**HOLOCAUST EDUCATION: AN INVESTIGATION INTO
THE TYPES OF LEARNING THAT TAKE PLACE
WHEN STUDENTS ENCOUNTER THE HOLOCAUST**

A thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Education

by
Alasdair John Richardson

School of Sport and Education
Brunel University
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Holocaust Education: An investigation into the types of learning that take place when students encounter the Holocaust.

Abstract

This study employs qualitative methods to investigate the types of learning that occurred when students in a single school encountered the Holocaust. The study explored the experiences of 48 students, together with two of their teachers and a Holocaust survivor who visited the school annually to talk to the students. A thematic analysis was conducted to identify prevalent similarities in the students' responses. Three themes were identified, analysed and discussed. The three themes were: 'surface level learning' (their academic knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust), 'affective learning' (their emotional engagement with the topic) and 'connective learning' (how their encounter with the Holocaust fitted their developing worldview). The first theme revealed that students had a generally sound knowledge of the Holocaust, but there were discrepancies in the specifics of their knowledge. The second theme revealed that learning about the Holocaust had been an emotionally traumatic and complicated process. It also revealed that meeting a Holocaust survivor had a significant impact upon the students, but made them begin to question the provenance of different sources of Holocaust learning. The third theme showed that students had difficulty connecting the Holocaust with modern events and made flawed connections between the two. Finally, the study examines the views of the Holocaust survivor in terms of his intentions and his reasons for giving his testimony in schools. The study's conclusions are drawn within the context of proposing a new conceptualisation of the Holocaust as a 'contested space' in history and in collective memory. A tripartite approach to Holocaust Education is suggested to affect high quality teaching within the 'contested space' of the event.

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"We are not able to justify, to explain what happened;

but we are able to confess and tell it.

And this will be the task of this generation"

***Figure 1** – Vandalised gravestones at the New Cemetery, Walecznych Street, Lublin, Poland (photograph by the author)*

Quote by Sandor Marai (Writer), from an inscription at the Dohány Street Synagogue, Budapest.

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Chapter 1: Introduction.

1.1 Introduction to Chapter 1.

This chapter introduces the study and the motivations and practicalities underlying it. The research question is introduced, as is justification for the study. Relevant terminology is clarified and the structure of the study is outlined.

1.2 Factors prompting the study.

1.2.1 Professional background and interest in the field of study.

I have been a teacher for sixteen years, having taught across the 3-18 age range in a variety of school settings – maintained and independent, mainstream and special, day and boarding, single sex and mixed schools. I am Primary trained (with a specialism in Primary Mathematics) and I have a Special Needs Certificate and a Master's Degree in Education. My Undergraduate Degree is in Education and Philosophy and I have specialised in teaching Religious Studies for the past eight years in Key Stages 2-5. For a long time, I have been interested in how Religious Studies teachers teach controversial or sensitive issues and particularly how pupils engage with these topics. I became increasingly aware of the transformative and affective potential of such teaching and began to question how pupils engage emotionally with these topics. Consequently, I decided to embark on the Professional Doctorate, rather than a PhD, as a means of developing my professional practice in these areas (Doncaster & Thorne, 2000, Murray, 2003).

A few years ago, I asked a friend's son (who was in Year 9 at a local school) what he had been doing at school that week. He replied that he had been learning about the Holocaust. As he did so, he visibly shivered as he recalled "*…piles of dead bodies – yuck – don't want to learn about that anymore!*" In that one sentence, the nature of the transformative and affective potential of teaching became clear to me – particularly the potential of poor (or misguided) teaching. This was his first encounter with the topic at school and in a single lesson his teacher had shocked and repulsed him and had

potentially closed him off from further learning. This was the point at which I first thought about researching in the field of Holocaust Education.

1.2.2 Historical context of the study.

Salmons (2003) argued that "The Holocaust occupies a prominent place in the collective memory of the UK" (p139). He based his assertion on a belief that the event provided a justification for Britain fighting in the Second World War, which gave us a creditable role as a 'liberator'. However, other commentators and researchers have argued that for many years the Holocaust sat at the back of the British consciousness, as an almost forgotten event (Kushner, 2004, von der Dunk, 2002). Short and Reed (2004) claimed that this was the product of several factors. First, that during the war there was a desire by the government to avoid the implication that the war was being fought on *behalf* of the Jews of Europe. Second, that the victimisation of the Jews was downplayed in the media following the end of the war (a sentiment echoed by Kushner, 1989). Finally, that the events at Hiroshima and Nagasaki overshadowed debate at the end of the war and eclipsed the events of the Holocaust in the public consciousness. Lawson (2004) argued that this process was also hastened by the vested interests of the Christian churches after the war. He argued that the Church endeavoured to promote "...a specific image of the past" (p164) that obscured the Jewish suffering in an effort to highlight the Christian struggle against the universal evil of Nazism. For Lawson, the Christian churches could not recognise the primacy of the Jewish suffering because doing so "...would have challenged the basis of... the idea that Nazism was... the negation of Christianity and the denial of God" (p161). Cesarani (1996) further blamed a wave of anti-Semitism in the UK that was related to the plight of the Palestinians, while survivors such as Kitty Hart-Moxon (2007) claim to have been told firmly not "…to embarrass people by saying a word" (p2) in England during the immediate post-war years. Given these social, political and religious factors, Kushner lamented that "…both state and public ensured that the history of the Holocaust would remain marginalised and generally neglected" (1994, p277). Thus it was that the Holocaust slipped quietly into an obscuring "…aura of silence" (Gallant & Hartman, 2001, p3) for several decades.

Landau (1998) described the trial of Adolf Eichmann in 1961 as a "…watershed" event (p2), which broke the silence surrounding the Holocaust and prompted the public

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worldwide to re-examine the events of the period. Television played a major part in this – documentaries such as Jeremy Isaac's film *Genocide* (Bloomberg, 1974), part of ITV's *World at War* series, or *Kitty – Return to Auschwitz* in 1979 (Hart-Moxon, 1979), began to bring the Holocaust into the contemporary British consciousness thirty years after the events had taken place. The Holocaust has remained increasingly in the public consciousness ever since (Libowitz, 1990). Survivors' testimonies and diaries, reports of anti-Semitism in the media, controversy over Holocaust denialist literature and films such as *Schindler's List* (Keneally & Zaillian, 1993), *The Pianist* (Harwood & Szpilman, 2002) and – more controversially – *Life is Beautiful* (Benigni & Cerami, 1997, see Wright, 2000) have prompted awareness, discussion and debate over the need to remember the events of the Holocaust and to heed the lessons of the past. The publication in 1993 of Carrie Supple's definitive text, *From Prejudice to Genocide*, provided a comprehensive textbook for school students for the first time (Supple, 2006). The Spiro Institute (now The Spiro Ark) was founded in the 1980s and the Holocaust Educational Trust was established in 1988. In Britain, significant calls for Holocaust memorial began in the 1990s. In 1995 the UK's first dedicated Holocaust museum, *Beth Shalom* (now known as *The Holocaust Centre*), was opened in Laxton, Nottinghamshire and the Queen opened the Imperial War Museum's permanent Holocaust Exhibition in 2000 (which remains the largest permanent exhibition of its kind in Europe).

In 1999 the British Government began a consultation process concerning the establishment of a Holocaust Memorial Day annually on the 27th of January (the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau; also adopted as International Holocaust Remembrance Day by the United Nations in 2005). This day was intended to remember *all* of the victims of the Nazis and of genocide throughout the world. The adoption of the day was not without controversy, however, with the debate over the definitions, intentions and practicalities becoming at times "…unsavory" (Kushner, 2004, p117). Academics and observers disagreed over the format (and indeed, the *need*) for such a day (see, for example, Burtonwood, 2002, Cesarani, 2000, Cohen, 2000, Stone, 2000). There was further disagreement over whether victims of the Armenian genocide in the First World War should be included (a debate which was only resolved – with their inclusion – at the last moment). More fundamentally, some felt that a country which was not directly affected by the Holocaust had no business commemorating it; and that the 'adoption' of the Holocaust harboured sinister political intentions (Levene, 2006, Novick,

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1999). Nonetheless, Holocaust Memorial Day was commemorated in Great Britain for the first time in 2001 led by the then Prime Minister, Tony Blair.

Conceived by Swedish Prime Minister Goran Persson in 1998, the Task Force for International Co-operation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research (ITF) met in Stockholm, Sweden, in 2000. 46 heads (or deputy heads) of government were present at the *Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust* and the resultant statement of intent (known as the *Stockholm Declaration*) was unanimously ratified (ITF, 2012). The agreement set out the principles and aims of the group. Representatives from a variety of charities, museums and other non-governmental organisations (NGOs) involved in Holocaust Education, form the UK delegation to the ITF. From January – June 1999 the UK held the chairmanship of the organisation, lead by diplomat Jeremy Cresswell. Although originally thought to be a short-term organisation, the ITF has continued to meet, developing its work, funding research and training and steadily growing the number of member states who meet the criteria for membership.

In 2007, the Historical Association published a report into the teaching of controversial and emotive topics in History. The Association's findings were widely misreported (Associated Newspapers Ltd., 2007), causing various internet and press campaigns to ensure the Holocaust remained on the syllabus in UK schools. The outcry caused the Holocaust Educational Trust to publish a public statement, outlining the UK's continued commitment to teaching about the Holocaust (HET, 2010).

1.2.3 The Holocaust in the curriculum and in educational legislation.

Coverage of the Holocaust in school textbooks in the 1970s was inadequate and often inaccurate (Short & Reed, 2004, p16). Major events such as Kristallnacht and the Final Solution were evident, but rarely was mention made of Christian culpability in the history of anti-Semitism in Europe (possibly exacerbated by ongoing debate over the Catholic Church's role during the Holocaust, Lawson, 2011). Fox's 1989 study into the teaching of the Holocaust in UK school History lessons also painted a poor picture of the state of Holocaust Education. The Education Reform Act in 1988 (and the subsequent National Curriculum) provided a prescribed syllabus of study in History in English and Welsh schools. However, the Holocaust's omission from the Interim Report of the National

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Curriculum Working Group (DES, 1989) left many observers baffled (Rubenstein & Taylor, 1992). The rise and fall of Nazi Germany was mentioned only once in the 120-page document. The omission of the Second World War from the proposed Orders was explained by saying that in order to include other significant historical events, "...something has to make way" (DES, 1989, p44). The exclusion of what is arguably "…the most important single event of the twentieth century" (Gregory, 2000, p52) provoked uproar amongst veterans' groups, Members of Parliament (MPs) and the public. On 29th September 1989, an all-party group of MPs wrote to the then Secretary of State for Education, John MacGregor, stressing that they regarded "…the omission of the Second World War and the rise and fall of Nazi Germany from the National Curriculum as totally unacceptable; without logic; educationally insupportable; and offensive to all those who fought in or suffered from the Nazis or the Second World War. It is also a sad signal for the future…" (Rubenstein & Taylor, 1992, p52). When the Orders were subsequently published in 1990 they included the 'Era of the Second World War: 1933-1948' as a core, compulsory unit, with the Holocaust specified as a topic for study and assessment.

1.2.4 Reaction to the legislation.

Whilst this decision was broadly welcomed, some objected to what they saw as the Holocaust being *relegated* in status to a single unit of study in a vast curriculum (Kochan, 1989). Milchman and Rosenberg (1996) thought that the location of the Holocaust within the History curriculum 'historicized' it (i.e., contextualised and comparatively referenced it to other acts of inhumanity in history). They claimed this was at odds with its uniqueness. They believed that either it was unique, or it could be 'historicized', but it couldn't be both. Huttenbach (1998) agreed that the singularity of the Holocaust meant it could not be located in history. However, Ben-Peretz (2003) countered that the Holocaust's location within a wider historical context gave it "…its historical meaning as an event that came to be because of certain roots in the thinking and feeling of people, and because of the synergetic effect of a number of historical circumstances" (p195). As a consequence of the National Curriculum, for more than twenty years all pupils in England and Wales have studied the Holocaust as part of Key Stage 3 History, usually towards the end of Year 9. Hector (2000), saw History as the "…'natural' place for the study of the Holocaust" (p107) and the subject remains the *only* place in the National Curriculum where study of the Holocaust is compulsory.

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1.3 Terminology.

Speaking in the *New York Times*, Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel (1978) asserted that the Holocaust was unique beyond representation and that he believed it was a historical event that "...transcends history" (pB1). Indeed, there is widespread agreement that the Holocaust is a unique event in human history – a "...fissure of evil which forever crosses the twentieth century" (Harris, 1989, p136). It has been called an "...unparalleled catastrophe" (Landau, 1998, p1), "...the most shocking event of the Century" (Goldhagen, 1996, p4) and "...this greatest of abominations" (Gregory, 2000, p58). For many, the Holocaust "...has come to symbolise the ultimate expression of evil" (Short & Reed, 2004, pvii). These assertions that the Holocaust is a singular event in human history are founded in the uniqueness of the ideological motivation underlying it. The term 'Holocaust' is widely used today (rightly or wrongly) to describe the period between 1941-1945 when Nazi Germany and its collaborators systematically annihilated two thirds of European Jewry – approximately six million people, including one and a half million children. The word gained popular use in the 1960s as a means of encapsulating "...arguably the most heinous crime in recorded history" (Short & Supple et al., 1998, p9). Petrie (2000) traced the origins of the term from the Greek translation of the Hebrew word *olah* which means 'that which is offered up' – a sacrifice exclusively to God, from the 3rd Century BC Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible. In Greek the word is *holokauston*; literally meaning 'burnt offering' - which suggests a theological explanation or cause for the event. However, there is widespread agreement that the Holocaust was not a sacrificial event – it was murder – and that connotations of such are inaccurate and disrespectful to the victims (Short & Supple et al., 1998). From the late Nineteenth Century, through to the mid Twentieth Century, the term 'holocaust' was used to describe various large-scale losses of life (such as the persecution and murder of Armenians by the Turks during World War One, or the threat of wholesale nuclear annihilation during the Cold War). The term began to be applied to the Nazi murder of European Jews before the Second World War had ended, but the term was not ascribed exclusivity to it. By the late 1940s the term 'holocaust' (with or without a capital 'h') began to be more widely used in Israel as a translation of the Hebrew word *sho'ah* (literally translated as 'destruction' or 'disaster'), a term that Landau (1998) argued described the event "...much more satisfyingly" (p1). The employment of the word 'holocaust' as the official translation of sho'ah in the Israeli

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Declaration of Independence and in media coverage of Adolf Eichmann's trial in 1961, affirmed the term's place in the common lexicon. However, it wasn't until nearly twenty years later that the term became firmly linked with the Nazi's Final Solution with the broadcast of the television mini-series *Holocaust* in 1978 (based on Gerald Green's book of the same name). In the same year American President Carter established the *President's Commission on the Holocaust* and subsequently the *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum* in Washington was founded and constructed. Thus, the term 'Holocaust' (denoted with a capital 'H') became the standard word used to refer to the systematic annihilation of the European Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators.

Whilst arguably the use of the term *sho'ah* is more literally accurate, the word *Holocaust* is used more widely (see, for example, Short & Supple et al., 1998, Lawson, 2007). Rathenow argued in 2000 that the term *Holocaust* was exclusive, believing that "…the widespread use of the term 'Holocaust' is directly related to its Old Testament meaning of 'burnt offering', which tends to exclude all non-Jewish victims of National Socialism" (p64). Conversely, Clements believed that by 2006, the term broadly "…indicates a system of value judgements and normative statements which those engaged with teaching the subject come to acknowledge" (p40). She also advocated the use of capital letters for 'Holocaust Education' "…suggesting a theoretical framework which encompasses aims and objectives, as well as defining what constitutes good practice" (p40). Marks (2007), however, regarded this as a misnomer for describing what should actually be termed "National Socialism and the Holocaust" (p264). Nonetheless, for the purposes of this study, the terms 'Holocaust' and 'Holocaust Education' will be used to describe the event and the practice of educating about it.

1.4 Research topic.

As I will illustrate, there has been relatively little research within the field of Holocaust Education over the last thirty years. What little there has been has tended to focus on teachers' perspectives. Given my interest in pupils' engagement with the topic, particularly at an emotional level, I decided upon the following research topic:

> *"Holocaust Education: An investigation into the types of learning*
> *that take place when students encounter the Holocaust".*

It should be noted that this study concerns students' experiences and their perceptions of their learning. This is not an academic study of the Holocaust and I am not a Historian by training (although I currently teach History across Key Stage 3). My primary intention in undertaking this study was to investigate the world of the learner and their experiences of being taught about this complex part of our history.

1.5 Structure of the study.

Chapter 2 contains a review of the relevant literature and critical reflection on research within the field. In chapter 3, the research methodology is introduced and justified, along with the design of the data collection and data analysis and consideration of the relevant ethical issues. Chapter 4 presents the data results, along with discussion of the findings and a case study of the Holocaust survivor who visited the school of the study. Chapter 5 outlines the conclusions of the study, presenting the findings in terms of their implications for future practice and suggesting a theoretical reconceptualisation of the Holocaust. References and Appendices conclude the study.

1.6 Significance of the study.

This study aims to make a contribution in the field of Holocaust Education in the UK. Particularly, there is little contemporary research regarding pupils' emotional engagement with the topic and how this affects their learning. Indeed, there is little research focusing on pupils' experiences at all. By employing a qualitative methodology, I believe that this study provides an important and significant contribution towards the debate about the future of best practice in Holocaust Education in the UK. As a professional involved in Holocaust Education, this study has deepened my understanding of teaching and learning both within this subject area and more broadly across my practice as a teacher.

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Chapter 2: Literature Review.

2.1 Design of the Literature Review.

Bell (2005) defined an effective literature review as providing "…a picture …of the state of knowledge and of major questions in the subject" (p100). In the following chapter I have endeavoured to provide just such an overview of some of the major themes in academic research within the field of Holocaust Education. At the outset, I was unsure whether indeed there was a body of research substantial enough in volume or academic rigour to warrant a thorough review. Beginning with the University library and the online journal databases, I began to gather together research and articles relating to the topic. After a few weeks, I started to identify key words, major issues and themes from within the research, grouping and cross-referencing the works as appropriate (Bell, 2005). As the process went on, I felt I was becoming increasingly familiar with the field of research and the current debates within it (Hart, 2003). References were collated using *EndNote* software and electronic sources were filed and cross-referenced using *iDocuments* software.

As the literature review continued, I became increasingly aware of my own values and positioning as a researching professional. Whilst maintaining the breadth of my search, I had to guard against spending too much time searching and reviewing articles relating to professional interests (Hart, 2002 and 2003). Over a period of many months I was able to map the field of study and develop an awareness of the 'big picture' of Holocaust Education nationally and internationally. Haywood and Wragg (1982) reminded us that a critical literature review was more than a catalogue of ideas; it needed to provide "…insight" (p2) into those ideas. Such an insight involves a respectful querying, questioning and challenging of the research that has gone before. What follows is an overview of the key themes of the published research, with key texts critically evaluated in an attempt to achieve an "…effective evaluation of these documents in relation to the research being proposed" (Hart, 2003, p13).

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2.2 Holocaust Education in the UK prior to 2009.

The Task Force for International Co-operation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research conducted a comprehensive review of Holocaust Education provision within its member states in 2006. The Country Report for the UK (USHMM, 2006) illustrated that the United Kingdom had a markedly different relationship with the Holocaust when compared to the other European countries surveyed. This was because there were no authentic sites related to the Holocaust in the UK (except the site of a former forced-labour camp on Alderney in the Channel Islands, which remains undeveloped). Consequently, the Holocaust did not happen directly *to* us (a fact that had been specifically raised several years earlier during the Government's consultation process regarding the establishment of a national memorial day (HMSO, 1999)). The report suggested that while a lot of good practice was apparent in Holocaust Education (such as the Holocaust Educational Trust's *Lessons from Auschwitz Project*, which offers to take two pupils from every Secondary school in the UK to Auschwitz for a day each year), the information provided was sketchy and teaching could be haphazard, dependent upon the enthusiasm and knowledge of individual teachers. The report highlighted some deficiencies in curricular time allocation and teacher training, but found that the place of Holocaust Education was generally secure within the curriculum (a position which had been supported and strengthened by the introduction of Holocaust Memorial Day in 2001). The report observed that Holocaust survivors played an important role in Holocaust Education in the UK, but it also warned that the nature (both in content and intent) of Holocaust Education in the UK over the coming decades would necessarily change, as the number of survivors able to give their testimony in schools dwindled.

There was a concern at the time of publishing that teaching about the Holocaust was becoming increasingly problematic (Short et al., 1998). Brown and Davies (1998) blamed this on what they saw as "…a general climate which is hostile to democratic processes" (p76), which they saw evidenced in voter disenfranchisement, voter apathy and a widespread lack of participation in the political process in the UK. However, in a BBC opinion poll in April 2009, 43% of the 1,015 adults surveyed said that they thought there was not enough emphasis on teaching about the Holocaust in schools (BBC, 2009). Whilst such surveys of Holocaust 'knowledge' are inherently problematic (see, for example, Bischoping, 1998, Smith, 1995), this indicated a remarkable change in public

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attitudes in the UK. A previous BBC poll in 2004 (BBC, 2005), which was widely reported in the media, indicated that only 55% of the population had ever heard of Auschwitz (with the figure as low as 40% of women and those under 35). Only a year later, however, this figure had risen to 94%; including 86% of under-35s. In 2005, 50% of those surveyed felt they had a good knowledge of the subject, an increase of 30% from the previous year. In the interim, Britain had marked Holocaust Memorial Day for the first time on the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz and the United Nations had established Holocaust Memorial Day as a day of remembrance across the world. A series of high profile media events such as the screening of the BBC series *Auschwitz, the Nazis and the Final Solution* (Bergen et al., 2005) and Prince Harry's widely publicised Nazi uniform 'gaffe' (Pyatt & Larcombe, 2005), had apparently served to significantly raise the profile of the Holocaust within the public consciousness (Libowitz, 1990).

The importance of teaching about the Holocaust in the UK has been widely agreed (see for example, Lindquist, 2011, Short & Reed, 2004, Russell, 2008). Indeed, Harris (1989) believed it to be a subject that had to be taught "…under pain of judgement" (p137) and Short and Reed (2004) concurred, "…that if the Holocaust is taught well the case for its inclusion in the school curriculum is unassailable" (p1). However, Landau (1998) tempered this enthusiasm by warning that "…if taught badly, it can titillate, traumatise, mythologise and encourage a purely negative view of all Jewish history, of Jewish people and indeed, of *all* victim groups" (p12). Surprisingly, however, there appeared to be a dearth of research in the field of Holocaust Education in the UK prior to 2009. Perhaps the most significant early survey was that conducted by Geoffrey Short in 1995, arising from his concern over the poor quality of Holocaust Education evident in the few surveys from the previous decade. He cited Davidowicz's (1990) research in the United States, which found instances of misinformation, inadequate coverage of anti-Semitism and inappropriate use of drama in the 25 Holocaust curricula she surveyed. He also cited Supple's (1992) survey of Holocaust teaching in 35 Secondary schools in the northeast of England, which had uncovered a number of barriers to good quality teaching and learning. Particularly, Supple had revealed evidence of inadequate (or misleading) textbooks, pupils' innate racism, teachers' lack of confidence or subject knowledge and pupils being upset or titillated by the subject. However, Supple's work was carried out prior to the Education Reform Act of 1989 (before the Holocaust became a compulsory part of the National Curriculum) and the children within the survey were predominantly

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ethnically homogenous (since the area contained a very small ethnic minority population at the time). It is fair to conclude, therefore, that her findings could not be said to be representative of the wider British population.

Short wanted to assess the state of Holocaust Education after five years of the National Curriculum. He interviewed a sample of 32 History teachers between October 1994 and July 1995, using a semi-structured interview schedule. The teachers came from 32 maintained Secondary schools, selected randomly from across five Local Education Authorities in the southeast of England. Eight were from single sex schools, four were Roman Catholic and all but one had a mixed-ability intake. The majority of the schools were ethnically diverse, with a few having significant populations of Jewish pupils. Short found that the teachers overwhelmingly believed that the Holocaust should be taught and two thirds of his sample felt comfortable doing so. Of those who did not feel comfortable teaching the topic, their main concerns were about pupils' inappropriate responses, or a fear of not doing the topic justice. There was evidence that some teachers felt strongly that Year 9 was not the appropriate age to teach the topic, citing the immaturity of the children at that age and their consequently "…superficial" teaching of the topic (p172). Of the 32 participants, 22 felt Year 9 was an appropriate age, although 10 felt the topic should ideally be taught to older pupils. Of those who felt Year 9 was too young, only two felt so strongly that they did not teach the topic, or only taught the basics. Most of the participants said they believed the main benefit of teaching about the Holocaust was to teach their pupils about racism; although none said it was to tackle anti-Semitism specifically. Whilst emphasising the uniqueness of the Holocaust, the majority of Short's sample related their teaching to modern world events (such as the ethnic cleansing in Yugoslavia during the early 1990s). While teachers drew parallels between the events, they failed to explain the differences between ethnic cleansing and the Holocaust to their pupils, however. Short found that discussing anti-Semitism was sometimes avoided due to time constraints, or because teachers simply didn't believe their pupils were anti-Semitic. Indeed, over half of the sample made little or no reference to the history of anti-Semitism in their teaching (a statistic which was the same in both denominational and non-denominational schools). Whilst most of the teachers had not experienced anti-Semitism in their classrooms, there were reports of pupils harbouring inaccurate stereotypes about Jews. Conversely, some had experienced philo-Semitic attitudes amongst their pupils, to the exclusion of other groups persecuted by National Socialism.

Only two teachers said they spent time exploring pupils' preconceptions of Jews. Others said they didn't because they didn't think their pupils harboured any negative stereotypes, or that they felt this issue was dealt with in Religious Studies or Personal and Social Education. Teachers' reported that pupils sometimes raised the issue of Holocaust denial, with a minority of teachers raising it themselves as part of the study. Only one teacher dealt with this subject by challenging their pupils to consider the motivations of the deniers, however.

Short found evidence of teachers' fear of traumatising their pupils, with one preferring not to teach the topic – leaving pupils to read the chapter in the textbook for themselves instead. However, none of the sample reported ever having witnessed a child being traumatised in their lessons, although many had witnessed pupils being visibly moved. Specific concerns were raised by a minority of teachers about teaching the topic when there were Jewish pupils in the class, particularly those who had lost family members in the Holocaust. Other teachers reported dealing with concerned Jewish parents who felt the topic should be taught at home, rather than at school. Others said they would alter their teaching to accommodate Muslim or Asian students in their classes. Conversely, other teachers reported problems engaging their pupils *enough* on an emotional level. Some cited the immaturity of their pupils, while others felt this was due to the racist predispositions of the students. Some felt their pupils were unable to engage with videos and images in class that often were far less distressing than the horror films they had been exposed to at home. They believed that this prevented them from perceiving the Holocaust as a *real* event that happened to *real* people. Some of the teachers in the sample consequently felt that it was possibly better *not* to teach the topic than to do it badly, or too briefly.

Short found that teachers typically allocated between two to four hours to the Holocaust, with some spending over five hours on the topic and others as little as 50 minutes. About half of the sample was happy with their time allocation. Those who felt they needed more time, reported wanting to spend it on anti-Semitism, or the non-Jewish victims of the Nazis. A couple had wanted to explore cross-curricular ways of teaching the topic, including using role-play. Teachers reported a dearth of quality teaching resources. Many used videos such as *Genocide* from the *World at War* series (Bloomberg, 1974), or the schools' version of *Schindler's List* (Keneally & Zaillian, 1993, provided freely by the

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Holocaust Educational Trust). Teachers reported using all of *Schindler's List* – or excerpts from it – and that it had been universally well received by their pupils. Two teachers refused to show it, believing it would be too upsetting. Visiting Holocaust survivors had been used in only four of the schools, with even fewer making school visits to museums or exhibitions. In addition to the main study, Short conducted an extensive review of school textbooks. In them, he found that Jews were predominantly portrayed by their victimhood and he was concerned by the questionable way in which Holocaust denial was dealt with in the texts.

Short concluded that the problems faced by teachers educating Year 9 pupils were broadly similar to those in Supple's earlier study. Concerns about distressing pupils, the immaturity or racist preconceptions of the pupils, or not doing the topic justice, remained. He asserted that teachers were clearly committed to Holocaust Education, but saw its value and relevance primarily in anti-racist education, rather than in exploring, explaining or preventing anti-Semitism.

The scope of Short's research was undoubtedly far-reaching, covering teachers' attitudes and motivations, their perception of pupils' views, their classroom experiences and the resources available to them. Whilst the teachers were overwhelmingly committed to teaching the topic, he identified a number of factors that might precipitate what he called "…the felony of inadequate coverage" (p178). His sample of schools reflected a more ethnically diverse population than Supple's, although it is questionable whether this was more or less reflective of British society. Both had merits, but there was perhaps still a need for a study reflecting both more and less ethnically diverse schools. The study raised concerns over the immaturity of pupils in Year 9 and the increased likelihood of them being upset by the topic, but it fell short of actually asking pupils in Year 9 about their experiences – instead relying solely on their teachers' perceptions.

2.3 Holocaust Education in the UK after 2009.

As a consequence of the comparative lack of UK-specific data available for submission to The Task Force for International Co-operation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research in 2006, the newly-formed Holocaust Education Development Programme (HEDP) at the Institute of Education, London University, carried out a substantial piece of

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research between 2008-9, entitled *Teaching about the Holocaust in English Secondary Schools – An empirical study of national trends, perspectives and practice* (Pettigrew et al., 2009). The research was intended and designed to give a comprehensive empirical portrait of Holocaust Education in English Secondary schools, which the authors felt had hitherto been lacking. The research was also intended "…to inform the design and delivery of a high quality, high impact continuing professional development programme [CPD] that has the potential to profoundly shape teaching and learning about the Holocaust" (p2), for which a place would be offered free of charge to one teacher from every English Secondary and Middle school. The research and the subsequent CPD programme were primarily designed for History teachers, since it was within History that the topic of the Holocaust was located within the English National Curriculum as a compulsory area of study.

The research employed a mixed methodology. Phase 1 involved the collection of quantitative data through a 54 question online survey, open to any teacher in a maintained English Secondary or Middle school. The instrument yielded an opportunity sample of 2,108 respondents and steps were taken to ensure the sample was as geographically and demographically diverse and representative as possible. A statistical data analysis software package (SPSS) was used to analyse the raw data and further analysis was done to ensure reliability. Open answers were processed using NVIVO for analysis and coding. Phase 2 involved the collection of qualitative data through follow-up interviews with groups of teachers. Respondents for this phase were drawn from volunteers and selection was targeted to reflect the diversity of schools and teachers in England and their geographical spread. Thus it was a purposive sample of 68 participants, drawn from 24 schools (54 History teachers, 9 Religious Studies teachers and 5 teachers of other subjects). Interviews followed a semi-structured guide, based on preliminary analyses of data from Phase 1. Transcripts were processed using NVIVO for coding and further analysis. Recurring themes were then compared with those from the online survey in Phase 1.

The data revealed that the Holocaust was taught predominantly in History and Religious Studies (RS) lessons, although there was evidence that a significant amount of teaching also took place in Citizenship, Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and English lessons (in decreasing order). There was also evidence of it being taught in subjects as

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diverse as Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) and Drama and in other Holocaust-related activities outside of timetabled hours, such as Holocaust Memorial Day events. There was evidence that many teachers who did not teach about the Holocaust explicitly, did so informally (although some were only prepared to *talk* about it rather than to *teach* about it). There was overwhelming evidence that teaching about the Holocaust was concentrated in Year 9. Where pupils had encountered the subject prior to Year 9, it tended to be in subjects other than History. History teachers reported teaching the topic usually for 4-6 hours in total (within a reported range of 1-20 hours).

Teachers reported that when teaching about the Holocaust, the topics most likely for inclusion were: the experiences of individuals persecuted by the Nazis (88%), Auschwitz-Birkenau (87%), propaganda and stereotyping (78%) and Kristallnacht (70%). Teachers were least likely to include the impact of the Holocaust on The Declaration of Human Rights (27%), Jewish social and cultural life before 1933 (26%) and the contribution of the Jews to European social and cultural life before 1933 (25%). 76% of teachers said they were likely to use feature films, citing *Schindler's List* (Keneally & Zaillian, 1993) as the most frequently used / most useful resource (p43) (although there were some concerns expressed that such films 'fictionalised' the topic). 81% said they were likely to use documentaries, with significant reference made to other audio-visual materials. 73% used resources they had made themselves. 20% of teachers used visits to memorial sites, museums or research centres outside the UK, whilst 28% used such facilities within the UK. 16% invited guest / expert speakers into school and 25% invited a survivor (which was frequently cited as being valuable, but had often been restricted by time or financial concerns).

Whilst most teachers tried to give students the key historical facts of the Holocaust, 92% agreed / strongly agreed that they allowed time for debate and discussion of the issues as well. 88% agreed that they asked students to consider moral or ethical questions related to the Holocaust – most notably 97% of RS teachers. 91% of teachers used individual testimony to help students engage empathetically with the subject and 72% reported wanting students "...to have a deep emotional response to this topic" (p42). Teachers broadly reported agreement that Year 9 was the right age to cover the topic with pupils, explaining that pupils were mature enough to understand / cope with the topic by then and that by that age they would have built up good teacher / pupil relationships which would

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underpin effective learning. All of the teachers who felt they could not introduce the topic of the Holocaust until they had had time to get to know their pupils well, felt that the quality of the relationship between the teacher and the pupils was key to effective learning in this topic. Several teachers admitted difficulty understanding the Holocaust themselves and some said they found it emotionally difficult to teach about it. Some reported anger at their pupils' apparent *lack* of emotional engagement with the topic. Teachers expressed concerns about balancing their desire to get their pupils to be emotionally moved by the subject, with their obvious desire to avoid traumatising them.

In the online survey, there was broad agreement about the importance of teaching about the Holocaust. However, there was some confusion over the *aims* of teaching the topic. In the interviews, there was clear evidence that teachers taught about the Holocaust to teach a *modern* lesson – to prevent similar atrocities from happening again. In all of the interviews "...the relationship between the past and the present – and in particular, the utility of studying the past to make sense of and / or influence the present – was a key concern" (p81). 41.3% of teachers who had experience of teaching the topic, agreed / strongly agreed that it was 'very difficult' to do so effectively. With the notable exception of RS teachers, the most frequently cited challenge to teaching the topic was the time allocated to it. 42% of those who had taught the topic felt that devoting insufficient time to the Holocaust could do more harm than good. There were also concerns raised over the lack of prescription within the topic, although this was paradoxically also cited as being a good thing. Teachers generally felt that written work and formal assessments were less important than allocating time to reflection, discussion and debate. Teachers felt that the outcome of Holocaust Education would be apparent in years to come – not in assessment results, but in pupils' attitudes.

Just under a quarter of experienced teachers (23.3%) said that the cultural diversity of their pupils affected how and what they taught about the Holocaust. Cultural diversity was seen generally as a positive resource to draw on, with none of the teachers saying it would prevent them from teaching the topic and very few reporting incidents of anti-Semitism or Holocaust denial. When questioned more deeply in interviews, the group teachers were most concerned about were children of German heritage. Indeed, teachers felt that cultural *homogeneity* was a far greater challenge than diversity was within their classrooms.

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On the whole, there was evidence of little or poor collaboration between different school departments engaged in teaching about the Holocaust. There was evidence of good support from appropriate external specialist organisations, such as those involved with arranging survivor visits, for example. Teachers generally felt the internet was an unhelpful tool, as it gave pupils access to too much information; much of it unedited, factually inaccurate or revisionist. Whilst it was not the intention of the study to assess teachers' knowledge of the Holocaust, nine knowledge-based questions were included to identify possible areas where teachers' subject knowledge might need developing in the subsequent CPD programme. These revealed some significant gaps / misunderstandings in teachers' knowledge and an apparent lack of knowledge of recent research within the field. For example, there was evidence of a fundamental confusion amongst teachers as to *how* to define the Holocaust.

The HEDP research showed that teaching about the Holocaust in English schools was broadly in line with the statutory requirements of the time. The findings highlighted a distinct lack of emphasis on teaching about the richness and variety of pre-war Jewish life and culture and teachers' choices of topics indicated a tendency to study the Jews as 'objects' of persecution. The authors felt that while further research in this area was needed, these preliminary findings suggested that "...a perpetrator narrative predominates" in classrooms (p40). 24% of all teachers said they 'never' or 'seldom' had adequate resources for teaching about the Holocaust and this was reflected in the large number who reported using resources they had made themselves. Despite relatively few schools inviting survivors in to talk with pupils, survivor visits were said to have a profound impact on pupils. The report noted the issues this raised for Holocaust Education in the future, when the event would no longer be within living-memory. As a consequence of these findings, the authors concluded that further research was required into the pedagogical, resource and curriculum choices of teachers.

The findings concluded that "…teaching about the Holocaust appeared to cause teachers to consider their pastoral relationships with students in ways that some had not necessarily experienced before" (p92). They also showed that the Holocaust was frequently being taught to prevent similar events from happening in the future and that, therefore, the outcomes of the teaching may not be evident until long into the future.

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Whilst this was a desirable outcome for the future of humanity, it raised challenges for formal curriculum-based Holocaust Education. There appeared to be confusion – or at least, disagreement – over whether teachers were teaching the topic as a *historical* lesson, or a *moral* lesson. The evidence suggested that many teachers used the topic of the Holocaust to open their pupils' minds and to move them away from a black and white understanding of the past, towards a more complex understanding of different truths and realities. The report acknowledged that this was a complex area and required further study.

Given the evident confusion among teachers as to the exact definition of the term 'Holocaust', the authors asked whether this was a matter of semantics, or whether teachers' definitions of the term would have an impact on their teaching. Responses to the online survey appeared to suggest that teachers' knowledge of the Holocaust had a greater influence on their understanding of the term than their subject background. During the interview phase, there was evidence that teachers were revising or diluting the term 'Holocaust'. For example, teachers were uncertain over the use of the word 'shoah' and there was evidence of confusion over Holocaust Memorial Day's apparent widening of the term to include other victims. The authors suggested that the apparent conviction with which teachers approached the subject, coupled with misconceptions perpetuated within popular-culture references to the Holocaust, might actually conspire to lead teachers from all subject backgrounds to teach about the Holocaust with zest, but inaccuracy.

The authors' intention was to produce a piece of empirical research "...in a manner unprecedented in either scope or scale" (p11) and they undoubtedly achieved this. Their findings represented the most extensive and comprehensive review of Holocaust Education in England compiled to date. However, the sample was not as representative as it first appeared. The sample was restricted to teachers in maintained schools in England and cannot therefore be said to be representative of all children in English schools, or indeed the UK. This could be regarded as a missed opportunity but is a consequence of the conditions of funding of the HEDP. Further, the sample in Phase 1 was manipulated to ensure it was demographically and geographically representative (for example, targeting certain locations with advertising material to encourage participation if take-up had been slow in that region). It is arguable whether this then remained truly the opportunity sample it claimed to be. Again, in Phase 2, volunteers were selected based

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on their location and type of school and it is questionable whether the views of teachers in 24 schools can be said to be in any way representative of all schools.

In Phase 1, questions were mainly closed, or employed Likert scales. Whilst this made a considerable amount of data manageable for the researchers, there appear to be areas where the nature of the question would have influenced the respondent. For example, when asked *'which of the following statements are accurate with regard to Kristallnacht'* (question 28), the only response which mentioned a date was *'Kristallnacht occurred on 9-10 November 1938'*. Respondents may have been unsure of the exact date of the incident, but since this was the only date-specific option, they may have been inclined to choose it. Had the question been open, or presented a range of closed options (different dates), the trend in teachers able to identify the correct date may have been very different.

The research instruments were designed primarily for use with History teachers. Whilst this is not unreasonable (given that the Holocaust is located in the statutory guidelines for History), the evidence they have produced points to the topic being taught formally and informally in a wider range of subjects, age groups and settings than the National Curriculum required. It may be that to get a true picture of Holocaust Education within England, a similar instrument needs to be designed to specifically investigate teaching about the Holocaust in Religious Studies or Citizenship, for example. Where the research instrument in Phase 1 was primarily concerned with issues such as the content of teaching programmes, a further instrument should perhaps now explore the pupil / teacher relationship which so many respondents said was key to effective learning. In essence, what this research produces is a 'muddy' picture of the state of Holocaust Education in England. It answers some questions, but poses many more. Whilst the evidence suggested that statutory requirements were being met, the ways in which that was being achieved appeared to be disparate. In some respects, whilst the research claimed to present a picture of unprecedented scope, what it actually produced was a document outlining and identifying the diversity of areas requiring further research.

As a consequence of the HEDP Report, the United Kingdom delegation resubmitted their country report to the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research in late 2010 (Foreign & Commonwealth Office and

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Department for Education, 2010). Whilst acknowledging its own limitations, the report provided a far more detailed and empirically based – and positive – picture of Holocaust Education in the UK than had been submitted four years earlier.

2.4 What kind of learning takes place?

A few years before the HEDP report, Clements (2006) endeavoured to explore what *kind* of learning processes took place in Holocaust Education. Recognising the 'working partnership' (Lenga, 1998) that existed between teachers and pupils, Clements' study looked at the dynamics of that relationship and the roles both parties played. Langer (1998) identified the relationship as being that of an adult (the teacher), providing keys to doors of knowledge that once entered through, would widen the child's moral horizons. Clements argued that when it came to teaching about the Holocaust, however, this was an over-simplified view.

Clements adopted a qualitative methodology, based on semi-structured interviews, to explore the perceptions and experiences of teachers and pupils in the hope of constructing a model of learning. A pilot study was carried out with two small groups of professionals - one group of teachers in New Jersey and one group of trainee teachers in the UK. From the initial study, Clements identified two consistent themes. First, nearly all participants said they felt it was necessary for pupils to be emotionally engaged with the topic if learning was to take place. Second, whilst participants were clear that teaching about the Holocaust had innate value in teaching pupils lessons for the future, they were confused as to the precise nature of what those lessons were and how they were conveyed (and, indeed, how they could assess how successful they had been).

The main study took place on a larger scale in three schools in the UK, employing similar semi-structured interviews with RS and History teachers and Year 9 pupils. Both teachers and pupils reported feeling that one of the main lessons to be learnt from the Holocaust was to prevent racism and prejudice in the future. Many of the participants mentioned the emotional aspects of the lessons, with three of the teachers saying that they saw this as the key lesson for the pupils. However, when asked what they remembered about the topic, pupils responses included words like "…shocked" or "…disgusted" (p43), suggesting an apparent inability to fit what they had learned into any recognisable

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framework. Further, both groups expressed difficulty understanding the various moral viewpoints of different players within the event, such as perpetrators or bystanders. Some pupils attempted to find refuge in a framework that placed the events of the Holocaust alongside those of other totalitarian regimes they had knowledge of. However, Clements observed that those pupils who had met a survivor were resistant to such comparisons. Pupils responded that whilst they did not consider their own moral choices to be radically altered by the experience, they did feel "…better informed" (p44). Clements explored the nature of the pupil / teacher relationship and the shared emotional experience of teaching and learning about the Holocaust. Pupils reported being clearly emotionally engaged, but being keen not to be publicly so. Similarly, one teacher reported consciously trying to stay emotionally impassioned, although his pupils reported being moved by his clear emotional engagement.

