How do Key Stage 3 students make sense of the Holocaust when they learn about it in their history lessons?

Catrina Kirkland

University College London

Doctorate of Philosophy

I, Catrina Kirkland, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Abstract

This research examined the meaning which Key Stage 3 students (aged 12-14) draw from their history lessons on the Holocaust. It was a case study on multiple sites, which was informed by the approaches of ethnography. It involved participant observation of six Key Stage 3 classes across four schools in London and the Midlands. The research examined the nature and origins of the ideas about the Holocaust which the students held at the start of their history lessons on the topic. It explored the relationship between these ideas and those the students held at the end of these lessons. It then analysed how the students responded to depictions of the Holocaust which challenged their initial perceptions of who was involved, and what happened, when, where and why.

This study found that, before learning about it in their history lessons, most students held some ideas about the Holocaust, but that these were commonly simplistic and fragmented. The students largely presented Hitler as personally responsible for what took place. They also referred almost exclusively to events carried out in concentration camps and not in other sites of persecution. The research found that these notions were largely drawn from their learning about the topic whilst in primary school, or from a familiarity with the stories of Anne Frank or *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*. Finally, the research suggested that many students held similar ideas at the beginning and at the end of their history lessons on the topic. Consequently, this thesis concludes with recommendations on how educators might support students in developing more nuanced and historically informed understandings of the Holocaust.

Impact Statement

While completing this PhD I worked as an Education Officer for the Holocaust Education Trust (HET), a leading provider of Holocaust education, which delivers training programmes for teachers and educational programmes for students from across the UK. This afforded me the opportunity to draw directly on this research to impact the understanding and practice of approximately 600 teachers by leading training sessions on my findings on students' misconceptions of the Holocaust, where they come from, and how they can be challenged. My role also enabled me to contribute to HET's programmes for students, particularly through reframing a seminar on the definition of the Holocaust for sixth form students (aged 16-18) involved in HET's *Lessons from Auschwitz* programme. This now asks the students to consider their own pre-conceptions and how they have been challenged by the seminar. Approximately 2500 students have taken part in the seminar to date. These experiences demonstrate that this research has already had a direct impact by enabling HET to bridge more explicitly the gap between academic research and educational practice, supporting the learning of teachers and students across the UK.

The thesis contributes to academic understandings of teaching and learning about the Holocaust. In depicting and drawing meaning from authentic classroom experiences, it has utility for colleagues leading initial teacher training across England. It has particular use for trainers of secondary history teachers who are likely to teach about the Holocaust. Such trainers can frame the guidance they offer their trainees around the Recommendations with which the thesis concludes. Practicing teachers can also draw on these Recommendations to reflect on their own professional practice. The Recommendations also have implications for educators within and outside of the UK whose students are familiar with the narratives of John Boyne's *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* (2006) and the story of Anne Frank. Both are used in discussions about the Holocaust around the world, and the implications of this are discussed in this thesis. The new readings of both narratives, as presented in this thesis, add weight to the existing arguments against the use of *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* as a teaching resource and provide educators using the story of Anne Frank with research on the

implications of students' familiarity with the story for their understandings of the Holocaust.

In future, I hope to reach a wider practitioner readership by producing teacher guidance for publication by HET which explicitly outlines how students' misunderstandings can be addressed using the Trust's educational resources. HET's teacher guides, which are available for free and have a wide teacher readership, already discuss some of the ways in which *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* is problematic as an educational resource. I hope to include aspects of my findings in updated editions of these guides. Finally, my Recommendations lend themselves to presentations in short films, for practitioner and public audiences, which explore commonly held misconceptions of the Holocaust, and my ongoing work with HET provides me with a useful platform to share such films worldwide.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and clarification of key terms

I decided to research teaching and learning about the Holocaust in response to one of the most memorable incidents of my teaching career. In 2009, a few months after starting my Masters in history and citizenship education, I was teaching a Year 9 GCSE humanities class, in a comprehensive school in North London. I had been working with the class for several months. They were, though teachers are not meant to acknowledge such things, one of my favourite classes. I remember them as the only class I ever taught who all handed their coursework in on time; and I remember with ridiculous fondness the moment when, recovering from pneumonia, I began a coughing fit halfway through a lesson. One student rushed to get a colleague. Another left to get tissues and water. When I thanked them, one said, with only a hint of irony, 'that's all right, Miss. We're family'. The class continued to call themselves 'the family' for the rest of the year.

This lesson was an introduction to a unit entitled 'Prejudice and Persecution' and was designed by a colleague for use by teachers across the faculty. The unit would culminate in lessons about the Holocaust, as an example of genocide. I began by showing a PowerPoint of photographs illustrating examples of discrimination. Each was accompanied by a question to discuss. The images included photographs depicting segregation in the southern US and Apartheid in South Africa, as well as others I no longer remember. I showed each in turn, reading the questions aloud. Students raised their hands to answer each, and there was, as ever in a classroom of 13 and 14-year-olds, a buzz as students whispered thoughts to each other. I chose a student to share their answer on each, and their responses suggested they had familiarity with the context of each photograph.

