policy framings and current exam specifications

### The Holocaust in Key Stage 3 curricular

As in 2009, the Holocaust remains a compulsory component of the National Curriculum for history at Key Stage 3. Indeed, in some regards the symbolic importance of the Holocaust within the curriculum has only increased. Since 2014, the Holocaust appears as the *only* statutory content within the unit, *Challenges for Britain, Europe and the wider world 1901 to the present day*. ‘Women’s suffrage’, ‘Indian independence and the end of Empire’ and both the First and Second World Wars, in contrast, are listed as content schools *could* choose to include (DfE, 2013a, p.4).

There remains no statutory national curriculum for RE with ‘locally agreed syllabi’ instead still determined at local authority level by a network of 153 ‘Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education’ (or SACREs). In undertaking this research, the content of all available (147) locally agreed syllabi in use in 2019 and 2020 were reviewed.<sup>27</sup> In 96 of these (65.3 per cent) explicit reference was made either to ‘the Holocaust’ or to ‘the Shoah’ albeit in very different ways. While some SACREs addressed the topic through a theological approach ‘Did God allow the Holocaust to happen?’ (for example, SACRE Northamptonshire, 2018, p. 39), others drew on the Holocaust to ‘investigate recent and current examples of racial/religious prejudice and the consequences’ (for example, Oldham Council, 2020, p. 111). The Holocaust is further included in different syllabi by asking students why hatred and persecution sometimes happen, which encourages them to identify actions that could be taken to prevent it (for example, Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, The London Borough of Haringey, North Somerset and the Isles of Scilly Councils, 2016, p. 81). The syllabi used by almost a quarter of SACREs made specific reference to cross-curricular opportunities, advocating coordinated teaching across RE, history, citizenship and potentially other subjects.

Within the current Key Stage 3 National Curriculum for English, teachers have relative autonomy for selecting literature to be studied. However, in a survey of over 170 schools conducted in 2020 by the UK Literacy Association, John Boyne’s *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* was the most frequently cited prose text used with students in both Year 7 and Year 8. In total, almost a third of their respondents cited this text (Kneen et al., 2020).

Finally, while the position of both PSHE and citizenship has, overall, been rather weakened and undermined by the educational reform and curriculum revision of the last ten years (Davies and Chong, 2016; PSHE Association, 2016; Weinberg and Flinders, 2019) both have also been

significantly impacted by the introduction of statutory duties for all schools to ‘actively promote fundamental British values’ and to ‘prevent and challenge’ the ‘radicalisation’ of students towards extremist perspectives, as already detailed in Chapter 1 (see also Starkey, 2018 and PSHE Association, 2019).

### Exam specifications in History

Since 2009, the number of students entered for GCSE history has steadily increased to reach 265,575 in 2019 (Ofqual, 2019) while the number of specifications offered by England’s examination awarding bodies reduced from nine to just four. In 2009, ‘the Holocaust’ or ‘Final Solution’ was directly referenced within options for study in five specifications while ‘the persecution of the Jews in Nazi Germany’ was included in a further two.

As shown in Table 3.1, among the specifications available for GCSE study in 2019 and 2020, ‘the Holocaust’ or ‘Final Solution’ was again explicitly listed as a component within optional units of study in three specifications while the fourth, Pearson Edexcel (2021), only lists the period of Weimar and Nazi Germany up until 1939. This is significant because in June 2020 59.6 per cent of all GCSE history students sat the Pearson Edexcel exam.

The introduction of the new history GCSE specifications also appeared to have an impact on Key Stage 3 teaching. The Historical Association’s 2018 survey findings suggested Key Stage 3 was becoming a ‘training ground’ for GCSE, rather than a distinct curriculum phase with its own priorities and aims. Around half of teachers reported planning the Key Stage 3 curriculum so that content could be revisited or to provide context for GCSE topics (Burn et al., 2019). By 2019, this trend appeared to be weakening. However, GCSE-style grading remained the most dominant model being used to evaluate and report on students’ achievement at Key Stage 3 from 2015 to 2019 (Burn and Harris, 2020).

<sup>27</sup> As the syllabi for 6 SACREs were unavailable, 147 of 153 were reviewed.



Table 3.1 GCSE history awarding body specifications

Awarding body, specification and number of 2020 entries	Holocaust related content
<p><b>AQA (2019a)</b> GCSE History (8145)</p> <p>For exams in 2018 onwards</p> <p>Entries: 94,284<sup>28</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One paper includes the option Germany 1890–1945: Democracy and Dictatorship.</li> <li>• Within this, students learn about the experiences of the Germans under the Nazis, including social policy and practice.</li> <li>• Topics referenced in the specification include: (a) reasons for policies, practices and their impact on women, young people and youth groups; (b) education; (c) control of churches and religion; (d) <b>Aryan ideas, racial policy and persecution; the Final Solution.</b></li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">(AQA, 2019a, p. 16)</p>
<p><b>OCR (2021a)</b></p> <p>History A (Explaining the Modern World) (9-1) J410</p> <p>For exams from 2018 onwards</p> <p>Entries 4,865<sup>29</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a non-British depth study, and one of the options is: Germany 1925–1955: The People and the State.</li> <li>• It consists of three topics: (a) the rise and consolidation of the Nazi regime 1925–1934, (b) Nazi Germany and its people 1933–1939, and (c) war and its legacy 1939–1955.</li> <li>• Under the second topic, content includes the <b>persecution of Jews and other groups</b>, including Roma, Jehovah’s Witnesses and homosexuals; eugenics policies.</li> <li>• Under the third topic, the <b>escalation of racial persecution leading to the Holocaust</b> is included.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">(OCR, 2021a, p. 14)</p>
<p><b>OCR (2021b)</b></p> <p>History B (Schools History Project) (9-1) J411</p> <p>For exams from 2018 onwards</p> <p>Entries: 17,000<sup>30</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a world depth study with three options, including: Living under Nazi Rule, 1933–1945.</li> <li>• This is divided into five sections: (a) Dictatorship, (b) Control and Opposition, 1933–1939, (c) Changing Lives 1933–1939, (d) Germany in War, and (e) Occupation.</li> <li>• Under ‘Changing Lives 1933–1939’ content includes: <b>Nazi racial policy: the growing persecution of Jews.</b></li> <li>• Under ‘Occupation’ content includes: <b>The Holocaust, including the Einsatzgruppen, ghettos and the death camps</b> and responses to Nazi rule: collaboration, accommodation and resistance.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">(OCR, 2021b, p. 25)</p>
<p><b>Pearson Edexcel (2021)</b></p> <p>Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9-1) in History (1HI0)</p> <p>For exams from 2018 onwards</p> <p>Entries: 148,678<sup>31</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As part of the modern depth study paper, students are given four options, one of which is Weimar and Nazi Germany: 1918–1939.</li> <li>• The study is divided into four key topics, including life in Nazi Germany, 1933–39.</li> <li>• This covers: Nazi racial beliefs and policies and the treatment of minorities: Slavs, ‘gypsies’, homosexuals and those with disabilities and <b>The persecution of the Jews, including the boycott of Jewish shops and businesses (1933), the Nuremberg Laws and Kristallnacht.</b></li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">(Pearson Edexcel, 2021, p. 45)</p>

In 2015, the A-level system in England changed. Previously, students could study an AS (advanced subsidiary) level for one year as either a standalone qualification or they could ‘bank’ the result and continue studying that subject before taking an A2 exam at the end of the second year of A-level study. Combining their AS and A2 scores gave their final A-level grade. In 2015, AS results ceased to contribute to the final A-level grade. Instead, A-level grades depended

solely on exams taken at the end of the two-year A-level course (Hanrahan, 2021). Thus, in 2015, the AS level and A-level essentially became separate qualifications. Across the exam specifications of the different awarding bodies, content related to the Holocaust is variable and optional. Thus, some students taking AS-level and A-level history may have limited opportunities to learn about the Holocaust.

28 AQA, 2020a.

29 OCR, 2021c.

30 OCR, 2021c.

31 Pearson Edexcel, 2020a.

Table 3.2 A-level history awarding body specifications<sup>32</sup>

Exam board, specification and 2020 entries	Holocaust related content
<p><b>AQA (2021)</b></p> <p>AS History (7041) For exams in 2016 onwards</p> <p>A-level History (7042) For exams in 2017 onwards</p> <p>A-level entries: 19,38<sup>33</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The specification includes the unit: Democracy and Nazism: Germany, 1918–1945. At AS level, the focus is on the Weimar Republic 1918–1933.</li> <li>• A-level students learn about the Weimar Republic, but also study Nazi Germany, 1933–1945. Within this, two topics address Holocaust related content: The Racial State, 1933–1941 and The Impact of War, 1939–45.</li> <li>• Topics covered for The Racial State include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The radicalisation of the state: Nazi racial ideology; policies towards the mentally ill, asocials, homosexuals, members of religious sects, the Roma and Sinti.</li> <li>• <b>Anti-Semitism: policies and actions towards the Jews, including the boycott of Jewish shops and the Nuremberg Laws.</b></li> <li>• <b>The development of anti-Semitic policies and actions; the effect of the Anschluss; Reichkristallnacht; emigration; the impact of the war against Poland.</b></li> <li>• <b>The treatment of Jews in the early years of war: the Einsatzgruppen; ghettos and deportations.</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Topics covered for The Impact of War include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rationing, indoctrination, propaganda and morale; the changing impact of war on different sections of society including the elites, workers, women and youth.</li> <li>• The wartime economy and the work of Speer; the impact of bombing; the mobilisation of the labour force and prisoners of war.</li> <li>• <b>Policies towards the Jews and the ‘untermenschen’ during wartime; the Wannsee Conference and the ‘Final Solution’</b></li> <li>• Opposition and resistance in wartime including students, churchmen, the army and civilian critics; assassination attempts and the July Bomb Plot; overview of the Nazi state by 1945.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">(AQA, 2021, pp. 55–7)</p>
<p><b>OCR (2021d and e)</b></p> <p>AS specification History A H105 First exams in 2016 onwards</p> <p>A-level specification History A H505 First exams in 2017 onwards</p> <p>A-level entries: 9,466<sup>34</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The AS level includes a unit about a non-British period study including the option: Democracy and Dictatorship in Germany 1919–1963. The unit consists of four key topics, including <b>racial policies to 1939, and war and racial policies, the Final Solution.</b> (OCR, 2021d, p. 41)</li> <li>• The A-level also includes the option: Democracy and Dictatorship in Germany 1919–1963 outlined above. (OCR, 2021e, p. 57)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Pearson Edexcel (2017a and b)</b></p> <p>Level 3 Advanced Subsidiary GCE in History (8H10) First exams in 2016 onwards</p> <p>Pearson Edexcel Level 3 Advanced GCE in History (9H10) First exams in 2017 onwards</p> <p>A-level entries: 12,542<sup>35</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The AS level includes the option: Germany and West Germany, 1918–1989, and students look at aspects of life in Germany and West Germany, 1918–89. The content includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The position of ethnic minorities, 1918–89: the status of, and attitudes towards, ethnic minorities, 1918–32.</li> <li>• <b>Nazi racial policies, including the Final Solution.</b></li> <li>• The status of, and attitudes towards, ethnic minorities in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). (Pearson Edexcel, 2017a, p. 57)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>The A-level includes the content outlined above for the AS-level and includes the optional paper: Germany, 1871–1990: united, divided and reunited. This does not look specifically at the Holocaust but explores the impact of Nazi policies on social and economic change in Germany and West Germany.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Germany 1871–1990 paper also includes A new Reich 1933–35, covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The nature of the new Nazi state: the relationship of state and party.</li> <li>• Attempts to create a Volksgemeinschaft.</li> <li>• Racial policy, including the significance of the Nuremberg Laws. (Pearson Edexcel, 2017b, pp. 65 and 103)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>32</sup> Note: In addition to examined content outlined, at A-level all specifications include a non-exam assessment. Where permissible, students could choose to explore content related to the Holocaust.

<sup>33</sup> AQA, 2020b.

<sup>34</sup> OCR, 2020.

<sup>35</sup> Pearson Edexcel, 2020b.

## Exam specifications in religious education

In 2009, Holocaust-related content was included as optional content in five of eight available specifications for GCSE religious education and in 2008, 164,000 students were entered for these examinations (Pettigrew et al., 2009). In contrast, in 2019/20 it was not directly referenced anywhere in any of the seven revised specifications. It is possible, however, that the key themes, 'Religion, peace and conflict', and 'Religion, human rights and social justice' / 'Religion, philosophy and social justice' (at least one of which is included in five specifications) would lend themselves to its inclusion.

Within the three available A-level specifications in 2019/20, two mention post-Holocaust theology as part of the option to study Judaism (AQA, 2019b and OCR, 2021f). Whereas Pearson Edexcel requires students to choose three papers from a choice of four, one of which focuses on a study of one of six major religions. For those students who elect to study Judaism, students learn about the Holocaust, with reference to the ideas of Richard Rubenstein and Emil Fackenheim, looking at the significance of the Holocaust for Jewish beliefs related to covenant relationship, the context of antisemitism, and Nazi pogroms and the 'Final Solution'. Students also explore Jewish responses to the Holocaust in terms of religious issues, loss of faith; death of God; God acting in history; suffering servant analogy; and punishment and resurrection (Pearson Edexcel, 2018, p. 62).

In other school curriculum subjects where the Holocaust is known to be taught – like citizenship and English – this does not currently translate into the Holocaust having a presence on public examination specifications.

## Has academisation impacted teaching about the Holocaust?

The national studies conducted by the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education (Pettigrew et al., 2009; Foster et al., 2016) raised concern about the impact of 'academisation' of English secondary schools on Holocaust education. It was argued that academy status schools might use their freedom to depart from the National Curriculum, in turn removing the study of the Holocaust from within Key Stage 3 history entirely. As already described in Chapter 1, this was a concern also named and noted by the 2016 Holocaust Education Select Committee.

The Historical Association's annual survey of history teachers in 2015 suggested that, in practice, few schools deviated from the National Curriculum (Burn and Harris, 2015). However, over time schools increasingly began to deviate and by 2019, only around 30.0 per cent of surveyed schools reported that they complied closely with the National Curriculum. Around 40.0 per cent reported they were broadly in line with the National Curriculum's

requirements while the remainder operated flexibly with reference to these requirements (Burn and Harris, 2020).

In the UCL 2019/20 study, teachers were asked to what extent they followed the National Curriculum. Looking at the data by school type, for those working in academies 75.4 per cent said that most or all subjects in their school followed the National Curriculum, with 15.6 per cent saying a small number of subjects followed it. With regards to those principally teaching about the Holocaust in history, the proportions were the same (73.2 per cent and 16.9 per cent respectively). History teachers in state-funded schools that were not academies were more likely to report following the National Curriculum, for example 95.7 per cent of teachers in comprehensives reported following it in most or all subjects. Overall, given that so many schools reported following the National Curriculum, academisation appears not to have contributed to the removal of the Holocaust from the curriculum in these schools.

However, as this study targeted, and therefore largely consisted of, teachers with recent experience of teaching about the Holocaust, those dropping the Holocaust from their curriculum would have been less likely to respond to the survey. Thus, it is difficult to draw conclusions about the prevalence of academies opting not to teach the Holocaust at Key Stage 3 as part of the National Curriculum directive. The engagement or otherwise of academy status schools with teaching and learning about the Holocaust therefore remains an important area for further targeted exploration.

## Where and when is teaching about the Holocaust taking place?

Overall, for the UCL 2019/20 study, 931 survey respondents with recent experience of teaching about the Holocaust reported the subject in which they principally taught about the Holocaust. Two-thirds of teachers reported principally teaching about the Holocaust in history, with a much smaller proportion doing so in other subjects such as religious education:

- History: 65.4 per cent
- Religious education: 15.0 per cent
- Citizenship, PSHE or related provision (including tutor time and assemblies): 5.1 per cent
- English or drama: 4.6 per cent

Additionally, 2.7 per cent of respondents cited other subjects in which they principally taught about the Holocaust including geography, sociology, art, music, modern foreign languages, maths, science and physical education (PE). A further 7.2 per cent cited principally teaching about the Holocaust in more than one subject.

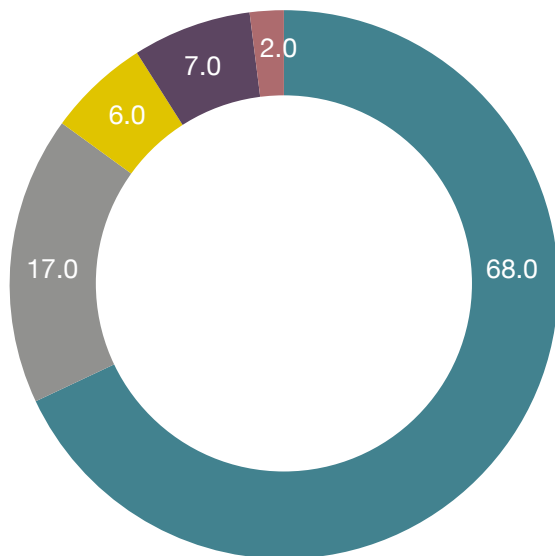
Thus, in the UCL 2019/20 study – as was the case in the IOE 2009 study – history was the subject area in which the majority of all reported teaching about the Holocaust took

place. In fact, as comparison between Figures 3.1 and 3.2 suggests, the dominance of history over other subject areas appears to have increased over the last ten years. In the UCL 2019/20 study, history classes accounted for 68.0 per cent of all teaching about the Holocaust reported by survey respondents compared to 57.0 per cent in 2009. This was accompanied by a notable decline in reported teaching taking place in religious education which accounted for 27.0 per cent of all teaching in the IOE 2009 survey but only 17.0 per cent in the UCL 2019/20 study.<sup>36</sup>

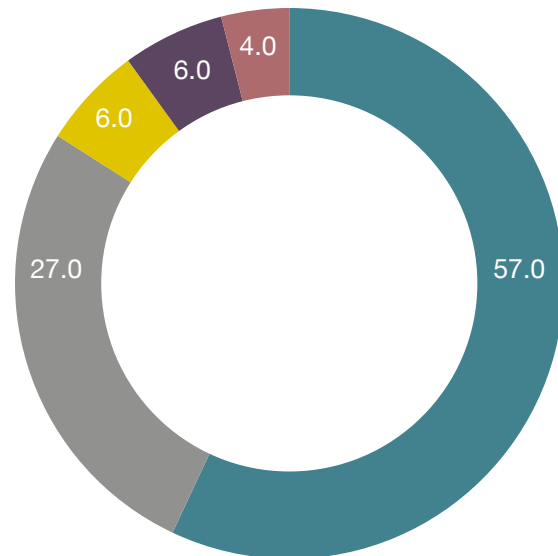
Approximately 6.0 per cent of all teaching about the Holocaust in both 2009 and 2019/20 took place within formal citizenship or PSHE classes (again, including related tutor time and/or assemblies). The proportion of teaching about the Holocaust that took place in English or drama increased very slightly in the UCL 2019/20 study compared to the IOE 2009 study, from 6.0 per cent to 7.0 per cent, while the proportion of teaching in other subjects fell from 4.0 per cent to 2.0 per cent between the two points in time.

Within history classes, there was also a striking shift in the proportion of teaching that took place with different age groups. In 2009, 49.7 per cent of all reported history teaching about the Holocaust took place in Year 9, the last year of Key Stage 3. Only 4.9 per cent of reported teaching took place in Year 8 history classrooms and 2.7 per cent in Year 7, with younger students aged 12–13 and 11–12 respectively. However, in 2019/20, while the proportion of reported history teaching with Year 7 students had increased marginally to 3.2 per cent, among Year 8 students, this had grown four-fold, to 20.7 per cent. The proportion of teaching in Year 9 had fallen to 38.9 per cent. Figure 3.3 illustrates the changes in history teaching by year group.

**Figure 3.1** Percentage of all teaching about the Holocaust by subject – UCL 2019/20 study (n=1539)



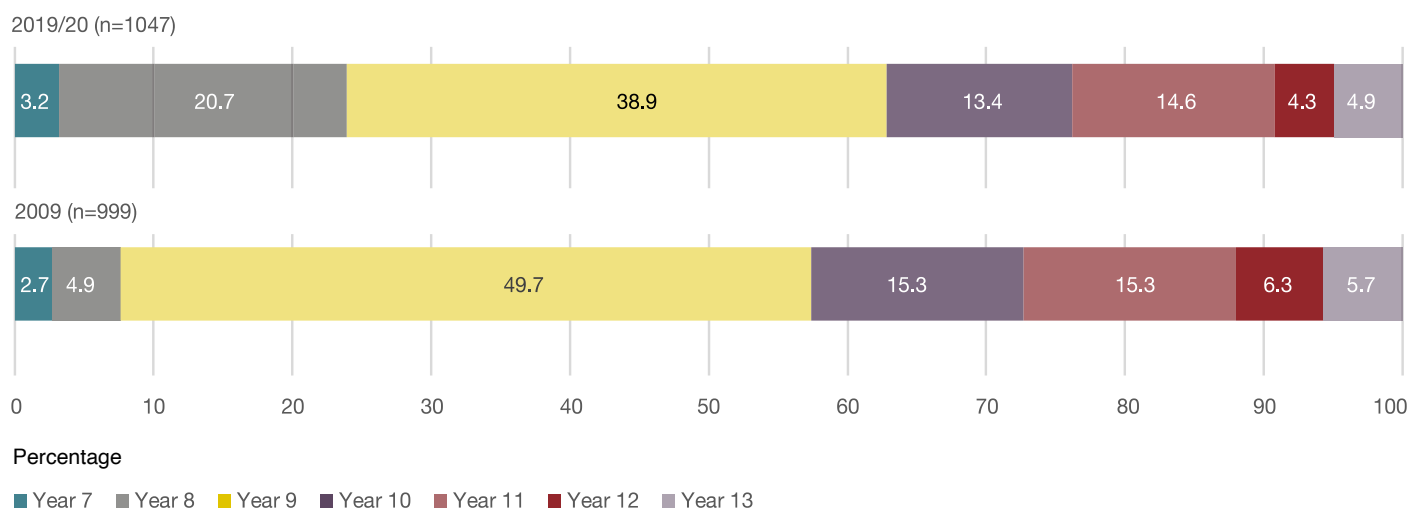
**Figure 3.2** Percentage of all teaching about the Holocaust by subject – IOE 2009 study (n=1748)



History
  Religious education
  Citizenship/PSHE
  English and drama
  Other subjects

<sup>36</sup> These percentages, also reproduced in Figures 3.1 and 3.2, are based on the total number of year groups in which each teacher was delivering Holocaust education (i.e. some teachers might cover the content with one year group, but others might cover it with a few different year groups). The data is broken down by the subjects in which teachers principally taught about the Holocaust. This gives a sense of coverage across the Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 curricula.

**Figure 3.3** Change in history teaching from 2009 to 2019/20 by year group (%)



Moreover, in the UCL 2019/20 study, 29.2 per cent of all those who taught about the Holocaust within Key Stage 3 history did so *only* within Years 7 or 8. The equivalent proportion in the IOE 2009 study was just 4.4 per cent.

In interview, several teachers explained this shift as the consequence of some schools' decision to 'reduce' or 'condense' their Key Stage 3 curriculum in order to introduce elements of GCSE programmes of study within Year 9. This trend was also identified in research conducted on behalf of the National Education Union (2019). Similarly, the authors of the Historical Association (HA) annual surveys found there was a steady increase in teachers reporting a two-year history Key Stage 3 from 5.0 per cent in 2009 to 22.8 per cent in 2014 to 40.2 per cent in 2018 (Burn et al., 2019). The HA recognise that in practice, many schools may in fact be spending between two and three years on Key Stage 3. Thus, they revised their survey question and in 2019 found that 29.6 per cent of teachers reported that their schools provided only a two-year Key Stage 3, 12.8 per cent spent more than two years but less than three, while only 57.6 per cent of schools provided a full, three-year Key Stage 3 (Burn and Harris, 2020).

In the context of Holocaust education, teachers from the UCL 2019/20 study reported some specific implications this had for their teaching. Among history teachers, almost 30.0 per cent experienced teaching the Holocaust to students in Years 7 or 8 because of a two-year Key Stage 3 curriculum as a challenge that they 'often' or 'always' encountered. In interview, a number of teachers spoke of the 'reduced' and 'restricted' opportunities this presented to teach about this history in all its complexity. Some expressed concern that this had direct impact on historical understanding and worried that younger students were 'just not equipped to deal with it'.

Now we have a two-year Key Stage 3 which has impacted us massively [...] I think it's probably fair to say that we're back at the drawing board at the minute in terms of what we're going to do and how we're going to do it [...]. This year we haven't managed to [cover the same amount of content] because of the loss of time and the maturity of the kids [...] we've had to change the content significantly because they're just not equipped to deal with it. And we weren't sure quite how low we would have to pitch it, but it has made a big difference in terms of the kind of scaffolding that they're needing for the tasks, the length of time it's taking to do things.

**History teacher, East Midlands, group interview**

In other schools, teachers described their reasons for actively resisting this apparent trend:

There was a discussion a few years ago about squashing Key Stage 3 into two years. It was agreed that the core subjects could start the GCSE courses in Year 9, but I stood strongly against losing Year 9 history. Squashing it into two years means losing both breadth and depth. I also think that most Year 8s are just not ready for the content of topics such as the Holocaust.

**History teacher, West Midlands, survey response**

In terms of religious education, the summation of responses given by teachers who indicated they taught about the Holocaust in this subject remained broadly consistent between the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 studies for the youngest year groups:

- Year 7: 34 teachers (2009) compared to 28 teachers (2019/20)
- Year 8: 55 teachers (2009) compared to 59 teachers (2019/20)

However, total response counts declined markedly in Years 9, 10 and 11:

- Year 9: 167 teachers (2009) compared to 79 teachers (2019/20)
- Year 10: 79 teachers (2009) compared to 28 teachers (2019/20)
- Year 11: 59 teachers (2009) compared to 18 teachers (2019/20)

Overall, while among the UCL 2019/20 survey sample just 15.0 per cent of respondents identified religious education as the subject in which they principally taught about the Holocaust, 25.9 per cent had done so in 2009. Explanations for the decline in RE teaching about the Holocaust, especially in Years 9, 10 and 11, were offered by a number of teachers in interview. These teachers reflected on how some of the issues described in Chapter 1 were impacting on their practice in schools. As the interview excerpt below indicates, this included concerns about RE being marginalised because of the EBacc, a shortage of specialist teachers and reduced curriculum time.

So here we used to do compulsory RS and then, when the GCSE changed we couldn't fit that into the time so then we've gone to optional RS. But what that has changed is, um, we used to find with the compulsory is, students who didn't think they liked it would love it by the end and would want to talk about stuff like this and have that discussion. Now we don't get that opportunity with students because they don't have [...] the time. Because they all want to do – you know – science. And RS wasn't put on the EBacc, so then you get schools that completely devalue it because it's no longer an EBacc subject. It's not part of those subjects that you *need* to choose [...] and even though it is legal [requirement], we still have to teach RS, schools completely devalue that. [...] Yeah, in some schools it's almost gone, like they just do

an RE drop-down day and just hope for the best. And that also reflects that we don't really have that many RS – specialist RS – teachers around.

**Religious education teacher, East of England, group interview**

As shown in Table 3.3, the average number of hours spent teaching about the Holocaust to each year group within different subjects further reflects a number of changes from the IOE 2009 study to the UCL 2019/20 study. For example:

- In 2009, the median number of total hours spent teaching about the Holocaust within history to Year 8 students was four, this doubled to eight hours in 2019/20.
- In 2009, the median number for Year 9 was six increasing to eight hours in 2019/20. At Key Stage 5, there appeared to be a decline in both the frequency and volume of teaching about the Holocaust in history.

Overall, in 2009, Key Stage 3 teaching accounted for 57.3 per cent of all teaching about the Holocaust within history classrooms compared to 30.6 per cent in Key Stage 4 and 12.0 per cent in Key Stage 5. In 2019/20, the proportion of Key Stage 3 teaching had grown to 62.8 per cent relative to 28.0 per cent in Key Stage 4 and 9.2 per cent in Key Stage 5.

Again, one explanation for such reductions was identified by teachers in interview:

And that's why I get nervous about the GCSE specifications, because it is done in the context of wider inquiries and they have to be necessarily done very briefly, and the less time you spend on something the greater chance you have to miss misconceptions and not to correct misconceptions and to leave with half-truths. There will always, their understanding, our understanding, will always be imperfect, but the more time you spend on it the better.

**History teacher, East of England, group interview**

**Table 3.3** Time spent teaching about the Holocaust in the IOE 2009 study and the UCL 2019/20 study by subject and year group (hours)

	Across all respondents	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13
<b>History (2009)</b>								
Response number	535	26	48	477	150	152	61	55
Mean	14.4	2.9	5.4	7.6	7.6	6.4	11	18.1
Median	10	2	4	6	4	4	6	10
Mode	6	1	1, 2	6	3	4	1, 3, 10	2
Range	1–152	1–12	1–20	1–100	1–76	1–76	1–70	1–80
<b>History (2019/20)</b>								
Response number	572	33	209	391	135	147	43	51
Mean	13.5	4.4	8.6	9.4	4.7	4.8	6.5	9.1
Median	12	2	8	8	4	4	4	8
Mode	10	1	10	10	4	2	2, 3	1, 10
Range	2–73	1–21	1–32	1–40	1–20	1–30	1–30	1–30
<b>Religious education (2009)</b>								
Response number	230	34	55	167	79	59	31	26
Mean	10.3	1.8	4.8	6.9	4.3	4	3.8	7.5
Median	8	2	4	6	3	3	3	4.5
Mode	6	2	2	3	1	1, 2	1, 2	4
Range	1–63	1–5	1–15	1–40	1–25	1–25	1–15	1–28
<b>Religious education (2019/20)</b>								
Response number	128	25	56	73	27	18	25	12
Mean	11.8	4.2	7.7	8.7	3.7	3.6	4.5	4.3
Median	10	2	6	8	2	2	3	3.5
Mode	4	1	4, 6	12	1, 2	2	2	8
Range	1–78	1–14	1–40	1–34	1–12	1–15	1–20	1–8

Table 3.3 continued

	Across all respondents	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13
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**Citizenship/PSHE (2009)**

Response number	41	12	9	23	18	16	8	7
Mean	9.2	2.3	3.1	3.6	4.5	4.6	5.6	5.9
Median	4	1	2	3	2	2	3	2
Mode	2	1	1	2	1	1	1, 2, 5	1, 2, 5
Range	1–130	1–10	1–10	1–10	1–25	1–25	1–25	1–25

**Citizenship/PSHE (2019/20)**

Response number	36	16	16	19	16	10	8	5
Mean	13.1	5.1	6.4	6.6	4.2	3.2	4.3	4
Median	6	2.5	2.5	4	2.5	2	3.5	4
Mode	6	1	1, 2	2	1, 2	1, 2	1, 3, 6	1, 4
Range	1–98	1–12	1–30	1–36	1–16	1–10	1–10	1–10

**English and/or drama (2009)**

Response number	59	17	22	19	2	16	5	5
Mean	9.8	5.6	6	5.8	5	4.4	3.6	6.4
Median	8	3	3.5	3	2.5	2	4	4
Mode	2	1	1	2	1, 2	1	4	1
Range	1–40	1–20	1–30	1–16	1–30	1–40	1–6	1–20

**English and/or drama (2019/20)**

Response number	36	20	22	18	9	8	3	3
Mean	16.6	13.8	5.5	5.5	4.2	4.1	5.3	4.3
Median	12.5	10	4	4	3	3.5	4	2
Mode	3, 4	4	3, 4	4	3	2	2, 4, 10	1, 2, 10
Range	1–70	1–48	2–12	1–21	1–10	1–10	2–10	1–10



Overall, the most significant increase in the average number of hours spent teaching about the Holocaust among any subject or year group was within Year 7 English and drama lessons. In the IOE 2009 study, English and/or drama teachers reported spending a median of three hours with Year 7 students teaching about the Holocaust. In the UCL 2019/20 study this had risen to 10 hours.

This trend is likely to be related to the use of the text *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*. While 35.0 per cent of all teachers in the UCL 2019/20 survey reported that they used the book and/or film version of *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* with students when teaching about the Holocaust, in English and drama this rate was 80.0 per cent (see Chapter 7 for further discussion).<sup>37</sup> Within interview, several teachers outlined the specific concern that *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* either introduced or reinforced problematic misconceptions that then needed to be tackled. These misconceptions often echoed the same specific distortions revealed in the Centre's research with students (Foster et al., 2016).

## 'Additional' subjects and whole school policy framings

Accounting for all teaching about the Holocaust in schools only where teachers described their 'principal' subject for doing so likely underrepresents the frequency of teaching in citizenship and/or PSHE contexts, especially where this is expanded to include teaching in tutor time, form periods and/or through whole school assemblies. While most of the data collected and reported here asked respondents to focus on the subject in which they principally taught about the Holocaust, the survey also captured additional subject areas and/or school contexts within which they taught. Over a third (36.5 per cent) of all such additional teaching took place in citizenship, PSHE classes, form time and/or school assemblies. Three-quarters of the teachers (74.5 per cent) also reported they marked Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD).

Taking principal and additional teaching about the Holocaust together, citizenship, PSHE, tutor time and assemblies made up 18.3 per cent of all teaching, roughly equivalent to religious education (18.8 per cent). On this basis, history accounts for just under half of all teaching picked up by the survey (48.2 per cent), English and/or drama for 6.5 per cent and all other subjects for 8.3 per cent.

In a departure from the IOE 2009 study, the UCL 2019/20 survey also included a series of questions exploring the potential impact on teaching about the Holocaust of whole school policies such as the Prevent Duty, the promotion of fundamental British values (FBV), SMSC provision and cross-curricular PSHE.

- A third of all teachers (38.0 per cent) reported that statutory SMSC requirements impacted their teaching

about the Holocaust 'somewhat' and 26.8 per cent 'to a great extent'.

- PSHE impacted 33.4 per cent of all teachers 'somewhat' and 11.3 per cent 'to a great extent'.
- A third of teachers (35.0 per cent) said the promotion of fundamental British values (FBV) impacted their teaching about the Holocaust 'somewhat' and 8.8 per cent 'to a great extent'.
- Prevent legislation impacted this teaching 'somewhat' for 29.2 per cent, and 'to a great extent' for 11.0 per cent.

Teachers had the option to elaborate on these questions, and 153 of them did so. A common theme in their responses was that while these policies were related to their teaching about the Holocaust, they were not the primary reason for teaching this subject:

We teach the Holocaust because as history teachers we feel it is an event which is of such significance and resonance students need to understand how it happened and why. They explore the complexities of the Holocaust and also the variety of responses and motivations people had. From this we have realized that we meet the policies, but it is not leading what we do in History.

**History teacher, West Midlands, survey response**

Nonetheless, some teachers spoke of the opportunity that the policies provided to expand the provision of Holocaust education within their schools:

We teach the Holocaust in History because it matters regardless of these policies. By studying the Holocaust, we aim to make our students better historians with a more nuanced understanding of the early 20th century and this would not change if the policies did not exist. Although the existence of these initiatives has helped raise awareness of Holocaust education with colleagues in other departments and make it a whole school focus. SLT are more willing to support cross curricular initiatives related to Holocaust Education as these policies clearly support whole school priorities like Prevent and SMSC as well as the school's own Christian distinctiveness, I am not sure SLT would be so supportive and colleagues in other subject areas so willing to collaborate.

**History teacher, North West England, survey response**

<sup>37</sup> The book or text was also used by 49.0 per cent of those who taught about the Holocaust within citizenship, PSHE or related assemblies/tutor time, 27.0 per cent of those teaching in religious education and 32.0 per cent of those teaching in history.

Similar points were also made in the interviews, for example, in relation to renewed governmental focus on SMSC within the Ofsted inspection framework:

For me, it was all about I needed Holocaust education to be here and it to be [of high] quality in this school. And I could see where we could take it, but it was, you know, there's lots of things in our curriculum, that need to be put into the curriculum. There is a, you know, an argument, 'why are you spending 15 hours doing this?' So, I have to justify it, and one of the ways that I justify it [is that] the two things dovetail. I don't know which is the chicken or the egg really, but it's dovetailed, this is the vital part of SMSC. So, in our last three Ofsted inspections they have specifically noted this, that this is outstanding SMSC most notably this programme [of Holocaust education across the school].

**PSHE and social sciences teacher, South East England, group interview**

The survey and interviews revealed some ambivalence about the Prevent Duty (see DfE, 2015b) and promoting fundamental British values (see DfE, 2014c), generally and in relation to teaching about the Holocaust. Nevertheless, there was also emerging evidence that these policies were influencing how teachers framed content and discussions about the Holocaust. While this study did not collect extensive data in this area and thus, caution is needed when interpreting this data, it does appear that these policies, are having an impact in some schools:

The Prevent agenda in broadest terms is becoming increasingly relevant - preventing extremism or vulnerabilities to all kinds of claims, not simply Islamist, as truth claims are contested. Need for critical thinking in age of fake news is key and in light of increasing division in society as a result of Brexit and other factors. As an MFL [modern foreign language] teacher and HOY [head of year] this is becoming more and more a factor - as the rhetoric is heightening, pre Holocaust imagery very visible, rising antisemitism and so on. More and more of my students are exposed to those messages and we need to be better equipped and alert to the dangers - in school and beyond, so in many ways modelling FBV is a means to address this. Whether it is the best or only way to do it is of course up for debate - but its certainly something that feels more relevant than it originally did.

**Modern foreign languages teacher, Yorkshire and the Humber, survey response**

## Summary

On the surface, it appears there are many continuities from the IOE 2009 to UCL 2019/20 studies: history remained the subject in which students were most likely to encounter this topic, it was also taught to a lesser extent in other subjects like religious education and citizenship, and students were more likely to study the Holocaust in Key Stage 3 than in Key Stages 4 and 5. However, detailed analysis revealed a more complex picture, with a decline in teaching about the Holocaust through religious education, greater coverage of the Holocaust in English, and younger students learning about this history because of some schools opting for a shorter Key Stage 3 programme. In addition to this, there was emerging evidence that broader government education policies, such as the Prevent duty, the promotion of fundamental British values, SMSC provision and cross-curricular PSHE were influencing how teachers framed content and discussions about the Holocaust.

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4

# The support and training available to those who teach about the Holocaust

## Key Points

- The IOE 2009 study led to a step change in the field of Holocaust education. It was the first large-scale empirical study published in England to document the issues that teachers encountered when teaching about the Holocaust, whilst also highlighting that only a minority of teachers had received any form of specialist training to support them in teaching this challenging history.
- Consequently, the IOE 2009 study led to the establishment of the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education's professional development programme for teachers. It not only played a pivotal role in the expansion of continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities in the field (with 25,000 teachers participating in the programme since 2009), but also pioneered a research-informed approach to Holocaust education CPD.
- The UCL 2019/20 study showed that participation in formal training for teaching about the Holocaust had increased considerably since the IOE 2009 study. For example, in the case of those teaching about the Holocaust in history and religious education, around two-thirds of teachers had received training provided by at least one specialist Holocaust education organisation.
- Participation in formal training was related to higher levels of confidence in teaching about the Holocaust compared to those without formal training. As outlined in this report, formal training was also related to other salient variables.
- This chapter explores the role of training and specialist support across the field of Holocaust education. For analysis and discussion about the continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities offered by the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education, see Chapter 8.

## Introduction

A central finding from the IOE 2009 study was that only a minority of those teaching about the Holocaust in English secondary schools had received any form of specialist training to support them. Of those surveyed (n=1,014):

- Only 26.4 per cent had taken part in any form of Holocaust education training provided by organisations outside of their school since becoming a teacher
- Fewer than a quarter (22.0 per cent) had experienced a specific focus on teaching about the Holocaust in their initial teacher training course
- Just 5.5 per cent had received formal training in teaching about the Holocaust in their first year as a newly qualified teacher (their 'NQT year')

These findings were pivotal, especially when viewed in tandem with other findings from the IOE 2009 study, and in the context of the Holocaust being a mandatory topic in the history National Curriculum. The study identified multiple issues (for example, the dominance of the 'perpetrator narrative' in teaching) and enabled teachers to discuss various concerns (for example, being uncertain about what the outcomes of Holocaust education ought to be) (Pettigrew et al., 2009). However, despite grappling with these challenges, many teachers had not participated in training to support them in this work. It was evident that not only was greater access to professional development opportunities in this field essential, but the courses also needed to be of high quality and responsive to the complex challenges (and opportunities) that teachers were regularly encountering in their classrooms when teaching about the Holocaust.

As already described in Chapter 1, the IOE 2009 study was the catalyst for the establishment of the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education's CPD programme, which to date, has seen the participation of over 25,000 teachers from multiple disciplines and at different stages of their careers. Of course, before 2009, there were some important and well-established organisations working in various ways to provide young people with educational encounters with this history. However, the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education was, and continues to be, unique in conducting its own empirical research to better understand the complexities of teaching and learning about this subject, in turn drawing on these studies to inform the content of its CPD courses. Additionally, the Centre's research has been used by other

organisations in the field, further benefiting teachers and students both in the UK and internationally. As outlined in Chapter 1, the Centre's research has been described as 'a model and an invaluable guide for those of us in the field of Holocaust education' (Shulman, 2015).