In the discussion of her findings, Clements reflected on the Holocaust as "…a restrained text" (p45), in which pupils were protected from the true horrors of the topic. This reflected what Arendt (1965) termed "…the banality of evil" (p.xiv), but in a way that, in Clements' opinion, "…may render the text impotent" (p45) for pupils. Teachers, she suggested, took respite in their pupils' obvious emotional engagement (even if they were unclear precisely what kind of learning was taking place). Clements argued that learning about the Holocaust was a *psychological* process rather than the simple acquisition of knowledge and any assessment of the outcome(s) could be problematic. She argued that Holocaust Education addressed the "…emptiness" (p46) outside of the structures within which we normally view society. This evoked a "…sea of confusion, emotion and exploration" for pupils and teachers in which they both "…appear to flounder together" (p46). Clements saw this as immensely valuable, however, since this upending of the traditional teacher / pupil relationship empowered pupils to learn in a new way. However unintentional, the loss of power by the teacher handed over the learning to the pupil who was then able to construct his or her own learning. In conclusion, Clements warned of following lessons about the Holocaust with lessons that try to explain it – such as lessons about racism, prejudice, etc. In doing this, the teacher would 'reset' the relationship and power would be wrestled back from the pupils, thus undermining their emerging, self-constructed learning. She summed up the success of Holocaust Education as being a marriage of two key factors – pupils' shock at being presented with such incomprehensible evil and their teachers' (unconscious) declaration of impotence as an educator and / or protector of

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their charges. As such, learning about the Holocaust was "...both a destructive and creative process" (p46) in which it was up to the pupil to construct their own learning and comprehension of the topic and to position themselves in relation to it.

Clements' research clearly located the Holocaust as a unique learning event that pushed the accepted teacher / pupil relationship into chaos. Further, it went against the accepted process of education – that the teacher teaches, the pupils learn and the subsequent outcomes can be assessed and measured. Since she argued that the process was as much a psychological / emotional one as a knowledge-based one, the outcomes might not be measurable (or visible) immediately, or for many years to come. This research illustrated that there is much more to Holocaust Education than the simple transfer of knowledge – it was as much dependent on *how* children learned as *what* they learned. It fell short, however, of suggesting a model of how the success of the process could be ultimately measured, if at all. Clements appeared to raise more questions than she answered, although it is questionable whether she saw this as a consequence or an intention of her research. What she set out to do was to make some sense of the "...sea of confusion" (p46) that occurred within Holocaust Education. What she achieved was to make explicit the contradictory – and often wrestling – roles and positions of the teachers and pupils within the learning experience.

A few years earlier, Gallant & Hartman (2001) had also considered how best to assess the emotional learning that happened in Holocaust Education. They saw the ultimate aim of Holocaust Education as being "...constructive activism in which we attempt to repair the past so as to heal the future" (p2) and likened it to the Jewish concept of 'tikkun olam' (repairing the world). "As teachers," they said, "...it is important to lead students to positive attitudinal orientations as well as factual knowledge, and to help them construct action follow-throughs by way of completing the learning process" (p6). As such, they lamented how previous research in the field had concentrated mainly upon the measurable, such as reviews of teaching resources. Holocaust Education, they said, flew in the face of contemporary classroom pedagogy (with its emphasis on the measurable), because it dealt with the emotional and affective aspects of learning. They felt there was a need to examine remembrance and the attitudinal dispositions of pupils (both before and after their encounter with the Holocaust). They identified a number of themes that needed to be tackled, if the Holocaust was to have relevance to pupils' future moral attitudes,

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without trivialising or subordinating it. Thus, they said, pupils could bridge the gap between the historical and the contemporary, making for "…a more profound learning experience" (p9). Drawing on psychological models from the previous 50 years, they believed that by careful selection of resources, teachers could personalise the Holocaust to enable their pupils to see it through the eyes of others. In this way pupils could move from viewing the historical *fact*, to seeing it as *lived* experience. They advocated a holistic approach to teaching which promoted 'pedagogical emotions' (Baum, 1996), where pupils were supported in exploring and explaining their developing emotions as they encountered new emotional experiences or emotional realities. This would mean a tripartite approach to assessment that evaluated the cognitive (factual knowledge), affective (attitudinal change) and actional (predispositions to act) outcomes of the curriculum and pedagogy. They recognised that such assessment could only be effective if applied to disparate groups of subjects and pedagogical settings to be able to draw *comparative* conclusions. Failing to take account of these different facets of Holocaust Education would be to become complicit in miring both students and teachers in another collective form of denial, they concluded.

In advancing this theory, Gallant and Hartman identified a sound model for assessing Holocaust Education, which in some respects went further than Clements' subsequent research. Where Clements commented on the pedagogical 'chaos' Holocaust Education caused, Gallant and Hartman at least made some suggestion at a method for evaluating the process, albeit a complex or impracticable one.

2.5 Pupils' emotional readiness and engagement.

Schools have a legal responsibility to nurture pupils' spiritual well-being and resourcefulness to help them cope with the "…challenging experiences of life" (NCC, 1993, p3). This obviously presents some concerns for the educator who is trying to teach about the Holocaust. Clements (2006) observed that "...the text of the Holocaust is not merely 'difficult', but is deeply challenging" for learners at any age (p45), while Landau (1998) reflected on "…our emotional and intellectual helplessness in the face of the enormity of the Holocaust" (p10). On the other hand, Bauer (1990) countered that it was actually the *mundane-ness* of the Holocaust that made it so inexplicable. This innate contradiction presents schools with the problem of contextualising the Holocaust in a way

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that facilitates children's learning, whilst protecting them from the horrors. Barnett (1997) posited the idea that an academic community should be based on "…critical being" (p173) and that learning in the academic realm should be at the exclusion of values and emotions. Whilst such an approach to Holocaust Education would make learning risk-free for both the teacher and the pupil, it might seriously impede any attempt at transformative learning. If learning about the Holocaust is to be transformative, it might necessarily be to some extent traumatic. Failure to prepare children emotionally and intellectually for their encounter with the Holocaust in the classroom risks what Short and Supple et al. (1998) termed "Auschwitz shock" (p35) (that is, the inability to assimilate the horrors encountered). Schwartz (1990) also warned teachers to "…take care against overwhelming impressionable minds with frightful depictions of piled corpses and endless statistics attesting to mass killings", for fear that "…such an approach can numb and de-sensitize students, or may even prove entertaining to aficionados of horror films" (p102, see also Salmons, 2003, Schatzker, 1980). The risk of counter-productive learning is ever-present when teaching about unimaginable horror. As Weiner (1992) warned, when "…faced with nightmarish images – gassing, cremation, rampant disease and hunger – a student may snatch his mind away as instinctively as he would pull his hand from the fire. The teacher who hopes to coax him closer to an understanding of the Holocaust must do so with skill, creativity, sensitivity and caring" (p37). Navigating this minefield of potential trauma, titillation and self-preservation is a difficult process for any teacher and their pupils, if they are to make the process of Holocaust Education a positive and beneficial one.

In her unpublished 1998 PhD research study, Burke (cited in Burke, 2003) explored the intellectual and emotional challenges teenage pupils experienced whilst learning about suffering and death during their study of the Holocaust and the role Religious Studies could play in that process. Burke studied both teacher and pupil perspectives of learning about the Holocaust. She employed a variety of methods to elicit both qualitative and quantitative data in a study involving over one hundred, 14 year-old pupils from the West Midlands of the UK. The participants were drawn from a variety of schools (single-sex and mixed, multi-cultural and more culturally homogenous), all of who had visited the *Anne Frank: A History for Today* exhibition and followed the accompanying study pack produced by Walsall Local Education Authority. A pilot study was carried out in one school and then a final questionnaire was administered to 92 pupils. The items for the

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questionnaire were developed from a Delphi study, involving an international group of Holocaust Educators. The questionnaires were followed up by several focus group interviews involving pupils from a variety of educational and religious backgrounds and abilities. Given the complexity of the topic being studied, Burke's intention was to triangulate by method in drawing her conclusions.

Burke's first questionnaire item asked which images the pupils could remember from their study of the Holocaust. She found "…clear evidence of the impact of visual images on pupils" (p58) – particularly images they had seen from the exhibition, or from films such as *Schindler's List* (Keneally & Zaillian, 1993), or other images from the death camps or from the killings or mistreatment of the Jews. In the focus groups, Burke asked the pupils to consider whether they thought they were old enough to cope with the Holocaust and whether their teacher should have protected them from trauma. While one group thought their teacher should have sheltered them, the other group saw it as a necessary part of growing up. Burke concluded that there was a need for further study regarding the impact images had on pupils and how these images contributed to learning. Whilst warning that some pupils could develop an unhealthy voyeuristic interest in such images, she believed that "...it may be the case that images play an important part in learning and pupils need such consolidation to overcome a state of disbelief" (p59).

Burke's second question asked pupils whether they felt threatened by the events they were studying. In their responses, just over half (53%) of the pupils said they felt threatened because it could happen again, whilst 62% felt threatened by the proximity of the events historically. 54% were concerned that it could have happened to them. Of the pupils who felt threatened, Burke asked them in the focus groups what age they thought was appropriate for study of the Holocaust. She found that most pupils agreed that 14 was the right age and that "...the majority of pupils felt they were old enough for the study, but only just" (p59). Pupils in the focus groups felt that younger pupils would lack the intellectual and emotional maturity and life experience to cope with the topic.

Burke's final question asked pupils what they found difficult when learning about the Holocaust. She found that pupils were "...clearly struggling with the number of victims" (p60) and the geographical and historical details of the topic. Some commented on the uniqueness of the Holocaust in history, and the way the Jews were treated. Given the

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strong emotional engagement evident in their responses to various questions, few pupils reported finding it difficult to talk about their emotions (although a few concerns were raised relating to the audience, such as finding it difficult to talk in front of their teacher). Burke found evidence that pupils found it more difficult to articulate their feelings when studying aspects they considered to be 'closer to home' – such as the atrocities perpetrated upon young children. She observed that events such as these caused pupils to be "...unable to leave the Holocaust in the past" (p60).

Burke concluded that the pupils were undoubtedly moved by the experience of learning about the Holocaust, but she was unsure to what extent images were an 'obstacle' to learning (or indeed whether contemporary pupils were desensitised by the graphic images all around them on television or in computer games). She felt that two things were clear, however. First, Burke asserted that pupils found it difficult to accept what they had learned had really happened. Burke warned that, "...this state of cognitive dissonance that many pupils portrayed, involved disequilibrium and created an uncertainty which may mitigate against new learning" (p62). If this is the case, she suggested that pupils and teachers might need to 'deconstruct' part of the pupils' prior experience if they were to assimilate this new and shocking knowledge. Second, Burke expressed a concern that teachers needed to be adequately prepared and equipped to support pupils as they went through this traumatic learning event, if it was to be at all affective and transformative.

In her discussion, Burke considered how Religious Education could provide "...both content and method to support such [traumatic] learning" (p63). She asserted that Religious Studies could provide a theological framework (or frameworks) within which to try to explore and understand the content of the event. By drawing on research from the field of 'death education' and death in different religious traditions, Burke believed teachers could help pupils move towards 'closure' in their study of the Holocaust, within the context of their developing worldview (although she acknowledged that bringing this about could be as complex as finding an appropriate way to begin the topic (Strom & Parsons, 1982, p16)). Burke concluded that children encountering the Holocaust would be uncomfortably changed *forever* – that their worldview and their place within the world and their view of their own mortality would be irrevocably altered, but that Religious Studies teachers could "...have a vital role in school encounters with the Holocaust by drawing upon religious materials and exploring questions about existence with pupils" (p64).

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Burke's study provided a comprehensive picture of how the pupils engaged emotionally with the potentially traumatic material they had been exposed to. Her sample was broad in terms of ability and educational settings and her use of focus groups enabled her to gather further, rich data based on the questionnaire responses. However, the focus group responses did raise some issues about the potential for group members' opinions to be influenced by their peers (evident in the fact that the two groups gave opposing opinions). Individual interviews would have ruled out this particular risk of bias. The study found that pupils felt threatened when they could identify with the victims, but it fell short of evaluating the effectiveness of the pupils' prior religious education – specifically how they identified with or against Jews or other persecuted groups. Whilst considering how Religious Studies could support pupils' learning about death, it did not examine how the learners' relationship with the deceased affected that process. Burke clearly illustrated that pupils wanted to discuss their new knowledge and experiences with parents, siblings, friends, etc. (see also Rowling, 1996). She asked whether this was part of the assimilation process, or an indication of deficit learning, but did not explore this further.

In her research, Burke raised an important issue concerning the role of Religious Studies teachers in complimenting History teachers in delivering effective and transformative Holocaust Education. The relationship between the two disciplines is not always clearly defined, however, and in some schools there may be no relationship at all. Hector's (2000) research revealed varying attitudes amongst History teachers towards teaching about the Holocaust. While some responses were pragmatic (taking the consequentialist view that the subject had to be taught to fulfil the requirements of the syllabus), others felt they had a *moral* responsibility to teach the young about this period of history before they ended their compulsory education (see also Althof & Berkowitz, 2006, Pring, 2001, Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2005). It is not surprising therefore, that Brown and Davies (1998) suggested that teachers found it difficult to define the purpose of the work clearly. While statutory study of the Holocaust in the UK falls within Key Stage 3 History, the topic undoubtedly sits "…particularly comfortably" (Hector, 2000, p109) within the remit of most Religious Studies departments as well (see also Burke, 2003, Foster & Mercier, 2000b). Hector (2000), suggested that this might be because Religious Studies teachers felt "…a little more confident" (p109) than others in teaching and talking about matters of death. She suggested that while History teachers might encourage pupils to learn *about* the

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subject, Religious Studies teachers encouraged them to learn *from* the subject. She took this comparison further by employing Stradling's (1984) distinction between a 'product-based' approach to teaching (where the subject matter was of most importance), and a 'process-based' approach (where the skills the pupil employed and developed were of most importance). Hector suggested that a product-based approach might be particularly used with younger children (when, for example, the Holocaust was mentioned within a study of Judaism), whilst a process-based approach might be employed with older pupils (if, for example, the Holocaust was taught within a topic on prejudice and discrimination).

Burke (2003) agreed that Religious Studies was well matched to teaching about the Holocaust. However, she described the relationship between Religious Studies and the Holocaust as being "...hazy" (p54) since some teachers saw the relationship as vital and intrinsic, whilst others saw it as incidental and contrived. Day and Burton (1996) argued against "...secularising" (p198) the Holocaust by neglecting the theological aspects of the event in favour of themes that could be "...more easily handled" (p212). However, Burke's assertion was that Religious Studies and the Holocaust were causally linked because the Holocaust was facilitated by the Nazis' manipulation of two millennia of Christian anti-Semitism and because many victims – Jews and Christians – found refuge in their faith to survive. She further suggested that a thorough study of religious traditions gave pupils a scaffold for supporting their learning about death, suffering and peoples' responses to these. Burke (2003) and Scott (1991) believed that the skills learned in Religious Studies were ideal for studying the religious, personal and contextual aspects of the Holocaust. Day and Burton (1996) identified a number of theological themes (such as the resilience of faith) that were, they argued, *religious* rather than *historical* aspects of the Holocaust. Burke agreed that there were particular themes (such as the place of religion in society, or how religion affected people's responses to atrocities) that Religious Studies was ideally and better suited to explore.

Surprisingly, Brown and Davies (1998) noted "...little or no interchange between teachers" of History and Religious Studies (p79, see also Bousted & Davies, 1993, Hargreaves, 1991, Lortie, 1975, Whitty et al, 1994). Whilst they found that Religious Studies teachers were sometimes positive about the possibilities of co-operation with other teachers (particularly History teachers) "...this collaboration did not normally take place, even in the form of an exchange of information about what was being taught" (p79). They even found

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evidence of some explicit opposition amongst Religious Studies teachers to co-operating with History departments. They found similar evidence amongst some History teachers, who felt that the History department was better placed to teach about the Holocaust as a 'higher status' department than Religious Studies. Some History teachers argued that the Holocaust was purely a "…social phenomenon" (p80) rather than a religious one and as such should be studied within the socio-historical context alone. Foster and Mercier (2000a) asserted that there were many dimensions to the Holocaust, which necessitated a multi-disciplinary approach because, "…without the religious dimension pupils will be unable to piece together the many parts of the puzzle" (p29, see also Broadbent, 2000). Consequently, Brown and Davies (1998) argued for a 'two pronged approach' to improve teaching and to avoid different departments repeating work or using the same resources. To complicate the picture further, there has been a growing body of evidence that the Holocaust has been taught in other areas of the curriculum, such as English (see, for example, Baer, 2000, Kidd, 2005, Powers, 2007, Spector, 2005). Given the lack of clarity about *who* has been teaching about the Holocaust and *what* they had been teaching, Harris lamented in 1989 that teaching about the Holocaust remained "…the null curriculum" (p136). By this, she meant that the Holocaust curriculum was a curriculum of omission – "…that paradoxical curriculum which exists because it does not exist" (p136).

Burke's (2003) research explored pupils' experiences at the limits of their 'comfort zone' and challenged the actions of the teacher *in loco parentis*. Steutel and Spieker (2000) showed that pupils had to put their faith in their teachers if they were to believe them and that if they did this, they would take it on trust that their intentions were good and that what they had to teach them was worthwhile. In the place of a parent then, a teacher would be expected to nurture and protect – but in teaching about the Holocaust they appear to be breaking this unspoken contract. Further, Clements' (2006) research found that whilst pupils felt their teachers were being emotionally open with them, the teachers had actually been aiming to be impassive. She observed that teachers felt there was an "…imperative to learn through controlled emotion", which could only be achieved when "…the teacher initiates a change in the pedagogical relationship, specifically in terms of 'power'" (p46). Faced with such dichotomous intentions and actions, Thornton (1990) reflected with a degree of hopeless resignation that, when struggling to teach Elie Wiesel's *Night*,

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"I cannot teach this book. Instead,
I drop copies on their desks,
Like bombs on sleeping towns…
I simply want the words
to burn their comfortable souls
and leave them scarred for life" (p87).

2.6 The ethics of horrifying students.

Whilst teaching what Gallant and Hartman (2001, p5) termed "…this most complex and emotionally taxing area of history", it is surely inevitable that teachers would expose their students to emotionally challenging information or material. Burke (2003) and Clements (2006) explored how emotionally complex learning about the Holocaust could be – and the state of flux in which it could place the traditional teacher / pupil relationship. However, little had been done to explore the dilemma facing teachers as to *how much* they could – or should – emotionally upset their students and whether this was an acceptable – or desirable – part of the process. Whilst Burke (2003) questioned whether emotional 'scarring' was a necessary part of effective Holocaust Education, Brina (2003) asserted that "…shocking students, [was] also about disturbing their preconceptions" (p525). Brina's point was that students came to the topic from a variety of social, cultural and historical backgrounds and that their preconceptions and dispositions would be consequently different. As a result, she believed that different things would shock and affect different students in different ways. This affirmed Gallant and Hartman's (2001) observation that it was possible that a range of outcomes (desirable and undesirable) might occur; what might engage one pupil might traumatise another and this might be inextricably causally linked to their background. Brina's concern was that as a result of a number of norms and values implicit in the academic world, students and teachers might therefore (intentionally or not) collude in avoiding tackling difficult social, political or historical issues as a means of maintaining the status quo.

Brina's study was based on her experiences of teaching a third level undergraduate social psychology module at the University of the West of England. Brina co-taught the module *The Holocaust and other massacres: A comparative study of genocide*, alongside four fellow academics. Whilst being committed to the transformative educational goals of the course, Brina questioned whether the implicit complex pedagogical issues of a course of

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this nature had ever fully been explored or addressed. Her findings came from the department's standard questionnaire used to evaluate modules upon completion, across the faculty. Her other evidence came from video recordings of seminar discussions involving four groups of 14 consenting students, recorded over a year. Individual interviews were then conducted with 15 volunteer students from these seminar groups. Her study was prompted by an incident while she had been teaching a small group about technological advances in Nazi Germany. During the discussion, one student put her head in her hands, appearing to be very upset. But she wasn't crying; she was laughing at a strange thought that had struck her. It occurred to Brina that contrary to post-Enlightenment conventional wisdom, rational discussion did not necessarily lead to rational reactions.

Brina found evidence of a variety of reactions to the course. One student felt that a course dealing with oppression should begin a little 'nearer to home' (such as studying Bristol's role in the slave trade, for example). Another student praised the 'scientific' approach of the module, which she found lent the topic more legitimacy than previous religious-based encounters with the topic. One commented on the emotional connection she had made with a picture of a woman on the front of a textbook to whom she could relate, which had made the topic "…very real – and very important" (p521). Brina noted a common response towards the module – specifically towards the materials students were presented with – was anger. One student who did very well on the course, formally complained about the lack of care shown to her by not giving her adequate warning before exposing her to explicit film footage. Brina noted that her complaint "…was not that she *couldn't* watch such films, but that she shouldn't be *made* to" (p521). Other students reported a need to disconnect with the topic for fear of others seeing their distress, or because of feelings of assault or anger. In her study, Brina found evidence of fascination, titillation, embarrassment, upset, laughter, anger, denial, deep-rooted personal engagement, withdrawal, etc., yet she found that these responses did not necessarily relate to the affective impact the topic had on the students. She noted that emotional engagement alone was not enough to trigger academic success, but that students who did well on the course found a way to channel their emotional response, to find a personal *motivation* for wanting to know more.

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In the discussion of her findings, Brina cited Cohen's (2001) work on the denial of atrocities. Cohen stated that for individuals to accept and take action about things they would rather deny or not know about, four conditions had to be in place:

1. They had to *cognitively* understand the event (framing it with such words as 'genocide' or 'evil', for example).
2. They had to *emotionally* understand it and share in that emotion (in this case 'outrage', 'shame', 'compassion', etc.)
3. They had to *morally* engage with it and share in the outrage at the event.
4. They had to have the *cultural* ability to know what needs to be done and to do it.

Brina argued that it was the last of these four that was often absent and that this lack of wide-scale cultural acceptance of action was what left us vulnerable to repeating the mistakes of the past. Brina likened the University environment to society at large, but noted an academic status accorded it that might preclude truly critical engagement with the subject. She suggested that students wanted to learn the *truth* at University; not engage with emotional uncertainties. This is where she conceded that she (and the course) might have fallen short in their transformative objectives because her students had made what she termed the "…theoretical retreat" (p524). Brina recalled one student who described how he compartmentalised his *cognitive* learning from his *emotional* engagement with the subject (although he was in the minority in verbalising this). What her research showed was that many of her students made the cognitive link, but not the emotional one (albeit for understandable reasons of self-protection). She reflected that this "…theoretical retreat" was in itself a form of denial, and that the University was complicit in this by the academic norms and values it created and cosseted its students in. Only by addressing its own preconceptions, could the academic environment allow its students to emotionally and critically engage with a topic like the Holocaust. Brina did reflect on some encounters with those who *had* emotionally engaged with the topic (specifically over a film clip about the liberation of the camps), although she found that the students engaged more with the liberating British soldiers, than the victims. This brought her to what she saw as the crux of the problem of teaching about the Holocaust – students' abilities to position their own selves with people they identified as *other*. In explaining this, Brina cited the widely reported incident involving a group of black and

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Hispanic students from Castlemount High School in the USA (see for example, Giroux, 1995, New York Times, 1994). On this occasion, the students reacted to portrayals of violence towards Jews in the film *Schindler's List* (Keneally & Zaillian, 1993) with laughing and jeering. The film was stopped, the students were ejected from the cinema and the incident received national media attention, largely condemning the boys for their apparent ignorance and bigotry. Brina argued that far from being unengaged with the text of the film, these boys came from a socio-ethnic background within the USA that potentially associated them directly with the socio-ethnic location of the Jews in Nazis Germany. Looked at in this way, their reaction – whilst undesirable – could be understandable (or at least, explainable). Indeed, it could be likened to the reactions of bystanders during the Holocaust (whose complicity with the atrocities was often more through words than through actions). In this way, Brina appeared to be agreeing with Stern Strom (1982) who likened the Holocaust to a "…tarnished mirror of history" (p2) through which pupils' reactions are bound up in their own position in society.

This study could not be seen to be conclusive – there was little explicit data analysis in support of Brina's findings, which at times read a little like musings or suggestions rather than academically rigorous assertions. However, the study did turn the debate about whether students should be exposed to emotionally difficult material on its head by suggesting that teachers were part of an institution that implicitly precluded the emotional at the expense of the intellectual and cognitive. This was clearly a difficult conclusion for her to draw since it meant that whilst trying to assess the effectiveness (and affectiveness) of the unit she taught on, she discovered that she might have been complicit in making it possible for students to make the "…theoretical retreat" (p524). She ended the study looking less at the affective impact the subject had on the students and more on the restrictive preconditions that the University environment created and placed upon them. She suggested that more work needed to be done to ensure that students were not able to slip into an emotionally comfortable position (such as the "...theoretical retreat"), or to identify with one side at the exclusion of the other. As such, she made a valuable and relevant contribution to the field in suggesting that academic environments were skewed towards the measurable and cognitive, at the expense of the emotional.

In his review of studies into the impact of 'fear' on learning, Short (1994) cited Janis and Feshbach (1953) whose research suggested that fear often promoted attitude change.

Short concluded that, "…whilst the ethical dimension of inflicting pain has constantly to be borne in mind, teachers need also to take cognisance of the pedagogic implications of painful material. In other words, they should appreciate the relationship between the infliction of pain and the ability to learn" (p60). Gregory (2000) picked up the same theme, claiming that teaching the subject of the Holocaust "…cannot be and must not be an intellectual exercise alone" (p58). For Gregory, an essential part of Holocaust Education was to confront pupils with "…a vision of a world bereft of moral concern" (p58) (although Ben-Peretz, 2003, reminded us that emotional identification with the subject was not a sufficient educational end in itself, unless pupils rejected all forms of prejudice and discrimination as a result). Short and Supple et al. (1998) expressed concern as to the level of pain a teacher should inflict upon their pupils, echoed by Totten's (1994) reminder that, "…it is essential that teachers avoid assaulting students with unremitting horror" (p170). Short and Supple et al. asserted that pain would be a necessary part of the experience, believing it should be just enough to elicit feelings of revulsion towards anti-Semitism and racism. However, they warned that the nature of some source material could cause some pupils to cry, feel sick, angry, or leave them unable to articulate their thoughts verbally or in writing. They emphasised that it was essential that pupils were able to assimilate their knowledge of the Holocaust into their worldview, make some sense of it and move on. However, they accepted that "…very high levels of fear engender avoidance and defensiveness" (p35), which could leave some pupils in a state of education paralysis, unable to move on from the shocking images they have seen. Totten and Parsons (1996) warned that to present a 'captive audience' of pupils with horrifying images for which they were unprepared, was to "…violate a basic trust" (p6-7) (see also Salmons, 2003). This would be an abusive breaking of the unspoken contract between pupils and teachers (that the teacher will provide them with a safe learning environment). It is almost as though when teaching the Holocaust, teachers needed to assume a dichotomous role as parent and protector, whilst exposing their pupils to a cathartic pain which would lead them to a realisation and comprehension of a little more of what it means to be an adult in our world. If the teacher is to educate the child they would therefore *have to* hurt them, because the realities to be taught are necessarily painful.

Short and Supple et al. (1998) expressed a particular concern that lessons on the Holocaust could become sources of sadistic amusement for some children. They noted

that some pupils – often boys – had a morbid fascination with the violence and some
teachers consequently avoided showing pupils such horrifying footage. Conversely,
Totten and Feinberg (2001) argued that there was "…little justification in using a work that
students are likely to find boring" (p162) since they would be unlikely to engage with it at
all (a sentiment echoed by Bauman, 1992). Short and Supple et al. also found some
pupils responded to traumatic material in other inappropriate ways, such as laughing (see
also, von der Dunk, 2002, Salmons, 2003), but they found that such responses were
usually caused by nerves and were frequently checked by peers. They suggested that
meeting survivors or hearing their testimonies was an effective remedy to such
responses. The research showed that it remained difficult for educators to strike an
appropriate balance between presenting young people with materials that engaged and
interested them, whilst at the same time avoiding fear, trauma or morbid fascination. As
Totten and Parsons (1996) concluded, the dilemma was that,

> *"The assumption that all students will seek to understand human behavior* [sic]
> *after being exposed to horrible images is fallacious. Some students may be so*
> *appalled by images of brutality and mass murder that they are discouraged from*
> *studying the subject further. Others may become fascinated in a more voyeuristic*
> *fashion, subordinating further critical analysis of the history to the superficial*
> *titillation of looking at images of starvation, disfigurement and death"* (p7).

2.7 Making sense of film violence.

It is a reality of growing up in the modern world that many young people are exposed to
graphic and horrifying images every day in the name of entertainment. Violent video
games and the proliferation of uncensored material on the internet mean that many pupils
arrive in school having seen far more violent or distressing images on screen than their
teachers would ever try to show them when teaching about the Holocaust. However, there
is a significant distinction between the violence of a video game – enveloped as it is within
the security of an alternate reality – and encounters with the violence of the real world,
albeit historically. There is a dearth of research into how viewers make sense of such
fictionalised / non-fictionalised violence in film; a deficiency that should be an area of
considerable concern for Holocaust Educators. Beyond the confines of Holocaust
Education, Shaw's (2004) research explored how adults made sense of violence within

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the narrative structures of films. Although the subjects of her study were older and very limited in number, her research highlighted significant implications for teachers who chose to use potentially distressing film with pupils.

While Shaw accepted that violence was an embedded historical presence within popular western culture, she felt that there was a quantifiable difference between violence within a narrative structure (such as within a film or folktale) and encounters with real life violence and brutality. Her research took a phenomenologically sensitive approach to explore narrative meaning. Six participants were interviewed, using a semi-structured interview schedule consisting of open-ended questions. Participants were recruited through an advertisement at a local cinema and via the Victims of Crime Support Scheme. The criteria for selection were that potential participants enjoyed popular films and had also experienced or witnessed violence in real life. Responses were then processed through an analysis of narrative meaning.

Shaw found that respondents automatically felt the need to justify the presence of violence within the films they talked about, particularly where they felt the representation served to remind the viewer how brutal the violence really was. Shaw referred to the findings of Schlesinger et al (1992 and 1998) who found that viewers' understanding and justification of violence within film would differ depending upon their gender – findings which were echoed in her research. Shaw found that even though individuals attached unique meaning to acts of violence experienced in film, the processes different subjects went through to attribute that meaning (based on the context) shared similarities. For example, viewers were able to understand (and consequently justify) acts of violence if the narrative context of the film provided them with the information to comprehend the flawed nature of the characters committing the violence. Participants claimed that they had very little time for gratuitous violence; but that violence (when used judiciously) had an educational value in pragmatically informing and warning the audience. Shaw asserted that this educational value was a "…function" of violent film (p147). Shaw concluded that violence had a place within film to educate its audience of the dangers and consequences of certain actions or inactions. Further, she felt that viewers could make sense of the violence within the narrative structure in a way that they could not do when trying to make sense of encounters with real life violence.

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It must be remembered that Shaw's research was conducted with a very small sample of adults and, as such, it would not be possible to draw broad comparisons with children's experiences of encounters with violence in film. However, her findings did have implications for the judicious use of violent film or images in classrooms. Whereas adults watched a violent film with some assumed degree of willing participation, children might encounter traumatic material in class unexpectedly, or feel coerced into watching it by their teachers or their peers. Further, we assume that an adult can make sense of the violence through the narrative arc of the film's story, but a child might not have the maturity to be able to do this (or might not be provided with sufficient of the film's story arc to be able to place or contextualise what they are watching). For example, a teacher might show a clip of a violent film to illustrate a point; but a pupil might struggle to make sense of it without the complete narrative context.

Holocaust-related popular films or documentaries frequently contain, by their very nature, violent or traumatic material. The ubiquity of such films and television programmes in recent years led Darlow (2005) to observe that, "…TV history programmes are the new rock 'n' roll"; likening their proliferation to "…visual musak" [sic] (p140). Darlow and others warned that such materials "…create the illusion of seeing with one's own eye" (Hamermesh, 2005, p177, see also Rees, 2005) and can blur the lines between fact and fiction, leaving the viewer open to potential manipulation (Lisus & Ericson, 1995). Langford (1999) questioned the thresholds of what was presentable in popular film media concerning the Holocaust. In 1978 the NBC miniseries *Holocaust* (Green, 1978) brought the subject squarely into the public consciousness through the medium of popular culture, being watched by approximately 120 million viewers in the USA. While many lauded the series, it was also open to criticism for having reduced the subject to the matter of soap opera – or even for making the Holocaust "…too popular" (Fallace, 2008). Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel decried the miniseries as being "…untrue, offensive, cheap… an insult to those who perished and those who survived" (1978, pB1). For Wiesel, the dramatic representation of the event did it the disservice of reducing it to the exemplary and the explainable (see also von der Dunk, 2002).

Fifteen years after the *Holocaust* miniseries, *Schindler's List* (Keneally & Zaillian, 1993) received the same mixed reception (Manchel, 1995). Lauded by the Hollywood establishment, the film won seven Academy Awards, including Best Director and Best

Picture. As a consequence of its commercial success, the director (Steven Spielberg) screened the film for free in 1994 to almost two million High School students in 40 States across the USA. The proceeds also enabled Spielberg to establish the *Shoah Visual History Foundation* (now the *USC Shoah Foundation Institute for Visual History and Education*) which to date has recorded the video testimonies of over 53,000 Holocaust survivors. In the UK, the Holocaust Educational Trust distributed an edited video copy of the film to every Secondary school. The film was criticised, however, for its central portrayal of a character that was exceptional (a Nazi rescuer). Further, there were concerns that the film employed melodrama and music to provoke an emotional response in the viewer and that it 'Americanised' the subject with its redemptive ending for Schindler and the 'happy' ending for the Jews (Fallace, 2008). Despite the criticisms and reservations from some quarters, Spielberg became a standard-bearer for the universalisation of the Holocaust, believing that racism was a universal issue and that the Holocaust could be used as an example to prevent it. Significantly, in the same year that *Schindler's List* was released (1993), the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) opened in Washington DC, with the specific brief of commemorating the Holocaust as a *uniquely* Jewish tragedy. Throughout these rapidly evolving times of Holocaust commemoration and representation, Elie Wiesel remained stoically convinced that the Holocaust should be taught as an unanswerable question, whose mystery should be preserved. He believed that the Holocaust should be taught in a way that provoked cognitive dissonance and that it was in this silent confusion that learning took place – the event was beyond emotional or intellectual understanding. For him, representations on film were aberrations – representations of the un-representable, explanations of the unexplainable.

2.8 Holocaust Education and citizenship.

For most Holocaust Educators concerns about resource selection come only after they have decided *why* they are teaching about the Holocaust. Hector (1999) revealed varying attitudes amongst History teachers towards teaching about the Holocaust – some were pragmatic (taking the consequentialist view that the subject had to be taught to fulfil the requirements of the syllabus), whilst others felt they had a *moral* responsibility to teach the young about this period of history before they ended their compulsory education (see also Althof & Berkowitz, 2006, Pring, 2001, Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2005). Teachers often

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find it difficult to define the purpose of Holocaust Education (Brown & Davies, 1998), leaving them confronted with a dilemma as to what the outcomes of Holocaust Education should be (Haydn, 2000). One of the main aims of educators when teaching about the Holocaust appears to be to make their pupils better citizens who are more able to recognise the socio-political foundations of racism and more able to articulate their anti-racist views (Brown & Davies, 1998, Carrington & Short, 1997, Cowan & Maitles, 2007, Salmons, 2003, Short & Reed, 2004, van Driel, 2003). Short and Reed summarised the goal of Holocaust Education as being to "…inoculate the generality of the population against racist and anti-Semitic propaganda and thereby restrict its appeal to a disaffected and politically insignificant rump" (p6-7). Salmons (2003) believed that many saw a "…redemptive value" (p139) in learning about the Holocaust. Indeed, he suggested that many educators regarded the Holocaust as "…a moral touchstone" (p139) from which pupils would suddenly become virtuous citizens, thus linking Holocaust Education to the broader aims of intercultural education. Salmons' writing acknowledged the debate sparked in the pages of *Teaching History* by Nicolas Kinloch (1998), when he argued that the Holocaust should be taught as a historical lesson, rather than a moral one. For Kinloch, there were no moral lessons to be learned from studying the Holocaust, beyond what he saw as the basic truism that mass murder was wrong. In the ensuing debate in the same publication Kinloch (2001) defended himself by saying that teachers needed to keep a sense of perspective in terms of the transformative capabilities of their teaching. This was a view Salmons appeared largely to agree with, claiming that teachers did a disservice to both their pupils and the victims when "…a desire to preach about prejudice overcomes a commitment to teaching about history" (p142). What Salmons was advocating, however, was a 'middle way', whereby in learning about the details of history, students would naturally be led to consider the moral choices made by the actors within the text. He believed that any such consideration would consequently naturally lead on to "…inform attitudes and perceptions in the present" (p147). Salmons was careful to warn, however, that education about the Holocaust alone, could not – and should not – be expected to 'cure' society of racism (a view echoed by Cowan & Maitles, 2007). Whether anti-racist or citizenship education is an intentional outcome of Holocaust Education – or simply a positive societal by-product of it – there is considerable evidence that Holocaust Education makes a positive contribution to students' attitudes regarding stereotyping, scapegoating, human rights issues and political awareness (Ben Peretz, 2003, Davies,

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2000, Hector, 2000). In their research Carrington and Short (1997) set out to explore the relationship between these diverse, but seemingly convergent, areas of the curriculum.

Carrington and Short (1997) investigated the ways in which Holocaust Education developed maximalist notions of citizenship among school students. Their case study sample included 43 Year 10 students, from six urban Secondary schools in the South East of England. There was a fairly equitable gender balance within the sample and all had studied the Holocaust at school within the past year. About half of the sample belonged to 'visible' ethnic minority groups and all were taking History at GCSE. Participants were interviewed individually using a semi-structured interview schedule, during which initial background questions were asked about participants' knowledge of the Holocaust (although these results were not reported). The three areas reported on were: participants' attitudes towards the prevention of a repetition of the Holocaust, the connections they made between the Holocaust and other forms of racism and their perception of the benefits of learning about the Holocaust.

Carrington and Short found that pupils reported having a clear understanding of the concept of a stereotype (although their elaborations appeared to contradict this when asked specifically about the Nazi's stereotyping of the Jews). Similarly, they found that participants claimed to understand the term 'scapegoat', but did not appear to know how the Jews were made scapegoats within Nazi Germany. Students also struggled to make clear what learning about the Holocaust had taught them about racism. When asked whether an event such as the Holocaust could happen in England, 23 students said it could and 17 said it couldn't. All of the students felt that the Holocaust should be taught universally, not just in countries directly affected by the events and two thirds of the students felt that racist parties should be excluded from taking part in democratic elections in this country. Almost all said that students their age should learn about the Holocaust, with just over half underlining the need for education as a means of preventing a recurrence and the rest seeing it as beneficial at least for developing their own historical knowledge. Almost two thirds said they had been "…changed" (p279) by learning about the Holocaust, with a small number commenting on how the topic had developed their understanding of racism. Although one participant said that the topic had underlined her stereotypical views of the Germans, almost all of the others said it had helped them develop their understanding that everyone had the right to be treated equally.

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From a maximalist standpoint, this research appeared to confirm that the students' Holocaust Education had been successful. However, the authors warned that there was an evident complacency amongst the students towards their newfound understanding of racism. They also identified a reliance on what they termed a "…'rotten apple' theory of racism" (p280, after Henriques, 1984) – i.e. that participants felt that such acts of racism were largely due to a small minority of people or individuals (who they believed would be prevented by the moral majority if they tried to incite a recurrence). By Carrington and Short's own assertion, "…the ability to recognise and deconstruct stereotypes may be regarded as an essential characteristic of 'political literacy' in a participatory democracy" (p281), but their research showed that roughly half of their sample did not have a clear understanding of what a stereotype was.

Whilst Carrington and Short expressed concern over the disparity between participants' understanding of racism and their understanding of a stereotype, it is possible that the explanation lay within the sample itself. Since a large proportion of the sample belonged to 'visible' ethnic groups (and by the authors' suggestion, the rest lived in an ethnically diverse area), they might have come to the interviews with a very well developed understanding of racism and stereotyping based on their own experiences within their local communities. The pupils' poor understanding of the specific stereotyping of Jews by the Nazis might simply be a consequence of an inadequate Holocaust Education (since it was not reported on, we are unable to tell if this specific area was taught about in their schools). This could also explain their failure to have made the connection between their study of the Holocaust and their understanding of racism. Participants' fears (that the Holocaust could happen again and their feelings that racist parties should be excluded from the democratic process), might also have more to do with their experiences as members of ethnic minorities, or living in diverse communities, than their study of the Holocaust. In essence, this study did not tell us whether the students *failed* to make the connections, or whether they were *unable* to.

The maximalist intentions of Holocaust Education appear to address many of the issues that fall within the remit of intercultural education – social cohesion, co-operation, mutual understanding, etc. However, this is a complicated and uneasy relationship (van Driel, 2003). Intercultural education in the UK found its roots in assisting the integration of

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immigrant children in the post-war years (Phillips & Phillips, 1999), although it remains debatable whether the intentions behind this were integrationist or assimilationist. van Driel (2003) recognised the difficulties inherent in linking Holocaust Education with intercultural education; not least because the former tended to be taught by History teachers and the latter by teachers of subjects such as citizenship or social studies (with the two groups rarely collaborating). For van Driel, however, there was a more fundamental problem than this and it concerned the students rather than the teachers. He recognised that students were unlikely to make any connections *with* – and consequently draw any lessons *from* – the Holocaust if they did not feel it was relevant to them. Several years after the widespread reporting of the experiences of the Castlemount High School pupils in the USA (see section 2.6, above), Loewy (2002) recorded a similar case with middle school pupils in Frankfurt, Germany. On this occasion, following a visit to a Holocaust exhibition, a heated conflict arose between those pupils of immigrant heritage and those who were ethnically German, when the former blamed the latter openly for the atrocities. Whilst this case might have highlighted sensitivities particularly heightened in Germany, it also illustrated van Driel's concern that "…the fact that students in today's society come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds will influence the kind of impact teaching about this topic will have on the students" (p128). van Driel recalled an experience he had whilst organising a travelling exhibition from the Anne Frank House entitled *Anne Frank in the World*, in America in the late 1980s. Whilst the exhibition appeared to run smoothly in the predominantly white, middle class town of Santa Cruz, van Driel observed a very different reaction in the mainly Latino school district of Watsonville. The Latino students appeared to be disinterested, disengaged or even annoyed at being there. van Driel asked some of the boys why they seemed so disengaged with the panels of the display and they replied pointedly that, "…they are all white" (p129). van Driel concluded, "…for these teenagers this was the story of white violence perpetrated against white people half a world away. No wonder they were only minimally interested – it had nothing to do with them" (p129).

In a similar incident, van Driel observed a group of immigrant-heritage students in the exhibition *Daniel's Story* at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Overhearing their discussions, van Driel observed that the students interpreted the exhibition in an entirely unintended and incorrect way; drawing them to the conclusion that the Jews actually *deserved* their fate. He wondered if their engagement with the exhibition didn't

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serve to actually make them *more* anti-Semitic than they may or may not have been before they visited. van Driel concluded that whilst Holocaust Education and intercultural education clearly shared many common goals, further academic research needed to be carried out to address students' socio-ethnic and religious 'starting points' when encountering the Holocaust. While Salmons (2003) reminded us that "…ultimately, the choice between apathy and action is a matter for each individual" (p148), van Driel had gone some way to suggesting the pre-conditions educators needed to address and redress if students were to make truly free and positive choices for themselves.

2.9 Conclusions.

Whilst Holocaust Education remains a core element of the National Curriculum in England and Wales, the research findings outlined above show that there remains a very unclear picture of *what* is being taught, *why* it is being taught, *how* it is being taught and *where* and *when* it is being taught. Perhaps the best we can do is to draw unsatisfactory generalisations, leaving the specifics to individual teachers, departments or schools. Where one school might be teaching about the Holocaust from a maximalist standpoint in an effort to enhance local community cohesions, a school a few miles away might be teaching the Holocaust with the purely consequentialist aim that students know enough to pass their examinations. But perhaps more significant, is the lack of evidence to explain what *kind* of learning is taking place in classrooms. In this respect, we are left with a rather 'muddy' picture of well-intentioned practice and inconclusive measures of the outcomes of 'knowledge'.