The final black and white photograph showed two children on a bunk in a concentration camp. The implication was that they would become victims of the Holocaust (though there was no attribution on the slide) since the question read 'Why were these two innocent Jewish children murdered?' One student, Fatima[1], without raising her hand, from the back of the classroom, said 'Jewish people murder people all the time, so

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[1] Like all students, teachers and schools in this thesis, Fatima is known by a pseudonym

why shouldn't they be killed?' After audible gasps and nervous chuckles from a few students, an uncharacteristic silence descended upon the class, most of whom looked towards me rather than towards Fatima. I found myself equally uncharacteristically silenced, ill-equipped to address Fatima's explicitly antisemitic comments. In the seconds which followed, I could have responded in different ways. I could have ignored the comment and redirected the discussion back to the question on the screen, asking another student for an answer. I could have spoken to Fatima privately, later, outside the classroom, or I could have asked her, there and then, to explain what she meant. My response had the potential to shut down the conversation or open it up, potentially allowing further comments to be voiced which would lead to my feeling even more conflicted.

As I write I feel the shame I felt minutes after my response, which was to take personal offence and to make this clear to the students. 'What is it you think I've done?' I asked Fatima, across the newly silenced classroom. 'Which innocent people have I killed?' To my recollection, I had never mentioned to this 'family' that some of my other family are Jewish, so this was possibly a surprise to them. Given my rapport with the class and the relationship I thought I had built with Fatima, had I done so previously, she might not have made the comment at all. Had I mentioned my heritage in another lesson with them, I would probably not remember it now; and, if I did, it would not be with the regret that I had weaponised it to shame an ill-informed 13-year old.

Many incidents from my time in the classroom remain with me in colour like this, but none left me so critical of my response or gave me cause for such reflection through a professional or research lens. As a teacher, Fatima's comments raised questions for me about my pedagogical approach. Had her comment been triggered by this photograph, or the question posed? Would framing either differently have elicited an alternative, less challenging response? As I considered the incident as a burgeoning researcher, Fatima's questions raised other questions. Who were the 'Jewish people' she claimed 'murdered people all the time?' How had she developed this impression of them? Most interestingly, would her views of Jewish people influence how she engaged with our lessons on the Holocaust?

It was partially as a result of Fatima's comment's being shared in a lesson on the Holocaust that I went on to study approaches to teaching about the topic for my Masters dissertation. Exploring the literature on teaching about the topic, I reflected more critically on my previous experiences of teaching about it and on why this incident, of all those I recall from teaching about the Holocaust, remained with me. Was it because Fatima's comment reflected an opinion so far from mine? Was it my relationship to Judaism, as the daughter of a non-practising Jewish mother, and my emotional response to this comment which I read as an insult to my heritage? Or was it the residual discomfort I continued (and continue) to feel when I thought about my response? I appreciated my response potentially made it less likely that Fatima would want to engage with sympathetic depictions of Jewish people essential to a meaningful study of the Holocaust.

In the years since, I completed my Masters and left classroom teaching to pursue further studies. I continued reflecting on the questions this incident raised for potential areas of study at doctoral level. I considered the ideas about the Holocaust which students bring into their history classrooms. What ideas do they hold and what are the implications of such ideas when they are taught about the topic? How do they draw on these ideas during such history lessons? Finally, how do they respond to ideas presented to them during these lessons which contrast with their own? Based on participant observation conducted in six Key Stage 3 history classes in England, this thesis explores aspects of these questions, asking 'How do Key Stage 3 students make sense of the Holocaust when they learn about it in their history lessons?'

This chapter examines the terms and assumptions embedded within this question, and how they relate to current research into teaching and learning about the Holocaust, and into history education in secondary schools in England, where this research was conducted.

The Holocaust

Throughout this thesis, the term 'The Holocaust' refers to the genocide of Jewish people during the Second World War. The term is, admittedly, problematic, partially because of its etymology. The 'Greek origins of the word 'holocaust' *(holos kauston),* with its reference to a 'whole' 'burning' for religious sacrifice render it a 'potentially

disturbing' (Lawson 2010:8) phrase for the killings enacted by the Nazi regime and its collaborators' (Foster, et al., 2016: 9). Despite its 'disturbing' nature, the term is used because, as will be demonstrated, it was used by teachers in the history classrooms in which this research was conducted and was recognisable to most students on whom this research was based. It also features in the National Curriculum for history, which outlines what should be taught in local authority managed schools in England, and it has been adopted in popular and political culture, which informs the wider context of this research. Though problematic, the term is used because of its familiarity to students and teachers and within society more broadly.

Herein, the term refers specifically to the genocide of Jewish people. UK-based organisations which lead education programmes on the Holocaust use it in this way, including UCL Centre for Holocaust Education, the Holocaust Educational Trust, the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust and the Imperial War Museum, all of which lead teaching programmes referred to during the fieldwork on which this research was based. Significantly, there appears to be 'dissonance between teachers' understanding and existing scholarship in this field' (Ibid, 10). Regardless of subject background, secondary school teachers were more likely to consider the term to refer to 'the persecution and murder of a range of victims' (Pettigrew et. al, 2009:8) and

> In the public sphere, controversies and contestations continue with petitions
> for an inclusive approach to defining the Holocaust showing no signs of
> going away.
>
> Foster et al. (2016:9)

This suggested that, although there is consensus across UK-based Holocaust-related organisations that the term refers specifically to the Jewish genocide, it is not always used in this way in schools or beyond.

Nonetheless, the term is used in this way herein, in the spirit of pragmatism, though it is acknowledged as problematic. It was important to use terms familiar to teachers and students so those at the heart of this study would understand its focus. Finally, though the question of whether non-Jewish victims of Nazi persecution should be considered part of the Holocaust was discussed in lessons depicted in this research, the Jewish specificity of the term is not debated within the thesis itself.