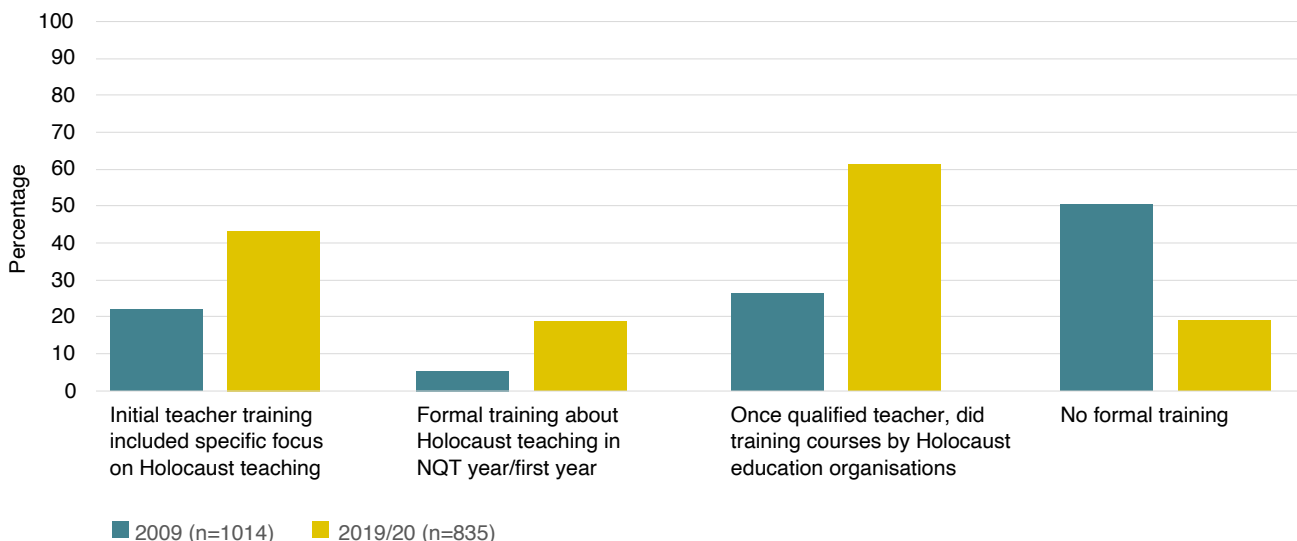
Consequently, the IOE 2009 study triggered the expansion and development of CPD provision across the field. This chapter explores teachers' engagement with specialist support and training over the last ten years.

## Expansion of specialist support for teachers

As Figure 4.1 illustrates, more of the teachers surveyed in the UCL 2019/2020 study had taken part in some form of training to support their teaching about the Holocaust than in the IOE 2009 study. Almost twice as many teachers reported that their initial teacher training included a specific focus on the Holocaust (43.4 per cent in 2019/20 compared to 22.0 per cent in 2009) while more than three times as many received such training during their NQT year.

Moreover, in the UCL 2019/20 study, only 18.9 per cent of those with recent experience of teaching about the Holocaust had no prior formal training in Holocaust education. Whereas almost two-thirds of teachers (61.4 per cent) had taken part in at least one specialist course offered by organisations outside of their school.

Figure 4.1 Experience of formal training to teach about the Holocaust in the IOE 2009 study and the UCL 2019/20 study (%)

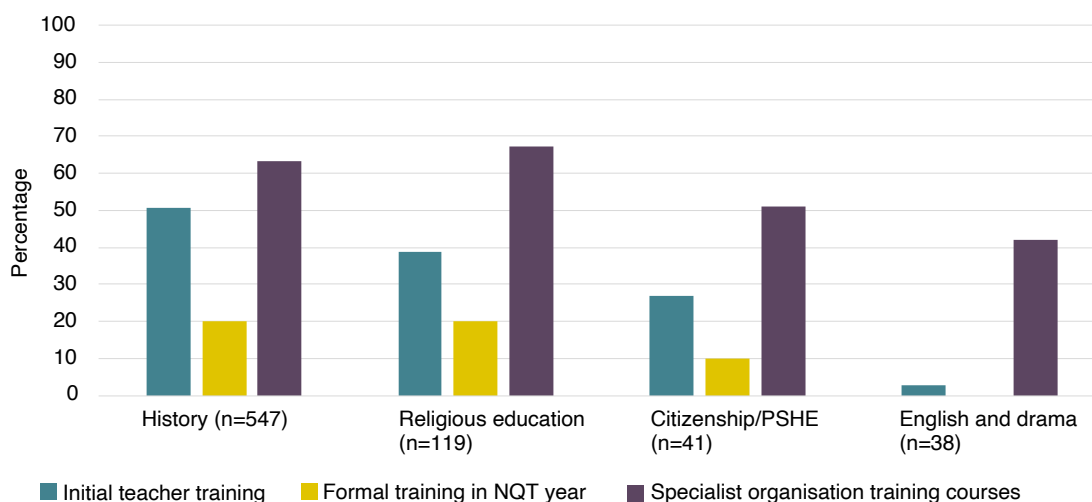


The influence and importance of such training is examined throughout this report in a variety of different ways, but at this juncture it is instructive to note variation in the experience of specialist training both on the basis of subject background and geographically.

## Variation by subject background

Figure 4.2 presents teachers' training experiences based on the subject in which they principally taught about the Holocaust. A specific focus on teaching about the Holocaust was included in the initial teacher training of 50.6 per cent of those surveyed who taught about the Holocaust within history, 38.7 per cent of those who did so within religious education, and 26.8 per cent of those who principally taught the Holocaust in citizenship, PSHE or other related curriculum spaces. A small handful (2.6 per cent) of those who principally taught about the Holocaust in English or drama reported that their initial teacher training had included specific content on teaching about the Holocaust, but none had received any such input during their first year as a newly qualified teacher (their 'NQT year'). In contrast, around 20.0 per cent of history and RE teachers recounted formal training on teaching the Holocaust during their NQT year as did 9.8 per cent of those principally teaching about the Holocaust in citizenship or PSHE.

Figure 4.2 Variation in experience of specialist training by subject in the UCL 2019/20 study (%)



The participation rates for specialist training opportunities provided by external organisations were:

- 67.2 per cent for religious education
- 63.3 per cent for history
- 51.2 per cent for citizenship or PSHE
- 42.1 per cent for English or drama.

### Initial teacher training provision

The data showed that in the ten years between the IOE 2009 study and the UCL 2019/20 study, the proportion of teachers reporting their ITE courses included a specific focus on the Holocaust increased for history, religious education and citizenship/PSHE, but was more or less the same in English:

- History: 25.3 per cent in 2009 compared to 50.6 per cent in 2019/20
- Religious education: 25.2 per cent in 2009 compared to 38.7 per cent in 2019/20
- Citizenship or PSHE: 6.5 per cent in 2009 compared to 26.8 per cent in 2019/20
- English: 6.1 per cent in 2009 compared to 4.5 per cent in 2019/20

It is important to note however, that among those surveyed in the IOE 2009 study, a third had trained as teachers more than 15 years previously. Thus, some of these teachers would have completed their initial teacher training before the history National Curriculum and statutory requirement to teach about the Holocaust had come into full effect.

Shortly after publication of the IOE 2009 study, the authors conducted a short survey with the course leaders responsible for Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) courses in history, religious education and citizenship running in 2010. The survey explored whether any specific guidance or instruction on teaching about the Holocaust was included within their courses. Responses were received from 18 history tutors (representing 50.0 per cent of all PGCE courses), 21 religious education tutors (57.0 per cent of all courses) and four citizenship tutors (33.0 per cent).

All 18 history course leaders and just over half of the religious education course leaders indicated that their PGCE programmes included specific input on teaching about the Holocaust, which was mandatory for all students. Provision for both subjects included workshops, invited speakers and external visits. Three of the four citizenship course leaders included a mandatory session related to the Holocaust within their programme.

By 2020 there were only four university-based PGCE programmes in citizenship still running across the country, a reminder of the wider shifting educational priorities and policies described in Chapter 1. However, the number of history programmes had increased to 47 while the number of religious education programmes remained the same. In preparation for this report, all course coordinators were contacted and, in addition, the coordinators of the 60 available PGCE programmes in English.

Responses were received for 18 history PGCE programmes (38.0 per cent of all those contacted), two citizenship courses (50.0 per cent), eight English courses (13.0 per cent) and 13 religious education courses (35.0 per cent). The history, religious education and citizenship course coordinators replied that specific content on teaching about the Holocaust was included within their programmes as did five of eight English coordinators. The vast majority of respondents (97.0 per cent) described that they invited external specialist educators to deliver and or support this content. Around a third of history and religious education course coordinators also described further activities such as site visits, input from Holocaust survivors and additional seminars. Thus, for the PGCE courses in these subjects, there appears to be increased coverage of the Holocaust in their programmes of study from 2010 to 2020.

However, it is important to remember that where teachers encounter Holocaust related content as part of their initial teacher training, there is a wider educational policy context to consider. As outlined in Chapter 1, there has been an expansion of initial teacher training providers in recent years. Indeed, for new ITT entrants across England in 2019/20, only 45.0 per cent were enrolled in PGCE (or similar) courses at higher education institutions, with the remainder of teachers enrolled in school-led courses like School Direct and School Centred ITT (DfE, 2019b). The form, content, and extent (or otherwise) of a specialist focus on teaching about the Holocaust across England's complex and extensive network of school-led teacher training routes remains largely unknown.

## Initial subject training

The UCL 2019/20 study asked respondents to identify the subject(s) they trained in during their initial teacher education (ITE). Almost all of those who indicated that they principally taught about the Holocaust within history had also received their initial teacher training in history (93.7 per cent). Similarly, 94.1 per cent of those who principally taught about the Holocaust in English or drama had received training in one or both of those subjects. The equivalent correspondence was only 85.0 per cent for those principally teaching about the Holocaust in religious education. Most strikingly, only 16.7 per cent of those who principally taught about the Holocaust within citizenship, PSHE or other related school contexts such as 'tutor time' or assemblies had received initial teacher education in either citizenship or PSHE. More of these teachers (25.0 per cent) had in fact received initial teacher training in religious education.

The diversity of subject background for those teaching citizenship and PSHE reflects the reality that in many schools, citizenship, and especially PSHE content, is delivered by teachers who are not specialists in these subjects. Instead, teachers across the disciplines often deliver this content through form time, newly defined subject areas which combine religious education themes with citizenship and PSHE, or through extra-curricular activities such as whole school or year group assemblies. The issue of teachers delivering taught content on the

Holocaust within a subject area they did not specialise in was also raised as a matter of concern by a number of teachers in interview. Often referred to as 'out-of-field teaching' (where teachers are assigned to teach subjects for which they have inadequate training and qualifications) (Hobbs and Porsch, 2021), this issue is discussed more fully in Chapter 7.

## Regional variation

Figure 4.3 tentatively suggests that it may also be salient to consider regional variation in either the uptake or availability of specialist teacher training about the Holocaust at both ITT and NQT level and in terms of courses offered by specialist organisations.

Only around a third of respondents with recent experience of teaching about the Holocaust in the North East (34.3 per cent) reported receiving specific content on teaching about the Holocaust during their initial teacher training and little more than that in the East of England (34.8 per cent) or South West (37.4 per cent). Around half of those respondents from both the West Midlands (51.2 per cent) and London (52.0 per cent) however, did report receiving such content. Teachers in both of these regions also appear most likely to have taken part in training provided by specialist external organisations (68.6 per cent in London and 69.0 per cent in the West Midlands), while this was true of only 51.4 per cent of teachers in the South West. The disparity across the regions reflects, to a certain extent, the locations in which specialist Holocaust education institutions are based. Thus, the fact that opportunities to participate in specialist CPD were higher in London (home to several Holocaust education organisations) is arguably unsurprising. However, the data draws attention to regions where these training opportunities appear more limited. Ensuring accessibility to Holocaust education CPD for all teachers irrespective of where they live is vital; as outlined in this report, formal teacher training in this history is associated with better historical knowledge, greater confidence when teaching about the Holocaust, and broader content choices.



Figure 4.3 Regional variation in specialist training on teaching about the Holocaust in the UCL 2019/20 study (%)

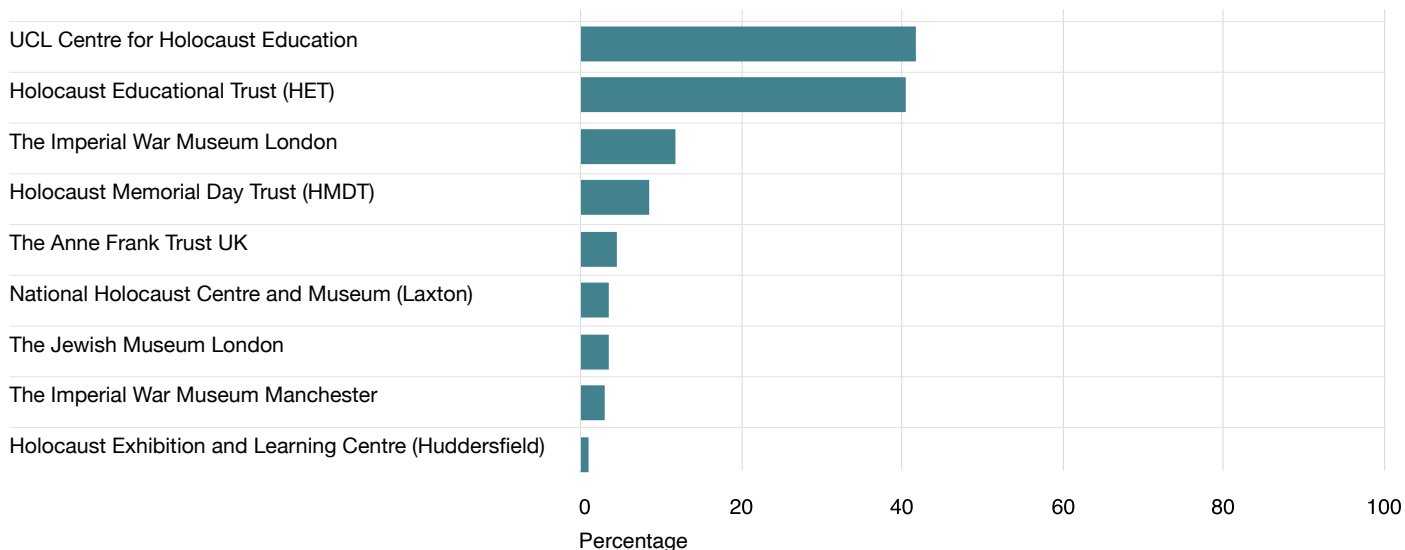


## Training with specialist Holocaust education organisations

The UCL 2019/20 survey also asked teachers whether they had experience of professional development support provided by a number of named, specialist organisations. Figure 4.4 shows that 41.8 per cent of respondents had taken part in courses offered by the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education and 40.4 per cent in courses offered by the Holocaust Educational Trust (HET). Overall, approximately two-thirds of teachers had attended courses with at least one of the organisations listed below with a small number additionally naming, Facing History and Ourselves (n=12), Yad Vashem (Israel) (n=7), The Jewish Museum in Manchester (n=2) and local synagogues (n=2).

As described in Chapter 2, teachers’ experiences of participation in the various programmes run by the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education were examined through a separate series of survey questions that are not included in the reporting or analysis in this chapter. The Centre’s work is the focus of Chapter 8.

Figure 4.4 Participation in courses provided by Holocaust education organisations in the UCL 2019/20 study (%)



When teachers were invited to describe the impact of taking part in CPD programmes/courses run by other Holocaust education organisations, words like ‘informative’ and ‘useful’ were used. Teachers valued the provision of resources and cited improved or expanded subject knowledge. When identifying the specific changes they had made to their teaching, respondents most commonly described an increased appreciation for personal stories, testimony and other ‘humanising’ approaches, and avoidance of shocking imagery or photographs:

They were very useful courses. They helped me to understand the value of teaching the holocaust through the use of survivor testimony and pictures of Jewish life rather than through the use of horrific pictures.

**Religious education teacher, London, survey response**

Overwhelmingly, across all responses there was enormous appreciation of the opportunities these organisations provide:

All those involved in Holocaust education want the very best for our students; resources [are] generally of an excellent quality and enable students to offer thoughtful, insightful responses to issues raised.

**Religious education teacher, North East England, survey response**

Collectively, the CPD and involvement with the various organisations has deepened and broadened my knowledge and understanding. Working with the museums has helped me understand (and therefore incorporate into lessons) the power of an individual object/source to help our appreciation of the suffering and experiences during the Holocaust.

**History teacher, London, survey response**

Invaluable - changed my outlook on the delivery of clear holocaust education through an array of subjects not just humanities. It is vital this happens, we owe it to the victims and the prevention of such events in the future.

**History teacher, South East England, survey response**

## The influence of specialist training on teachers’ confidence

Analysis showed that irrespective of prior training or subject background, the majority of teachers surveyed in both the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 studies considered themselves confident in teaching about the Holocaust. This confidence had grown in the intervening years between the studies:

- In the IOE 2009 study, 63.3 per cent were ‘fairly confident’ in teaching about the Holocaust and 30.0 per cent were ‘very confident’
- In the UCL 2019/20 study, 44.5 per cent were ‘fairly confident’ and 48.7 per cent were ‘very confident’

Additionally, among the UCL 2019/20 survey respondents (n=819):

- Half (50.2 per cent) said there were ‘fairly confident’ in their historical knowledge about the Holocaust and 40.9 per cent said they were ‘very confident’
- Just over half (52.5 per cent) said they were ‘fairly confident’ in their ability to answer questions that may be raised by students and 39.6 per cent were ‘very confident’

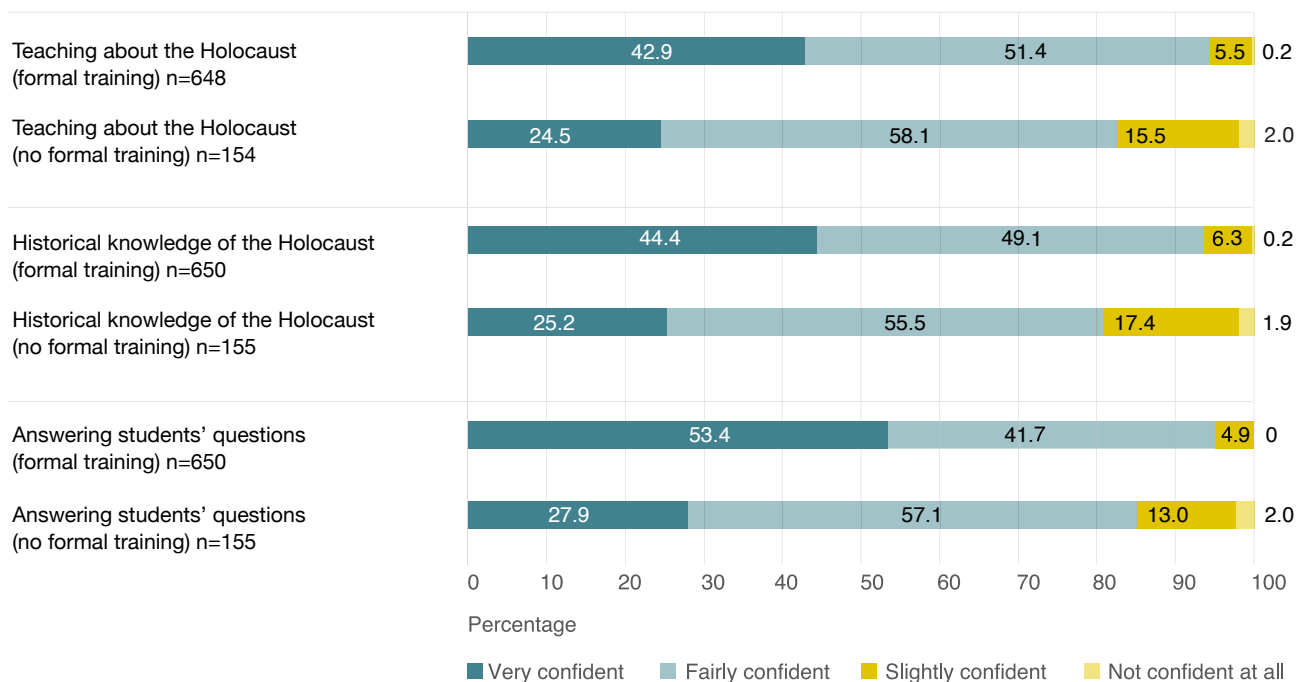
It was hypothesised that confidence, as well as other salient elements of teachers’ knowledge and practice, would be related to teachers’ training experience. Thus, as described in Chapter 2, a composite variable was created for statistical analysis to enable comparisons between ‘any formal training’ and ‘no formal training’ (and this comparative analysis is presented where relevant throughout the report).<sup>38</sup>

Figure 4.5 indicates that across all three confidence questions, teachers’ confidence was highest among those who had taken part in some type of formal training about teaching of the Holocaust. For example, 93.5 per cent of teachers with formal training said they were ‘very confident’ or ‘fairly confident’ in their historical knowledge of the Holocaust. This was 12.8 percentage points higher than those without formal training.

As an overall trend, those without formal training were more likely to say they were ‘fairly confident’ whereas those with formal training were more likely to say they were ‘very confident’ across the confidence questions. Nonetheless, confidence in teachers without formal training, was still reasonably high. This is an important finding because teachers who feel confident in their Holocaust knowledge and teaching practice are arguably less likely to seek out and participate in Holocaust education CPD courses. This is problematic because as Chapter 5 shows, teachers who participated in formal Holocaust education training, demonstrated better historical knowledge than those who had not participated in this sort of training.

<sup>38</sup> The ‘any formal training’ category does not distinguish between the type of training undertaken (i.e. during initial teacher training, NQT year or through an external specialist organisation), nor the duration or provider.

Figure 4.5 Teachers' confidence levels by experience of formal training (%)



## Summary

In the intervening years between the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 studies, participation in formal training for teaching about the Holocaust increased considerably. This was across all stages of teachers' careers, with increased formal training reported during initial teaching training, the NQT year, and once fully qualified with greater opportunities for teachers to attend courses offered by specialist organisations. Training experiences varied by subject, with those teaching about the Holocaust in history and religious education the most likely to receive formal training in this area. Given evidence to show that the Holocaust is taught across subjects, it is important to reflect on how training and resources can be developed specifically for different disciplines (this is discussed in more detail in Chapter 9).

It is also important to note that in exploring how formal training is related to salient variables – for example, historical knowledge as discussed in the next chapter – the formal training variable does not distinguish between the type of training undertaken, the duration of the course, or the provider. Undoubtedly, it is critical for all teachers who deliver material related to the Holocaust to participate in high quality research-informed CPD, such as the courses offered by the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education. The UCL 2019/20 study also demonstrates that the most pronounced influence on teachers' knowledge and

practice is typically achieved through courses that meet or exceed the Department for Education's current Standards for Teacher Professional Development (DfE, 2016a), as exemplified by the UCL Centre of Holocaust Education's flagship Beacon School and Masters Programmes. Evidence to illustrate this is presented in the next chapter, and explored in greater depth in Chapter 8.

5

# Teachers' historical knowledge of the Holocaust

## Key Points

- Broadly, teachers' historical knowledge of the Holocaust improved in the UCL 2019/20 study compared to the IOE 2009 study.
- However, significant confusion and/or misunderstanding continued to exist around several critically important historical issues including: the chronology of mass murder; whether fear of reprisals was a factor in perpetrators' decision to kill; the minority status of Germany's Jewish population; and the response of the British government to the Holocaust.
- In the UCL 2019/20 study, those who had received formal training for teaching about the Holocaust demonstrated more historical knowledge than those without formal training.
- Teachers who participated in the UCL high engagement programmes were considerably more likely to answer the questions correctly compared to those with other training experiences or without any relevant training in Holocaust education.
- History teachers were more likely than religious education, citizenship/PSHE and English/drama teachers to answer the knowledge questions correctly. Even so, the data indicated some limitations in core knowledge among history teachers.

## Introduction

In much of its work with schools and teachers, the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education has placed significant emphasis upon the importance of secure historical knowledge of the Holocaust. Far from valorising the accurate possession of information for its own sake, the Centre's interest in the absence or presence of particular historical knowledge – among students or their teachers – relates to the specific forms of understanding, or 'meaning making', that such knowledge allows. While 'knowledge' and 'understanding' are socially situated phenomena, knowledge acquisition is nevertheless an integral part of learning. That said, acquiring factual knowledge is by no means the sum of all learning. In the language of curriculum theory, while 'powerful knowledge' – that is, knowledge that allows students to arrive at secure and potentially transformative understandings (Young, 2013) – is centrally salient, its relationship to clearly considered aims for teaching and learning is of paramount importance too.

The current chapter, therefore, explores teachers' historical knowledge of the Holocaust. In doing so, it is important to acknowledge that, as Chapter 3 has described, the Holocaust continues to be taught in a variety of different subject areas and 'knowledge' can refer to different things in different disciplines. Indeed, 'powerful' disciplinary knowledge of the Holocaust from the distinct perspectives of religious education, citizenship or literature studies remains a regrettably underdeveloped area of empirical research. Each subject in which students encounter the Holocaust has the potential to introduce young people to alternative and important perspectives, to enrich their understandings and support them in developing deeper and more meaningful interpretations.

However, as argued elsewhere (Foster et al., 2016; Foster et al., 2020b; Pettigrew, 2017) it is essential that as part of any learning about the Holocaust, students are able to draw from a robust and reliable historical record. This not only deepens their understanding of the Holocaust itself but ensures that the connections they are able to make with contemporary issues are both better informed and, potentially, more profound.

Reflecting this importance, both the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 studies sought to explore several dimensions of teachers' historical knowledge about the Holocaust. In 2009, this was done using multiple-choice questions, and in 2019/20 a combination of multiple-choice and open-ended questions were utilised. It should be noted that there was no expectation that teachers should display an encyclopaedic historical knowledge of the

Holocaust, especially when not all of them were history subject specialists. Instead, across the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 studies (and the Centre's research with students – see Foster et al., 2016), in consultation with specialist educators, historians and other international researchers, a small number of key pieces of historical information that teachers and students could draw on to understand the Holocaust in meaningful ways were identified. A full rationale of the individual questions included in the 2019/20 survey is included in Appendix 5 and the full wording of all questions and response categories is available in Appendix 1.

In both the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 studies, the surveys included a question to explore teachers' overarching understanding of the Holocaust. In the IOE 2009 study, a multiple-choice question was used. From a list of different statements defining the Holocaust, teachers had to select the one that most closely reflected their own understanding of the Holocaust. Whereas, in the UCL 2019/20 survey, teachers' understandings of the Holocaust were explored using an open-ended question: *To begin with, please describe what you think the Holocaust was.*

The other open-ended questions that were included in the UCL 2019/20 study were:

- Who were the victims of the Holocaust?
- Who was responsible for the Holocaust?
- Why did the Nazis and others murder the Jews of Europe?

Initial analysis highlighted that teachers' responses to these four open-ended questions needed to be conducted in tandem – and with reference to their answers on the multiple-choice knowledge questions – to give the most comprehensive and valid insight into teachers' historical knowledge and understanding. Over 900 teachers with recent experience of teaching about the Holocaust provided a description of the Holocaust, over 700 of them responded to the questions about who the victims were and who was responsible, and over 600 teachers answered the question about why the Nazis and others murdered the Jews of Europe. This generated an incredibly rich dataset from which to explore these crucial areas of Holocaust knowledge and understanding. However, given the scope and scale of this dataset, and to ensure rigorous analysis and reporting, investigation of teachers' responses to the open-ended questions is ongoing and will be reported in a future publication.

The multiple-choice knowledge questions included in both the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 studies, and reported in this chapter, explored several dimensions of teachers' historical knowledge. However, it is recognised that a short series of multiple-choice questions is a somewhat blunt instrument.

Moreover, 'knowledge scores' that can be derived from such instruments are at best a proxy for real understanding (see Chapman and Hale, 2017). Nonetheless, they are a useful indicator, and the consistency of several questions across the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education's national studies with teachers and students makes it possible to identify and examine significant shifts or developments over time while also indicating just how resistant some of the most widespread and enduring misconceptions really are.<sup>39</sup>

As described in Chapter 2, and outlined in more detail below, there was some variation in the multiple-choice questions used in the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 studies. The revision, omission and addition of other questions across both studies, further attest to the ultimately fluid nature of both historical understandings and research priorities. Indeed, the continually evolving field of Holocaust studies and its accompanying knowledge base is one of the most compelling arguments for all teachers to have access *throughout* their careers to high quality, research-informed CPD provision that is itself responsive to developing academic scholarship.

## Overview of UCL 2019/20 study findings

Figure 5.1 presents the percentage of teachers who answered the survey's ten multiple-choice questions correctly in the UCL 2019/20 survey. It should be noted that one of the questions, 'Which of the following were death camps built specifically for killing Jewish people?' invited respondents to tick all response options they thought applied. Three out of the seven options presented were correct: Treblinka, Sobibor and Chelmno. In Figure 5.1, each of the correct options is represented by a column to show the percentage of teachers who selected them. However, in analyses where total scores on the knowledge questions are used (for example, in Figure 5.5) it was necessary to ensure that extra weighting was not given to this question. Thus, one point for the question was awarded when a teacher correctly identified *all* three death camps and *did not* select any of the incorrect options. Analysis based on mean knowledge scores across all questions is therefore calculated on a scale up to ten rather than 12 (and up to six rather than eight when only the questions included in both the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 surveys are analysed).

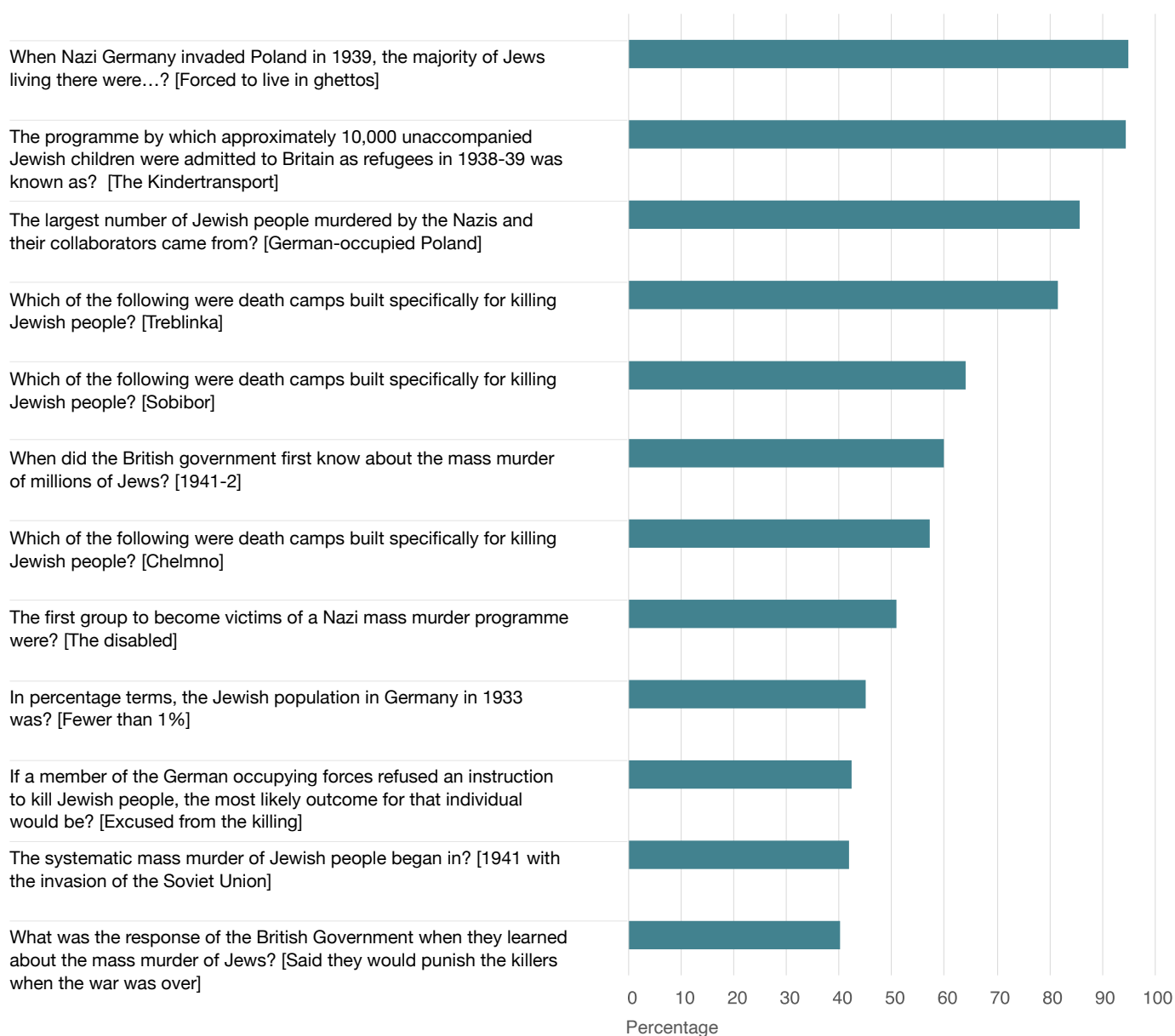
Figure 5.1 shows considerable variability in the accuracy of teachers' responses. It was positive, for instance, to find almost all knew that the majority of Jewish people living in Poland when Nazi Germany invaded in 1939 were forced to live in ghettos. They also knew that 10,000 unaccompanied Jewish children were admitted to Britain as refugees in

39 National studies: Teaching about the Holocaust in English secondary schools: an empirical study of national trends, perspectives and practice (Pettigrew et al., 2009); What do students know and understand about the Holocaust? Evidence from English secondary schools (Foster et al., 2016); the study presented in this report: Continuity and Change: 10 years of teaching about the Holocaust in English Secondary Schools.

1938-39 under the Kindertransport programme. Well over two-thirds of all teachers were able to correctly identify that the largest number of people murdered by the Nazis and collaborators came from German-occupied Poland and recognised Treblinka as a death camp. However, less than half of the teachers surveyed knew that fewer than 1.0 per cent of the German population in 1933 was Jewish or that members of the German occupying forces who refused an instruction to kill Jewish people were most likely to be excused from the killing and given other duties. Nor did they appear to recognise that the systematic mass murder of Jewish people began in 1941 with the invasion of the Soviet Union, or that after learning about the mass murder

of Jews, the response of the British government was to say they would punish the killers when the war was over. To better understand these findings and the nuances they encompass, analysis was conducted to explore continuity and change across the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 surveys, to consider the role of specialist training and to identify variation across and between different subject disciplines.

Figure 5.1 Percentage of teachers in the UCL 2019/20 study who answered each multiple-choice knowledge question correctly (n=760-769)

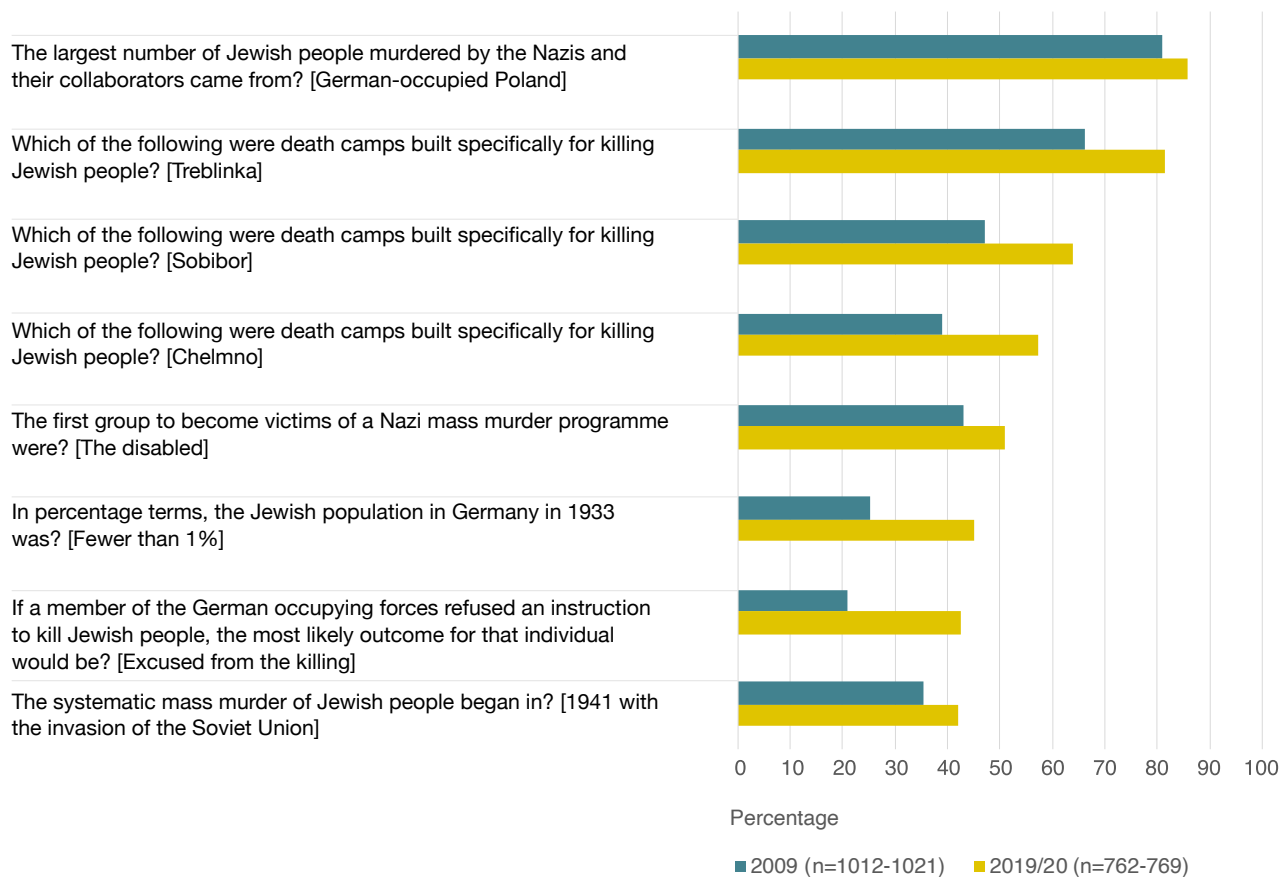


## Comparison of historical knowledge in the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 studies

Eight of the multiple-choice questions used in the UCL 2019/20 survey were also asked in an identical or closely comparable manner within the IOE 2009 survey, thus allowing comparison over time. These are detailed in Figure 5.2 alongside the corresponding proportion of teachers correctly answering each question in each survey.

In the broadest terms, teachers' historical knowledge of the Holocaust had improved, in some cases quite markedly, from 2009 to 2019/20. Improvements were also observable when aggregating teachers' answers across all questions to produce an overall 'knowledge scale' of 0-6 (where the three-part question asking teachers to identify individual death camps is counted only once as described above). In the IOE 2009 study, 20.6 per cent of teachers were able to answer at least four questions correctly compared to almost double that in the UCL 2019/20 study at 39.5 per cent.

**Figure 5.2** Percentage of teachers who answered each question correctly in the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 studies





Again, these are positive developments. As a snapshot, they speak of a broader trend which has seen an overall improvement in teachers' subject knowledge of the Holocaust. During interview a few teachers posited explanations for this:

I think people have become kind of better educated on [the Holocaust]. I don't know if it's just a general move in education with this kind of idea of knowledge becoming, or lessons becoming more rigorous, and students needing to remember things and constantly going back, but I think teachers are becoming more educated on it. And I don't know if educated is the right word, but in terms of reading more about it, and understanding, kind of, the lead up to it more.

**History subject leader, East of England, group interview**

I think when I started teaching [about the Holocaust] it wasn't considered to be as significant, and then it's definitely become more of a recognised essential module. There's been, I know there is a lot more CPD available, I haven't been able to use it myself, but I know it's there, which in itself tells you how much more significant it is now within teaching, because when I first started it wasn't there at all.