The Holocaust is a compulsory History topic in England, but there is significant evidence to suggest that teachers are teaching the topic to engineer wider socially desirable outcomes. Cowan and Maitles (2007) believed that "…studying the Holocaust teaches citizenship targets that are central to the development of well-rounded young people" (p128). Definitions of what precisely these 'targets' are, or indeed what a 'well-rounded' person is, remain undefined and elusive. Even those overtly concerned with teaching a citizenship or anti-racist agenda through the study of the Holocaust seem unhappy with the outcomes (Shechter & Salomon, 2005, Short, 1999, Simon, 2003). The picture is similarly uneven in international studies. Nowhere is this more evident than in Germany (see, for example, Boschki et al., 2010, Marks, 2007, Meseth & Proske, 2010) or in Israel

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(Dror, 2001, Gur-Ze'ev, 1998, Shechter & Salomon, 2005). This is possibly because the text of the Holocaust is so intrinsically complicated and bound up by the socio-historical interpretations placed upon it not just at a national, but also at a personal level. Stevick and Gross (2010) reminded us that "...knowledge is not neutral" (p190). Indeed, they pointed out that,

> *"The construction, legitimation, and selection of knowledge in* [Holocaust] *textbooks and curricula help to create the contexts within which teachers further select and interpret materials in their dialogic relations with the children in the class, a socio-cultural process in which they co-construct and negotiate meaning. This relational process of creating meaning must be understood in its complex interrelationship with the context in which they meet… The relational process of co-constructing meaning must be understood as involving culture, and thus inevitably must include a consideration of ideology, but not stop at that."* (p191)

Different countries and contexts commemorate the Holocaust for different reasons and purposes (van Driel & van Dijk, 2010). The challenge for the teacher is to make the text of the Holocaust relevant to their students in *their* context, without the experience becoming traumatic or confrontational (Gryglewski, 2010). Since the Holocaust remains beyond the boundaries of belief or comprehension for most people (Bauer, 1990, Cesarani, 2001), educators need to engage their students on both an academic and an emotional level, if they are to identify with those involved. Short and Supple et al. (1998) believed that, "Teachers should try to stress individual experiences… to break down the huge statistics to a personal level, by including oral testimony, diaries, literature, poetry and art" (p37). The challenge for educators and researchers in the coming decade will echo von der Dunk's (2002) concern that we may lose this emotional connection with the Holocaust as it slips out of living memory. Whether the teacher views the lessons to be learned as historical or contemporary, factual or attitudinal, they should remember David Cesarani's (2001) words that "...taught properly, the events of 1933-45 remain disturbingly relevant" (p54) to us today and for the future.

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Chapter 3: Methodology.

3.1 Introduction to Chapter 3.

Chapter 3 builds upon the literature that has gone before, explaining the rationale for the current study and the development of the research question central to it. It explores the research approach taken and the methodological standpoint is explained. The data collection method is detailed and justified, along with the design of the data analysis. Relevant ethical considerations are explored and challenged in light of the methodological choices made.

3.2 Development of a rationale.

As a graduate in social philosophy and ethics, I had always been interested in how we as human beings acquire our sense of right and wrong. As a teacher of Religious Studies, PSHE and Citizenship, I had long been interested in how we as a society – and particularly how we as teachers – were involved in the process of shaping the moral perspective of the next generation. I approached this study with a growing concern about *how* we explicitly and implicitly transmitted our values to the young in our classrooms. For me, the Holocaust represented a complex challenge. It was (and remains) a topic that I found emotionally challenging, as it is barely within the bounds of rational comprehension. As a teacher, I felt I had a responsibility to teach my students about it, but I also had a duty not to expose them to things that they would find traumatic. I was interested in the delicate balance effective teachers needed to strike as they carefully guided their charges through this painful history of humanity. However, unlike the relatively few studies that had gone before (see chapter 2, above), I wanted to explore the experiences of the *students*, rather than the teachers. Holocaust Education is itself in a transitional state in England and Wales. Whilst the topic currently retains its statutory status within the National Curriculum, evidence suggests that it is often poorly taught, or teaching lacks focus (Pettigrew et al., 2009). At a time when the last of the World War One veterans have recently passed, the Holocaust hovers on the outskirts of living memory and it will not be long before it is consigned to historical reference. As Holocaust Education is being forced to adapt to a new social and historical landscape, I wanted to see what was

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happening in the classroom and how students were engaging with this difficult and complex topic.

3.3 The research question.

I did not feel that my research question could be articulated clearly in advance of the research process (Robson, 2004). Rather, it was the result of an iterative process, guided by the literature and shaped by my own professional experiences, interests and concerns. My initial interest concerned students' emotional engagement with the Holocaust and the role teachers played in this. I was also interested in how students engaged with multi-media representations of the Holocaust, such as films or photographs. This led me to a focus on the different ways in which students engaged with the Holocaust, with a particular emphasis on their emotional engagement. In reviewing the literature, evaluating my own preconceptions and talking with colleagues in the field of Holocaust Education, I formulated the following research question:

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that take place when students encounter the Holocaust."

3.4 The research approach.

3.4.1 Ontological and epistemological issues.

Methodology is not about the outcomes of a study, but rather the process of conducting it (Cohen et al., 2007). In designing this research, it was essential that I reflected on and assessed my own philosophical positioning in terms of what I wanted to study, the nature of what I thought it was possible to learn and how I might go about that. Grix (2004) described ontology and epistemology as being like the foundations of a house; they are the building blocks that inform and influence every aspect of our research – from the research question to the methodology and methods. If we fail to acknowledge and examine them, he argued, we are unable to understand where our research has come from and where it is subsequently located in the wider academic debate.

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Ontology concerns the nature of things that exist within the universe (see, for example, Crotty, 1998, Hughes & Sharrock, 1990). Blaikie (2000) described ontological assumptions as being "…concerned with what we believe constitutes social reality" (p8). I believe that when searching for a 'reality' or 'truth' from within the experience of an individual (or group of individuals), you would necessarily be lead to the uncovering of not one, but a multiplicity of 'truths'. The nature of this research was such, that the experience of each participant might be completely different from that of their peers. This was not to say that any individual's experience would be more or less valid, but rather that the only 'truth' I could endeavour to piece together would be a collage of individual experiences, emotions, reactions and reflections. As such, the ontological stance of this research was that multiple realities existed within the social world and that participants and players within it constructed multiple, changing realities. Specifically, this research was rooted in an anti-foundationalist ontology (Hughes & Sharrock, 1997), within which the realities experienced were socially and discursively constructed and were subject to constant revision (Bryman, 1995).

The ontological standpoint of any piece of social research does not lend the findings credibility on its own, however. Rather, it is from the epistemological standpoint that "…what is assumed to exist can be known" (Blaikie, 2000, p8). Epistemology is the theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective and the intellectual authority of the knowledge comes from the epistemological justification. Disputes over validity are often rooted in more fundamental disagreements as to what knowledge is and how it can be obtained (Griffiths, 1998). Hughes & Sharrock (1997) put this that, "No technique or method of investigation… is self validating: its effectiveness, i.e. its very status as a research instrument making the world tractable to investigation, is, from a philosophical point of view, ultimately dependent on epistemological justifications" (p11). It might be assumed that if research is carried out within the field of education, the researcher wishes ultimately to communicate their findings to a broader audience for a purpose – such as to inform practice (Sikes, 2004). If such findings are to achieve validity within the academic and professional communities, the researcher needs to consider what sort of knowledge they produce. Burrell and Morgan (1979) considered two types of knowledge: the first was a solid, hard, tangible knowledge, whilst the second was more experiential, subjective and transient. Given the ontological standpoint outlined above, this research was clearly located within the latter definition.

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This study did not set out to reveal a certainty. Rather, it aimed to explore a 'truth' as it appeared to (and was recounted by) a particular group of students. Whilst acknowledging the pitfalls and challenges inherent in investing in the credibility of the young people interviewed to represent their experiences accurately, it was also recognised that this research could not ever claim to reveal an 'absolute' truth. Steps were taken to mitigate these factors and to minimise the chances of inaccuracies in the data collected (outlined below). I also acknowledged my own place within the research, my professional background and experience and my ontological position. My role as a 'teacher' (albeit from a school other than that of the study), was also acknowledged as having an impact upon the responses I would receive. Describing anything I would discover as being 'absolute' would be, in my opinion, unobtainable in a piece of research such as this. Indeed, I accepted that it would be counterproductive (even undesirable) to attempt it. For me, the 'truth' of this research would be in the interpretation and exposition of a multiplicity of experiences, which would be the result of the interplay of many educational and sociological factors, of which I was undoubtedly an active participant.

The ontological and epistemological positions outlined thus far, placed this research within the interpretivist / constructivist paradigm (see, for example, Crotty, 1998, Grix, 2004, Schwandt, 1994). Interpretivism / constructivism is 'lived experience' within which no 'truth' exists in itself, but rather arises out of our engagement and interaction with phenomena. Research within this paradigm acknowledges the cultural and historical contexts within which interpretations of reality are made (Crotty, 1998). To a researcher working within this paradigm, 'meaning' is constructed in the mind of the beholder and before a consciousness engages with something, it has no meaning. However, it was important to acknowledge that, as Crotty (1998) pointed out, "…meaning does not come out of an interplay between subject and object but is imposed on the object by the subject" (p9). The observer (the subject) *imposes* meaning onto the observed (the object). Truth was not definite, but dependent (upon the observer) and therefore, two observers could construct two (or more) completely different meanings or 'truths' from observing the same thing (in keeping with an anti-foundationalist ontology). Such work is innately concerned with subjectivity (Grix, 2004), which in itself presented its own epistemological complexities, concerns and even contradictions. Denscombe (2002) described the interpretivist / constructivist's dilemma as being that:

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"The interpretivist's concern with 'subjectivity', with 'understandings', with 'agency' and the way people construct their social world, introduces complexities that involve elements of uncertainty. There is even the possibility of contradictions and internal inconsistencies arising as part of the explanations that interpretivists produce… To caricature things a little, interpretivists' explanations are likely to be messy rather than nice and neat. They might be open-ended rather than complete." (p21-2)

This might be viewed as a criticism, but the very nature of the subjective interpretivist / constructivist stance regards knowledge "…as belonging to the individual as a result of his or her own consciousness and thoughts" (Opie, 2004, p7) and subordinates the need for a collectively opined reality in favour of a collection of discrete realities which are (by necessity) 'messy'. In essence, theirs is a view of reality that they create for themselves (Schwandt, 1994). This study sought not to *explain* what was going on, but attempted to reach an *understanding* of the particular experiences of the participants. This would not be clear-cut or lead to an easy definition, but rather it would seek to examine the nature of the 'mess' of a diversity of social constructions as viewed by a variety of players within the study and their realities as they experienced them.

3.4.2 Qualitative methods.

Drever (2003) observed that "In the teaching profession, when you want to get information, canvas opinion, or exchange ideas, the natural thing to do is to talk to people" (p1). A significant part of my professional life was (and is) taken up with conversation and social interactions between students, colleagues and other stakeholders. Given my ontological and epistemological standpoints (outlined above) it was obvious to me from the outset of this study that, as a researching professional, I would be employing a qualitative methodology. It was also clear that this would subsequently lead me to employ a qualitative method of data collection.

Qualitative methods (such as interviews and observations) are predominant within the interpretivist / constructivist paradigm since such researchers believe that reality is only constructed through interactions between the researcher and the researched. Qualitative researchers believe that you have to gain access to the experiences of the subjects if you are going to be able to construct meaning from them (Sikes, 2004). This introduces its

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own complexities, however, since "The function of research is not necessarily to map and conquer the world but to sophisticate the beholding of it" (Stake, 1995, p43). Qualitative research is historically rooted in the work of psychologists, ethnographers and social historians. These researchers sought to find ways of evaluating human interactions beyond the prescriptive or scientific. Stake (1995) described the difference between quantitative and qualitative data as being the difference between "…searching for causes versus searching for happenings" (p37). He described quantitative research as an exercise in minimising variables or interpretation until the data is collected, whereas qualitative research was far more concerned with placing the skilled researcher in direct contact with the observed phenomena. This led Erickson (1986) to define qualitative research by the centrality of *interpretation* within it (although he conceded that, by definition, this could be seen as weakening the results by reducing them to 'assertions' rather than 'findings'). Indeed, it has often been the specific advantages of qualitative research that have been cited as its greatest weaknesses (see, for example, Miles, 1979, Walker, 1981, Stake, 1995). It is, for example, labour-intensive, costly and can leave the researcher with more questions than answers (Lee, 1989). However, it was the assumption of the "…ongoing interpretive role of the researcher" (Stake, 1995, p43) that I felt would enable me to explore the perceptions of the participants involved in this study most effectively. Whilst quantitative methods would undoubtedly have yielded a wealth of valid data, I felt that qualitative methods would provide a more naturalistic and comprehensive data set, allowing me to interact more closely with the participants to explore their experiences in greater detail and thus gain a richer picture of their constructed realities.

In order to achieve a more rounded, multi-faceted picture of the students' learning, I decided also to interview some of the adults who led or influenced their learning. In this way I felt I could contextualise the students' experiences within their teachers' expectations (and vice versa). This seemed an appropriate way in which to contextualise the multiple realities experienced by the students. To enable this, I conducted interviews with the Head of History and the Head of Religious Studies at the school and the Holocaust survivor who visited the school each year to talk with the pupils about his experiences. The interviews with the two teachers form part of the research context and are discussed in section 3.5.2. The interview with the Holocaust survivor forms a case

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study that is discussed in light of the analysis of the students' responses and can be found in section 4.5.

3.4.3 Case study approach.

> *"A case-study is a restriction or narrowing of focus to one or more towns, individuals, organisations, etc., which are studied in great detail… with the aim of shedding light on the object of study… involving empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context"*
>
> (Grix, 2004, p162)

Case study research has a long and complex history within social research (see for example, Bassey, 2000, Bergen & While, 2000, Denscombe, 2007, Yin, 1994). Case study research concerns the individual rather than the whole. It examines one thing, one entity, a single instance. By exploring the case, the researcher can explain its nature to the reader, illustrating characteristics, bounding them in a relatable real-world context. Case study researchers see the context as a key factor. Grix (2004) asserted that the context was "…crucial" (p51) to the analysis of the case, as the phenomenon being studied was embedded within it. Indeed, it is this contextualisation that many researchers argue lends case study research its credibility (see, for example, Cohen et al., 2007, Thomas, 2011, Robson, 2004). By adopting a case study approach, the researcher can explore the dynamics within the context to try to explain the phenomena in greater detail than a simple set of statistical occurrences would allow. As Denscombe (2007) put it, when using case study "…there is obviously far greater opportunity to delve into things in more detail and discover things that might not have become apparent through more superficial research" (p36).

Several attempts have been made to define different types of case study (see, for example, Robson, 2004, Stake, 1995, Sturman, 1999, Yin, 1994) and it has been suggested that a lack of clear definition poses a significant threat to the robustness of the method (Bergen & While, 2000). Some have defined case study in terms of its descriptive nature (Parse et al, 1985, Hammersley, 1989). Yin (1994, p1) – arguably the most cited writer within the field – defined case study as an empirical enquiry. He described a case study as being an investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, noting that the relationship between the phenomenon and the context is a complex one. A

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case study concerns the *particular* and as such is not necessarily a process intended to lead to a plausible generalisation; it is a process that is primarily concerned with the entity in and of itself. The usefulness (or desirability) of using the single case to explain – or at least, suggest – the whole is debatable.

Essentially, case study is an organisational strategy (Grix, 2004). Within this structure, each case has a "…critical uniqueness" (Stake, 1995, p44), whereby the particulars of the case are critical to understanding it. Each case is also 'bounded' by various factors including temporal, geographical, institutional or organisational contexts (Cohen et al, 2007). Case studies wrest with the contradiction of being both detailed and narrow. They strive to illustrate the lived experience of the actors within the case, often consequently yielding 'thick descriptions' of reality (Geertz, 1973). Perhaps the best they can hope to achieve, therefore, would be to *refine* our understanding of a phenomenon, rather than explain it (Bergen & While, 2000). Thus "Case study research shares the burden of clarifying descriptions and sophisticating interpretations" (Stake, 1995, p102). The only common concern for case study researchers has to be the *credibility* of the evidence collected. To achieve this credibility, the case study researcher must "…collect good evidence and lots of it… penetrating into every nook and cranny and squeezing out every little bit that can be found" (Thomas, 2011, p4).

The debate concerning the advantages and disadvantages of using case studies has been considerable (see for example, Cohen et al, 2007, Nisbett & Watt, 1984, Thomas, 2011), although the disagreements have at times be likened to little more than academic snobbery (Cohen et al., 2007). Denscombe's (2007) assertion that "…what a case study can do… is to study things in detail" (p36) forms the basis of my justification for conducting a case study within this piece of research. It is important at this point to differentiate between the *case study* (the research method) and the *case* (its object). Hamel et al. (1993) asserted that the case should be researcher-defined and Thomas (2011) noted how the interests of the researcher would guide the choice of case. I agree with these views, given that my research question arose from a professional interest in Holocaust Education. For the purposes of this study, the case was a Holocaust survivor who visited the school annually to talk with the students. I felt that this constituted an 'intrinsic' case (Stake, 1995) since I was interested in researching that particular case for its own sake.

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3.5 Methodological issues in the design of the study.

3.5.1 The research context.

From the outset, I was certain that I did not want to conduct the study within my own professional context. I did not wish to conduct an action research project as I felt the research would be compromised by my professionally invested place within it (Opie, 2004) – particularly since I was the only teacher within my school who was explicitly involved in Holocaust Education. A colleague at another school nearby expressed an interest in my proposed study and offered any help they could. This subsequently evolved into a decision to conduct the study at their school. To expedite the practicalities of the process, the agreement and consent of the Head Teacher was sought from the outset (Festinger & Katz, 1966).

The school of the study was a nominally selective independent school for boys aged 13-16, with a mixed Sixth Form. The school had a roll of approximately 550 and was located within the Greater London / M25 area. The school population was predominantly white, from professional, middle class backgrounds and comparatively affluent. The majority of pupils were day pupils, although there were a few who boarded. Academic results were significantly above the national average at both GCSE and A Level.

3.5.2 The teachers' perspectives.

During the course of the study, I had the opportunity to interview both the Head of History at the school and the Head of Religious Studies. I felt that doing so was an important part of establishing the research context. I was only able to meet with the former briefly, talking with him while I spoke with the Holocaust survivor during his visit, but the Head of Religious Studies (as my main point of contact and the facilitator of my access to the school) was easier for me to gain access to and we spoke at length.

The Head of History's perspective:
The Holocaust was taught as part of the History curriculum in Year 9. This was the school's youngest year group. Most of the students joined the school from a variety of

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local Preparatory schools, at which they would have studied History for Common Entrance examinations. The syllabus they would have covered in preparation for this would include Medieval Britain (1066-1485), the Tudors, the Stuarts, the Georgians and the Victorian era (up to 1900). Consequently, most of the students in Year 9 would have studied very little modern history prior to joining the school and few would have studied the Second World War since Key Stage Two, if at all. In order to prepare them for the GCSE syllabus at the school – and to maintain their sense of chronology – the Year 9 syllabus covered the period of modern history from 1901-1945, with a focus on the First and Second World Wars. Students in Year 9 had four periods (of 50 minutes' duration) in every two-week cycle of the timetable. As part of this, the Holocaust was studied towards the end of the summer term (following the study of World War II). The History Department arranged for the annual visit of the Holocaust survivor and had done so for many years. It was felt that it was appropriate to do so *after* the students had completed (or nearly completed) their learning in class, so that they could ask questions from a more informed point of view.

The Head of History felt that, above all, there was a need to ensure that the students were taught historical accuracy. He was particularly concerned that students were equipped with the skills necessary to employ the correct terminology. For example, in discussing the merits and shortcomings of *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* (Boyne, 2006), he wanted to ensure that students understood the difference between a *concentration* camp and an *extermination* camp. The Head of History was satisfied that the department taught the topic well and that it was adequately covered, within the constraints of the curriculum. He felt that the students benefited significantly from having the opportunity to meet a survivor. Under the supervision of the History department, two students in the Sixth Form took part in the Holocaust Educational Trust's *Lessons from Auschwitz* project each year. These students would lead an assembly upon their return, to tell the rest of the school about their experiences. Although Holocaust Memorial Day was commemorated each year in Chapel services, this did not fall within the remit of the History department and was instead organised by the school Chaplain (who was also the Head of Religious Studies).

The Head of Religious Studies' perspective:
The Holocaust was taught in the Religious Studies department in the summer term of Year 10. This had been its historical location within the curriculum, although the Head of

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Department wanted to move it to the end of Year 9 in the near future, to coincide with their study in History. Whenever possible, he tried to combine students' work in class with the school's annual Holocaust Memorial Day chapel service.

The Head of Religious Studies felt that learning about the Holocaust in his subject should be more "…*empathetic*" and less "…*factual*" than in History. Whilst there was no shared planning between the two departments, he wanted his teaching to compliment student's learning in History. He thought it was important that students felt able to freely discuss the issues involved and to facilitate this, he was wary of telling them what they should think. In this way, he didn't feel he taught it any differently to any other topic. He said he would, however, draw the line at racist or prejudice comments so that students "…*realize there's a boundary somewhere*", although he had not experienced such comments in his two years at the school. The only negative comments he had heard students make, concerned remarks that people should 'move on' from dwelling on the events of the past. Revisionist views had only been raised once, which he had tried to discuss as openly as possible.

As part of their Religious Studies learning, the students watched *Schindler's List* (Keneally & Zaillian, 1993). The Head of Department thought this might change in the future, since he felt that the students didn't like it because it was overly long and they found some scenes distressing. He was also concerned that watching the film might make other films (especially documentaries) seem more like fictional films and immunise the young viewers against their authenticity or impact. With such films, he said, "…*the danger is they become a spectacle rather than historical fact*". To close, I asked him to summarise what he felt his students learned from studying the Holocaust in his subject, particularly. He reflected that "*As a personal issue, they probably don't identify with it as much as they would other moral issues, such as sex before marriage*". He explained that he thought this was because the students felt they would experience the other issues directly, whereas the Holocaust was a historical event that they could only learn *from*. In this way, he mused, "…*it's slightly divorced from their frame of reference, I guess*".

Reflections on the teachers' perspectives:
The difference in approach and intent taken by these two subjects and their teachers is immediately apparent. While both teachers would, presumably, hope to compliment each

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other's work; the potential for contradiction is also obvious. The History department endeavoured to teach the Holocaust within the chronology of the 20th Century. Inviting a survivor is intended to compliment this and to enable students to apply their knowledge to ask questions and extend their learning. The Religious Studies department, however, was teaching the topic to help students' moral development. By linking their learning with the annual Holocaust Memorial Day chapel service, there was also an implication that the topic was being taught to support students' spiritual development as well. These are not mutually exclusive intentions or outcomes, but it is concerning that there was little co-operative planning between the two departments to achieve their goals. However, this is not uncommon in schools (Brown & Davies, 1998, Pettigrew et al., 2009). What was apparent was that it was the intention of the teachers that the students in this school received a well-rounded education about the Holocaust from both a historical and moral perspective.

3.5.3 Recruitment and sampling.

Social researchers are often unable to collect information from the entire population that falls within their sample category, due to restrictions of time, access, etc. By necessity, therefore, they need to select a smaller group from within the sample category (Denscombe, 2007, Opie, 2004). Whether or not that smaller group is representative of the whole population depends, fundamentally, on whether the researcher feels this would be desirable or not. If they do, then they will need to ensure that their sample is large enough to adequately reflect the views, experiences and dispositions of the whole. If they do not, then they have to justify their sample size and acknowledge the limitations this restriction places upon their ability to draw wider conclusions or inferences. Having a clear understanding of the sampling unit is essential to the external validity of the design (Bergen & While, 2000). Once the social researcher has reflected on their position they can decide whether to employ probability sampling techniques or non-probability sampling techniques and can justify their choice (Denscombe, 2007).

Determining the sampling method.

The sampling method employed for this study was largely determined by logistical factors in the field. At a basic logistical level, times had to be found during the week when I could

visit the school and have access to the target population. These tended to be times when I was not teaching in my own school and the Head of Department at the other school was teaching classes of potential participants. I did not have access to detailed demographic information to be able to target a particular sample. To a certain extent, my research was conducted with an opportunity / convenience sample, since the only criterion for potential selection was that a student was being taught by a particular teacher at a particular time. 'Haphazard sampling' of this type is often the simplest and most efficient method of selection available (Sapsford & Jupp, 1998). However, potential participants additionally needed to fit the criterion that they had studied the Holocaust in Year 9 at the school. So in this way, the sample was more specifically a purposive sample, because I selected participants based on their "…typicality or possession of the particular characteristics being sought" (Cohen et al., 2007, p114-5).

In selecting a sample of this nature, I had to acknowledge the limitations inherent in such a sample (Bell, 2005). I also had to recognise that within any sample a great deal of 'selection' goes on by the researcher in designing the study – and that only they know what that selection is and the reasons for doing it (Dyer, 1995). My sample was not 'designed' in the strictest sense; rather it was a sample that revealed itself to me by virtue of the students' prior educational experience, their availability and their willingness to get involved in my study (Denscombe, 2007).

The sample.

The sample for this study is a group of 48 students, two teachers and a Holocaust survivor, acting within a single school. The students were from Years 9, 10 and 12 and had all studied the Holocaust at the school in Year 9, as part of the History curriculum. They were all boys (since the school was single sex from Years 9-11) and were aged between 13-17 at the time of the study. This number of students represented just fewer than 9% of the total possible population. Whilst opinion differs as to exactly how large an adequate sample size should be (see for example, King & Horrocks, 2011, Munn & Drever, 1996, Travers, 2001), I felt that this group of subjects adequately represented the different actors within the wider school community.

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Participation in the study was dependent solely on the students' availability and willingness to take part. Their *availability* arose from them being taught by the Head of Religious Studies at the school, in one of the following groups:

- Religious Studies lessons as part of the core curriculum in Key Stage 3 (Year 9).
- GCSE Religious Studies classes (Year 10).
- General Religious Education classes for students not taking the GCSE (Year 10).
- A Level Religious Studies classes (Year 12).
- General Religious Education classes for students not taking A Level (Year 12).

While their availability depended upon their being taught whilst I visited the school, their *willingness* to take part was more complex to establish. At the start of their lessons, I was introduced to the class and I gave a brief outline of the aims of my study and invited the students to take part. Students were then asked whether they would like to opt in or opt out of participating, after I had left the room. In this way, participation was entirely voluntary, as only the teacher knew who had volunteered and who had not. I felt that this was necessary to ensure that I didn't unduly influence their choice to take part, or not. Even though I was a visitor in their school, I had been identified as a teacher and therefore could be perceived as being in a position of authority. Even if they did not recognise me as a teacher, I was still an adult within the school and as such had to acknowledge the power differential that exists between adults and children in schools (see for example, David et al., 2001, Hurt et al., 1978, Jelinek, 1981, McCroskey & Richmond, 1983). Broadly, writers on this subject have viewed the power relationship as being the teacher's ability (or potential ability) to influence the student to do something that they would not have done, had they not been influenced. I was particularly aware of this as I considered the ways in which potential participants would be able to opt in or out of this study. I was especially mindful of Hurt et al.'s (1978) specific definition of power in the classroom as being "…a teacher's ability to affect in some way the student's well-being beyond the student's own control" (p124). Had I been present while the students made their choice to participate, not only would I have been likely to influence their decision making process by exerting my 'coercive power' (French & Raven, 1968) over them, I would also have risked compelling them into placing themselves in a situation that

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might affect their well-being. This would have been both academically undesirable and professionally unethical.

In recent years, there has been a significant growth in research literature concerning 'pupil voice' (see for example, Flutter & Rudduck, 2004, Robinson & Taylor, 2007, Rudduck & Flutter, 2004). Through the establishment of Student Councils and other initiatives to embrace students' opinions, school-based learning is rapidly moving away from its tradition power-differentiated roles (Robinson & Fielding, 2007). In their Interim Report for the Primary Review, Robinson and Fielding noted that "Where pupils' voices are heard on teaching and learning, teachers can gain an insight into what helps and what hinders pupil learning" (p21). This will always be complicated to negotiate in any school. However, having isolated and acknowledged my own positioning within the environment, I felt that the safeguards I had put in place (above) ensured – as far as possible – voluntary, open participation. Whilst I could not legislate for the legitimacy of the students' responses during the interviews, I was satisfied that I had minimised the risks of coercion of this sample.

3.5.4 Data collection method.

Interviews as a method for social research.

Verbal communication is at the heart of teaching and learning and as such, it made sense that this study would involve talking with students and teachers to elicit their thoughts and reflections on learning about the Holocaust (Drever, 2003). Thus, interviews seemed to be the natural choice for my primary method of data collection. Moser and Kalton (1971) described interviews as a conversation with an agenda – that of eliciting certain information. One of the key advantages of an interview is that it is an adaptable and versatile social research tool. It is an organic instrument that can explore issues as they arise, in a more flexible and responsive way than a more rigid method. Bell (2005) agreed, observing that "…a skilful interviewer can follow up ideas, probe responses and investigate motives and feelings," in a way that "…the questionnaire can never do" (p157). An interviewer can respond immediately to the subtleties of the responses they receive, such as the tone in which things are said, or the respondent's body language. They can also clarify responses in situ, thereby reducing the risk of misinterpretations that might

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occur when working with written responses. The desirable flexibility of an interview can also be its greatest weakness, however. Interview data is qualitative and therefore more open to interpretation than some alternative methods. There are also risks of interviewer bias that are not present in other methods. It is important that the researcher is aware of these pitfalls and protects against interactions with subjects that lead to bias or deviation from the topic of study.

Semi-structured interviews.

Semi-structured interviews are guided interviews that are more flexible than structured interviews, but more focused than unstructured interviews. A framework of discussion topics flexibly structures the interview so that the respondent can talk freely, while the interviewer can interject to clarify points or scaffold the topic of conversation. This requires the researcher to be constantly evaluating the process (Cohen et al, 2007), intuitively responding to the participant's thought processes (Robson, 2004).

I felt that this type of interview was ideally suited to this study since it allowed the flexibility to explore issues, within predetermined parameters (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995). Given that the study concerned participants' recollections of their feelings and experiences, semi-structured interviews allowed for structured inquiry, enhanced by flexible probing (Drever, 2003).

Design of the instrument.

The design of the instrument, was dependent upon addressing three key factors (Cohen et al., 2007):

- The theoretical basis underpinning the study.
- The broad aims of the study.
- The practical value it was hoped the study would have upon completion.

From this process, I was able to identify a set of very broad core themes for the study that would later provide the basis for the interview items and subsequently the scaffold for the interviews. These were:

- Students' knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust *(What did they understand by the term 'Holocaust'?).*

- Students' Holocaust 'learning journey' *(Where and from whom had they learned about the Holocaust?).*

- Students' emotional engagement with the topic of the Holocaust *(How did they recall feeling about the experience?).*

- Students' reflective interpretations of their learning experience *(How did their learning fit into their developing worldview?).*

Next, these objectives were translated into specific questions for the study. The main questions of the interview needed to give it a logical, sequential structure that allowed it to flow as a natural conversation between two people. This meant designing the instrument in a way that presented no surprises for the participant, whilst being flexible enough to let the participant's responses determine which question would be asked next.

I intended the interview to consist mainly of open questions (for example, *"how did it make you feel, hearing about that?"*). Such questions were intended to offer respondents a 'frame of reference' upon which to construct an answer (Kerlinger, 1970). Where questions of a more closed nature were to be employed, they were to be used as a 'gateway' item to a broader open question. For example:

Interviewer: *Where have you learned about the Holocaust?*   (Closed question)

Student: *In History. And a bit at home.*

Interviewer: *At home? Can you tell me a bit about that…?*   (Open question)

The instrument was designed to meet the needs of the rationale of the study, whilst being presented in a way that was appropriate and engaging for the intended participants (teenage school students). Subordinate questions (prompts and probes) would be judiciously used in the field, to enable the students to express their views as clearly as they were able or wished to.

Piloting.

Developing specific interview items from the core themes (outlined above) involved a process of piloting. Piloting is an essential part of preparing the interview schedule for use in the field (Sapsford & Jupp, 1998). The aim of the piloting process should be to 'shred' individual items so as to yield a premium of data with maximum expediency in the field (Drever, 2003). The process allows for questions to be re-designed to enhance clarity for the interviewee, or refocused to elicit more specific responses for the researcher (Bell, 2005). Piloting is an iterative process in which it is unrealistic to expect to reach a specific 'end point'.

To be effective, "…the pilot sample must be representative of the variety of individuals which the main study is intended to cover" (Sapsford & Jupp, 1998, p103). Ideally then, this sample should have consisted of participants who fairly closely resembled the intended participants' profiles, but who would *not* be taking part in the final interview process. For this study, piloting of the initial interview items was carried out with a pair of students. The students were similar to the intended participants in that they were both boys aged between 13-16 years of age and had studied the Holocaust as part of the History curriculum at school. They had attended different schools from the school of the study, however. This choice of pilot population was mainly driven by the convenience of access (they were both students I had taught in the recent past and whose parents I was still in contact with). My primary concern during the piloting process was to refine the interview items to suit the age of the students, whilst still meeting the objectives of the study. It also allowed me to get comfortable with the questions and to practise interviewing. The piloting process was conducted with each student individually.

The interview schedule.

Following the piloting process, the interview items were refined, focused and clarified. The finalised interview schedule, based on the core themes of the study was as follows:

1. Introduction:

- Introduction and an explanation of the terms of participation.

           i

2. Knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust:

- *What does the word 'Holocaust' mean to you?*

(Possible probe: to explore their understanding of the Jewish specificity of the Holocaust)

           ii

3. Their Holocaust 'learning journey':

- *Where have you learned about the Holocaust?*
- *What sort of things did you learn?*

(Possible probe: to explore the impact the visit of the Holocaust survivor had on them)

4. The Holocaust and their emerging worldview:

- *How does it make you feel learning about the Holocaust?*
- *Why do you think you learn about the Holocaust at school?*
- *Do you think we have learned the lessons of the Holocaust, today?*
  (Possible probe: to explore if they think it could happen again?)

           iii

- *How old were you when you learned about the Holocaust?*
- *Do you think that was a good age to learn about it?*

           iv

5. Close

- Is there anything else you'd like to add, or ask?
- Thanks and close.

           v

This schedule followed Robson's (2004) five-part model for question sequencing in interviews:

i. Introductions *(introducing the interviewer and the purpose of the study, agreeing confidentiality and asking permission to record the interview).*

ii. 'Warm-up' questions *(straightforward, non-threatening questions to get the interview flowing).*

iii.   Main body of the interview *(questions covering the main aims of the study –*
including 'high risk' questions which might provoke the interviewee's withdrawal –
should be included here).

iv.   'Cool-off' questions *(lower risk, straightforward, or reflective questions to draw the*
interview to a natural conclusion).

v.   Closure *(thanking the interviewee and saying goodbye).*

The inclusion of the item *"Is there anything else you'd like to add, or ask?"* also acted as a
"…sweeper question" (Drever, 2003, p27), partly as a courtesy, to bring the interview to a
close and ensure the participant was comfortable with how the interview had gone.

3.5.5 Ethical issues.

"*…while truth is good, respect for human dignity is better*" (Cavan, 1977, p810).

An interview for social research purposes is a conversation on unequal terms (Kvale,
1996) and as such, the ethical risks are "…substantial" (Stake, 1995, p45). It is an
artificially initiated social interaction in which there is an asymmetry of power between the
interviewer (who defines the terms of the interaction) and the interviewee. As such, the
researcher must acknowledge their role, the power they yield and their responsibility
towards their participant(s). The researcher must balance the needs of their study with the
respectful treatment of their subjects. Cohen et al. (2007) observed that "…ethical
considerations pervade the whole process of research" (p57) and highlighted three key
ethical considerations for conducting interviews: informed consent, confidentiality and the
consequences and risks associated with participation (see also, O'Leary, 2010).

Informed consent.

Since the heart of this study was a school, it was necessary first to negotiate the informed
consent of certain 'gatekeepers'. King and Horrocks (2011) define a 'gatekeeper' "…as
someone who has the authority to grant or deny permission to access potential
participants and / or the ability to facilitate such access" (p31). In this school this was the
Head of Religious Studies and, through him, the Head Teacher. This consent was sought
and received verbally. The students' parents could reasonably be deemed to be

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"…interested parties" (Sapsford & Jupp, 1998, p32) in the consent process. The school management decided that written informed consent from parents was not necessary as they felt the research was not invasive or threatening to the students' welfare and fell within the school's remit 'in loco parentis'. Staff with pastoral responsibilities also expressed a view that, should a student become distressed during the interview, they had adequate welfare procedures in place to care for them in-house. The Head Teacher and Head of Religious Studies were happy that informed consent on the part of the students' would constitute their agreement to participate on a voluntary, confidential basis once the broad aims of the interviews had been outlined to them. In this respect, the informed consent of the students was passive, non-parental consent. I felt that the procedures put in place satisfied Cohen et al.'s (2007) four conditions for respecting subjects' rights:

- Potential participants were able to give (or withhold) their *informed consent*.
- Potential participants were able to make a *competent* decision to participate, or not.
- Potential participants were able to *voluntarily* choose to participate.
- Potential participants had *comprehension* of the nature of the research.

Confidentiality.

Unless they have explicitly waved the right to do so, participants who are volunteering to take part in social research should be guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity (Opie, 2004). Anonymity and confidentiality are different things and researchers do not always agree over the difference (see for example, Bell, 2005, King & Horrocks, 2011). For the purposes of this study I employed Sapsford and Jupp's (1998) definitions of confidentiality as "…a promise that you will not be identified or presented in identifiable form" and anonymity as "…a promise that even the researcher will not be able to tell which responses came from which respondents" (p319). In a face-to-face interview, it is obviously not possible for a researcher to absolutely guarantee anonymity to each participant. However, they can take steps to offer them as great a degree of confidentiality as possible. In this study, I offered the students confidentiality in that I would be the only person who knew which participant had said what during the interviews. Further, once the data was transcribed, pseudonyms were randomly ascribed to each transcription and to

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the corresponding original sound files. I intended to protect the identity of the school in the final report, giving it a pseudonym and an intentionally vague geographical location. Since I would be the only person with access to the original sound files, I was satisfied that any quotes used in the report would be un-attributable. However, as Bell (2005) pointed out it would be difficult to hide the identity of some participants, by virtue of their status. For example, a quote attributed to 'the Head of Religious Studies' would obviously be attributable. Since steps had been taken to conceal the identity of the school, however, I felt that the identity of such individuals would be protected from the wider readership. I realised that I still had a duty of care towards such individuals from identification within the school itself, so I endeavoured to couch any quotes in broad terms so as to avoid any potential professional embarrassment. In all aspects, it remained my intention to put the needs of the individual above the needs of the research.

Minimizing risk.

The level of confidentiality I offered my participants upheld Sapsford and Jupp's (1998) assertion that "A first principle of research ethics… is that the subjects of the research should not be *harmed* by it" (p318). At first glance, this principle appears to be self-evident, but its application frequently highlights a tension at the heart of social research. The investigation of a societal construct does not guarantee 'comfortable' outcomes. It can produce very uncomfortable truths, the consequences of which could be very serious for some of the participants. I was aware that in investigating the experiences of a school population, it was entirely possible that I could uncover such uncomfortable truths and that, consequently, I had a duty of care towards those who were to give freely of their time to assist me. Guaranteeing non-maleficence was a guiding principle of this study and I believe that this was achieved through the steps I took to ensure confidentiality within the school community and anonymity to the wider readership.

Ethics Committee approval.

It is good practice for social researchers to seek approval from an ethics committee prior to undertaking their study, particularly where data will be collected from people (see for example, Burgess, 1989, Denscombe, 2007, Opie, 2004, Thomas, 2011). Darlington and Scott (2002) described the ethics committee as 'gatekeepers' whose purpose is to

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balance the needs of the researcher with the perceived needs of their target population. This process of negotiation between the two parties can be both a source of tension and delay, however (see, for example, Parker, 2005, Kvale, 1996). Opie (2004) suggested that, as a rule of thumb, researchers should consider how *they* would feel if they or their family were participating in the research. Ethics committees fulfil the role of providing an objective professional opinion of the impact the research will have on the researched and the need for ethics committee approval places concern with ethics at the heart of good research (Denscombe, 2007).

Ethics approval was sought for this study from the Brunel University Research Ethics Committee. Approval was received from Dr. Simon Bradford, Chair of the committee, in a letter dated 23rd July 2008 (Appendix 1). The process took about eight weeks and involved one resubmission. The committee expressed a concern that additional measures needed to be put in place to ensure the emotional wellbeing of the participants, given that some of the proposed interview questions could be emotionally intrusive. The committee suggested that participants be provided with contact details for additional, external sources of counselling. This was made available to participants in the hand-out they were given which introduced myself and the research and offered them contact details for my supervisor at Brunel University (Appendix 2). This created some tension between the needs of the committee and the desires of the 'gatekeepers' within the school, however. The Head of Religious Studies (from whose classes the participants would be drawn) was also the Head of Pastoral Care in the school and the Chaplain. Having fully discussed the intentions of the study with me prior to granting access to the school, he felt uncomfortable with the committee's perception that any issues might arise as a consequence of participation that the school could not deal with internally. He felt that the suggestion of external counselling might provoke more problems than it would solve. As a compromise, it was agreed that the hand-out would be given to students at the start of each interview so that they could read through it. They would then be given the option of taking it away or not.

3.6 Practicalities of conducting the interviews.

It is the researcher's responsibility to establish a positive, encouraging atmosphere within the interview so as to allow the participant to talk freely (Cohen et al., 2007). To achieve

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this, I had to carefully consider the practicalities of conducting the interviews. It was decided, at the suggestion of the Head of Department at the school, that the interviews took place in his office, adjacent to the classroom in which he would be teaching. This provided a neutral ground that was neither the students' 'home territory', nor mine. I decided to interview the students individually, to avoid unusual behaviours caused by the presence of others (Drever, 2003). Interviewing students on a one-to-one basis required me to adopt a number of measures to safeguard both parties (Denscombe, 2007), such as ensuring the office door was open at all times and that the interview setting was visible to passers by. Chairs were set at 90° with a table in between (providing a box of tissues and a place to put the hand-outs on). The office had a friendly and welcoming feel as the Head of Department, who was also the school Chaplain, frequently used it as a counselling setting. As such I felt confident that the space was a familiar and non-intimidating one for the students. Since the interviews would be taking place during lesson time, the likelihood of disturbances or interruptions was minimal, although there were occasional distractions from the adjacent corridor.

The interviews began with a preamble, in keeping with Robson's (2004) suggested checklist of 'introductory tasks' for the start of an interview:

- The nature of the study was outlined and the reasons why the participant had been selected were explained.
- The participant was reassured of confidentiality.
- Participants were reassured that there were no 'right or wrong' answers and that their opinions were valid by virtue of being *their* experiences / interpretations.
- Participants were encouraged to interrupt the interview if they wanted to ask questions or clarify points.
- I introduced myself briefly to the participants (and provided them with the hand-out).
- I explained the need to record the interviews for practical / transcription purposes, with their agreement.

Further to Robson's suggestions, I included an additional task:

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- I reassured the participant that they had the right to withdraw from the process at any point, or to not answer any specific question(s) if they did not wish to (Cohen et al. 2007).

Qualitative researchers try not to intrude unnecessarily on the social setting they are observing, in an attempt to understand what "…the ordinary means" (Stake, 1995, p44). Since I had visited the school on a number of occasions prior to undertaking the interviews, I felt that my presence in the department had become fairly routine. Throughout the interviews, I endeavoured to establish a relaxed formality in the hope of creating a relationship of trust between the students and myself, to encourage their participation.