The history curriculum in England

The focus on students' experiences in their history lessons was informed by my professional and academic interests. On starting my PhD I had taught secondary history for 11 years. My Masters dissertation culminated in my writing a scheme of work for teaching about the Holocaust. History lessons are one of many places where students often learn about the Holocaust (Pettigrew et al., 2009). Of these, the history classroom was most familiar to me. It was through a history curriculum that I had most frequently taught about the Holocaust, and it was this subject discipline with which I was most familiar. Though, as a humanities teacher, I had taught religious education and geography, I had never engaged with literature on those subjects as with texts on history education. My familiarity with the subject allowed me insight into the ideas I sought to capture and the classroom activities I anticipated observing.

The Holocaust 'has featured, with increasing prominence, in the history curriculum for secondary schools since 1991 when the National Curriculum was first introduced' (Russell, 2006: Foreword). Further, its

> symbolic significance in terms of curricular framing has never been more profound. In the current curriculum – taught in schools from September 2014 – the Holocaust stands alone as the only named compulsory content.
>
> Foster, et al. (2016: 12)

Its inclusion in the National Curriculum makes it part of the 'substantive history' which teachers are required to teach. 'Substantive history is the content of history, what history is '"about"'' (Ashby and Lee, 2000: 199). It is alternatively known as 'first-order knowledge'. Chapman usefully explained that:

> knowledge and understanding is world-knowledge about the past, and, many of the concepts we learn to use to help make sense of the past are also concepts that we use in the present.
>
> Chapman (2021:11)

Substantive history or first-order knowledge is one element of the National Curriculum for history; others are discussed below.

Somewhat counter-intuitively, is not compulsory for all state schools in England to teach according to the National Curriculum. The Department for Education (DfE)

introduced the Academies Act (2010) which allowed schools with academy status to opt out of the National Curriculum if they deliver a 'balanced and broadly based curriculum' (DfE, 2010). So though the Holocaust is the only compulsory topic on the National Curriculum for history, academies can fulfil their curriculum requirements without teaching about it. By 2016, 'a clear majority of secondary schools' had converted to academy status (Foster et al., 2016:214) and by January 2021, 78% of secondary schools were academies or free schools (DfE, 2021), no longer bound by it. This is not to claim that these schools no longer teach according to its guidance. Indeed, the History Association found that ¼ of state-funded secondary schools' history curriculums were 'closely aligned' with the National Curriculum, and ¾ were 'broadly aligned with it' (History Association, 2018: 1). Nor is it appropriate to claim schools not following the National Curriculum do not teach about the Holocaust. However, it is striking that the Holocaust has 'increasing prominence' in a National Curriculum which has become less significant in most English schools.

Significantly for schools whose curriculum is still informed by it, the National Curriculum offers no guidance on what history lessons on the Holocaust should include. An indication of what the Department for Education expect students to take from such lessons is implied by its guidance on the purpose of studying history. This states that studying history should:

> . . . help pupils gain a coherent knowledge and understanding of Britain's past and that of the wider world. It should inspire pupils' curiosity to know more about the past. Teaching should equip pupils to ask perceptive questions, think critically, weigh evidence, sift arguments, and develop perspective and judgement.
>
> DfE (2014)

This implies that there is more to learning history, and therefore, learning about the Holocaust in history lessons, than learning what happened in the past. Studying history requires particular ways of thinking. Chapman described such ways of thinking as 'second-order knowledge and understanding', or 'metahistorical understandings' (Chapman, 2021:14) and wrote that it involves developing understandings of:

> what history books (or other forms of historical representation) can be;
> ideas about how we come to know the past on the basis of the interrogation

of traces and their manipulation to build models of past worlds through inference; ideas about how and why things happen in the past, and so on.

Ibid

The Holocaust is part of the substantive history which students in England are expected to learn through the National Curriculum; whilst doing so, they are expected to engage in 'second-order' thinking. There is an 'interplay and interdependence of substantive historical knowledge and second-order knowledge' (Hammond, 2014:18) and engaging students in both types of learning is 'the balancing act that teachers juggle every day' (Kitson, 2021:39). When learning about the Holocaust, students' might be taught about multiple substantive concepts. These could include Jewish culture and histories, antisemitism, Nazism, persecution, genocide, concentration camps and death camps, ghettos, mass-shooting, Nazi-occupied Europe, and the Second World War. However, they cannot develop historically informed ideas about this past learning only about substantive concepts. Second-order understandings 'enable students to make most effective use of knowledge' (Pickles, 2010:50). Counsell highlights the importance of focusing on both types of historical understanding:

> To teach the substantive alone is to deceive the pupil by suggesting that the knowledge of the past arrives in fixed stories, that it is never possible to reconfigure, rearrange, challenge or defend those stories. To focus on disciplinary knowledge alone, without building up layers of broad, substantive knowledge, denies access to those very debates.

Counsell (2021: 170)

Substantive concepts are explored through questions informed by second-order concepts. For example, second-order concepts include 'causation and consequence' (Ibid, 157). Students could usefully explore these concepts by asking 'why did the Holocaust happen', for example, and in so doing develop greater substantive understandings of the Holocaust. This would be an historically informed question, and one most suitably discussed in the history rather than the religious education classroom, for example, where the questions posed might be more theologically informed. It was important to specify the subject context in which this research was to

be conducted because the issues the students examine are informed by the subject in which they were examining them.