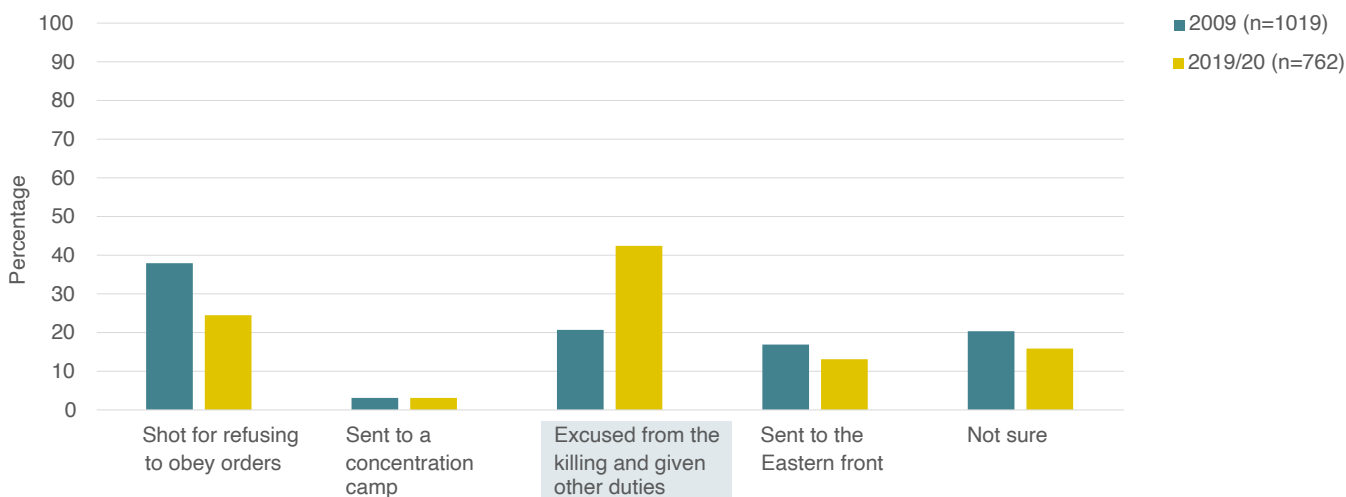
**History subject leader, North West, group interview**

However, even though teacher knowledge, at least as captured by this measure, had improved in the UCL 2019/20 study, the mean total score across all six questions was only 3.0, compared to the mean score of 2.2 found in the IOE 2009 study. Thus, improvement between the two time points is arguably rather modest, and reveals a large proportion of teachers who still answered questions incorrectly.

Returning to the overarching results shared in Figure 5.1, across all 12 multiple-choice questions asked in the UCL 2019/20 study, there were four in which a majority of respondents could *not* correctly identify the most historically accurate answer and a further question where scarcely 50.0 per cent were able to. These findings suggest that significant confusion and/or misunderstanding continued to exist around several critically important historical issues including: the chronology of mass murder; whether fear of reprisals was a factor in perpetrators' decision to kill; the minority status of Germany's Jewish population; and the response of the British government to the Holocaust.

An example that illustrates both improvement in knowledge from 2009 to 2019/20 and enduring misconceptions, is the question 'if a member of the German occupying forces refused an instruction to kill Jewish people, the most likely outcome for that individual would be that they were...?'. Figure 5.3 shows that the percentage of teachers answering this question correctly has more than doubled over ten years, rising from 20.9 per cent in the IOE 2009 study to 42.4 per cent in the UCL 2019/20 study. This is an encouraging development. In a similar vein, it is also noteworthy that there has been a sizeable decrease in the percentage of teachers who believe that fear for one's life was the key driver for someone agreeing to participate in murder (38.1 per cent in 2009 down to 24.7 per cent in 2019/20). But notwithstanding these changes, it remains the case that the majority of teachers still answered this question incorrectly. Though this has reduced from 79.1 per cent to 57.6 per cent, it is a percentage which continues to be problematic. Knowing that those responsible for murder fundamentally had choice, had agency, and ultimately would not likely face any form of punishment is absolutely critical for grasping some of the key questions raised when confronting this history.

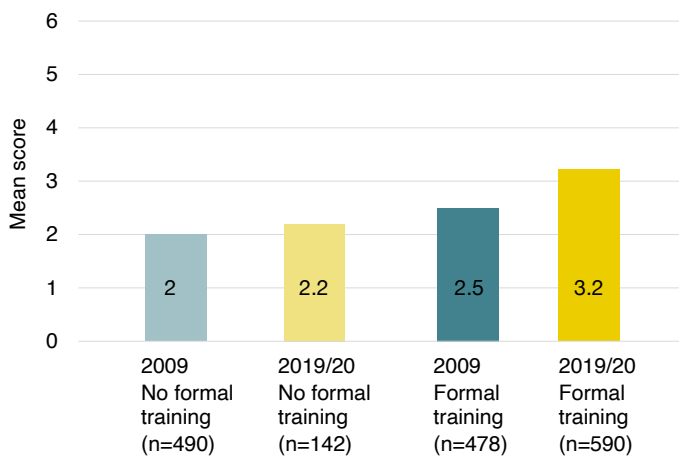
**Figure 5.3** The percentage of teachers in the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 studies selecting each option for the question: 'If a member of the German occupying forces refused an instruction to kill Jewish people, the most likely outcome for that individual would be that they were...?'



## The importance of specialist training

The overall improvement in accuracy of answers from the IOE 2009 study to the UCL 2019/20 study appears closely related to the expanded provision of specialist professional development for teachers described in Chapter 4. Figure 5.4 compares the mean knowledge scores of teachers with no formal training and those with formal training in the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 studies. It is useful to recall that the mean knowledge score of *all* teachers in 2009 was 2.2, and in 2019/20 was 3.0.

Figure 5.4 Mean knowledge scores of teachers with no formal training and formal training, in the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 studies



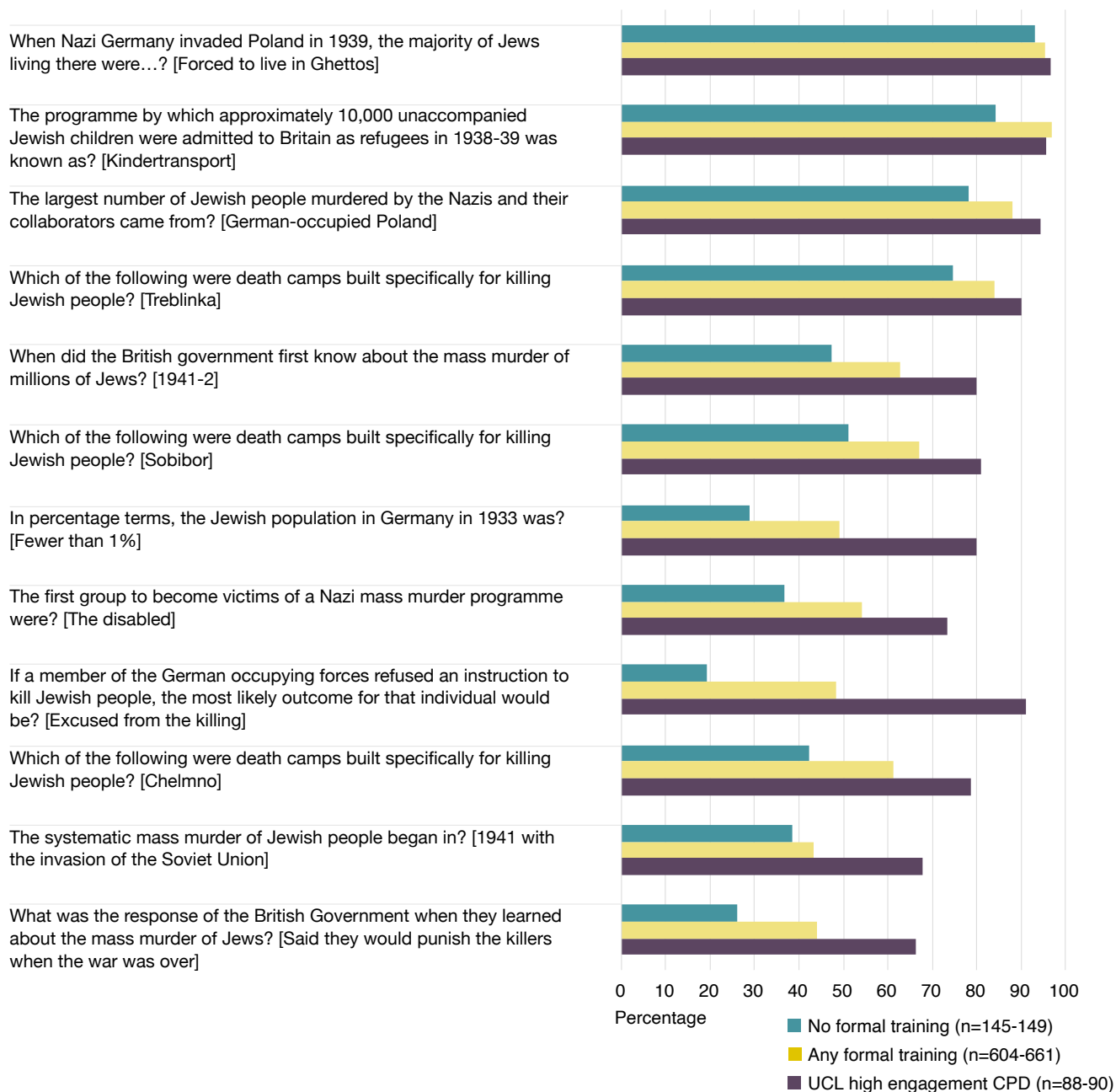
In looking at this holistic view of the knowledge data, there are a few things to note:

- For teachers with no formal training, knowledge levels in 2009 and 2019/20 were more or less the same.
- In both 2009 and 2019/20, teachers with formal training tended to demonstrate higher levels of knowledge compared to those without training.
- The influence of training seemed greater in 2019/20 than in 2009. This is because in 2009, the difference between the mean knowledge score of those with and without formal training was 0.5, whereas in 2019/20, the difference between those with and without formal training doubled, with a difference of 1.0.
- Moreover, it appears that formal training in 2019/20 potentially made *more* of a difference to teachers' knowledge than in 2009 as can be observed in the larger difference between those with and without formal training in 2019/20.

As Figure 5.5 illustrates, in the UCL 2019/20 study, across all individual questions, those who had taken part in any form of training were more likely to answer the questions accurately compared to those without formal training. On a few questions where knowledge levels among teachers without any formal training were already high, this difference was least pronounced (for example, 93.1 per cent of teachers without any formal training recognised that the majority of Jews were forced to live in ghettos from September 1939, this rose just 2.3 percentage points to 95.4 per cent among teachers with any formal training). However, for other questions the difference was striking, with more than two-thirds of teachers without any formal training unable to correctly answer questions about what happened to members of the German occupying forces who refused an order to kill Jewish people; the proportion of the German population who were Jewish in 1933; and the response of the British government to the Holocaust.

The knowledge gaps and misconceptions prevalent in a sizeable proportion of the UCL 2019/20 sample, especially for those without formal training, are reflective of wider representations of the Holocaust that proliferate within contemporary British society. Indeed, a survey of almost 4,000 adults across the UK, commissioned by The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference) in 2021, revealed knowledge gaps and misconceptions which mirrored those displayed by some of the teachers in the UCL 2019/20 study. The relationship between experience of CPD and accuracy of answers was especially profound when examined further in relation to 'high engagement' programmes such as the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education's flagship Beacon School Programme and Masters module (as described in Chapter 8).

Figure 5.5 Relationship between experience of formal training and accuracy of teachers' answers in the UCL 2019/20 study (%)<sup>40</sup>

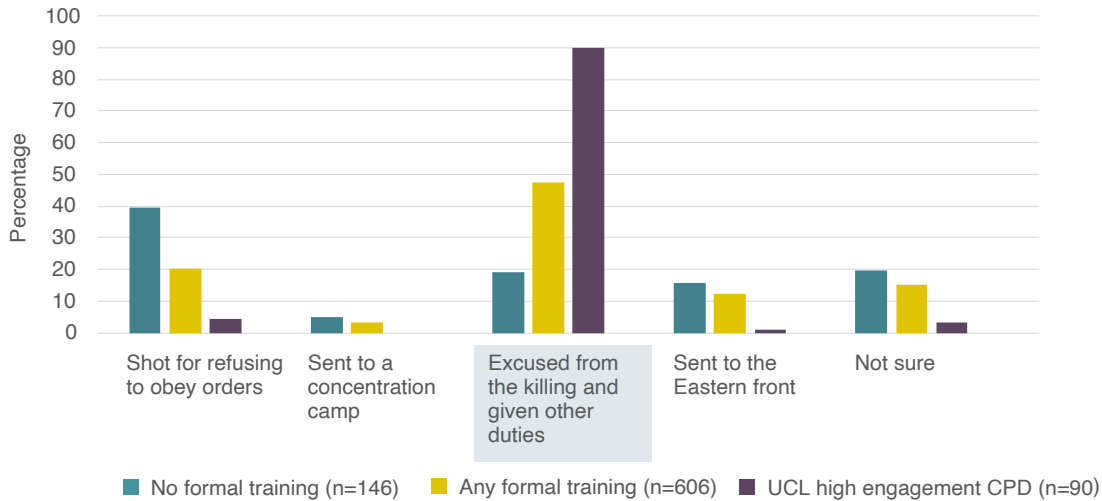


Revisiting teachers' responses to the question that asked what the likely response to a member of the German occupying forces who refused an instruction to kill Jewish people would be, a troubling 40.4 per cent of those without any formal training shared the popular misconception that German troops typically were 'shot for refusing to obey orders'. It is also revealing that almost 1 in 5 teachers (19.9 per cent) who had not participated in any training were 'not sure' of the correct answer. As indicated in Figure 5.6,

almost half of teachers who had participated in some form of training selected the correct option. Nevertheless, it is notable that this also means that around half of teachers still offered an incorrect response, including 20.8 per cent who still erroneously believed that a member of the German occupying force would be shot if they disobeyed.

<sup>40</sup> 'Any formal training' and 'UCL high engagement CPD' are not mutually exclusive categories. That is to say, the formal training group includes those taking part in the UCL high engagement programmes.

**Figure 5.6** The percentage of teachers in the UCL 2019/20 study selecting each option for the question: 'If a member of the German occupying forces refused an instruction to kill Jewish people, the most likely outcome for that individual would be that they were...?'



As one teacher noted during interview, misconceptions in this area are especially common, and teachers (including those teaching history) are often oblivious to the historical record that no evidence has ever been found that a German soldier was killed or sent to a concentration camp for refusing an order to kill Jews.

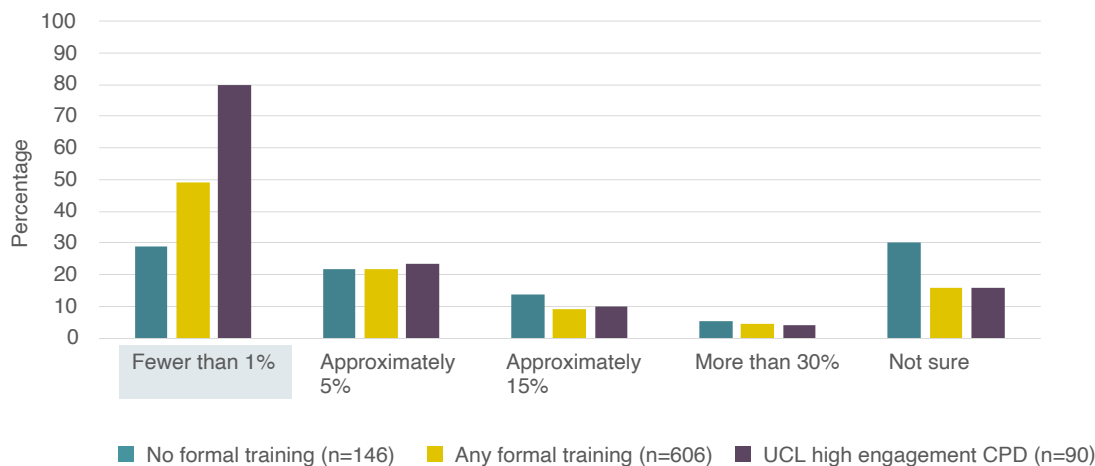
Do you know what, it's the knowledge as well, because I was quite confident with my knowledge until I started reading about, you know, the finer details [...] it was [...] Battalion 101, and other teachers on my table were [saying] we have never heard of this and what they did. And it was this whole idea of through like textbooks and everything it's driven that you have no choice, you have to conform to the Nazi ideology. Actually, when you read these stories, it was more about actually the Nazis never persecuted people that said they didn't want to take part in the murder of Jews and other minorities, they had a choice to opt out, they could do other duties. And other teachers, that kind of, I was taken aback by that, because I've been reading loads of stuff that never talked about that until I went on that training, and it's kind of changed my perspective of people actually had a choice to do this. And then that's the kind of thing I've been trying to say to students, people had a choice, so it's all about making choices. So that was quite useful for knowledge because there's things, I didn't even know about that I learnt, but it was all through these stories.

**History teacher, East England, group interview**

Zooming in on the responses of the teachers who participated in the UCL high engagement programmes, 91.1 per cent of them selected the correct answer, with only 4.4 per cent embracing the most common misconception and 3.3 per cent who remained 'not sure'.

A second example highlighting variation in responses based on training, is the question that asked respondents to identify the proportionate size of the Jewish population in pre-war Germany. As indicated in Figure 5.7, there is a striking relationship between the level of teachers' training experience and their ability to provide a correct answer here. For example, only 28.8 per cent of teachers without formal training knew that the pre-war Jewish population of Germany was less than 1.0 per cent and a similar proportion (30.1 per cent) were unsure of the answer. In stark contrast, almost half of teachers with formal training answered this question correctly, and within this group almost 80.0 per cent of the teachers who participated in UCL's high engagement programmes provided an accurate response.

Figure 5.7 The percentage of teachers in the UCL 2019/20 study selecting each option for the question: 'In percentage terms, the Jewish population in Germany in 1933 was...?' by training experience



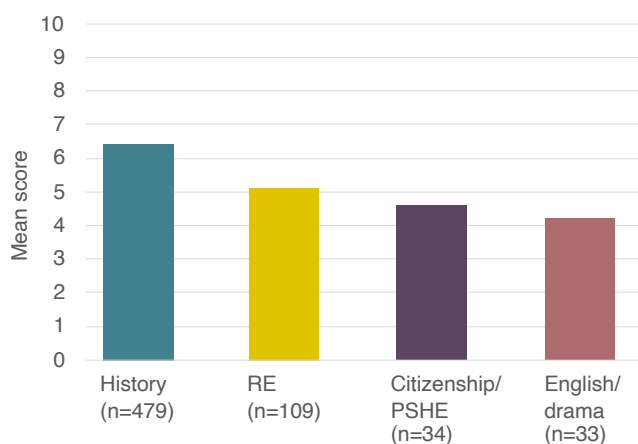
## Subject specific understanding

In both the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 studies, there was – as perhaps should be anticipated – considerable variation in teachers' historical knowledge of the Holocaust based on the principal subject in which they taught about this topic. Figure 5.8 compares the mean 'knowledge score' across all multiple-choice survey questions by subject discipline. History teachers were more likely to answer the majority of questions correctly, although the mean score of 6.4 (out of a maximum of 10) does suggest that limitations in core knowledge existed among some teachers of history. Religious education teachers answered approximately half of the questions correctly (mean score = 5.1), followed by a mean score of 4.6 for teachers who taught about the Holocaust principally in citizenship, PSHE or other related activity and 4.2 for those who did so principally within English or drama.

In interpreting these findings, it is important to again note that teachers were grouped for analysis based on the subjects in which they principally taught about the Holocaust, not necessarily the subject in which they initially trained. While for most teachers this was the same subject, there were a minority of teachers where this was not the case. For example, over 6.0 per cent of teachers teaching lessons about the Holocaust within history had trained to teach in other subjects. Of course, these teachers may have engaged in some form of relevant training after their initial teacher training and felt proficient in teaching history. However, some teachers were likely to be covering history lessons with little experience or training in teaching this subject. Certainly, evidence suggests this is a particular concern for humanities teachers, with 13.0 per cent of this group teaching subjects almost entirely outside of their specialism (McInerney, 2018). In this situation, the experience of teaching about the Holocaust might be especially challenging given the complexity and sensitivity

of this area of history. While relevant to only a small subsample of teachers, with minimal impact on overall knowledge scores, it is important to be cognisant of the 'out-of-field teaching' that is occurring in this context.

Figure 5.8 Mean knowledge scores by subject in which teachers principally taught about the Holocaust (UCL 2019/20 study)



The mean scores based on the six questions used in the IOE 2009 study and again in UCL 2019/20 study (see Figure 5.9), suggests that the same trend exists across both studies in terms of variation between subjects. It also indicates that teachers' knowledge scores have improved in the past decade irrespective of subject specialism.

Although it would be imprudent to draw sweeping conclusions on the basis of this evidence and the relatively small sample size for some subject areas (e.g. citizenship or PSHE and English and drama), the data does indicate important improvements in teachers' substantive knowledge across a range of subjects as well as some differences between subjects. Returning to just the UCL 2019/20 study data, Figure 5.10 shows these differences are more pronounced on some questions compared with others.

Figure 5.9 Mean total score, by subject, based on the six questions used in both the IOE 2009 study and the UCL 2019/20 study

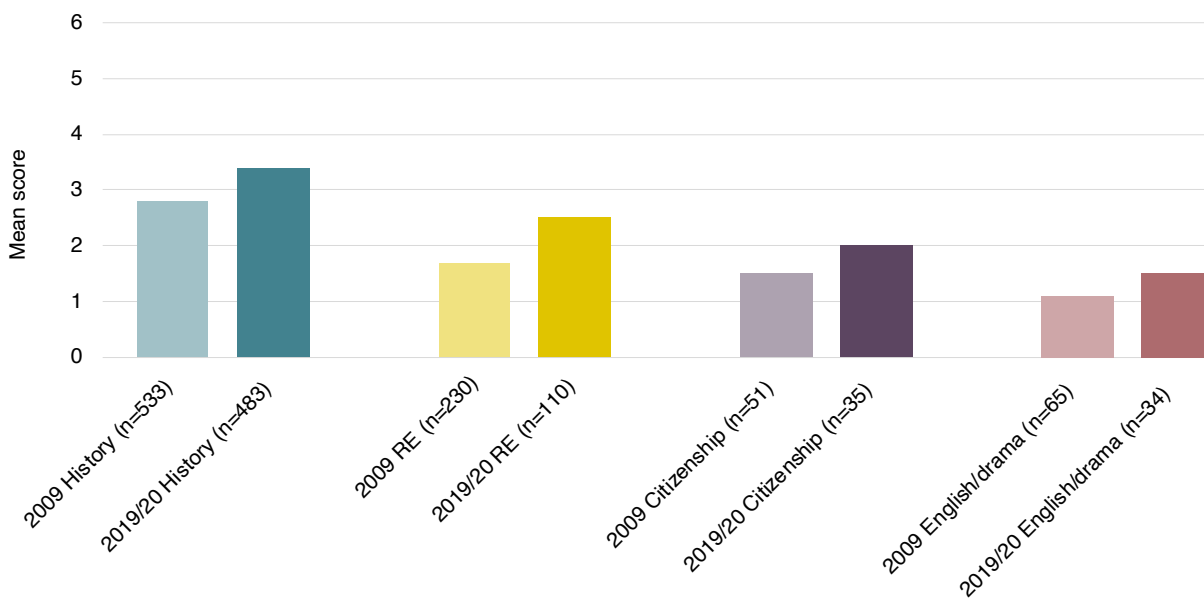
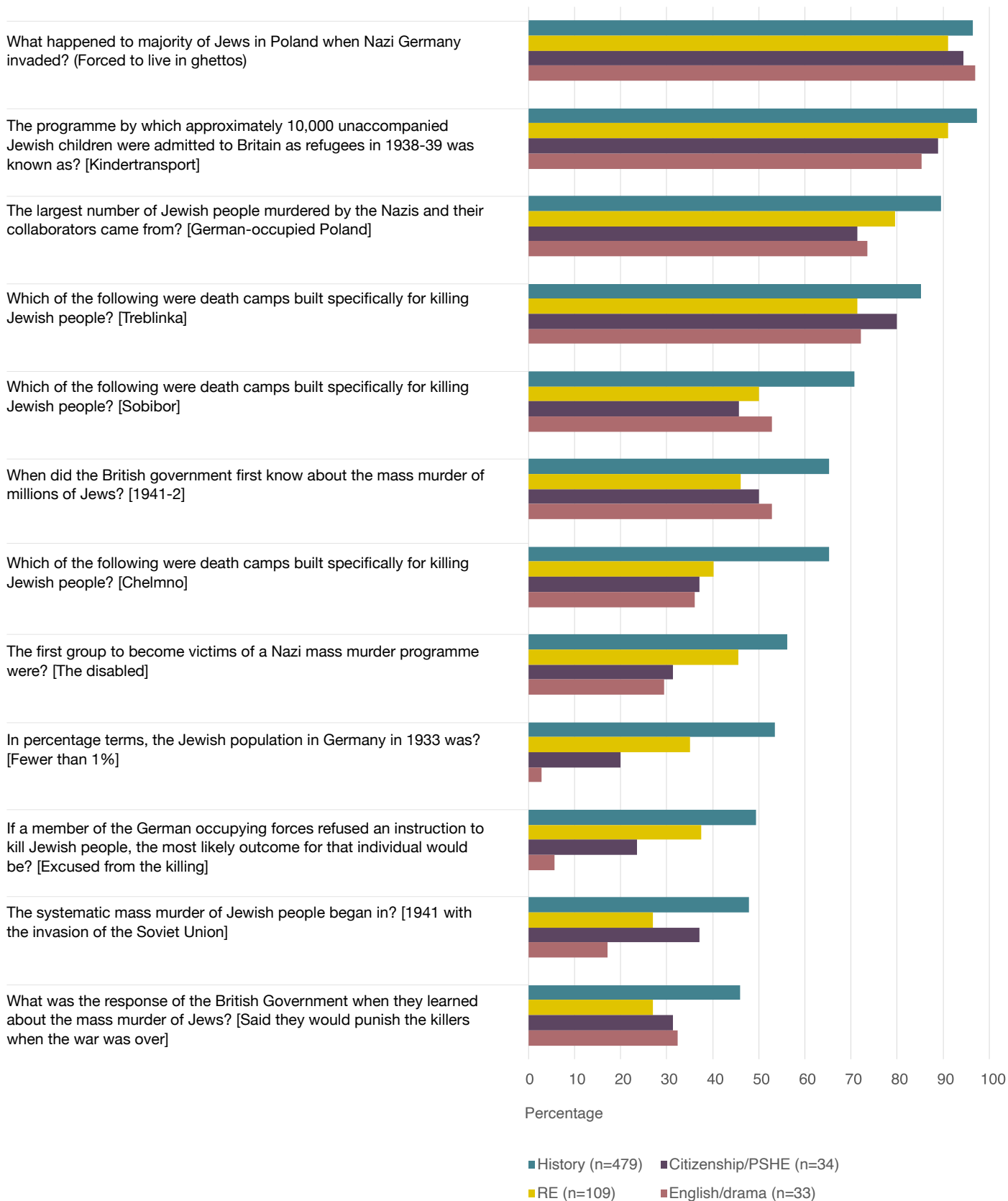


Figure 5.10 Percentage of teachers in the UCL 2019/20 study who correctly answered each question, by subject in which they principally taught about the Holocaust



It is potentially unfair and inappropriate to expect other subject teachers to share the same level of historical knowledge as history specialists across the board. That said, there is a sound rationale for critically considering subject-specific variation in the accuracy or otherwise of teachers' answers in relation to specific individual questions and, in turn, in light of their disciplinary teaching aims.

In this regard, it is perhaps particularly significant to note, for example, that only a minority (31.4 per cent) of those who principally taught about the Holocaust in citizenship, PSHE or related school activities, accurately knew that when the British Government found out about the death camps, they said they would punish the killers when the war was over. As shown in Figure 5.11, although the citizenship and PSHE group was small ( $n=35$ ), it is instructive to consider that collectively 22.9 per cent of these teachers thought that the British Government either declared war (8.6 per cent), tried to do everything possible to rescue the Jews (8.6 per cent) or bombed Auschwitz in an attempt to destroy the gas chambers (5.7 per cent). Meanwhile, 20.0 per cent thought the British Government ignored the situation. Each of these responses have potentially rather different implications regarding wider classroom conversations about 'British values', governmental responsibilities or the country's role and position within the international community, yet all would be based on an erroneous understanding of the history.

A further example of considerable divergence between teachers in different subject areas in the UCL 2019/20 study is illustrated in responses given to the question 'In percentage terms, the Jewish population in Germany in 1933 was...?' The findings presented in Figure 5.12 suggest that the majority of history teachers knew this important aspect of history, but a sizeable proportion (46.5 per cent) did not. Of further potential concern is that only 35.1 per cent of religious education teachers, 20.0 per cent of citizenship or PSHE teachers and less than 3.0 per cent of English and drama teachers answered this question correctly. Excluding the 'not sure' responses shows that around a third of RE teachers and almost two-thirds of citizenship or PSHE and English and drama teachers over-inflate the Jewish population.

Overinflation has particular salience if and when teachers attempt to draw on the Holocaust in order to help students develop an understanding of the dangers of prejudice, racism, and/or stereotyping in society, for example (which, as Chapter 6 discusses further, is a very commonly prioritised teaching aim). If teachers fail to recognise the wider socio-cultural context and position of pre-war Germany's very small Jewish population, the 'lessons' this history may teach regarding the nature of racialised prejudice in general and twentieth century European antisemitism in particular, are significantly compromised. Indeed, where teachers themselves over-estimate the Jewish presence in Germany there is a risk that the fantasy of Jews having undue power or posing an existential threat upon which Nazi antisemitism depended is actively reinforced rather than debunked or critically understood.

Figure 5.11 Percentage of citizenship/PSHE teachers ( $n=35$ ) in the UCL 2019/20 study selecting each option for the question: 'What was the response of the British Government when they learned about the mass murder of Jews?'

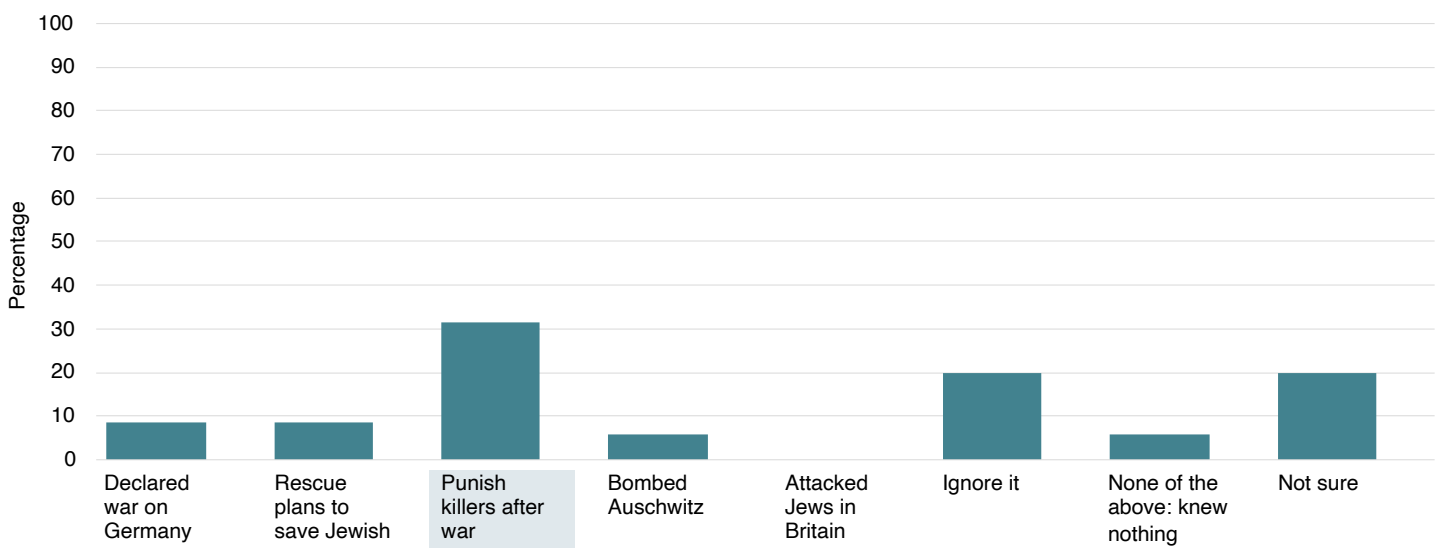
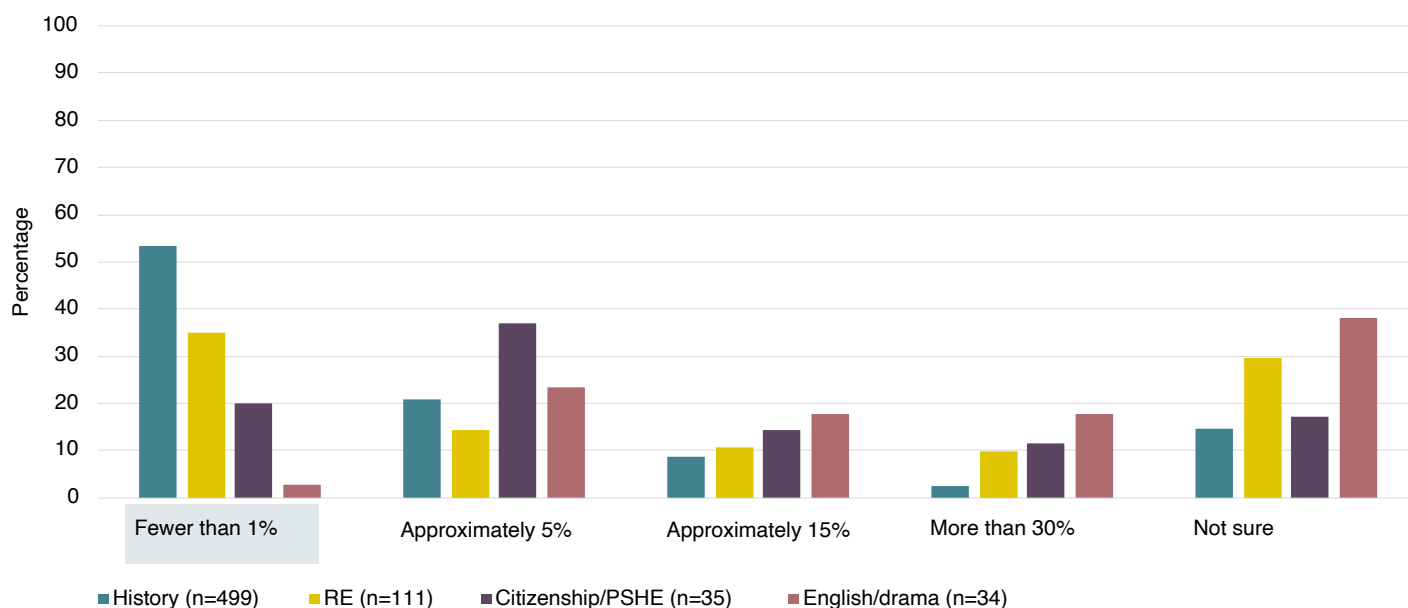




Figure 5.12 Percentage of teachers in the UCL 2019/20 study selecting each option for the question: 'the Jewish population in Germany in 1933 was...?', by subject



## Summary

The data collected in the UCL 2019/20 study highlighted some very positive developments since the IOE 2009 study; notably that teachers' historical knowledge had generally improved, and it appeared that participation in formal Holocaust education training was an important factor in this development. However, some areas of knowledge continued to be characterised by knowledge gaps and misconceptions, calling attention to areas where teachers continue to need further support.

In contrast, very high levels of knowledge were demonstrated by teachers who took part in the UCL high engagement programmes. This indicated the importance of investing in teachers through courses that meet or exceed the Department for Education's current Standards for teacher professional development (DfE, 2016a), as exemplified by the UCL Centre of Holocaust Education's Beacon School and Masters Programmes (see Chapter 8).

The UCL 2019/20 study also revealed that historical knowledge was highest among those who principally taught about the Holocaust in history. Of course, it could be legitimately argued that not only is this an intuitive finding, but that the lower levels of knowledge found in teachers of other subjects is less concerning – that is to say, they are not history teachers, and therefore their expertise lies

in presenting the Holocaust through other disciplinary framings. Undoubtedly, different disciplines will focus on and contribute different insights, providing students with richer and more nuanced understanding of the Holocaust from a range of perspectives. However, teachers from all disciplines who cover content related to the Holocaust in their teaching need sound historical knowledge as a framework through which to meaningfully present the knowledge, understanding, skills and interpretations specific to their discipline.

The salience of sound historical knowledge is also applicable when considering the teaching aims employed in Holocaust education. As the next chapter will discuss, across all subjects (even history) some of the most common teaching aims identified when studying the Holocaust do not prioritise the assimilation of the historical details, but instead draw on the Holocaust to help young people better understand and respond to persecution and atrocity. This is problematic because broader contemporary understandings of the Holocaust needed to meet these aims are more effective and meaningful when they are informed by accurate historical details. Thus, as both the current chapter and the next chapter highlight, having sound historical knowledge about the Holocaust is relevant to teachers of all subjects.

6

# Teaching aims, content selection and disciplinary lenses when teaching about the Holocaust

## Key Points

- In both the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 studies, there was overwhelming support for the value of teaching about the Holocaust, irrespective of subject background or prior training teachers had received.
- Broadly, the teaching aims prioritised by survey respondents were similar in both studies, with ‘to develop an understanding of the dangers of prejudice, racism and/or stereotyping in society’ the most frequently selected aim across all subjects.
- However, some variation between the aims prioritised in the IOE 2009 study and the UCL 2019/20 study did emerge. For example, the aim ‘to understand and explain the actions of people involved in and affected by an unprecedented historical event’ was more likely to be selected in 2019/20 compared to 2009. Whereas the aim to ‘to learn the lessons of the Holocaust and to ensure that a similar human atrocity never happens again’, was less likely to be selected in the UCL 2019/20 study compared to the IOE 2009 study.
- In contrast to the IOE 2009 study, the UCL 2019/20 study revealed teachers increasingly asserted that when contemporary ‘lessons’ were drawn from the Holocaust, they must be grounded in historical knowledge.
- In the UCL 2019/20 study, some of the most frequently cited topics that teachers covered when teaching about the Holocaust included: the experiences of individual men, women and children who were persecuted by the Nazis; Auschwitz-Birkenau; the Nuremberg Laws; and the choices and actions of bystanders.
- Topics that were much less likely to be covered included: Treblinka; changes in awareness and understanding of the Holocaust since 1945; Operation Reinhard; and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

## Introduction

Across all the data collected in the UCL 2019/2020 study, teachers emphasised the importance of teaching about the Holocaust within their work. One history teacher, for example, explained,

When I’m teaching this, I always say to students that this is the most important piece of history they will ever learn.

**History teacher, East England, group interview**

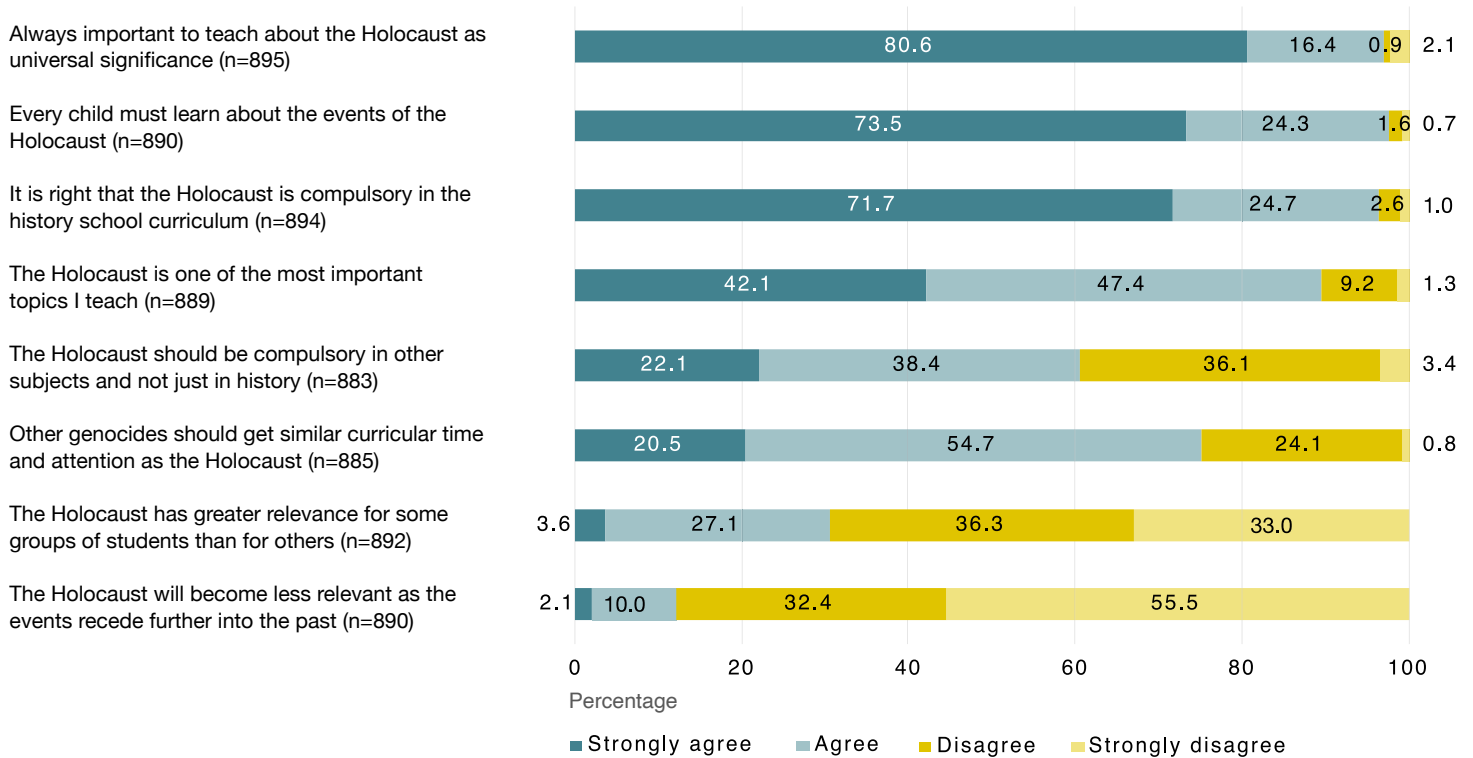
In doing so, this teacher very closely echoed sentiments shared by several respondents from the IOE 2009 study,

I always say to them [the students], if you never ever remember anything else that we are teaching you in this classroom – in this school – I want you to learn the lesson we are teaching you today.