3.7 Other practical considerations – the nature of the Professional Doctorate.

At this point in my writing, it is perhaps necessary to 'step out' of my role as an academic researcher and re-evaluate my position as a teacher, who is conducting research. The nature of the Professional Doctorate is such that for many people undertaking it, study has to fit around a busy professional life (Doncaster & Thorne, 2000). This was very much the case as I undertook these interviews. I was teaching in a boarding school, with working days often exceeding 14 hours. I had classes to prepare for public examinations, responsibility for two academic departments (Religious Studies and PSHE) and whole-school responsibility for Pastoral Care. This significantly impacted on my research in two ways. First, it meant that I had to be constantly aware of a lack of consistency in my work. At times, days (maybe weeks) would go past without me being able to do any work on this study at all. This meant that I would often need to re-establish my thought process when I returned to it, or use notes I had written to myself as an 'aide memoire'. Second, it meant that conducting the interviews had to be somewhat haphazard. Over the course of several weeks I had to negotiate access to the school on an often day-to-day basis, depending on when I was able to leave my school and when the Head of Religious Studies was teaching at the school of the study. This resulted in what I colloquially termed 'smash-and-grab interviewing'. I would often finish a lesson at my school, drive immediately to the other school and barely have time to greet the teacher as the bell rung and he started his lesson. After my quick introduction to the class, I would take up my position in his office and the students would come to be interviewed. I would often leave as soon as the lesson

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ended (if not before, on occasion), to get back to my own school in time to teach my next lesson. I had to keep essential paperwork in my car, including my digital voice recorder and spare batteries! This was far from ideal but it did – in my opinion – represent the nature of the Professional Doctorate. My research was *part* of my practice, it was shaped by it and, ultimately, beholden to it. I had to acknowledge this and accept it. This study was never going to be as clinical as a traditional Doctorate could be; it would be 'messy', because that's what the business of professional education often looks like. I took every precaution to prevent this from impacting on my data and I was greatly assisted by the teacher at the other school, who prepared everything for me in his office ready for my arrival. However, this 'smash-and-grab' nature of my data collection meant that there were days when I found it difficult to get in-role as the interviewer and I cannot help but acknowledge that this was the case. Ultimately, I came to realise that the advantages of being a researching professional were also, undoubtedly, the greatest hindrances.

3.8 Data collection – a reflexive process.

Having completed my data collection, I would agree with Bell (2005) that interviewing is not an easy process! Negotiating access to the participants was relatively easy since I already had established professional links with the school. The practicalities of conducting the interviews were also fairly straightforward given the pre-established counselling space within the Head of Department's office. What I found particularly challenging was developing the skills of interviewing for research purposes. I had conducted informal and formal interviews regularly as part of my professional practice and as part of my research methods training for this study, but in those situations I had always been invested in the social interaction as a teacher within my school. For this research I was not an 'insider' within the organisation and had to strike a balance between friendly, professional, approachability and being an objective observer. I found solace in Bell's (2005) observation that most researchers frequently found it "…difficult to strike the balance between complete objectivity and trying to put the interviewee at ease" (p168). In striking the appropriate balance myself, I had to address which role I felt I was going to take as a researcher (Stake, 1995) – for example, that of neutral observer, advocate, storyteller or critical analyst. Initially I thought I might assume the role of neutral observer, but as I began to spend time in the field, I felt that my professional interest in the topic under study meant that I was unlikely to be comfortable retaining that level of detachment. I wanted to

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get 'under the skin' of the experiences of the participants which, I felt, precluded me from absolute abstract objectivity. I did not feel I wanted to be an advocate, as I did not envisage this research being emancipatory in any particular way. Nor did I simply want to tell the story of these students. Given my epistemological and ontological standpoints, I decided that I was most comfortable assuming the role of critical analyst. I felt I had a set of skills and experiences that lent credibility to my ability to critically analyse constructed realities within a school setting and this is what I felt I was best able to do.

Whilst conducting the interviews, I felt I had to continuously evaluate the process as it was happening (Cohen et al, 2007). This involved a great deal of 'thinking on my feet' as the sequence of topics was guided, to some extent, by the responses of the interviewees (Robson, 2004). Whilst my interview schedule was semi-structured, I needed to keep control of the general direction of the conversation and so found myself employing "…funnel" questions (Cohen et al., 2007, p357) when the discussion had broadened and needed to be returned to a more succinct or specific focus. Listening to the interview recordings as I went along, enabled me to critically evaluate my skills and hone the prompts and other interjections I employed to do this (Robson, 2004). Reviewing the recordings also caused me to reflect on my positioning within the interviews and to evaluate how effectively I was assuming the role of a critical analyst. For example, agreeing with the participant too much ran the risk of 'going native' (Stake, 1986) which could introduce elements of bias and bring into question my impartiality. This was a challenging process that required me to critically analyse myself as much as the data. I believe this helped me to become a more reflexive researcher, more willing to address the limitations of my research (Shacklock & Smyth, 1998).

3.9 Data analysis.

3.9.1 Data analysis design.

I decided to use Braun and Clarke's (2006) model for thematic data analysis. They described thematic analysis as a "…foundational method" (p78) for qualitative analysts and believed that the ability to thematise meanings was a skill of all qualitative researchers. They asserted that thematic analysis was a method in its own right, which sat comfortably within the constructionist paradigm (although it was not limited to it, or by

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it). Whilst acknowledging concerns about the sometimes apparently haphazard approach taken to thematic analysis, their work endeavoured to provide a framework for researchers that was both theoretically and methodologically sound (since the omission of such justifications were a common pitfall amongst quantitative researchers, they felt).

Thematic analysis enables the researcher to identify, organise, analyse and report patterns within the data. These patterns can then be classified as themes, enabling rich description of the dataset. Braun and Clarke argued that whilst many researchers used thematic analysis, there had not been a clear understanding of what it was. They argued that most qualitative researchers were, by nature, thematic analysts, whether they acknowledge it or not. Many researchers have described the process of 'discovering' themes, but Braun and Clarke recognised the researcher's role in actively creating them – they believed that the researcher needed to acknowledge the decisions they had made as an integral part of the construction of the themes.

Braun and Clarke defined a theme as that which "... captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of *patterned* response or meaning within the data set" (p82). This, they argued, required a substantial degree of researcher judgement as the number of instances of a theme across the dataset did not necessarily mean the theme was more significant. In this way, a theme was a theme because it spoke to the research question, not just because of the frequency with which it appeared. As they put it, "...the 'keyness' of a theme is not necessarily dependent on quantifiable measures – but rather on whether it captures something important in relation to the overall research question" (p82).

I would argue that as a researcher I am not free from my theoretical and epistemological foundations and as such this analysis will be a 'theoretical' thematic analysis (since it is innately driven by my own theoretical interests in the area under examination). I approached this study with preconceived interests within the field of research and it was always likely that I would code whilst implicitly or explicitly searching for themes relating to these interests. Further, my analysis was going to be at the latent, rather than interpretive, level. This meant that I would be going beyond the surface semantics of the data, in search of the ideas, assumptions and conceptualisations that underlay it. In this way, I

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had to recognise that I had already, partially theorised the outcomes of the analysis before it had formally begun.

Braun and Clarke outlined six steps for conducting a thematic analysis:

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarising yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Creating interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Braun and Clarke (2006, p87)

Table 1: Six steps for conducting a thematic analysis.

3.9.2 The data analysis process.

Phase 1: Familiarisation with the data.
Following Braun and Clarke's framework, my initial process (Phase 1) involved immersion in the data. Since I had collected the data through interviews, which I had conducted and

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transcribed personally, I was already very familiar with the data and approached the analysis process with some preconceptions about it. I felt it was important to transcribe the interviews in person, as part of familiarising myself with the data (see, for example, King & Horrocks, 2011, Langdridge, 2004, Riessman, 1993). This was a time-consuming process, but I felt this was necessary to provide a 'true' account of the interview (Drever, 2003). I believed I was the best-placed person to undertake the transcription (since I was closest to it and had field notes to aid the process). In doing this, transcription was undoubtedly an interpretive process during which I recorded initial thoughts and possible codes that could be built upon throughout Phase 1 and beyond.

Phase 2: Generating initial codes.

During Phase 2 I formalised the codes I had begun to identify in the previous stage and added further codes as appropriate. These codes ranged from identifying purely semantic commonalities (such as students' verbal definitions of the Holocaust), to beginning to identify latent commonalties (such as evidence in students' articulations of empathetic reactions they had to things they had heard or seen). I was keen not to limit the number of codes at this stage, or to restrict any data to only one code. All of the transcribed responses were coded, generating more than thirty codes.

Phase 3: Searching for themes.

At this stage I began to move away from the coded data towards defining my units of analysis – the themes. This involved searching for patterns amongst the codes – the process Stake (1995) described as being the qualitative equivalent of quantitative correlation. Potential themes were identified and groups of coded data were loosely constructed. This involved a great deal of movement between potential themes, subthemes and codes. On a practical level, this was achieved through physical manipulation of the themes (on Post-it Notes) on a large area of wall space in my home, which allowed me to 'visualise' the themes and their potential groupings (this process is shown in the photographs in Appendix 3). Throughout this process, frequent reference was made to the original transcriptions to reappraise contextual information and redefine codes. This process produced a thematic map of the data corpus, within which individual codes could be identified and different codes could be defined by their interrelationships. This process resulted in three candidate themes:

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Academic knowledge – This potential theme contained codes that classified students' responses that demonstrated their subject knowledge or academic learning about the Holocaust. For example, codes relating to references made to historical events, or students' opinions as to who was culpable for the Holocaust.

Emotional engagement – This potential theme contained codes that classified students' responses that involved their emotional engagement with the topic of the Holocaust, or their emotive reaction to it. For example, codes relating to how students' felt about learning about the Holocaust, or their response to specific stimuli (such as film footage).

Relevance / making connections – This potential theme contained codes that classified students' responses regarding how they felt their learning related to the 'real world'. For example, codes relating to why students felt they had learned about the Holocaust, or whether they thought the world had learned the lessons of the Holocaust today.

Phase 4: Reviewing themes.

This stage involved reviewing and refining the three candidate themes. First, individual coded data was reviewed and reappraised to evaluate the coherence between codes and within the suggested umbrella themes. It was during this process that I began to consider whether the third candidate theme ('relevance / making connections') added anything to the 'story' of the study. I felt that the lines between this theme and the others were not satisfactorily clearly defined and consequently it was collapsed into the second theme ('emotional engagement'). The resulting two themes ('knowledge' and 'emotional engagement') created a distinction between two different aspects of students' learning – their *factual* learning and the *affective* learning that took place. However, there remained two levels within the theme of 'emotional engagement' that differentiated between students' personal emotional engagement and the connections they made between their learning and their developing worldview. Whilst remaining uneasy about this, I felt confident that as this phase drew to a close the themes I had identified were clearly demarcated, working in tandem to tell the 'story' of the study.

Phase 5: Defining and naming the themes.

Approaching this stage caused me to re-evaluate the process I had been through in the previous stage. I remained uneasy about the process of collapsing the third theme into

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the second and still did not feel it 'sat' well. I began to realise that if I had a broad theme that contained two 'levels', it might be better as two distinct themes again. I did not simply revert to the previous demarcations, though, as these had also been unsatisfactory. This time, the third category 'broke away' with more codes than it had before. This formed a more satisfactory third theme that could stand alone (albeit side-by-side) with the second theme and continue the 'story' begun by the first theme. These three themes were now:

1. Academic knowledge.
2. Emotional engagement.
3. A third theme concerning *how* students' connected the academic learning (theme 1) and the emotional learning (theme 2) with their developing worldview.

I felt that these were unsatisfactory names for the three themes, however. The first two were semantic labels that felt almost 'imposed' upon the collections of codes to describe the group, rather than the phenomena within. The name of the third theme was obviously unwieldy and needed to be further defined. Braun and Clarke warned researchers that "It is vital that you do not *just* paraphrase the content of the data extracts presented, but identify what is of interest about them and why" (p92). With this in mind, I set about redefining the names of my themes.

This time I sought to define the themes not by a semantic description of their content, but instead by the *types of learning* that were evident within each one. Braun and Clarke suggested that "Names need to be concise, punchy, and immediately give the reader a sense of what the theme is about" (p93). As a result of this analysis process and reviewing the data, I concluded that three types of learning were evident within the data corpus:

'Surface Level' Learning	**'Affective' Learning**	**'Connective' Learning**
What academic knowledge have they acquired, where and from whom?	*How does that knowledge affect them?*	*Where and how does that knowledge fit within their developing worldview?*
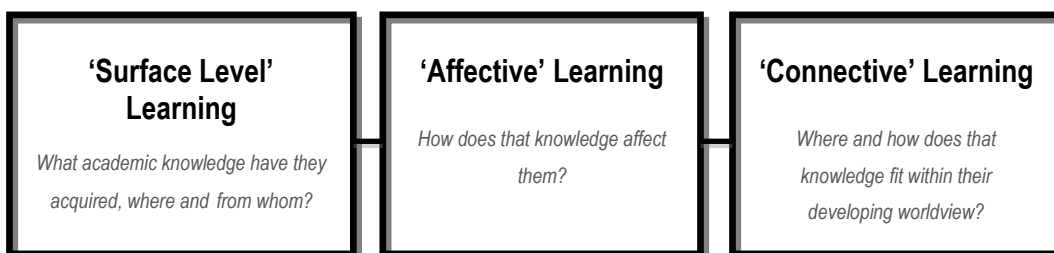
Figure 2: The three types of learning evident within the data.

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Phase 6: Producing the report.

Having reached this point in the data analysis process, I was able to start producing the academic report of the study, which follows in Chapter 4 (alongside the discussion of the findings).

3.9.3 The data analysis process and the gap in the literature.

Having identified the three themes evident within my data, I referred back to my Literature Review (Chapter 2). Looking over the research in the field afresh (having completed my data analysis), I found that my themes were clearly rooted in what had gone before. Where it differed from previous findings, however, was in the suggested interconnectedness of the three areas of learning.

The HEDP report (Pettigrew et al., 2009) endeavoured to investigate students' academic learning, but unexpectedly revealed emotional and connective learning of sorts. Clements (2006) found evidence of emotional and connective learning in chaos, but asserted that *how* they learned was more significant than *what* they learned. Burke (2003) had explored students' emotional learning in an effort to enhance their academic learning, whilst Brina (2003) also explored emotional learning, but found that it did not affect academic learning (for Brina, personal motivation – which could be deemed 'connective' learning – was more influential). Only Gallant and Hartman (2001) had advocated a tripartite approach of cognitive (academic), affective (emotional) and actional (connective) learning, although for them the latter referred to students making a connection as to 'how to act' in similar circumstances. I felt confident, therefore, that my research could be said to be founded in the field of prior knowledge whilst tentatively indicating that it might fill a gap within that knowledge.

3.9.4 Data analysis – a reflexive process.

Reflexive writing is meant to encapsulate your thinking processes (Luttrell, 2010). Progressing through the stages outlined above provided me with a 'route-map' through a bumpy, uncertain journey. It caused me to consider my assumptions and to re-evaluate my positioning within the field of research. I had to address what I knew (or thought I knew) about the field of Holocaust Education and to abandon that – as best I could – in an

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attempt to dispassionately see what the data was saying. It was important to me that the data was allowed to speak for itself, rather than enslaving it to my agenda. Coding the text of the interview transcripts was a fairly straightforward procedure, which generated a considerable number of categories. 'Thematizing' the codes was more complicated – and was arguably made more so by my preconceptions. I had approached the study with an interest in how effective Holocaust Education was (on an academic level) and how pupils engaged emotionally with the topic. This had undoubtedly shaped my data collection (particularly the construction of the instrument). In developing candidate themes I had two clear areas – academic learning and emotional engagement – but I was also left with a third, 'other' group (which in Phase 3 I termed 'relevance / making connections'). This was an unsatisfactory theme, both in name and content. By collapsing the third theme into the second and then re-expanding and redefining it into two new themes, I arrived at a more comfortable and clearly demarcated trio of themes. This process led me away from what I *wanted* to find out, towards what was *evident* within the data. In this way, the 'story' of the data that I was about to tell would be a more accurate reflection of it. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) pointed out that we cannot design complexity as part of our data collection; rather it evolves from within it. Through this process, I came to realise that whilst I might have conceived the 'characters' of this particular story, they would need to be free to tell their tale for themselves.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion.

4.1 Introduction to Chapter 4.

Having reviewed the relevant research literature, established my theoretical position and explained my methodology, the purpose of this chapter is to present the findings and discussion of the data. As this thesis is being submitted for a Professional Doctorate, I have decided to present the discussion alongside the findings to enable more immediate reflection upon professional practice.

4.2 Surface Level Learning.

This section presents the collected data which relates to students' learning at a surface (academic) level. Students' evident understandings and historical knowledge of the Holocaust are presented, as are their reports of the various places they have learned about the topic.

4.2.1 Defining the Holocaust.

Each of the students was asked what the term 'Holocaust' meant to them. The diversity of definitions offered illustrated two things. First, that there was a lack of any clearly learnt common 'textbook' definition amongst the students. Most of the definitions offered were generally accurate in content, but loosely constructed and lacked clarity. For example, Ali (Year 10) suggested the definition that, "*…it was the Nazi regime of getting rid of er, the, all the other like, races who the Nazis deemed subhuman such as, er, the Jews and political prisoners and so on*". Second, whilst there was clarity about the main victim group of the Nazi persecution, there was uncertainty about which other groups or individuals were targeted. The most frequently referenced victim groups after the Jews were "*…gays*" or "*…homosexuals*" and "*…gypsies*". A variety of other victim groups were mentioned, however, such as "*…coloured people*", "*…criminals*", "*…antisocials*" and "*…outcasts*". In total, over thirty victim groups were mentioned, with most only being referenced by one or two students. The students were generally unspecific about the numbers of victims involved. Some spoke in terms of *"…millions"*, although only two specified that there were

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6 million victims (with one other reporting *"…7 million"* victims). Felix (Year 12) rather indifferently recalled his experience as being that, "…*we just went through it in the books I was, I was like okay – facts, blah-blah-blah… 20 million people in this camp and all that sort of thing*".

Many of the students seemed unsure in their definition of the Holocaust itself, several responded in the form of a question, apparently seeking affirmation. For example, when asked what the Holocaust meant to him, Hamish (Year 9) asked "*When, er, the Jews were gassed, wasn't it? Er, I think it was, and, er, people with problems, stuff like that.*" In defining the Holocaust, many of the students made reference to the concentration camps or death camps, particularly Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen. There was evidence in their definitions that a few students understood the distinction between the concentration camps and the death camps, although the majority referred to one or the other (usually the former). This was surprising since the ability to make this distinction was a specific concern of the Head of History at the school (see section 3.5.2, above). Those who did not name specific camps, often made reference to 'gassings', 'people being sent to camps', or 'killing'.

These comments reflected the HEDP's findings (Pettigrew et al., 2009) that there was a lack of clear definition of the event itself and that this confused pupils. An element of such confusion was clearly apparent in this study. In defining the Holocaust, students first mentioned either Hitler / the Nazis' actions, or the Jews' persecution in equal numbers. The HEDP report suggested that a 'perpetrator narrative' was being taught in schools, but I do not think that these students' responses demonstrated that. There was little evidence to suggest students' generally felt that the Holocaust was something either done *by* one group, or *to* another. There was, however, evidence of 'Auschwitz-centric' learning as death camps and gas chambers were a common theme in their definitions. Bergen-Belsen was also frequently mentioned, probably because the students recalled the visit to the school of the Holocaust survivor who had spent some time there and the camp was a key part of his testimony (see section 4.3.6, below).

Much of the language used by the students expressed their revulsion towards the Holocaust. By using words such as "…*massacre*", "…*disastrous*", "…*horrible*", or "…*unfair cruelty*", they linguistically distanced themselves from the event. These are normal

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reactions to it, but in my field notes I recorded an uneasiness that these seemed, in some way, 'learned' or 'expected' responses. I felt as if the students were choosing their words in an attempt to identify with societal norms (and possibly to give me what they felt I – in my role as a teacher – expected to hear from them). It was as if they knew they had to reject the event and subsequently chose language designed to illustrate their sensitive, reactive disgust. A definition of the Holocaust does not strictly require this, but the students seemed to need to express this as part of their attempted definition or understanding.

A small number of students could not remember what the Holocaust was, or gave an incorrect definition. Max (Year 10) defined it as "*...a period of time in history where the country goes through a bad stage in the economy and the people really. Could be any country. The most obvious one is Germany.*" Will (Year 9) thought that the Holocaust was an attempt by Hitler to "*...take over France*", whilst two other students (one in Year 9 and one in Year 10) were unsure if they could give a definition as they didn't have a "*…religious*" point of view to offer. Some other students offered definitions reliant on their academic experiences and recollections. They couched their responses in terms of what they could remember from their lessons or textbooks, or 'protected' their proffered definition with riders such as "*…well, in our recent History exam, that's what I put*" (Daniel, Year 9). This suggested some evidence of students making the "*…theoretical retreat*" (Brina, 2003, p524), clinging to the security of theory. This may have been due to a realisation that their knowledge was lacking, or due to a desire not to be seen to 'get it wrong'. Similarly, other students offered history-centric responses, supporting Milchman and Rosenberg's (1996) belief that by placing it within the History curriculum the event can become (however inadvertently) 'historicized'. Craig (Year 12) explained that "*I didn't study History to GCSE, so I don't know that much about the Holocaust*", whilst Duncan (Year 12) seemed at pains to impress that "*…I did History GCSE so I do know, a fair bit…* [then, more hesitantly] *I know, I know, I know what it is*". Although these views were very much in the minority, they suggested that some students were unclear as to the historically defined nature of the Holocaust. Whilst some saw it as religious in nature (and consequently felt their opinions were less valid if they did not have a religious point of view), others saw it as historical in nature (and consequently their opinion was based on their academic achievement or experiences in History lessons).

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There was evidence in some students' definitions that they equated the event with an act of racism towards a particular "*…denomination*". As Lawrence (Year 9) put it, "*...to me… it's kind of a lack of respect towards the Jewish faith, and it's sort of just Hitler brushing aside a whole religion*". Whilst simultaneously illustrating his misunderstanding of the event as being particularly religious in nature, Lawrence also appeared to believe that the event was motivated by prejudice. This might suggest that the students had been taught that the Holocaust was an act of prejudice (see, for example, Clements, 2006, Short 1995), or that they have come to that conclusion themselves. To describe the Holocaust as an act of prejudice is to misunderstand the nature of the event and undermine its uniqueness (Harris, 1989). It is important that students' understanding of the causes of the Holocaust is such that it cannot be neatly compartmentalised in a way that diminishes it.

4.2.2 Jewish specificity.

Students who had said that they thought Jewish people were the main target group of the Nazi persecution, were asked why they thought this was. The majority of explanations concerned Hitler's desire for racial purity, or the perceived financial success of the Jewish community within pre-World War Two German society. Harvey (Year 10) summarised Nazi racial ideology as promoting "*…blond hair blue eyes sort of big, big six-foot people*". Several of the students appeared to see this as a racial or genetic distinction (although significant mention was also made of religious distinctions). Definitions of Aryanism were restricted to superficial descriptions of physical traits. Students made reference to the "*Aryan race*" as having been a perceived "*…superior race*" and to the Jews being thought of as "*…imperfections*" or "*…inferior*" to that ideal. Some students seemed a little confused as to how the state of 'Aryanism' could be achieved, however. Quinn (Year 9) appeared to suggest that Aryanism was a choice, as the victims were those he believed "*…didn't want to be in the Aryan race*". Declan (Year 10) was not alone in implying a superficial understanding of Nazi eugenic policies in saying that "*Hitler had some strange idea that he could make a pure race*". However, there was no evidence to suggest students understood this as a proactive policy as such. Where explanations of Jewish specificity were expressed in terms of their exclusion from the Aryan ideal, the students appeared to believe that this was particularly a racial distinction. Guy (Year 12) went so far as to label the targeting of the Jews as "*Genocide really*" (a sentiment echoed by two

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other students in Year 9). Whilst the broad acknowledgement that the Jews were not considered to be Aryan is an accurate reflection of Nazi ideology, it is of concern that Aryanism was reduced to a set of stereotypical physical characteristics that avoid the complex historical and religious origins and implications of the word. Similarly, no reference was made of the complex definitions of 'Jewishness' set out in the Nuremberg Laws (a topic that The HEDP report (Pettigrew et al., 2009) suggested teachers were less likely to teach about). It could be that this area of study had simply been a casualty of curricular time restrictions at this school, however, rather than any failure in adequate depth of study.

The financial prosperity of the Jewish population during the inter-war period in Germany was raised by a number of students as another reason for their persecution. Students mentioned their success in business, compared with their non-Jewish neighbours, which had afforded them what Henry (Year 12) termed "*…a higher place*" in German society. This was linked with suspicion that the Jews had somehow "*…cheated*" their way to success and that persecution was a consequence of this. As Daniel (Year 9) put it, "*…all the successful people were Jews and I think he* [Hitler] *sort of wanted to get back at them*". There was some confusion evident in these comments, however. Where comments were made about the prosperity of the Jews, students were not clear as to whether they felt the Nazis' views were accurate or not. For the most part, students reported the Jews' prosperity as apparent fact, despite evidence to the contrary (see, for example, Supple, 2006). Only a couple of students were careful to avoid inadvertently condoning these views by using phrases such as "*…they were seen as inferior*", "*I heard…*" or suggesting that Hitler contrived and perpetuated this belief.

This idea that the Jews were punished in some way continued to be a recurring theme in other explanations. Some of the students cited blame for Germany's defeat in the First World War, although their historical bases for these explanations were unsound. Vincent (Year 9) believed that "*Hitler felt that, that er, that the Jews kind of helped Germany lose the war because the German General who surrendered was Jewish*", whilst Phillip (Year 10) thought that "*…one of the criminals who signed the Treaty of Versailles, was Jewish*". These views are not based on sound historical evidence and appear to be little more than the perpetuation of myth, based on the 'stab in the back' legend that incited anti-Semitic feeling within the Weimar Republic in the aftermath of World War One. Two students

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mentioned how the Nazis used such beliefs as the basis for propaganda. Adrian (Year 12) evaluated the effectiveness of this as a political tactic, reflecting that, "*…it's always good to have somebody, to… blame, so then you can draw together people through persecuting others*".

Some students, however, felt that the historical basis for the persecution of the Jews stretched back further than the inter-war years. They considered the impact of 2,000 years of anti-Semitism and the charge of deicide levied against the Jews following the crucifixion of Christ. This tended to open up considerations of Jewish specificity being based upon religious, rather than racial, distinctions. Paul (Year 9) attempted to clarify this by arguing that "*Hitler didn't think Jewish was a good faith and that they, they caused Jesus' death. And, he wanted revenge on them*". Whilst his comment appears to be concise and comprehensive, it exposed a confused underlying logic since he was arguing that the Jews were targeted for their religious character, rather than any racial or wider cultural heritage. He also appeared to be claiming that the Holocaust was a religiously motivated retribution upon the Jewish faith. Paul went on to say (later in the interview) that, "*…my view on it is that the Jews kind of did cause his death, but we, may have some biased, like, sources of information, from the Bible*". In adding this, Paul seemed to be alluding – intentionally or not – to Christianity's role in the creation and sustentation of the anti-Semitic charge of deicide. This raises an important issue in understanding anti-Semitism as a key influence of the design of the Final Solution and Christianity's role in it (see, for example, Rees Jones, 2000, Rittner & Roth, 2000). It is essential that students have an understanding of the history of anti-Semitism if they are not to see it as a peculiarly Germanic invention (Short & Reed, 2004).

The students' responses clearly showed that they understood the specificity of the victimisation of the Jews. However, their understanding of the rationale behind this was at best mixed and at worst very unclear. There was still a lack of clarity as to the Nazis' conceptual 'difference' of the Jews and whether this was religiously or racially based. This is an understandable confusion, however, since the definition of 'Jewishness' remains an ambiguous concept, varying as it does amongst different Jewish groups. Their explanations also revealed further evidence of vague or questionable historical knowledge. For example, Alex (Year 9) spoke of the Jews as being key targets during the Crusades. Uri (Year 9) referred to the "*…terrorist attacks*" and other "*…problems*" (such

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as religious wars) that the Jews were allegedly known to have caused prior to World War Two. Daniel (Year 9) believed that Hitler was himself a Jew and Henry (Year 12) recounted how he had heard about the impact a "*Jewish teacher*" had on Hitler, when he failed him at school. Such snippets of poorly informed or unspecific history echo Davidowicz's 1990 study and have been refuted by distinguished historians such as Ian Kershaw (1998). They serve to perpetuate misunderstandings of the circumstances of the Holocaust. It was apparent from the students' responses that whilst they had a functional understanding of the specificity of the Jewish persecution, their understanding of the specific underlying motivations was not clearly supported by accurate historical knowledge.

4.2.3 Perceptions of culpability.

In proffering a definition of the Holocaust, most of the students alluded to which individual (or group of individuals) they felt was culpable for the event. Overwhelmingly, Hitler was deemed to have had prime culpability. Half of those who suggested him did so solely. Others suggested Hitler alongside other groups such as "…*the Nazis*" or "…*the Germans*", whilst a few mentioned these latter groups alone. Only two other suggestions were made – "…*the policy of appeasement*" (Daniel, Year 9) and "…*his, er, generals that were the same as him*" (Owen, Year 10), although both of these were qualified by reference to Hitler's co-culpability.

The students were not asked explicitly whom they thought was responsible, but these responses were evident within the data corpus. The primacy of Hitler's perceived culpability among the students is significant and suggests a tendency towards the 'rotten apple' theory of culpability put forward by Henriques (1984). It indicates a lack of understanding about the complexity of the Jewish persecution. Reducing the event to the simplicity of saying 'Hitler killed the Jews' reveals a naïvety that ignores the pervasiveness of the Nazi ideology and the wider societal contributing factors of the persecution. For example, no mention was made of the Wannsee Conference or its attendees, as a decisive factor in the formulation of the Final Solution. This bears out the HEDP report findings (Pettigrew et al., 2009) that barely half of teachers included study of the Wannsee Conference in their schemes of work (ranking it 21st out of 35 possible topics in the study).

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Most of the students seemed to feel that the Germans – whether they were ordinary citizens or officials – had little choice but to collaborate with the Nazi hierarchy and its aims. Theo (Year 9) summed up this view in his belief that "*…no one was fighting back at what was right because it was really wrong killing all these Jews… I think if anyone got in his* [Hitler's] *way they'd be killed and no one wanted to be killed… It would have been really difficult*". In this way, collaboration appeared to be represented by the students as being the result of a difficult *choice.* Students saw many Germans as having wrestled with the dilemma of "*…realizing that you know it's wrong but you're still carrying it out just to save yourself*" (Niall, Year 10). Others felt that most ordinary Germans would simply not have known what was really happening. A further three students mentioned the effectiveness of anti-Jewish "*…propaganda*" as an influencing factor (although these were in reference to the *organisation* of the persecution, rather than its *execution*). Bill (Year 10) felt that self-interested collusion of this sort extended beyond Germany, lamenting that other nations "*…knew it was happening at the time and no one stopped it… I think people wanted to help but they were too sort of concerned, of their own situations.*" In their explanations, the students appeared to be framing their understanding of the actions of others in terms of the moral dilemmas they faced. These appear to be the "*…comfortable 'explanations'*" Salmons (2001, p35) feared when people try to make sense of complex history by explaining it in terms of simpler human choices. To do so is to conveniently repackage those human choices into terms we can more easily comprehend, at the expense of the complex history.

For students to have learned about the Holocaust and come away from it with an un-nuanced, cursory understanding of who the perpetrators were is concerning. Literature regarding the role ordinary men and women played as perpetrators and bystanders is extensive (see, for example, Browning, 1992, Hilberg, 1992, Steinfeldt et al., 2002). Holocaust survivor Kitty Hart-Moxon (2007) reminded us that the numbers of the SS were swelled by necessity with "*…foreign volunteers such as those from Spain, and collaborators like those from the Ukraine and Lithuania*" who, in her opinion, "*…could be far more vicious than the true SS*" (p109). This is an often forgotten truth of the Holocaust and one that is arguably in the interests of the nations implicated to preserve and perpetuate (Stone, 2010). Only one student raised the much-debated concept of Jewish resistance (see, for example, Bauer, 2002) and none of them talked about rescuers or

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'upstanders' (Holocaust Memorial Resource & Education Centre of Florida, 2012) beyond film or fictional characters such as those in the 2008 film, *Defiance* (Zwick & Frohman, 2008). The Holocaust could not have occurred to the extent – and within the timescale it did – without the co-operation of ordinary citizens across occupied Europe. These students did not appear to have a correct understanding of this, believing it to be the responsibility of one man, or vaguely defined groups such as coerced "*Germans*". To condense the complicated historical, political, sociological, cultural and financial contributing factors into an overly simplistic definition is to do a disservice to all those involved.

4.2.4 Historical references.

In their responses the students made a small number of other historical references. When discussing the camps, two students specified geographical locations. Phillip (Year 10) located the camps within Poland and Germany, whilst Paul's explanation (Year 9) was simultaneously more specific and more vague, saying that "*…all the extermination camps were all in Poland and, er, concentration camps were in Germany, and a couple of slavery camps just dotted all over the place*". Both students had a basic understanding of the geography of the camp system, but it was little more than a perfunctory one. When discussing the camp system, Scott (Year 9) made reference to "*…this stuff called Xyclon B, which, er, turned into a gas which killed them*", but this was the only mention of the specific mechanics of the Final Solution. Three students in Year 9 spoke about the events of Kristallnacht as being amongst the things they had learned (although only one used the term directly, the other two referring to it in the English translation of 'The Night of Broken Glass'). A small number of students exhibited a deeper understanding of some of the contributing political factors preceding the Holocaust. For example, James (Year 10) spoke confidently about Hitler's imprisonment, his authorship of *Mein Kampf*, the "*…mistreatment*" of Germany at the Treaty of Versailles (and how it subsequently lead to hyperinflation and the ultimate failure of the German government) and the League of Nations.

These passing references made to historical facts highlighted some areas that should be of concern. The students' knowledge of the camp system was essentially just that they existed and that Jews were sent there. The bulk of their historical knowledge appeared to

be little more than fragments of information, or terms they were unsure of. My field notes revealed a sense that when they did use a specific term, the students tended to talk cautiously, or to couch their responses as questions rather than as statements. Historical references to the Treaty of Versailles, appeasement, or Xyclon B were the exception, rather than the norm. In several cases, such references were incorrect, or inaccurately located within world history. For example, Daniel in Year 9 (who was visibly unsure of his own facts) asked if "*…Auschwitz was before appeasement, wasn't it?*" and Craig in Year 12 spoke of learning about the Holocaust in the same sentence as recalling his learning about Douglas Haig and the Battle of the Somme.

It cannot, of course, be concluded that these students did not have a sound knowledge of the historical facts, but rather that any such depth of knowledge was not overtly evident from their responses. This strikes at the heart of the debate as to what History is *for* (Slater, 1995) – whether knowledge of the historical facts is necessary or, indeed, desirable. Kinloch (1998) has argued that study of the Holocaust should be located within the History curriculum (as it currently is within the statutory framework in England and Wales). However, the responses of the students in this study do not appear to indicate that the historical emphasis of their study of the Holocaust has been entirely successful in this school.

4.2.5 Sources of learning – curricular.

When asked where they had learned about the Holocaust at school, almost all of the students said they had learned about it in History lessons. Their perception as to the depth of their study varied, however. Their qualifications as to how much they had learned in History ranged from 'a bit', to 'quite a lot', to 'all' of their learning in this field. Many of them said History lessons had been the 'main' source of their Holocaust learning and those who were in Years 10 or 12 tended to explain that this had occurred whilst they were in Year 9 at the school. When recalling the content of these lessons, the students spoke in broad terms about having learned about the background to the Holocaust, Hitler's rise to power, their study of the two World Wars, Kristallnacht and the camps, amongst other topics. A few students in Year 9 (who had studied the topic in recent weeks) made reference to the textbooks they had used during their lessons. Ross (Year 9) spoke of the "*…quite graphic*" content in his textbook, whilst Theo (also Year 9)

remembered an image of confiscated wedding rings he had seen, which had clearly resonated with him. Pointedly, however, Cian (Year 9) felt that he had used his textbook merely *"...to answer questions in class so we learn like that"*.

Just over one third of the students commented (either voluntarily or as the result of a prompt during the interview) that they had learned about the Holocaust in Religious Studies (RS) lessons. The majority of these students said that they thought they had learned something about the Holocaust in RS lessons, although for some this was limited to having just 'touched' on it, or having done 'a small amount'. A couple of students said that they had 'obviously' studied it in RS, suggesting a natural link between the study of religion and the study of the Holocaust (a point clarified by Ewan in Year 12 who said that it had come up during their study of racism in RS). Duncan (also Year 12) explained that he had not studied the Holocaust as part of his RS lessons because those lessons were *"...just like Christianity, so it's not – it's not like world religions"* (suggesting that he also saw a relational link between the Holocaust and religion, presumably to Judaism).

A few students discussed the content of their RS lessons. Most of these descriptions involved them volunteering an explanation of how the Holocaust fitted in with a study of religions. For example, Ivan in Year 10 said that he had learned *"...about the Holocaust, er, moral like right and wrong, good and evil"*. In this way, intentionally or not, the students' responses appeared to need to justify studying the Holocaust outside of History lessons. A very few other references were made to learning about the roots of anti-Semitism (based on historic charges of deicide against the Jews), a study of Jewish religious life and practices and a more general reference to learning about corporal punishment.

It is unsurprising that the students felt the majority of their Holocaust learning had taken place in History lessons (see, for example, Fox 1989, Pettigrew et al., 2009, Salmons, 2001, Short & Reed, 2004), or that significant learning also occurred in RS lessons (see, for example, Brown & Davies, 1998, Davies, 2000, Short, 2001). This also reflected the apparent national situation at this time (Pettigrew et al., 2009). The depth of the students' historical knowledge has already been discussed in this chapter, but it is significant to note that the students' perceptions of the *depth* of their study in History varied widely. The HEDP Report (Pettigrew et al., 2009) provided evidence that the amount of time spent

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studying the Holocaust varied between schools nationally, but one would assume that different pupils within the *same* school would have spent roughly the *same* amount of curriculum time on the topic (and the curricular plans for the school suggested this was the case). It may be that pressures on curricular time had impacted the amount of teaching hours different pupils received, but it is perhaps more likely that the topic simply had greater resonance for some pupils than others (and hence affected how much time they thought they had spent studying it). For example, the student who spoke about the image of the confiscated wedding rings was far more forthcoming about his learning and his experiences of the Holocaust than some of his peers. It is possible that those who connected most with the topic (for example, remembering a particular image) remembered more and consequently felt they had spent longer on it.

That students felt they needed to justify their learning about the Holocaust in RS reflects the issue at the heart of the debate as to what Religious Studies is for (Napier, 2005) and what role it plays in Holocaust Education (Short, 2001). Their opinions about how the Holocaust fitted their Religious Studies syllabus (and to what extent there was a causal relationship between the two) revealed inconsistencies in their reasoning, however. This once again highlighted some of their uncertainties about the Holocaust's relationship with religion and revealed an apparent lack of explicit understanding in this area.

Of the students who said they had learned about the Holocaust in both History and RS lessons, some were asked whether they felt their teaching or learning in the two subjects had been particularly different. Every student described a similar key difference they perceived between the two curricular areas. Their learning in History was reported as being essentially 'factual', whilst their learning in RS lessons was more 'emotional' or 'moral' in tone. There was some evidence that learning in History was more outcome-dependent (based on their need to pass an exam), whilst learning in RS was "*…not work pressured*" (Declan, Year 10). This did not, however, mean that the students felt the lessons were mutually exclusive. Rather, there was evidence that the students felt the two perspectives – facts and opinions – complemented and informed one another. Harvey (Year 10) summarised these views in saying that he felt "*…what we learn in History can sort of affect what we, how we think in, RS, so, it helps*". Given the students' articulations of their learning it is perhaps unsurprising that they drew these distinctions between the two disciplines. Indeed, the visit of a Holocaust survivor in their History lessons – which

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was mentioned by the majority of the students without prompting – probably added to these perceptions. However, it is not necessarily educationally beneficial that they articulated this difference. In describing the differences they highlighted a hierarchy of sorts, differentiating between the subject that deals with factual truths (History) and that which deals with more flexible opinions (Religious Studies). This suggests that the students were beginning to formulate the same subject-based status hierarchy that Brown and Davies (1998) found existed amongst teachers. The students' understanding of the relationship between the two subjects was somewhat unclear, however, with some students feeling their historical learning *underpinned* their religious understanding, whilst others felt the opposite. Finlay (Year 10) struggled with the uncertainties RS introduced, whilst his classmate Graham felt that RS helped him gain a wider perspective on the historical facts. This illustrates the 'hazy' relationship Burke (2003) described between the two subjects but also reflects a national trend (Pettigrew et al., 2009) that these two subject areas have much to offer to complement one another, but often work against or in spite of one another. However much co-operation there might have been (or not) between the two departments in this school, their work – albeit done with the best intentions – has left these students somewhat confused as to the relationship between history and religion in the Holocaust and with clearly emerging views about the academic differences in purpose and status of the two subjects.

History and RS lessons were not the only sources of curricular learning talked about by the students. There were further subjects and lessons that they mentioned as sources of their Holocaust learning, although these were very few in number. For example, Duncan (Year 12) recalled that he had *"…touched upon it"* whilst studying war poetry in English and Chris (Year 10) thought he had briefly learned about it in "*…quite a few subjects*". Several students said that they had watched *Schindler's List* (Keneally & Zaillian, 1993) in Geography lessons, although none could explain the reason for it being shown in that particular subject's lessons. Mentions were also made of students having learned about the Holocaust in their previous school, but the content they reported having covered was limited to cursory introductions to the topic. It is not unexpected to hear about a diverse range of curricular sources of Holocaust Education (Pettigrew et al., 2009), but these were significantly few considering the size of the sample. This study was conducted just two years after the publication of *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* (Boyne, 2006) and it is possible that students in subsequent years will be exposed to more opportunities to study

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the Holocaust earlier in their Secondary school careers than these students had evidently been.

4.2.6 Sources of learning – extra-curricular.

During the course of their interviews, various students spoke about sources of their Holocaust learning beyond the classroom. For example, two Year 10 students mentioned how their learning had been enhanced by conversations with their friends. Similarly, several spoke about conversations they had participated in at home. Some of these discussions arose through family connections (such as having relatives who fought in the Second World War). Others were more specifically academic in nature (for example, conversations with interested, History-graduate parents). For two students the family discussions were prompted by relatives' direct involvement in the Holocaust – for one as victims, for the other as a witness in the Ukraine. It is encouraging that these students felt able to discuss the Holocaust at home, particularly where they were able to explore their personal family histories (Short, 1995).

One student recalled watching *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* (Herman, 2008) with his mother. Media representations of the Holocaust were a common source of learning for many of the students. Unspecified television programmes and clips were mentioned many times. Specific television documentaries students had watched included *Band of Brothers* (Jendresen et al., 2001) and *Hitler: The Rise of Evil* (Pielmeier & Parker, 2003). Films they had seen included *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* (Herman, 2008), *Schindler's List* (Keneally & Zaillian, 1993) and *Downfall* (Eichinger et al., 2004). Lloyd (Year 10) talked about having seen clips of the Nazi propaganda film *Terezin: A Documentary Film of the Jewish Resettlement* (Gerron, 1944). Some students made only passing mentions of unspecific films or television clips they had seen, whilst a small number of others were able to list a comprehensive catalogue of them. Films undoubtedly have a significant influence in young people's lives (Shaw, 2004). Professional educators need to exercise caution as to the historical veracity of the moving images they present students with (see, for example, Cohen, 2000, Cole, 2000). Parents may have no such concerns, however. For example, the book of *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* (Boyne, 2006, subsequently released as a film in 2008) contains riders which clearly state it is both a fable and unsuitable for 9 year olds to read. Its marketing and placement in children's sections of

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bookshops might lead an unsuspecting – if well intentioned – parent to reasonably assume it is both suitable for an older child reader and historically accurate. In fact, the appropriateness of the novel's role in informing young people about the Holocaust has been seriously called into question (see, for example, Ceserani, 2008, Gilbert, 2010). Other films (such as *Schindler's List*, Keneally & Zaillian, 1993) have also been criticised for the artistic liberties their directors have taken with the historical truths they are claiming to represent (see, for example, Cohen, 2000, Manchel, 1995). Whilst it is encouraging to see students engaging with the Holocaust in popular culture outside of school, it does raise a question as to whether the potential benefits to their education outweigh the risks of misinformation from uncensored access to such materials.