Key Stage 3

Schooling in England is divided into five 'Key Stages'. Key Stage 3 students are in Year 7, 8 and 9 and aged 11-14. Key Stage 3 is the last time when it is compulsory for students in state funded schools in England to study history. The decision to focus on Key Stage 3 history students reflects my interests as a history teacher who taught Years 7-9 students for over a decade, and the fact that the incident sparking my research interest happened in a Key Stage 3 classroom. I initially intended to focus on Year 9 students like 'the family' since, in 2009 it was 'in Year 9 that history becomes the dominant subject area in which teaching about the Holocaust takes place (Pettigrew et al., 2009: 7). However, an increasing amount of teaching about the Holocaust was taking place in Year 8 history lessons by 2016, when my final fieldwork was conducted, since:

> In 2009, only 4.9% of all reported teaching about the Holocaust in history took place in Year 8 classrooms. By 2019/20 this proportion had grown more than four-fold to 20.7%.
>
> UCL (2021A: 1)

This change in the educational landscape contributed to a reframing of this study to focus on Key Stage 3 students rather than solely those in Year 9, and to my conducting fieldwork in Year 8 and 9 classes.

Making sense

The phrase 'make sense' describes the ways students engage with 'new information, forging links with knowledge and ideas they already hold and 'constructing' a new or improved picture of the world' (Conway, 2006:10). Herein, the phrase describes how students draw meaning from different depictions of the Holocaust, within and without the history classroom, using this meaning to develop ideas about the events. It refers to social and cognitive aspects of the development of students' ideas about what happened. Exploring how individual students 'make sense' of this past involved an examination of how they drew particular notions from the same depictions and of how

their initial ideas about the Holocaust influence what they take from their history lessons on the topic. The process of 'making sense' is the 'phenomenon' (Stake, 2006: 6) or 'problem' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995) this research sought to explore.

Foster et al. (2016) suggested that students are likely to approach their Key Stage 3 history lessons with ideas about the Holocaust taken from films and books, discussions at home, or studying the events in other subject areas. The depictions of the Holocaust they encounter in their history lessons could challenge the ideas they bring into the classroom. If so, their 'making sense' of the Holocaust involves reconciling their existing ideas with newer, contradictory ones. Fatima appeared to find the image of two malnourished Jewish children, or the notion of Jewish people as 'innocent', inconsistent with her understanding of Jewish people as murderers. She needed to reconcile such contrasting ideas if she were to develop more nuanced, sympathetic perceptions of the victims of the Holocaust. Yet students do not need to hold such problematic views for their initial ideas to influence the meaning they draw from new depictions. This research examined how students attempted to reconcile any different ideas.

The use of the term 'making sense' reflects the significance of the work of Simone Schweber, whose accounts of teaching about the Holocaust influenced my planning, researching, and writing of this thesis. Schweber's 2004 text was entitled *Making sense of the Holocaust – Lessons from Classroom Practice.* The meaning she ascribed to the term was implied by the questions at the heart of her text. These asked:

> How do experienced high school teachers teach about the Holocaust? What moral messages do they convey implicitly and communicate explicitly? And, most important, what do their students learn?
>
> Schweber (2004: 12)

In this context, 'making sense' concerned interactions between how teachers teach and what students learned.

In Davies (2000) the term was used in a discussion of the 'intellectual, the representational and societal' complexities involved in 'characterising the Holocaust' (Davies, 2000:2). Davies posed that the fact that:

> . . . so many terrible things were done so systematically by so many . . . can perhaps never be truly grasped [but] does not necessarily mean that we cannot begin to make *some* sense of it.

> Davies (2000:3)

Davies' italicisation of 'some' emphasised that 'making sense' can be partial, and comprise emerging ideas, not just ideas which are complete or permanent. Edwards and O'Dowd (2010) also used the term in their abstract. They wrote that:

> Students make sense of new learning on the basis of their prior understandings; we cannot move our students' thinking on unless we understand what they already know.

> Edwards and O'Dowd (2010:20)

Here, the term referred to drawing on prior knowledge to connect with newer ideas.

The term 'making sense' also appeared in texts on history education. In Wineburg's 'Making Historical Sense' (2000) his meaning was suggested in his discussion of unexplored questions:

> . . . what is it that students actually *do* know about the past? What sources beyond teachers and textbooks contribute to their understanding? How do young people navigate between images of the past learned in the home and those encountered in school? How do they situate their own personal histories in the context of national and world history?

> Wineburg (2000: 307)

For Wineburg, 'making sense' involved navigation between alternative ideas. The term acknowledged that students bring ideas into their history classrooms and draw on these when engaging with alternatives. 'Students do not come to history class as *tabula rasa* but, rather, with a tissue of assumptions based in prior learning in school, and in prior life experience outside school, some of which may, but many of which may not, be helpful in supporting historical learning' (Chapman, 2021:11). Ribbens (2007), Pendry and O'Neal (1997), and Lee (2005) commented on myriad places in which students encounter depictions of the past which contrast with those they meet in the

classroom. To 'make sense' of the past, students navigate between rival accounts from inside and outside the history classroom, drawing meaning from them.

The notion that students encounter depictions of history in multiple places appears particularly true in relation to the Holocaust. The Holocaust 'retains a central position in the canon of culturally and politically valued knowledge', because:

> Outside of formal education, representations of the Holocaust proliferate through best-selling works of literature, box-office hit feature films, television programmes, museum exhibitions and public acts of commemoration, such as those surrounding the UK's annual Holocaust Memorial Day.