**History and integrated humanities teacher, East Midlands, group interview (Pettigrew et al., 2009, p. 75)**

As shown in Figure 6.1, among those who took part in the UCL 2019/20 survey, 97.0 per cent of teachers with recent experience of teaching about the Holocaust agreed with the statement ‘it will always be important to teach about the Holocaust’. Similarly, 97.8 per cent of teachers agreed that ‘every child must learn about the events of the Holocaust’, while 89.5 per cent agreed that the Holocaust was one of the most important subjects they taught. Levels of support for, and value placed upon, teaching about the Holocaust remained high across all teachers, irrespective of subject background or prior training they had received.

**Figure 6.1** Attitudes towards the importance of teaching about the Holocaust (%)



Support for teaching about the Holocaust was similarly high among all respondents ten years ago. However, the IOE 2009 study also revealed that despite the significant emphasis placed on teaching about the Holocaust, teachers commonly appeared to find it very hard to articulate *why* they believed it was so important to do so. For many, the question of overarching aims or rationales for teaching about the Holocaust did not appear to have been significantly reflected upon.

It's an interesting one that you should ask that, because it's something . . . you kind of just assume to some extent that they should know about the Holocaust, rather than even think about whether there's any reason why they should know about it.

**History teacher, North East England, group interview, emphasis added (Pettigrew et al., 2009, p. 75)**

However, and as was argued at the time, the question of overarching aims can have profound importance for teaching practice. Totten et al. (2001, p. 1) for example, insist, it is 'essential to establish a solid set of rationales' as the basis for guiding content selection and choosing between different pedagogical strategies. The current chapter explores the teaching aims most commonly prioritised by those teaching about the Holocaust in the UCL 2019/2020 study and begins to consider relationships between these and the specific content teachers focus on with their students in schools.

## Why teach about the Holocaust?

It was noted in the IOE 2009 study that the overarching absence of significant reflection on teaching aims among teachers at that time was not altogether surprising given the accompanying absence of any clear statement of rationale at most levels of educational policy too. As Lucy Russell and Andy Pearce have both recounted, the genealogy through which the inclusion of the Holocaust within England's very first formal National Curriculum was first secured was such that the educational import of this history was only ever presented – initially by lobbyists and campaigners, and subsequently within curriculum documentation itself – as though self-evident and assured (Russell, 2006; Pearce, 2014). And without any clear outlined rationale for *why* England's secondary school students must learn about the Holocaust, it was equally uncertain *what* students should learn about or how. Again, as both Pearce and Russell have argued, throughout its entire thirty-year history, the statutory provision for teaching and learning about the Holocaust in England's schools has been marked – in some interpretations marred – by the absence of any clear deliberation at policy level of exactly what should be taught about under the rubric of 'the Holocaust' or why (see also Pettigrew, 2017).

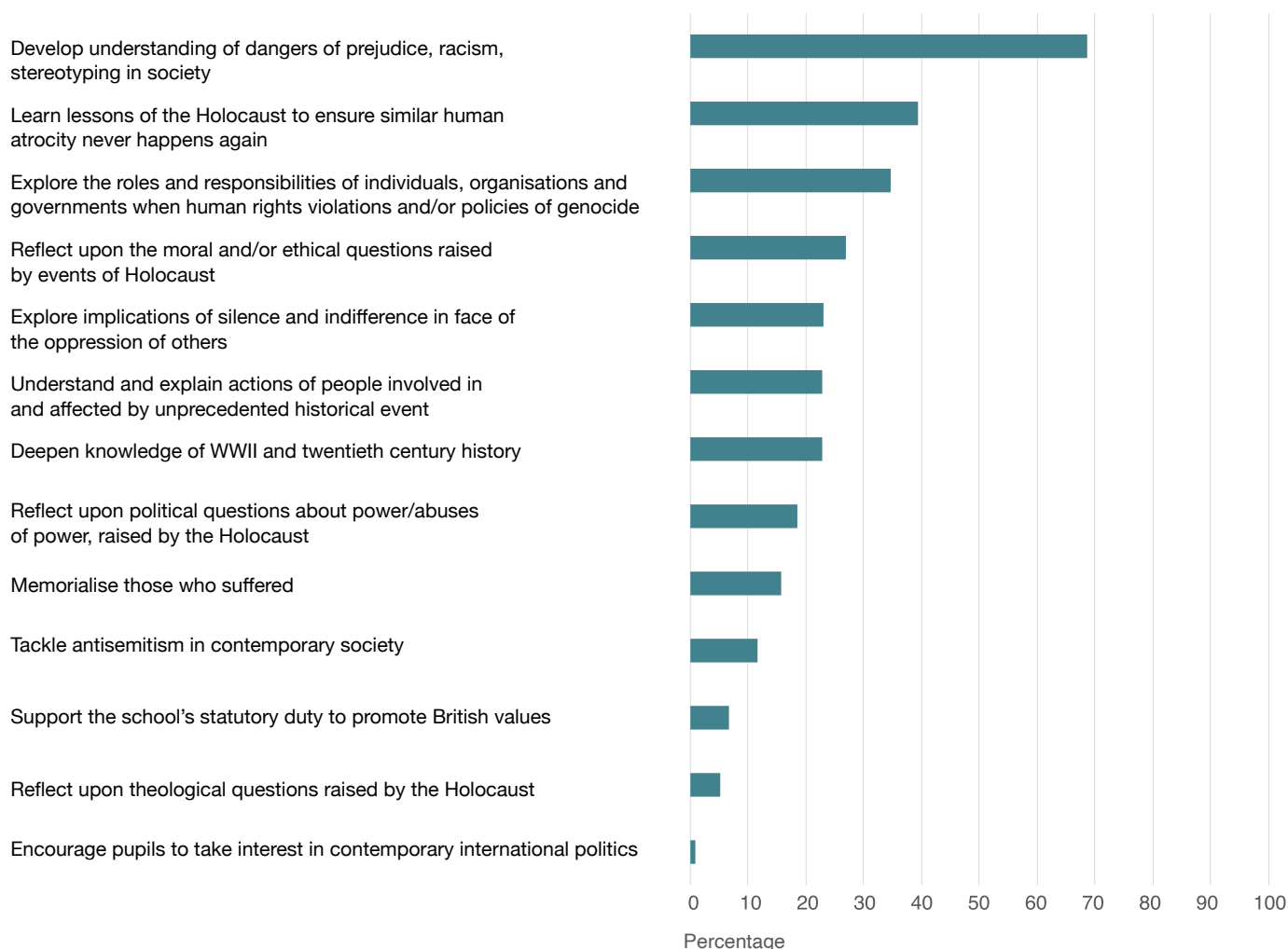
As a consequence, in the IOE 2009 study at least, many teachers appeared to be left to grapple with fundamental questions alone,

What does the Government want us to be teaching every child of this country? ... What aspects are they wanting us to teach? What is the focus? ... What is the outcome they want us to have with the students that we're teaching? ... Learning from the past or what we can learn in the future? ... Or is it that they just want us to teach the facts, the figures?

**History teacher, London, group interview**  
(Pettigrew et al., 2009, p. 86)

In the IOE 2009 study, more than 40.0 per cent of secondary teachers with experience of teaching about the Holocaust reported that they felt it was difficult to do so effectively, and many suggested that a specific challenge was knowing what content to cover within a limited amount of curriculum time. As described more fully in the pages that follow, the UCL 2019/20 study provides encouraging evidence that ten years later, this situation had begun to improve for many teachers.

**Figure 6.2** Percentage of teachers in the UCL 2019/20 study who selected each teaching aim (n=907)<sup>41</sup>



## Teaching aims prioritised in the UCL 2019/20 study

In the UCL 2019/20 survey, teachers were presented with a list of 13 aims potentially relevant when teaching about the Holocaust and asked to choose the three they considered most important in their own work. Figure 6.2 presents these aims in the **order of popularity** (they were not listed in this order in the survey – please see Appendix 1). The most frequently prioritised aim among teachers with recent experience of teaching about the Holocaust was, ‘to develop an understanding of the dangers of prejudice, racism and/or stereotyping in society’, chosen by 68.6 per cent.

<sup>41</sup> Wording of aims shortened in figures due to limited space – please see the survey in Appendix 1 for complete wording of these aims

## Comparison of teaching aims prioritised in the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 studies

The IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 studies used slightly different lists of potential aims but across both studies, ten aims were presented in an identical or closely comparable manner. Figure 6.3 reports the comparative popularity of the ten shared aims. However, given the different number of aims listed in the IOE 2009 study (11 aims) and the UCL 2019/20 study (13 aims), this had implications for the findings. For example, as the teachers' responses were spread across a greater number of options in the UCL 2019/20 study, this will have contributed to lower percentages for some of the aims compared to the IOE 2009 study. Comparisons between the two studies should be viewed with this in mind, but nonetheless still reveal some interesting trends.

Teachers' prioritisation of the aims remained largely stable in the period between the two studies, with some small differences emerging:

- The ranking for the top five categories of aims (dangers of prejudice/discrimination, learning lessons, roles/responsibilities, moral questions, implications of silence/indifference) remained the same in the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 studies.

- The aim 'to learn the lessons of the Holocaust and to ensure that a similar human atrocity never happens again', was less likely to be selected in the UCL 2019/20 study compared to the IOE 2009 study.
- The aim 'to understand and explain the actions of people involved in and affected by an unprecedented historical event' was more likely to be selected in the UCL 2019/20 study compared to the IOE 2009 study.
- Teachers in the IOE 2009 study were more likely to select the aim 'to memorialise those who suffered' than their UCL 2019/20 counterparts.
- Teachers were marginally more likely to select the aim 'to deepen knowledge of World War II and twentieth century history' in the UCL 2019/20 study compared to teachers in the IOE 2009 study.
- Additionally, teachers in the UCL 2019/20 study were marginally more likely to select the aim 'to explore the roles and responsibilities of individuals, organisations, and governments when confronted with human rights violations and/or policies of genocide' than the teachers in the IOE 2009 study.

Figure 6.3 Percentage of teachers selecting each aim in the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 studies

Develop understanding of dangers of prejudice, racism, stereotyping in society

Learn lessons of the Holocaust to ensure similar human atrocity never happens again

Explore the roles and responsibilities of individuals, organisations and governments when human rights violations and/or policies of genocide

Reflect upon the moral and/or ethical questions raised by events of Holocaust

Explore implications of silence and indifference in face of the oppression of others

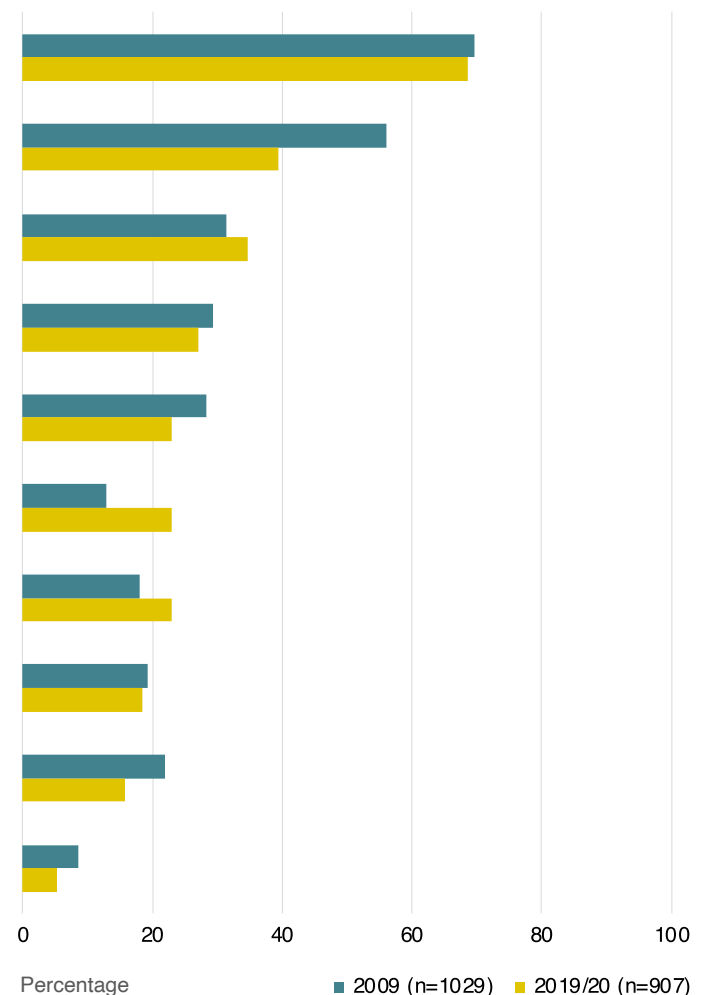
Understand and explain actions of people involved in and affected by unprecedented historical event

Deepen knowledge of WWII and twentieth century history

Reflect upon political questions about power/abuses of power, raised by the Holocaust

Memorialise those who suffered

Reflect upon theological questions raised by the Holocaust



## Teaching aims and disciplinarity

The IOE 2009 report observed that, at that time, distinct disciplinary teaching aims were considerably less likely to be prioritised by teachers than overarching rationales which cut across subject boundaries. Among survey responses, the same two aims were overwhelmingly the most popular, irrespective of the school subject within which respondents identified that they principally taught about the Holocaust. Over twice as many history teachers, for example, prioritised the aim, ‘to learn the lessons of the Holocaust and to ensure that a similar human atrocity never happens again’, than either of the two more distinctively ‘historical’ aims, ‘to deepen knowledge of World War II and twentieth century history’ or ‘to understand and explain the actions of people involved in and affected by an unprecedented historical event’. Moreover, and perhaps most strikingly, this was further evidenced in a later section of the IOE 2009 survey:

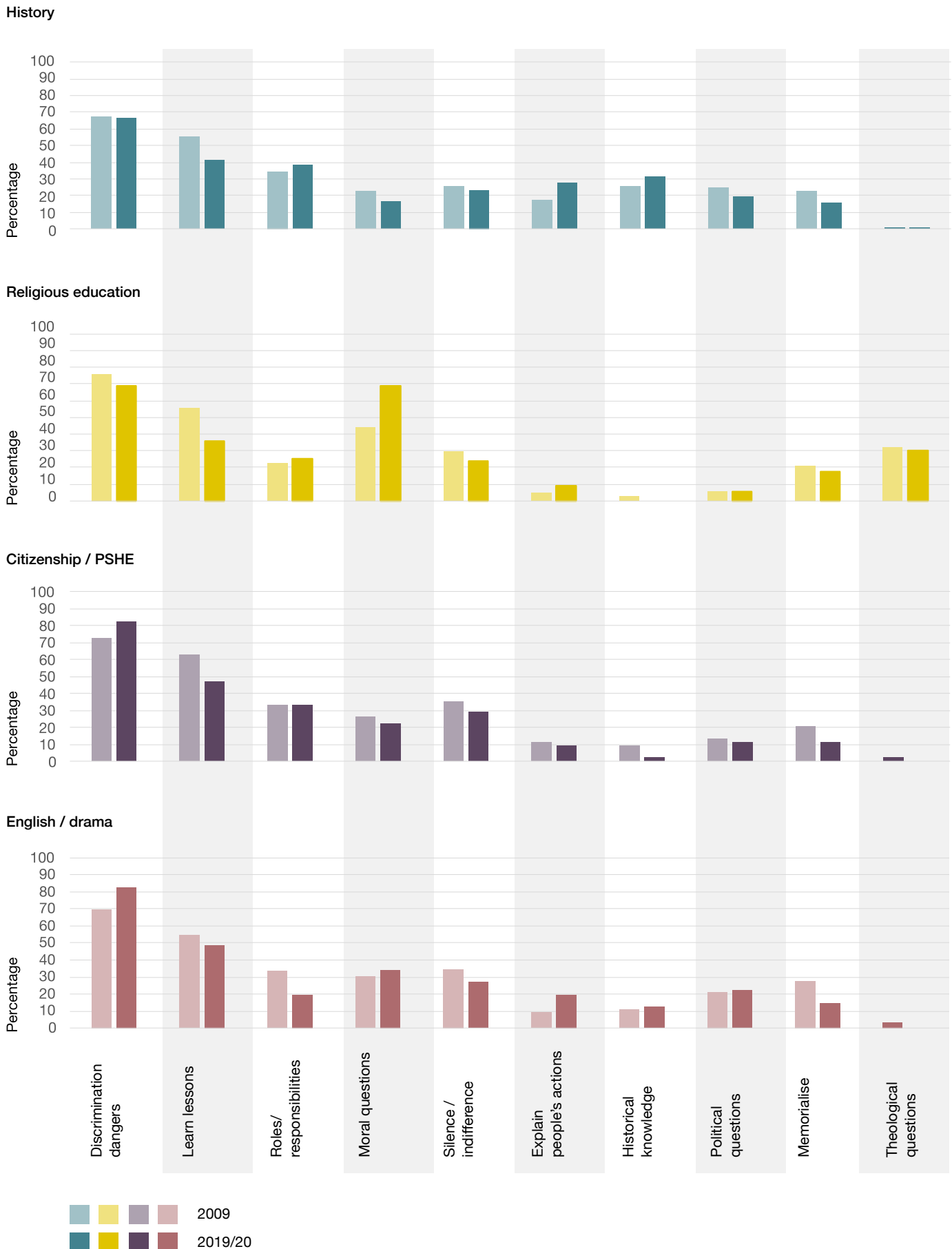
- Only 30.6 per cent of history teachers agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: ‘when teaching about the Holocaust, I take a disciplinary approach and focus on historical teaching’.
- Whereas, 83.7 per cent agreed or strongly agreed: ‘when teaching about the Holocaust, I ask students to consider moral and/or ethical questions’.
- And 69.5 per cent agreed or strongly agreed, ‘when teaching about the Holocaust, I emphasise the horror of these events and the human suffering – I want students to have a deep emotional response to this topic’.

Figure 6.4 examines the same ten aims that were shared or closely comparable across both surveys already described above. The data reveals there was some variation in the teaching aims prioritised by different subjects, and that this had changed slightly from the IOE 2009 study to the UCL 2019/20 study. Some notable findings included:

- In the UCL 2019/20 study, around two-thirds of those who principally taught about the Holocaust in history or religious education prioritised the aim ‘to develop an understanding of the dangers of prejudice, racism, and/or stereotyping in any society’. Whereas almost all teachers who principally taught about the Holocaust in English, considered this aim most important (82.9 per cent). This was also the case for those who principally taught about the Holocaust in citizenship, PSHE or other related curricula areas (82.2 per cent).

- In the UCL 2019/20 study, the aim ‘to deepen knowledge of World War II and twentieth century history’ was more likely to be prioritised by those teaching in history (31.3 per cent) compared to teachers of other subjects. That said, there were a handful of teachers in English who selected this aim.
- The aim ‘to learn the lessons of the Holocaust and to ensure that a similar human atrocity never happens again’ was less likely to be selected by those principally teaching about the Holocaust within history in the UCL 2019/20 study (41.2 per cent) compared to the IOE 2009 study (55.7 per cent).
- For those who principally taught about the Holocaust in religious education, there was a notable increase in the proportion of teachers selecting the aim ‘to reflect upon the moral and/or ethical questions raised by events of the Holocaust’ from the IOE 2009 study (44.4 per cent) to the UCL 2019/20 (68.9 per cent). Whereas there was a decline in those who selected the aim ‘to learn the lessons of the Holocaust and to ensure that a similar human atrocity never happens again’ from 2009 (55.6 per cent) to 2019/20 (35.6 per cent).
- For those who principally taught about the Holocaust in citizenship/PSHE and other related curricula areas, the frequency with which the aim ‘to develop an understanding of the dangers of prejudice, racism, and/or stereotyping in any society’ was selected increased from 2009 (72.2 per cent) to 2019/20 (82.2 per cent), whereas prioritisation of the aim ‘to learn the lessons of the Holocaust and to ensure that a similar human atrocity never happens again’ decreased (from 63.0 per cent in 2009 to 46.7 per cent in 2019/20).
- In the case of English/drama teachers, the aim ‘to develop an understanding of the dangers of prejudice, racism, and/or stereotyping in any society’ was more likely to be selected in the UCL 2019/20 study (82.9 per cent) compared to the IOE 2009 study (69.7 per cent). Several aims such as ‘to explore the roles and responsibilities of individuals, organisations, and governments when confronted with human rights violations and/or policies of genocide’ decreased in prioritisation in the UCL 2019/20 study compared to the IOE 2009 study.

Figure 6.4 Percentage of teachers selecting each aim in the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 studies, by subject





## Aims in teachers' own words

In the IOE 2009 study, an emphasis on generalised and/or overarching rather than subject-specific teaching aims was also borne out in interview. While very broadly, religious education specialists were more likely to emphasise theological dimensions of the Holocaust – such as the nature of evil, for example – and history teachers were more likely to specifically refer to the acquisition of skills such as ‘source evaluation’ or ‘working with chronologies’, prioritised teaching aims tended not to be related to subject background. In the UCL 2019/2020 study, a more complex and nuanced picture of teachers' considerations in relation to teaching aims was revealed during interview and in free-text survey responses. Across this 2019/20 data, there were many instances where teachers illustrated how they operated with subject-specific aims or objectives and many articulations of how teaching aims changed according to the subject in which the Holocaust was taught:

I have selected the aims that are most important to the unit of study I teach in history. Some of the other aims are relevant to our study of the Holocaust in Life Skills/ Citizenship lessons and RE lessons.

**History teacher, East Midlands, survey response**

This is a difficult question to answer because if you ask me as a history teacher I have one answer and as a teacher of PSHE another.

**History teacher, East England, survey response**

The survey's free-text response box also provided an instructive opportunity for teachers to identify aims they felt were not captured within the options provided. This seemed especially useful to those teaching about the Holocaust outside of history or religious education.

Our aims as an English teacher are not ‘Holocaust’ focused, rather it is that the Holocaust becomes a vehicle or lens through which we can help young people explore a range of literature, develop their language and oracy skills, examine themes and explore new worlds – of course, we hope it contributes to several of the stated themes, but our chief aims are English literature and language ones, and then we have chosen specific texts – such as Holocaust related ones to address that, and support our colleagues in history and elsewhere.

**English teacher, North West England, group interview**

I want students to understand and explore power: in terms of conflict, resources, space - so the Holocaust comes into that. I want young people to reflect on movement of people, forced and voluntary - migration, refugees and so on (historical and current). And, I want young people to consider spaces, topography, field work, so as to actually interpret spaces and sense of place, and why sites are where they are for geographical, political, economic and other reasons.

**Geography teacher, South West England, survey response**

In interviews too, there was very regularly clear disciplinary inflection – or in some cases, very pronounced framing – of teaching aims. This was especially apparent where group interviews involved colleagues from more than one subject area considering distinctive approaches as, for example, in the following extract where teachers considered their individual responses to the interviewers' invitation to outline, ‘two or three of your most important teaching aims’:

**Teacher BK:** How and why did the Holocaust happen? That's kind of the scheme of work, that we would follow in history.

**Interviewer:** And when you say how? What does that include?

**Teacher BK:** How, would be the processes of it taking place, like the actual stages if you like, for example from ghettos, etc. But also in terms of – which I guess is a bit more PHSE now – as in kind of the bystander kind of role, why no-one stopped it, why nothing was done about it. One of the lessons we do in history is why did Britain not stop the Holocaust from happening? [...] So by the how, we don't just mean the process of it, but more of how could it happen in the first place? The history of persecution of Jews, why did no-one stop it? So the broader how if you like.

**Teacher BN:** And from a religious studies perspective we look at it through the nature of good and evil, so sort of um ethics, we also look at what it means to be human, and we also use it as part of our sort of forgiveness, punishment, reconciliation, scheme of work as well, so you know, how far are these people evil, how are they to blame, how should we punish them, and can they sort of receive reconciliation for what happened?

**Teacher BK:** I think in PHSE we kind of follow a similar line to the RS, so it's looking at, we do [a] bystander lesson, but also we then consider the decisions that had to be made by the *Judenrat* in the ghettos, [...] we look at and debate and discuss those in PHSE. So PHSE lessons come from a similar angle of what is it to be human, why do people make the decisions they do, and what happens if you're forced into these impossible situations, these impossible decisions?

**History teacher (BK) and religious education teacher (BN), London**

As the contributions made by teacher BK in the interview extract above also reflect, the notion of hard and fast disciplinary aims or objectives can be complicated by the way that many schools deliver PSHE and in some cases citizenship. It is not uncommon for these subjects to be delivered as a cross-curricular theme (i.e. through other disciplines, especially humanities) and not necessarily as a discretely timetabled subject area of its own.

Nonetheless, teachers tended not to indicate an overshadowing of disciplinary historical priorities by 'present-oriented' or otherwise instrumentalist uses of the past. This was a concern expressed by Kinloch (1998), Salmons (2003) and Russell (2006), and significantly framed analysis in the IOE 2009 study. Instead, the interview and free-text contributions from teachers in the UCL 2019/20 study were much more likely to both identify and emphasise the importance of 'knowing about the past' and 'drawing relevance in the present' as discrete albeit importantly inter-related teaching aims.

## An increased prioritisation of secure historical knowledge and of learning about the past

While not immediately reflected in the responses given when asked to choose just three from a list of fixed options, the aims that teachers themselves freely articulated in free-text responses and in interview could in fact most commonly be categorised as emphasising the importance of students' acquisition of historical knowledge about this past.<sup>42</sup> It is important to note here that 'historical knowledge' was not conceptualised in narrow terms in this regard; teachers did not commonly refer to students knowing necessary 'facts and figures' but rather made reference to a variety of different dimensions of historical understanding, such as causes, the chronology and geography of the Holocaust and the different experiences

of those persecuted. Overall, many teachers were particularly keen to uncover and address common student misconceptions.

Interestingly, quite a few teachers spoke about including in their lessons the actions, roles and responsibilities of individuals caught up in the events. Thus, it appeared that the aim cited in the survey 'to deepen knowledge of World War II and twentieth century history' was conceptualised by some teachers in close relation to the aim 'to explore the roles and responsibilities of individuals, organisations, and governments when confronted with human rights violations and/or policies of genocide', as well as the aim 'to understand and explain the actions of people involved in and affected by an unprecedented historical event'. This finding suggests that these aims intersect to provide a contextualised approach to the Holocaust. The 'roles', 'responsibilities' and 'actions' of individuals were often the link between the aim of learning about this history and learning of lessons from the Holocaust.

Several teachers appeared aware of, but actively resisted, a binary opposition between 'historical' and 'presentist' teaching aims, and emphasised the importance of better understanding the specific historical context in order to draw contemporary lessons from the Holocaust:

I'm generally in history, really, really wary of foreground[ing] the 'learn lessons from the past' thing, I think, because of the risks, obviously, of distorting the past with a view to presentist aims. But I think, with obviously significant caveats and caution about getting the history right first, it does seem to me, naively or otherwise, that if there's one event that stands out as an event that I do want pupils to learn from – more than just learn about – then this, this would be it. I'm aware this is a risky approach, I'm aware it's an approach that's up for grabs and debate, and I think it has to be done very much without... I don't mean learn from as in asking naff, moralistic questions, I mean learn from having asked really good historical questions that get to a good understanding of the history. And the lessons that we learn from that are not explicitly taught, but by asking good history questions, my hope is that they learn lessons indirectly from that, from having a good understanding of the history, so like the role of perpetrators and victims, for example, that people can learn from that.

**History teacher, East England, group interview**

<sup>42</sup> A note on coding method: free-text survey data and interview data were inserted into NVivo separately. Starting with interview data, each utterance of teaching aims was coded based on a close description of its meaning. Each description code was then reviewed and codes with similar expressions of aims or concerning conceptually similar aims were grouped together into categories. The resulting categories were then tested on whether they applied to the description of the free-text survey responses. These categories were found to be satisfactory in describing the vast majority of what teachers said about aims in both survey and interview.

What was distinctive about teachers' accounts in the UCL 2019/20 study compared to IOE 2009 study was ostensibly wider awareness that the 'lessons' of the Holocaust were not immediately self-evident and, relatedly, greater specification of how exactly it might be possible to learn from this and other pasts was needed. Here as elsewhere, sufficient understanding of the Holocaust within its own (historical) context was, importantly, emphasised.

### Making it 'relevant': drawing contemporary parallels and learning lessons from the Holocaust

In teachers' own words, through survey free-text responses and interviews, the second most frequently referenced aim when teaching about the Holocaust was for students to better understand and reflect upon contemporary issues. Again, links to contemporary issues were conceptualised in a rich variety of ways. For example, teachers in interview referred to:

- Critically examining stereotypes
- Discussing the dangers of politics of blame and scapegoating
- Countering intolerance
- Discussing discrimination in parts of society today
- Addressing concerns about the rise of the far-right
- Tackling homophobia
- Making students aware of how prejudice and discrimination can lead to persecution
- Discussing social justice issues and equality
- Discussing diversity and difference
- Recognising the danger signs of similar things happening again

Among these responses, teachers most commonly framed contemporary relevance in terms of attempting to combat prejudice, discrimination and/or stereotyping in general terms rather than specifically with reference to antisemitism. This was also reflected in the comparatively small percentage (11.7 per cent) of teachers who prioritised the aim, 'to tackle antisemitism in contemporary society' in the UCL 2019/20 survey. Teachers were also much more likely to describe their intention to equip students to understand and challenge everyday issues caused by prejudice and intolerance than to prevent a similar atrocity from happening again.

I see teaching the Holocaust as an invaluable strategy for countering some of the very worrying trends in politics and society, for example the rise of the Alt-Right, extremism, xenophobia and anti-immigrant feeling. It also enables students to reflect on what can happen if prejudice is unchallenged even at the most basic and simple level, and the potential impact of treating those who are different to ourselves with a lack of dignity and discrimination.

**History teacher, Yorkshire and the Humber, survey response**

Again, it was especially interesting that this aim – of drawing contemporary parallels and informing students about the world today – was almost always accompanied by the conviction that any such 'lessons' must be grounded in historical knowledge. This articulation was more prevalent in the UCL 2019/20 study compared to the IOE 2009 study.

I believe that the holocaust must be understood in its proper historical context first, in order that wider lessons can be drawn. Occasionally, well-meaning teachers focus on racism and prejudice in the abstract with only the briefest reference to the historical context and this can lead to an over simplified and inaccurate understanding which may cause people to dismiss the holocaust as something which could never happen again because these were different people in a different time. Only by recognising and understanding the wider historical background can people also see how such events could happen again unless we are mindful enough to guard against it.

**History teacher, East Midlands, survey response**

Despite teaching during RE lessons, we tend to have a focus on what happened and why. We feel it is essential for students to learn lessons from this period of time so that it is not repeated.

**Religious education teacher, South West England, survey response**

## Informing ethical, theological or philosophical discussions

Finally, a small but distinctive collection of both interview and survey respondents independently articulated teaching aims which sought to provide opportunity for theological and/or philosophical reflection. For example:

The Holocaust offers a useful opportunity to exam[ine] questions about human nature, and to understand how complex and contradictory human behaviour can be.

**History teacher, survey response**

[T]he sorts of things we need to look at in RE [are], so how and why did so many Jews retain a faith in God? How could one human do this to another, along the lines of morality. And why would God allow it? So linked in with the problem of evil and suffering, believing in God.

**Religious education teacher, East England, group interview**

These sorts of teaching aims were articulated overwhelmingly by those who principally taught about the Holocaust within religious education. It is perhaps pertinent, therefore, to consider the diminishing curricular opportunities to confront the most philosophical questions posed by the Holocaust, if, as we reported in earlier chapters, less and less of this teaching is actually taking place within religious education.

## Content choices

As suggested at the outset of this chapter, the clarity and congruence of teachers' overarching aim(s) or rationale when approaching the Holocaust, should be of central consideration when determining what to include within a complete and coherent programme of study.

In the UCL 2019/20 survey, teachers were presented with a list of 34 topics (see Appendix 1) and were asked, in the first instance, to identify those they personally included when teaching about the Holocaust. The full list and responses given by all teachers with recent experience of teaching about the Holocaust is reported in Figure 6.5 (presented in order of popularity, not the order the topics were presented in the survey). Nine topics were included by at least 70.0 per cent of teachers:

- The experiences of individual men, women and children who were persecuted by the Nazis (89.1 per cent)
- Auschwitz-Birkenau (88.1 per cent)
- Nazi ideology (83.6 per cent)
- Kristallnacht (83.2 per cent)
- Propaganda and stereotyping (79.4 per cent)
- The Nuremberg Laws (78.7 per cent)
- The choices and actions of bystanders (76.7 per cent)
- An account of life in the ghettos in occupied Poland (e.g. Warsaw) (73.3 per cent)
- The long history of antisemitism (72.9 per cent)

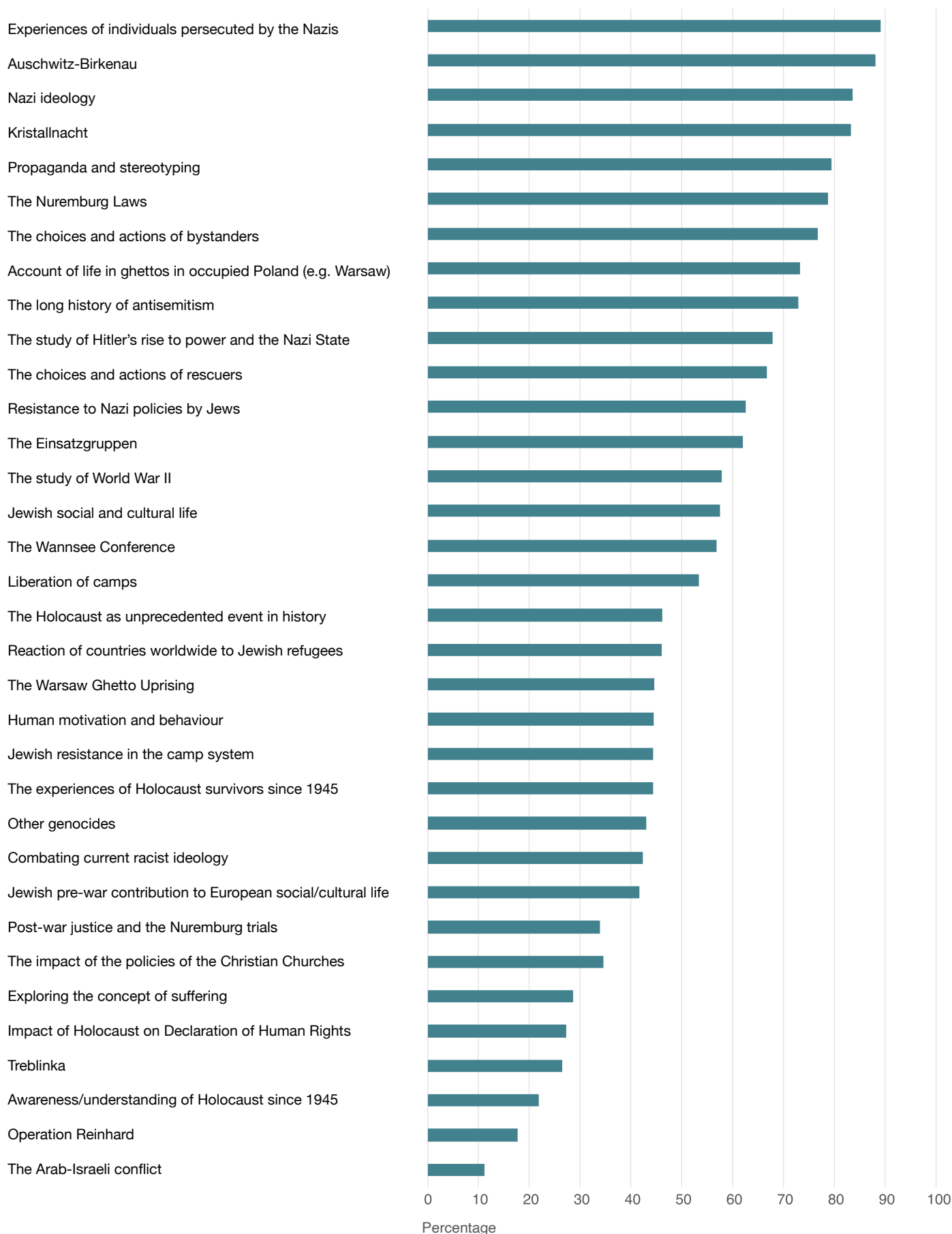
In contrast, six were included by fewer than 30.0 per cent:

- Exploring the concept of suffering (28.6 per cent)
- The impact of the Holocaust on the Declaration of Human Rights (27.3 per cent)
- Treblinka (26.5 per cent)
- Changes in awareness and understanding of the Holocaust since 1945 (21.9 per cent)
- Operation Reinhard (17.7 per cent)
- The Arab-Israeli conflict (11.2 per cent)

A very similar list was also included in the IOE 2009 survey but there, teachers were asked to indicate *how likely* they were to include each topic within their teaching. The different styles of question for collecting this data precluded the possibility of directly comparing frequency counts across both time points. As a consequence, throughout the rest of this chapter a more reliable comparison of relative ranking of the 32 topics that were included identically in both surveys was employed.

Tables 6.1 and 6.2 show some consistency in the most and least likely content to be taught in the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 studies. However, notable changes include 'Nazi ideology' rising 11 places from 14th in the IOE 2009 study to 3rd most frequently selected topic in the UCL 2019/20 study, and 'exploring the concept of suffering' falling to 28th place in 2019/20 from 19th place in 2009. The full list of rankings for 2009 and 2019/20 are provided in Appendix 3, but other notable changes in ranking, where the topic shifted at least five places between 2009 and 2019/20 are shown in Table 6.3.

Figure 6.5 Percentage of teachers in the UCL 2019/20 study who personally included each topic in their teaching about the Holocaust (n=868)



**Table 6.1** The most frequently covered content in the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 studies

Ranking	IOE 2009 study (n=1,038)	UCL 2019/20 study (n=868)
1	The experiences of individual men, women and children who were persecuted by the Nazis	The experiences of individual men, women and children who were persecuted by the Nazis
2	Auschwitz-Birkenau	Auschwitz-Birkenau
3	Propaganda and stereotyping	Nazi ideology
4	Kristallnacht	Kristallnacht
5	The choices and actions of bystanders	Propaganda and stereotyping

**Table 6.2** The least frequently covered content in the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 studies

Ranking	IOE 2009 study	UCL 2019/20 study
32	Operation Reinhard	The Arab-Israeli conflict
31	The Arab-Israeli conflict	Operation Reinhard
30	The impact of the Holocaust on the Declaration of Human Rights	Changes in awareness and understanding of the Holocaust since 1945
29	The contribution of the Jews to European social and cultural life before 1933	The impact of the Holocaust on the Declaration of Human Rights
28	Changes in awareness and understanding of the Holocaust since 1945	Exploring the concept of suffering

**Table 6.3** Ranking of topics in the UCL 2019/20 study with the most pronounced shifts since the IOE 2009 study

UCL 2019/20 study ranking	Topic	Shift since the IOE 2009 study
3	Nazi ideology	+11
11	The choices and actions of rescuers	-5
12	Resistance to Nazi policies by Jews	+12
13	The Einsatzgruppen	+10
15	Jewish social and cultural life before 1933	+12
16	The Wannsee Conference	+5
20	Human motivation and behaviour	-10
23	Other genocides	-7
24	Combating current racist ideology	-15
28	Exploring the concept of suffering	-9

When reflecting on the changes from the IOE 2009 study to the UCL 2019/20 study, it is instructive to look back at the issues highlighted in the IOE 2009 study. For example, concerns were raised about the apparent lack of emphasis on Jewish life. The findings from the UCL 2019/20 study suggests teachers were increasingly addressing this concern with 'Jewish social and cultural life before 1933' going up 12 places to 15th place and included by 53.7 per cent of teachers. Interviews conducted in the UCL 2019/20 study also highlighted the inclusion of pre-war Jewish life, which teachers described as not only fundamental to students' understanding of the significance of the Holocaust and its consequences, but also to rehumanising the victims. For example:

Well, when I taught it last year, I realised it was all... there was nothing about Jewish life, about the Jews, about them as people, as individuals. I kept telling the kids, 'These were people with families, with good days and bad days, and people they love and people they hated. And there were some nice people and there were some bad people', you know? But in the book, it was all about, 'How do we exterminate the Jews' and it was all horrific accounts of brutality, but there was nothing about the fact that they were actually people, you know, who loved their kids, who loved their parents, and that's really what I missed.