Many of the students talked about Holocaust era photographs they had seen. Usually they referred to the large volume of images without specifying any particular picture. Judicious use of images undoubtedly has benefits for helping students' understanding of the Holocaust (see, for example, Brina, 2003, Burke, 2003), but is not without controversy (Crane, 2008). Finlay (Year 10) was able to connect the still images he had seen with the films he had been shown, explaining how the latter explained or contextualised the former (a phenomenon explored by Shaw, 2004). A few students referred to Holocaust-related books they had read, such as *The Diary of Anne Frank* (originally published in 1947). As with films, such sources can be controversial (Gilbert, 2010) – although Anne Frank's diary is less so, given that it is essentially a Primary source. Other sources mentioned by individual students included conversations with Sixth Form students who had visited Auschwitz (with the Holocaust Educational Trust) and attendance at Holocaust Memorial Day events at the school. This latter recollection perhaps brings into question the effectiveness of the school's Holocaust Memorial Day commemorations, however, since only a single student mentioned it (Kushner, 2004). Three other Year 9 students recounted having visited the Imperial War Museum's permanent Holocaust Exhibition. Two had trouble recalling the museum's name, while the third (upon further probing) had confused the Imperial War Museum in London with the Holocaust Centre in Laxton, Nottinghamshire. Museums can play an important role in students' Holocaust learning (Short, 2000) but again, the relatively small number of visits stated by students appeared to corroborate Short's (1995) observation that they are often rarely fully utilised. This is all the more disheartening given that the school is only 20 miles from the Imperial War Museum, home to Europe's largest permanent Holocaust exhibition.

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Adrian (Year 12) spoke about having performed in an amateur dramatic performance of a play set during the Holocaust, entitled *Playing for Time*. He recalled playing "*…a little boy who was a… a Jew and I was adopted by a Nazi guard and I saw my family being gassed*". Whilst the experience had a visible effect on Adrian and he remembered it vividly, portraying a young victim of the Nazi's Lebensborn programme (presumably whilst he was still quite young himself), is educationally complex. It is generally agreed within the field of Holocaust Education that role-play is not acceptable as it risks trivializing the circumstances of the event, or disrespecting the victims (see, for example, Short, 1997, Skloot, 1979, Totten & Parsons, 1996). Whether or not Adrian's experiences have enhanced or confused his learning could not be explored adequately in the space of a short interview, however. What was clear was that this experience had obviously affected him quite profoundly and had formed a significant part of his prior learning as he approached the Holocaust at school.

It is not especially surprising that these revelations of Holocaust learning outside of the formal classroom setting were relatively few in number. Although a variety of other sources were evident, they had only been experienced by a small number of students. Whilst these encounters will have been undoubtedly influential to the thinking of the individuals who experienced them, they were not a significant source of learning for the majority in this study.

4.2.7 Surface level learning – reflections on the theme.

> *Well I don't know that much about it to be honest… I've… never took history that far, so, I don't – I don't understand sort of the, I know sort of about the, concentration camps and that… the gas chambers and the, like the vast amount of death and things like that, like… I – I wouldn't say I was all that clued up on it"*
>
> Guy (Year 12)

Guy's response to being asked what the word 'Holocaust' meant to him revealed a paucity of knowledge and understanding that, although not representative of the sample as a whole, illustrated a number of the key deficiencies evident among the rest of this population. The overall picture that emerged of students' knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust was broadly sound, but unclearly defined. Their collective understanding

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(that the Holocaust was the Nazi persecution of the Jews) was evident from the various fragments of definitions that they offered, but lacked any kind of uniform clarity. Their tentative offerings of definitions were often shrouded in apparent uncertainty and a lack of confidence in their own knowledge. This uncertainty extended beyond the definition of the term, to their broader contextualisations of the event. Definitions of what it was to be Jewish, the history of anti-Semitism and the camp system were among other areas where they demonstrated questionable understanding. Their reduction of the event to the over-simplification that 'Hitler killed the Jews' also illustrated a lack of understanding of the central intentionalist / functionalist debate over the underlying, motivating causes of the Holocaust. This, in turn, confused their thinking about the broader issues of culpability of members of the general population. Further, there was evident confusion about the religious and historical nature of the Holocaust and this extended to their perceptions of the role and status of these two academic disciplines in their learning at school.

Gregory (2000) asserted that "…at the very heart of teaching about the Holocaust must be an accurate historical account of what as a matter of brute fact happened, and the seeking of perspectives that make sense of the facts" (p54). For the majority of these students, most of their Holocaust learning had happened at school. The result appears to have been that these students did not generally have a grasp of the historical narrative at the heart of their intended learning. What Short (1995) termed "…the felony of inadequate coverage" (p178), can result in students having a clear idea of the appalling nature of the event, whilst having a very questionable understanding of the specifics of it and this was apparent among these students. Given the unique space the Holocaust occupies in human history (Wiesel, 1978), it is troubling that these students appeared to be victims of just such a process.

4.3 Affective Learning.

This section presents the collected data that relates to students' learning at an affective (emotional) level. Evidence of students' reflections on their emotional engagement with the Holocaust is outlined. Students' reports of the various sources with which they have emotionally engaged and their reflections on the age-appropriateness of their learning are also presented.

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4.3.1 Student's emotional engagement with the topic.

The nature of the Holocaust and the enormous loss of life involved mean that it is often an emotionally difficult topic for students to learn about and they may well be upset by it (see, for example, Brown & Davies, 1998, Short, 1995, Short & Supple et al., 1998). Whether or not this is an educationally desirable outcome is widely debated, however (see, for example, Aboud, 1988, Barnett, 1997, Clements, 2006). When asked how they *felt* about the Holocaust and their learning in this area of the curriculum, the general views of the students in this study overwhelmingly suggested that they had been emotionally 'moved' by the experience and that this had been, in some measure, a negative emotional encounter that had clearly resonated with them (and continued to do so). As Oscar (Year 9) summed it up, "*It sticks in your mind, like, the word 'Holocaust' brings back painful memories*".

Cian (Year 9) described the Holocaust as "*...probably one of the worst events that has ever happened in the history of the earth that is recorded*". This was typical of much of the language students used to describe the event and their consequent reaction to it. In talking about their learning, they also revealed clues to their emotional engagement with the topic. Overwhelmingly, these clues illustrated the *difficulties* they had experienced coping emotionally with the topic. They described the Holocaust using 'negative' words such as "*…rotten*", "*…terrible*", "*…unfair*" and "*…inhumane*". However, there was also evidence of more emotionally revelatory language, such as describing it as "*…distressing*", "*…depressing*", "*…sickening*", "*…saddening*" or "*…horrendous*". Others put forward evidence of a more aggressive, angry reaction to the topic. For Adrian (Year 12), this appeared to be the result of a revelatory process which left him feeling, "*...I'd say angry more than anything. Less, er... not like upset, but I'd say angry really*". For some of the students, learning about the Holocaust appeared to be paradigm-defining. Felix (Year 12) described it as "*...probably the most racist thing that's ever been done*", while James (Year 10) saw it as a "*...global example*" of being wrong. The responses of these students mirrored Brina's (2003) findings that learning about the Holocaust elicited a wide range of responses from learners and the terminology they chose was unsurprising, given the magnitude of the event. However, there may be a significant difference underlying the specific choice of a word such a 'terrible', compared to one such as 'horrendous'. Where the former term implies that the event was 'bad', the latter suggests a level of emotional

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aberration that could suggest an inability to assimilate it into one's understanding (Clements, 2006). As such, it is possible that their choice of words illustrated three things – acknowledgement of the 'wrongness' of the event, their inability to comprehend it and (as Adrian, Year 12, articulated) a residual, resonant emotional distress moving forward. If this is the case, then educators need to consider their role in helping students achieve a cognitive and emotional comprehension of the topic, if their students are to progress beyond the 'horror' of it.

4.3.2 Empathetic reactions to the topic.

When talking about the Holocaust, many of the students revealed an empathetic reaction to the victims they had learned about. In several instances, their empathy had been triggered by images they had seen of the victims' looted possessions. Pictures of confiscated wedding rings or piles of shoes were the images most frequently mentioned as having emotional resonance. For some, these images had acted as a gateway to better understanding the scale of the Holocaust. As Owen (Year 10) explained, "*I tried to imagine how many people could have been wearing those shoes... I tried to imagine each of those shoes with a person inside it and… it sort of helps me realise how bad it was*". The responses illustrated just how powerful a tool Holocaust images can be and teachers need to consider carefully their educational motivations for using photographs to illustrate the Holocaust (Sontag, 2003). They have also to weigh up the potential educational benefits against the risks of causing distress to the students, or de-humanising the victims by reducing them to merely 'a pile of bodies' in a photograph (Crane, 2008).

Owen had also struggled to emotionally make sense of what he had seen and he said that the images of personal objects had enabled him to begin to understand the magnitude of the Holocaust from the individual level. Although he had talked about the Holocaust at home before studying it at school (and thought that this had helped him to be "…*prepared*" for it), he had clearly been moved by the images of the shoes and the wedding rings he had seen, nonetheless. Having talked about how seeing these photographs made him feel, Owen concluded by reassuring me (unprompted) that he wasn't, "*...you know horrified or like having nightmares in my sleep* [laughs] *or anything, but it was… interesting, to hear about it*". What struck me about his unsolicited reassurance was the uneasiness with which it was hastily delivered. My field notes remind

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me that his uneasy, nervous laugh – almost a cough – seemed to be a way for him to 'correct' his unguarded emotional revelations here, allowing him a brief pause to redirect the end of the sentence towards a more 'academic' explanation of his connectedness with the images. There were other occasions when I observed and noted students using similar physical motions to help them express their emotional reaction to what they had learned. During his interview, Theo (Year 9) laughed exasperatedly several times as if to illustrate his incredulity towards the inactions of bystanders, for example. When talking about his dramatic role in a Holocaust era amateur production of *Playing for Time*, Adrian (Year 12) explained that, "*...it was like a very emotive play, that was my first experience* [of the Holocaust]*, at quite a young age, actually, and that was quite...* [beats chest twice] *hit to the heart, you know?*". Choosing to strike his chest twice rather than attempt to put into words how he felt made the intensity of Adrian's emotions obvious between us. My field notes recall that it seemed as if 'he could not put it into words' and that the physicality of the non-verbalisation of his feelings implied that there was a shared understanding between us that he felt deeply affected by the experience in a way that negated the need for him to articulate it explicitly. This was an unspoken, communally 'understood' pain – and he was letting me know how deeply he felt it.

Among the other students who also expressed apparent difficulties dealing with their empathetic reactions was Lloyd (Year 10). He spoke about a photo he had seen of gaunt-looking prisoners behind bars in a camp and recalled a video he had watched about the Nazi propaganda film made at the Theresienstadt concentration camp (*Terezin: A Documentary Film from the Jewish Settlement Area*, Gerron, 1944). For him, it had been images of hair, shoes and toys which he reported finding the most difficult to deal with, because they helped him more tangibly realise the number of victims involved. These comments were remarkable because Lloyd recalled these things *very* vividly. I felt as if he really needed to impress upon me the nature of the images and the barbarity of the Nazi deception of the Danish Red Cross. At the end of my interview with Lloyd, I asked him if he had anything else he would like to add. Almost all of the students had declined to offer additional information thus far, but Lloyd took the opportunity to revisit these images and the events that had clearly affected him so profoundly at an emotional level. Without prompting beyond my vague invitation, he recalled at length:

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"Oh - the pits, that they burned them in. They showed… how they burned them, they just piled them on. Even some people were burnt alive, which I really, regret, regret.

[Lloyd was then asked why he 'regrets' it]

Because you can't burn people alive. It's just not, wrong – it's wrong. It just feels bad. And, er, there's a story where, some lady got out alive, she got out and, er, they shot her as she got out, which I don't think, is good.

[Lloyd was then asked why it sticks in his mind]

Because if someone is trying to escape they are brutal, they don't let them get out. They let, they shoot them as soon as they try and get a chance to escape."

Lloyd was clearly struggling to comprehend the scale of the violence of the Holocaust from the different sources of information he was trying to piece together. He was coming to terms with the numbers involved (from photographs of possessions), the conditions of the camps (from the pictures illustrating the physical health of the inmates and their loss of individuality), the tactics the Nazis employed to deceive both the victims and the outside world (as illustrated at Theresienstadt) and the realities of mass murder (from the stories he recalled). Particularly, I was struck by his choice of the word "…*regret*" to describe his feelings towards the use of the crematorium pits. This was not a choice of word that illustrated disconnection with the event (in the way that a word like 'disgusted' might do), but rather it was a word that highlighted his apparent emotional attachment to these victims and his upset either at their loss, or the perpetrators' actions. It possibly even suggested some feelings of shared 'guilt' on Lloyd's part. I was not able to explore this further with Lloyd as the lesson finished abruptly at this point, but it was clear from what he had said that our conversation had prompted within him a resurfacing of an on-going struggle to comprehend and assimilate the information he had been given.

Lloyd, Adrian and Owen each expressed in their own ways their efforts to comprehend and make sense of the images they had been presented with. For each of these students, in each of these instances, their exposure to these images meant that the "…restrained text" (Clements, 2006, p45) of the Holocaust had been unfettered by the images. Whether presented as photographs, video footage or as a work of dramatic art, these encounters with representations of the Holocaust illustrated a problem central to effective teaching about the Holocaust – how to present the truth without traumatising the viewer (Schatzker, 1980). Using atrocity images in the classroom raises issues of educational

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appropriateness, but perhaps the broader question would be to ask whether the use of Holocaust images is ethically justifiable in the first place and whether the purpose of such images is redemptive (Zelizer, 1998), or ultimately useless (Sontag, 2003). Crane (2008) argued that such images should be morally equated with scientific information gained from Nazi medical experiments, since they were gained brutally and without the consent of those involved. As such, she saw their reproduction and use as an almost 'promiscuous' re-assaulting of the victims they depicted. Crane thought that we had become so familiar with what she termed the "…photographic landscape of atrocity", that such photographs had now "…reached the limits of their usefulness as testimony" (p310). Consequently, she believed that the presence of these images within the public consciousness would ultimately serve only to leave us in a state of 'compassion fatigue'. Whilst this may be true of an adult viewer in an adult world in which these images are the common currency of history and the news media, *these* students were viewing them for the first time, untarnished by cynicism. Their purpose for viewing these images was primarily educational and their exposure to them should have supported their growing understanding of the event they were illustrating. I do believe, however, that educators have a responsibility not to use these images 'promiscuously'. It would be all too easy to present these images to young people as a means of shocking them. This is, arguably, both an assault on the young people in our care (Short & Supple et al., 1998) and a re-assaulting of the victims. I agree with Crane's (2008) assertion that we as historians need to act responsibly with these images. Only a naïve historian would think photographs spoke any kind of 'universal language'. The old adage that 'the camera never lies' has been re-evaluated in a contemporary world of propaganda and political spin. We appreciate now that photographs are, by their very nature, de-contextualised. Indeed, Crane's concern was that by viewing the victim through the perpetrator's gaze (the camera's lens), we become in some way complicit in their abuse. A responsible teacher should be concerned with the provenance of any image and not present it to their students without due diligence as to its origins, intent and context. If done with care, the visual image can achieve its transformative purpose (Zelizer, 1998) in helping the young viewer emotionally to come to terms with the facts of the event depicted. If done without due diligence, it can serve only to leave the young viewer incapacitated in the face of unremitting horror and leave them unable to move on from the image towards an understanding of the event.

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4.3.3 Students' reflections on their emotional engagement with the topic.

For some students, their emotional engagement with the Holocaust led them to reflect more deeply on their learning process after the event. Lloyd (Year 10), who had struggled so obviously (above) with what he had seen, suggested that the effectiveness of Holocaust Education lay in the way it was taught. He considered that whilst a teacher "*...could go straight on about it and say 'it's a bad thing'*", a more effective approach would be to "*...go slightly, week by week*", dipping in and out of the emotionally difficult areas to cover the topic more gradually. Lloyd's comments strike at the heart of the debate about the judicious use of emotionally difficult material when teaching about the Holocaust (see, for example, Burke, 2003, Clements, 2006) and he is perhaps putting forward an equitable (if un-nuanced) compromise. However, Niall (Year 10) felt that in trying to convey the facts of the event most effectively, his teacher had actively *avoided* the emotionally difficult elements. He thought that his teacher "*...didn't really wanna make us feel... that bad about it... he just thought we should learn it and realise about it rather than... put a lot of thought into it*". In putting it this way, Niall demonstrated a similar understanding of the dual aspects of Holocaust learning that Lloyd had (albeit through an articulation of what he *hadn't* been taught, rather than what he *had*). Whilst it is unclear whether Niall felt the exclusion of the emotional aspects was beneficial or detrimental to his learning, it is significant that he appeared to understand that what his teacher had presented him with was the "…restrained text" Clements (2006, p45) had spoken of.

Studying the topic left some students in an apparent state of cognitive dissonance (Burke, 2003). This was usually expressed in rhetorical questions during their responses – such as Duncan (Year 12) asking (himself) whether the images he had seen of victims' shoes were, "*…really real?*" Isaac (Year 12) had lost a number of relatives in the Holocaust and appeared to particularly struggle with this. Considering the things he had seen and learned, his recollections were interspersed with questions such as "*Why would you want to do that?*" These students were all clearly engaged with the topic – and in most cases emotionally so – but these questions illustrated their struggle to comprehend this knowledge. The conflicting cognitions they were now grappling with remained an evidently on-going problem for most of them as they absorbed this new knowledge.

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For Owen (Year 10), the very thought that society would want its young people to explore its most "*...horrifying and horrific*" event was, in his opinion, "*...weird*". It was only *after* learning about it that he could see the value of having done so to prevent further "*...mistakes*". His comments suggested an initial (almost protective) withdrawal from the topic, followed by a process through which he came to understand his learning as part of a wider societal self-inoculation against future repetition (Gallant & Hartman, 2001). Isaac (Year 12) felt that for Holocaust Education to be effective there should be greater depth of study of the Holocaust within the History syllabus at A Level. He thought it was necessary for students to be more informed than the basic course in Year 9 allowed (although he only specified more detailed study of the different types of camps). Isaac also thought that it was important students were exposed to a variety of discourses on the Holocaust, to enable them to make informed judgements. As he put it "*If I was reading something, I would form my own view and then I would read someone who was for it, then I'd read someone who was against it*". Isaac's commitment to a greater study of the Holocaust at school is perhaps unsurprising given that he had a personal, family connection to the event. However, his suggestions are somewhat restrictive, given that such a limited proportion of the post-compulsory education population studies History at A Level. Even if the Holocaust were to be studied in greater depth at this stage, relatively few students would have the opportunity to do so. Further, his comments implied a level of maturity and engagement with the topic that many students of A Level History might not share. Whilst Isaac felt confident that he would be able to discern between conflicting interpretations of the Holocaust, exposure to balanced opinions might involve a reading of denialist literature, for example, which many educationalists would find unhelpful or undesirable (Short, 1995).

In reflecting on the emotional aspects of their learning, some students revisited their understanding of defining 'Jewishness'. Karl's (Year 9) view that "*...the Jews aren't all that different to everyone else*" was representative of many opinions. This is an encouraging sentiment; interestingly at odds with many of their difficulties defining what a 'Jew' was at the outset of the interviews. It also does not reflect Brina's (2003) findings that students often identified Jews as being 'other' to them. Even if these students were unable to clearly define 'Jewishness' during the interviews, they appeared to see any such definition as simply a matter of semantics. In locating themselves as no different from the Jews, some students extended their empathetic feelings to consider how lucky they were, or

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how they would have acted had they been alive during the Holocaust. For some students, this presented further ethical difficulties. For example, Declan (Year 10) struggled to reconcile his primary concern to act in ways that were fundamentally "…*good*", with a desire to look for a means of escape, realising that these might be conflicting intentions. His assertion that he would act morally might suggest a lack of adequate learning about the experiences and motivations of bystanders and onlookers (Marks, 2007) and could be dismissed as a naïvely 'easy' stance taken from the comfort of historical distance. However, his subsequent revelation that in that situation he was likely to have ultimately "*...committed suicide*" to – as he saw it – "*Take the coward's way out*", revealed a more starkly realistic clarity in his comprehension of the situation and of his moral reasoning.

That the Holocaust is a topic laden with emotion is self-evident. But what that emotion might be – and how someone encountering the Holocaust might deal with it – is far more complex and difficult to foresee, particularly where young people are involved. Some learners might experience shock, others guilt, vulnerability, sadness, titillation or defensiveness and different students will emotionally engage with different things (Brina, 2003). Teachers will have scant idea of the familial and emotional 'baggage' their students will bring to their learning. What is important is that their teacher meets them where they are, or else the experience will be meaningless (Short & Supple et al., 1998). Teachers therefore need to be aware of the emotional challenges learning about the Holocaust will present teenage pupils with (Burke, 2003) and to protect them from harm (Gallant & Hartman, 2001). Finding the balance between the "…restrained text" (Clements, 2006, p45) and the reality is difficult, but we must consider whether we are doing them a disservice by over-protecting them from that truth (see, for example, Erricker, 1998, Ward, 1993).

4.3.4 Students' reflections on the emotional engagement of others.

It was not just their own emotional engagement with the subject that students reflected upon. Several spoke of their concerns for the emotional wellbeing of their friends, or others. Cian (Year 9) recalled the upset experienced by some of his friends when they saw Holocaust images and how he comforted them, reassuring them that these events were now in the past. Students' consideration of the emotional engagement of others is not surprising (Short, 1995) and it is encouraging to see their concern for their peers' as

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they navigated through this complex topic. However, Cian's reassurances are based on his location of the event in the past, which might be seen as hindering his friend's transformative learning (although I would argue that these were simply the well-intentioned reassurances of one young friend to another). This is not an error that we as teachers should make, however. It would be irresponsible to suggest or reinforce a view that such shocking events are solely the property of history, in an attempt to allay the fears of the present (Crane, 2008).

The majority of their paternalistic concerns for others were for young people from particular ethnic groups, such as Germans, Jews or gypsies. Of these, students most frequently talked about how they imagined the experience of learning about the Holocaust would be for German or German-heritage pupils (which reflected the concerns of teachers in the HEDP Report, Pettigrew et al., 2009). Whilst firmly believing that such children should learn about it as an important part of their history, Fraser (Year 9) considered that the experience would ultimately "*…haunt them*". There was some concern that learning about the Holocaust might be a difficult experience for students from these various ethnic groups and might inadvertently reinforce stereotypes about them. These are concerns often shared by teachers (Pettigrew et al., 2009, Short & Reed, 2004). It is important that teachers help their students towards an understanding of the ethnicity of the different groups within the Holocaust narrative in such a way as to educate, without prejudice or stereotype.

One of the students (Finlay, Year 10) was of German heritage and his real first name identified him 'visibly' as such. His friend James (also in Year 10 and his roommate in their boarding house at school) talked about his concern for Finlay while they were studying the Holocaust in lessons. James couched his concern in a protracted explanation of what he saw as the causes of the Second World War – the Treaty of Versailles and the 'War Guilt Clause' and their impact on the German people. He did not go so far as to explicitly say these explained the outbreak of the Second World War, but did imply that he felt so. James' difficulty was balancing the facts they were learning with his friend's ethnic identity. In so doing, James' desire was to keep it 'light hearted' for Finlay. He was aware that his well-intentioned attempts to do so meant risking inadvertently offending Finlay, however. As he put it, "*…it's like just quite tough… I know he doesn't mind a bit of a joke, but then sometimes you can accidentally take it too far and*

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you don't know what's gonna upset them". James' concern for Finlay was obvious and his empathetic understanding of the different ways in which his roommate might react illustrated a depth of understanding of the source material and the potentially deeply affective nature of its content. Clements' (2006) observation that students do not like being seen to be visibly upset appears, here, to have been extended by James to a paternalistic desire to protect a peer. The nature of his 'protection' is also interesting. He assumed responsibility for safeguarding his friend emotionally, using humour as a means of managing potentially difficult knowledge. It is understandable that students might have difficulty explicitly expressing an emotionally difficult situation between themselves (Burke, 2003). In lieu of doing so, James opted to position himself as a 'gatekeeper' for Finlay, pre-emptively managing the emotional difficulties he perceived his friend might have. As teachers, then, perhaps we have not only to consider our own perceptions of how best to manage sensitive information with different groups of students, but also how to empower them to manage their own learning 'space' within the context of their own social groupings and relationships.

4.3.5 Students' emotional engagement with the Holocaust in popular film.

As part of their learning both in school and at home, several students said they had watched commercially produced Holocaust genre films (see section 4.2.6, above). These included *Defiance* (Zwick & Frohman, 2008), *Hitler: The Rise of Evil* (Pielmeier & Parker, 2003) and *Downfall* (Eichinger et al., 2004). The most frequently cited of these was *Schindler's List* (Keneally & Zaillian, 1993), which many of the students had reported watching in Geography lessons at school. Their general reaction to the film was that "*It was shocking, parts of it. But, it's moving at the same time*" (Ali, Year 10) and there was a consensus that the film was a "*…good*" one. This juxtaposition of shock and enjoyment illustrated the dual (and arguably dichotomous) intentions of such films – to inform and to entertain. The only student who did not recall being able to engage with *Schindler's List* as being entertainment in any way was Isaac (Year 12). For him, the film 'epitomised' the Holocaust and he had found it very challenging to watch, given his family's connection with the Holocaust. He recalled having only got half way through *Schindler's List* before having been unable to watch any more. He said that he intended to try to watch it again in the future, but didn't feel able to "*…at the moment*". Isaac's emotional connection with the film was clearly complex and bound up with his family history. The film embodied the

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event and was therefore too emotionally problematic for him to be able to cope with at this time.

The second most frequently cited film was *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* (Herman, 2008). Again, although there were relatively few students who said they had seen the film, those who did generally reported having enjoyed it. The scenes they most often recalled finding emotionally challenging involved the crematoria. Some of the students spoke about how they realised that the film wasn't entirely historically accurate. Owen (Year 10) based his scepticism on comments from a teacher who had questioned the film's accuracy. He realised that the central plot device (that the two boys became friends by talking through the camp's fence every day) would not have been possible in reality. Lloyd (Year 10) seemed somewhat challenged by the film's reliability, given the discourse surrounding it. Having recalled how appalled he was by the film's depiction of the living conditions within the camp, he added later in our interview that he would like to visit Auschwitz to see the reality for himself. As he put it, he wanted to see how people were "*…stuffed in there, to one room? I just want to see that really*". These recollections raise important issues for teachers concerning the challenges they may confront young learners with when using Holocaust genre films in the classroom. Students such as Isaac have a right to be protected by their teachers (Burke, 2003). What can be entertaining for one student can be deeply traumatic for another (Brina, 2003). Further, Lloyd's comments raise concern over the potential to confuse students if we expose them to the debate over authenticity, since this may well be a discussion they are not ready to engage with and one which leaves them floundering in uncertainty.

Max (Year 10) recalled a particular scene he had watched during the ten-part television series *Band of Brothers* (Jendresen et al., 2001). The series was based on the experiences of 'Easy Company' (2nd Battalion, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division of the US Army) during World War II. The scene appears in the ninth episode ('*Why We Fight'*) and involved the central characters discovering an unnamed concentration camp near Landsberg, Germany. Max remembered seeing the characters "*…throwing up because of the smell*", the emaciated appearance of the camp's inmates and the large number of victims who were already "*…dead on the floor*". The fictitious narrative was based on the real-life liberation of Kaufering IV in Hurlach, but had been interpreted with significant artistic license (Kaufering IV was razed to the ground by fire,

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killing any inmates too unwell to be evacuated on the Death Marches) and Max seemed to be unaware of this. In conclusion, Max assured me that he "*…didn't find it difficult to watch but I found it, almost like, very interesting to watch… thinking how disgraceful it was*". In so doing, Max's account illustrated once again the challenging duality of the role of filmic representations of the Holocaust to inform and to entertain and the complex nature of authenticity in these films.

Whilst learning about the Holocaust, it is very likely that students will watch commercially available films such as those mentioned, above. Of these, *Schindler's List* (Keneally & Zaillian, 1993) appears to be the one most frequently used by British teachers in school (Pettigrew et al., 2009). But *Schindler's List* embodies the conflicts outlined above – it is a factually based account, which has been artistically interpreted. Whilst many of the central characters (such as Oskar Schindler and Amon Goeth) and locations (such as Schindler's factory and the Plaszow concentration camp) are factually based, some of the key events (such as the location of Goeth's villa within the camp's walls) are not. Indeed, some of the elements (such as the recurring image of 'the girl in the red coat' – the only colouration in the black and white body of the film) are an amalgamation of various, unspecified testimonies. This presents subtle difficulties for younger viewers (or anyone watching the film) about its provenance. In creating *Schindler's List*, the director (Steven Spielberg) has not made a documentary and his film has been subject to much criticism for its artistic interpretation (see, for example, Cole, 2000, Fallace, 2008, Manchel, 1995). The narrative of the film is essentially one of rescuers, redemption, heroism and survival. It reinforces the stereotypes of Jewish passivity and presents the character of Goeth as a classic 'villain' type – almost a "...cartoon Nazi" (Lawson, 2007, p411). In so doing, the viewer is left reeling from the horrors they have not *actually* been shown, but from the exaggerated suggestion of what they *might* have seen. *Schindler's List* does not portray "…the banality of evil" (Arendt, 1965, p.xiv), but the triumph of good and this was *not* the narrative experienced by the vast majority of the victims. The issue for educators is not the morality of Spielberg's artistic choices, but the status the film has subsequently achieved. Only a year after its release, Bernstein (1994) observed how the film had already begun "…to affect the way our culture understands, historically orders, and teaches how the Holocaust should be remembered" (p432) and six years later Cole (2000) felt the film had achieved "…almost the status of a primary source" (p75). Watching a film such as *Schindler's List* at school legitimises the credibility of the content. If students consequently accord these

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films the status of historical fact, then their teachers are guilty of conspiring in a re-writing of history and the unwitting collusion of their students.

The canon of films and documentaries concerning the Second World War era is extensive and expanding (Darlow, 2005). In this context, the evidence presented by these students raises a number of issues. Given the nature of the content, young people are likely to be emotionally challenged by these films (see, for example, Schwartz, 1990, Short, 1995, Weiner, 1992). As educators we have to decide what is presentable to our students (Langford, 1999) and what we professionally condone as authentic testimony. If we select materials that our students cannot emotionally cope with, we risk (unintentionally) assaulting them (Brina, 2003). If we select materials that are not factually accurate, we risk potentially manipulating both our students and the history of the Holocaust (Lisus & Ericson, 1995). Some of the films the students in this study had seen had been viewed in school, while others had been watched outside of school (but possibly influenced by their learning in lessons). These students did not generally appear to be traumatised by what they had seen, although some struggled with particular scenes or images. Perhaps this was because they were able to make sense of the violence – however extreme – contextualised as it was within the narrative structure of the films (Shaw, 2004). Where they did appear to have difficulty, however, was in distinguishing between fact and fiction. Where they were aware that the legitimacy of the film had been called into question (such as with *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, Herman, 2008), they were not clear as to exactly what was authentic and what was not. Lloyd's desire to visit Auschwitz to see for himself the things he found most difficult to comprehend in the film version of *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, illustrated the precarious position we put students in when they see 'embellished' films. The ubiquity of what Cole (2000) termed the "Hollywood Holocaust" (p79) is now part of students' learning, whether their teachers present it to them or not. It undoubtedly forms part of their Holocaust Education in school and outside of the classroom. As such, teachers have to consider how to educate their students to inoculate themselves against the myths. Their learning is taking place in an age when the growth of the 'Holocaust Industry' (Finkelstein, 2003) has meant that filmmakers have not always selflessly documented history. Indeed, two of the most lauded Holocaust-era films of recent years, *Life is Beautiful* (Benigni & Cerami, 1997) and *The Reader* (Hare, 2008), tell almost entirely fictitious tales, with very little indication to the casual observer that they are not fact. In their popular appeal, films such as these have become an insidious metatext

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for the Holocaust and teachers need to equip their students with the skills necessary to navigate the different representations of the event in their search for the truth.

4.3.6 Students' encounters with a Holocaust survivor.

Teachers often report concerns about how they can help students to engage with the enormity of the disaster of the Holocaust (Brown & Davies, 1998). If Holocaust Education is to be effective, teachers need to help students connect with the 6 million victims on an individual level (see, for example, Goldberg, 1998, Misco, 2008, Schwartz, 1990, Short & Supple et al., 1998). The most effective way to do this might be to meet and interact with a Holocaust survivor (Hector, 2000), as 25% of schools currently do in the UK (Pettigrew et al., 2009). In the school of this study, the History Department arranges for a Holocaust survivor – Jonathan – to visit annually. During the course of his day's visit in the year this study was conducted, Jonathan spoke to three classes in Year 9 for half an hour each, another for an hour and for a further hour to a group of Sixth Formers who had been at other schools when they were in Year 9 (this last group consisted almost entirely of girls, who had joined the co-educational Sixth Form).

Jonathan was in his late seventies, a retired professional who now dedicated his time to giving his testimony in schools and working with Holocaust Education organisations. This school was the first place he had ever given such a talk and in the subsequent years he has given more than a thousand talks. He was very fond of the school and this was why he willingly agreed to give so many talks in his single-day visit. During World War II he survived for five years in Nazi-occupied Europe, spending time in the camps at Westerbork and Bergen-Belsen. Before the war, his family were 'assimilated' Jews who rarely practised or went to synagogue. At the outbreak of the war, they lived a prosperous life in Amsterdam. When deportations began, they were protected from being sent to Auschwitz or Sobibor because his sister had been born in England, giving them the status of 'Exchange Jews' (potentially eligible to be exchanged for German prisoners of war and thus exempt from deportation to an extermination camp). The family spent seven months in Westerbork, before being deported to Bergen-Belsen when Jonathan was 12 years old. His parents both died of illness at Bergen-Belsen. Jonathan and his siblings left the camp on one of the last trains prior to liberation, but were ultimately liberated two weeks later. His motivations and intentions for speaking to students are explored in section 4.5, below.

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During the course of the interviews, most of the students cited Jonathan's visit and almost all of those recalled his name, usually including his surname. When asked about the visit and his talk, all of their comments were positive. Students said they had found it "*…fascinating*", or "*…interesting*" or described it as "*…useful*". Declan (Year 10) went so far as to say it had been "*…a once in a lifetime opportunity*". Jonathan's testimony covered a number of areas – his family life before the outbreak of the war, their changing life as the war began, deportation, life in the camps, the deaths of his parents, liberation, life immediately after the war (resettlement) and his post-war life and career (see Appendix 4 for an outline of one of his sessions). Some students recalled the restrictions placed upon the family and the requirement to wear a yellow Star of David. They remembered the star Jonathan had brought with him, which he had shown them, that was clearly marked 'Jood' (the Dutch word for 'Jew'). There was also some mention made of the rounding up of Jews for deportations to the camps, although this was passing and unspecific. Most of the students' recollections concerned Jonathan's experiences in the camps, with most recalling the name 'Bergen-Belsen' (or simply 'Belsen'), although there was evident uncertainty or hesitancy in some of their voices when they did so.

Particular features of Jonathan's testimony that students remembered concerned his family. A few recalled the family's movements prior to the outbreak of war, which explained how his younger sister had been born in Britain. Some students mentioned the fate of Jonathan's parents, both of whom died in the hospital barracks at Bergen-Belsen of unspecified illnesses. Ross (Year 9) was the only student to recall the fate of Jonathan's grandparents, comparing "*…how his grandparents, er, were gassed, and er, his parents were killed because of typhoid*". In so doing, Ross was accurately recalling the differing fates of Jonathan's relatives – his parents had died of 'natural causes' (albeit hastened by starvation, lack of sanitation or medical care at Bergen-Belsen), whereas his grandparents had been intentionally murdered at Sobibor two years earlier (not sharing the protection of their offspring's 'Exchange Jew' status). This element of the story seemed to have particular resonance for some of the students. Max (Year 10) was struck by how, upon the death of Jonathan's parents, "*…no one came and told the children that they were dead, they just went in to see them and they weren't there*". It was personal, familial details such as this that really seemed to strike a chord emotionally with the students.

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Students were most surprised by Jonathan's explanation of how he survived in the camp. He explained that he had been given the responsible role of ladling out the watery potato soup to other inmates at mealtimes. He told them that he would not stir the soup until he portioned out his own family's rations, whereupon he would stir the mixture vigorously to release the sedentary potato skins from the bottom of the pot, consequently giving them a more nutritious meal. This shocked some students, who were clearly trying to rationalise the relative morality of Jonathan's actions. Many understood why Jonathan did what he did, but Max (Year 10) described Jonathan's actions colloquially as 'nicking' food. To place such a judgement on his actions is to circumvent the extreme circumstances in which they happened and it is possible that this illustrated Max's difficulty comprehending Jonathan's motivations and the morally inverted context within which they occurred.

Whilst observing Jonathan give his testimony to the different groups of students, I recorded in my field notes a growing sense of the generally 'positive' impression he was giving of his experiences. He is a very personable man with a friendly demeanour, who used humour frequently during his testimony. His story was one of survival; making his family's experience the exception, rather than the norm. He was able to explain away the deaths of his parents as the result of illness and not (as was the case for most victims) the result of murder. As 'Exchange Jews' his family experienced pogroms, deportation and the camps, but were always afforded a 'special' status that kept them from the threat of the gas chambers. By its very nature, Holocaust *survivor* testimony will always be exceptional, but Jonathan's was also one of relative safety. His recollections of the camps were of a time when he was treated quite well, could visit his family, had food and could keep his possessions and clothes. His story does not include a striped uniform or a tattoo, for example. Some of the students picked up on this, making references to the perceived 'luxuries' he was afforded as a result of his status. Delivering such a testimony left Mark (Year 9) with the impression that Bergen-Belsen camp "*…wasn't a big, er, a bad one, they never went into one where lots of people got gassed*". Whilst Mark's comment is technically accurate (in so far as Bergen-Belsen never had a gas chamber), it does not acknowledge the incredible hardship endured by many there, or the deaths of the estimated 100,000 inmates at the camp (including, famously, Anne Frank and her sister Margot). Indeed, such were the horrors of Bergen-Belsen that it – rather than Auschwitz – became synonymous in Western Europe with Nazi atrocity in the immediate post-war

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period. What struck these students was the relative 'ordinariness' of the testimony and of the speaker. As Ali (Year 12) put it "*I thought, speaking to a Holocaust survivor… you just expect them to be in shock from it, but I suppose people move on*". Watching Jonathan engaging with the students, his apparent lack of anger at the perpetrators of the Holocaust was also obvious. I could entirely understand how Ali came to the conclusion that Jonathan had 'moved on' in his life. My concern was that the 'ordinariness' Jonathan presented them with would misguide the students in terms of comprehending the realities of the event. Relatively few students reported being 'horrified' in any way by Jonathan's testimony. They were *moved* by it and *saddened* by it, but it is not a brutal testimony. Rather, it is one of restriction, explainable (if senseless) loss and survival. This left the students with more of an impression of empathetic sadness and reverence, rather than horror or disgust. This is not to say that I would wish such an encounter to be used "…as a shock treatment" (Friedlander, 1979, p542), but my field notes throughout the day recorded a growing uneasiness that this meeting would leave the students with an unrealistic impression of the experiences of the majority of both survivors and the murdered.

4.3.7 Students' reflections on their encounter with a Holocaust survivor.

> "*I think that getting somebody in who has had the experience is definitely, probably the most powerful thing you can do. To actually see the Jewish badge, and also to watch a film, because they are horrific images, you just realise, that that really happened*"   (Cian, Year 9)

Cian's reflection on meeting Jonathan echoed the thoughts of many of his fellow students. There was a clear sense that his personal testimony added a real / humanising element to the information they had been given in class, or seen on film. This supported Clement's (2006) findings that meeting a survivor helped improve students' understanding of the event. Personalising the narrative in this way also meant that students had to address the topic from a more emotionally connected perspective. Ross (Year 9) explained that being "…*faced with*" the reality of the Holocaust had really 'got to him'. Similarly, Lawrence (also Year 9) reported finding it "…*quite a struggle*" to come to terms with Jonathan's testimony. This was particularly acutely felt by students who realised that, however angry the testimony may have made them feel, they were ultimately powerless to do anything about

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it. Again and again, students recalled feeling that their encounter with the survivor caused them to re-examine their comprehension of the Holocaust and their reaction to it.

For one student, however, the 'positive' nature of Jonathan's testimony made it difficult to make sense of. James (Year 10) did not understand that Jonathan's story was exceptional and interpreted the testimony as unrealistic evidence of hope against the oppression. Whilst acknowledging that "…*some*" were exterminated, he implied that his understanding was that the majority were not. What is perhaps of more concern is that James thought Jonathan's story showed that "*…we can see that some people are, for example luckier than others. You could say that is it fair from an RE perspective that God saved like,* [Jonathan] *instead of the next man who died?*" This highlighted a number of misunderstandings or misinterpretations on James' part. First, he had understood Jonathan's survival as being a matter of luck or chance, instead of it being primarily the result of his 'Exchange Jew' status. Second, his clarification that you could also explain it from a religious point of view – and that doing so would be 'fair' – appeared to be a redundant and unfounded explanation. Jonathan's testimony (or James' interpretation of it) appeared to have left this student with an inaccurate and flawed understanding of the processes of the Holocaust. Whilst James' experience was unusual in this study, it does highlight the need for educators to consider the nature of the personal testimonies students are exposed to. There are a variety of such testimonies – from victims, camp survivors, Kindertransport survivors, etc. – each depicting a different Holocaust experience. Whilst it would be undesirable (and ethically questionable) to discern any kind of 'hierarchy of suffering', teachers need to consider *how* they can help students understand the Holocaust through the use of particular testimonies, or types of testimony.

One thing that was clear amongst all of the students was that meeting Jonathan had been a significant experience. Karl (Year 9) summed up simply "*…that man is amazing*". Given the impression Jonathan had clearly made on the students, I asked most of them whether they felt that meeting him was more useful than having learned about the Holocaust in textbooks. They all responded that it had been, to varying degrees. The general feeling among the students was that hearing a survivor 'brought to life' the history they had learned from their textbooks – "*…it was like, someone had come out of the textbook, out of the history book and was now right in front of you talking about it*", Theo (Year 9) said. Given that so little of the content of the History curriculum falls within living memory, these

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reactions are perhaps unsurprising. It is widely accepted that where students have the possibility to meet a survivor, they will benefit from doing so (see, for example, Clements, 2006, Glanz, 1999, Hector, 2000). However, this particular encounter raised potentially significant issues surrounding students' interpretations of the different sources of testimony teachers expose them to.

