

<b>Institution: Institute of Education</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: 25</b>
<b>Title of case study: Holocaust education: Teaching the 'unthinkable'</b>
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)

The IOE's Centre for Holocaust Education has transformed the way that this disturbing historical event is taught in many English schools. The Centre's highly regarded research-informed professional development programme has benefited thousands of teachers and ensured that an estimated 1m pupils experienced a deeper emotional and intellectual engagement with this difficult subject. The Centre has established a group of 'Beacon Schools in Holocaust education' which have developed programmes of study that are now being shared with their own school networks throughout England. It has achieved international 'reach' by producing educational materials for the UN and providing advice, training and consultancy for organisations such as Yad Vashem, Jerusalem's international Holocaust memorial museum.

<b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)
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**Context:** The Holocaust has been a compulsory topic in England's schools at Key Stage 3 since 1991, but there is no government guidance on how this complex and potentially contentious subject could, or should, be approached. Nor was there, prior to the IOE's study, any national research into the challenges faced by teachers or what support they needed. A 2007 symposium on Holocaust education raised concerns that teachers were struggling. This led to £1.5m in R&D funding (grant **G1**) from the Pears Foundation and the DCSF to establish the Holocaust Education Development Programme (HEDP, now known as the Centre for Holocaust Education). The 2008-9 study described below – *Teaching about the Holocaust in English Secondary Schools* – was designed to inform the work of this IOE programme.

**Research methods:** Teachers' understanding of the Holocaust was investigated by means of an online survey completed by 2,108 teachers and follow-up interviews with 68 teachers in 24 schools in England.

**Key findings:** The *Teaching about the Holocaust* study (**R1, R2, R3**) revealed that:

- very few teachers received specialist professional development: 82.5% considered themselves self-taught and 77.5% wanted CPD.
- there were serious gaps in teacher knowledge. Teachers gave scant attention to pre-war Jewish life, or victims' perspectives. This reflects the content of commonly used textbooks that focus on perpetrator-orientated narratives (**R3**).
- the topic was taught in all secondary years and several subjects, but received most attention in Year 9 history where teachers on average spent six hours on the subject; however, many taught the Holocaust in just one or two lessons.
- 85% of teachers believed the Holocaust should be a compulsory part of the secondary history curriculum, but many found it difficult to articulate its distinct historical significance.

**Research team:** Professor Stuart Foster (executive director); Dr Alice Pettigrew (research officer); Jonathan Howson (head of research); Paul Salmons (programme director); Ruth-Anne Lenga (specialist adviser); Kay Andrews (outreach co-ordinator).

**Other underpinning research:** The Centre's approach to teacher development and materials was also partly underpinned by two earlier IOE studies. The first was the 1991-96 *Concepts of History and Teaching Approaches* project (CHATA), which involved pupils in Years 3, 6, 7 and 9. It mapped children's working assumptions in three key areas of understanding: historical evidence, historical explanation and historical accounts (**R4**). The data enabled the researchers to establish progression models for these areas of learning and identify key shifts from less to more powerful ideas about history. Peter Lee and Alaric Dickinson were PIs of the CHATA project and Rosalyn Ashby was the research officer. The other (2006-8) precursor of the *Teaching about the Holocaust* project was *Usable Historical Pasts: A study of students' frameworks of the past*, by Stuart Foster, Rosalyn Ashby (research and evaluation co-ordinator), Peter Lee and Jonathan Howson (research officer). This small-scale qualitative longitudinal study focused on a purposive sample of 36 pupils

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

from three English schools. The sample included a) pupils who had dropped History at the end of Year 9 and b) pupils who opted to take the subject at KS4. It concluded that many pupils see the past as a catalogue of arbitrary and disconnected events, while a smaller group think more deeply about processes, themes and trends. The study did not support the common complaint that pupils “don’t know any history”. The main issue it identified was that teenagers often cannot apply their historical knowledge.

**3. References to the research** (indicative maximum of six references)

- R1: Pettigrew, A., Foster, S., Howson, J. & Salmons, P. (2009) *Teaching about the Holocaust in English Secondary Schools: an empirical study of national trends, perspectives and practice*, London: IOE.
- R2: Foster, S. (2013) Teaching about the Holocaust in English schools: challenges and possibilities, *Intercultural Education*, 24(1-02), 133-148.
- R3: Foster, S. & Burgess, A. (2013) Problematic portrayals and contentious content: Representation of the Holocaust in English history textbooks, *Journal of Education Memory and Media*. 5(2), 20-38.
- R4: Lee, P., Ashby, R. & Dickinson, A. (2000) Progression in historical understanding among students ages 7-14, in Stearns, P., Seixas, P. & Wineburg, S. (eds). *Knowing, Teaching and Learning History: National and International Perspectives*, New York: NYU Press, 199-222.
- R5: Pearce, A. (2008) The development of Holocaust consciousness in contemporary Britain, 1979-2001, *Holocaust Studies: A journal of culture and history*, 14(2), 71-94.