**History teacher, Yorkshire and the Humber, group interview**

The IOE 2009 study also warned that teachers appeared to place much greater emphasis on what was *done to* the victims of the Holocaust with relatively little attention given to how they responded. Thus, that 'resistance to Nazi policies by Jews' saw the largest increase in inclusion since 2009, suggests that this is another important issue that teachers have sought to address over the last decade. In the UCL 2019/20 study, 58.4 per cent included this within their teaching. The increased presence of these topics in teaching, as well as an account of the life in the ghettos in occupied Poland (included by 68.4 per cent) featuring in the ten most frequently taught topics, suggests that teachers had responded to the IOE 2009 study finding that perpetrator-oriented events often took precedence over victim-oriented issues.

While the topics occupying the first ten positions in the 2019/20 ranking continue to be mostly perpetrator-oriented, this is perhaps to be expected given the emphasis teachers appeared to place both on students' historical understanding of the events and on drawing contemporary parallels from the history – as revealed by the previous analysis of teaching aims. It could be argued that topics

such as 'Propaganda and stereotyping', 'Nazi ideology', 'The Nuremberg Laws', 'Kristallnacht' and 'Auschwitz-Birkenau' are not only essential elements of understanding what happened but also of understanding how it happened, how the persecution developed over time and how persecution escalated.

The IOE 2009 study also drew attention to the prevalence of topics relating to the 1930s and Nazi Germany with less attention given to events during the Holocaust itself. Again, findings from the UCL 2019/20 study provide evidence of a shift in this area. The inclusion of 'The Einsatzgruppen' (included by 57.8 per cent of teachers) had increased (up ten places in the ranking) as well as 'The Wannsee Conference' (included by 53.0 per cent of teachers and up five places) which indicates more inclusion of events during the Second World War.

However, it is important to acknowledge that teachers only have a finite amount of time to deliver a unit of work about the Holocaust, and difficult decisions about what to include and exclude must be made. It is therefore inevitable that the inclusion of certain areas like pre-war Jewish life might be at the detriment of other topics. For example:

- 'Combating current racist ideology' moved down 15 places and, in the UCL 2019/20 study, was included by 39.5 per cent of teachers.
- 'Human motivation and behaviour' moved down ten places and was included by 41.5 per cent of teachers.
- 'Exploring the concept of suffering' went down nine places, covered by 26.7 per cent of teachers.
- 'Other genocides' moved down seven places and was covered by 40.1 per cent of teachers.

The comparatively lower ranking of these topics in the UCL 2019/20 study compared to the IOE 2009 study can in some cases likely be explained by the proportionate decrease in religious education teachers across the sample (most notably, exploring the concept of suffering). However, this could also be seen as further indication of teachers' increased emphasis on the specific historical context of the Holocaust and, perhaps, reduced emphasis on citizenship-oriented topics or moral/social-oriented ones.

## Content choices by subject background

As shown in Table 6.4, 'the experiences of individual men, women and children who were persecuted by the Nazis' and 'Auschwitz-Birkenau' were amongst the most frequently covered content by teachers of history, religious education, English and/or drama and citizenship/PSHE subjects. Beyond this, history teachers tended to cover topics such as 'Nazi ideology', 'Kristallnacht' and 'the Nuremberg Laws', and teachers of the other subjects covered 'propaganda and stereotyping' and 'the choices and actions of bystanders'. For religious education teachers the notable difference was the high incidence of 'exploring the concept of suffering'.

Additional subject variations were found (see Appendix 4) and Table 6.5 presents some of the most notable differences. In particular, content more explicitly related to the chronological details of the Holocaust and how it developed, changed and radicalised over time tended to be covered by history teachers to a greater extent than teachers of the other three disciplines. These teachers appeared to prioritise topics which spoke more explicitly to broader socially-orientated content. In interview, the history teachers also emphasised the need for chronology; of narrating how the persecution developed and the key phases and events between Hitler's rise to power and the end of the Holocaust. Within the chronological narration, the Nuremberg Laws, Kristallnacht and Auschwitz were often individually named, thus supporting the survey findings that these were topics that history teachers commonly included in their lessons.

**Table 6.4** The most frequently covered content in the UCL 2019/20 study by teachers' principal subject

Ranking	History (n=564)	Religious education (n=123)	Citizenship/ PSHE (n=42)	English and/or drama (n=41)
1	Nazi ideology: 97.0 per cent	The experiences of individual men, women and children who were persecuted by the Nazis: 87.0 per cent	The experiences of individual men, women and children who were persecuted by the Nazis: 83.3 per cent	The experiences of individual men, women and children who were persecuted by the Nazis: 92.7 per cent
2	Kristallnacht: 96.5 per cent	Exploring the concept of suffering: 79.7 per cent	Auschwitz-Birkenau: 76.2 per cent	Propaganda and stereotyping: 85.4 per cent
3	The Nuremberg Laws: 95.2 per cent	Auschwitz-Birkenau: 78.0 per cent	Propaganda and stereotyping: 71.4 per cent	Human motivation and behaviour: 80.5 per cent
4	Auschwitz-Birkenau: 94.5 per cent	Propaganda and stereotyping: 78.0 per cent	Combatting current racist ideology: 66.7 per cent	Auschwitz-Birkenau: 68.3 per cent
5	The experiences of individual men, women and children who were persecuted by the Nazis: 92.0 per cent	The choices and actions of rescuers: 74.8 per cent	The choices and actions of bystanders: 64.3 per cent	The choices and actions of bystanders: 61.0 per cent



**Table 6.5** Ranking of topics in the UCL 2019/20 study that show notable variation related to teachers' principal subjects

Topics	History (n=564)	Religious education (n=123)	Citizenship/ PSHE (n=42)	English and/or Drama (n=41)
Nazi ideology	1	16	14	6
Kristallnacht	2	9	19	12
The Einsatzgruppen	10	28	22	26
The study of World War II	12	32	32	25
The Wannsee Conference	13	29	30	32
Other genocides	24	11	7	15
Combating current racist ideology	25	14	4	7
Human motivation and behaviour	27	7	6	3
The impact of the Holocaust on the Declaration of Human Rights	30	15	10	17
Exploring the concept of suffering	31	2	13	9

**Table 6.6** The most frequently covered content in the UCL 2019/20 study, by formal training experience

UCL 2019/20 study ranking	No formal training (n=156)	Formal training (n=671)
1	The experiences of individual men, women and children who were persecuted by the Nazis: 87.8 per cent	The experiences of individual men, women and children who were persecuted by the Nazis: 89.7 per cent
2	Auschwitz-Birkenau: 85.3 per cent	Auschwitz-Birkenau: 89.0 per cent
3	Propaganda and stereotyping: 78.8 per cent	Kristallnacht: 86.0 per cent
4	Nazi ideology: 77.6 per cent	Nazi ideology: 84.8 per cent
5	The choices and actions of bystanders: 75.6 per cent	The Nuremberg Laws: 82.4 per cent

## Formal training and content choices

Table 6.6 shows the five most frequently taught topics in the UCL 2019/20 study – across subjects – categorised by whether or not teachers had participated in any formal training for teaching about the Holocaust. While there was similar emphasis between the two groups, there appeared to be slightly more focus on specific historical events amongst teachers with some form of training. Whereas, teachers without any training seemed to place more emphasis on themes such as ‘propaganda and stereotyping’ and ‘the choices and actions of bystanders’.

In terms of comparisons between content choices from 2009 to 2019/20 based on training experience, there was increased inclusion of ‘Jewish social and cultural life’ in both groups, although this increase was more pronounced for the formal training group. Both groups were also more likely in the UCL 2019/20 study compared to the IOE 2009 study to teach about ‘The Einsatzgruppen’, ‘resistance to Nazi policies by Jews’ and ‘Nazi ideology’. Irrespective of training experience, teachers were less likely to include ‘combatting current racist ideology’ in 2019/20. Those with formal training were less likely to include ‘human motivation and behaviour’ and those without formal training were less likely to include ‘other genocides’.

Zooming in on teachers who participated in the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education Beacon School Programme and/or Masters module (the ‘UCL high engagement programmes’), for the majority of topics listed in the survey, this group were more likely to include them compared to those without formal training. This is discussed further in Chapter 8, but in summary, almost all teachers (over 75.0 per cent) participating in the UCL high engagement programmes reported including the following topics:

- Jewish social and cultural life
- Nazi ideology
- Resistance to Nazi policies by Jews
- Hitler’s rise to power and the Nazi State
- The Nuremberg Laws
- The long history of antisemitism
- Kristallnacht
- The experiences of individual men, women and children who were persecuted by the Nazis
- Auschwitz-Birkenau
- Propaganda and stereotyping
- The choices and actions of bystanders
- The choices and actions of rescuers

## Summary

While approaches to Holocaust education in terms of teaching aims employed and the content covered have not seen dramatic changes from 2009 to 2019/20, some very important developments have occurred. Notably, the UCL 2019/20 interviews showed teachers increasingly recognised that sound historical knowledge was needed as the basis from which to draw parallels between the Holocaust and contemporary ‘lessons’. There was also evidence of disciplinary framing when teachers discussed their teaching aims. Additionally, recommendations from the IOE 2009 study appeared to have had an impact. For example, there was increasing inclusion of ‘Jewish social and cultural life before 1933’ in the UCL 2019/20 study. There was also evidence that those who had participated in formal training appeared more likely to focus on specific historical events whereas teachers without any training seemed to place more emphasis on themes such as ‘propaganda and stereotyping’ and ‘the choices and actions of bystanders’.

In considering these findings, it should be acknowledged that the nature of the question about teaching aims meant that teachers could only select three aims, and it is likely that most teachers would have selected more than this if permitted. In other words, where an aim was not selected by a teacher it did not mean they overlooked this element of teaching. However, it is interesting to note that when asked to prioritise the three aims they felt were most important, the most frequently cited aims were similar across subjects. In the case of history teaching in the UCL 2019/20 study (as with the IOE 2009 study) the most frequently selected aim was ‘to develop an understanding of the dangers of prejudice, racism and/or stereotyping in society’, suggesting that ‘to deepen knowledge of World War II and twentieth century history’ was not the primary outcome for the majority of history teachers. As already described, having sound historical knowledge about the Holocaust is a crucial foundation from which to meaningfully address the broader social and civic-orientated aims that tended to be prioritised by teachers.

Another important consideration, which is discussed in the next chapter, is that many teachers struggled with limited curriculum time when teaching about the Holocaust. This will inevitably have had implications for what they could teach, meaning difficult decisions about what to include and exclude had to be made. Indeed, the research identified and explored numerous challenges encountered by teachers when teaching about the Holocaust, having direct bearing, amongst other things, on the content they taught, how they taught it, the outcomes they sought to achieve, and the ways in which their students responded to this material. The next chapter looks at a range of challenges including teaching about the Holocaust to students in Years 7 or 8 because of a two-year Key Stage 3 curriculum, the resilience of student misconceptions about the Holocaust and students believing information they find on the Internet regardless of its legitimacy.

7

# Changes, challenges, and the need for further support

## Key Points

- The challenges that teachers most frequently encountered when teaching about the Holocaust included: students becoming emotionally distressed by the subject, insufficient curriculum time and students believing information they find on the Internet regardless of its legitimacy.
- Other challenges, while encountered very infrequently, were extremely serious when they did arise, for example, students articulating antisemitic attitudes. Thus, the analysis noted that the frequency with which any challenge was encountered was not always the most salient metric to consider.
- Some of the challenges identified in the IOE 2009 study, for example, grappling with decisions about the most appropriate way to use assessment in Holocaust education, continued to cause teachers uncertainty in the UCL 2019/20 study.
- Other issues were of more concern in 2019/20 than they were in 2009, for example, the proliferation of antisemitic material and scurrilous information about the Holocaust on the Internet.
- In contrast, a paucity of CPD opportunities was very rarely mentioned as a challenge in the UCL 2019/20 survey. This was a significant shift from the situation in the IOE 2009 study where access to such courses was limited.

## Introduction

Teachers who took part in interviews for the UCL 2019/20 study were asked to comment on changes they have experienced in Holocaust education within their teaching careers. Reflecting on change, many described ‘massive’ transformations since they had started out as teachers. They talked about a past when teaching about the Holocaust was either very dry, factual, or more commonly, highly emotive and reliant on shock tactics through graphic imagery. They described an evolving appreciation of more meaningful ways to get students to connect with this history, ways of intellectually and emotionally ‘moving’ students through understanding individual experiences, personalising the incomprehensible scale of the atrocities and reclaiming the humanity of Jewish victims. Teachers typically identified change in terms of improvements and characterised the field of Holocaust education as one where there was a lot of positive investment in terms of curriculum time but also in terms of research and training. Those who had taken part in programmes of CPD – both with the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education and those provided by other organisations – talked about the transformative impact of these courses on their work.

I think certainly talking to various people that I’ve met on these courses, some of the provision for Holocaust education CPD is the best CPD that they’ve been on, whether that’s as teachers, or as educators in other forms, because it changes perspectives, and it gives you a much more firm grounding in what is possible, but also what is necessary.

**History teacher, South East England, group interview**

Teachers detailed the impact of CPD not only within teaching about the Holocaust but also for the insight and skills they were able to adapt and adopt elsewhere. Furthermore, there was specific appreciation of research informed approaches and a renewed emphasis on the importance of students and teachers acquiring sound historical knowledge about the Holocaust. With these positive changes in mind, this chapter considers new and enduring challenges that teachers in this field of work face, and the areas where they say additional and continued support is needed.

## Significant challenges encountered when teaching about the Holocaust

The UCL 2019/20 survey presented respondents with a list of challenges and asked them to indicate whether they had encountered each challenge ‘always’, ‘often’, ‘occasionally’ or ‘never’ when teaching about the Holocaust. As Figure 7.1 illustrates, a very clear majority (91.4 per cent) of all teachers with recent experience of teaching about the Holocaust had at least occasionally encountered the challenge of students becoming emotionally distressed by the subject. Unfortunately, few teachers elaborated on this challenge in the survey’s free-text box. When teachers were asked about challenges in interview, few spoke about this issue. When it was mentioned – either in survey or interview – it was most commonly articulated as a concern about the lack of time or ability to check how students were coping with the topic. For example, one survey respondent wrote:

What I find challenging is how to wrap up the lessons, we can’t draw a neat line under this and obviously there will be disbelief, unanswered questions and difficulty processing it and students may or may not feel empowered in their own lives in response to it [...] I do wonder what the best way is to check whether a student feels really distressed, isolated or confused.

**Religious education teacher, London, survey response**

While the UCL 2019/20 study gave a sense of the scale of this challenge, showing that almost all teachers encounter it to some extent, it was impossible to explore the features of this challenge given the dearth of qualitative data. Consequently, numerous questions remain and point towards the need for more research in this area. For example, little is known about the different ways that students’ distress might manifest, teachers’ confidence in recognising this distress, and how they can support students accordingly (especially where the distress presents in withdrawn behaviours or ruminations).

Other challenges were also prevalent, with around three-quarters of teachers encountering the following challenges at least occasionally:

- Students believing information they find on the Internet regardless of the source or accuracy of the information (74.9 per cent)
- Insufficient curriculum time (74.6 per cent)
- Being unable to answer students’ questions (73.0 per cent)
- Students articulating other forms of prejudiced and/or discriminatory language (70.3 per cent)

At the other end of the spectrum, 85.6 per cent of all teachers with recent experience of teaching about the Holocaust reported that they had never encountered Holocaust denial among students and only 1.0 per cent had encountered it more than occasionally. However, the frequency with which any challenge was encountered was not always the most salient metric to consider. Thus, this challenge along with other challenges that were reported with low frequency but are potentially high impact/high concern, are also important to consider. Some of these challenges are discussed briefly in this chapter and will be considered in further detail in future publications.

As Figure 7.1 also indicates, only three of the 15 suggestions offered in the survey were ‘often’ or ‘always’ encountered as a challenge by 25.0 per cent of teachers or more. These were:

- Insufficient curriculum time (41.8 per cent)
- Teaching this subject to students in Years 7 or 8 because of a two-year Key Stage 3 curriculum (28.8 per cent)
- Students believing information they find on the Internet regardless of the source or accuracy of the information (25.8 per cent)

Interviews provided opportunities for more detailed discussions about challenges. Here, teachers again spoke of challenges in relation to the lack of time and the truncated Key Stage 3 curriculum. They also spoke about: students’ emotional immaturity; challenges presented by the way the curriculum is organised in their school; the extent that different subjects cooperate; the complexities of balancing different teaching aims; choosing content; finding appropriate resources; and implementing assessment. Student-centred challenges and wider cultural issues were also discussed in interviews and mentioned in free-text responses to various questions within the survey. In the sections that follow, some of the challenges are discussed in more detail.

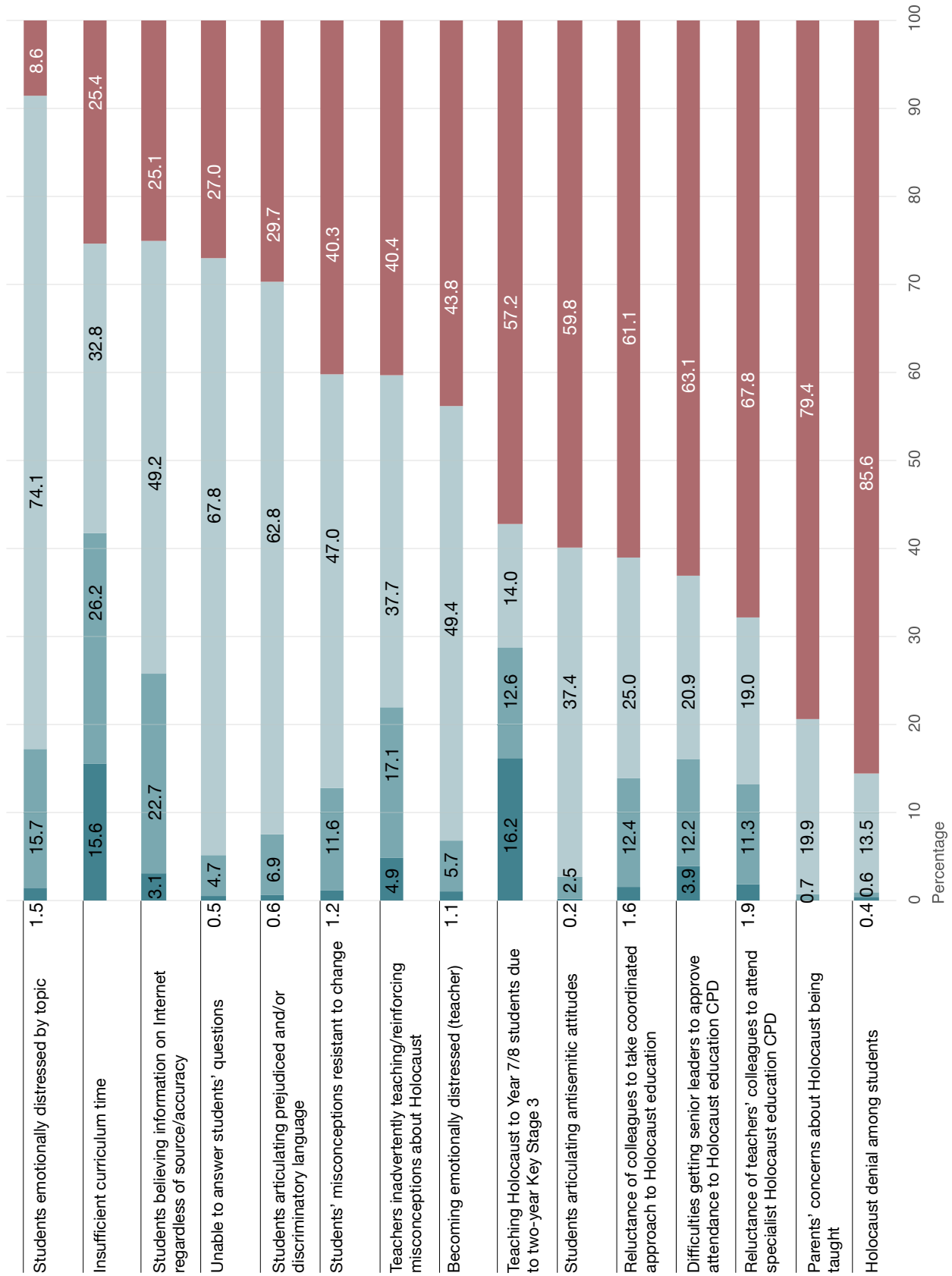
### Insufficient curriculum time and a truncated Key Stage 3 curriculum

In the IOE 2009 study, the most frequently reported challenge was limited curriculum time. In interview, many teachers suggested that this was not necessarily a problem peculiar to teaching about the Holocaust. History teachers in particular expressed concern that their whole subject was being ‘cut back’ in curriculum time. In some schools this resulted from Key Stage 3 history being truncated from a three-year into a two-year course with little or no compulsory history being taught in Year 9.

Ten years later, insufficient curriculum time remained the biggest challenge with 41.8 per cent of survey respondents citing it as a challenge they ‘always’ or ‘often’ encountered. An additional 32.8 per cent said they encountered this challenge ‘occasionally’. The lack of sufficient teaching time was also frequently mentioned in interview. The finding was broadly consistent across curriculum areas.

Figure 7.1 Percentage of teachers in the UCL 2019/20 survey who reported encountering each challenge ‘always’, ‘often’, ‘occasionally’ or ‘never’ (n=795-845)<sup>43</sup>

Always Often Occasionally Never



43 Wording of challenges shortened in figure due to limited space – please see the survey in Appendix 1 for complete wording of these challenges

As in 2009, the lack of sufficient curriculum time seemed in many cases to be closely connected to the second challenge most frequently indicated in the survey as occurring 'often' or 'always': teaching this subject to students in Years 7 or 8 because of a two-year Key Stage 3 curriculum. As described in Chapters 1 and 3, this represents a trend that grew year on year between 2009 and 2019, influenced by the overhaul of the GCSE examinations, the expansion in GCSE content, and the introduction of accountability measures like Progress 8.

Time is the key issue. We've had to deliver certain elements of our GCSE curriculum in Y9 just to fit it in so our whole KS3 delivery has had to be reduced to accommodate therefore restricting the opportunities to deliver Holocaust studies.

**History teacher, Yorkshire and the Humber, survey response**

A total of 28.8 per cent of respondents indicated that they experienced this as a challenge 'often' or 'always'. Interestingly, it was least likely to be a concern for teachers at comprehensive schools than teachers in academies. A total of 62.4 per cent of teachers working in a comprehensive school indicated this as 'never' being a problem as opposed to 48.0 per cent of teachers working in academies. As one teacher explained:

Becoming an academy was an issue in two of my past schools as when they converted their history curriculum condensed and less Holocaust time/ed[ucation] was offered, consequently impacting on students' historical knowledge about the Holocaust.

**English teacher, South West England, survey response**

Elsewhere, teachers also made explicit reference to the significance of changing content within revised GCSE specifications, as in the case of the religious education teacher below.

Now the holocaust isn't really in any exam specs, the desire to cover the subject in ks3 now that we have reduced it to two years is a challenge. You have to fight to retain it against other topics that will help students' foundation for exams.

**Religious education teacher, East England, survey response**

As also considered in Chapter 3, teachers' responses provided an initial understanding about how the new exam specifications were having a negative effect on the teaching of the Holocaust. Firstly, the impact of the

exam specifications appeared related to the reduction in time available for the topic in general. Secondly, they jeopardised the topic's place in the curriculum all together, as some schools preferred to focus on content that would be useful in Key Stage 4. Thirdly, they deprived teachers and students of the opportunity to study or return to the Holocaust later with more intellectual and emotional maturity (this was something that teachers in the IOE 2009 report emphasised as important). Finally, they forced teachers to teach about the Holocaust to younger year groups. This was a challenge that many teachers referred to in their survey free-text responses, for example:

Previously teaching in Year 9 meant the students were emotionally more mature - change of content in the last year due to a 2 year KS3. Content has been simplified and feels less rigorous.

**History teacher, survey response**

The study found some efforts at resisting or reversing the truncation of Key Stage 3 history:

We have had to teach in Year 8 for 2 years: I found students not ready. Thankfully we are moving back to a 3 year KS3 curriculum so am pleased that students will now do this in Year 9.

**History teacher, North West England, survey response**

We have changed back to a three year key stage 3 this year and it is so much better to teach to an emotionally more mature Year 9.

**History teacher, South West England, survey response**

While the lack of sufficient curriculum time is arguably a problem across all subject areas for all curriculum topics, both interviews and survey free-text responses gave a sense of this being especially problematic for teaching about the Holocaust. This was because of the perceived complexity and importance of this history for teachers and hence their desire to do it justice:

I think the big thing is you always worry that you can't do it justice because of the limited amount of time that you have, and you don't really want to do something that's such an important thing in history, you don't want to do like a whistle-stop tour of it, because you don't want to do it injustice. And I think that's one of the only challenges really that we have.

**Religious education teacher, North West England, individual interview**



Lack of sufficient curriculum time was in many cases seen as exacerbating the difficult choices teachers must make when deciding what and how to teach this history.

I think what it also presents, as a challenge, as a history teacher, is, what do you focus upon when they do have so many questions and each of those questions potentially leads to all sorts of misconceptions, and if they're not getting the answers from you, where are they getting them from? And we all know what Googling the Holocaust gets you to very quickly – it's Holocaust denial and some pretty vile, vile things that aren't necessarily obviously vile and misrepresentative. And that's, that's a challenge [...] to do it in sufficient scope and breadth that you answer as many of the pupils' questions as possible, in the limited time that we have.

**History teacher, East England, group interview**

The Holocaust is the topic every year that kind of I struggle with, in terms of, I don't know if it's year group, I don't know if it's, if it's scale. I think it's kind of, it's a vortex a little bit, in that you sit down to think about what you want to include, and you come up with your huge list, and you're kind of like I can't do all of that, and particularly for that year group because of their age. And then you try to start to cross things off your list, and then you're like, but can they really understand it without not, without knowing that? And I think that's the constant dilemma with it.

**History teacher, East England, individual interview**

## Competing pedagogical concerns and how to incorporate assessment

Concerns about content were frequently linked to concerns about how to balance different learning objectives and pedagogical priorities. A number of challenges that teachers outlined arguably stemmed from a central concern that, in some school contexts at least, teaching – and learning – about the Holocaust was seen as a way of addressing multiple and diverse learning objectives.

I think teaching the Holocaust can be problematic trying to marry up all those different ideas, about what is our role as teachers, as educators. Is it to get them the skills to pass an exam, especially in this context where it's a grammar school, it's high achieving, we do have that expectation that those skills are developed from the ground

up. Is it to broaden their horizons, and make them citizens of the world? Or is it to foster a love of the subject? And trying to balance those three, with any subject, can be very difficult, and then you've got the morality issue that comes in with trying to teach the Holocaust as well, which makes it even more of a complex issue.

**History teacher, South East England, group interview**

One aspect of this issue was the concern about the contemporary relevance of the subject matter. As one history teacher explained in their survey response, the challenge was 'ensuring the balance between historical fact and contemporary relevance is reached'. 'Relevance' was invoked by teachers in the UCL 2019/20 interviews and survey responses, with regard to relating the events of the Holocaust to contemporary socio-cultural contexts and concerns, and also with respect to fostering student engagement and personal connection with this history. For some teachers, it appeared to remain a challenge to both teach the history of the Holocaust while also making it meaningful and accessible to their students. To this end, teachers talked of their desire to present both the 'big picture' of the Holocaust in terms of salient historical context but also personalised meaning at the level of individual human encounters: 'wanting to look at individual stories and engage with stories but still get the chronology right' (history teacher, East Midlands, survey response), 'giving them the facts and the history of it' while also 'trying to get the empathy in there' (history teacher, South West, group interview).

Potential tensions such as these became particularly apparent where teachers reflected upon what they considered to be appropriate modes of assessment. Indeed, this indicated a marked continuity across teachers' accounts between the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 studies. One interview exchange was particularly interesting in terms of illustrating how competing pedagogical concerns can affect assessment:

**Teacher DQ:** I think it [the final assessment question] was, "Explain how the Holocaust was allowed to happen?" And it's based on a GCSE style question.

**Teacher DO:** [...] We've tried to focus it this year on just the history element of it, because it does need to be assessed – we do need to have the unit assessed – but it's the hows and the whys. So, we looked at the purpose of why we were doing it and we went back to the scheme of learning and looked at actually the journey, those key turning points [i.e. different stages in the development of persecution], and we tried to put that into an assessment question. [...]

**Teacher DQ:** But I agree it was challenging to put that into an assessment question. I found that tricky.

**Interviewer:** More so than other topics that you teach?

**Teacher DO:** Yes, I think because it's – we want them to have a personal – personal stories, and a lot of them were mentioning those stories in their assessment, which was correct, but they wanted to go then into the story element of it a little bit more than the history element of it and so it's hard to – because we want them to have that, we want them to know [Paul Oppenheimer's story],

[...]

**Teacher DS:** [...] so we want them to have had that – that really engages them, it really pulls them in and they really have that level of empathy. But actually, from a history teacher point of view, the kids don't need to have empathy in order to be successful at – in a history assessment. So, it's difficult isn't it, because we've tried to engage them through that personalised story which is so important but then we don't really want them to hook too much on to that in their assessment because, from a history assessment perspective, empathy is not one of the skills that the pupils need to have. So, it presents those challenges of, 'So how do we create an assessment that reflects the scheme of learning but also reflects the big picture of our history skills that we're trying to get them to develop?'

**History teachers, North West England**

For some teachers in the UCL 2019/20 study, as in the IOE 2009 study, the idea of formal written assessment was considered inappropriate in the context of Holocaust education:

I think if we do start bolting on assessments to it, we lose some of that ability for them to actually self-reflect. I absolutely agree with what [my colleague] is saying actually, because it does become about, 'how do you answer an exam question', and we lose that focus, of actually, so this happened: why? What can we, as humans, learn from it?

**History teacher, South East England, group interview**

However, many teachers talked about assessing through discussion and engagement, and knowing their lessons were making an impact through students' responses to the content and the questions they asked. They also talked about using open-ended tasks and giving students choices as a form of assessment. Open-ended tasks mentioned by teachers were, for example, researching a topic of their choice, contributing to a classroom debate, thinking about what topics they would include in the pages of a textbook and responding to their learning in creative ways (for example, designing a memorial or creating an artwork).

## Teacher cooperation across and within curricular areas

As already emphasised earlier in this chapter, even simply in terms of ensuring coherent content coverage, teachers regularly described that they had too little time to include everything they wanted to – or felt that they should include. The teacher reported below found even having fifteen lessons allocated to the Holocaust was insufficient, but as they alluded to, part of the solution might be to work with other subject disciplines to enrich students' understanding:

I would like it if [the students] had a greater understanding of Jewish culture and religion, but it's very difficult because the RS department, a lot of the teachers in the RS department are actually year heads. So, to get them to dedicate [...]. I just feel that there needs to be a greater understanding about the actual Jewish culture. I think ... and it should be taught separately from the Holocaust. I think that loss would be greater understood if that was taught in a different [disciplinary context]

**History teacher, London, individual interview**

This teacher identified the opportunities afforded by cross-curricular cooperation but encountered difficulties in enlisting the dedicated attention of colleagues from another department. Some UCL 2019/20 survey respondents also indicated having this experience, with 14.0 per cent reporting that they 'often' or 'always' encountered 'the reluctance of teachers in other departments/subject areas to work on a coordinated approach to Holocaust education'. A further 25.0 per cent cited having this experience occasionally.

Within the survey free-text responses to the question about challenges, the issue of cross-curricular cooperation – or its absence – was frequently discussed. In some cases, this was reported as the result of lack of time rather than a lack of will. However, in most cases, the challenge was articulated as teachers from different disciplines coming to the subject from different angles or with different objectives and having trouble making their approaches or aims compatible. Even so, the merit of approaching Holocaust education from different disciplinary perspectives was recognised. Thus, it appeared this challenge was not

about multiple subjects teaching about the Holocaust per se, it was instead about the complexity of doing this in a coordinated and coherent manner.

I think there is a lack of co-ordination between different subject areas about how the Holocaust is taught. I think that can lead to confusion for students about the messages they receive about this topic and how the Holocaust fits within the entire curriculum narrative.

**History teacher, Yorkshire and the Humber, survey response**

There is no co-ordinated approach to teaching about the Holocaust in my school although English, PSHE and History all teach it. I believe it is all taught at different times.

**History teacher, North East England, survey response**

Related to the challenges of cross-curricular cooperation, in the IOE 2009 study, a small number of history teachers expressed specific concern that colleagues in other departments were introducing students to the Holocaust in Years 7 and/or 8 without any prior discussion or consultation with them. The UCL 2019/20 study found this still to be a challenge within schools. Frequently, teachers – especially history teachers – expressed their dissatisfaction that colleagues in their school taught elements of the topic to Year 7 or Year 8 in other subjects. They explained that the early and uncoordinated introduction to the topic created misconceptions that had to be rectified later. This was particularly the case with the use of *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* text in English lessons.

Students coming across Holocaust themed literature e.g. *The Boy in the Striped pyjamas* in other subjects e.g. English prior to studying the history of the Holocaust. This can often lead to an attitude of “I know what happened” from the [outset] when in reality they have gained as many misconceptions as they have factual knowledge and understanding.

**History teacher, North West England, survey response**

Students come to us and literally think the Holocaust IS *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, so that is a massive issue.

**History teacher, North East England, group interview**

Consequently, a number of history subject specialists described their attempt to address what they framed as shortcomings or potential ‘issues’ in colleagues from other departments continuing to use either the film or text. Some went further describing their continued effort – in some cases described as ‘massive arguments’ or ‘major battles’ – to try and persuade colleagues not to use the text or film at all with varying degrees of success:

[In my own subject] it’s very much taught with a historical discipline, which is kind of the massive, massive, massive argument with English about *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*. You can’t play loose with historical facts when you’re talking about the Holocaust.

**History and philosophy teacher, East Midlands, group interview**

The concerns expressed by the teachers in the UCL 2019/20 study echo those of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA). In their Recommendations for Teaching and Learning About the Holocaust, IHRA provide useful guidance for how fictional resources should be used. This includes: educators having sound knowledge to differentiate fiction from truth; not using problematic fictional resources; and warnings about the use of the novel and film *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* with learners who have little or no prior knowledge of the Holocaust and thus, are at risk of acquiring misinformation about this history. (IHRA, 2019).

Concerns were also raised in relation to educational content on the Holocaust delivered through PSHE and/or citizenship, and/or through school assemblies or tutor/form time. As outlined in earlier chapters, it was very common for those charged with teaching the Holocaust within these contexts, to have unrelated subject backgrounds. This created another challenge which was mentioned in interview and survey: the teaching of the Holocaust by teachers who were delivering the topic within a subject or context they were not specialists in (sometimes referred to as out-of-field teaching). There were accounts of out-of-field teaching occurring across the disciplines typically associated with teaching about the Holocaust. This situation risked, at times, teachers inadvertently saying inappropriate things to students, failing to see the significance of the topic, or being unable to answer students’ questions or address misconceptions.

[...] sometimes SLT have delivered assemblies or planned tutor activities around the Holocaust that lack knowledge or are not age appropriate.

**History teacher, East Midlands, survey response**

All teachers, regardless of disciplinary background or knowledge, being asked to deliver a Holocaust education presentation in tutor time. I feel this can be damaging to students' understanding, as they may air misconceptions to their peers, but the teacher does not necessarily have the knowledge to challenge them.

**History teacher, North West England, survey response**

We haven't got it right this year and we've also got the added problem of having to pick and choose [...] where it's taught by a non-specialist. A couple of years ago we had four specialist teachers which was not a problem because we taught the whole of the history curriculum and that was that. Now we're down to two specialist history teachers for Key Stage 3 which means that we have a core of kids who will never be taught by a history specialist and that presents its whole raft of problems in terms of what lessons are taught and how they're taught particularly with this topic. For those teachers, what we've done is stuck very much with some pre-prepared lessons that have come either from [UCL's Centre for Holocaust Education or the Holocaust Educational Trust] and we've just put the package together and said, 'this is what you need to teach, there's the lesson plans, there's the resources, there's the bits and pieces that you need to do with it' but it doesn't come with the same level of knowledge, it doesn't come with the same level of understanding and the kids come out of it knowing more but something's missing.

**History teacher, East Midlands, group interview**

Even where subject specialists delivered content about the Holocaust, including history specialists teaching about the Holocaust within history lessons, this was no guarantee that they would necessarily have informed knowledge about the Holocaust, especially where their degrees had not included extensive coverage of this history. In this situation, a few teachers mentioned reliance on textbooks to supplement their knowledge. However, until recently, history textbooks covering the Holocaust were imprecise, problematic and not informed by the latest research (see Foster and Karayianni, 2017).<sup>44</sup> This further underlines the importance of teachers attending specialist Holocaust education CPD.

I'm thinking about my NQT this year, she's a Medievalist, but she's got to teach the Holocaust, so it's like what could I suggest to her, to kind of get her started, that isn't the kind of not-great-stuff that's in the Year 9 textbooks? Um...you know, just to give her confidence, because I think it is that thing where she's nervous about teaching it, because she hasn't really taught it before, and she doesn't have that knowledge to support her when she's going in, in case [the students] do ask the tricky questions.

**Head of history, East England, individual interview**

As described throughout this report, teaching about the Holocaust regularly took place in a wide variety of subject areas, year groups and other school contexts. While this can create challenges, it can also foster opportunities for in depth, coherent and well sequenced learning. The concerns expressed by some of the teachers in the UCL 2019/20 study pointed to the need for better communication within and across subjects and departments, and to the importance of developing better understanding of what the aims of Holocaust education are across the school, and how each subject and teacher could contribute to the achievement of those aims. A more integrated approach to providing quality Holocaust education – both vertically along key stages and horizontally across subjects and disciplines – would perhaps prevent some misconceptions from forming or provide opportunities to address pre-formed misconceptions. It would also allow teachers to build on each other's work, in turn reducing the time they individually spend on addressing misconceptions and maximising the impact of the time available.

## Antisemitic attitudes, myths and stereotypes

In response to the multiple-choice statements about challenges, only 2.5 per cent of teachers in the UCL 2019/20 study with recent experience of teaching about the Holocaust said they 'often' encountered students articulating antisemitic attitudes, and only 0.2 per cent said they 'always' encountered this challenge. A much more substantial percentage indicated encountering the challenge 'occasionally' (37.4 per cent). Consequently, it appeared that antisemitic attitudes were not something teachers frequently encountered or had to deal with. This, however, does not mean that encountering the challenge 'occasionally' is insignificant; far from it, this a very worrying and serious issue.

In free-text survey responses, teachers did on some occasions refer to antisemitism as a challenge in the classroom and school more broadly. A particularly arresting

<sup>44</sup> The UCL Centre for Holocaust Education published a new research-informed Key Stage 3 textbook in 2020: Understanding the Holocaust: How and why did it happen? Contact the Centre for more details or visit <https://holocausteducation.org.uk/the-holocaust-education-ks3-textbook/>

example of this came from one teacher, who expressed their view that:

Antisemitism is a creeping issue within the schools. There are a minority of students who have identified as Nazi, or who have said that they thought Hitler was a good leader. In the last year, I have seen Swastikas being graffitied within the school and within the last month I have heard two students refer to another student as a “Jew”- by that they meant that the student was a loner with no friends.

**Religious education teacher, South East England, survey response**

It should be emphasised that such reflections were neither widespread nor commonplace, though of course this in no way makes this teacher’s experience less shocking or important. On most occasions when antisemitism was mentioned, teachers reported that it was often antisemitic tropes that were repeated by students, related to erroneous myths about physical appearance or references to money.

I taught one pupil who believed anti-semitic stereotypes (physical appearance, money), and was resistant to change his view when presented with the facts.

**History teacher, Yorkshire and the Humber, survey response**

Similarly, in a minority of interviews, antisemitic myths and stereotypes were also mentioned:

That was one of the challenges I had, where kids would have like, I don’t know, not exactly, so you’d be like ‘oh the Nazis thought the Jews owned all the businesses’, and they’d be like ‘well Jews are quite rich aren’t they?’ And stuff like that. And, you know, challenging that effectively I found was, I found that tricky sometimes.

**History and politics teacher, London, group interview**

**Teacher DX:** The kids come out and say, ‘Well, my dad says that is true’, or, ‘they are greedy, they do take the money’.