There were no suggestions from the students in this study that they placed anything other than their complete trust in Jonathan's testimony. Indeed, he had clearly secured their total confidence. However, after hearing his testimony, some students began to express concerns about the confidence they now had in their *teachers* and the texts they had presented them with. In comparison to hearing a first-hand account, students reflected on the inadequacies (as they now identified them) of their textbooks. They felt they had connected far more with Jonathan and the personal details he could add, than with their textbooks which they confessed they had not perhaps paid such close attention to. Further, some expressed concerns about the legitimacy of their teachers 'expert' knowledge, in light of meeting a survivor. There was a growing awareness amongst some of the students that their teachers might not have the knowledge necessary to be able to fully inform them about the event, in the way Jonathan had. Their teachers, they said, had been on courses to learn about the Holocaust, but their knowledge was of relatively little worth compared to Jonathan's first-hand experience. Owen (Year 10) went so far as to suggest that "*…the teachers …you never know* [if] *what they're saying is true or not …coming up with all these terrible facts …which …you just suspect will be the one in 100 case*". His suggestion that teachers are an untrustworthy source of information is worrying. Of more concern, however, is his suggestion that his teachers might present him with the exceptional in order to shock him. Pupils need to place their trust in their teachers if they are to learn from them (Steutel & Spieker, 2000) and these comments appear to echo Clements' (2006) findings that there can be a significant shifting of 'power' within the pedagogical relationship when Holocaust Education occurs. Good relationships between teachers and students are key to successful Holocaust Education (Pettigrew et al., 2009). However, I would argue that bringing a third party – an expert – into the equation does not necessarily enhance these relationships. Taken in light of Clements' (2006) findings, I would suggest the following complex and concerning course of events had taken place (at least for some students) in this school:

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- The teacher was in a position of power (as an 'expert' of knowledge).

- The teacher would only teach the Holocaust when they felt they had the trust of their students.

- The teacher invited a Holocaust survivor to give his testimony to the students, to enhance the students' learning.

- The survivor (intentionally or not) revealed his position as a *more* trustworthy 'expert' of the knowledge.

- The teacher was consequently involuntarily disempowering himself and betraying the 'trust' relationship by revealing himself to be 'less than' he previously appeared to be.

If this is what had happened in this classroom – and could therefore be replicated in others – then educators need to consider carefully how they employ Holocaust survivors and their testimony. Such testimony is clearly of intrinsic value and these speakers are rightfully revered, but teachers need to ensure that their contribution enhances the students' learning without disempowering the teacher. If the testimony renders the teacher's expert status impotent, this could damage their role as a trusted 'gatekeeper' of knowledge now and in future lessons. By presenting students with something that is at the limits of human understanding, then being complicit in revealing their own inadequacy to teach it, teachers might be colluding in their own failure. Just as different Holocaust narratives compete for students' attention, so too there is a competition for their trust. This is a state far removed from the 'working partnership' Lenga (1998) envisaged. The end result may well be, as Clements (2006) thought, that in the "…sea of confusion, emotion and exploration" both teachers and students do, indeed, "…flounder together" (p46).

4.3.8 Other sources of testimony.

During the course of these interviews, it became apparent that students' learning sometimes occurred within the context of additional family narratives. Such narratives can be contradictory to what students are being taught in school (Historical Association, 2007), but there was no evidence of this in this study. A small number of students spoke about their personal family histories, in relation to our conversation. Nathan (Year 9) spoke about a surprise reunion between his great-granddad and his great-uncle during

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the Second World War. The story appeared to have no connection to the Holocaust, but demonstrated Nathan's growing awareness of the time period and his family's place in the historical context. Phillip's (Year 10) family history was closer to the Holocaust. He said he had learned "*…a few things*" from his mother, because his grandmother was living in the Ukraine during the war. They were not a Jewish family and he did not say that he had heard of any relatives being persecuted, but he did reflect on how "*…lucky*" he had been told he should feel. Both of these students showed that they had begun to make connections between the topic they had studied in school and their own family histories. In both cases their family testimonies appeared to complement what they had learned in lessons and there were no suggestions of competing narratives.

As has already been noted, one student disclosed a family history far closer to the events of the Holocaust. Isaac (Year 12) revealed that he had lost "*…three or four great-uncles… at Auschwitz-Birkenau*" and that he felt this had definitely been an influence on the way he viewed the Nazi regime. Although he wasn't entirely clear about the details, he recalled that his great-uncles had "*…sacrificed themselves*" to get his other relatives out of Germany to safety in Israel. Isaac said that his family were now Christian, although he remained proud of his "*Jewish roots*". This episode of his family history was clearly of great interest to Isaac and he had discussed it in detail with his parents at home. Isaac felt that these discussions had added a "*…more personal side*" to his learning and it was an issue he clearly appeared to take very personally. As he put it, "*…it just made me feel so angry that… my family had to… suffer*". As has already been mentioned, he had subsequently immersed himself in books, films and documentaries to research this period of history and was taking History at A Level. He was obviously passionate that students his age should learn as much as they could about the Holocaust. He also appeared to be confident discerning between different sources of information and their providence.

There is a growing body of research and personal writing concerning the 'trans-generational' (Kestenberg, 1982) transmission of Holocaust trauma (see, for example, Fonagy, 1999, Lazar et al, 2008). Isaac's strong feelings about the topic are unsurprising and reflect the experiences of fellow 'third generation survivor', Sarah M. Bender (2004). Like Isaac, her positioning within a family of survivors and their descendants meant that she had been taught about the Holocaust at an unusually young age and had also subsequently immersed herself in a wealth of literature, film and other sources (such as

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museum exhibits). Isaac's strongly expressed desire that young people should learn about the Holocaust echoes Chaitin's (2002) findings that this conviction is a common characteristic of third generation survivors. Perhaps most significant, however, was Isaac's revelation that, like Sarah M. Bender, his third generation status was something that was somewhat transitory. Bender spoke of her desire sometimes "…to pretend it never happened, [until] …the responsibility overrides and I remember, "We must never forget."" (p212). Similarly, when asked if this was something he was 'happy' to talk about in class, Isaac replied that,

> *"I… mention it… in dispatches. I don't talk about it that often, I don't, feel the need, you know, to share it… if someone asks, "What do you know of the Holocaust?" I would say "Well, my, my family died but I don't particularly want to talk about it, that much", so..."*

Isaac's response illustrated the struggle he faced as a third generation, assimilated, Christian teenager, growing up in a time and place where the Holocaust is a historical event that happened elsewhere and to 'others'. His employment of British military terminology ("*…in dispatches*") and the stilted, defensive way in which he chose almost every word with caution, gave me the impression that this was a very 'private' part of himself that he was revealing. He was careful who knew this knowledge and he released it judiciously. His desire to learn and his determination that others should too, wrestled with his own trans-generational sense of familial hurt and his self-protective desire not to be seen as 'other' himself.

Short and Reed (2004) expressed a concern that learning about the Holocaust "…may be a qualitatively different experience" (p56) for students who identify closely with groups persecuted by the Nazis. They suggested that the parents of such students might wish to consider withdrawing their children from lessons. Whilst Isaac's testimony undoubtedly illustrated the particularity of his experience in the classroom, I did not feel that it had 'harmed' him in any way and he gave me no reason to suggest it had. Rather, I thought that it was a shame that he felt unable to share his experiences more openly with his classmates. Jonathan's testimony helped the students to build a bridge between themselves and the past, but was bounded by his advanced age and nationality / accent. Testimony from a contemporary – someone 'within' – might help students complete the bridge between themselves and the past and eliminate any sense of the victim as 'other'.

Burke (2003) felt that there was "…no doubt that the Holocaust is likely to hit Jewish pupils harder than other pupils" (p57) and, obviously, teachers cannot protect them if they are unaware that they are Jewish (just as Isaac's teachers were apparently unaware of his Jewish heritage). However, there is also an opportunity here to consider how students who openly identify as Jewish (or with any other persecuted group) could contribute to the learning of their peers, if they felt comfortable doing so.

4.3.9 Students' reflections on the age-appropriateness of their learning.

"Er, that's quite a difficult question actually. I don't think I'd learn about it when I'm young, because I think there's some of the things… in the… textbook which we've got which are quite graphic… I think that you have to be quite sort of mature to… look at these things and interpret them… they're quite graphic and, er, violent… you wouldn't want to see them when you're young, you have to be of a certain age and you've got to judge that age, but… I don't think I could tell you what that age was" (Ross, Year 9)

Having been asked at what age he thought it was most appropriate to learn about the Holocaust; Ross' response encapsulated the general feelings of the students. Overwhelmingly, they thought they had learned about it at the right age, in Year 9 (13-14 years of age). This was roughly in line with Burke's (1998) survey of pupils and Pettigrew et al.'s (2009) assessment of teachers' opinions. A few expressed reservations or uncertainty, but were not able to offer an alternative, preferred age. In his objection to Year 9 being the ideal, Bill (Year 10) said that he felt that "*…as long as you fully understand it doesn't matter what age*". This is implicitly problematic, however, since the age of 'understanding' will vary from student to student (Short & Supple et al., 1998). Only one student (Phillip, Year 10) explicitly suggested that learning should happen at an earlier age, based on a perceived need to find out about how different religions were treated in the past. He had learned about the Holocaust when he was about 7 years old, although he did not say whether this learning had taken place at school or at home. While he felt it had been useful, his justification appeared to be self-evidently flawed. Phillip said that he felt he had "*…maybe not fully*" understood what he had learned about at that age, which would seem to undermine his conviction. Some students considered how they would have felt if they had not learned about the Holocaust until they were older. Being told any later would have been equal to a betrayal of trust Cian (Year 9) said, which would have left him wondering why this truth had been withheld from him. Lloyd (Year 10)

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agreed that there was a specific 'window of opportunity' within which they were optimally receptive to the topic, believing that he would not have taken it seriously if it had been left until he was any older.

The majority of the students thought that learning about the Holocaust at an earlier age would not have been appropriate. Theo (Year 9) felt that maturity enabled him to be more "*…accepting*" of difficult facts and that he was able to "*…take things in*" better. He was worried that younger children might fixate on the 'horror', echoing concerns that students will withdraw from their learning if they feel they are being harmed by it (Short & Supple et al., 1998, Weiner, 1992). Max (Year 10) worried that distressing images "*…may just haunt you for a bit, too long*", if you saw them when you were young. The impact of the 'graphic' nature of the subject matter and teaching materials was a recurring concern amongst the students, either because they felt they would cause emotional harm, or because younger learners would fail to "*…connect with*" them (Lawrence, Year 9). Fraser (Year 9) believed that he was now mature enough to witness "*…these terrible things* [without getting] *...too upset or get nightmares about it*". This was another common theme amongst the students' responses; that the nature of the topic warranted a certain level of maturity for them to be able to cope with it, if any learning was to take place. In this way, most of the students articulated a recognition that they needed to be able to cope with the material emotionally if they were to understand it academically.

Some students felt that Year 9 was the appropriate age because by this age they had some 'life experience' which could help them to comprehend and contextualise the event. Will (Year 9) drew parallels with the Jewish concept of a boy becoming Bar Mitzvah since that was "*…the Jewish coming-of-age …13, 14, so …it shows when, when they become men they can deal with more problems on their own really. I reckon we can take it into account more now than we could*". Will's supposition appeared to be that 'problems' such as the Holocaust could (and should) be dealt with only when achieving adulthood. This raises an issue concerning what constitutes 'adulthood', however. Under UK law, a boy is still a 'child' until the age of 18, but Judaism recognises a boy as being able to take responsibility for his own religious actions at the age of 13. This age is meant to recognise the average *onset* of physical maturity in boys and so becoming Bar Mitzvah is often interpreted as representing the *start* of Jewish adulthood, not its fulfilment. A Bar Mitzvah can, for example, take part in the *minyan* (the quorum of Jewish adults required for certain

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religious obligations, such as public prayer). In this way, a Jewish boy assumes certain minimal adult responsibilities from the age of 13, just as a non-Jewish boy might. Will's assumption appeared to be that, as a non-Jewish boy, he also had to assume the mantle of 'manhood' at this age and that dealing with topics such as the Holocaust was a necessary consequence of reaching that point in his life. This may be a result of Will's misunderstanding of the subtleties of 'adulthood' and becoming Bar Mitzvah, but represented his understanding of the dawning revelation of some of the more inhumane aspects of the adult world. Niall (Year 10) equated this learning with a loss of innocence – his having reached an age where *"…you have to get on with your life and start taking things seriously – you learn about more important things"*. He added that he thought it would not have been appropriate to learn about the Holocaust when he was younger because he remembered those school days as being primarily about "*…having fun in your life*". Now he felt better able to consider the impact of serious events and "*…what they actually mean*". While he described this realisation as being "*…hard*", he conceded that "*You get used to it*". It appeared that Niall (like Will) was grappling with the realisation that he was nearing the ending of his (protected) childhood. For both of these students, their exposure to the Holocaust at this stage of their formal education served as a significant marker. Both appeared to view this learning as demarking an end of childhood learning and the onset of their adult education.

There was some evidence that the students felt it was best to learn about the Holocaust once they had reached a level of maturity that enabled them to *evaluate* the facts they were presented with. James (Year 10) saw it as a matter of being able to judge the "*…morality issues*", while Ross (Year 9) felt he needed to be of an age where he could "*…interpret*" what he saw. Both students' reasoning was based on their developing skills of interpretation, rather than understanding, however. This raises an important issue concerning students' reading of the text of the Holocaust and how teachers present it to them. Pettigrew et al. (2009) found that when teaching about the Holocaust, most teachers allowed time for debate and discussion and asked their students to consider moral or ethical questions relating to the event. These students appeared to be very aware of this and apparently felt confident and able to make such judgements. What is less clear is what the specific aspects of their learning were that they were judging, or being asked to judge. For example, while it might be desirable to ask students to evaluate the role of bystanders during the Holocaust, it might not be desirable to encourage

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students to take an open-ended evaluative stance towards the Holocaust as a whole. To do the latter, would necessarily involve a reading of revisionist literature and teachers need to consider very carefully whether this is an area they wish to explore with students. Holocaust denial represents a "…real threat" (Short & Supple et al., 1998, p11) to academic study of the period, but its exclusion from the curriculum will not necessarily counter its sophistry. The period since the Second World War has seen a number of authors publish work revising the history of the Holocaust (see, for example, Butz 1976, Faurisson, 1979). Such authors have attempted to lend credibility to the claim that Nazi Germany did not persecute the Jews (or did not do so to the extent commonly believed). Revisionist Historians have been widely criticised and discredited (see, for example, Dalrymple, 1992, Lipstadt, 1993). Lending voice to those who Novick (1999) described as a "…tiny band of cranks, kooks and misfits" (p270) is implicitly perilous when teaching impressionable teenagers and teachers need to exercise extreme caution in doing so. However, to refuse to engage with such work is equally hazardous. As Short and Supple et al. (1998) suggested, perhaps the most effective way to inoculate students against Holocaust denial is to engage with it, exposing the denialists' motivations and reasons for attempting to distort history in this way.

4.3.10 Other reactions to the topic.

Although the vast majority of students reported having an empathetic reaction to the topic, a few did not. For example, Ewan (Year 12) reported feeling "*…pretty disgusted*" by what he had learned, but felt that the event was too long ago to affect him. A few others appeared to take refuge in making the "...theoretical retreat" identified by Brina (2003, p524). Nathan (Year 9) would not talk about the emotional aspects of his learning, despite various probes. He constantly deflected such questions, instead preferring to talk about his interest in History and his academic learning. Just as Brina had found, Nathan seemed to be seeking refuge in his cognitive engagement as a means of avoiding any kind of emotional engagement. This raises a further consideration for teachers, since sometimes the problem can be a *lack* of an emotional response (Short & Supple et al., 1998). However, in this study, evidence of pupils making the "...theoretical retreat" was very rare and did not imply any problem of the kind Brina suggested at her University.

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Although the majority of students had found the topic of the Holocaust difficult to learn about, a couple commented on the positive aspects of the experience. Owen (Year 10) said he had been "*…intrigued but disgusted at the same time*", adding that it had been, "*…amazing and important*" to learn about the limits of human nature. The few 'positive' experiences reported were concerned primarily with interest and there were no suggestions of the kind of morbid titillation Landau (1998) warned about, amongst the students in this study.

4.3.11 Affective learning – reflections on the theme.

If a student watches a film about the Holocaust, it is likely to be *Schindler's List* (Keneally & Zaillian, 1993). If they read a book about the Holocaust, it may well be *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* (Boyne, 2006). If they visit a museum to learn about the Holocaust, it could be the Holocaust Centre in Laxton, Nottinghamshire, where they can follow *Leo's Story* (about a boy who survived the Holocaust by escaping on the Kindertransport). Any of these encounters would teach the student a great deal about the Holocaust. They would also, no doubt, elicit a strong emotional response from the student. After all, who could fail to be moved by the cold-hearted brutality of the murderer Amon Goeth, or be shocked by Shmuel's fate in the gas chamber, or not share Leo's distress at leaving his family behind? These would all be very understandable and laudable responses, but none of these experiences would be factually accurate. *Schindler's List* is based loosely on real-life events but also draws on a variety of other testimonies and experiences. *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* is a self-declared 'fable' that makes veiled references to real people and places. *Leo's Story* is a composite of events various children went through during the Holocaust, the sum of which would have been experienced by no one. Such is the developing landscape of Holocaust commemoration that students find themselves within. But this "...virtual Holocaust" (Cole, 2000, p75) is not reality; it is an *interpretation* of reality and often one that is artificially devised to emotionally manipulate the onlooker.

A consideration of the different sources students are exposed to (and their emotional reactions to them) has been outlined at length in this section. In reflecting on this theme, I am less drawn to consider *how* they engaged with the sources (which I have already done, above), so much as to consider the sources themselves. The students in this study had met a survivor, seen films and images, read books and attended lessons. While some

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had engaged minimally with what they viewed as simply 'another History topic', others had been plunged into a tumult of narratives, perspectives and interpretations that they were only just beginning to make sense of – in some cases several years after they first encountered the event. Schatzker (1980) commented that, "…there seems to be no other topic so saturated with unresolved emotions and spiritual conflicts" (p220) as the Holocaust. I would argue that this observation strikes at the crux of the complexity faced by young learners trying to make sense of the many differing perspectives and concerns vying for their attention. We must consider how we expect them to navigate their way through this and how we can, as educators, help them. Much of the information they receive is outside their teacher's judicious regulation in the classroom, or beyond the watchful eye of their parents. What is essential, then, is that teachers equip them with the knowledge and skills necessary to be able to prudently and cautiously steer their way through these competing accounts unaided.

The easiest thing for a teacher to do would be to ignore all of this and simply teach the facts of this topic and then move on to whatever is next on the curriculum. The problem (and concern) for many teachers is that emotion can be a "…loose cannon" in the classroom (Crane, 2008, p315). I would argue that teachers need to help their students become both historically *and* emotionally informed (Langer, 1989) and literate if they are to both explore and harness the power of their emotional engagement with the Holocaust. I believe that to do any less would be unprofessional and irresponsible. As the students in this study have revealed, they perceived knowledge of the Holocaust as constituting 'adult knowledge'. Many of these students felt it represented leaving behind the safety of the past and being exposed to realisations about the world that they were now becoming mature enough to cope with. Teachers open this door for their students and I would argue that they consequently have a responsibility to help them through it and beyond. In teaching them about the Holocaust, we have made the "…unimaginable visible, enlarging the realm of the possible" for these young people (Bartov, 1996, p326). If we fail to give them the opportunity to talk about what they have learned, they will struggle to integrate this knowledge into their developing worldview. Rational or factual analysis alone is inadequate when learning about something that is neither (Schatzker, 1980). The problem is whether teachers have the skills – or are willing – to engage with their students on an emotional level (Weiner, 1992). This, ultimately, comes down to whether or not the teacher views their purpose as being transmissionist or transformative. With or without the

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on-going support of their teachers, the students will have begun an emotional journey of coming to terms with the inhumanity of human history. Consequently, it should be remembered that, for both students and teachers, in many ways "Establishing closure for this curriculum can be as difficult as searching for a way to begin the study of the Holocaust" (Strom & Parsons, 1982, p16).

4.4 Connective Learning.

This section presents the data collected which relates to the connections students appeared to make between the Holocaust Education they had received and their developing worldview. Students considered reasons for learning about the Holocaust and the relevance of the event to the modern world. This theme emerged, was collapsed, and then re-emerged as part of the data analysis process (see section 3.9, above) but ultimately necessitated being presented as a separate theme, in my opinion.

4.4.1 Students' reflections on possible reasons why they had learned about the Holocaust.

Craig's (Year 12) observation that learning about the Holocaust "*…puts things into perspective, when you think about it*" was something I wanted to explore further with the students. Particularly, I was interested to understand how their learning about this topic fitted in with their developing worldview and their understanding of the adult world (given their responses to section 4.3.9, above). To begin, the students were asked whether they thought it was important to learn about the Holocaust. All responded positively, with many saying it was "*...definitely*" important to learn about it. Next, they were asked *why* they thought they had been taught about it. Their answers to this question were more diverse. Many students felt that the main reason for learning about the Holocaust was to teach them about racism. In explaining this, they made reference to terms such as 'racism', 'prejudice', 'discrimination', 'bullying' and 'equality'. What was of particular note amongst these responses, however, was Felix's (Year 12) observation that he thought such replies were merely mechanical recitations of "*…the normal lessons*". There was a certain tone of resignation in this revelation; it seemed as if he was saying that the desire to treat people equally was the 'expected' reaction, which he felt obliged to give. While it would be understandably difficult (and educationally undesirable) for a student to express an

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opinion to the *contrary*, it would be worrying if students were left feeling that they needed to recite the 'expected' response without also, necessarily, believing it. The issue for teachers is that creating an environment where students felt able to express such contrary opinions might lead to an open discussion (or the outright promotion) of revisionist history or anti-Semitism. This was a concern highlighted by the Historical Association (2007, see section 1.2.2, above), widely misreported in the British media as being the reason why teachers were 'afraid' to teach about the Holocaust in the UK. This may well be an issue of the mismatched opinions some students are exposed to between school and home. It should certainly be a concern for teachers in school populations where, for example, views of the actions of modern-day Israel may influence the messages Muslim students receive at home about the Jews (which was the Historical Association's concern and mirrors research by Rutland, 2010, in Australia). In my interview with Jonathan (see section 4.5, below), he recalled encountering a similar problem in one school he had been invited to speak at. The school had a large Muslim population and the teacher who invited him asked that he only spoke for a few minutes, so as not to provoke too much antagonism from either the students or their parents. Jonathan was happy to do this, but to his welcome surprise found that the students wanted him to talk for longer. It is difficult for educators to strike an appropriate balance between the curriculum and modern anxieties, or cultural-political concerns, but it remains a crucial consideration if teachers are to help their students distinguish between them and learn about and from the Holocaust.

The contribution Holocaust Education can make to anti-racist education is widely debated (see, for example, Bloom, 2009, Carrington & Short, 1997, Cowan & Maitles, 2007, Short, 1999), both in terms of its usefulness and its appropriateness. It is unsurprising that many of these students made a connection between the Holocaust and racism, given their understanding of the event (see section 4.2, above). However, several students perceived the anti-racist lessons of the Holocaust as being not just intentional, but actional. They felt that the lesson of the Holocaust was to *prevent* future atrocities. By learning from the 'mistakes' of the past, they believed they could "*…make sure it doesn't happen again*" (Evan, Year 9). There was evidence that students thought that education about the Holocaust inoculated them and (by extension) future society from it recurrence. Ian (Year 9) thought that where such atrocities or genocides had occurred in the modern world, the people in those countries had not perhaps, "*…really, researched it all, or looked into it as*

much as we have". The implication here appeared to be that such things could only recur in uneducated societies (which completely ignores the socio-cultural backdrop in Germany during the 1930s). There was a general awareness that preventing such events would also require an element of fortitude on their part. For example, Harvey (Year 10) acknowledged that this meant that he would have to remember to "*…stick to what we believe in*" in the face of extremism. All of these attitudes are not surprising given the wealth of evidence to suggest that the Holocaust is often taught in schools to facilitate an overtly anti-racist agenda (see, for example, Bloom, 2009, Carrington & Short, 1997, Maitles et al, 2006). Whether or not individual academics or teachers believe this is desirable, it appears to be the reality of classroom practice in the UK at the present time (Pettigrew et al., 2009) and therefore cannot be ignored.

The rationale for learning about the Holocaust that was cited by most of the students, concerned their learning in academic subjects (specifically History or Religious Studies). Some of these explanations were uncertain, however, or showed evidence of students merely searching for *some kind* of explanation. Given that their learning had mainly occurred in History lessons, some seemed to be logically guessing that the reasons were simply to extend their historical knowledge. These students described the Holocaust quite vaguely; justifying learning about it as being because it was a 'big' or 'major' part of history. Some explanations went a little deeper, such as Evan's (Year 12) rationalisation that,

> "*…it's a pretty major thing that happened in the past and… it's always good to kind of know how we got to where we are now… I think that the Holocaust is a major event that happened in relation to that so I think that's why we teach it today*".

Evan's justification was rooted in a mature understanding of how the events of the present and future can be founded in the past. In so doing, he illustrated clearly the connections he had begun to make between his historical learning and the contemporary world he was growing up in. Teachers need to consider how ready their students are to do this, if they are to be able to place the Holocaust within the context of human history.

On the whole, students' religious justifications for learning about the Holocaust were as vague as their historical ones. Suggestions were made that learning about the Holocaust

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taught them more about religions, or what the Jews 'went through' (and its subsequent impact upon the Jewish people), or to illustrate persecution on a non-nationalist basis. James (Year 10), recognised that the Holocaust had been taught – at least in part – as a religious "*…moral dilemma*", explaining it as an example of how God "*…wanted us to have variation between us*". His understanding of why he had learned about the Holocaust showed that he had clearly interpreted the primacy of his teachers' intentions to be religious, rather than historical. The competition for 'ownership' of the Holocaust between the school subjects of History and Religious Studies has been extensively documented (see, for example, Burke, 2003, Brown & Davies, 1998, Foster & Mercier, 2000b, Fox, 1989, Haydn, 2000). Teachers need to be wary of students' readings of this competition (intentional or not) and their subsequent positioning of the Holocaust as primarily being taught for religious or historical reasons.

Several students thought they had learned about the Holocaust to discover more universal lessons. Their rational was that their learning had been a revelatory experience, related to their impending adulthood and taking their place as young adults in society. Uri (Year 9) reflected that "*…you kind of have to know about it*", while Paul (also Year 9) suggested that they, "*…had to learn about …things that are just, not meant to be*". The concept that learning about the Holocaust was something you 'had' to do, implied that they thought it was a necessary part of growing up in the world and being exposed to a more adult curriculum. This echoed the thoughts some students had expressed when thinking about the age-appropriateness of their learning (see section 4.3.9, above). However, when talking about their perceptions as to *why* they had learned about the Holocaust, some of their reasoning went further than issues of maturity. While reconsidering their readiness for the topic, several students spoke about how their learning had introduced them to the realities of the adult world and their need to be prepared for it. Adrian (Year 12) considered that his learning had been "*…to open our eyes to, you know… the malicious nature that is out there*", while Ethan (Year 10) thought that the topic had been taught "*…to build up your emotions*". These are related, but significantly different opinions. For Adrian, learning about the Holocaust represented a realisation of the true (malevolent) nature of the adult world. For Ethan, it was about being inoculated against that realisation. Craig (Year 12) interpreted his learning as being a benchmark against which he could place other events in perspective. For him the "*…little things that get on your nerves*" in everyday life were brought sharply into check when he

considered the fate of the six million Holocaust victims. These revelations raise an issue as to the contribution Holocaust Education might make towards students' emotional or social education (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006, Short, 1999) and how it affects their developing view of the world. Teachers need to ensure that students do not see the process as merely a regrettable but inevitable end to childhood. To do so would be to ignore the positive, transformative potential of the subject.

There were a variety of further reasons students gave for learning about the Holocaust. Some of these revolved around a belief that the Holocaust was an event of such significance that it simply demanded to be taught in and of itself "*To show how bad it was*" (Nathan, Year 9). Others felt there was a need to show students how bad Hitler's actions had been (although this might also illustrate again their misguided belief in Hitler's singular culpability – see section 4.2.3, above). Interconnected to this were some views that the Holocaust was taught to show students what could happen when governments collapsed, or extremists took over a country. Two students considered reasons for teaching the Holocaust to students from particular backgrounds. For example, Cian (Year 9) considered how Holocaust Education could teach Jewish students not to be so submissive. He thought that the Jews during the Holocaust had "*…just let themselves get killed*" and that this explained "*…why the Jews are like one of the hardest fighters in the world*" today. This is a complicated conclusion for Cian to reach. It illustrated both a misunderstanding of the Jews' apparent 'passivity' in the face of devastating aggression (Bauer, 2002) and a sweeping generalisation of the collective defensive abilities of Jewish people in the contemporary world. The latter point raised an issue of how students might view contemporary Jewish young people or the Jews in general. Considering them as a group in this way illustrated their 'other-ing' in the mind of this student (which might also have been influenced by a number of factors, such as family opinions, or representations in the media). Conversely, the impact of the Holocaust upon the collective consciousness of young Jews is a much-debated area (see, for example, Ackerman, 1980, Brog, 2003, Feldman, 2002, Lazar et al., 2004). Teachers need to consider this in relation to Jewish students they might be teaching in their classroom and other students' reactions to them. In the same way that non-Jewish students might come to see the Jews as 'other', the Jewish students could also negatively interpret their own 'otherness' within the classroom context. It is important that teachers consider how to avoid unintentionally reinforcing the discriminatory views of the past, through their study of them.

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Fraser (Year 9) also considered why it might be important for different groups to learn about the Holocaust. First, he thought about why Jewish students might learn about it, although his explanation purely concerned a perceived need for them to find out about their family history. Next, he considered why German students might be taught about the Holocaust. His reasoning here went significantly deeper, saying that he thought the subject could be both morally instructive ("*…to teach them that that was wrong*") and cathartic ("*…hopefully Germans nowadays would find somewhere in their heart to say that 'that was wrong, we shouldn't have done that'*"). Fraser's reflection on the impact Holocaust Education might have on German students suggested that he thought there was (and should be) an element of trans-generational collective 'guilt' over the event (a concern echoed by Deckert-Peaceman, 2003). Again, this illustrated that it is important that teachers consider not just the complicated interpretations of victimhood that might occur amongst their students, but also of transferred guilt.

While there was a lack of consensus in students' opinions as to why they had been taught about the Holocaust, most had an opinion of some kind. Only two students claimed to be, "*…not really sure why*" they had been taught about the Holocaust (Daniel, Year 9). Chris (Year 10) was the only one who felt unable to draw any reasons for learning about it at all. The range of motives the students suggested (anti-racism, the prevention of future atrocities, historical or religious, or broader, less specific reasons) was logical and most would probably be considered laudable intentions of Holocaust Education. Whether teachers of different curriculum subjects would agree with them is debatable, however (Burke, 2003). A History teacher, for example, might be surprised by the transformative, anti-racist intentions their pupils had perceived. This might be a problem of competing intentions from the different sources of curricular information students were exposed to, leaving them confused as to which intention their school placed foremost. It could be argued that, although disparate, there was at least agreement that there *was* a reason for learning about the Holocaust and that it was *important* to learn about it. Isaac's (Year 12) attitude towards the subject may have been influenced by his family history, but nonetheless summed up the general mood of his contemporaries in his belief that,

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> "*…it is something that can't go… untaught… we're the next generation… growing up… and… one day we're going to be the people who are going to have to lead remembrances and I feel its important that we know what we're remembering*".

4.4.2 Students' connections between their learning and the contemporary world.

Most of the students were asked whether they thought we had learned the lessons of the Holocaust. The question was left intentionally open-ended and vague insofar as the 'we' and the 'lessons' of the enquiry were left up to the students' interpretation. Therefore they could construe the questions at a micro level (where the 'we' might be themselves and the 'lessons' could relate to them), or at a macro level (where the 'we' might include others and the 'lessons' might relate to wider society). I was interested to see how the students took the question and to hear the answers and explanations they subsequently offered. About a quarter of the students said that they thought 'we' had learned the 'lessons' of the Holocaust. Some simply responded 'yes' without elaborating further, while others' generally positive responses came with qualifications. For example, Alec in Year 9 felt that although most people had learned the lessons, there were still *some* groups of people who were not opposed to genocidal acts like the Holocaust, possibly for religious reasons. Harvey (Year 10) cited the fall of Communism as evidence that the lessons had been learned and Owen (also Year 10) felt that the evidence (from the liberating soldiers) was so extensive that we could not have failed to have learned the lessons. Barney (Year 12) believed that the Holocaust "*…sort of, brought everyone together*", although he felt that recent terrorist acts had put this bond of unity under strain. A few students thought that we had not learned the lessons of the Holocaust and only one (Karl, Year 9) enlarged on this, basing his opinion on the fact that there was still conflict in the world. Perhaps of more concern was his comment that he felt similar atrocities had happened since the Holocaust. As he put it, "*…concentration camps were re-established, I'm not sure which war it was, but I know that they were slightly after that*". This is a misconception, or a misunderstanding of how the events of subsequent conflicts have been defined. Prior to the Second World War, the term 'concentration camp' was used imprecisely to describe a number of different types of prisoner camps (originating from the British camps set up to inter Boer and Black Africans during the Second Boer War between 1899-1902). Since 1945, this nebulous term has become synonymous with the Nazi extermination camps (which, further, inaccurately suggests that all Nazi camps were extermination camps).

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Consequently, newer euphemisms have come to describe a variety of prison camps since World War Two, such as 'displacement camp' or 'transit camp'. Although semantic distinctions such as this can be implicitly problematic (Garber & Zuckerman, 1989) – and Karl is technically correct in saying that such camps have existed since – it is important that definitions are not confused between the Nazi regime and subsequent conflicts or acts of oppression. Teachers need to ensure that they are using the correct historically referenced terminology in their classrooms, to avoid imprecision or confusion in their students' thinking.

The majority of students claimed to be uncertain as to whether we had learned the lessons of the Holocaust. Some of their responses were unspecific, while others cited modern conflicts as the reason for their scepticism. Craig's (Year 12) observation that "*…overall we've probably learned a little bit*" summed up a generally lacklustre view of humanity's ability to learn and progress from its mistakes. Occurrences such as 'killings', 'racism', or 'war crimes' were amongst the examples given by the students to exemplify these judgments. Their opinions were not entirely pessimistic, however. Theo's (Year 9) perception, for example, was that,

> "*Jews as people and… prostitutes and homosexuals… they have much more freedom and I think that's er, because how people reacted to what Hitler was doing… nowadays it really doesn't matter if you're gay or if you're, er, Jewish or something… it is a big problem, but it's on a smaller scale compared to what happened in Auschwitz and the German concentration camps.*"

Theo appeared to be struggling with his perception that although persecution still occurred, it did so to a lesser extent than under the Nazi regime, although it remained a significant problem. This was, of course, a consideration of disproportionate scale. To say that something is "*…on a smaller scale compared to… Auschwitz*" leaves scope for considerable interpretation. While it might be unreasonable to expect a Year 9 student to have a nuanced understanding of the complexities of international laws and the experiences of different citizens around the world, it is important that students realise that the world has not necessarily been 'cured' of persecution post-World War Two. Using the Holocaust for comparative purposes is at best problematic and at worst inappropriate. Whilst not wanting to demean the suffering endured in other conflicts (Nates, 2010), teachers should help their students towards an understanding that comparisons between

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the present day and the Holocaust are necessarily inequitable (see, for example, Avraham, 2010, Markusen, 1993).

In his example, Theo said that the Jews, "*…have much more freedom… nowadays it really doesn't matter if you're gay or if you're, er, Jewish or something.*" I could speculate about Theo's perceptions of people who are 'Jewish', 'gay' or 'prostitutes' and whether he perceived them in equivalent terms, or if he was simply naming them as representative persecuted groups under the Nazis. Either way, he was one of only a very few students to mention persecution faced by Jewish people today (in the form of anti-Semitism or Neo-Nazism). This seems to be contrary to Jedwab's (2010) findings that greater knowledge about the Holocaust led students to have a greater awareness of anti-Semitism. What is of note, however, is that these students all explicitly revealed that they felt modern-day anti-Semitism was "*…not as bad as… the original Nazis*" (Jacob, Year 9). The Community Security Trust (CST, 2012) reported that there had been 586 anti-Semitic incidents of which they had been made aware in 2011 in the UK. This was the fourth highest number of incidents on record and included violent attacks, threatening behaviour, verbal abuse, damage or desecration of Jewish property. These incidents were largely concentrated in Manchester and Greater London (reflecting the size of the Jewish populations in those cities). Although the school of this study is located in the Greater London (M25) area, the reported incidents occurred mainly in north London boroughs (such as Barnet and Camden) and this school is located in a south-eastern county. Demographically, therefore, these students are unlikely to have experienced anti-Semitic incidents in their local areas. Whilst this meant it was not surprising that very few of these students mentioned anti-Semitism or Neo-Nazi activities, their lack of awareness should still be of concern. The Anti Defamation League (ADL, 2005) reported that there were significant anti-Semitic feelings amongst European citizens (although the evidence was varied between residents of the twelve countries involved). 29% of respondents to the ADL survey said that their anti-Jewish sentiments were influenced by the actions taken by the State of Israel (2005, echoed in CST, 2012 and Kaplan & Small, 2006). These students will undoubtedly be exposed to media coverage of the Israeli / Palestinian conflict, if not already, then at some point in their future. Educators should provide them with the information necessary to be able to contextualise the two events; to separate the historic conflict from any contemporary one. While there was no evidence to the contrary, these students had relatively little awareness of modern-day anti-Semitism or the existence of

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Neo-Nazi groups in the UK and across Europe. Teachers might consider how links could be developed between Holocaust Education and Citizenship lessons (see, for example, Eckmann, 2010, Maitles et al., 2006, Petersen, 2010) to provide students with opportunities to make clearly defined links between their Holocaust learning and issues of modern citizenship and democracy. By assisting students in making links between these areas, it is possible that their learning could better prepare them to be protected against future, contrasting opinions and influences.

4.4.3 Students' perceptions of repetition in the contemporary world.

Whilst discussing whether we had learned the lessons of the Holocaust, many of the students were asked if they thought such an event could happen again. Several students said that they believed it could not. They gave a variety of reasons; such as a fear of the consequences, or the effective legal procedures we now have which they thought would prevent it. Several of their assertions were qualified, however, by their lack of certainty. For example, Craig's (Year 12) confident statement that "*I can't see another Holocaust, event happening again*" was later clarified by his adding that he, "*…would hope not*". Other students were evidently more disturbed by considering what might be possible in the future. For example, Lloyd (Year 10) revealed that,

> "*I don't really like learning about it. It just makes me feel like, will this happen again? Like, what these people could actually do to you, they have control over everything. But I just keep thinking it's all over, there's nothing to be worried about.*"

In so doing, Lloyd revisited the concerns he had expressed when talking about images and films he had seen (see section 4.3.2, above). Even amongst those students who felt a repetition was unlikely, this lack of conviction in their own beliefs was a common motif.

The majority of the students thought that an event such as the Holocaust could occur again in the contemporary world (a proportion significantly higher than the 53% reported by Burke, 2003). There was a general feeling, however, that if it did it would not be "*…on such a big scale*" (Jacob, Year 9). Two examples were given of locations students felt were vulnerable to recurrence – Jerusalem (as a potential flashpoint in the conflict between Israel and Iran) and Africa (where there was "*…a lot of conflict*", according to

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Quinn in Year 9). Most of the students based their pessimism on the possibility that political situations within countries could change in ways that could allow for genocide to occur. Particularly, a number of them cited socio-political conditions (such as an economic recession) whereby a dictator could offer the population a renewed hope of financial stability and employment. That Holocaust Education does not occur in a political vacuum is an important consideration and teachers need to remember that students are likely to draw such comparisons or parallels (Murphy, 2010). For example, in the context of his wider learning and experience, Uri (Year 9) considered how,

> *"…it depends on, er, what kind of leader comes to power and… maybe the country kind of sees them as a strong leader… who can improve their like, living conditions and stuff and believe that that man will be the best for their country but they don't realise that power will probably change him."*

Max (Year 10) likened such preconditions to the rising electoral success of the British Nationalist Party in the UK during times of economic hardship (from the recession of the early 1990s to the present day global financial crisis). By preying on individual families' insecurities, Max believed that such political parties encouraged voters to think about their own needs, *"…more than the consequences of it"*. Other students cited incidents of intolerance in modern-day Britain such as racism in football and sports, or stereotypical views of others. As long as these things existed in the contemporary world, they said, *"…you can't say it wouldn't happen"* (Barney, Year 12).

The students mentioned a number of modern conflicts while they were considering whether we had 'learned the lessons' of the Holocaust. The most frequently cited of these was the political and social turmoil in post-independence Zimbabwe. Other places of conflict mentioned by the students included Afghanistan, Iraq and the Congo. Some were contemporary (such as Guy in Year 12's reference to the *"…terrible"* tension between black and white South Africans, as reported to him by a South African fellow student), while others were historic (such as Ethan in Year 10's reference to racial segregation in America in the last century). There was a diverse range of conflicts mentioned, echoing Clements' (2006) finding that students tried to place their Holocaust learning into a framework of understanding, by placing it alongside other atrocities.

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Of the mentions made of Zimbabwe, most were unspecific, or seemed a little hesitant. For example, Daniel (Year 9) raised the example by tentatively suggesting that "*…I think in Zimbabwe with, er, Mugabe… I'm not exactly sure what's going on there… I think, in a way, it's sort of like appeasement*". In so doing, Daniel illustrated his lack of specific knowledge about the situation, but his developing understanding of the – as he apparently saw it – ineffectiveness of the international community to prevent it or control it (by comparing it to Appeasement) The students generally felt that what had happened in Zimbabwe was not as bad as the events of the Holocaust. Only one – Cian in Year 9 – demonstrated a more comprehensive understanding of the situation, referencing an incident of alleged intimidation during the 2008 Presidential election (BBC, 2008):

> "*…there are people in this world who will do anything that they can to stay in power, like Robert Mugabe… on the news last weekend, getting his thugs in to beat up all the opposition parties, he's just inhumane, I just don't see how someone can just do that just to cling on to that little bit more power*"

His obvious struggle to comprehend the actions of the President left Cian with a pessimistic view of the future of the country, and the rest of the world's ability to act:

> "*…you can't do anything about it. The Zimbabwe government is so corrupt and he's in such a high power. He covers his tracks basically, you can't just catch him and say, 'you're nicked'.*"

Intentionally or not, Cian's understanding of the situation in Zimbabwe illustrated a developing, complex appreciation of international relations and comparative morality. He appeared to be beginning to understand that modern day events (just like historical ones) are not always clear-cut. There is often an element of ambiguity as a result of complicated global relations and Holocaust Education can help students towards a more mature (if necessarily cynical) understanding of the 'grey' areas of human history (Pettigrew et al., 2009). The same study found that teachers believed that often the outcomes of Holocaust Education were fully evident only in years to come (in the attitudes of their students in adulthood). Cian certainly appeared to be displaying some of these attitudes and perceptions at a young age, very soon after his study of the Holocaust. Romi and Lev's (2007) research did not entirely agree with Pettigrew et al.'s (2009) findings. They found evidence that students' are more deeply affected by the Holocaust soon after they have learned about it (like Cian) and that this level of affectedness decreased over time,

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although it did stay with them. All of the findings presented thus far in this study appear to suggest that these students were very much affected by what they had learned. Teachers need to consider, however, how best to help students manage this affectedness for it to remain as useful a personal attribute in the future, as it might be in the short-term. Whilst the appropriateness and effectiveness of drawing historical parallels with the Holocaust is widely debated (see, for example, Avraham, 2010, Hondius, 2010), teachers should acknowledge that their students' learning happens within a global context and that they might make those links for themselves anyway.

4.4.4 Students' perceptions of the factors that could prevent a repetition in the contemporary world.

The general feeling amongst the students was that there could not be a repetition of the Holocaust today because 'the world' would stop it. These perceived rescuers remained a largely unspecified group of people, however. There was a bias in the students' responses towards a belief that salvation would come from economically developed countries and governments (such as the United States of America or the United Kingdom). Frequent reference was made to students' confidence that people would stand up for what was right to prevent genocide. However, Lawrence (Year 9) considered how this might work on a practical level. Citing people's reactions to modern-day racism, he considered how "*…in groups it would probably be easy* [but]*… it would probably be quite hard for the individual*". This wariness of human nature was echoed by Fraser (Year 9) who considered how people might act if "*…forced*" to commit crimes. Considering whether people would be prepared to murder others if the government told them to he conceded, reluctantly, that he thought that "*…if it was based nowadays, people, I'm sure… would be forced to do it even if they knew it was wrong… which is sad to say, but…*". Quinn (Year 9) reflected how people's morality (and their subsequent actions) might be relative to their perceptions of threat and their proximity to it. It is important that students consider these issues of moral indifference and perceptions of paternalism as part of their study of the Holocaust (Gregory, 2000). What Quinn and Fraser were doing here was to consider the idealistic standards they *hoped* people would maintain, in light of their *realistic* understanding of relative morality in the face of extreme oppression. It is important that teachers support their students in this revelatory appreciation; for fear that without such support, they will be left investing their naïve confidence in the overriding decency of

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human nature. In times of conflict, this might prove to be a critical inadequacy in their education.