**Indicative grants**

G1: HEDP/Centre for Holocaust Education, a total of £6m for R&D 2008-15, from the Pears Foundation, DCSF/DfE, HEFCE and the Claims Conference (for the Beacon Schools programme) (Grant holder: Foster).

G2: Concepts of History & Teaching Approaches at KS2 & KS3 (1991-6), ESRC, £81,482. (Grant Holder: Lee)

**Quality indicators:**

IQ1: The 2009 report (R1) and resulting CPD programme were praised by international Holocaust scholar Professor Yehuda Bauer (Impact source S1). He said the programme was the first in the world to explicitly link national research in Holocaust education to leading scholarship and school practice.

IQ2: In 2011, Pears Foundation and DfE decided to extend the original £1.5m funding from 2011 until 2015 - at £4.5m. Additionally, in March 2013 DfE granted an extra £500,000 to March 2015 – matching the contribution from Pears and doubling their original funding for the next two years.

IQ3: Academics in Spain, Portugal and Greece are using the Centre’s questionnaire to investigate teachers’ understanding of the Holocaust in their countries.

**4. Details of the impact** (indicative maximum 750 words)

**Beneficiaries and dates of impact:** More than 3,200 teachers and more than a million pupils are estimated to have benefited from the teacher education programmes that the Centre has provided since 2008. Crucially, the educational programmes were designed in response to the challenges identified in its 2009 landmark research (R1). Teachers and children around the world have also benefited from the IOE research and the educational materials and approaches it has generated. It is, however, society as a whole that is the ultimate beneficiary because this education is essential in helping pupils to examine how the flaws in modern societies can allow them to descend into genocide; gain a greater understanding of the causes of mass violence and to help strengthen efforts toward genocide prevention through recognising warning signs, engendering feelings of responsibility towards vulnerable groups, and understanding what forms of action and intervention are possible.

**Reach and significance:** As Yehuda Bauer (impact source S1) has recognised, the Centre’s distinctive contribution has been to use – for the first time – large-scale national research into the challenges of teaching about the Holocaust to ensure that approaches, activities and materials are specifically designed to meet classroom needs. The Centre’s ground-breaking CPD and Initial

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

Teacher Education programmes are taught across England and the wealth of information derived from the 2008-9 study (see section 2) is now shared with all involved in Holocaust education nationally and internationally. As the following evidence demonstrates, the impact that the Centre has had is ‘instrumental’<sup>1</sup> (it has changed teaching practice), ‘conceptual’ (it has changed the way that teachers and children think about the Holocaust) and ‘capacity building’ (it is developing the expertise of Beacon Schools which are now building and supporting their own school networks).

**International impact:** Since 2008 the Centre has:

- developed educational materials for the UN. The *Footprints for Hope* materials (**S2**) had more than 50,000 downloads in 2012, and more than 3,000 hard copies were distributed to government and NGO representatives from some 30 member states in the International Task Force (now the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance), and to UN officers around the world for use in their Holocaust education work. The materials have been translated (online) into French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic and Chinese. They have also been translated into Romanian and distributed among the country’s public schools.
- worked directly with teachers across four continents in countries including Canada, USA, Ireland, Croatia, Hungary, South Africa and Israel.
- provided advice and consultancy services to organisations such as: the EU’s Fundamental Rights Agency; the Salzburg Global Seminar (on its genocide prevention educational initiative); Final Account, a major new oral history archive; Stephen Spielberg’s Shoah Foundation; Yad Vashem and, regularly, the Imperial War Museum. The Centre also plays a leading role in the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance as part of the UK delegation, led by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Sir Andrew Burns, former UK Ambassador to Israel and now Britain’s Envoy for Post-Holocaust Issues, says the IOE is “at the leading edge” of Holocaust education internationally. “The IOE’s approach marks a shift away from simple ‘lessons of the Holocaust’ to genuine engagement with the complexity of the past, and deep learning about one of the most traumatic events in human history,” he says. “What is remarkable is the extent to which such complexity can be made accessible to pupils.” (**S3**)

**Impact on teachers and pupils:** The professional development and resources provided by the Centre enable history teachers not only to fulfil their curricular obligation to teach about the Holocaust but to do so more confidently and effectively, with deeper knowledge about this complex past, and the supply of age-appropriate resources and activities supports young people as they engage with this difficult and emotionally challenging subject. Nick Gibb (then Schools Minister) referred to the Centre’s work in the House of Commons in January 2012 and added: “The level of teaching expertise in England’s schools on the Holocaust is now higher than ever before – a welcome fact.”