**Teacher DW:** That ‘all Jews were rich’.

**Teacher DX:** Yeah, ‘Well that is the case, isn’t it?’ and they just say it very factually, and then you have to address that so you have to deviate from what you’re doing because you don’t want the rest of the class to suddenly go, ‘What?’ like, you know, and

also I don’t want that child [...] to continue with that mind-set, I suppose, but then it is difficult because then it’s, you know, how do we deal with the parents or the wider scenario as to what’s going on?

**History teachers, Yorkshire and the Humber**

Such pernicious stereotypes and mythologies about Jewish people’s appearance, behaviour and socio-economic standing have regrettably persisted throughout history – but to encounter evidence of these among today’s young people is still striking and should command attention. So too should indications that parents and other adults in wider society are peddling antisemitic tropes and prejudices to students. With this in mind, it is equally troubling that teachers in interview spoke of having an intuitive awareness that myths, misconceptions and stereotypes were circulating in some students’ minds. Significantly, although teachers did not always provide specific details about the particular stereotypes and mythologies they were encountering, they did indicate that they duly framed their teaching in ways to try and dispel these.

As mentioned, it is important to remember that across all the teachers who participated in the UCL 2019/20 study, and the many thousands of students they will have encountered across their careers, these sorts of incidences were not commonplace. Many young people do not believe or articulate antisemitic attitudes. However, this study showed that it does occur at times, and other evidence indicates incidents of antisemitism are rising (see for example, Community Security Trust, 2021), and thus, exploring the ways in which teachers can be supported to address this issue with their students is a critical area for future research.

## Holocaust denial and other conspiracy theories

The survey findings suggested that Holocaust denial was not something teachers generally encountered, with 85.6 per cent indicating that they had never come across Holocaust denial in their classrooms. Serious incidents of Holocaust denial were reported by very few teachers within the UCL 2019/20 study. In interview, two teachers described encountering outright denial. Another described their awareness of Holocaust denial positions taken by some students’ parents and a fourth recounted an incident of Holocaust distortion – ‘He didn’t say [the Holocaust] didn’t happen, he was like questioning the numbers and that kind of insidious route’ (history teacher, London, group interview).

The survey also asked teachers to indicate how often students made unsolicited references to Holocaust denial when teaching about the Holocaust. Again, the vast majority of respondents either ‘never’ (37.9 per cent) or ‘rarely’ (41.0 per cent) encountered such references. However, while one-fifth of respondents (19.1 per cent) said they ‘sometimes’ encountered unsolicited student

references to Holocaust denial and 2.0 per cent that they 'often' did so, this typically took the form of students being baffled by Holocaust denial. That is to say, in teachers' free-text responses, most teachers clarified that when denial was mentioned by their students, it was because students were puzzled by this and sought to discuss their concerns with their teachers. In the free-text responses to the question about challenges encountered when teaching about the Holocaust, two teachers similarly explained that when denial was mentioned, it was not because students believed in it but because they were bewildered by how it was possible for other people to deny the Holocaust.

They tend to be incredulous and want to know what possible reasons there could be for Holocaust denial - as in how can someone deny historical facts? I have never had a student express any support for or belief in any Holocaust denial theories - although I have had a few who have come across some on YouTube and want to ask about them.

**History teacher, East England, survey response**

My students tend to ask why people deny the Holocaust - every time I have been asked the question it has been from the context of bewilderment - it seems so obvious to them that it happened that they struggle to understand how you could deny it.

**History teacher, North West England, survey response**

In general, across the whole sample in the UCL 2019/20 study, instances of outright denial were reported by a total of 22 teachers in the open-ended survey question about unsolicited references to Holocaust denial. There were also 29 references to students not outright supporting Holocaust denial but questioning how we know it really happened. In addition to this, there were 32 references to what could be characterised as Holocaust 'trivialisation', 'minimisation' or 'distortion' which mostly focused on questioning the scale of the Holocaust or the importance attached to the topic today.

How can they know what is said about the Holocaust is true? Was it really as bad as that? Rarely do I get that the Holocaust didn't happen and that it was lies, but I do get more of the idea of it being exaggerated, or that it's talked about too much for other reasons today, and what about all the other genocides or other terrible things happening today.

**History teacher, London, survey response**

[...] increasingly we see students asking questions that aren't 'outright denial' which for most is ridiculous, but instead something akin to distortion or minimisation - was it really 6 million? They (the Jews) must have done something for the Nazis to hate them, that it was 70+ years ago, why keep on about it? That it can't have been as bad as described, that other groups suffered too, or even others have suffered since. A student has said 'people only go on about the Holocaust so they can keep saying Israel is legit', so I have seen a conflation of Palestine/Israel and the Holocaust arise.

**English teacher, North West England, survey response**

Many of the teachers who reported antisemitic views in a minority of their students, also said that these ideas were a problem that had appeared recently and linked it with wider issues relating to online sources, the currency of conspiracy theories and the challenges presented by fake news:

But this has been a recent thing, when I first started teaching it was hardly mentioned, even laughed at by students if it was, as they couldn't conceive of anyone denying the evidence and survivors. It seems to be since the fake news era and the experts being challenged that a few students take on conspiracy theories or ideas and so it sometimes comes up.

**English teacher, South West England, survey response**

This is an important reminder, that whilst Holocaust denial and distortion is not expressed in most classrooms, many students are at risk of exposure to it outside school, often through the Internet. The survey found that 25.8 per cent of teachers 'often' or 'always' cited their 'students believing information they found on the Internet regardless of the source or accuracy of the information' as a challenge (overall, 74.9 per cent of teachers encountered this challenge at least occasionally). This points to the disturbing prospect that some students are not recognising, scrutinising or challenging denial material; a situation that is even more serious where they do not have sound knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust to enable them to recognise such reprehensible material.

That said, the data highlighted an interesting paradox: on the one hand, students tended to be aware that not all sources of information were valid, making them suspicious of everything and prompting them to ask how we know that something is true and be hesitant to believe anything. On the other hand, students were exposed to a variety of information through the Internet and social media and were at times impressed or persuaded by arguments which lacked grounding in evidence.

## Students' backgrounds

In the IOE 2009 study, very few teachers raised the issue of cultural diversity and students' backgrounds when specifically asked about challenges to teaching about the Holocaust. Ten years later there seemed to be more continuity than change. When explicitly asked about challenges they faced, very few teachers in the UCL 2019/20 study said that students' backgrounds presented challenges.

However, combining the UCL 2019/20 survey and interview data from other relevant questions did provide some interesting insights into the ways students' background could influence teaching, raise considerations, and create challenges. For example, teachers were asked in interview about their specific school context and how that influenced their teaching. To this question, in almost half of the interviews conducted, teachers mentioned students' background as something they take into account when making decisions about their teaching.

And while awareness of students' backgrounds was not presented as a challenge per se, in schools with majority white British student populations, the lack of diversity, appeared to be associated with students having very limited knowledge of Jewish people and limited knowledge about antisemitism. This was something that teachers said they considered when planning their lessons about the Holocaust.

In some cases, the lack of diversity was reported as being linked to students being particularly vulnerable to prejudiced views. In such instances, Holocaust education was seen as important in addressing such views.

**Teacher BE:** [...] they are quite intolerant as a group in this area, and it might be again that it is a very white dominant area we are in [name of place removed], that they don't live in a multicultural society. But they are very intolerant basically, this area of children, which is a shame [...].

[...]

**Teacher BD:** [...] Yeah, I think working from a pastoral point of view, ignorance and prejudice is something that happens quite a lot unfortunately, and those sorts of harmful views are sort of woven into the nature of the society or the area, which I don't think lots of them recognise that lots of them will start to repeat what they hear and sort of see it as normal.

**Teacher BE:** It's what they have heard at home.

**Teacher BD:** Exactly. So, it is that sort of not moving away, not being mixed demographically and culturally, it has that sort of effect where it just plays from one generation to the next, and there is a worry of how that can play out. So, I think learning about the Holocaust, but extending it as a wider topic, has some value pastorally as well.

**Religious education teachers, South East England** <sup>45</sup>

In the IOE 2009 research, survey respondents were asked whether or not they agreed with the statement, 'I find that having students from diverse cultural backgrounds influences the way that I teach about the Holocaust'. Those who agreed were asked to explain in further detail their reasoning. Just under a quarter (23.3 per cent) agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. In the UCL 2019/20 study, the same question was posed to teachers and 38.5 per cent agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Thus, there was some increase in the number of teachers who reported that having cultural diversity in their classroom influenced their teaching. In survey responses, some teachers said this was simply seen as good teaching practice because any teaching, and especially teaching of emotionally difficult topics, should take into account the needs of the specific group of students in each classroom.

Many teachers highlighted that their awareness of students' diverse backgrounds did not mean that they changed the emphasis they placed on certain issues or compromised their message. Rather, the majority of teachers who said that cultural diversity influenced their teaching, explained that it was important for them to be aware if they had students from a Jewish background or students who originate from countries affected by the Holocaust. They believed that such awareness ensured a more sensitive approach to the topic. For other teachers, however, awareness of cultural backgrounds of their students did influence their choices in content or approach:

When I taught in a school that had a strong Romany Gypsy population, I ensured that I taught about the persecution of gypsies

**History teacher, West Midlands, survey response**

We have a lot of eastern European students some of whom have family that were killed in the holocaust. They have brought personal stories and done additional research at home to share with their peers

**Religious education teacher, South East England, survey response**

Furthermore, some teachers stated that it was important for them to consider students' personal histories and experiences. For example,

Some students I teach may be from refugee backgrounds/victims of conflict from their own country so the topic may be a sensitive one for them. It's important to approach The Holocaust in a sensitive way to ensure students are not affected by the horrific details of it.

**English teacher, South East England, survey response**

## Resources, professional support, and teacher training

In the UCL 2019/20 study, the third most frequently mentioned challenge in survey free-text responses was linked to teaching resources. This was at times related to the lack of funding to buy resources or take students on educational trips. In other cases, teachers said that the availability of accessible materials was sometimes a challenge, especially for students with special educational needs (SEN) or those where English was an additional language (EAL). These were issues also expressed in interview but with far less frequency.

**Teacher DA:** The other thing we'd like to do but obviously we struggle with is just getting the kids out more, go to visit different places, go and see different memorial sites, go and take them to the synagogue today but...

**Teacher DB:** We used to take them, but we can't do it anymore.

**Teacher DA:** Struggle to get them out for that.

**Interviewer:** Okay

**Teacher DA:** Time and money, teachers.

**History teacher (DA) and religious education teacher (DB), East Midlands**

I think if we consider our school though, it's important to understand that our school, our pupils are children with... some with quite significant educational needs and they don't all learn in the way that they might learn in mainstream. So, all the children who come to this school have an EHCP, an educational healthcare plan. Some of them have quite significant cognitive difficulties, emotional, social difficulties. And our main aim when they arrive in our school is to work out what these as individuals need so that we can help them achieve and get to the potential

that they can get to. And those needs are quite vast, aren't they, in difference? Some of them will need more, [...] the visual clues and that kind of... particularly our autistic children. Some of them, when we talk about stories and books, some of our children have reading ages of sort of below eight, so for them, the texts that are written about the Holocaust tend to be quite complex texts, so we have to make it accessible for our children.

**PSHE teacher, East Midlands, group interview**

In both survey and interview, some teachers were concerned that in the near future, when the last survivors have passed away, students would not have the highly valued learning experience of hearing their testimonies in person. Some teachers expressed concern that, as time went by, survivors' testimonies would be lost. Such teachers thought recordings, or more advanced, interactive versions of recordings, should continue to be developed.

Within interviews and surveys, some teachers also suggested the development of existing resources, or production of new ones, to fit better within particular subject contexts.

Something which addressed RE disciplinary approaches and questions would be really useful - as often even the sessions/material I do use, have a history focus and we adapt, but would be good to have something that opened up questions of theodicy, faith, identity, belonging, post-Holocaust Jewish theology, forgiveness etc.

**Religious education teacher, East Midlands, survey response**

I'd love to see more resources or approaches that take a physical and human geography approach! Eg. Why camps located where they were, the journeys of Leon Greenman and others across Europe. How different occupied countries experienced the war/Holocaust in terms of the climate and conditions etc.

**Geography teacher, North East England, survey response**

Help with using Holocaust education as part of our PSHE programme as I am the Curriculum leader and would like to use some resources as part of our work on Justice, Inclusion, Human Rights, Extremism and Citizenship.

**Assistant headteacher, North East England, survey response**



As far as training was concerned, the lack of access to CPD was very rarely mentioned as a challenge in the UCL 2019/20 survey. This is an important finding and represents a real shift from the findings of the IOE 2009 study. In fact, only two teachers mentioned this as a challenge, possibly attributable to them working in isolated areas of the country. However, there were a number of instances where the need for professional development was referred to as a challenge in the case of teachers who were being asked to teach about the topic outside of their subject specialism.

## Summary

As this report has demonstrated, and will reflect on in Chapter 9, much has changed in the field of Holocaust education since the IOE 2009 study. However, many of the challenges that teachers encountered in the UCL 2019/20 study chimed with concerns that teachers expressed in 2009. The difficulties associated with limited curriculum time, supporting students with their emotional responses to this complex and disturbing history, the tensions of competing pedagogical concerns, grappling with questions about what and how to assess students' progress, and determining if and how to work with colleagues across the school were common themes in both studies. That is not to say nothing had changed in the ten years between the two studies. Indeed, many teachers in the UCL 2019/20 study felt that the CPD they had participated in had been critical in building their confidence, knowledge and expertise in teaching about the Holocaust.

However, some challenges are not easily addressed. For instance, insufficient curriculum time is ubiquitous across many areas of the curriculum, especially when considered in relation to the impact of the broader education context, like changes to the National Curriculum, the introduction of the EBacc, and the effects of accountability measures like Progress 8, and the ripple effect these policies and initiatives can have on the time that teachers allocate to Holocaust education. Moreover, the nature of the challenges teachers encounter has evolved over time. For example, the growing and often problematic influence of the Internet and social media in recent years has made it easier than ever to circulate misinformation, fake news, conspiracy theories and hatred, and in doing so, has the potential to fuel antisemitism and Holocaust denial.

That said, certain challenges can be viewed as opportunities to progress the field in very impactful ways. The 'challenge' of multi-discipline coordination is an apposite example of an opportunity to bring teachers together, avoid different disciplines covering the Holocaust independently risking repetition of content, and look for ways to develop discipline-specific training opportunities. Additionally, high quality professional development opportunities can have a transformative impact on teachers' practice, confidence, and knowledge, better equipping them to tackle the challenges discussed in this report. The next chapter examines UCL Centre for Holocaust Education's high engagement programmes in more detail, looking at how teachers – and by extension their students – can benefit hugely from these programmes.

8

# The UCL Centre for Holocaust Education: World-leading research and teacher training to transform classroom practice

## Key Points

- The UCL Centre for Holocaust Education's CPD Programme was established in 2009. To date, over 25,000 teachers have participated in the Centre's professional development courses.
- All courses are informed by the Centre's research and designed and led by experts. Amongst the Centre's most impactful opportunities are the Masters module 'The Holocaust in the Curriculum' and the flagship Beacon School Programme.
- Evidence suggests these high engagement programmes can have a transformative impact on teachers' practice, confidence and knowledge, and by extension, student outcomes.
- Whilst Holocaust education CPD is related to positive outcomes, not all CPD works in the same way or has the same impact. There is, in effect, a gold standard of CPD in Holocaust education, and this is professional development that is underpinned by research, sustained over time and immersive.

## Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 4, the intervening years between the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 studies saw significant expansion in the specialist support available for teaching about the Holocaust. Most notably, the establishment of the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education's CPD Programme in 2009. To date, over 25,000 teachers from multiple disciplines and at all stages of their careers have participated in the Centre's portfolio of professional development courses. Of course, some other important organisations have provided educational encounters with this history since 2009. However, the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education continues to be unique in conducting its own empirical research to better understand the complexities of teaching and learning about this subject, in turn drawing on these studies to inform the content of its CPD courses.

## Overview of the UCL high engagement programmes

The courses and programmes offered by the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education are summarised in Chapter 2. All courses are robustly informed by the empirical research the Centre conducts, they are designed and led by experts, and improve teaching practice and student outcomes. Amongst the Centre's most impactful opportunities are the Masters module 'The Holocaust in the Curriculum' and the flagship Beacon School Programme, collectively referred to in this report as the UCL high engagement programmes.

The Masters module enables teachers to develop an in-depth understanding of Holocaust education, strengthening their academic knowledge and professional practice in teaching and learning. The course content is responsive to the latest emerging research and helps support teachers in developing a coherent whole school approach to Holocaust education. The Centre's Masters course is quality assured. It is validated according to UCL's strict academic policies and criteria, and its work is scrutinised by a chief examiner from the University of Oxford.

The Beacon School Programme is the Centre's most immersive initiative. Every year, around 20 secondary schools in England committed to enhancing teaching and

learning about the Holocaust are selected to participate in this programme. Each Beacon School has a named lead teacher who works closely with an assigned UCL mentor and participates in a range of bespoke modules, residential programmes and collaborative meetings with Centre staff and other Beacon School colleagues. Through the programme, teachers acquire deeper subject knowledge and understanding, grow in confidence and enjoy the opportunity to network with other colleagues also seeking to improve teaching and learning in their schools. Each school also nominates a member of their senior leadership team to support the lead teacher's work.

UCL Beacon Schools in Holocaust Education work to significantly improve their provision for teaching and learning about the Holocaust. They partner with the Centre to become dynamic hubs serving a network of local schools to improve teaching standards, raise pupil achievement, strengthen Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) provision, enhance safeguarding and support whole school improvement. By autumn 2022, there were 206 UCL Beacon Schools, working with a network of over 1,600 schools across England, annually impacting on the learning of millions of students.

As shown in Table 8.1, the Beacon School Programme exceeds the Department for Education's current Standards for teacher professional development and fulfils the criteria identified in the Teacher Development Trust's international review into effective professional development (Cordingley et al., 2015).

**Table 8.1** How the UCL Beacon School Programme exceeds recommended standards for high quality CPD

<b>Key features of UCL Beacon School Programme</b>	<b>Related findings from Teacher Development Trust (Cordingley et al., 2015)</b>	<b>DfE's Standards for teacher professional development (DfE, 2016a)</b>
A named Beacon School lead teacher, supported by a senior leader in their school, participates in the programme.	Involvement of school leaders associated with teachers making substantial changes to their practice.	Professional development must be prioritised by school leadership.
The programme runs for one year initially, with continued support and opportunities beyond the initial year. For example, the Beacon School Quality Mark Programme, and participation in evaluation research to explore student outcomes.	Prolonged professional development interventions (at least two terms), comprised of a 'rhythm' of activities through multiple instances of ongoing support and follow-up activities.	Professional development programmes should be sustained over time.
Lead teachers participate in sessions and residentials together, with open discussions and bespoke UCL mentor support.	Recognise the differences between teachers and their starting points, and provide opportunities for them to surface their beliefs.	
Each cohort of lead teachers forms a 'learning community', enabling peer support. This is also evidenced in the way in which they collaborate with colleagues within their school through cross-curricular approaches, and in their local Beacon School networks.	Provide opportunities for teachers to engage in peer learning and support and build a shared sense of purpose.	
The Centre's latest research findings are pivotal to the programme. Lead teachers have access to emerging research findings and published studies. Researcher-led sessions give opportunities for teachers to work directly with the research team.	Make the public knowledge base, theory and evidence on pedagogy, subject knowledge, and strategies accessible to participants. Introduce new knowledge and skills to participants.	Professional development should be underpinned by robust evidence and expertise.
Centre experts run a series of knowledge-building, interactive sessions and model pedagogical approaches and resources that teachers can use in the classroom. The Centre also works with schools to explore the impact of the CPD on teachers and students.	Activities rooted in content knowledge while also developing generic pedagogic approaches, focused on pupil outcomes.	Professional development should have a focus on improving and evaluating pupil outcomes.
Specialist educators at the Centre mentor the teachers, partnering with them as they evaluate, adapt, implement, reflect on, and refine their schemes of learning and classroom practice.	Delivered by external experts who act as mentors to the teachers.	Professional development should include collaboration and expert challenge.

This chapter draws on data from the UCL 2019/20 study to explore the practice of teachers who have participated in the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education high engagement programmes. For comparative purposes, findings for teachers without any formal Holocaust education training are also presented. Teachers who have had some form of relevant training in teaching about the Holocaust are also considered; this can include training at any career level and with a variety of institutions. Particular attention is then given to the UCL high engagement group, comprised of 97 teachers who are a subset within the ‘some formal training’ group. More details are provided in Chapter 2.

- 76.3 per cent of teachers in the UCL high engagement group were very confident in teaching secondary school students about the Holocaust (additionally, 23.7 per cent were fairly confident)
- 53.2 per cent of teachers in the UCL high engagement group were very confident in their historical knowledge of the Holocaust (additionally, 44.7 per cent were fairly confident)
- 67.0 per cent of teachers in the UCL high engagement group were very confident in answering questions that students might raise while learning about the Holocaust (additionally, 30.0 per cent were fairly confident)

## UCL 2019/20 study findings

### Confidence

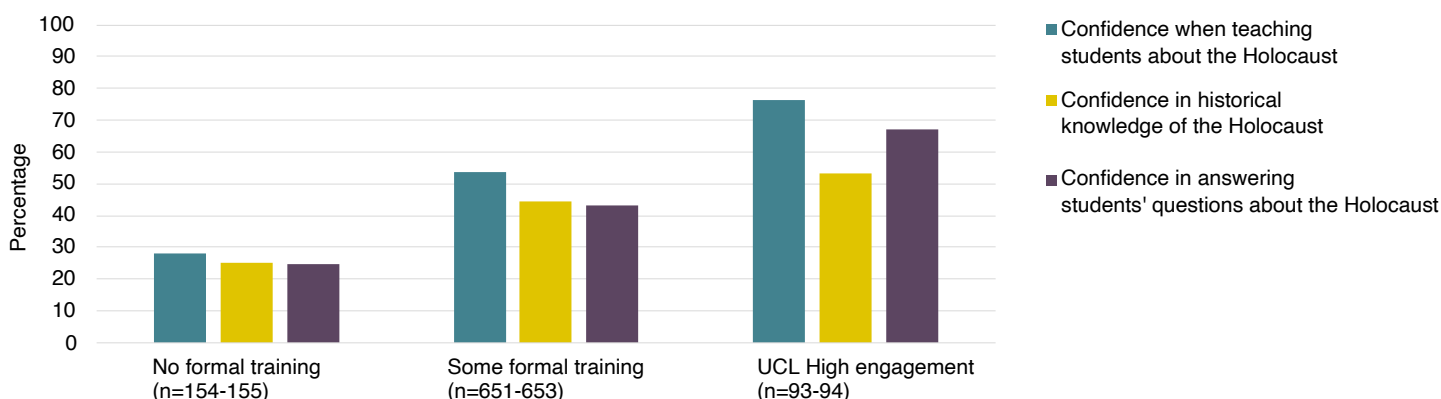
In the UCL 2019/20 study, teachers indicated that they felt some degree of confidence in relation to Holocaust education, irrespective of training. For example, when asked about confidence in teaching students about this history, only three teachers without formal Holocaust education training reported they were ‘not confident at all’ (none of the teachers with training reported this).

Across all training groups, confidence in historical knowledge tended to be lower than confidence in teaching the subject and answering students’ questions. However, there were variations in the proportion of teachers expressing high levels of confidence. As shown in Figure 8.1, the percentage of teachers reporting they were ‘very confident’ on the three different elements of their practice was highest for the UCL high engagement group.

### Historical knowledge

Figure 5.1 in Chapter 5 demonstrated that in the UCL 2019/20 study, teachers’ knowledge was inconsistent, with some historical knowledge questions more easily answered than others. There were four questions where the majority of teachers with and without formal training in Holocaust education were unable to provide the correct answer, and a further question where little over half were able to do so. However, as shown in Figure 8.2, this was not the case for those participating in the UCL high engagement programmes; instead, they answered these questions with striking levels of accuracy. Indeed, as described in Chapter 5, teachers who participated in the UCL high engagement programmes were considerably more likely to answer the multiple-choice knowledge questions correctly compared to those with other training experiences or without any formal training in Holocaust education.

Figure 8.1 Percentage of teachers in each training group who indicated they were ‘very confident’ in response to each confidence statement



This is important because these questions offer invaluable insights into some of the myths and misconceptions prevalent in wider society; myths and misconceptions that are likely to go unchallenged in the classroom because, as the UCL 2019/20 research shows, many teachers themselves are unaware of them. The knock-on effect is demonstrated in the Centre’s national study with students: these myths and misconceptions persist in young people and have worrying implications for how they understand the Holocaust and the sort of contemporary meanings they derive from this history (Foster et al., 2016).

The mean total score for the multiple-choice knowledge questions in the UCL 2019/20 study revealed the same pattern. As shown in Figure 8.3, out of a total of 10, those with no formal training in Holocaust education had a mean total score of 4.7 compared to a score of 6.2 for those with some form of training. In stark contrast, however, the teachers in the UCL high engagement group scored 8.1. Indeed, two-thirds of the teachers in the UCL high engagement group (66.7 per cent) correctly answered at least eight of the ten questions correctly (compared to 12.1 per cent of those without formal training and 29.1 per cent of those with some form of training).

Figure 8.2 The UCL 2019/20 survey questions that were most challenging for teachers, and the percentage who answered these questions correctly, by training experience

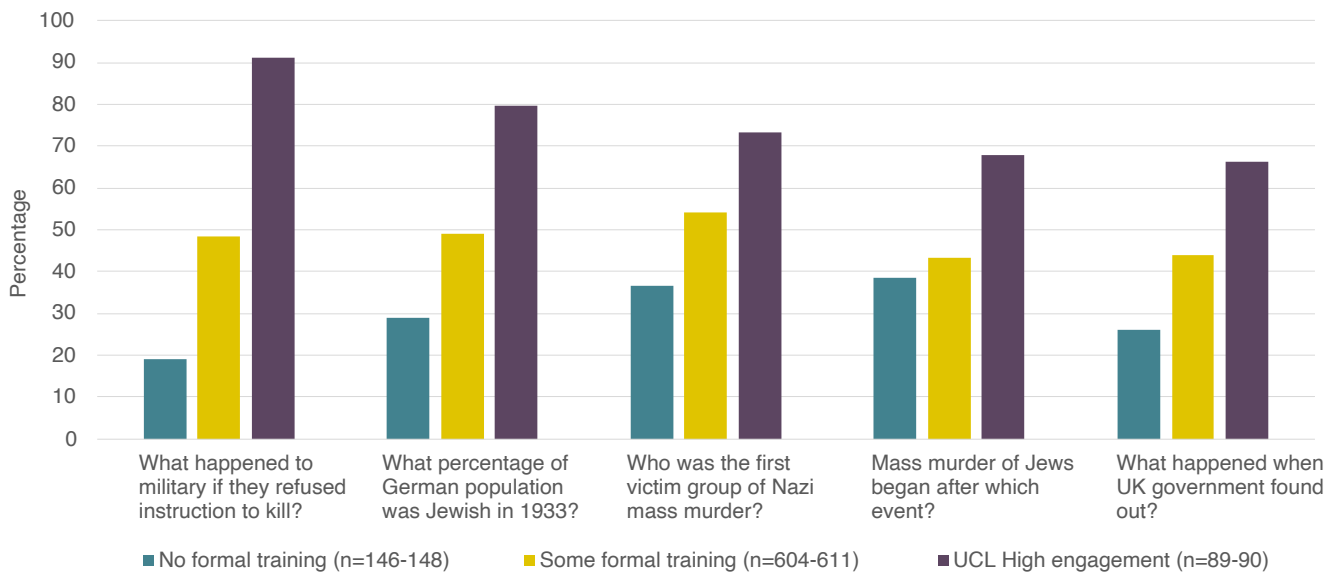
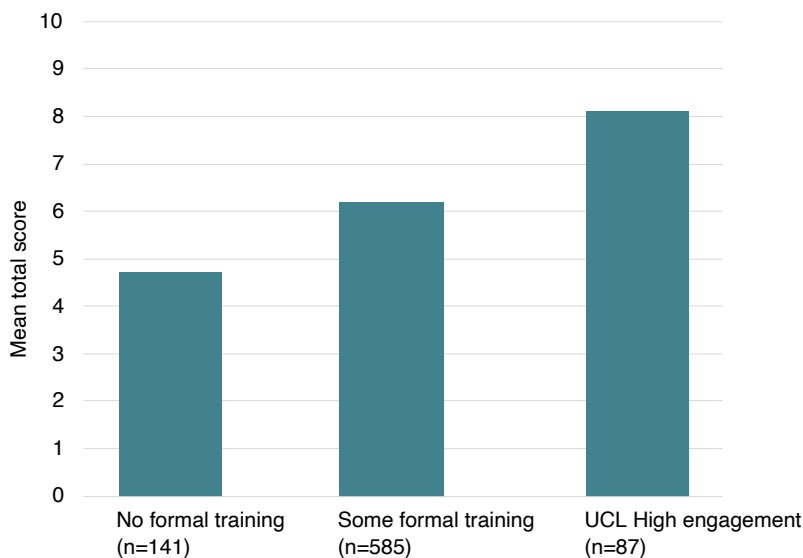


Figure 8.3 Mean total knowledge score by training experience



**Table 8.2** Percentage of teachers selecting each teaching aim, where differences in aim selection appeared related to training experience.

	No formal training	Some formal training	UCL high engagement
<b>Teaching aims less likely to be selected by UCL high engagement group</b>			
To develop an understanding of the dangers of prejudice, racism and/or stereotyping in society	77.7 per cent	66.3 per cent	55.7 per cent
To learn the lessons of the Holocaust and to ensure that a similar human atrocity never happens again	39.5 per cent	39.5 per cent	23.7 per cent
To reflect upon the moral and/or ethical questions raised by events of the Holocaust	33.1 per cent	25.6 per cent	16.5 per cent
<b>Teaching aims more likely to be selected by UCL high engagement group</b>			
To deepen knowledge of World War II and twentieth century history	21.0 per cent	23.5 per cent	32.0 per cent
To understand and explain the actions of people involved in and affected by an unprecedented historical event	18.5 per cent	23.3 per cent	47.4 per cent
To explore the roles and responsibilities of individuals, organisations and governments when confronted with human rights violations and/or policies of genocide	29.3 per cent	36.4 per cent	50.5 per cent

## Teaching aims

As discussed in Chapter 6, in the UCL 2019/20 study, when asked to choose three teaching aims (from a list of 13) they considered most important in their classroom focus on the Holocaust, teachers were most likely to select ‘to develop an understanding of the dangers of prejudice, racism and/or stereotyping in society’. However, teachers in the UCL high engagement group were less likely to select this aim compared to those with other training experiences. As shown in Table 8.2, the UCL high engagement group were also less likely to select the aims ‘to reflect upon the moral and/or ethical questions raised by events of the Holocaust’ and ‘to learn the lessons of the Holocaust and to ensure that a similar human atrocity never happens again’. In contrast, they were much more likely to select the aims ‘to deepen knowledge of World War II and twentieth century history’, ‘to explore the roles and responsibilities of individuals, organisations, and governments when confronted with human rights violations and/or policies of genocide’ and ‘to understand and explain the actions of people involved in and affected by an unprecedented historical event’.

The greater prioritisation of the more historically aligned aims such as the ‘roles and responsibilities’ aim and the ‘deepening knowledge’ aim for teachers participating in the UCL high engagement programmes, is likely to be informed by the position advocated by the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education. That is not to say that aims more directly aligned with civic, moral and social themes are not important. Patently they are. However, the Centre’s position, exemplified in its high engagement programmes, is that sound knowledge and understanding of the history of the Holocaust are fundamental for any study of the Holocaust.

In doing so, the Centre challenges the orthodoxy of well-intentioned yet reductive moral ‘lessons from’ approaches to Holocaust education that are often uncritically promoted by many educators, non-governmental organisations and policy makers. This approach rests on the evocative idea that knowing where prejudice and discrimination can lead is a safeguard for the future. But this approach typically does not prioritise the importance of accurate historical knowledge and deeper understanding. Significantly, in 2016, the Centre’s research with students (Foster et al., 2016) documented for the first time the scale of students’ misconceptions and the worrying implications they have for students’ attitudes and values – misconceptions which were potentially exacerbated by the prevailing ‘lessons from’ approach.

Thus, as outlined in Chapter 5, it is imperative to improve teachers’, and by extension students’, substantive and conceptual knowledge of this history. From this, young people gain deeper understanding, which leads to more meaningful connections with contemporary issues. This approach underpins all UCL Centre for Holocaust Education courses and teaching resources; however, for teachers who participate in the Centre’s highest engagement programmes, there are extensive opportunities to assimilate this focus and reflect on what this means for their teaching practice.

## Content choices

Chapter 6 explores the content of teachers' schemes of learning, and again there appear to be associations with training experiences. When presented with a list of 34 possible topics that could be covered when teaching about the Holocaust, over three-quarters of the teachers taking part in the UCL high engagement programmes indicated they included the following topics:

- The experiences of individual men, women and children who were persecuted by the Nazis (95.9 per cent)
- The choices and actions of bystanders (92.8 per cent)
- Nazi ideology (88.7 per cent)
- The Nuremberg Laws (88.7 per cent)
- Auschwitz-Birkenau (88.7 per cent)
- Jewish social and cultural life (87.6 per cent)
- Resistance to Nazi policies by Jews (87.6 per cent)
- The long history of antisemitism (87.6 per cent)
- The choices and actions of rescuers (87.6 per cent)
- Kristallnacht (85.6 per cent)
- Propaganda and stereotyping (78.4 per cent)
- Hitler's rise to power and the Nazi State (75.3 per cent)

Whilst these topics were also covered by those without formal training or some formal training, they tended to be more prominent in the teaching of those who had participated in the UCL high engagement courses. The disparity between content choices related to the different training experiences was quite striking in some cases. For example:

- 'Jewish social and cultural life' was covered by 87.6 per cent of those in the UCL high engagement group, whereas 63.2 per cent of those with any formal training covered the topic, and just 34.0 per cent of those without formal training did.
- 'Resistance to Nazi policies by Jews' was covered by 87.6 per cent of those in the UCL high engagement group, compared to 66.2 per cent with any formal training and 48.7 per cent of those without formal training.
- 'The long history of antisemitism' was covered by 87.6 per cent of those in the UCL high engagement group, compared to 76.9 per cent with some formal training and 55.8 per cent without formal training.
- 'The choices and actions of rescuers' was covered by 87.6 per cent of those in the UCL high engagement group, compared to 69.4 per cent with any formal training and 54.5 per cent of those without formal training.

The prominence of these content choices on the schemes of learning of teachers in the UCL high engagement group, reflects the role of the Centre's research and pioneering approach of drawing on its in-house research to inform its CPD content. For example, the Centre's IOE 2009 study, was the first to reveal and document concerns about the lack of emphasis on Jewish life, and in turn developed teaching materials that responded to this concern. Teachers participating in the Centre's courses, including those in the UCL high engagement group recognised that learning about Jewish social and cultural life was fundamental to students' understanding of the significance of the Holocaust, its consequences, and rehumanising the victims. The IOE 2009 study also found that teachers placed more emphasis on what was done to the victims of the Holocaust with relatively little attention given to how they responded. Again, the Centre developed courses and materials to address this shortcoming. The inclusion of 'resistance to Nazi policies by Jews' by almost all teachers in the UCL high engagement group reflects this more enlightened approach.

Overall, from the list of 34 possible topics teachers could include in their teaching of the Holocaust, the mean of the total number of topics selected was 15.7 for those without formal training for teaching about the Holocaust, and 18.7 for teachers who had participated in formal Holocaust education training. In the case of the teachers who took part in the UCL high engagement programmes, on average, they taught 20.8 topics. Thus, participation in the UCL high engagement courses appeared related to creating and implementing a broader scheme of learning.

## What the teachers say

In the UCL 2019/20 survey, the teachers were invited to describe the impact of their work with the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education on their teaching practice. The teachers participating in the UCL high engagement programmes highlighted how the programmes had 'significant impact' and 'transformed' their teaching. They referenced the Centre's unique and critical position as a research hub which directly informed their schemes of learning with a more detailed focus on accurate historical content. For many, the way in which the Centre's research shone a light on prevailing misconceptions held by students was seen as distinctive, invaluable and critically important – not least because teachers felt it equipped them with the necessary confidence, knowledge and skills to address these misconceptions. They also noted that participating in the Centre's programme, not only considerably improved their teaching about the Holocaust, but gave them knowledge and skills they could apply to other topics they taught.



HUGE [impact]. The professionalism, expertise and support provided by UCL is phenomenal. The training is updated continually. The contact between the Centre and the teachers is constant. Support is always available. No matter what, UCL remains the hub of current research and is completely in touch with the changing political framework, which impacts the teaching of the Holocaust and its relevance. I learn all the time. New research is carried out and we are provided with the training almost immediately. I cannot thank UCL enough for the support provided.

**History teacher, London, survey response**

The CPD I've undertaken with the IOE or UCL Centre for Holocaust Education has completely transformed my approach to Holocaust education. It made me realise that I was teaching and reinforcing misconceptions that students had because they were the misconceptions that I also had. In terms of my general teaching practice, it's made my lessons much more inquiry based. It's also given me confidence to make my general lessons far more academically challenging. Seeing how students have flourished when using the Centre's materials gave me the confidence to try similar types of activities in other schemes of work.

**Religious education teacher, East of England, survey response**

Incalculable [impact]. It has significantly impacted on my teaching career, it's made me a better, more reflective and effective classroom practitioner, not just a better Holocaust educator. It's given me the skills and confidence to tackle difficult and sensitive issues in the classroom – it's re-engaged me with research and that has informed my practice and in so doing impacted massively on the outcomes for my young people. It's been an incredibly rich and important driver in the course of my professional and personal life.

**Religious education teacher, South West, survey response**

Hugely significant [impact]. I use the teaching resources for teaching the Holocaust. Much more importantly, the pedagogy behind the lessons has informed all aspects of my approach to teaching. The MA module challenged and developed my understanding of the rationale for teaching history and the Holocaust.

**History teacher, East Midlands, survey response**

## Beacon School Quality Mark Programme

In July 2016, the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education successfully launched its Beacon School Quality Mark Programme recognising the commitment of Beacon Schools to ongoing quality provision and innovation in teaching and learning about the Holocaust. The Quality Mark enables the Centre to champion best practice and continue the Centre's and schools' developmental partnerships beyond the Beacon School Programme year.

When a Beacon School applies for Quality Mark status, they provide a portfolio of evidence including, their scheme of learning that was developed as part of their initial year on the Beacon School Programme, their School Improvement Plan (SIP) with the Beacon School status an important element of the plan, and details of at least five partner schools the Beacon School is supporting to develop Holocaust education. Additionally, a member of the Centre's leadership team visits the school to conduct a detailed review of its Holocaust education provision and the prominence of the school's Beacon School status.<sup>46</sup> The reviewer's visit includes analysis of Holocaust education schemes of learning, lesson plans and resources, and samples of students' Holocaust assessment work. A lesson about the Holocaust is observed and an interview with several students takes place to discuss their views and experiences of Holocaust education in their school. The reviewer also meets with a range of staff who have participated in UCL Centre for Holocaust Education CPD courses. Schools are evaluated on a case-by-case basis to reflect the unique context and provisions of each school. However, for Quality Mark status to be awarded schools would usually be expected to demonstrate:

- a clear rationale for their approach to Holocaust education that speaks to affective and cognitive outcomes for learners;
- sound schemes of learning with clearly defined and aligned aims, content, teaching approaches and assessment activities, which draw on – where

<sup>46</sup> Before the COVID-19 pandemic the Quality Mark visit was conducted in person. Since the pandemic virtual visits have been arranged.

appropriate – the Centre’s lessons and materials;

- an approach which responds to the findings and issues raised in the Centre’s research, and this includes ensuring students gain accurate historical understanding of the Holocaust from which they can draw more powerful contemporary meanings;
- support for staff members across disciplines to participate in UCL Centre for Holocaust Education CPD sessions and courses; and
- commitment from senior leaders and teachers who champion the school’s Beacon School status and advocate for the principle that all learners have the right to access high quality Holocaust education.

By autumn 2022, 21 Beacon Schools had received Quality Mark status. Summaries of two schools are presented below. The full Quality Mark reports for all schools can be accessed on the Centre’s website: <https://holocausteducation.org.uk/beacon-school-quality-mark/>

## Torpoint Community College

Torpoint Community College is located in south east Cornwall. The school’s history scheme of learning is informed by the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education’s pedagogy and educational principles. Key elements include humanising the history, ensuring respect for victims, identifying and challenging students’ misconceptions, and introducing students to cutting-edge academic research. The scheme of learning seeks to facilitate outcomes that contribute to the ethos of the college, contribute to spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development, and encourage independent learning. Holocaust education plays a vital role in the school’s commitment to promoting equality and enabling students to become socially, culturally, and emotionally fulfilled young people.