Such naïvety was echoed in a number of students' responses. These ranged from trusting beliefs in the power of the United Nations, to their invested expectations of civilised society. Ross (Year 9) spoke extensively about the role the media might play if genocide were to recur. At first, he considered television and the print media to be positive influences in society, whilst conceding that they could be "*…quite opinionated*". Later, he warned that they could potentially, "*…brainwash you in a sort of sense into what you want to do*" (although he seemed relatively unconcerned by this). By comparison, he thought that people in less economically developed countries, or people living under Communist regimes, would not have access to free media and would be less well informed about global events. Lloyd (Year 10) also expressed a belief that citizens in free democracies would be better placed to stand up against an atrocity. In his words, he thought that "*…the world doesn't think like that anymore*". Both of these students might be commended for their optimistic confidence in the virtues of a free, democratic society and the willingness of its citizens to act morally. However, this would be to completely ignore the societal preconditions of the Holocaust in Germany (Supple, 2006) and the influence of the media and propaganda in the rise of National Socialism. It is important that students have a clear understanding of the cultured, technologically advanced, democratic society within which the Nazi Party was fostered and how the media was used to manipulate freethinking citizens. In this respect, teachers might need to consider how they teach pre-war *German* life (Marks, 2007) as carefully and as significantly as they should consider teaching pre-war *Jewish* life (Pettigrew et al., 2009).

4.4.5 Students' opinions about further learning.

Towards the close of the interview, students were asked if they felt that they wanted to learn more about the Holocaust in the future. A few did not, mainly because they considered that they had studied it "*…in reasonable depth in History*" (Harvey, Year 10). Ewan (Year 12) replied that he wanted to "*Just kind of move on from it really*". At first, it might seem like he was saying that he wanted to 'move on' from something that had been emotionally difficult. However, within the context of the rest of the interview with him, this does not appear to have been the case. Rather, he seemed to feel as though he had

learned enough and it was simply time to move on to other topics. He seemed to be a student who was very ready to give 'learned' responses from the safety of the "...theoretical retreat" (Brina, 2003, p524), but did not appear to have been particularly engaged by the event, or concerned to deepen his understanding of it (see section 4.3.10, above). Only one student remained unsure as to whether he wished to learn more about the Holocaust. Niall's (Year 10) dilemma lay in his dichotomous feelings of interest (in the topic and, specifically, Hitler's motivations) and shock (at what he had learned so far).

Of those who expressed an opinion, slightly more said they wanted to learn about the Holocaust further. These students were, on the whole, motivated by interest. Particularly, they wanted the chance to visit some of the camps to see what they were like for themselves. Karl (Year 9) connected his interest with his future career choice. Saying that he wanted to join the Army when he left school, he considered how that might mean him having to harm others one day. He made it clear that this was something he would struggle with and that his primary motivation for joining the Army would be to learn the value of life and "*To keep the peace and to stop that* [the Holocaust] *happening again*". Other expressions of interest were qualified by time restrictions. For example, Guy (Year 12) lamented the lack of time he had to read books around the topic – "*…because you've got so much other stuff going on at school and things… Because of things like that I regret not taking history*". For one student, however, his motivations for learning more about the Holocaust were more fundamental and universal. As Owen (Year 10) put it,

> "*It's just something I feel that I should do… I feel sort of… like I have to… I feel obliged of it, to sort of, learn about it… It's part of like our collective human history… We have a responsibility to understand it… Because it shows mankind like sort of, as it is, sometimes.*"

Owen's emotional connection with what he had learned has already been documented (see section 4.3.2, above). His closing statement here summed up the deep effect his learning had obviously had upon him. This had, apparently, been a truly transformative experience for him and he in no way regarded the persecution of the Jews as the suffering of 'others'. Rather, he had come to understand the collective and universal nature of the tragedy, our communal responsibility for it and how it exposed the baser side of human nature. He had done this in such a way as to connect his learning about the past, with his outlook towards the future. This exemplified Clements' (2006) view that

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learning about the Holocaust was "...both a destructive and creative process" (p46) and educators need to see this as a holistic process. To 'destroy' a child's view of the world – to rip them from the safety of their childhood learning – without helping them to reconstruct their worldview afterwards, is educationally misjudged (and, at worst, an abuse of trust). Teachers need to see this process through – they need to help their students 'come out the other side' of traumatic learning, if they are to support them in making connections about the world in which they are preparing to take their place as young adults.

4.4.6 Connective learning – reflections on the theme.

The primary concerns of this study from the outset were to determine how much the students knew about the Holocaust and to consider how they had emotionally connected with what they had learned. These concerns subsequently formed the bases for the first two themes. This third theme developed from within the other two as students revealed their thoughts, concerns and wider knowledge of atrocities in the world and in modern history. It became apparent that far from just knowing *about* these world events, their understanding of them was beginning to be contextualised by their Holocaust learning. The Holocaust became the paradigm-defining event within which the other occurrences now sat in the minds of these students.

What was clear from the research was that the students had begun to make connections between the Holocaust and other events in the world. However, it remains somewhat unclear as to what these connections were as there was a lack of consistency or clarity in their collective thinking. The reason behind this appeared to be a lack of teacher direction (although this could well have been intentional). Rather, the students appeared to be piecing together a collection of fragmented connections and associations in a largely unguided manner. Their conclusions that there had been an anti-racist agenda underlying their learning may have been the result of curriculum design, but could well have been simply logical deductions drawn by students growing up in a multi-cultural society where such teachings are frequently encountered (in PSHE, for example). Perhaps more significant, was their apparent desire to *act* upon this anti-racist agenda. This illustrated the power educators have to influence the predispositional attitudes of their students (whether this was a deliberate intention in this school or not). It highlights the need for

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teachers to be clear about the intentions of their scheme of work and to assist students in 'making sense' of their new learning, within their developing worldview.

This developing view of the world was something that many of the students seemed to be aware of. Many were cognisant that they were getting older, approaching adulthood and consequently discovering more about the realities of the adult world. As they began to make connections between these new revelations, there was also a realisation that the world had, in fact, failed to learn the lessons of the Holocaust. I was concerned by the students' apparent fears of a repetition of the Holocaust. However, I was perhaps more worried by their naïvely unrealistic expectations of resistance to such an occurrence. While I would not wish to deprive a teenager of their faith in the moral fortitude of adults, the evidence did suggest a lack of understanding of the preconditions within Germany when the Nazis came to power and within which the Holocaust subsequently occurred. This is an important connection and one that these students frequently lacked. Whilst such concerns do not fall within the narrow confines of the History curriculum (as defined in the National Curriculum, for example), teachers need to consider whether time spent exploring these issues would be time well invested in helping their students develop the skills to protect themselves from future evils in society.

These students were realising that the world as it had been presented to them thus far, was not the reality. Their dawning realisation that the world can often be a 'bad' place – where cruelty can recur – risked exposing their teacher(s) as duplicitous co-conspirators in this deception. This jeopardises the teacher-pupil relationship again, and teachers need to handle this transition carefully if they are to retain any credibility with their students. Teachers have a responsibility to help their students reconstruct their worldview in light of these revelations (echoing Clements', 2006, observation of the "…destructive and creative process" (p46)). Only then, can students 'move on' from the horrors of the Holocaust and contextualise it within history and the contemporary adult world.

Overall, I could not help but feel (once again) that much of the evidence presented to me within this theme was rather superficial. I remain uncertain as to whether these students had really begun to make connections between the Holocaust and their developing worldview, or if these responses were little more than 'expected' indignations and fragments of world news. Throughout this study, I spoke with students who had clearly

been deeply affected by what they had learned and those who had not. I had also met young people who had begun to maturely assimilate this new knowledge into their developing worldview (even if the process had been a struggle). However, there were a worrying number of instances when I found myself wondering whether many of these reactions were merely those of very personable, well intentioned, intelligent, socio-ethnically homogenous teenagers who had learned about the event and were now blithely recycling the expected – but hollow – cliché, 'never again'.

4.5 Jonathan – a case study.

4.5.1 A natural conclusion...?

This was the point at which I had intended (and expected) the study to conclude. However, during the course of my visits to the school, I became aware that Jonathan's annual visit was nearing and found myself discussing this with the Head of History one day. He invited me to join them on the day, suggesting that it might be useful for me to meet with Jonathan and watch him interact with the students. At first, I decided just to visit and observe some of his sessions with the students. I contacted Jonathan as a courtesy, to see if he was happy for me to do so, which he was. Indeed, he was very enthusiastic to find out about my work and to help in any way he could. We continued this conversation on the day of his visit and the Head of History suggested that we might like to spend some time exploring Jonathan's thoughts and motivations during a break between sessions with the students. Jonathan appeared, again, to be very keen to do so. So it was that we came to spend about 30 minutes talking privately about his experiences of giving his testimony to a variety of audiences, particularly school students.

This opportunity (and the data it yielded) does not perhaps sit too 'comfortably' at the end of this chapter. In many ways it is unrelated to the preceding data (which came from the students) and that data would not be any more or less valid without it. I felt strongly, however, that it could add an extra layer of contextualisation to the study and might present an additional perspective on the students' learning. Jonathan's testimony was a 'lynchpin' of sorts for the school's annual programme of Holocaust Education and the students had mentioned it so frequently as a central part of their learning experience. Furthermore, the students who had already heard him in previous years had clearly found

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it a moving experience and one which had been central to their learning (see above). Consequently, I felt that I wanted to explore his testimony to try to gain some understanding of it and how it framed the students' learning. I thought that the data yielded from our discussion could enhance both the study and my professional understanding of the perspective of a Holocaust survivor engaged in this work. My findings are presented below, therefore, as an additional piece of the 'jigsaw' of Holocaust Education at this school. As will be illustrated (below and in the concluding chapter), it became apparent that his testimony was a complex one which both deserves and demands examination if the students' learning is to be more fully understood.

4.5.2 Jonathan – an introduction.

Jonathan's family history and his experiences during the Second World War have already been briefly outlined (see section 4.3.6, above). During the course of his daylong visit to the school of this study, I had the opportunity to talk with him for about half an hour around midday. Having watched him speak to three classes of Year 9 students (each for half an hour), I was able to discuss with him his motivations for giving these talks and his views on what he hoped the students would learn from them. His thoughts and opinions are detailed below, as part of a discussion and analysis in terms of his personal narrative and the implications for students and teachers.

4.5.3 An analysis and discussion of Jonathan's views on his work in schools.

Jonathan appeared to be very keen to talk about his work and spoke enthusiastically throughout our time together. He was clearly very motivated in this work and had, in many respects, dedicated his retirement to travelling the country giving his testimony. He said that he felt privileged to be able to do so as he was effectively the last one of his family who could give this testimony first-hand (since his brother had recently died and his sister had been too young to remember the events of the time directly). He first gave his testimony in schools shortly after the Holocaust became part of the National Curriculum. He was a modest man and this was apparent throughout our discussion and in his testimony. It was clear that Jonathan's commitment to telling students about the past was constantly tempered by his desire not to appear to be in any way self-aggrandising. This gave him a somewhat contradictory nature, however, since he was at once a subversive,

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defiant survivor, yet at the same time he wished to remain an amenable everyman, hoping to make his way in the world quietly unnoticed. Far from being contradictory, however, this is a common personality trait amongst Holocaust survivors, often resulting from having had to keep silent about their experiences for many decades after the war (see, for example, Neusner, 1973, or the testimonies of Hart-Moxon, 2007, Knoller & Landaw, 2005, Tribich, 2003, Winston, 2003).

Central to Jonathan's expression of his own identity was that he asserted himself as a *Jewish* survivor of the Holocaust and he said that one of his principal concerns was that the students he spoke to had a clear understanding of what a Jew was. In many ways this seemed to be more of a concern to him than conveying an understanding of the persecution they had endured. Jonathan referred to himself as "*…this little Jewish boy*" on a number of occasions throughout the day, but his relationship with his faith was clearly a far from simple one. He said he was not an observant Jew and that he "*…belonged to no synagogue*". Indeed, he appeared throughout the interview to actively distance himself from organised Judaism. Religion for him had simply meant the marking of the four rites of passage – brit milah, bar mitzvah, marriage and his future funeral. He said he believed in God, but felt that his relationship was more personal and did not warrant the need to follow the practices of his religion. Jonathan felt that God had 'picked' him out and he felt he should be grateful for that. Consequently, he considered that he had "*…a direct line. He looks after me because I'm still here*". He thought of himself as being Jewish in *essence*, if not in *practice* and his sense of 'disconnection' from the mainstream faith appeared to be a source of sadness and regret to him. Fackenheim (1994) recognised this disconnection as being a consequence of what he called the "*…commanding Voice of Auschwitz*" (p299) – an inability for survivors to leave their Judaism behind after the Holocaust, even if they still did not embrace it. He likened it to a "614th commandment" (p299) for them, demanding that all survivors had a duty to ensure the endurance of Judaism. Certainly this appeared to be Jonathan's experience – he was not a practising Jew and had no desire to be affiliated to any part of organised Judaism, but his sense of moral purpose in ensuring the survival of Judaism and the Jews was clear and was evident throughout his testimony in the classrooms. Some of the students picked up on this and asked Jonathan questions about how he would identify himself now. When asked by one Year 9 student what nationality he would consider himself to be, his answer exemplified his dilemma again. He said that he regarded himself as being British now,

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although he had spent a lot of his youth in the Netherlands and had been born in Berlin. However, he felt that his sense of British-ness was fundamentally undermined by his eternally optimistic attitude (which he credited to his German roots). That a Holocaust survivor should exhibit such rootlessness is not uncommon (Amir & Lev-Wiesel, 2005). What was evident, however, was his clear identification as a Holocaust survivor (echoing the "…survivor mentality", identified by Neusner, 1973, p298), which appeared to have given him a thread of commonality throughout his frequently displaced life.

Jonathan had one obvious objective in his work in schools. He told me that his main motivation for speaking was that he felt people needed to learn the lessons of the Holocaust and that they had failed to do this so far. This seemed to him to be a moral imperative (Lindquist, 2011, Maitles et al., 2006). He also hoped he could encourage young people to speak up against injustice when they saw it (something that he felt young Germans had failed to do in the 1930s). Jonathan said that his hope was that young people listening to him would be minded to "*…prevent future genocides happening – not to the Jews only, but to anyone*". He estimated that 125,000 people had heard him give his testimony and hoped that if just one rose to a position of influence (such as becoming an MP) they would remember "*…this little Jewish boy*" and act "*…the right way*". Whilst it is understandable that someone such as Jonathan should not want future generations to experience the prejudice he had endured as a child, such an overtly actional intention places him somewhat at odds with much of the contemporary thinking and research concerning the aims of Holocaust Education (see, for example, Bloom, 2009, Carrington & Short, 1997, Cowan & Maitles, 2007, Short, 1999). For many Holocaust educators, attitudinal change should be more correctly a bi-product of effective Holocaust Education, than a reason for it. The research presented in this study has shown that his intention was clearly one that the students in this school had internalised (see section 4.4.1, above) and felt predisposed to act upon in the future. In this way, Jonathan's goals had apparently been met, even if those of the teacher might not have been. This raises an important consideration for teachers since testimony from a witness such as Jonathan might not always be compatible with the aims and objectives of the professional educator. Teachers need to consider very carefully whether the testimony of a survivor should be heard per se (out of reverence for the person giving it), if the intentions of the speaker might conflict with the intentions of the teacher.

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One thing that set Jonathan's testimony apart from many other survivors I had heard was the overarching optimism and positivity of his story. For example, he described his experiences at Bergen-Belsen (one of the most notorious camps in Nazi Europe) as having not been, "*…so bad*". Indeed, he likened the hardship he endured there as being no more than the cold showers he had become used to in their house in Amsterdam before the war. He conceded, however, that his experience in Bergen-Belsen had not been the norm, since they were treated well in the 'Star Camp' as Exchange Jews. He felt lucky for the life he had lived since the war and consequently didn't want to make his testimony one of sadness, but of optimism and hope. Neither did he want to be seen as a victim, or a hero. The students certainly recognised the positivity of his outlook (see section 4.3.6, above) and in many ways this had helped them to connect with him. In other ways, however, his testimony ran contrary to their expectations and their learning in class. Ali (Year 12) commented that, "*…you just expect them to be in shock from it, but I suppose people move on*". His impression that Jonathan had 'moved on' seemed to oversimplify what Jonathan himself had revealed to me had been a complex and lengthy period of coping with his experiences. Nonetheless, I was not surprised by what Ali had said, since Jonathan was clearly intent throughout the day on showing students the positive aspects of his life during the Holocaust and since.

To explore this further, later in the day I asked Jonathan about the 'soup story' he told the students (see section 4.3.6, above, for a discussion of the students' reactions to this story). Whilst weighing up the morality of the situation and the impact his actions might have had on others in the camp, his conclusion was that "*I don't feel guilty at all about* [it]*, you can decide for yourself what you would do*". Ayalon et al. (2007) examined Holocaust survivors' attitudes towards their actions and choices during the war, compared to how they would have acted before it or since. They found that many survivors had to rationalise their actions during the war in terms of their need to survive. For several participants in their study, this resulted in a necessary removal of themselves from the group, family or community in an effort to find ways to survive. Whilst I cannot draw any conclusions with certainty, Jonathan's testimony appeared to point to such a rationalisation of his 'stealing' during the Holocaust (for which he used the common wartime term "*…organised*" rather than "*…steal*") and possibly suggested an explanation for his on-going extrication from mainstream Judaism. Jonathan later went on to say that he still felt guilty that his parents would have disapproved of his stealing, which perhaps

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explained his need to put a positive spin upon it (Ayalon et al., 2007). The Head of History asked Jonathan why he never told the students that he had been punished several times for his actions with the soup. In the autobiography Jonathan's brother had written (which is not referenced here, to protect Jonathan's anonymity within the study), it has been recorded that Jonathan was "…sentenced by the Jewish Council to two or three days of solitary confinement in a bunker". His brother wrote that he "…accepted this as a hazard that went with the job and always returned to the same activities, with the same results". This had been a job Jonathan had actively sought (having chosen to live in the men's camp where he could find work, rather than stay with his mother and sister in the women's camp) and he seemed a little embarrassed that this had been raised. He hastily said he omitted this detail purely to avoid making his talk overly long for the students listening. After a few moments further consideration, however, he added that "*I don't want to come out as a hero… we were lucky*". His reticence to explain the reality in full, poses challenges for educators if they wish to use survivor testimony to illustrate the fate of the Jews during the Second World War. Only later (during question and answer sessions) did Jonathan talk about the harsher realities of life in Bergen-Belsen and beyond. For example, he spoke about the punishments dished out by the 'kapos' (Polish criminals, appointed as prisoner functionaries within the camp) and his own participation in the ransacking of local German villages for food after his liberation. The reality of the 'darker' side of his story was ever-present in his testimony, but he remained intent on presenting students with as positive a picture as possible, instead.

When asked, he put his optimistic attitude down to his working life, which had taught him to look at the positives in life. He considered his 'extra' 65 years as being a "*…bonus*" and he couldn't understand how some survivors could hold on to their bitterness for so many years. He was also concerned that the testimonies of some of them had grown "*…worse and worse*" as time had gone on. When asked why he thought that was, he reflected that "*I think they, partly, want to compete*". The issue of recollection has been raised by survivors such as Kitty Hart-Moxon (2007), who commented how her own story had "…developed over many years" (p227) as she had found out more about the circumstances she was subject to. Roediger and McDermott (2000) warned of the risk of memory distortions in such cases and this was a concern Jonathan also raised. Moreover, he spoke of what he perceived as being a 'hierarchy of suffering' amongst some of his fellow survivors. He felt strongly that you couldn't (and shouldn't) classify

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different levels of suffering in this way. He illustrated this by recalling how some Auschwitz survivors had said that Bergen-Belsen had been the far worse experience of the two camps for them. His explanation for this was that these people had *survived* Auschwitz (probably by having jobs and slightly better rations), but received no such special treatment upon arrival at Bergen-Belsen, where they were effectively left to perish. This had not been his experience at all and, as such, comparisons were innately flawed and meaningless. From what he said, Jonathan had clearly recognised the elasticity of fellow survivors' testimonies over time. This made me consider to what extent he had reflected on any change in nature in his own testimony, if he acknowledged any such change at all. Since there is evidence that teachers select oral history resources according to their illustrative usefulness within their scheme of work (Newton Lawley et al., 2005), Jonathan's revelations suggest that teachers might also need to consider the post-traumatic emphasis that may have been placed on any such testimony, so long after the event.

Given the nature of his experiences, I discussed with Jonathan what age he thought was most appropriate for children to learn about the Holocaust. He believed that Year 9 was an appropriate age, although he had also frequently visited Primary schools. He was very much in favour of Primary-aged children being taught about the Holocaust (a view opposed by researchers such as Burke, 2003, Pettigrew et al., 2009, Short & Supple et al., 1998). He was aware, however, that his views were divergent from those of many Primary educators, who he felt were generally not in favour of it. Similarly, he was broadly – but cautiously – in favour of Holocaust-themed literature such as *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* (Boyne, 2006), despite an awareness of growing opposition to its use amongst Holocaust educators (Gilbert, 2010). He felt that since younger children had often read books such as Anne Frank's diary they could learn a lot about pre-war Jewish life from them. This meant that they could well understand the restrictions placed upon Jewish people (such as himself) in Europe as the war began. He was understandably opposed to exposing younger students to the horrors of the camps, however, which was something he felt most camp survivors tended to focus on. As he put it "*The gas chambers are not important for me because I don't want to make it such a bad thing*". These views had been largely formed by his experience of working for several years at the Holocaust Centre in Laxton, Nottinghamshire, which houses the only Holocaust exhibition in the UK aimed specifically at children in Key Stage Two (7-11 years of age). Hundreds of Primary

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aged pupils and their teachers visit *The Journey* exhibition every year, engaging with it and finding it a positive learning experience (van Coevorden, 2011). My concern was that whilst I agreed with his stance against risking traumatising young children with the potentially horrific content they could be exposed to (see, for example, Burke, 2003, Brina, 2003, Clements, 2006, Gallant & Hartman, 2001), his testimony might actively and unnecessarily be over-protecting them from the realities of the event.

Jonathan said that he had given his testimony in a wide variety of schools and other settings and that he had not encountered any forms of religious or racial prejudice in his work (indeed, quite the opposite was true – see section 4.4.1, above). He was particularly aware of German-heritage students who might be listening to his story, because he had found that they generally "*…don't want to stick out in their Form*". He said that he had actually been asked on several occasions by other students to use the word 'Nazi' rather than 'German', to distinguish between the people of the past and the present. Making such a distinction was something he had himself struggled with over the years, by his own admission. During his working life, he had refused to go to Germany with his employer, for example. Today, he said he had visited, but could not forgive the older generations (since forgiveness could only be granted by those who had suffered at their hands, in his opinion). Jonathan was particularly complimentary of the current German education system, which he believed covered the topic of the Holocaust better than any other nation. On the other hand, he said that he rarely visited Jewish schools to talk these days, because he found there were too many interruptions (because the students were too forthcoming and interrupted too often with their own family stories, etc.). In adding this, intentionally or not, I felt that Jonathan was once again illustrating his disconnection from mainstream Judaism. When talking about his experiences in Jewish schools, there was a sense of impatience in his voice, highlighting his distaste towards 'collective' commemoration (Ofer, 2009), which he clearly wanted to distance himself from (echoing the findings of Ayalon et al., 2007, again). This disinclination towards collective commemoration extended to Jonathan's apparent dislike of Holocaust Memorial Day events in the UK. He was unhappy about the way the Holocaust was commemorated here and felt that Holocaust Memorial Day should be renamed less specifically as a 'Genocide Memorial Day' (particularly since the Jewish people already had the day of Yom Ha'Shoah to remember the Holocaust). He said he had rarely attended the national Holocaust Memorial Day events (except on the occasion when he had been invited by the

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Queen) as he felt that often his invitation was little more than a tokenistic gesture. In his opinion the event had become "*…very political*" and Jonathan felt that at times he had been invited 'to perform' – as if he was there for no reason other than that he had a testimony to give. Despite having worked for most of his life for a large, multinational company in various places around the world, Jonathan was clearly still suspicious of communal activities when it came to commemorating those parts of his life prior to arriving in England in November 1945. In all that he had said, my overarching impression was of Jonathan as a man who had dedicated a large part of his later life to simply telling his story, without the need (or desire) for 'approval' from any organisations or institutions.

Jonathan remained a humble man with an enduring salvific view of the world (Neusner, 1973). Disinterested in fame or celebrity, I felt that he saw his work as an act of healing – both of his disconnected past and his present. Weinstein (2003) posited that "…older persons recall and review their past in order to find meaning in their lives… which determines whether they achieve the task of ego integrity or succumb to despair" (p29). In reflecting on my encounter with Jonathan, I considered how this might apply to him and his work. Jonathan arrived in England within days of his 14th birthday with only his brother at his side (his sister had arrived several months earlier). Since liberation, they had endured seven months of stateless displacement across Germany and Holland. Further, he was told upon starting school in England, that he was not to discuss his wartime experiences with other children. He loved school and threw himself into his schoolwork. Krell (1993) found that a majority of child survivors of the Holocaust went on to live fairly normal adult lives and Jonathan similarly chose a good career as an engineer. He moved around, first to live with cousins, then with family friends until he finished his studies at university. His job took him around the world, living in Holland and Venezuela for some time. He never married. Consequently, my impression of him was of someone always on the move – someone who had remained (to some extent) homeless and stateless throughout much of his life and mainly through choice. His brother described in his book how beginning his work in Holocaust Education had given him "…a new purpose in life" and I couldn't help but think that it had been the same for Jonathan in his retirement. Perhaps the 'positive' perspective from which he presented his testimony was his way of coping with the trauma he had experienced during the Holocaust and post-traumatically (Ayalon et al., 2007). Perhaps it gave him a sense of purpose that enabled the rest of his life to find a sense of contextualised purpose. His testimony was a complex one which

seemed almost ordinary in its extraordinariness and this was his great contradiction. Somehow, when I left him that day I reflected that there might have been an evident tone of hollowness in his frequent, quiet assertion that "*I've got nothing to grumble about really… I'm only a refugee*".

Smith (2002) noted that, at the end of the war, "The Allies demonstrated their resolve to deal with this past by instigating war crimes trials for accused members of the Nazi hierarchy" (p111-112). However, I would suggest that there was no such opportunity to 'resolve this past' available to most of the Holocaust survivors in the immediate post-war years. "The world was not ready to listen to their stories" and consequently a "...veneer of silence" (Berger, 2011, p6) forcibly shrouded their story for several decades. For Jonathan, this meant assimilation as a British student and the beginning of his career. It was not until he neared retirement that he started to give his testimony and to give words to his memories. This is not without its self-evident complexities and I will explore this further in the next chapter.

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Chapter 5: Conclusions.

5.1 Introduction to Chapter 5.

This chapter presents a summary of the findings of the study, together with a consideration of the implications for future practice. The chapter is presented in two parts:

- The first part (section 5.4) presents **conclusions** drawn from the findings of the study, based on the empirical data collected and the body of literature that exists in the field of Holocaust Education.

- The second part (section 5.5) considers the implications of the study's findings and presents a new theoretical conceptualisation of the Holocaust in light of these, in an effort towards a better understanding of how the subject can most effectively be taught to students.

5.2 Reflexivity – bringing it all together.

Luttrell (2010) explained the intention of reflexive writing was "…to capture your thinking process while you are engaged in it" (p469). Writing this thesis had been a long journey, throughout which my thinking process had been constantly informed (and challenged) by the emerging data, my analysis and interpretation of it and my wider professional experiences. Along the way I had to be open to what the data revealed, whilst acknowledging my own professional and philosophical positioning within it. In this way, I needed to be "…aware of being aware, [and] of performing a variety of roles" (Findlay & Gough, 2003, p1) within the study. Only by accepting such a postmodern sensibility would I be able to situate myself within the research and celebrate my role as a researching professional. I embarked on this Professional Doctorate (rather than a traditional PhD) specifically because I wanted to undertake research that could *inform* practice. As such, it would be naïve of me not to acknowledge that equally, my practice had informed the research.

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Never was this process more starkly apparent to me than as I approached this final chapter. Arriving at this point in the study brought me to a 'junction' of sorts, both in my research and in my thinking. For my research, it meant bringing together the many different threads of evidence I had explored in the study to finalise conclusions about them. For my thinking, it meant needing to address my own professional opinions (some of which had altered significantly during the study), to contextualise any conclusions. What was of paramount importance throughout, however, was that I continued to do my best to let the data tell its own story, in all its splendid complexity (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

5.3 The significance of the study in 2012.

Whether the Holocaust should still be taught in schools and what its purpose should be, remains as relevant today as it did in 1989 when the National Curriculum was being conceived. The National Curriculum is currently under review once again and the debate over the Holocaust's location within it continues (see, for example, the recent comments of Lord Baker of Dorking, the former Secretary of State for Education, Telegraph Media Group, 2012). There is also growing evidence in contemporary society of what Rutland (2010) termed "…new racism" or "…cultural racism" (p78), based on the perceptions of the majority of the threat to social cohesion posed by particular minority ethnic groups. A recent example of this has been evident in a complaint that was made to (but not upheld by) the Advertising Standards Authority, regarding the portrayal of Gypsy / Traveller groups in the media (reported in Guardian News and Media Ltd., 2012, for example). It could be argued that this is a modern example of how language (and new media) is being used by a majority (who have social power) to marginalise and invalidate a particular (powerless) minority group within society (Rutland, 2010). Given this, I would argue that the need to teach young people about where racism and prejudice can lead, might be as relevant today as it has ever been.

From the outset, the aim of this study has been to make a new contribution to the field of Holocaust Education in the UK. Its particular strength lies in its focus on students' views (an area largely ignored by prior research). By contextualising the views of the students within the wider setting of the institution (the school) and the other significant actors engaged with their Holocaust Education (their teachers and the Holocaust survivor), the

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study presents Holocaust Education as a process, rather than just an outcome. It focuses on the experiences of the learners, rather than just the intentions of the educators. It is my contention that it is only by understanding this process more fully from the learner's point of view that we can continue to improve practice in Holocaust Education. Never has this been more critical than now, as the Holocaust sits on the threshold of living memory.

5.4 Conclusions.

5.4.1 Summary of main the findings of the study.

The findings of this study have already been outlined in detail above (see chapter 4). It is not my intention to dwell on the particulars of the data again, but rather to present the key findings to contextualise the conclusions of this study.

In reviewing the data from this study, the key findings were as follows:

- The students had received a relatively extensive and well-intentioned programme of Holocaust Education at this school.

- Their academic knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust was sound, but lacked depth and disclosed inconsistencies.

- The experience had been an emotionally distressing and complex one for them. They had not had time to discuss their emotions or their emotional learning in the classroom and this remained an area many of them struggled to come to terms with going forward.

- Meeting the Holocaust survivor and hearing his testimony had been a central part of their Holocaust Education, academically and (particularly) emotionally.

- Some students had experienced issues of trust and provenance, leaving some unsure as to which sources of Holocaust knowledge were legitimate.

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- Some students saw the experience as being a 'gateway' event, demarking their move from childhood into adulthood.

- There was evidence of students giving 'learned' or 'expected' responses regarding the Holocaust, in an apparent attempt to distance themselves from the event and to adhere to societal norms.

- They had begun to make connections between the Holocaust and other events from history and the contemporary world, but these connections were diverse and lacked depth of understanding or maturity of perspective.

5.4.2 Considerations of current practice, in light of the main findings.

Essentially, my anxiety for the future of Holocaust Education is rooted in the complexity and the richness of the data collected in this study. Students' positioning within the learning they had received about the Holocaust has been evidently diverse. While it is possible to view some of the key findings (above) as major failures of Holocaust Education (specifically in this school), it is also possible to perceive them as highlighting the complexity of the event. I am not arguing that inadequacies in historical knowledge are acceptable, but rather that if the Holocaust is to be even partially understood, students' encounters with it must necessarily be diverse. As actors within a socially constructed space, they must necessarily act *upon* it as well as *within* it and this will create different 'truths' for different students. Their experiences will necessarily be different.

Upon my return to school in a few weeks' time, I will continue to teach my Year 7 classes about life in Medieval England. I know that there is a chapter entitled 'Life in a Medieval Village' in our textbook and that it tells the story and everyday experiences of a fictional villager named Alric. We will look into illustrations of his fictional home, meet his fictional wife and children and join him at his fictional place of work and socialise with him in his fictional village. We accept that it is enough to learn about fabricated, composite characters such as Alric when the history is so far removed from us. We have little interest in 'connecting' with a past so distant. But, as this study has shown, this is not our relationship with the Holocaust. The Holocaust is still within living memory and, of course,

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we have far superior sources of evidence available to us to study from the last century than we have from the middle ages. However, as the Holocaust slips out of living memory, we have to consider "…not *whether* the Holocaust is remembered, but what we choose to remember from the past – what kinds of stories do we tell about the Holocaust" (Salmons, 2010, p58). Perhaps, more significantly for educators, we also have to consider *how* we are going to teach these stories.

For an author such as Salmons (who established the Holocaust Education programme at the Imperial War Museum in London and who is currently Head of Curriculum and Development at the Holocaust Education Development Programme at the Institute of Education, London University) this predicament is essentially a "…struggle for memory" (p61). Salmons' assertions are that the Holocaust should (and must) be taught primarily as historical *fact* and he questions whether emotional learning can "…constitute *learning about the Holocaust* at all" (p57). Bialystok (1996) agreed that any Holocaust curriculum that focused on feelings rather than knowledge was inherently flawed and 'weak'. Conversely, Lindquist (2011) viewed teaching the Holocaust in terms of morality – both in the 'moral imperative' to teach it and in the moral questions it forces us to address. I am not sure that I, or the evidence presented in this study, are advocating either approach – or that we necessarily should have to choose between them. It seems to me, as a teacher of History and Religious Studies, that any examination of the Holocaust that does not address the emotional learning of our students will be integrally futile. If we are to adhere to the contemporary pedagogical preference to individualise the Holocaust, we are asking students to accept these *real* people – who are strangers – into their hearts. We are asking them to care about them and to accept them as being 'like' rather than 'other'. We are asking them to be angry at their loss and to rail against repetition. However, equally I do not believe that it is enough for students to simply memorialise these people in terms of some saccharine, sentimentalised expression of their grief at their loss. They need to understand the event as a point of historical fact and they need to have a sound knowledge and understanding of the key developments of the event. I believe that it is only by acknowledging and accepting the place of *both* academic ('surface level') learning and emotional ('affective') learning in Holocaust Education that students can truly learn about the Holocaust *affectively* and *effectively*. If they achieve this, I believe that students' will be able to begin to assimilate this learning into their developing worldview (their 'connective' learning) and move forwards as 'Holocaust-literate' young people.

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Given these assertions and the empirical data presented in this study, I therefore suggest that teachers need to consider three aspects of their students' learning, presented in the following model:
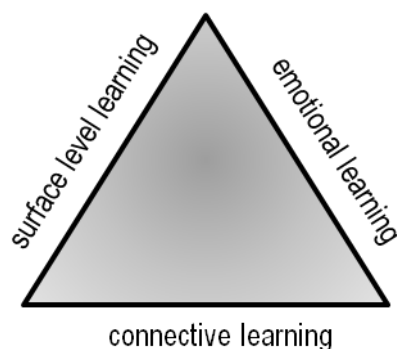
Figure 3: A model of students' learning about the Holocaust.

I believe that Holocaust Education is at its most effective when teachers acknowledge that the acquisition of historical facts alone is not enough. The evidence presented in this study has clearly shown that learning about the Holocaust is an emotional experience. It has also shown that students need support to recognise this process and to help them assimilate this emotional learning into their developing worldview. By acknowledging the interrelationships of the three learning aspects of this model, teachers can help students to learn more effectively in each of the three areas. They can help students in the *process* of their learning, to achieve a better-informed *product* of their learning.

5.4.3 Strengths and limitations of the study.

I set out and justified my epistemological and ontological standpoints and my consequent claims to validity in section 3.4.1. I believe that I have remained true to these principles throughout this study. I have endeavoured not to seek a certainty, but to explore the constructed realities of others. I have made no attempts to generalise, but rather to gain critical insight into the particularities of each participant. My claim to research validity lies in the assertion that the truths I have explored were truths in and of themselves – they were the reality as the participants told them. Steps were taken to ensure that these truths could be given as freely as possible and I have no reason to suspect that any evidence

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was given under duress or undue influence. I have acknowledged my own position within the research (both as a researcher and as a professional engaged in this field of education) and have celebrated this as part of the construction of the study. In concluding this study, I am content that it represents the 'lived experience' of the participants (Schwandt, 1994), interpreted through my eyes and experience (Crotty, 1998). In chapter 3, I quoted Denscombe's (2002) observation that "To caricature things a little, interpretivists' explanations are likely to be messy rather than nice and neat. They might be open-ended rather than complete." (p21-2). This is precisely the nature of the 'mess' I have explored in this study and in many ways it asks more questions than it answers. Recognising this, the study is not an end, but rather an exposition in one place and time, with all of the strengths and weaknesses that entails.

5.4.4 Recommendations for future research.

As stated above, the findings of this study pose many questions (and there is a dearth of large-scale research in this field in the UK in general). I think it would be counterproductive to explore these questions at length, but rather to consider what I believe are the *key* areas for future research, based on the evidence presented here:

- Surface level learning: Research into the key components necessary in a Scheme of Work to ensure that students have a basic understanding of the history of the Holocaust. This might include further investigation of the contributions different academic departments in schools could make to work together, to provide a comprehensive, multi-faceted Holocaust Education for students. It might also include research into the key elements required to produce 'Holocaust literate' students (for example, key chronology, events, characters, etc).

- Affective learning: Research into the area of students' emotional engagement with the challenging subject matter of the Holocaust, particularly their encounters with characters in textbooks or through other media (such as photographs, films, or documentaries). This might particularly include further investigation of their interactions with survivors, the connections they make with them and how they

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interpret their individual testimonies (this issue is addressed further in section 5.5.6, below).

- Connected learning: Research into how students assimilate their learning about the Holocaust with their developing worldview. Particularly, further research might focus on how they conceptualise *past* experiences with *contemporary* contexts. Research might also focus on the facility for Citizenship to enhance and support Holocaust Education.

This is not an exhaustive list. It represents what I think the data in this study has highlighted to be particular concerns of Holocaust learning. Teachers and researchers need to explore these areas further, if they are to help students learn more effectively about the Holocaust.

5.4.5 Conclusions – an end... or just another beginning?

These findings are as interesting as they are complex and they pose as many questions as they answer. It would be easy to draw the study to a close at this point and leave these unanswered questions for future researchers. However, as a professional educator I feel very strongly that to do so would be to admit defeat in the face of complexity. Had this study been drawn to a conclusion about a year ago, my judgment might have been similarly pragmatic – that the complexities of Holocaust Education were such that endeavouring to teach it would always, ultimately, be futile and therefore it could be entirely legitimate not to do so. Whilst it might seem shocking (and inconsistent) for me to say such a thing, my concern was that there were evidently so many ways to 'do it wrong' that all a teacher could hope to do was to do it as 'less badly' as possible. Consequently, I could understand (and sympathise with) teachers who chose not to. However, this left me in an incongruous position – a professional who (by virtue of submitting a doctoral thesis in Holocaust Education) was purporting to be an 'expert' in the field, but who was promoting not doing it!? This was clearly an untenable (but nonetheless reflection-provoking) situation to find myself in.

Professionally, I am pleased to say that this turned out to be merely a 'stage' of my thinking (albeit a crucial one) and one from which I have moved on. I am still convinced

that Holocaust Education is burdened with complexity, but I no longer see this as being a
negative attribute. The Holocaust was a complicated event and it therefore follows that
trying to explain or understand it necessarily will be – and should be – complicated as
well. I realise that this will be daunting for many teachers and professionals, but I would
argue that complexity is part of the process of education. Children are not homogenous
and the Holocaust is a complex and complicated topic. The skilled teacher will see this
not as a discrepancy but as an opportunity to create connections and build understanding.
Where and how this 'understanding' will happen is also complex, however. What I will
offer next is a new theoretical model of Holocaust Education which I feel both embodies
and explains the complexity of the topic, giving teachers a clearer understanding of how
to meet the needs of their students and the needs of this multi-faceted topic.

5.5 Implications.

5.5.1 Holocaust Education – towards a new theoretical conceptualisation.

What follows is a proposal and justification of a new conceptualisation of Holocaust
Education in the UK, which places it within a new theoretical framework. This
conceptualisation is rooted in the empirical data collected in this study, the body of
research that has gone before and the contemporary context.

5.5.2 Defining the Holocaust as a 'space'.

Figure 4: The Homomonument, Amsterdam.

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I took the above picture of the *Homomonument* in Amsterdam, whilst visiting the Netherlands for a few days during the writing of this chapter. Designed by Karin Daan, the monument is a memorial to the thousands of Dutch homosexuals who were persecuted and deported to Nazi concentration camps during the Second World War. This portion of the monument (which is part of three triangles in total) is a large, raised plinth, made of pink granite. The memorial symbolises the pink triangles male homosexual prisoners were forced to wear in the Nazi concentration camps. I had visited this monument several times before, but it was only upon this most recent visit that I reflected on the significance of the monument as an illustration of Holocaust memorialisation more generally. This monument is not overtly 'revered' in the tradition sense – people do not come to stand at it to reflect, nor do they lay flowers here (that is reserved for the third triangle in the group, which leads into the nearby canal). Rather, this is a *functional* piece of the local landscape – people come here to sit, to meet, to have lunch or to take in the view. Its three aspects offer the visitor different perspectives on the surrounding city (with views towards the Westerkerk church and the Anne Frank House, the canal or the shopping centre). As I looked at the monument this time, I began to reflect on the duality of its presence in the space it occupies; it is at once both a significant and invisible piece of architecture. This caused me to consider the presence of the Holocaust in collective memory in similar terms. My proposal – explained and justified below – is that the Holocaust should be viewed similarly to this monument – as a functional 'space' within the landscape of history and of our collective memory.

In equating the Holocaust with a physical landscape, I am employing the concept of 'space' in the sense of a social construct (Gregory & Urry, 1985), in keeping with the constructivist approach underpinning this study. Such a 'space' is one that should be viewed in socio-cultural terms (Cresswell, 1996) where it impacts on the identity of the players who inhabit it (Tajbakhsh, 2001) and is "…both shape[d], and is shaped by, narratives and discourses" around it and within it (Morrissey & Gaffikin, 2006, p874). I believe that this has been exactly the kind of 'space' that has been evident in the constructed realities expressed by the students in this study. Their understanding of the topic, their engagements with it and their developing worldviews have been evidently shaped by the event itself, whilst they have also shaped the event in their own conceptualisations of it. This was a process noted by Smith and Barker (2000) who asserted that children were "…social actors who are active agents in the constitution of

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the place" (p315-6) and that the 'place' itself was "…fluid, temporary and negotiable, as different groups of children… imbue places with different meanings and use [the] space in different ways" (p330). I am suggesting (based on the evidence presented in this study) that educators need to view the Holocaust not simply as a 'space' that students inhabit for a time, but as a 'space' they dwell in ad infinitum and which they will, in turn, shape as they assume the mantle of commemoration going forwards into the future. It is also a 'space' that will be inhabited by different students in different ways and this is something it will fall to educators to guide and to bound.