> Foster et al. (2016:7)

The cross-party national Holocaust Commission, established by Prime Minister David Cameron in 2014, exemplifies the way in which the Holocaust is regularly framed politically' (Ibid, 15). Though students may not be aware of the political nature of such discussions, they are learning about the topic within a national context in which the Holocaust is commemorated, and commemorations are discussed at the highest level of government. The Holocaust is 'contested space' (Richardson, 2012) and the fact that students might encounter contrasting, and even contradictory, depictions of the events could relate to this 'contest'. When making sense of the Holocaust as they learn about it in their history lessons, students must reconcile ideas taken from other spheres which demonstrate this 'contest', with those presented to them by their history teachers. This research examines how they do this.

The term 'making sense' is used herein to refer to students' meaning making. It explores some of the meaning which the students drew from encounters with the depictions of the Holocaust which they experienced before their Key Stage 3 history lessons. It also explores how they responded to the depictions they encountered during such lessons. Particularly, the students' ideas about who was involved in the Holocaust, what happened, when, where, and why, are explored before, during and after these lessons. Also considered are their notions of the interconnectedness of the events, their participants, their causes and their consequences. There is a particular focus on the ideas the students demonstrated at the end of their history lessons on the Holocaust. These are considered against the definitions, stories and sources with

which they were presented by their history teachers. The term 'making sense', which appears throughout the related literature, was chosen as a short hand for the ways in which the students drew meaning from these different encounters, the ways in which their ideas changed or remained stable over time, and the approaches they used when encountering depictions which challenged the ideas which they brought into their history classrooms. The specific research questions which this research sought to address can be found on page 92.

Other significant terminology and its use in this thesis

As has been demonstrated in the discussions above, my preferred term to describe those who experienced persecution and murder during the Holocaust is 'Jewish people'. I respectfully acknowledge that some Jewish people, including members of my own family, find the term 'Jew' largely unproblematic, relating as it does to their heritage or practice. However, it has additional, more negative connotations. It continues to be used within racial slurs, and was used during the Holocaust as a label forced upon people who may or may not themselves have identified as Jewish. Consequently, I generally avoid the use of the term 'Jew' in my writing or teaching, preferring the term 'Jewish people', which has, for me at least, better recognises the individuals, families and communities who shared, to differing degrees and in various ways, a heritage and collection of beliefs and practices, and who were not defined primarily by their associations with persecution.

However, this thesis draws heavily on direct quotations from students, teachers, and relevant literature to examine how students make sense of the Holocaust. Students' comments are analysed as indicators of how they make sense of the events, and pertinent literature is quoted to demonstrate how this thesis responds to questions posed within or implied by the existing research. The term 'Jews' appears in literature on the Holocaust (including in seminal texts like Hilberg, 1985 and 1993) and in texts on teaching and learning about the topic. It appears, for example, in the herein oft cited Foster et al. (2016), and Gray (2014b). Further, it appears in definitions of the Holocaust presented, at the time of the research, by the Imperial War Museum (see page 204) and Yad Vashem (see page 181). These definitions were discussed in some of the lessons observed during the fieldwork. Consequently, in this thesis, the

term 'Jews' is cited when such literature or definitions are quoted to contextualise or Ann the findings of this research.

Most saliently, in order to present, with authenticity, the 'real life' (see page 60) encounters and ideas which formed the basis for much of the research, I have quoted students and teachers *verbatim*. This means that the terms 'Jew', 'Jews' and, on fewer occasions, 'the Jews' do appear herein. It is hoped that a reading of the totality and context of the teachers' and students' comments will make clear that they were using the term without ill intent, and because of a lack of familiarity with these wider, more negative connotations. When the students' ideas are being discussed rather than quoted, the term 'Jewish people' is generally used instead, to reflect my own preferences and appreciation that the more commonly used terms are problematic.

Although, as discussed above (see page 14), the term 'the Holocaust' refers specifically to the genocide of Jewish people during the Second World War, any discussion of the Holocaust will and should involve a discussion of non-Jewish victims of Nazi persecution. The language used to discuss members of these minority groups also needed careful consideration. Within the body of the text, the terms 'Roma and Sinti' are used rather than the term 'Gypsies', which is a 'derogatory term used to refer to a large and diverse ethnic minority who might see themselves as belonging to a number of groups' (Donert, 2022: 58). When the term 'Gypsies' was used by a student in their writing it is quoted within the thesis as was, which was generally without inverted commas and often without capitalisation. In the subsequent examinations of student or teacher's comments, it is written capitalised and in inverted commas, to both recognise that it is a quotation and to highlight that it is problematic. Within any wider discussion in the thesis, the term 'Roma and Sinti' is used as an alternative.

Finally, in discussions of the persecution of non-Jewish minorities, some students and teachers mentioned 'homosexuals'. My preferred term is the more precise phrase 'gay men' because, in Nazi Germany:

> all gay men found their lives affected by the Nazis. They were forced to live in greater secrecy with the constant risk of being reported to the police. By contrast, lesbians were not targeted by the Nazis, although a small number were arrested for 'asocial' behaviour'.
>
> Holocaust Educational Trust (2016d: 2)

Arguably, today the term 'gay' is used more than the term 'homosexual' by those who identify as such. Consequently, the term 'gay men' is used within the body of the text when examining teachers' and students' discussions of the people they describe as 'homosexual', though, again, the latter term is used when quoting directly.

Within the chapters which follow, footnotes are provided the first time each of these problematic terms is used. These footnotes include a simple acknowledgement that the term is indeed problematic, and a reminder that a fuller discussion of the decision to use it appears on these pages.