The school is an exemplar of what is possible when Holocaust education is afforded requisite curriculum time and cross-discipline provision. Not only do students benefit from an extended scheme of learning in history but from the thoughtful coordination of work done in other curriculum areas including religious studies, English, and art and design. Each subject retains their distinctive disciplinary natures, while also supporting students to make connections between different forms of knowledge, understanding and skills. Overall, students gain a more accurate historical understanding of the Holocaust and are able to challenge myths and misconceptions. They are also infused with a broader, richer understanding of personal stories, an appreciation of the complexities of moral dilemmas and allowed time to reflect and respond in creative and innovative ways.

As the Beacon School lead teacher, Charlotte Lane, explained:

Being a Quality Mark Beacon School has not just inspired, motivated and challenged us – it has allowed us to see further potential in our students, our teams and ourselves. ‘Transformational’ is a word that can only begin to describe our experiences with UCL and being a Quality Mark Beacon School. One of the strongest areas that Beacon School status supports and actively encourages is wider professional development. It increases depth, vigour and innovation, and offers significant improvement in provision and impact of Holocaust Education in the South West, through its continuing commitment to supporting teachers in the highest quality free CPD and curriculum resources.

Students also alluded to how the programme has transformed their understanding:

I thought I knew about the Holocaust, but I didn’t really understand it...the way we were taught about it really made me think more about things...everything I thought I knew was a bit simple really and what I know now is that the Holocaust was anything but simple.

## Woking High School

Woking High School is located in north west Surrey. The scheme of learning developed during their participation in the Beacon School Programme was built around challenging prevalent misconceptions about the Holocaust, heavily drawing on the findings of the Centre’s research with students (Foster et al., 2016).

The school cited the value of teaching about the Holocaust and the significant impact it has upon broader educational values such as: Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development (SMSC); Global Learning; active, democratic citizenship; and students’ development of independent and critical thinking. Many teachers from different subject disciplines benefited from the school’s Beacon School status, especially in terms of advanced pedagogical approaches. Referencing the current political climate, which has seen an increase in far-right sentiment, antisemitism and belief in conspiracy theories, the school continues to advocate that now more than ever, teaching of the Holocaust is extremely important.

Through the school’s Holocaust programme, driven by the Centre’s resources and research, teachers create a supportive environment to unpack the ‘baggage’ that students bring with them to the classroom. By focusing on addressing misconceptions, and challenging the assumptions

and preconceptions, students gain a much more accurate understanding of the Holocaust. Simultaneously, students develop the skills of enquiry, learning how to use evidence, communicate about the past and understand broader concepts of significance, interpretation, causation and diversity. As one student explained:

It felt like I could say what I thought and it was ok to find out that I was wrong or that it was a misconception as the lessons allowed us to understand sources and personal stories more...through them you realise some things you thought at the start weren't right, and you correct or edit your ideas... it made it really obvious that I was learning lots and progressing because I could see where I had changed my views or how the evidence pointed to something else.

Another student commented:

It's made me think twice about some of my ideas and question if they are misconceptions or stereotypes...I was so wrong about so much in the Holocaust, maybe some of my other ideas and views could be wrong too... that's quite a lesson to learn I think.

The school's Beacon School status was the catalyst for powerful teaching and learning, pedagogic conversations among staff and reflection. Indeed, the pedagogical principles and strategies originating from the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education were applied in other subjects and topics unrelated to the Holocaust. Teachers credited the Centre's approach as significantly contributing to a 'shift in thought processes' and positively impacting upon teaching practice. The Beacon School lead teacher, Matt Jones, reflected on the impact of the programme:

Rarely do we get that chance as a department to think through our own pedagogy and development. It's given us a real sense of being 'in it together'. It has made us more open and honest, reflective of our strengths and weaknesses – not just around our Holocaust education work. It's given us innovation and sharing. It's provided the best possible foundation for ongoing internal CPD.

## Summary

The evidence collected from teachers participating in the UCL high engagement programmes is compelling. It demonstrates that CPD which is sustained, has direct connection to cutting-edge empirical research, and is built on the Department for Education's Standards for Professional Development, has the potential to have a transformative impact on teachers' practice, confidence and knowledge, and by extension, student outcomes.

The Beacon School Programme – which is the most immersive form of Holocaust-related CPD that teachers can experience – is also a powerful catalyst for whole-school changes, with greater cross-curricular coordination and meaningful partnerships between colleagues across different subject departments. A third (32.9 per cent) of teachers who took part in the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education's high engagement programmes coordinated their teaching about the Holocaust with colleagues in at least three subject areas in addition to their own (twice as many as those without formal training).

As this report has demonstrated, a stand-out development of the last ten years has been the emergence of continuing professional development courses in Holocaust education. These courses have had tangible effect – contributing, in certain key respects, to some of the most positive findings presented in this report. Yet it has also been seen that whilst CPD 'works', not all CPD works in the same way or has the same impact in terms of raising standards or levels of students' knowledge and understanding. There is, in effect, a gold standard of CPD in Holocaust education and this is professional development that is underpinned by research, sustained over time, and immersive. Such CPD requires commitment – from teachers, schools and the organisations involved in developing and delivering these programmes. But commitment requires financial investment; to enable teachers and schools to devote themselves to the enterprise, and to ensure that the programmes are of the highest possible standard. This report has uncovered clear evidence that existing high engagement programmes, such as those offered by the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education, are making a real difference. It is vital that they continue to receive the practical and financial support necessary to continue transforming Holocaust education in this country.

9

# Key findings, considerations, recommendations

## Introduction

Thirty-five years ago, the historian John P. Fox undertook one of the first national surveys into teaching and learning about the Holocaust in England. Commissioned by the Yad Vashem Committee UK, the Fox Survey saw 506 questionnaires dispatched to schools, colleges and universities across the country. The aim was to establish what was happening in these institutions; to surface attitudes, practices, and problems that educators were grappling with. It was an important undertaking, but a challenging one too: partly because the education system in England had not yet undergone the centralisation processes brought by the Education Reform Act (1988), but also as the Holocaust did not have the social, cultural and political prominence or currency in England that it does today. Still, despite the challenges, Fox's findings were notable. On the one hand, he found welcome indications that – in contrast to fears and expectations – the Holocaust did have a presence in some schools, and on some examination syllabi. On the other, he unearthed troubling evidence of concerning perceptions of the Holocaust as being a Jewish concern, ambivalence towards it having any specific or particular importance, and issues in subject knowledge and understanding (Fox, 1989).

In the generation that has passed since Fox's investigation, the landscape of Holocaust education in England has changed immensely. Whilst the introduction of the National Curriculum in 1991 was a major catalyst for change, many of the most significant developments in Holocaust education in England have occurred over the past 20 years. In this regard, both the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 studies can therefore be seen as important windows through which we can observe what has changed, what has stayed the same, and what changes need to be made in order to further develop teaching and learning about this complex history.

This chapter considers the implications of some of the key findings from this study and presents recommended actions in response to these. Suffice to say that none of the recommendations that follow should be read as criticisms of teachers. The Holocaust is an extremely complex subject to know, to understand, and to teach and learn about. Moreover, these challenges are compounded by numerous other issues, including the curriculum time available to teachers, students' misconceptions, and cultural and

political representations of the Holocaust in wider society. These and other factors have been brought to our attention by teachers throughout the course of this research project, and as such cannot be ignored. On the contrary, it is critical to listen to the challenges that teachers are grappling with and formulate ways forward which are cognisant of these pressures and demands.

## Knowledge and understanding

### Teachers' historical knowledge has generally improved

The UCL 2019/20 study found that teachers' historical knowledge of the Holocaust has improved in general terms since 2009. The two primary metrics for this were teachers' responses to a series of multiple-choice questions related to historical aspects of the Holocaust, and an overall 'knowledge score' produced by the aggregate of individual teachers' responses to six of these questions.<sup>47</sup> Through these measures, it was possible to identify evidence of increased awareness of the correct answers and a growth in overall historical knowledge. In some instances, this improvement was marked.

The general improvement in teachers' historical knowledge of the Holocaust is positive and welcome. Strong, secure subject knowledge is foundational and a prerequisite for effective teaching. Without it, standards in teaching are unavoidably affected. That knowledge of the Holocaust has generally increased among teachers is necessarily reflective of trends and trajectories beyond the classroom. The Holocaust continues to be subject to considerable social, cultural and political interest in England, with continued memorial exercises, cultural works and public history initiatives duly raising awareness and understanding. However, not all of this activity rests on secure foundations. Representational activities such as fictional works and feature films are, by their nature, unreliable sources of historical information, just as acts of memory and popular history are inherently selective. These contexts and realities are important, given that teachers are products of their wider environments.

<sup>47</sup> As outlined in Chapter 5, in the UCL 2019/20 survey, there were ten multiple-choice questions to explore historical knowledge. Of these questions, eight were also asked in an identical or closely comparable manner within the IOE 2009 survey thus allowing comparison over time. However, when calculating total knowledge scores, to avoid the UCL 2019/20 version of the question about death camps being weighted differently (due to the different question format used in the study) an adjustment was made. This meant that total knowledge scores were out of six when conducting analyses to compare knowledge in 2009 and in 2019/20.

With this in mind, it is notable that this research revealed a relationship between formal training on teaching about the Holocaust and the ability to provide historically accurate answers to subject knowledge questions. This indicates that there are tangible, real-world benefits for teachers who engage in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and it seems reasonable to in turn infer that these would lead to improved learning experiences for students.

This is, however, not the complete picture – for, in short, it is not simply the case that CPD ‘works’. Instead, the UCL 2019/20 research has produced compelling evidence that teachers who have engaged with CPD which is sustained, research-informed, and built on the Department for Education’s Standards for Professional Development (as in the UCL Beacon School and Masters Programmes), consistently demonstrate significantly higher levels of historical knowledge and understanding. This finding has significant implications. It underlines how not all CPD is the same – and that if teachers want to deepen their subject knowledge of the Holocaust in a truly transformative way, they need access to specific forms of CPD characterised by their rigorous content and approach. The provision of such CPD programmes thus requires support and investment.

### Limitations in teachers’ historical knowledge persist

Despite the general advance in teachers’ historical awareness and understanding, this comes with two important and interrelated caveats. First, while the overall ‘knowledge score’ of teachers increased from the IOE 2009 study to the UCL 2019/20 study, this improvement was modest – with the mean score rising just 0.8 points from 2.2 (2009) to 3.0 (2019/20) out of a possible 6.0. Whilst progress has evidently been made in terms of increasing teachers’ subject knowledge, there clearly remains much room for improvement.

This relates to the second important caveat – namely, that this research has uncovered particular aspects of subject knowledge which require redress. These include:

- Half of teachers (49.1 per cent) did not know that disabled people were the first victims of a Nazi mass murder programme
- Most teachers (55.0 per cent) did not know that fewer than 1.0 per cent of the German population in 1933 was Jewish
- A quarter of teachers (24.7 per cent) incorrectly believed that those who refused an instruction to kill Jewish people were shot
- Most teachers (58.0 per cent) did not know that systematic mass murder of Jews began in 1941 with the invasion of the Soviet Union
- The majority of teachers (59.7 per cent) did not know that when the British Government learned about the

mass murder of the Jews, they responded by saying they would punish the killers when the war was over

These findings are of concern as they suggest these limitations in knowledge and understanding will have a negative impact on teaching and learning. Subject knowledge is not just a prerequisite for effective teaching; it is also essential to teachers being able to recognise common misconceptions held by many students, and duly tailor and adapt their teaching to address these misunderstandings.

In the case of teaching and learning about the Holocaust, this truth has particular salience. Our research into students’ knowledge and understanding (Foster et al., 2016) exposed the prevalence of troubling myths, misconceptions and misunderstandings amongst the majority of young people – a number of which have been echoed in this present study. With that mind, the limitations in teachers’ subject knowledge come more sharply into view. At a fundamental level, it means that teachers are less likely to be able to identify misconceptions among their students. This has importance for all teachers – even those who do not look to explicitly teach about the Holocaust, for misconceptions and misunderstandings can find expression both inside and outside the classroom. Failing to identify and address misconceptions and mythologies increases the risk that they will be perpetuated.

### Knowledge varies – partly according to subject specialism, but mainly by experience of specialist training

The Holocaust is cavernous, complex, complicated history. It is a subject which has spawned reams of scholarship and continues to be researched the world over. For this reason, it is unsurprising that this study found that teachers’ historical knowledge and understanding varied considerably according to the subject that they principally taught. History teachers tended to display more accurate historical knowledge than teachers from other disciplines. Arguably, teachers of subjects such as religious education, English and citizenship might not be expected to have in-depth historical knowledge. However, the findings from this study – and reinforced by the findings from the Centre’s research with students (Foster et al., 2016) – underscore that it is paramount for any teacher covering material related to the Holocaust, to have sound subject knowledge of this history.

Improving teachers’ knowledge and understanding – across disciplines – has importance given that the most common teaching aims identified in this study included intentions to draw on the Holocaust to help young people better understand ‘the dangers of prejudice, racism and/or stereotyping’ and to ‘ensure that a similar atrocity never happens again’. Irrespective of what one thinks about the feasibility of these aims, it follows that they require students to possess accurate historical details. Having secure historical knowledge of the Holocaust is not, therefore, just a concern for history teachers; rather, it is relevant to

teachers of all subjects who are looking for students to develop contemporary understandings of the Holocaust. This is not to detract from the importance of different subjects drawing on relevant disciplinary knowledge, understanding and skills when teaching about the Holocaust. However, such enterprises must be underpinned by sound historical knowledge.

As already noted, the UCL 2019/20 study found that a critical factor related to teachers' knowledge was engagement with CPD. In the IOE 2009 study, the majority of those teaching about the Holocaust had received no formal training. In the following decade, CPD provision expanded significantly, including the establishment of the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education's own programme of courses. Thus, in the UCL 2019/20 study, 62.9 per cent of teachers who completed the survey had taken part in specialist training with an external organisation. Across all the historical knowledge questions asked in the UCL 2019/20 survey, where teachers indicated the experience of some type of formal training on teaching about the Holocaust, there was greater historical accuracy. And – as has been made clear in this chapter and others – engagement with sustained, collaborative and evidence-led programmes of specialist CPD, such as the UCL Beacon School Programme, were related to increasing teachers' historical awareness. Consequently, this research highlights that addressing teachers' misconceptions is not simply about more training, it's about the nature of the training they receive.

## Knowledge and understanding: Recommendations

- Teachers who engage in CPD see an improvement in their own historical knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust. This advance is fundamental in raising the standards of teaching and learning about the Holocaust. As such, all teachers need to be supported in accessing high-quality, research-informed professional development.
- CPD programmes should focus on improving and evaluating pupil outcomes; be underpinned by robust evidence and expertise; include collaboration and expert challenge; be sustained over time; and prioritised by school leadership. As identified in Chapters 5 and 8, the Centre's Beacon School Programme exemplifies all these attributes. Across all the knowledge questions, teachers who had participated in this programme demonstrated the highest levels of historical accuracy.
- CPD programmes which are sustained, underpinned by research, and embody the Department for Education's Standards for Teacher Professional Development – like the UCL Centre for Holocaust

Education's Beacon Schools Programme – have the most transformative effects on teachers' subject knowledge of the Holocaust and, by extension, their teaching. It is vital that the government continues to invest in such programmes.

- Further investigation should be made into the real-world impact that CPD courses and interventions have on teaching and learning about the Holocaust. This is complex and under-researched terrain that will require rigorous and robust methodologies grounded in classroom practice (Hale, 2020). However, it is essential to evidence the extent to which CPD courses are truly beneficial to teachers (and thus, their students). Evaluations that simply show the teachers appreciated the course or found it interesting, tend to overlook the fundamental issue of whether the CPD had the intended impact on teachers and/or students.
- The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has meant that many training courses – across the sector – have moved from in-person formats to online formats. A primary benefit of this development has been to increase the accessibility of teacher engagement with such training. However, Holocaust education CPD that is entirely online is not cost-free. Online sessions are shorter and come with a sense of disconnect; there is less opportunity to enter into pedagogic conversation about the history being presented, or appreciate complexities and nuances. More research into the experience of online courses and its effects on practice would be useful. At the same time, it is crucial that online courses be accompanied – with due caution – with face-to-face opportunities.
- Persisting misunderstandings and misconceptions in teachers' subject knowledge should be addressed by way of targeted CPD initiatives which focus specifically on the troublesome areas identified by the research. These initiatives should have evaluative mechanisms built into them to establish their success.
- Issues in teachers' subject knowledge and the endurance of troubling misconceptions should be seen as reflective of shortcomings within wider culture and society. Public history projects, stakeholders and political representatives should be aware of these issues and actively look to counter them in their activities and initiatives.

## Curriculum trends and trajectories

### The Holocaust is now being taught to younger students

One of the most striking developments that this study has revealed is that the Holocaust is now being taught to younger cohorts of students than has traditionally been the case. In the IOE 2009 study, just 4.4 per cent of teachers who taught about the Holocaust in Key Stage 3 history did so within Years 7 or 8. By sharp contrast, in the UCL 2019/20 study, this had dramatically increased to almost a third (29.2 per cent).

It is instructive to listen to how and why teachers account for this phenomenon. Revealingly, interview data suggested a predominant reason for the Holocaust being taught in history to younger students was schools' decision to 'reduce' or 'condense' their Key Stage 3 curriculum in order to introduce elements of GCSE Programmes of Study at Year 9. Delivering the content of a three-year curriculum in a reduced amount of time inevitably has practical and pedagogical consequences. Amongst other things, it creates a downward pressure on perennial issues such as what to teach, how, and why. Moreover, these consequences are in some cases further compounded by the Holocaust being taught in other areas of the school curriculum. The data produced by this research indicated for example, that the Holocaust is introduced to younger students in subjects other than history, such as – for example – Year 7 students using *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* novel in English.

Collectively, the evidence presented in this report suggests that a sizeable proportion of the youngest students in the secondary school system are now encountering the Holocaust in some form. This change in the age at which students are encountering the Holocaust in formal educational settings is noteworthy and warrants consideration – not least because it potentially makes long-standing issues in the field more acute.

For instance, questions about the age appropriateness of classroom materials and pedagogical approaches become all the more poignant when the students who are encountering these are in Years 7 and 8, rather than in Year 9. Relatedly, there is a risk that teachers seek to 'protect' younger students from the emotional discomfort of this history and thus shield them from its reality; either by sanitising aspects of the Holocaust or focusing primarily on those exceptional 'positive' stories that can be told. In another regard, the shifting of the Holocaust further down the school curriculum amplifies issues related to development and progression in learning. In the context of the history classroom, students' ability to understand key concepts such as antisemitism, racial ideology, totalitarianism, resistance and response, complicity and responsibility, mass murder and genocide, loss and survival will typically be more limited in Years 7 and 8 compared to Year 9. This is because the opportunity to have explored these ideas and acquired this vocabulary will be reduced. All of these issues become only more pronounced where

students' first encounters with the Holocaust do not take place in history lessons, and when these engagements are led by teachers without secure subject knowledge.

Schools do not, of course, take decisions about how to organise their curriculum lightly. School leaders take into consideration a number of factors, and competing pressures and priorities are unavoidable. Notwithstanding this reality, it appears that where a decision is made to teach the Holocaust to younger students in Years 7 and 8, teachers would benefit from research-informed specialist support. This would involve not just developing subject knowledge, but also equipping teachers with the confidence and pedagogic know-how necessary to adjust schemes of learning and associated teaching resources so that they are suitable for a younger age group. Such adjustments would include making historical information more accessible, providing increased curriculum time, and scaffolding key concepts such as antisemitism, racial ideology, totalitarianism and genocide. It would entail helping teachers to revise resources to ensure that literacy levels are appropriate: a particularly important consideration in the context of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on schools and the level of lost learning, especially for disadvantaged young people. And finally, supporting teachers would involve helping them to anticipate, and respond to, the emotional reactions of younger students, noting how these might differ from their Year 9 counterparts.

### Reduced attention to the Holocaust in GCSE and A-level exam specifications

This research found that between the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 studies there was a small decline in the amount of teaching about the Holocaust at Key Stage 4 (GCSE) and Key Stage 5 (A-levels). In the IOE 2009 study, 30.6 per cent of Holocaust education within history occurred in Key Stage 4 and 12.0 per cent in Key Stage 5. This compared to 28.0 per cent in Key Stage 4 and 9.2 per cent in Key Stage 5 in the UCL 2019/20 study.

On a cursory glance, this numerical difference could potentially be overlooked or dismissed as being not particularly consequential. While teachers can choose to cover this history, it is usually approached as part of a study of Nazi Germany, and teachers are necessarily limited in how much time they can devote to it. Certainly, there are variations by specification and awarding body, but where the Holocaust is subsumed under broad periods of history (for example, the optional unit 'Germany, 1890–1945: Democracy and dictatorship' from AQA's GCSE specification 8145), it is understandable that providing an in-depth study of the Holocaust becomes counterintuitive for teachers grappling with an already content-heavy course. However, the marginalisation of the Holocaust at GCSE and A-level is problematic on at least two counts.

The first of these relates to evidence from the Historical Association that GCSE specifications influence how history is taught in Key Stage 3. This includes informing the questions that are set at Key Stage 3, the way in which



sources are used, and how historical interpretation is taught. While this trend has weakened since 2018 (arguably because teachers became more confident in specification requirements once the first examinations took place in 2018), it remains the case that the requirements of GCSE specifications have crept into Key Stage 3. Given the Holocaust is not prioritised, or in some exam specification routes not covered at all, it follows that there is a risk of the Holocaust becoming deprioritised in Key Stage 3 teaching; especially in academies and free schools who are not required to follow the National Curriculum.

The second reason why the reduced presence of the Holocaust at Key Stages 4 and 5 is problematic relates to missed opportunity. The position of the Holocaust in the National Curriculum – as statutory content in the Key Stage 3 history curriculum – together with students' ability to choose to end their history education at the end of Year 9 – means that for the majority of young people, formal learning about the Holocaust will only take place between the ages of 11 to 14. As we argued in 2016, this structural arrangement is highly lamentable because it represents a missed opportunity: if teaching and learning about the Holocaust is to be significantly improved, progression in students' learning is critical. And perhaps the most powerful means to ensure that learning is coherent, age-appropriate and developmental is for students to spend time studying the Holocaust *throughout* their school career (Foster et al., 2016).

An important first step in redressing this situation would be to elevate the status of the Holocaust at Key Stage 4 and 5. Whilst this would not necessarily mean more students would elect to study history at GCSE and A-Level, it would support progression over time in learning. With the 16–18 year old cohorts more developmentally and cognitively orientated to grasp complex concepts and build more in-depth understanding, subject knowledge of the Holocaust could be duly built over time with gradually increasing difficulty (Bruner, 1960). Moreover, reversing the decline of Holocaust teaching at Key Stages 4 and 5 would have considerable symbolic potency. As Yehuda Bauer explained in Foster et al. (2016, p. ix) with reference to recommendations based on the Centre's national study with students:

The major thrust of recommendations should, in my humble view, be directed at suggesting that if indeed the Holocaust is a “civilizational break” (as Dan Diner put it), and young people should grapple with it, then the emphasis should be on ages 15–18, at GCSE and at Advanced Level...make it an examination subject – not as a bullet point in a wider paper on Nazi Germany but as a crucial part of European history in its own right – and then school investment in time, resources, and teacher development will certainly follow.

These words remain as apposite in 2023 as they were in 2016.

## Curriculum trends and trajectories: Recommendations

- The trend towards teaching the Holocaust to students at the youngest end of Key Stage 3 (Years 7 and 8), necessitates renewed discussion of pedagogical approaches and philosophy, and the provision of research-informed specialist CPD to support subject teachers. To achieve this, it is essential that more research be undertaken to establish a more granular understanding of how teachers are currently approaching the subject with the youngest of students, and what effects – emotional and intellectual – this learning is having.
- With the Holocaust being increasingly taught to younger students, there is a pressing need for thought and time to be given to curriculum mapping. Teachers should be supported in identifying where, when and how the Holocaust is encountered by students across the school curriculum. They should also be guided to see where opportunities presently exist in the curriculum to deepen learning, and how learning encounters could be better sequenced to both address misconceptions and ensure coherent, meaningful progression in learning.
- Resources and classroom materials created for use at Key Stage 3 must be crafted with the awareness that these may well be used by 11–12 year old students instead of 13–14 year olds. Teachers and organisations working in the field must take heed of issues such as levels of literacy and cognitive development.
- The position of the Holocaust at Key Stages 4 and 5 should be elevated and enhanced. Revision to exam specifications should be undertaken in a research-informed manner, to ensure that student misconceptions are duly addressed, and that examination content is cognisant of the general condition of students' knowledge and understanding at the ages of 14–18. These developments must be augmented by bespoke, specialist, research-informed CPD to support GCSE and A-level teachers, and targeted training for examiners working for examination awarding bodies.

## Practice and approaches

### Continuity, change, and complexity exists in teachers' approaches

The UCL 2019/20 study has provided evidence suggesting that between 2009 and 2019/20 there has been continuity and change in how teachers approach the Holocaust – both in terms of thinking about the purpose and aims of that endeavour, and with respect to classroom practice. Equally, the research also found indications of a growing need to recognise that teaching about the Holocaust takes place in various disciplinary contexts; a reality which requires further consideration to ensure teachers are properly supported and schools are able to maximise the learning opportunities that this can bring.

One indicator of continuity is the importance that teachers continue to ascribe to teaching about the Holocaust. In the IOE 2009 study, the majority of teachers professed strong support for teaching the subject, and in the UCL 2019/20 study similar levels of support for and value placed upon teaching the Holocaust were found. Another indication of continuity relates to potential aims when teaching about the Holocaust. Although the respondents to the IOE 2009 and UCL 2019/20 surveys were invited to select their potential teaching aims from slightly different lists, it was possible to undertake comparative analysis of which aims were the most popular between the two time points. In so doing, it was found that in both studies the top two aims were the same – namely, 'to develop an understanding of the dangers of prejudice, racism and/or stereotyping in any society' and 'to learn the lessons of the Holocaust and to ensure that a similar human atrocity never happens again'.

The consistency in these metrics is noteworthy. On the one hand, it is reassuring to discover that the intervening years between 2009 and 2019/20 has not seen a decline in the importance teachers place on teaching about the Holocaust. On the other, the continuity in the two most popular aims indicates that civic-orientated approaches to Holocaust education and a belief there are lessons of the Holocaust to be learnt, are deeply embedded in the teaching profession. As notable as these findings are for the field, they are also of interest when we recall how teachers and schools are reflections of wider culture.

However, this research has also shown there are significant changes in how teachers conceive of Holocaust education and the aims they are prioritising. We have seen, for example, that continuity in the top two most popular aims in fact belies how the second of these – that of 'to learn the lessons of the Holocaust' – was in fact less popular in the UCL 2019/20 study than it was in the IOE 2009 study. This fall is particularly striking when viewed alongside the increase in popularity of other aims, and the high percentage of teachers who either agreed or strongly agreed with the notion of taking a disciplinary approach to their teaching. This latter dimension was further borne out in multiple areas of the data where numerous instances of teachers operating with subject-specific teaching aims and

learning objectives were apparent.

These shifts in the way that teachers are thinking about their approaches to teaching the Holocaust, are among the most intriguing findings of this study. Understandings of why the Holocaust should be taught and what that teaching should aim to achieve are fundamental considerations because they influence what is taught and how. Indeed, this report has presented evidence which indicates that teachers' thinking about their aims impacts various aspects of their planning, such as decisions around what content to include in their lessons on the Holocaust.

Of course, the formulation of teachers' aims does not take place in a vacuum and there were various indications of how forces within the school and policy agendas in education more generally can impact practice. From the Centre's experience of working with Beacon Schools, this includes the decision by some schools to pursue whole-school approaches to teaching the Holocaust – something that has become increasingly popular, but which itself requires due conceptualisation, clear coordination and reflexive implementation. A whole-school approach is about more than different subjects working on the same topic, project or programme through their disciplinary lens; instead, it's about the initiative permeating through all areas of school life, becoming part of the school's fabric.

To implement such an approach is complex and requires buy-in across the school (including from senior leaders, teachers, students, and parents). It also needs different disciplines to have individualised support, and schools to have guidance about how different subject areas can cooperate in delivering Holocaust education. Without meaningful support, efforts to implement a whole-school or integrated approach can inadvertently become several disciplines within a school covering the Holocaust but operating in silos whilst doing so.

### Teachers continue to grapple with limited curriculum time

This study has found evidence that teachers are grappling with both long-standing and more recent challenges when it comes to teaching the Holocaust. The most enduring challenge continues to be curriculum time.

The issue of managing limited curriculum time relates to many of the issues highlighted in this chapter. Moreover, 'insufficient curriculum time' was a challenge that three-quarters of teachers in the UCL 2019/20 study reported encountering at least occasionally when teaching about the Holocaust. This is not a new problem, having also been cited in the IOE 2009 research. It is also not unique to Holocaust education; across many subjects and topics, teachers have reported pressure due to more content-heavy and difficult GCSE specifications (Bettsworth, 2020). In the context of history, teachers have reported struggling to fit the required GCSE content into the time available to teach it (Burn and Harris, 2020).

As noted, the move to condense the Key Stage 3

curriculum into two years has elemental implications for teaching about the Holocaust. Similarly, the reality of the Holocaust not being a priority (or not covered at all) in GCSE and A-level exam specifications means where teachers do want to cover the Holocaust with Key Stage 4 or 5 students, it is difficult to justify allocating too much lesson time when the content of the new exam specifications is so extensive.

## Teachers are facing new classroom challenges

This study has found evidence that teachers face new challenges in the classroom – challenges which are not necessarily related to teaching about the Holocaust per se, but which are rather tied to wider contexts and evolving circumstances beyond the school gates. For example, the research found that among the challenges that teachers encountered there was concern about:

- Students believing information they find on the Internet regardless of the source or accuracy of the information (25.8 per cent encountered this often or always; 49.2 per cent encountered this occasionally)
- Holocaust denial among students (1.0 per cent encountered this often or always; 13.5 per cent encountered this occasionally)
- Students articulating antisemitic attitudes (2.7 per cent encountered this often or always; 37.4 per cent encountered this occasionally)

The first of these – that of students accessing unreliable sources of information and failing to subject these to any degree of critique – is very much a challenge of our age. It is a challenge which has been made all the more acute in the wake of the pace of technological change, young people's increased use of the Internet during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the emergence of populism and 'post-truth' cultures in Western society. In the context of Holocaust education, it is a challenge which has particular salience in light of the Centre's research with students (Foster et al., 2016), where troubling evidence was found of a deficit in the capacity of many young people to think critically about the myths and misconceptions they encounter in culture and society.

Meeting and addressing this challenge is not straightforward. Nor is it the sole responsibility of the teacher who teaches their students about the Holocaust. But it is a challenge which the field needs to be aware of – both in the creation of classroom materials, and in terms of supporting teachers. It is a challenge which places weight on the need for more metacognition in Holocaust education, in order for young people to know and understand how to interrogate truth claims.

The issue of students' susceptibility to unreliable information has added import in light of the two other challenges listed here. It is important to note that reports

of teachers regularly facing Holocaust denial or antisemitic attitudes were far less prevalent – for instance, 2.5 per cent of teachers reported they 'often' encountered students articulating antisemitic attitudes and 0.2 per cent 'always' did. Nonetheless, these are disturbing and serious issues. Indeed, even if occurring relatively infrequently, the fact they occur at all is alarming and underlines how crucial it is to provide relevant support for teachers. Indeed, when invited to outline areas of additional support or training to help teach about the Holocaust more effectively, many teachers cited topics related to these challenges.

## Practice and approaches: Recommendations

- The findings of this study have provided some examples of discipline-specific issues when teaching about the Holocaust. There are also indications that teachers can find themselves having to teach about the Holocaust through disciplinary frameworks they are unfamiliar with and/or lack training in. Non-history teachers need specialist, research-informed Holocaust education professional development that is tailored for their subject. Since CPD sessions and teaching materials about the Holocaust are more abundant for history teachers, it is important that training and resources are also developed specifically for different disciplines.
- Detailed studies should be designed and implemented to better understand the impact that disciplinary approaches to Holocaust education are having in the classroom. Further research should also be undertaken into whole-school approaches to teaching about the Holocaust, with the purpose of establishing commonalities, differences and successful case studies.
- The support and active engagement of senior leaders in schools is an integral part of successful Holocaust education provision. Tailored courses and resources which broaden the subject and pedagogic knowledge of these senior figures, together with guidance on how to bring about effective whole-school change in Holocaust curricula, are essential to achieving deep and long-lasting institutional change.
- Important conversations are necessary to determine the content that different school subjects should cover, thinking carefully about disciplinary aims, defining the parameters for what material will be covered, why the material is being covered and how it will be taught, as well as considering how this content relates to the work of other disciplines. Teachers and their schools require support and guidance about how to initially broker these conversations, and in how to then translate them into meaningful institutional change.

- In addressing the challenge of insufficient curriculum time, the content that teachers could include in their schemes of learning about the Holocaust is considerable, but given they have a finite number of lessons, difficult decisions must be made about what to include and exclude. Thus, guidance for teachers on the most salient features to include in a scheme of learning, as appropriate to their subject discipline and age of students they are teaching, would be a valuable resource for teachers. This is not – it should be said – about more prescription; the Centre’s Beacon School Programme has demonstrated that teachers want and need to develop curricula which is responsive to their disciplinary framing, their school context and the needs of their students. That said, the findings of this study suggest that as teachers navigate this vast and complex subject, guidance on some of the most important content to be included would be beneficial. Similarly, helping teachers to ensure that what they teach is intrinsically related to their rationale, aims, and modes of assessment will make their schemes of learning more coherent and effective.
- Additionally, insufficient curriculum time can be tackled by providing opportunities to learn about the Holocaust throughout young people’s school careers. In this way, responsibility for teaching about the Holocaust doesn’t fall to one teacher or a single scheme of learning delivered in a limited timeframe. Likewise, students’ learning is not restricted to an isolated series of lessons, typically received when in Key Stage 3, requiring them to grapple with complex and distressing material. Given the breadth of the subject, and students’ increasing capability to cope with the cognitive and affective demands of this challenging history as they move through school, it is paramount for Holocaust education to be offered throughout young people’s schooling.
- Relatedly, teaching about the Holocaust within the framing of different disciplines means increased opportunity for students to study the Holocaust on multiple occasions, in turn alleviating the challenge of insufficient curriculum time. As outlined above, to augment students’ learning, cross-discipline work should be considered and then implemented in a coordinated manner, ideally building towards a whole-school approach. In this way, the ‘whole’ of a student’s learning about the Holocaust becomes greater than the sum of the individual parts they have studied in different disciplines. Overall, students would have a richer, more nuanced understanding of the Holocaust and become more able to reflect on it and draw meaning framed by various branches of knowledge including history, theology, literature, art, geography, politics, sociology and psychology.
- The evidence from this research points towards the need for teachers to receive research-informed CPD in how to confidently and effectively address Holocaust denial and antisemitism. This should begin from ITE level. Arguably, tackling these issues is complex for all teachers, regardless of experience, but for those beginning their teaching career, recognising and constructively challenging these issues is likely to elicit feelings of trepidation. The training developed should be contextually driven, responding to the specific concerns and experiences of teachers across all stages of their careers, the context of their schools, and the nature of the incidents they are encountering. As part of this work, the development of guidelines which help teachers navigate these challenging situations will be useful.
- The field of Holocaust education needs to respond to the tendency of young people to access and believe unreliable sources of information. This is a societal problem and cannot be solved in the confines of teaching about the Holocaust; but those who are engaged in this endeavour need to be aware of this tendency and look to work against it at any opportunity. This includes calibrating pedagogical approaches which develop students’ metacognition and critical faculties.



Photograph by Emilie Hobba, 2014

# Appendices

# Appendix 1

## The survey

### Section 1: Introduction

1. To begin with, please describe what you think the Holocaust was.

2. Which of the following statements best describes your practice?
- I have never taught about the Holocaust.
  - I have taught about the Holocaust during the past three years.
  - Although I haven't taught about the Holocaust during the last three years, I have taught about it in the past.
  - I will be, or am expecting to be, teaching about the Holocaust for the first time in the next 12 months.

**Note:** This was a branching question and respondents were directed to different questions dependent on their response.

### Questions presented to Branch A (I have never taught about the Holocaust)

3. There are many reasons why you personally may not teach about the Holocaust.

From the list below please tick all that apply.

- I do not teach any year groups in which the Holocaust is taught.
- I do not teach any subject(s) in which the Holocaust is taught.
- I teach a relevant subject, but my head of department has decided not to include the Holocaust in the syllabus.
- I am not personally interested in the topic.
- I find the topic too emotionally upsetting.
- I am not confident that I have the necessary subject knowledge.
- I am not confident in my ability to teach sensitive and emotive issues of this nature.
- I feel this topic is very well publicised already (for example, in the media) and there is no need for me to focus on it.
- I am concerned teaching about this topic may increase antisemitism.
- I am concerned teaching about this topic may cause anti-German feeling.
- I feel there are many more positive topics in Jewish history to teach about and I prefer to focus on these.
- I feel this topic is very much in the past and that it has little contemporary relevance.
- I am worried my students will find the subject too emotionally upsetting.
- I am worried my students will find this topic too controversial.
- I am worried my students will find this topic too intellectually difficult.
- I am worried my students will react inappropriately or fail to take this seriously.
- Other (please specify in the box below).

4. As far as you know, is the Holocaust currently taught in your school?
- Yes.
  - No.
  - Not sure.

*If no was selected, respondents were presented with one additional question:*

5. There are many reasons why **your school** may not teach about the Holocaust. From the list below please tick all that apply.

In my school...

- It is considered to be too controversial a topic.
- There are too many other curriculum pressures and demands and there is not enough time to include this topic.
- It is considered to be too emotionally difficult a topic.
- We do not have the necessary teaching materials.
- It is considered to be too intellectually demanding a topic.
- Other (please specify in the box below).

**Questions presented to Branch B  
(I have taught about the Holocaust during the past three years)**

Note: Branch C (although I haven't taught about the Holocaust during the last three years, I have taught about it in the past) included the same questions as Branch B, but the questions were phrased in the past tense to reflect teachers' past experience. Branch D (I will be, or am expecting to be, teaching about the Holocaust for the first time in the next 12 months) included the majority of the questions below (with the exception of questions 12–24). Again, the questions were phrased differently to reflect what teachers were planning or were expecting to teach within the next year.



6. We would like to find out more about the subject(s) you teach and in which subject(s) you teach about the Holocaust. Where relevant, tick all the subjects that apply for each column.

	Thinking about your current teaching post, which subjects do you teach the most?	In which subject do you personally principally teach about the Holocaust?	Are there any other subjects in which you teach about the Holocaust?
• Art & Design	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Citizenship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Computing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Design & Technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Drama	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Food Science	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Geography	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• History	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Mathematics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Modern Foreign Languages	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Music	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Physical Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Politics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Psychology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• PSHE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Religious Education / Religious Studies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Science	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Sociology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Work-related Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Other (please specify in box below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. If you personally cooperate with other subject area(s) when planning to teach about the Holocaust, please indicate which one(s) from the list below.

- Art & Design
- Citizenship
- Computing
- Design & Technology
- Drama
- English
- Food Science
- Geography
- History
- Mathematics
- Modern Foreign Languages
- Music
- Physical Education
- Politics
- Psychology
- PSHE
- Religious Education / Religious Studies
- Science
- Sociology
- Work-related Learning
- Not applicable
- Other (please specify in box below)

8. Focusing on your principal subject, how much time do you spend on teaching about the Holocaust in hours for each year group? For each year group, please indicate in which term(s) you are most likely to teach about the Holocaust. For year groups and terms not relevant, please leave them blank.

#### Year 7

Hours per school year (drop-down list: 1–75)

School term(s) (drop-down list: Autumn only, Spring only, Summer only, Autumn + Spring term, Spring + Summer term)

#### Year 8

Hours per school year (drop-down list: 1–75)

School term(s) (drop-down list: Autumn only, Spring only, Summer only, Autumn + Spring term, Spring + Summer term)

#### Year 9

Hours per school year (drop-down list: 1–75)

School term(s) (drop-down list: Autumn only, Spring only, Summer only, Autumn + Spring term, Spring + Summer term)

#### Year 10

Hours per school year (drop-down list: 1–75)

School term(s) (drop-down list: Autumn only, Spring only, Summer only, Autumn + Spring term, Spring + Summer term)

#### Year 11

Hours per school year (drop-down list: 1–75)

School term(s) (drop-down list: Autumn only, Spring only, Summer only, Autumn + Spring term, Spring + Summer term)

#### Year 12

Hours per school year (drop-down list: 1–75)

School term(s) (drop-down list: Autumn only, Spring only, Summer only, Autumn + Spring term, Spring + Summer term)

#### Year 13

Hours per school year (drop-down list: 1–75)

School term(s) (drop-down list: Autumn only, Spring only, Summer only, Autumn + Spring term, Spring + Summer term)

## Section 2: Holocaust education teaching practice

This section of the survey explores how you teach about the Holocaust and the topics you cover.

9. Listed below are 13 possible aims for teaching about the Holocaust. Please tick the three statements that most closely match the aims you consider to be the most important...