Conceptualising the Holocaust as a 'space' is not without its difficulties, however. Extensive literature exists about the conceptualisation of 'space' in the academic discipline of Geography (see, for example, Morgan, 2008, Olwig, 2002), but not of Holocaust Education. Some exists concerning the geography of the Holocaust (see, for example, Beorn et al., 2009, Cole, 2003 & 2011, Gilbert, 2002) and the need to investigate the physical 'space' the Holocaust inhabited (Lambert, 2004), but only limited literature extends the metaphor of 'space' beyond the physical demarcation of land. Examples include Aitken's (2001) exploration of the 'geographies of young people', or Bodemann's (2005) examination of the 'geography of time'. It seems entirely plausible, therefore, to extend the metaphor of 'space' to encompass the geography within which knowledge and commemoration of the Holocaust can be placed. Lawson (2003) alluded to this in describing the Holocaust Exhibition at the Imperial War Museum as being part of "...London's memorial landscape" (p173). Further, he talked about "...the deathscapes of Auschwitz and Treblinka" (2007, p404). It is my intention to take this metaphor further, as a means of describing our very conceptualisation of the Holocaust. Employing such language leads the researcher into an area lacking in prior research or understanding, however. What this study has provided to enable me to do this, I assert, is an in-depth exploration of the geography of students' knowledge, understanding and conceptualisations of the Holocaust as both a historical and relevant lived experience. The data has shown how the students interacted with the Holocaust, how they were shaped by it and how they reactively shaped it in the formulation of their views and opinions about it. The anti-foundationalist ontology rooting this study has allowed a diverse topography to emerge, which has both defined and bounded the 'space' I am proposing.

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5.5.3 The Holocaust as a 'contested space'.

Having presented the Holocaust as a socio-cultural 'space' of history, it becomes necessary to clarify the particular characteristics of this 'space'. I am going to suggest that the Holocaust is not merely a 'space', but a 'contested space' of history and of memory. In so doing, I am borrowing once more from the academic discipline of Geography. The concept of 'contested space' has been widely explored in the field of Human Geography (see, for example, Desai & Sanyal, 2012, Morrissey & Gaffikin, 2006) and in the geography of historical sites and memorialisation (see, for example, Purbrick et al., 2007, Walkowitz & Knauer, 2009). A 'contested space' is one where different actors within the space disagree over its definition (such as disputes over sovereignty within the city of Jerusalem). The concept of 'contested space' has already been applied in various arenas of sociology as well, such as feminist theory (Enke, 2007), childhood (Aitken, 2001) and childcare (Smith & Barker, 2000). It is my contention that this application can be extended to the 'space' I have suggested that the Holocaust inhabits and that, consequently, Holocaust Education occurs within just such a 'contested space'. Indeed, it is my belief that the Holocaust is rife with contestation on both a macro level (such as attempts at the redefinition of national victimhood (Stone, 2010)) and a micro level (such as the diversity of individual testimony that exists). I am suggesting that when we look at the nature of contestation and conflict within the 'contested space' of the Holocaust what we see is not merely *one* 'contested space', but an assemblage of 'contested spaces'. For example, there is within the Holocaust a 'contested space' of memory and memorialisation (definitions of the Holocaust, representations of it, memorials, etc.). There is also a 'contested space' of curriculum (what is to be taught? How is it to be taught and by whom? What and who constitute 'expert' knowledge? etc.). These are just two of many 'contested spaces' within the wider 'space' of the Holocaust. Others might include the 'contested spaces' of culpability, of victimhood, of the learner, of emotion, etc. The point is that there is no *single* version of the Holocaust – no *universal narrative* exists. Commonalities might exist (such as those between persecuted individuals), but there is no universalisation. As such I am suggesting that the Holocaust 'space' is, by its own definition, a deeply ingrained, complex 'contested space'.

Morrissey and Gaffikin (2006) defined two types of 'contested space' in Geography – those based on 'pluralism' (power struggles between rival groups) and those based on

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'sovereignty' (ethno-nationalist struggles around authority and legitimacy). I would argue that the Holocaust is contested in both respects. It is a 'pluralist' space insofar as different ethnic groups and nations inhabit it, but it is also a 'sovereign' space insofar as different groups and nations 'claim' it. Morrissey and Gaffikin noted that when different groups inhabited such spaces, they took advantage of them and legitimised themselves through manipulating the space. Such a definition could well be levelled at, for example, the state of Israel, or at certain European states' contemporary attempts to redefine their wartime collaboration as victimisation. Morrissey and Gaffikin referred to this as a process that produced "…an ethnoscape" in which there was a "…territorialization of memory" (p875). I would argue that this, too, is evident in the 'space' of the Holocaust – the rise of the 'Holocaust Industry' (Finkelstein, 2003) and the development of the 'myth of the Holocaust' (Cole, 2000) are evidence of just such a "…teritorialization of memory". To expose and negate this process, Morrissey and Gaffikin suggested a model of "…argumentative planning" in which "…dialogic spaces" (p877) were created to celebrate diversity and make everyone's interests transparent and overt, rather than hidden and invested. Innes and Booher (1999) recognised the potential of such a method in generating 'emancipatory knowledge' which had the power to highlight (sometimes unexpected) commonalities, between formerly divergent groups. Such 'emancipatory knowledge' would, I believe, empower students to understand the contested nature of the Holocaust 'space' more completely. When presented with an ethnoscape in which memory is territorialised and agendas are hidden, students will either become blindly accepting of the 'truths' they are presented with, or will ultimately come to mistrust the givers of any information that is later exposed as having been circumscribed (as has been evident in this study).

Advocacy of such an approach is not without its flaws, however. School students are *young* people and teachers have a duty of care not to present them with information beyond their comprehension. It is self-evident that it takes a skilled teacher to do this effectively; to create bounded "…dialogic spaces" in which students can explore the commonalities whilst recognising and appreciating the diversity of narratives within the 'contested space'. Of course, it would be far easier for teachers to ignore the contested nature of the 'space' and simply teach a sanitised, universalised history of the Holocaust. But this would be to ignore both the 'plurality' of the narrative history and the 'sovereignty'

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of the students to claim the knowledge as their own, forcibly introducing a further level of contestation into this already disputed space.

5.5.4 The nature of conflict within a 'contested space'.

For a teacher to do this – to create a 'dialogic space' within a 'contested space' – he or she needs to be confident, skilled and critical. Part of this criticality involves a necessary understanding of the nature of the conflicts that exist within the 'contested space'. Indeed, I believe that it is only through an exploration and understanding of the nature of these conflicts that a teacher can adequately bound the 'dialogic space' they lead their students in to. Although Morrissey and Gaffikin's (2006) theorising about the nature of 'contested space' was strictly concerned with the discipline of Geography (specifically, urban planning), I submit that their model of the eight characteristics of conflict within a 'contested space' is equally applicable to the 'contested space' of the Holocaust. What follows is my conceptualisation of how these characteristics that they anticipated might manifest in the 'contested space' of the Holocaust. I have also suggested some examples of each characteristic, to show how they might affect learning in the classroom:

Characteristic of a 'contested space':	How it might manifest in the 'contested space' of the Holocaust:
The conflict is *intensified* within the space.	The Holocaust concerns power, subjugation and mass murder. It involves issues such as identity, guilt and revenge. As such, it is a highly intensified and emotional 'contested space'. *Example(s): How might a Jewish student feel? What about a German-heritage student?*
The conflict is *extensive*.	The Holocaust permeates societal consciousness. The Holocaust is not confined to the events of the Second World War. It is within living memory. It is an event that is still located in contemporary culture (as evidenced by the Nazi-comparison meme known as *Godwin's Law*). *Example(s): How might a 'third-generation survivor' student react to inappropriate responses from their peers to atrocity images in class?*

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The conflict is *persistent*.	Time does not make the contestation lessen (indeed, it might heighten the disparity between invested groups). Issues of contestation might be nationally ingrained. As it slips beyond living memory, the Holocaust remains a paradigm-defining atrocity. *Example(s): How might different students perceive the contemporary Israeli-Palestinian conflict and how might it affect their approach to learning about the Holocaust?*
The conflict breeds *intimate enemies*.	The 'enemy' groups know each other only too well, either through shared experience (eg. survivors) or through experiences of opposition (eg. as persecutor and victim). *Example(s): How might Jewish students view Muslim students?*
The conflict generates *mutual victimhood*.	'Victimhood' is poorly defined within the context of unimaginable atrocity. Contestation might arise between 'victim-victims' (the persecuted) and 'perpetrator-victims' (persecutors who subsequently redefine themselves of victims of power relationships). *Example(s): How might a Jewish student react to issues surrounding the persecution of other groups? How might an Italian student react to the event?*
The conflict *normalises revenge*.	Violence is used as justification for retaliation / revenge, or to prevent future aggression. *Example(s): How might different students view the contemporary Israeli-Palestinian conflict? How might they view issues of capital punishment?*
The conflict legitimises *spoilers*.	The conflict legitimises people who have a vested interest in keeping it alive (for reasons of power). *Example(s): How might different nations teach about the Holocaust to perpetuate their own political agendas?*
The conflict is *fluid*.	The conflict's intensity can change over time. For example, the contestation might be heightened at times of political conflict, racial tension, economic pressure, etc. *Example(s): How might students view different minority groups during times of economic hardship? How might racism become 'normalised' in different contexts?*

Adapted from Morrissey and Gaffikin (2006, p876)

Table 2: Morrissey and Gaffikin's (2006) model of the eight types of conflict within 'contested spaces'.

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Obviously, the prevalence and particularities of these different characteristics (or examples) will depend on the socio-cultural location of individual classrooms. However, it is worth teachers considering the preconditions that might give rise to these types of conflict. Ignoring these complexities – adhering to what we might term a 'textbook' version of the Holocaust – would be to preference the "…comfortable explanations" Salmons (2001, p35) warned against and to lend them legitimacy by dint of their articulation in a classroom. It would also be to ignore the culturally referenced nature of any such 'textbook' versions. Whether it is manifest in an actual book, or as an accepted notion in society, such definitions are inherently problematic and invested. In an increasingly globalised world, such 'comfortable explanations' are becoming more difficult to marshal or maintain, however. Globalisation does not necessarily free us from such deceptions though. Indeed, rather than liberating complexity, the globalisation of knowledge may well produce fresh duplicities into this 'contested space'.

5.5.5 The Holocaust as a 'contested space' in a globalised world.

The nature of globalisation is complex (Brown, 2008) and its application to the sphere of education is rapidly emerging (see, for example, Lam, 2006, Kelly, 2009). As I have already stated, it is my considered opinion (based on the evidence in this study) that teachers should not try (intentionally or otherwise) to synthesise or maintain a pretence of sanitised universalisation when presenting the Holocaust to students. This raises important issues in light of the globalisation of knowledge and of contemporary education, however. Macgilchrist and Christophe (2011) considered how such theories of globalisation related specifically to recent shifts in Holocaust Education (and how these teaching practices in turn produced and reproduced concepts of globalisation). Their work focused on the graphic novel *The Search* (Heuvel et al., 2007), developed by the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam (in consultation with various international content experts). The story tells the fictitious tale of a Jewish family (the Hechts), from the point of view of the daughter, Esther. The authors told the story in graphic novel format in an attempt to make the text more 'accessible' to teenage readers. Macgilchrist and Christophe used a set of "…'sensitizing concepts'" (p155) to illustrate how the book was "…a telling example of how a specific issue, the politics of collective memory… is increasingly shaped by the dynamics of global debates and thus contributes to the (re-)production of globalization"

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(p151). Their contention was that the book represented a globalisation – a *universalisation* – of the Holocaust narrative. By focusing on how the book depicted (or, more specifically, avoided) atrocity images, they argued that the authors' intention was not to shock (as an explicit image might do), but to "…'perturb' or 'disconcert' the students, so that they begin to ask questions and consider indeterminacies and contradictions" (p152-3). They saw this as representing a "…marked shift" (p153) away from the traditional received wisdom that children needed certainties in the world (not least about the facts of the Holocaust). The authors of *The Search* justified this narrative choice as being based on what they perceived as a move away from atrocity-focused representations, towards more individualised, person-centred narratives (an approach they felt had been advocated by such organisations as the ITF and the USHMM over the past 30 years). They also felt a need to adhere to the pedagogical principle of *Überwältigungsverbot* – a standard enshrined in Germany as part of the Beutelsbach Consensus on the teaching of political issues, which asserts that learners should not be overwhelmed in any effort to direct their reasoning. Macgilchrist and Christophe argued that the creation of resources such as *The Search* were the consequence of a move away from a pedagogy of shocking students, that had resulted in the creation of a "…fissure" (p155) in the discourse. An emphasis on individual, biographical narratives (such as *The Search*) had necessarily filled that fissure, creating what they saw as "…a new hegemonic project" (p155). To them, this represented the creation (and implicit advocacy) of a new discourse, legitimised by the authority of organisations such as the Anne Frank House. Macgilchrist and Christophe saw *The Search* as the embodiment (and result) of a new pedagogic ideology in Holocaust Education – a move away from the certainties of 'shock', towards the ambiguities of dilemmas, a move away from factual learning, towards emotional engagement and a move away from the particular, towards the universal.

Whilst I would agree with the authors of *The Search* that there has undoubtedly been a shift in focus in pedagogy in recent years, their embodiment of this shift concerns me and I find myself aligned with Macgilchrist and Christophe's criticism of their work. The students in this study found the individualisation of the event (meeting Jonathan) deeply affecting, but were somewhat confused by the particularity of his narrative. But I believe that this particularly should be celebrated, not circumvented for the sake of convenience. For an organisation such as the Anne Frank House to promote a fictitious, compound narrative such as this book does not necessarily solve the problem of particularity within

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the 'contested space'. Rather, I would argue, it risks universalising the event at the expense of the particular.

A similar criticism has been levelled at the Holocaust Exhibition at the Imperial War Museum in London. In his review of the exhibition, Lawson (2003) reported being "...deeply troubled" (p174) by its location within this particular museum. By placing it in the national military museum, he argued that the Holocaust became both part of the "...official national memory" (p175) and a justification for Britain's involvement in the war. Examining the exhibition more closely, however, Lawson revealed a very contrived narrative. In his opinion, the exhibition presented a monocausal, Auschwitz-centric, over-simplistic narrative. Motivations underlying the actions of the perpetrators were not explored, presenting these actors instead as caricatured villains, driven by their innate anti-Semitism. Individual testimonies were only given in support of 'harder' evidence "...as if they were not quite trusted" to be objective on their own (p174). The exhibition did not engage the visitor with complexity, nor did it present analyses of events or actions. Overall, Lawson found that the 'story' presented was "...a partial narrative, which reflects a culturally constructed Holocaust rather than an object reality" (p182). It could be argued, therefore, that this exhibition presented the viewer with the very "...comfortable explanations" Salmons (2001, p35) warned against. However, Salmons (whose views about the necessity of teaching historical fact have already been outlined above, in section 5.4.2) was involved in both designing and delivering the education programme at the Imperial War Museum exhibition and is credited as an 'international content expert' in *The Search* (Heuvel et al., 2007). Since Lawson pointed out that "...history is not a singular discourse. There are many different approaches to the past" (p175), I would argue that these two representations of the Holocaust narrative are emblematic of the very "...struggle for memory" (2010, p61) that Salmons warned against. Neither of them represents the historical 'truth' Salmons so avidly promotes.

Just as 'the girl in the red coat' in *Schindler's List* (Keneally & Zaillian, 1993) attempted to represent the 'whole' from within the disparate, so too does *The Search.* Similarly, The Holocaust Exhibition at the Imperial War Museum appears to actively avoid complexity for the sake of the explainable. The question for educators is whether these resources reduce the complexity of the Holocaust to a narrative younger learners can better

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understand, or whether they seduce them into unknowing complicity in a universalised *un-truth*.

5.5.6 The 'contested space' of Holocaust survivor testimony.

If we are to reject universalisation (as I have), we have no choice but to return to the particular – the testimonies of those who experienced the Holocaust. Such a testimony formed a central part of the programme of Holocaust Education at the school of this study, but raised a wealth of issues concerning content, provenance and the academic and emotional impact such testimony has upon young learners. I am going to suggest that testimony is itself a 'contested space' within the wider 'space' of the Holocaust. This should both concern educators now (while survivors are available to visit schools), but also as the Holocaust moves beyond living memory and their testimony becomes confined by its recording.

Wieviorka (2006) defined these times as the 'Era of the Witness'. Up until the relatively recent past, however, the category of Holocaust 'survivor' had not been socially constructed (Berger, 2011), mainly because its potential membership had remained (forcibly) silent since the war (see section 1.2.2, above). Whilst Smith (2002) has welcomed the normality of their presence in our consciousness today, he recognised that "…somehow we still struggle to understand exactly what they went through and what it should mean to us" (p112). Much work has been done to try to rectify this, drawing from a range of different academic disciplines. Researchers in fields as diverse as poetics (Rapport & Hartill, 2010) or psychoanalysis (Alford & Fred, 2008, Trezise, 2008) have tried to analyse and understand the nature of Holocaust survivor testimony, to support our historical understanding of the text and the event. A fundamental problem, however, is that we (who did not experience it) are not guardians of this knowledge – it is locked in a dimension away from us (Yaeger, 2006) and consequently we read Holocaust testimony differently to other texts (Eaglestone, 2003), which perpetuates their complexity. Whilst Roseman (1999) spoke of an "…'archetypal' Holocaust survivor" (p4), he recognised that such a person was hard to define, let alone find. I would go so far as to suggest that such a person simply does not exist and that their absence adds a further layer of complexity and contestation to the already contested 'space' of the Holocaust.

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As historians (or simply as members of a future generation), we *need* the testimony of those who have gone before – it is necessary to be able to tell our history. In the case of the Holocaust, there is a wealth of such evidence, ranging from diaries to letters, poems, artwork, documentation, etc. These testimonies contain "…extraordinary riches" (Wieviorka, 2006, p396), but for many years they remained hidden. Testimony from the time of the Holocaust tends to come from those who perished (such as letters buried in the camps, or thrown from the transports). Later testimony comes from those who survived, but these people became a largely disparate group after the war. Only after the Eichmann trial in 1961 did their collective trauma find voice and public recognition. This pivotal moment was significant not only for the voicing of survivor testimony per se, but because of the socio-cultural mantle it consequently assumed. Wieviorka (2006) observed that "For the first time, the Holocaust was linked to the themes of pedagogy and transmission" (p389). It also marked the "…advent of the witness" (p389), a status which brought with it the burden (and subsequent moral imperative) for these witnesses to be the 'bearers of history'. This was a mantle that the survivor population assumed (because society conveyed it upon them), whether they wished for it or not.

Under the weight of such expectation, however, Holocaust survivor testimony has assumed an almost transcendent quality, through time and across cultures. This raises a problem, however, when historians try to do their work in this field. Where any other text would be subject to extensive scrutiny and analysis, exegesis of Holocaust testimony seems inappropriate – as if it would be in some way disrespectful to question what many view as a 'sacred' source. It is as if we are wary of harming further those who have already suffered so much (Roseman, 1999). This leaves the historian almost in a state of 'paralysis' in the face of the suffering of the witness (Wieviorka, 2006). There is also concern that such questioning might encourage revisionism by those whose motives might be less respectful than others. Nonetheless, it seems counter-intuitive for a historian to blindly accept testimony without question. At the very least a creditable historian might wish to perform *some* type of internal or external validity check, if only to help them to understand the testimony more fully. Central to most legitimacy contention concerns is the nature of memories recalled when the events happened so long ago (Kraft, 2006). Primo Levy (whose cathartic writings and reflections have come to define survivor literature) has acknowledged that recollections can become distorted over time by what he called a subtle 'memory drift'. Even in the immediate post-war period, as he

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began to write *If This is a Man* (1987), he questioned his own ability to recall the events (reflecting that "…as I sit writing at a table, I myself am not convinced that these things really happened", p109). Similarly Anne Frank's father, Otto Frank, had accusations of revisionism levelled at him as his daughter's eponymous diaries were prepared for publication. At the heart of these concerns were worries that time might alter the writer's perspective (or the editor's perception of the original text). Kraft (2006) believed that any such distortions were often a consequence of the enforced silencing of the testimony after the war. He found substantiation of what he termed a "…*phenomenology of not being believed*" [author's emphasis] evidently pervasive in some testimony. In such cases, the survivor clearly appreciated that what they were saying was almost beyond belief and consequently had to find ways of expressing their story that could make the unimaginable, imaginable. Often, this meant subtly amending the details of the original narrative, thus altering the text over time. Whilst some saw this as revisionism, others saw it not as wilful distortion, but as a process of translation. Langer (1991) (a prominent scholar of Holocaust testimony) has been an outspoken opponent of those who have sought to criticise the veracity of survivor testimony. He believed that, fundamentally, such testimony could never be altered by the passage of time – these memories could not be troubled by issues surrounding their 'reawakening' because they were so ingrained as to never have been asleep. For him, Holocaust memory was "…an insomniac faculty" (p.xv) which defied temporal erosion.

I would suggest that these issues of veracity – rather than being exaggerated by the passage of time – are actually made increasingly inconsequential by it. Academic research usually endeavours to draw generalisations, but I think that this is undesirable when dealing with Holocaust testimony. Tec (2000) reminded us that "The universe of the people we are studying is not there. Most of those we want to know about had died" (p91). If this is the case, then I would question our motives for wanting to generalise about them. I believe that the Holocaust was a 'unique' event in history (Landau, 1998), for the same reasons that I have argued that the Holocaust 'space' cannot be universalised. There are other atrocities and genocides in history with which the Holocaust shares *commonalities*, but I do not believe there are *identical* events. Consequently, I also believe that trying to draw comparisons does a disservice to the victims of any such event. In my opinion, perhaps what would be of more use would be to acknowledge that every individual testimony represents a reality – a 'truth' – of its own, and that it therefore

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justifies recognition in and of itself, rather than being subject to some generalising 'whole'. I agree with Markle et al. (1992) that there is an imperative to recognise "…the singular humanity of each survivor" (p200) by recognising the primacy of their own, individual 'truth'.

I am suggesting, therefore, that we should not be concerned with the collective weight of testimony. If we are, we are led towards creating compound narratives (such as *The Search* (Heuval et al., 2007), or the story of *Leo Stein* at the Holocaust Centre, Laxton, Nottinghamshire) and I do not believe this is the direction Holocaust Education should be taking. Simplifying complexity is a 'comfortable' option which, in my opinion, distorts the reality and overlooks the vast array of testimony available for us to engage with. The problem with such an approach, however, is that if we choose to reject a 'universal' testimony like *The Search*, we have to confront the complexity of individual 'truth'. This was an issue evidenced extensively in this study, particularly in Jonathan's positivity and his desire not to shock his audience. We need to ask how such a narrative fits within the wider experience of Jewish people in Europe throughout the Holocaust. Jonathan's testimony could hardly be said to be representative (not that I wish it to be) but this presents the educator with a real complexity of contestation within the 'space' of the Holocaust – how to manage an individual 'truth' within the contextualising narrative of millions of 'truths'. This is an issue that I did not foresee having to address in this study – whether testimony is actually beneficial to students' learning? If the most an individual testimony (or group of individuals' testimonies) can achieve is to represent the 'truth(s)' of a tiny percentage of those involved, then is it of any educational value? Is it, in fact, so contradictory in its individual nature, that it becomes *un*-representative – an *un*-truth? This is, I believe, an issue that has not been adequately explored and demanding of further research. Many aspects of Jonathan's testimony were contrary to the generality of the Holocaust (he survived, he was well treated, he had adequate food, he had no uniform or tattoo, for example). We have to consider whether, as the primary source being put before the students in this study, such testimony informed them, or undermined their learning of the generality of the event. This challenges the contemporary orthodoxy to teach about individuals, rather than about the 6 million. The individuals we teach about tend not to be part of the 6 million and even if they are, the nature of their individual 'truth' is such that it negates their representativeness. Ultimately, then, we have to consider whether testimony is of any use?

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Smith (2002) noted that even "Survivor testimony is not a replacement for learning the history of the Holocaust, but it is a personal perspective which the historical facts alone cannot convey" (p113). I suggest that he is essentially correct in this but we need to recognise that survivor testimony is another 'contested space'; one of perspective, personality and of memory. Wieviorka (2006) said that "Each person has an absolute right to his or her memory… Each person has the right to fashion his or her own history, to put together what he or she remembers and what he or she forgets in his or her own way" (p396) and I agree with him on this. We have to accept the imperfection of survivor testimony as *their* 'truth' and therefore of intrinsic value. But as educators, we then have to consider how best to utilise individual 'truths' to develop our students' understanding of the Holocaust. I suggest that, rather than looking at individual testimony as representative, we should consider it 'orphan' testimony – testimony that comes *from* the event, but is not representative *of* the event. As such, it is as much connected with the 'space' of the Holocaust as it is unconnected from it. To draw on Wieviorka's analogy, each testimony could be likened to driftwood from "…the shipwreck of war" (p393). When we see the part, we do not see the whole, but if we try to see the whole, we will lose sight of the part.

5.6 Bringing it together – conceptualising future teaching.

The empirical evidence collected in this study and the new theoretical conceptualisation I have suggested (above), do not present the Holocaust as a clear-cut issue. In actuality, they present something of a 'mess'. The Holocaust is not a clearly definable 'space' and the narratives within it are diverse; even contradictory at times. Holocaust Education is an equally complex learning 'space' where the academic and the emotional challenge and compete with one another for students' attention. What I am advocating, therefore, is a *tripartite approach* towards Holocaust Education teaching, based on the empirical data collected in this study and the theoretical reconceptualisation proffered above:
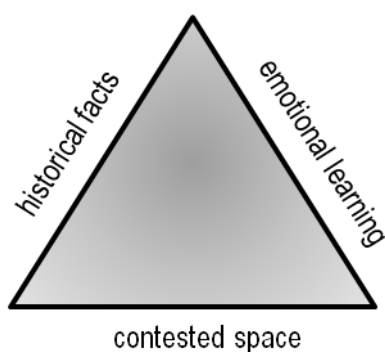
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Figure 5: A tripartite approach to Holocaust Education.

1. *The Holocaust should be taught as historical fact.* Current research by Salmons' own department (Pettigrew et al, 2009) suggested a lack of commitment on the part of teachers to do so (or an inability to do so). This study has highlighted a paucity of adequate subject knowledge amongst a significant proportion of the students at this school, in a variety of key areas. If we fail to teach students the facts of the event, we risk "...the felony of inadequate coverage" (Short, 1995, p178), to the detriment of both our students and the victims of the Holocaust.

2. *The Holocaust should be taught as an emotional encounter.* There is a dearth of research in the area of students' emotional engagement with the Holocaust. At a time when accepted pedagogy suggests an individualised approach, it seems absurd to me that many teachers and researchers have ignored the emotional impact such learning may have upon students. This study highlighted the emotional learning of the students and their struggle to come to terms with what they had learned. As professional educators, we do the young people in our care a disservice if we fail to help them through this difficult and complicated process. To do so constitutes an abuse of trust and a basic failure of our compassion.

3. *The Holocaust should be taught as a 'contested space'.* I believe that the Holocaust should be redefined as a 'contested space' of history and of memory. The diversity of experiences of the event dictates that universalisation is both undesirable and unobtainable. This study has illustrated the multiplicity of interpretations and constructions made by different students as they negotiated the 'space'. Failing to acknowledge the contested nature of the Holocaust leads

to over-simplification of the event and a distortion of the complex narrative. Equally, universalisation of the event (however well-intentioned) can only lead to the universalisation of *un*-truth, which leaves students untrusting of the provenance of knowledge and open to manipulation by revisionism. Particular consideration needs to be given to the place of survivor testimony within any schemes of work and its use in the classroom needs to be judiciously thought through.

It is my contention that it is only by acknowledging and implementing this tripartite approach that Holocaust Education can fulfil both its transmissionist and transformative goals. For too long, the focus amongst teachers has been on the *outcome* of Holocaust Education ('surface level learning') at the expense of the *process* of it ('affective learning'). I believe and contend that it is only through an acknowledgement of the Holocaust as a 'contested space' that we can accept and unite the two and liberate the Holocaust from the mire of its own contestations and complexity for students.

5.7 Reflexivity – Implications for my professional practice.

When I began the doctoral training programme at Brunel University, I had no idea that it would lead me towards Holocaust Education. Now, several years on, I could not imagine it having led me anywhere else. It has been an incredible journey that has taken me across Europe and beyond. I have visited countless memorial sites and museums (such as Belzec, the Berlin Holocaust memorial, the site of the Plasow ghetto and the communal garden 'Jonathan' played in outside Anne Frank's original home in Amsterdam). I have had the opportunity to listen to scholars such as Sir Ian Kershaw, Sir Martin Gilbert and Professor Yehuda Bauer. I have spent a week travelling across Poland with the Holocaust Centre and ten days at the International School for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem in Israel with the Holocaust Educational Trust. Above all, I have had the chance to listen to and meet many survivors and hear their testimony – child survivors, Kindertransportees, camp survivors, the rescued and the hidden. What I have learned along the way is that the Holocaust is so much more than a 'unit of study' in a scheme of work. It has a complexity that defies constriction or definition. There is no one story, no one truth. Everyone who survived the event has a different 'truth' and everyone who encounters it afresh has a different experience of it. Yet this is the task of the teacher – to

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explain the unexplainable and to make the unbelievable, believable. No researcher can prescribe how the professional should do this because no-one is better placed to navigate children through this most burdened of subject areas than their teacher, who knows them well and understands their particular needs as learners. However, research such as this study can offer reflections on these experiences from other people and other places. If this study can do that, it has served its purpose.

For me as a professional engaged with Holocaust Education, this study has formed a central point of reference within my wider professional development. It has enabled me to engage with the debate about the nature of Holocaust Education and its future, not just from intuition or experience, but from a *research-informed* point of view. It has made me a more critical, reflective professional. It has challenged and inspired me in equal measure. I have confronted the overwhelming horror of the event and it has shown me "The power of the individual human story within" (Bauman, 1992, p21). Teachers, like some of the students in this study, might baulk at the enormity of the Holocaust. The easiest path is always to do nothing; to say it all happened so long ago and to 'do the Holocaust' quickly in a few cursory lessons before the summer holidays begin. However, the choice to do nothing or to do that which is difficult is one for which we might be eternally judged. For me, the greatest challenge remains how to teach the un-teachable truth. During my time at the International School for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem in Israel, I met a survivor who summed up this dilemma. His testimony to our assembled group of teachers from across the UK ended when he shrugged with almost indifferent resignation, telling us that,

"I feel sorry for you, because you cannot teach this.
You do not know, because you were not there".

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"*We stopped some children who were firing at each other with*

toy guns and asked them if they knew what happened here.

They nodded, shrugged and carried on firing anyway"

Smith, 2000, p81

Figure 6 – Fragment of the Ghetto wall, Krakow (photograph by the author).

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Mr Alasdair Richardson
xxxxxx
xxxxxx
xxxxxx
xxxxxx

23rd July 2008

Dear Alasdair,

RE87-07 - An investigation of pupil's experience of learning about the Holocaust
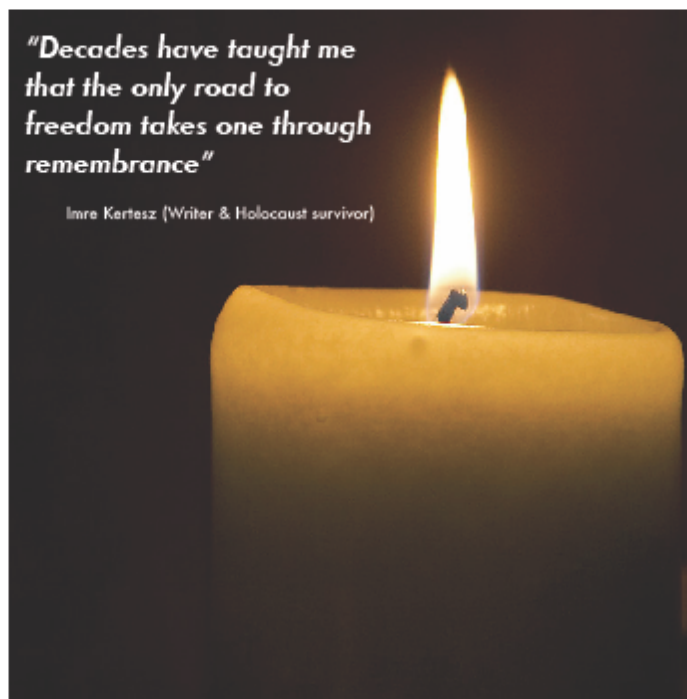
I am writing to confirm the Research Ethics Committee of the School of Sport and Education received your application connected to the above project. Your application has been independently reviewed and I am pleased to confirm your application complies with the research ethics guidelines issued by the University.

On behalf of the Research Ethics Committee, I wish you every success with your study.

Yours sincerely

Dr Simon Bradford
Chair of Research Ethics Committee

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APPENDIX 2

learning about the holocaust

"Decades have taught me that the only road to freedom takes one through remembrance"

Imre Kertesz (Writer & Holocaust survivor)

have you learned about the Holocaust at school?

...could you help other people learn about what happened?

My name is Mr Richardson and I'm Head of Religious Studies at ▓▓▓▓▓ School in ▓▓▓▓▓.

I've been teaching at ▓▓▓▓▓ for four years and during that time I've taught a lot about the Holocaust. I'm also a part-time student at Brunel University in West London where I'm studying for a Doctorate in Education Degree. For my Degree, I'm researching pupils' experiences of learning about the Holocaust, to try to help teachers teach about it more effectively.

[Head's name] has kindly allowed me to come into [School name]to talk to some pupils in the Fourth, Lower Fifth and Lower Sixth Forms about their experiences learning about the Holocaust and I'd very much like YOU to be involved.

I'll be coming into your school in the next few weeks and I'd like to spend about 10 minutes talking to you, probably during an RS lesson. I only have a few questions and don't worry... you don't have to answer anything you don't want to! I'll need to tape-record our conversation, but I promise I'll only keep the recording until I finish my Degree. No-one else will know what you say in the interview and I won't use your real name when I write it up.

I hope that you, like me, agree that it's really important teachers help pupils learn about the Holocaust. If you can spare 10 minutes to help me with this research, maybe you'll help someone else to learn about the Holocaust in a really positive way too!
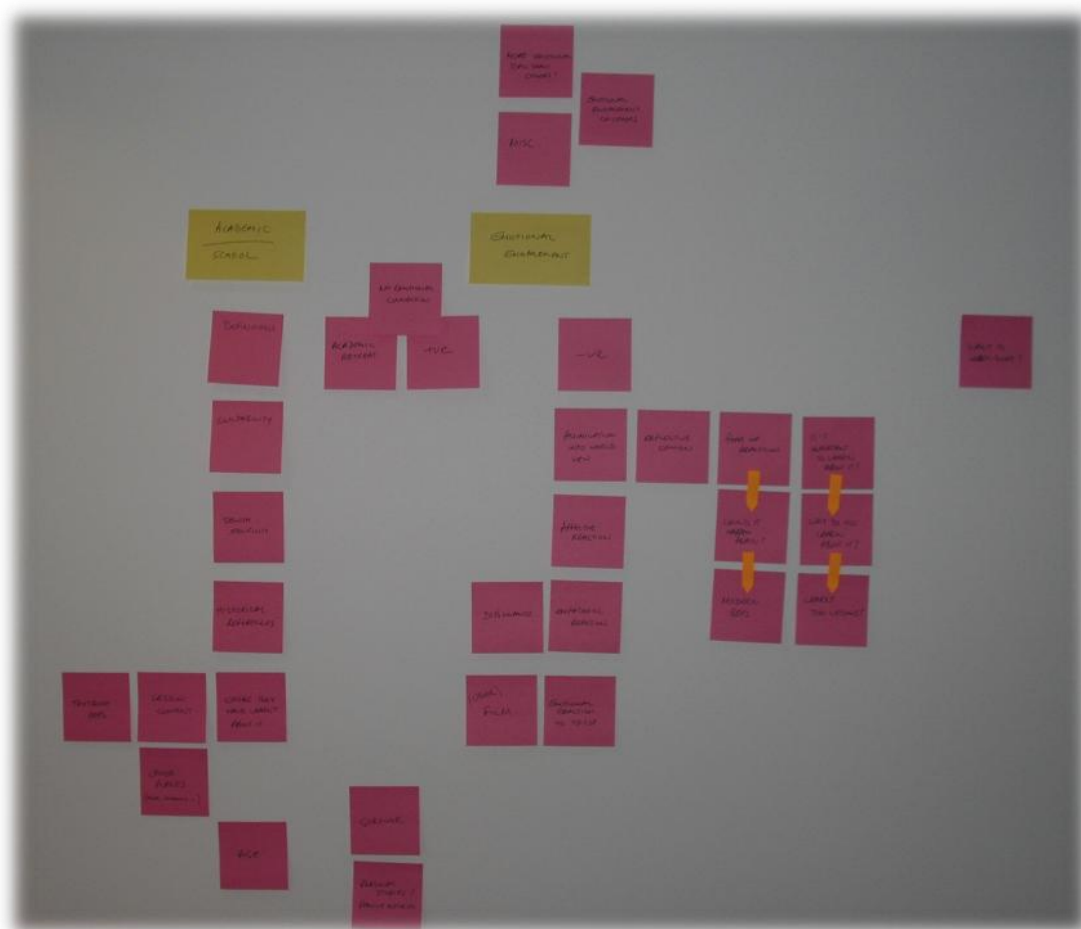
If you have any questions, please email me at: ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓, or contact my supervisor at Brunel University, Dr. Pam Alldred (pam.alldred@brunel.ac.uk)
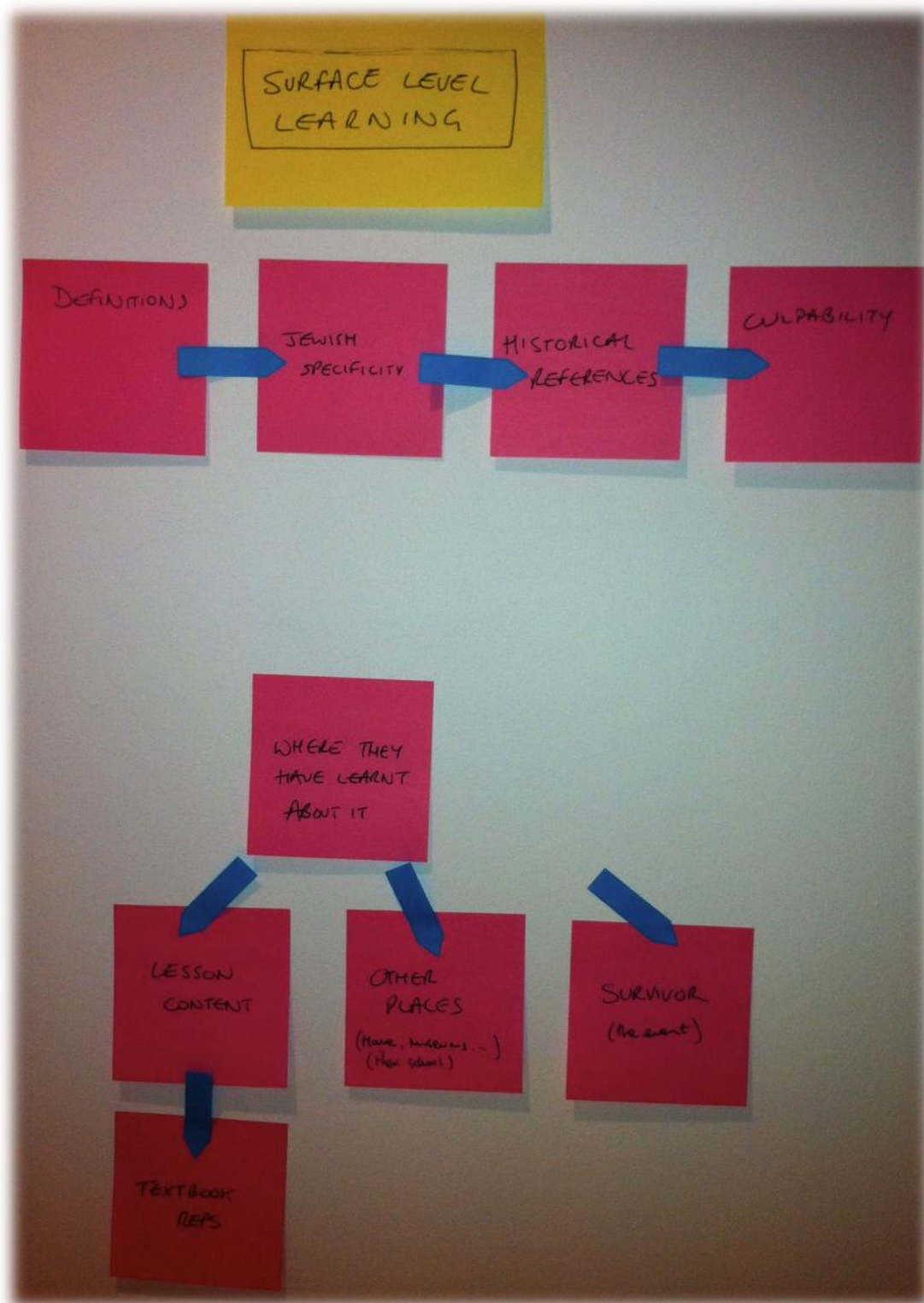
Thanks for your time!

Alasdair Richardson

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learning that take place when students encounter the Holocaust.*

APPENDIX 3

Phase 4: Reviewing themes.

The initial two themes.

Phase 5: Defining and naming themes.

The final three themes.

Alasdair Richardson

*Holocaust Education: An investigation into the types of
learning that take place when students encounter the Holocaust.*

Phase 6: Producing the report.

Surface level learning.

Phase 6: Producing the report.

Affective learning.

Phase 6: Producing the report.

Affective learning.

Alasdair Richardson

Holocaust Education: An investigation into the types of learning that take place when students encounter the Holocaust.

APPENDIX 4

Outline of Jonathan's 35 minute talk to Year 9

- Introduced himself and outlined the structure of his immediate family.

- Spoke about his early life and his schooling.

- Showed them a yellow 'Star of David' (inscribed with the Dutch word 'Jood') that he had worn. This was passed around for the students to look at.

- Spoke about the legal restrictions placed upon the Jews at the start of the war (such as the removal of telephones and the ban on cycling).

- Spoke about his maternal grandparents being deported to their deaths.

- Spoke about his family being deported to Westerbork transit camp and the conditions in the camp.

- Spoke about his paternal grandparents being deported to their deaths.

- Explained their 'Exchange Jew' status and how this caused them to spend seven months at Westerbork.

- Spoke about their deportation (on an ordinary train) to Bergen-Belsen camp in Germany.

- Spoke about the scene on his arrival at Bergen-Belsen – guards, dogs, etc. and the size and scale of the camp.

- Explained how he chose to go to the men's camp to get a good job.

- Explained his typical day in Bergen-Belsen (what they ate, what types of work there were, roll calls, etc.).

- Explained the job he got (serving soup) and how he ensured his family ate well by not stirring the soup consistently.

- Spoke about survivors from Auschwitz arriving at the camp.

- Spoke about Anne Frank and her sister Margot arriving at the camp.

- Explained the subsequent overcrowding at the camp and the spread of disease / typhus.

- Spoke about his mother's illness and subsequent death.

- Spoke about his father's illness and subsequent death.

- Spoke about the evacuation of Bergen-Belsen and his train journey across Germany six days prior to the camp's liberation.

- Spoke about the trains being dive-bombed by the American Air Force during their journey.

- Spoke about his liberation by the Russians and his subsequent return to the Netherlands.

- Explained how a British Officer placed his sister in a field hospital.

- Explained how he and his brother were placed into a camp with other Germans and how they escaped and contacted their uncle in England.

- Spoke about their journey to England a few months later, once their visas had been arranged.

- Spoke about his post-war life (his education and his career).

- Question & Answer session.