A summary of the purpose of this research

This research was inspired by a classroom encounter which made me consider the ideas students bring to their history lessons on the Holocaust, and their implications whilst learning about the topic. This thesis examines the nature and origins of Key Stage 3 students' prior ideas about the Holocaust, and the ideas they hold once the lessons are over. It concludes by exploring how they made sense of new ideas with which they were presented. It was informed by, and builds on, current research into teaching and learning about the Holocaust, and research into history education. It reflects an emerging trend in research into what is often called 'Holocaust Education' by focusing on learning over teaching, depicting, as had not been done previously, classroom encounters in which Key Stage 3 students learned about this topic. It is timely, reflecting the continuing and arguably increasing prominence of the Holocaust in educational, political and popular culture, when the events are on the cusp of human memory, and capturing and examining how students make sense of them is more important than ever. Finally, it is hoped that this thesis will be useful to those who study teaching and learning about history, and about the Holocaust, and particularly to practitioners charged with educating about the topic, for whom the final chapter on 'Recommendations' is particularly pertinent.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Existing research into teaching and learning about the Holocaust

 In 2012, when this study began, in England at least, research into teaching and learning about the Holocaust prioritised 'teachers over learners' (Richardson, 2018: 83) and did not focus on 'the learning process' (Gray, 2014b: 306). Indeed:

> Debates about the content of Holocaust curricula, the subject's uniqueness and the aims of teaching it have been important, and at times very productive, yet they have inadvertently marginalized the value of accounting for the learners; their preconceptions, attitudes, understandings and outlook.
>
> Gray (2014a: 2)

Within the literature there were discussions of teaching about the Holocaust in different curriculum areas. Most pertinent to this research, Haydn (2000), Russell, (2006), and Salmons (2001 and 2010) discussed teaching about the Holocaust through history. There was also literature on teaching about the topic through religious education (Foster and Mercier, 2000a and 2000b and Short, 1994), English or literature (LaBonty, 2008, McGuinn, 2000, Parks and Spector, 2008), and citizenship or civics (Cowan and Maitles, 2008, Mckenna, 2008, Pettigrew, 2010 and Stambler, 2008). Literature also discussed teaching about the Holocaust in different educational contexts, including museums (Davies et al., 2000), authentic sites (Andrews, 2010, Cowan and Maitles, 2011, Oleksy, 2000, and Waters, 2010), urban classrooms (Bond, 2008), and multicultural classrooms (Short, 2012). Further literature explored wider issues around teaching about the Holocaust, including Short (1991, 1994a) on ethical considerations when teaching about the topic, and Hector (2000), and Lindquist (2006) on pedagogy.

Such literature explored what can be taught, and for what purpose, and how the Holocaust should be framed in discussions with students (Gray, 2014a). Yet it did not explore students' ideas about the Holocaust before or after their lessons on the topic, or how students respond to the teaching approaches. Even texts on preconceptions

were generally framed without reference to individual students or how these preconceptions informed their engagement with ideas presented to them by their teachers. These included Totten (2002), which provided a thorough examination of common misconceptions of the Holocaust with significant implications for teaching, but did not present research on specific students. When this research began, most literature exploring education about the Holocaust focused on teaching over learning.

Research conducted outside the UK explored students' understandings of the Holocaust. Research conducted in the USA (Cohen, 2009), Canada (Jedwab, 2010), Ukraine (Ivanova, 2004), Romania, (Gross, 2013) Latvia, (Misco, 2008) Slovakia, (Michaels, 2013) Germany, (Welzer, 2008) and Israel (Cohen, 2013) was usefully summarised in Gray (2014a). Gray's synthesis of such research highlighted enormous differences in the findings of the various studies. For example, one teacher quoted in Misco (2008) suggested students in Latvia 'don't have any idea' about the events of the Holocaust; by contrast, Cohen (2013) found that 'Israeli students' knowledge of the Holocaust is vast and almost universal' (Gray, 2014c: 11). This extreme contrast suggested students' understandings are informed by their national context since the:

> meaning and significance of Holocaust education vary with the peoples to
> whom and the places where it is taught.

<div align="center">Acedo (2010:1)</div>

This rendered such international research more useful methodologically than substantively for studying the ideas held by students in England.

Even the most relevant literature conducted in England shed little light on students' experiences. Pettigrew et al. (2009) examined secondary school teachers' experiences of teaching about the topic. 693 / 2108 participants who completed the survey and 54 / 68 participants involved in follow up interviews were teachers of history (Ibid, 23 and 19, respectively), as were those involved in this study. The study identified the resources teachers used most when teaching about the Holocaust, their definitions of the term, and their aims when discussing the events in the classroom, which had implications for students' classroom experiences. Yet although it suggested what happened during lessons on the Holocaust (discussed below), it was not an explicit study of students' understandings, or of how they responded to the teaching approaches which they encountered. Teachers were quoted. Their students were not,

because they were not the focus of the study. So even the most pertinent study about teaching and learning about the Holocaust in England was not focused on learners' experiences.

In Scotland, Cowan and Maitles explored whether learning about the Holocaust helps students develop more positive attitudes towards others from different ethnic groups. Their study examined students' ideas and how they developed over time. It focused on the citizenship attitudes and values of upper primary students, aged 11-12, who were learning in a different national and curriculum context than those I would study, and were slightly younger. The study was conducted through a survey designed to 'ascertain change in some of the values and attitudes' related to the citizenship curriculum (Maitles, 2008: 345). Within the research, then, was an assumption that changes in attitude were likely. Pupils' attitudes were captured through surveys conducted before, immediately after, and ten months after their lessons on the Holocaust, the last of which was compared with responses from students who had not studied the topic.