- To develop an understanding of the dangers of prejudice, racism, and/or stereotyping in any society.
- To reflect upon the theological questions raised by events of the Holocaust.
- To reflect upon the moral and/or ethical questions raised by events of the Holocaust.
- To reflect upon political questions, about power and/or abuse of power, raised by events of the Holocaust.
- To explore the roles and responsibilities of individuals, organisations and governments when confronted with human rights violations and/or policies of genocide.
- To deepen knowledge of World War II and twentieth century history.
- To memorialise those who suffered.
- To understand and explain the actions of people involved in and affected by an unprecedented historical event.
- To explore the implications of remaining silent and indifferent in the face of the oppression of others.
- To learn the lessons of the Holocaust and to ensure that a similar human atrocity never happens again.
- To tackle antisemitism in contemporary society.
- To encourage pupils to take an interest in contemporary international politics.
- To support the school's statutory duty to promote the British values of: democracy; the rule of law; individual liberty and/or mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs.
- I want to skip this question.

If you would like to comment on these aims, offer your own aims or explain your rationale further, please use the space below.

10. To what extent have the following policies had an influence on your teaching of the Holocaust? (*Likert options: not at all; very little; somewhat; to a great extent*)

- a. British values
- b. Prevent
- c. Personal, social and health education (PSHE)
- d. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC)

If you would like to comment on or describe how these policies have had an impact on your teaching about the Holocaust, please use the box below.

11. Please read the following statements and indicate the extent to which you agree with them. (*Likert options: strongly disagree; disagree; agree; strongly agree*)

I think....

- a. It will always be important to teach about the Holocaust because it has universal significance.
- b. The Holocaust will become less relevant to our daily lives as the events of that time recede further into the past.
- c. The Holocaust has greater relevance for some groups of pupils than for others.
- d. It is right that teaching about the Holocaust is compulsory in the history school curriculum.
- e. Every child must learn about the events of the Holocaust.
- f. Teaching about the Holocaust should be compulsory in other subjects and not just in history.
- g. Other genocides and crimes against humanity should get similar curricular time and attention as the Holocaust.
- h. The Holocaust is one of the most important topics I teach.
- i. Having students from diverse cultural backgrounds influences the way I teach about the Holocaust.

If you agree/strongly agree with the last statement, please explain why.

12. Please read each of the following statements and indicate the extent to which you agree with them. (*Likert options: strongly disagree; disagree; agree; strongly agree*)

When teaching about the Holocaust...

- a. I emphasise chronology, key facts and information about the Holocaust, and provide students with a clear narrative outline.
- b. I support students in developing their historical knowledge and understanding of second order historical concepts such as causation, consequence and change.
- c. I encourage students to follow their own lines of enquiry and draw conclusions by exploring different sources.
- d. I use the lens of my subject discipline (e.g. history, religious studies) to help students understand events in a subject-based way.
- e. I support students to evaluate the weight and reliability of different truth claims.
- f. I encourage students to engage with this subject on an empathetic level.
- g. I allow time for debate and discussion so that students can explore their reactions to the events they are learning about.
- h. I use images showing the horror of what happened to the victims.
- i. I explain to students the moral lessons they must learn from the Holocaust.
- j. I encourage students to 'never forget'.
- k. I ask students to consider theological questions.
- l. I ask students to consider moral and/or ethical questions.
- m. I engage students in political questions about power and/or the abuse of power.
- n. I get students to share and explore their perceptions and understandings of the Jewish community today.
- o. I encourage students to reflect on the meaning of the Holocaust for contemporary society.

13. Due to time constraints, teachers must make difficult choices about what to cover. In the first column please tick the topics you include when teaching about the Holocaust. You can use the second column if you want to indicate topics you know teachers in other subjects/departments at your school cover. For topics not taught by you or your colleagues, leave the relevant boxes blank.

Note: It's ok if you're not sure what other departments cover – just leave the second column blank.

	I personally include these topics in my teaching	Colleagues in another department teach about these topics
• The long history of antisemitism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Jewish social and cultural life before 1933	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• The contribution of the Jews to European social and cultural life before 1933	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Nazi ideology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• The Nuremberg Laws	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Kristallnacht	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• The experiences of individual men, women and children who were persecuted by the Nazis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• The impact of the policies of the Christian Churches	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• The choices and actions of bystanders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• The choices and actions of rescuers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• The reaction of countries around the world to Jewish refugees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• An account of life in the ghettos of occupied Poland (e.g. Warsaw)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Treblinka	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Resistance to Nazi policies by Jews	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Operation Reinhard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• The Einsatzgruppen (Holocaust by bullets)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• The Wannsee Conference	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Auschwitz-Birkenau	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Jewish resistance in the camp system	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Post-war justice and the Nuremberg trials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Liberation of camps	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• The experiences of Holocaust survivors since 1945	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Changes in awareness and understanding of the Holocaust since 1945	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• The impact of the Holocaust on the Declaration of Human Rights	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Propaganda and stereotyping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Combating current racist ideology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• The study of World War II	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• The study of Hitler's rise to power and the Nazi State	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• The Arab-Israeli conflict	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Exploring the concept of suffering	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Human motivation and behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• The Holocaust as an unprecedented event in human history	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Other genocides	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Are there any other topics, not listed above, that you always include in your teaching about the Holocaust? If so, please share them in the text box below.

14. As far as you know, does your school participate in the following? Tick all that apply.

- Occasional assemblies about the Holocaust.
- Events to mark Holocaust Memorial Day.
- Lessons from Auschwitz (provided by the Holocaust Educational Trust).

15. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements. (*Likert options: strongly disagree; disagree; agree; strongly agree*)

When teaching about the Holocaust...

- a. I explicitly teach about antisemitism.
- b. I explicitly teach about the differences between antisemitism and other forms of racism.
- c. I explicitly teach about antisemitism in contemporary society and not only in the context of the Holocaust.

16. When teaching about the Holocaust, do you...? (*Likert options: yes; no; not sure*)

- a. Invite a Holocaust survivor to the school to talk to students.
- b. Show video recordings of survivor testimony to students.
- c. Use written testimony and individual stories.

17. When teaching about the Holocaust, do you...? (*Likert options: yes; no; not sure*)

- a. Incorporate visits to a memorial site, research centre or museum within the UK.
- b. Incorporate visits to a memorial site, research centre or museum outside of the UK.

If you do these types of visits with your students, where do you go?

18. When teaching about the Holocaust, do you...? (*Likert options: yes; no; not sure*)

- a. Ask students to use the Internet to research the Holocaust during their lessons.
- b. Ask students to use the Internet to support their homework about the Holocaust.

19. Do you use any of the following books with your students? *This can include the full book or excerpts*

- Night by Elie Wiesel
- The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas by John Boyne
- Hana's Suitcase by Karen Levine
- The Diary of Anne Frank by Anne Frank
- The Book Thief by Markus Zusak
- Other (please specify in the box below)

If you would like to give more information about how you use these books with your students, please use the box above. You can also use this box if you want to mention if and how your colleagues use these books in their teaching.

20. When teaching about the Holocaust, do you personally use any subject-based textbooks with your students? (*Likert options: yes; no*)

If you responded 'yes', please give the name(s) of the textbooks you use.

21. Do you use any of the following films or TV programmes with your students? *This can include the full film/TV programme or excerpts.*

- The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas
- The Pianist
- Schindler's List
- The Book Thief
- Denial
- A documentary originally aired on a TV channel (in the box below, could you tell us a bit more about the documentaries you've used).
- Clips of relevant material from YouTube or another video website (in the box below, could you tell us a bit more about the material you've used).
- Other (please specify in the box below).

If you would like to give more information about how you use these films or TV programmes with your students, please use the box above. You can also use this box if you want to mention if and how your colleagues use TV/film in their teaching.

22. When you teach about the Holocaust, how frequently do students make unsolicited references to Holocaust denial? (*Likert options: never; rarely; sometimes; often*)

If relevant, when Holocaust denial is mentioned by your students, what do they tend to ask or say about it?

23. Please briefly explain if and how you assess/monitor students' learning throughout your scheme of work about the Holocaust? (For example, plenary activities and/or homework activities.)

24. When teaching about the Holocaust, to what extent have you personally encountered the following potential challenges? (*Likert options: never; occasionally; often; always*)

- a. Students becoming emotionally distressed by the topic.
- b. Being unable to answer students' questions.
- c. Certain student misconceptions being particularly resistant to change despite covering these issues in lessons.
- d. Students believing information they find on the Internet regardless of the source or accuracy of the information.
- e. Parents' concerns about this subject being taught to their child.
- f. Students articulating antisemitic attitudes.
- g. Students articulating other forms of prejudiced and/or discriminatory language.
- h. Becoming emotionally distressed as a teacher.
- i. The reluctance of teachers in other departments/subject areas to work on a coordinated approach to Holocaust education.
- j. The reluctance of teachers in other departments/subject areas to attend specialist Holocaust education CPD courses when they have the opportunity to do so.
- k. Teachers who lack specialist knowledge inadvertently teaching or reinforcing common misconceptions about the Holocaust.
- l. Difficulties in getting senior leaders to approve time out of school to attend Holocaust education CPD courses.
- m. Insufficient curriculum time.
- n. Holocaust denial among students.
- o. Teaching this subject to students in Years 7 or 8 because of a two-year Key Stage 3 curriculum.
- p. Other (please describe in the box below any other challenges you have experienced when teaching about the Holocaust).

25. As far as you know, does your school participate in the following? Tick all that apply.

- Occasional assemblies about the Holocaust
- Events to mark Holocaust Memorial Day
- Lessons from Auschwitz (provided by the Holocaust Educational Trust)

### Section 3: CPD opportunities in Holocaust education

This section of the survey explores your experiences of training programmes specifically designed to support teachers in teaching about the Holocaust.

26. Using the statements below, please indicate your experience of training and CPD related to Holocaust education. (*Likert options: no; not sure; yes; not applicable*)

- a. My Initial Teacher Training course included a specific focus on teaching about the Holocaust.
- b. I received formal training in teaching about the Holocaust during my NQT year/first year of teaching.
- c. Since becoming a teacher I have taken part in training courses created by colleagues at my school to support my teaching about the Holocaust.
- d. Since becoming a teacher I have taken part in training courses in Holocaust education offered by organisations from outside my school.
- e. Since becoming a teacher I have taught myself how to approach teaching the Holocaust.
- f. Since becoming a teacher I have had informal training in teaching about the Holocaust.

27. Have you participated in any courses and/or special events provided by the UCL (IOE) Centre for Holocaust Education?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Questions 28–30 were only presented to those respondents who answered ‘yes’ to this question.

### Working with the UCL (IOE) Centre for Holocaust Education

28. From the list below, please indicate which courses and/or special events provided by the UCL (IOE) Centre for Holocaust Education you have participated in. Choose all that apply.

- Initial teacher education (ITE)
- Unpacking the Holocaust – Full day CPD (this is likely to have included some of the following: Authentic encounters (Barney’s toy); who were the six million?; pre-war Jewish life; and/or the timeline activity)
- Being human?
- Unlocking antisemitism
- A space called Treblinka
- British responses to the Holocaust
- Whose Anne Frank? Representations of a young girl
- Pursuit of Justice: the trial of John Demjanjuk
- Masters Module ‘The Holocaust in the Curriculum’
- Beacon School Programme as the lead teacher
- Beacon School Programme as the senior leadership link
- Other (please specify in the box below)

29. Please indicate which of the Centre's resources and lesson plans you personally use in your teaching and where relevant the subjects and year groups in which you use them. For resources you don't use you can leave the options blank.

If you use any of the resources with more than one year group or in more than one subject, you can give additional information about this in the box below. You can also use this box if you want to outline how other departments in your school use the resources.

	<b>Do you use this resource?</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Year group</b>
What was a Nazi concentration camp?	[Yes/No]	Drop-down list	Drop-down list
Ordinary things? (The 'shoe lesson')	[Yes/No]	Drop-down list	Drop-down list
Narrative links	[Yes/No]	Drop-down list	Drop-down list
German Jews and the Holocaust	[Yes/No]	Drop-down list	Drop-down list
Authentic encounters (Barney's toy)	[Yes/No]	Drop-down list	Drop-down list
Jewish life in Europe	[Yes/No]	Drop-down list	Drop-down list
Life in Plauen	[Yes/No]	Drop-down list	Drop-down list
What was the Holocaust? (The timeline activity)	[Yes/No]	Drop-down list	Drop-down list
Unlocking antisemitism	[Yes/No]	Drop-down list	Drop-down list
Resistance	[Yes/No]	Drop-down list	Drop-down list
Being human?	[Yes/No]	Drop-down list	Drop-down list
'Liberation' and 'Home'	[Yes/No]	Drop-down list	Drop-down list
The first year	[Yes/No]	Drop-down list	Drop-down list
Surviving survival	[Yes/No]	Drop-down list	Drop-down list
A note from Leon	[Yes/No]	Drop-down list	Drop-down list
The void	[Yes/No]	Drop-down list	Drop-down list
A space called Treblinka	[Yes/No]	Drop-down list	Drop-down list
What happened to Helene Seligmann and her family?	[Yes/No]	Drop-down list	Drop-down list
What is justice?	[Yes/No]	Drop-down list	Drop-down list
Justice achieved?	[Yes/No]	Drop-down list	Drop-down list
British responses to the Holocaust	[Yes/No]	Drop-down list	Drop-down list
Whose Anne Frank?	[Yes/No]	Drop-down list	Drop-down list
Other, please specify	[Yes/No]	Drop-down list	Drop-down list

30. How would you describe the impact of your work with the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education on your teaching practice?



### Holocaust education organisations (excluding UCL/IOE)

31. Below is a list of UK-based Holocaust Education organisations (excluding UCL/IOE) that provide support and training for teachers. For each one, please indicate (a) if you have heard of them, (b) if you have completed CPD courses with them and where relevant, (c) approximately how much time you have spent on the course(s).

Name of Organisation	(A) Have you heard of them?	(B) Have you participated in any CPD courses this organisation offers?	(C) In total, approximately how much time have you spent on course(s) with this organisation
Holocaust Educational Trust (HET)	Yes/No/Not sure	Yes/No/Not sure	Drop-down list: half a day to 7 days or more. Includes a 'not applicable' option.
Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (HMDT)	Yes/No/Not sure	Yes/No/Not sure	Drop-down list: half a day to 7 days or more. Includes a 'not applicable' option.
The Anne Frank Trust UK	Yes/No/Not sure	Yes/No/Not sure	Drop-down list: half a day to 7 days or more. Includes a 'not applicable' option.
The National Holocaust Centre and Museum (Laxton)	Yes/No/Not sure	Yes/No/Not sure	Drop-down list: half a day to 7 days or more. Includes a 'not applicable' option.
The Imperial War Museum London	Yes/No/Not sure	Yes/No/Not sure	Drop-down list: half a day to 7 days or more. Includes a 'not applicable' option.
The Jewish Museum London	Yes/No/Not sure	Yes/No/Not sure	Drop-down list: half a day to 7 days or more. Includes a 'not applicable' option.
Holocaust Exhibition and Learning Centre (Huddersfield)	Yes/No/Not sure	Yes/No/Not sure	Drop-down list: half a day to 7 days or more. Includes a 'not applicable' option.
The Imperial War Museum North (Manchester)	Yes/No/Not sure	Yes/No/Not sure	Drop-down list: half a day to 7 days or more. Includes a 'not applicable' option.

If you have participated in Holocaust education CPD from other organisations, please give details in the box below.

32. In instances where you have worked with organisations listed in the previous question, how would you describe the impact of your work with them on your teaching practice?

33. Overall, would you find it useful to have additional support or training to help you teach about the Holocaust more effectively? (*Likert responses: yes; possibly; no*)

If you selected 'no', please explain why in the box below.

34. If you answered 'yes' or 'possibly' to the previous question, please explain what types of support or training you would find useful. This can include support/training for particular disciplines, for teaching specific topics or issues related to the Holocaust, or for teaching about the Holocaust in relation to different government policies.

## Section 4: Confidence questions

35. In general, how confident do you feel teaching secondary school students about the Holocaust? (*Likert responses: not confident at all; slightly confident; fairly confident; very confident*)
36. In general, how confident do you feel about your historical knowledge of the Holocaust? (*Likert responses: not confident at all; slightly confident; fairly confident; very confident*)
37. In general, how confident do you feel in answering questions that students might raise while learning about the Holocaust? (*Likert responses: not confident at all; slightly confident; fairly confident; very confident*)

## Section 5: Knowledge of the Holocaust

This section of the survey includes some history-based questions about the Holocaust. This is not a test, so please don't worry if you are unsure about the answers. In previous research we have presented similar questions to teachers and students to get a sense of the information they are familiar with and information they know less about. You can skip any questions you don't want to answer, but also feel free to write or choose what you think is the most appropriate answer even if you are not sure.

38. Who were the victims of the Holocaust?

39. Who was responsible for the Holocaust?

40. Systematic mass murder of Jewish people began in:

- 1933, with the Nazis' rise to power
- 1935, with the Nuremberg Laws
- 1938, with Kristallnacht (the November Pogrom)
- 1939, with the outbreak of war
- 1941, with the Invasion of the Soviet Union
- 1942, with the construction of gas chambers at Auschwitz-Birkenau
- Not sure

41. Which of the following were death camps built specifically for killing Jewish people: (please tick all that apply)

- Treblinka
- Bergen-Belsen
- Sobibor
- Chelmno
- Hadamar
- Katyn
- Not sure

42. If a member of the German occupying forces refused an instruction to kill Jewish people, the most likely outcome for that individual would be that they were:

- Shot for refusing to obey orders
- Sent to a concentration camp
- Excused from the killing and given other duties
- Sent to the Eastern front
- Not sure

43. The first group to become victims of a Nazi mass murder programme were:

- Disabled people
- Jews
- Homosexuals
- Trade unionists
- Jehovah's Witnesses
- Black people
- Communists
- Political opponents of the Nazis
- Roma and Sinti ('Gypsies')
- Not sure

44. The largest number of Jewish people murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators came from:

- Germany
- Poland
- Ukraine
- France
- Netherlands
- Hungary
- Not sure

45. When did the British government first know about the mass murder of millions of Jews?

- They knew it was happening in the years between 1933 and 1938.
- They knew it was happening when war broke out in September 1939.
- They knew it was happening in 1941–1942.
- They knew it was happening in 1944, after the British were involved in the Allied invasion of occupied Europe.
- They only knew about it after the war ended in 1945.
- Not sure.

46. What was the response of the British Government when they learned about the mass murder of Jews?

They...

- Declared war on Germany.
- Thought up rescue plans and tried to do everything possible to save Jewish people.
- Said they would punish the killers when the war was over.
- Bombed Auschwitz-Birkenau to destroy the gas chambers.
- Attacked Jews living in Britain.
- Ignored it.
- None of the above, the British knew nothing until the end of the war.
- Not sure.

47. In percentage terms, the Jewish population in Germany in 1933 was:

- Fewer than 1%
- Approximately 5%
- Approximately 15%
- More than 30%
- Not sure

48. When Nazi Germany invaded Poland in 1939, the majority of Jews living there were...?

- Forced to live in ghettos.
- Made to convert to Christianity.
- Sent straight to gas chambers.
- Put into concentration camps.
- Not sure.

49. The programme by which approximately 10,000 unaccompanied Jewish children were admitted to Britain as refugees in 1938-39 was known as...

- The Einsatzgruppen
- Operation Rescue
- Kindertransport
- Evacuation
- The Eisenbahn
- Not sure

50. Why did the Nazis and others murder the Jews of Europe?

## Section 6: You and your school

51. What training route did you take to become a school teacher?

- Bachelor of Education with qualified teacher status (BEd)
- University-led Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) after completing an undergraduate degree (e.g. BA, BSc)
- School Direct (tuition fee)
- School Direct (salaried)
- Postgraduate teaching apprenticeship programme
- School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT)
- Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP)
- Teach First Leadership Development Programme (LDP)
- Assessment only route to Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)
- Researchers in Schools, including Maths and Physics Chairs Programme
- Bachelor of Arts (BA) and Bachelor of Science (BSc) with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)
- Bachelor of Arts (BA), Bachelor of Science (BSc), and Integrated Master's (MA) opt-in Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)
- Future Teaching Scholars Programme
- Troops to Teachers
- Diploma in Education and Training
- Other, please specify below

52. If applicable, which subject(s) were you trained in during your initial teacher education/training?

- Art & Design
- Citizenship
- Computing
- Design & Technology
- Drama
- English
- Food Science
- Geography
- History
- Mathematics
- Modern Foreign Languages

- Music
- Physical Education
- Politics
- Psychology
- PSHE
- Religious Education / Religious Studies
- Science
- Sociology
- Work-related Learning
- Not applicable
- Other (please specify in box below)

53. In which year did you begin teaching? This should be the year in which you began formal teacher training in a UK school, college and/or university.

54. How many years, in total, have you been teaching? This should be from and including the year in which you began formal teacher training in a UK school, college and/or university, and excluding time taken for career breaks.

55. From the list below, which best describes your current main role in your school?

- Unqualified teacher
- Teacher in training
- Newly qualified teacher (NQT)
- Teacher with QTS
- Subject Leader
- Head of Department
- Head of Faculty
- Head of Year
- Head of Lower school
- Head of Senior/Upper school
- Head of Sixth Form
- Assistant/Deputy Headteacher
- Headteacher
- Executive Headteacher
- Other (please specify)

## Section 7: Your school

56. In which region of England is your school situated?  
Drop-down list: South East, London, North West, East of England, West Midlands, South West, Yorkshire and the Humber, East Midlands, North East, I don't teach in a school in England.

If you don't teach in a school in England, please state which country your school is in:

57. In what type of school do you teach?  
Tick all that apply

- Academy
- City Technology College
- Community School/College
- Comprehensive
- FE College
- Free School
- Grammar
- Independent
- Middle
- School with a religious character (Faith School)  
(please specify faith in the box below)
- Sixth form College
- Special
- Other (please specify)

58. In general, to what extent does your school follow the National Curriculum?

- Not at all
- Where relevant, a small number of subjects follow the National Curriculum
- Where relevant, most (or all) subjects follow the National Curriculum
- Not sure

## Section 8: A few questions about you

The next few questions are included to determine the extent to which survey respondents are representative of the demographic characteristics of teachers in England. Additionally, we may explore trends on the basis of religious group. Please skip these questions if you don't want to answer them.

59. What is your religion?

- Buddhist
- Christian (all denominations)
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- No religion
- Prefer not to say
- Other (please specify)

60. What is your ethnic group?

### Asian/Asian British

- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Indian
- Pakistani
- Any other Asian background

### Black/African/Caribbean/Black British

- African
- British
- Caribbean
- Any other Black/African/Caribbean background

Mixed/multiple ethnic groups

- White and Asian
- White and Black African
- White and Black Caribbean
- Any other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background

White

- British, English, Welsh, Scottish or Northern Irish
- Irish
- Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- Any other white category

Other ethnic group

- Arab
- Prefer not to say
- Other (you can specify this in the box below)

61. What best describes your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say
- Prefer to self-describe:

Section 9:  
Thank you

62. How did you first hear about the survey?

- a. I read about it on the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education’s newsletter
- b. I read about it on the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education’s website
- c. I heard about it when I attended a UCL Centre for Holocaust Education CPD course
- d. On the Centre’s Basecamp forum for Beacon School lead teachers and SLT links
- e. The Beacon School teacher in my school informed me
- f. I am in a Beacon School network and The Beacon School lead teacher informed me
- g. Twitter
- h. I saw an advertisement in *Teaching History*
- i. I saw an advertisement in *RE Today*
- j. I saw an advertisement in Association for Teaching Citizenship e-news
- k. I saw an advertisement in my teaching union magazine *Educate*
- l. I found out via another Holocaust education organisation (please specify in the ‘other’ box below)
- m. Other (please specify)

63. The UCL Centre for Holocaust Education conducted similar research with teachers in 2009. At that time the Centre was called the Holocaust Education Development Programme (HEDP), part of the Institute of Education (IOE). Did you participate in this research?

- Yes, I completed the survey in the 2009 research
- Yes, I took part in an interview or focus group in the 2009 research
- Yes, I completed the survey and took part in an interview or focus group in the 2009 research
- No, I didn’t take part in the 2009 research
- I can’t remember

64. If you have any other general comments, please use the comment box below.

# Appendix 2

## The interview questions

These questions provided a framework for the individual and group interviews conducted for the UCL 2019/20 study. The interviews followed a semi-structured format. This meant that while the questions were used by the researcher as a guide for content to cover, teachers were also invited to discuss anything that was relevant to their opinions and experiences of Holocaust education.

Phase	Question
<b>Opening questions</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Before we begin, could you each give your name (first name only) and your role in the school – it's so when we read back the transcripts, we know the subject and role you're referring to when you talk about your views and experiences.</li>   <li>2. To start with, briefly when talking to a Year 9 student, how would you define the Holocaust to them?</li> </ol>
<b>Part 1: Practice</b>	<p>In the first part of our conversation, I'd like us to talk about rationale, aims and practice.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. To start off, could you explain why you teach the Holocaust in your specialist subject? What are your key teaching aims when teaching about the Holocaust? (Perhaps pick two or three examples.)</li>   <li>4. How do you know if and when you've achieved these aims?</li>   <li>5. Thinking about the content of your lessons, what are the most fundamental topics you teach? (Again, perhaps pick some examples.) How do you decide what topics to include and exclude?</li>   <li>6. When teaching about the Holocaust, what particular teaching approaches do you employ? Why do you use these approaches?</li> </ol>



Phase	Question
<b>Part 2: Context</b>	<p>I'd now like to talk about the broader context of Holocaust education in your school (and/or subject).</p> <p>7. How far does the context of your school influence how Holocaust education is approached in your school? For example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The needs, interests and/or demographics of your particular students.</li> <li>Considerations/issues in relation to your school's local community.</li> <li>The structure of your school's curricular, for example, collapsed Key Stage 3.</li> <li>Cross-curricular and/or whole school approaches to Holocaust education.</li> <li>Other areas of focus/priority for your school (which might influence the time and opportunity for Holocaust education to be developed in your school).</li> </ol> <p>8. How far does government policy influence how Holocaust education is approached in your school? This could be related to the National Curriculum and/or policies like SMSC and British values.</p>
<b>Part 3: CPD</b>	<p>I'd now like to spend a bit of time talking about your experiences of specialist training for teaching about the Holocaust.</p> <p>9. How far does the Holocaust education CPD you've participated in influence how Holocaust education is approached in your school?</p>
<b>Part 4: Reflection</b>	<p>As we approach end of the discussion, I'd just like to get some final reflections from you...</p> <p>10. What issues and challenges have you encountered in teaching about the Holocaust?</p> <p>11. From your perspective, how far has the field of Holocaust education changed over time?</p> <p>12. We are now coming to the end of the time we have for this discussion, is there anything else you would like to mention before we finish?</p>

## Appendix 3

### Ranking of content included in the teaching of the Holocaust in the UCL 2019/20 and IOE 2009 studies

Content choices	UCL 2019/20 study ranking	IOE 2009 study ranking	Change
Combating current racist ideology	24	9	-15
Human motivation and behaviour	20	10	-10
Exploring the concept of suffering	28	19	-9
Other genocides	23	16	-7
The choices and actions of rescuers	11	6	-5
Jewish resistance in the camp system	21	18	-3
The Holocaust as an unprecedented event in human history	17	15	-2
Changes in awareness and understanding of the Holocaust since 1945	30	28	-2
The choices and actions of bystanders	7	5	-2
Post-war justice and the Nuremburg trials	27	25	-2
Propaganda and stereotyping	5	3	-2
The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising	19	17	-2
The study of Hitler's rise to power and the Nazi State	10	8	-2
The Arab-Israeli conflict	32	31	-1
The study of World War II	14	13	-1
Auschwitz-Birkenau	2	2	0

Content choices	UCL 2019/20 study ranking	IOE 2009 study ranking	Change
The experiences of Holocaust survivors since 1945	22	22	0
The experiences of individual men, women and children who were persecuted by the Nazis	1	1	0
The impact of the policies of the Christian churches	26	26	0
Kristallnacht	4	4	0
Operation Reinhard	31	32	1
The impact of the Holocaust on the Declaration of Human Rights	29	30	1
The Nuremburg Laws	6	7	1
The reaction of countries around the world to Jewish refugees	18	20	2
An account of life in the ghettos in occupied Poland (e.g. Warsaw)	8	11	3
The long history of antisemitism	9	12	3
The contribution of the Jews to European social and cultural life before 1933	25	29	4
The Wannsee Conference	16	21	5
The Einsatzgruppen	13	23	10
Nazi ideology	3	14	11
Resistance to Nazi policies by Jews	12	24	12
Jewish social and cultural life before 1933	15	27	12

## Appendix 4

Ranking of content and percentage of teachers including each topic in their teaching, as reported in the UCL 2019/20 study (by subject)

Content choices	History (n= 564)	Religious education (n=123)	Citizenship/ PSHE (n=42)	English and/or Drama (n=41)
Combating current racist ideology	26 (36.3%)	14 (52.8%)	4 (66.7%)	7 (56.1%)
Human motivation and behaviour	28 (32.6%)	7 (71.5%)	6 (64.3%)	3 (80.5%)
Other genocides	25 (37.1%)	11 (57.7%)	7 (64.3%)	16 (34.1%)
Exploring the concept of suffering	33 (12.8%)	2 (79.7%)	13 (47.6%)	10 (48.8%)
Jewish resistance in the camp system	19 (52.1%)	23 (33.3%)	30 (16.7%)	29 (14.6%)
The choices and actions of rescuers	15 (67.7%)	5 (74.8%)	8 (57.1%)	11 (46.3%)
The Holocaust as an unprecedented event in human history	21 (46.1%)	18 (45.5%)	12 (50.0%)	14 (36.6%)
Changes in awareness and understanding of the Holocaust since 1945	31 (18.4%)	26 (25.2%)	23 (26.2%)	23 (24.4%)
The choices and actions of bystanders	11 (79.8%)	6 (71.5%)	5 (64.3%)	5 (61.0%)
Post-war justice and the Nuremburg trials	27 (36.2%)	25 (28.5%)	27 (21.4%)	28 (14.6%)
Propaganda and stereotyping	8 (81.2%)	4 (78.0%)	3 (71.4%)	2 (85.4%)
The Arab-Israeli conflict	34 (7.6%)	27 (22.8%)	31 (14.3%)	32 (7.3%)
The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising	18 (53.9%)	28 (20.3%)	28 (21.4%)	24 (24.4%)
Auschwitz-Birkenau	4 (94.5%)	3 (78.0%)	2 (76.2%)	4 (68.3%)
The experiences of Holocaust survivors since 1945	23 (40.2%)	10 (59.3%)	11 (50.0%)	12 (43.9%)
The experiences of individual men, women and children who were persecuted by the Nazis	5 (92.0%)	1 (87.0%)	1 (83.3%)	1 (92.7%)
The impact of the policies of the Christian churches	24 (37.2%)	24 (30.9%)	26 (21.4%)	31 (12.2%)

Content choices	History (n= 564)	Religious education (n=123)	Citizenship/ PSHE (n=42)	English and/or Drama (n=41)
An account of life in the ghettos in occupied Poland (e.g. Warsaw)	7 (82.4%)	13 (55.3%)	15 (42.9%)	8 (56.1%)
Kristallnacht	2 (96.5%)	9 (61.0%)	20 (35.7%)	13 (41.5%)
Operation Reinhard	30 (22.3%)	33 (7.3%)	33 (9.5%)	33 (2.4%)
The impact of the Holocaust on the Declaration of Human Rights	32 (18.3%)	15 (52.8%)	10 (52.4%)	18 (29.3%)
The reaction of countries around the world to Jewish refugees	20 (48.9%)	20 (42.3%)	19 (38.1%)	21 (26.8%)
The long history of antisemitism	9 (81.2%)	8 (67.5%)	9 (52.4%)	17 (29.3%)
The contribution of the Jews to European social and cultural life before 1933	22 (42.7%)	22 (37.4%)	18 (40.5%)	15 (36.6%)
The study of World War II	12 (76.1%)	34 (6.5%)	34 (9.5%)	26 (19.5%)
The Nuremburg Laws	3 (95.2%)	17 (49.6%)	22 (28.6%)	22 (26.8%)
The study of Hitler's rise to power and the Nazi State	6 (87.6%)	31 (13.0%)	25 (23.8%)	25 (22.0%)
The Wannsee Conference	13 (75.9%)	30 (15.4%)	32 (14.3%)	34 (2.4%)
Resistance to Nazi policies by Jews	14 (73.6%)	19 (43.1%)	29 (19.0%)	20 (29.3%)
The Einsatzgruppen	10 (80.1%)	29 (19.5%)	24 (23.8%)	27 (14.6%)
Nazi ideology	1 (97.0%)	16 (49.6%)	14 (45.2%)	6 (61.0%)
Jewish social and cultural life	16 (61.9%)	12 (56.9%)	17 (40.5%)	19 (29.3%)
Liberation of camps	17 (57.1%)	21 (41.5%)	16 (42.9%)	9 (56.1%)
Treblinka	29 (29.6%)	32 (12.2%)	21 (31.0%)	30 (14.6%)

# Appendix 5

## Rationale for multiple-choice knowledge questions

Question and correct answer	Rationale for inclusion
<p><b>Systematic mass murder of Jewish people began in...?</b></p> <p><b>Correct answer:</b> 1941, with the Invasion of the Soviet Union.</p>	<p>In the Centre's 2016 national study (Foster et al., 2016), very few students appeared to fully grasp the significance of the relationship between the Second World War and the Holocaust, and they had difficulty stating when the Holocaust started and how it ended.</p> <p>Although many Jews had been murdered before 1941, it could not be construed as systematic mass murder. Historians agree that systematic mass murder began after the invasion of the USSR. Knowing this information is an important element in understanding that genocides do not happen merely because someone kills it. Instead, it is important to know how the development from persecution to genocide unfolded. Knowledge of the connection between the mass murder of Jews and a particular historical event (the invasion of the Soviet Union by Nazi Germany and its allies on 22 June 1941), could potentially indicate that a teacher has some degree of chronological understanding about the Holocaust and its key milestones.</p>
<p><b>Which of the following were death camps built specifically for killing Jewish people? (Please tick all that apply)</b></p> <p><b>Correct answers:</b> Treblinka Sobibor Chelmno</p>	<p>Along with chronological understanding of the development of the Holocaust, it is also important to understand its geography. In part, the Centre's interest in this area came from how the Nazi camp system functions culturally as a reference point for Nazism and the Holocaust, yet also remains shrouded in mythologisation and misunderstanding. With that in mind, knowing the names of the Nazi death camps carries with it a number of potentialities. It can serve as a measure of an individual's general historical knowledge of the Holocaust; it can indicate an awareness that there were different types of camps to service different ends; and it raises the possibility of teachers being able to add nuance to students' historical understanding.</p>
<p><b>If a member of the German occupying forces refused an instruction to kill Jewish people, the most likely outcome for that individual would be that they were:</b></p> <p><b>Correct answer:</b> Excused from the killing and given other duties.</p>	<p>In the Centre's 2016 national study with students (Foster et al., 2016), the vast majority of students incorrectly assumed that a member of the police or military would be shot for refusing an order to kill Jews. By comparison, only 5.0 per cent of students provided the most accurate answer, 'given another duty'. This shows that many young people hold misconceptions about the Holocaust that are prevalent in public discourse about the period – that those ordered to kill Jews had no option but to obey. Arguably, these misunderstandings have important consequences for how students make meaning of the Holocaust.</p> <p>In fact, no record has been discovered of any German soldier, police or member of the SS being shot or sent to a concentration camp for refusing to kill Jews, whereas there is documented evidence that people refused such an order and were simply assigned other duties. Thus, the inclusion of this question served to examine teachers' awareness of this issue and their ability to challenge students' misconceptions around matters of complicity and perpetration.</p>
<p><b>The first group to become victims of a Nazi mass murder programme were...?</b></p> <p><b>Correct answer:</b> Disabled people.</p>	<p>In the Centre's 2016 study (Foster et al., 2016), students typically exhibited limited understanding of why other victims of Nazi persecutions were targeted and how. The inclusion of this question was partly about gaining further insight into teachers' chronological understanding, and partly about gleaning a sense of teachers' knowledge of what different victim groups experienced, and when. Knowing what happened to the various victim groups is essential for a holistic understanding of what Nazism was and how the system of violence and murder functioned. But it is equally crucial in order to understand where policies enacted against different groups overlapped and intersected, and where they diverged and differentiated.</p>

<p><b>The largest number of Jewish people murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators came from...?</b></p> <p><b>Correct answer:</b>  (German-occupied) Poland</p>	<p>In the Centre's 2016 national study (Foster et al., 2016), students typically had a German-centric view of the Holocaust, wrongly believing that most of the killing took place within German borders, and few recognising the continent-wide scale of the genocide.</p> <p>Knowledge of the 'spaces of killing' is crucial to an understanding of the Holocaust. Appreciation of the scale of the killings in the East is important in moving beyond a German-centric view of the Holocaust, and grasping the devastation of Jewish communities in Europe and the significance of the genocide in destroying diverse ways of life and vibrant cultures that developed over centuries.</p>
<p><b>When did the British government first know about the mass murder of millions of Jews?</b></p> <p><b>Correct answer:</b>  They knew it was happening in 1941–1942</p> <p>*****</p> <p><b>What was the response of the British Government when they learned about the mass murder of Jews?</b></p> <p><b>Correct answer</b>  They said they would punish the killers when the war was over.</p>	<p>The Centre's 2016 national study (Foster et al., 2016), found that many students mistakenly believed the British government either didn't know or only found out about mass killings at the end of the war. When students were asked 'what happened when the British government knew about the mass murder of Jews?', 34.4 per cent of students who completed the survey wrongly suggested that Britain declared war on Germany, and 23.8 per cent incorrectly believed that Britain did not know anything until the end of the war. Only 6.7 per cent chose the most appropriate answer: that Britain said they would punish the killers when the war was over.</p> <p>Teachers' knowledge and understanding of these issues is important if they are to effectively challenge these misconceptions and help students understand Britain's relationship with the Holocaust then and today.</p>
<p><b>In percentage terms, the Jewish population in Germany in 1933 was...?</b></p> <p><b>Correct answer:</b>  Fewer than 1%</p>	<p>In the Centre's 2016 national study (Foster et al., 2016), almost three-quarters of students dramatically overestimated the size of the Jewish population in Germany in 1933. This matters because a central plank of the Nazi propaganda was the claim that Jews were a powerful, dominant group in Germany intent on destroying the country from within. Understanding that in June 1933 just 0.75 per cent (505,000) of the total German population of 67 million was Jewish, is therefore paramount if one is to recognise the irrationality of Nazi propaganda for what it was, and that – for all their positive contributions to German society, culture and the economy – German Jews remained a very small and, ultimately, a vulnerable and powerless minority. Having this knowledge, for instance, ensures a teacher is fully aware that the myth propagated by the Nazis about Jewish power, wealth and influence, was fundamentally untrue. In a similar vein, a teacher who is cognisant of the erroneous nature of anti-Jewish propaganda becomes able to both highlight its pernicious nature to students and potentially open up enquiries around how it was possible for a minority group to be persecuted in such a fashion.</p>
<p><b>When Nazi Germany invaded Poland in 1939, the majority of Jews living there were...?</b></p> <p><b>Correct answer:</b>  Forced to live in ghettos.</p>	<p>Understanding what ghettos were, when and where they were created and for what purpose, is important to comprehend how anti-Jewish policy developed over time, and to see that 'the Holocaust' (the intended murder of every last Jewish person) was not an aim from the beginning of the Nazi regime, and nor was it inevitable. To understand the Holocaust in all its complexity it is important to see it as a process, not a singular event, with key chronological and geographical developments. Most historians, therefore, recognise the importance of key events such as the German invasion of Poland in September 1939 in understanding how this process unfolded. Assessing what teachers knew about Nazi policy in occupied Poland at this time would provide insight into their chronological knowledge and potentially gesture to how far they too grasped the notion of policies evolving over time.</p>
<p><b>The programme by which approximately 10,000 unaccompanied Jewish children were admitted to Britain as refugees in 1938–39 was known as...</b></p> <p><b>Correct answer:</b>  Kindertransport.</p>	<p>What Britain did – or did not do – to help and support Jewish people during the 1930s and 1940s remains subject to intense historical debate. One often cited example of British support for Jews was the establishment of the Kindertransport programme in 1938. This scheme allowed approximately 10,000 Jewish children to travel as refugees to Britain in 1938 and it almost certainly saved their lives. The successful initiative was organised by refugee and aid committees, not the British government. This question aimed to examine teachers' awareness of this programme as an indicator of one important aspect of Britain's relationship to the Holocaust.</p>

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The UCL Centre for Holocaust Education is part of the IOE, UCL's Faculty of Education and Society and was developed in partnership with the Pears Foundation. The Centre works in partnership with the Pears Foundation who, together with the Department for Education, have provided principal funding to the Centre since 2008.

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