**Teacher development:**

- The IOE runs a free two-day programme for teachers across England, with on-going support through a virtual learning environment. Some 905 teachers took the CPD course between 2009 and July 2013. Participants access free educational resources from the Centre’s dedicated website, including: student-centred investigations into questions of Jewish resistance; detailed examination of the layers of complicity in genocide; and a range of activities exploring the impact, legacy and significance of the Holocaust. More than 90% of teachers who took the CPD courses said they have used or will use these resources.
- Further free online resources, available on the open access parts of the Centre’s website, were used by more than 2,500 site visitors by July 2013.
- The Centre has designed and run one-day Initial Teacher Education sessions at 24 universities from York to Exeter. Some 731 student teachers benefited between April 2012 and July 2013.
- The researchers reached thousands of other teachers by guest-editing the History Association’s *Teaching History* journal (December 2010) and addressing the Schools History Project’s annual conference.
- In 2013, the Centre began exploring ways of working systematically with all teaching schools, at the request of the DfE.

<sup>1</sup> Using Evidence: How Research can Inform Public Services (Nutley, S., Walter, I., Davis, H. 2007)

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

Teachers attest to substantial change in their lessons. For example, Leanne Judson (**S5**), writing for the *Guardian Teacher Network* in 2012, told how the Centre's CPD course spurred her to change her school's whole scheme of work. "Devoting a session [in the CPD] to pre-war Jewish life, to contextualise the impact of the Holocaust, was a 'lightbulb' moment," wrote Ms Judson, a 'teacher of excellence' in the Humanities and an ex-head of history. Her pupils said that the resulting classroom work was "the most memorable study they had done and the one that had the biggest impact on them emotionally and intellectually". Teachers who attended a training programme for Beacon Schools in July 2013 reported that it had clarified their thinking and understanding, for example:

- "I want to really focus on the human stories behind the Holocaust. Some teachers, in my school included, sometimes focus on a sterile portrayal of statistics and industrialism without remembering the human cost. Without the stories I feel the teaching will be counterproductive".
- "Having recently taught year 9 a short series of lessons at the end of the summer term I realised how random and ad hoc our approach was. This seminar has reinforced the need to create a framework of specific lessons with specific aims".

**High quality resources:** The pedagogical approaches that were largely based on *Teaching about the Holocaust* (**R1**) were featured in two 2010 Teachers TV documentaries. These showed teachers using IOE lesson ideas and materials, such as survivor testimony and a dynamic timeline. The IOE also worked with Teachers TV to produce a set of BAFTA-nominated lesson materials (**S4**).

**Beacon schools:** By July 2013, there were 32 IOE Beacon Schools in Holocaust Education, working with a network of at least five schools each. Royal Wootton Bassett Academy, Wiltshire, had established a network of more than 30 schools from around the country, and also worked with PGCE students from the University of Southampton. Two inspectors who visited Royal Wootton Bassett (**S6**) judged the Holocaust lessons they saw as outstanding. They commented:

- "The engagement of students, their understanding, empathy is quite unique – a truly holistic and powerful learning experience. It is hard to judge this against various criteria as we have never seen anything quite like this. Extraordinary."
- "It is an experience of what education should be."

The Foreign Office (**S7**) has also stated that the UK became – in 2010 – the first country to thoroughly review and re-submit its Holocaust Education report to the International Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research "on the basis of the IOE's groundbreaking national research". The UK thus has the clearest empirical picture of the state of teaching and learning about the Holocaust, providing an essential platform for meeting its challenges.

<b>5. Sources to corroborate the impact<sup>2</sup></b> (indicative maximum of 10 references)
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- S1: Yehuda Bauer (2010), Professor of Holocaust Studies, Avraham Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry, Hebrew University of Jerusalem.  
<http://www.ioe.ac.uk/newsEvents/35868.html>
- S2: The Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme, The Footprints for Hope Project educational materials  
[http://www.un.org/en/holocaustremembrance/educational\\_footprints.shtml](http://www.un.org/en/holocaustremembrance/educational_footprints.shtml)
- S3: Sir Andrew Burns, the UK's post-Holocaust Envoy (comments available in *Working with Teachers to transform Holocaust Education* [hard copy])
- S4: Teachers TV materials <http://www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resource/Teachers-TV-video-collection-Secondary-History-The-Holocaust-6112548/>
- S5: Judson, L. (2012), 'Transforming Holocaust Education' <http://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/2012/jan/18/holocaust-education-teaching-resources>
- S6: Head teacher, Royal Wootton Bassett Academy (testimonial available)
- S7: FCO (2012) *Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research Country Report of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland*  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/206418/201211\\_01\\_ITF\\_Country\\_Report\\_of\\_the\\_United\\_Kingdom\\_of\\_GB.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/206418/201211_01_ITF_Country_Report_of_the_United_Kingdom_of_GB.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> All web links accessed 15/10/13