The study found students who had studied aspects of the Holocaust 'maintained more positive values than had their peers who had not' (Ibid, 341), leading to the conclusion that 'learning about the Holocaust can have both an immediate and a lasting impact on pupils' values' (Ibid, 350). Inherent in the study was the belief that students can and should learn about the Holocaust to develop moral attitudes, a belief apparently borne out by its results. However, its use of a survey to measure such attitudes meant that the study was still framed within a discussion of teaching over learning. It examined the extent to which students took specific beliefs from their lessons, whereas I wanted to explore how students make sense of the topic themselves. Karayianni (2020) critiqued some of the findings of Maitles (2008) and other literature based on the study, ultimately concluding that the data from Foster et al. (2016):

> do not seem to justify assumptions regarding the benefits of studying the Holocaust for the promotion of civic and moral objectives as the study of the Holocaust in primary school does not seem to have added value on these students' attitudes and values.
>
> Karayianni (2020: 104)

Nonetheless, the study provided a useful example of how research can be conducted which discerns how students' ideas change over time.

Research from outside of the UK explored students' experiences of learning about the Holocaust in high school. One such study was 'Mind the gap: Holocaust education in Germany, between pedagogical intentions and classroom interactions' (Meseth and Proske, 2010). Within the title, the mention of 'students' suggested learners would be central to the research. The mention of 'interactions' also hinted students' understandings would be examined, highlighting the 'gap' between what teachers intend of their lessons and how they are received. However, though concluding students bring into these lessons 'not only their pre-existing knowledge about the topic, but also themselves as complete individuals' (Ibid, 216), the authors did not explore the ideas students held before or after the lessons or engage with them directly in the research. They concluded by urging teachers to 'present the topic of National Socialism to history classes in ways that allow for controversial discussion' (Ibid, 218) and suggested 'interactions are influenced by the quirky, often unexpected, ways in which students appropriate knowledge' (Ibid, 217). However, they did not demonstrate how such knowledge is 'appropriated', how it relates to previous ideas, or how it is later deployed. Students' contributions were generally paraphrased and unattributed to individual students. Consequently, the text did not explore the students' ideas about the Holocaust or present what happens in lessons when students learn about the events, which were the core interests of this research.

The most prolific writer on students' experiences when learning about the Holocaust is Schweber, who has published several texts reflecting real classroom practice in different educational contexts in the US (Schweber, 2004, 2008a and 2008b). Particularly pertinent to this study, Schweber (2004) depicted four teaching programmes on the Holocaust led by high school teachers. The author described her work as mapping 'unchartered territory' (Ibid, 11) by critiquing the teachers' approaches. Each approach was presented as a separate case study. In contrast to the focus of this research, the teaching approaches were the focus of, and provided the framing for, the research, rather than the ideas held by the students. Importantly, however, within the text, students were quoted directly in lesson observations and in Schweber's discussion of their responses to follow up activities and interviews.

One of Schweber's conclusions was 'that the complexities involved in understanding the events of the Holocaust, its iconic status, its politicised usages and inevitable moral lessons, demand that we not pursue oversimplification in its teaching, no matter how seductive that urge' (Schweber, 2004: 167). It is interesting that Schweber's conclusions focused on teaching rather than learning, probably due to her anticipated readership being educators rather than students. By observing teachers whose courses came recommended, Schweber was presenting accounts of students' experiences which were somewhat atypical, and in which the teacher's approach, rather than the students' experiences, were the primary focus, since this was how the classes were selected. Nonetheless, the text provided an approach to emulate, drawing as it did on observations of students, a commentary on how they described what they learned, and captivating depictions of real classroom experiences.

Recent research into teaching and learning about the Holocaust

Since 2012, further texts have focused on teaching about the Holocaust. Gray (2015) outlined several pedagogical considerations for teaching about the topic and provided practical teaching resources. Gray (2014a) explored contemporary issues facing teachers of the Holocaust, including discussions on the implications of new technologies. Totten and Feinburg (2016) presented '"real world" perspectives on how to teach young people about the Holocaust (Totten and Feinburg, 2016: 1). Meinecke's chapter on misconceptions problematised students' ideas about the Holocaust, and Culbertson's explored 'iconic' resources, many of which Pettigrew et al. (2009) suggested were used in English schools. Cowan and Maitles (2017) provided an overview of issues facing educators teaching about the Holocaust in primary and secondary schools. The authors 'advocate' (Ibid, 150) the use of a 'spiral curriculum' to teach about the topic. Such a curriculum enables students 'to revisit a topic, theme or subject several times throughout their school career' (Ibid, 102), encountering more challenging ideas as they mature. Additionally, Foster et al. (2020) explored 'contemporary challenges and controversies' in teaching and learning about the Holocaust, using research into students' ideas about the Holocaust including Foster et al. (2016) and Gray (2014b), discussed below. Though these texts added to the literature on teaching about the Holocaust, they shed little light on the experience of learning about it. However, since 2012 three texts focused explicitly on secondary

school students' ideas about the Holocaust or their experiences of learning about it: Richardson (20120), Gray (2014b) and Foster et al. (2016).

Richardson (2012) involved 48 students, aged 13-17, who were in Years 9, 10 or 12 at the time of the study, all of whom had learned about the Holocaust whilst in Year 9 (Richardson, 2012: 64). Richardson conducted 'semi-structured interviews' with the students to examine their knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust, their 'learning journey' when exploring the topic, their 'emotional engagement' when learning about it and their 'reflective interpretations' of what took place (Ibid, 72). He interviewed the heads of history and religious studies (Ibid, 64), to elicit their reflections on those lessons. Richardson's inclusion of more students than teachers in his study, and reference to students' own words, were responses to his observation that there had 'been relatively little research within the field of Holocaust Education over the past thirty years. What little there had been tended to focus on teachers' perspectives' (Ibid, 17).

Richardson's students had learned about the Holocaust in Year 9 history lessons. Contrastingly, Gray (2014b) focused on students before they learned about it, examining 'what knowledge thirteen and fourteen-year-olds in English schools have about the Holocaust'. Together, the studies presented students' ideas about the Holocaust on either side of the lessons I envisioned exploring. Gray asked 298 students to complete a spider diagram task on which they were asked to write 'things that you know about the way that the Jews[2] were treated during the Second World War', and a questionnaire asking open and closed questions. 51 were also involved in semi-structured interviews (Ibid, 142). He explored the nature and some potential origins of the students' knowledge and understandings of the Holocaust.

Finally, published as I was completing my fieldwork, Foster et al. (2016) was 'the world's largest ever study of its kind, drawing on the contributions of more than 9,500 students across all years of secondary school in England' (Ibid,1). The research aimed to 'provide a detailed national portrait of students' knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust', analysing survey responses from 7,952 students and focus group

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[2] The term 'the Jews' is used here, and throughout this thesis, only when direct quotation from literature or from a student or teacher participant. It is problematised on page 22.

interviews with 244 students' (Ibid,1). Providing a comprehensive account of the position of the Holocaust in the curriculum in England, the research discussed its place in popular culture and political discourse, contextualising the research and exploring the potential origins of students' understandings. The research discussed students' attitudes towards learning about the Holocaust and provided an 'illustration of what students appear to know – and are able to recall – about specific aspects' of the Holocaust (Ibid,11). Significantly, the research drew on responses from secondary school students from all years, aged 11 -18, including students who, like Gray's, had not yet formally learned about the topic and students like Richardson's who had. The results were presented for all students, and, sometimes also by year group, allowing an exploration of ideas held by students of different ages and an examination of how their ideas appear to develop over time. In such cases, the responses of Year 8 students were particularly useful because they were less likely to have studied the Holocaust in their Key Stage 3 history lessons and so were at a similar stage of their learning about the topic as my student participants would be when I began my fieldwork.

Richardson (2012) and Gray (2014b) informed my research approach, Foster et al. (2016) provided questions to ask of my data once the fieldwork was complete. Each had particular foci, but these studies shared an interest in students' ideas about the Holocaust, albeit at different stages of their learning about it. Consequently, they are considered together, below, to demonstrate what was known about Key Stage 3 students' ideas about the Holocaust, before and whilst this research was completed.

Students' initial ideas about the Holocaust

Gray (2014b) found 'pupils in Year 9 of secondary education possess meaningful, and in some cases considerable, knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust before they formally study it' (Ibid, 155). A useful framework for interrogating this 'knowledge and understanding' came from students' answers when asked to 'describe in one or two sentences what you think the Holocaust was' (Foster et al., 2016: 41). These authors 'did not ask students to demonstrate *everything* they knew about the Holocaust', but their answers indicated knowledge they chose to 'prioritise' in their answer (Ibid, 41). The authors observed 'students overwhelmingly prioritised the identification of an action or series of actions (most commonly 'killing', 'murdering',

and/or 'taking to concentration camps') committed by named perpetrators (most commonly 'Hitler' and/or 'the Nazis') upon named victims (most commonly 'the Jews')' (Ibid, 37). Their ideas about such 'actions', 'perpetrators' and 'victims' inform the discussions below.

'The single strongest association that students made in their descriptions of the Holocaust was the "Jews" or related references to "Jewishness"' (Ibid, 44). The 533 Year 7 respondents used the term 472 times in their descriptions; the 854 Year 8 respondents used it 862 times in theirs (Ibid, 60). This suggested students who were unlikely to have studied the Holocaust in their Key Stage 3 history lessons still associated the term with 'Jewishness'. The terms associated with 'Jewishness' were used with 'considerable consistency' by students of all ages, and regardless of whether they claimed to have learned about the topic in school (Ibid, 60).

It cannot be discerned from Gray (2014b) whether his students connected the concepts of the 'Holocaust' and 'Jewishness' before learning about the topic. The first task Gray asked his participants to complete was a 'spider diagram activity', writing 'things that you know about the way that the Jews were treated during the Second World War' (Gray, 2014b: 136). Gray introduced the term 'the Jews' to students before examining their preconceptions of the Holocaust. Neither his spider diagram activity nor his questionnaire used the term 'Holocaust', which he used subsequently when conducting his interviews. He had not included the term in his final research tools because, whilst piloting his spider diagram activity, some students indicated they did not know its meaning, even though it transpired through his discussions that they 'did know quite a lot about the Holocaust, and they had simply not come across the term' (Gray, 2014b:135). It is difficult to conclude whether Gray's students knew 'the treatment' of Jewish people during the Second World War is referred to as 'The Holocaust'.

The study, however, raised interesting points about how the students perceived the Jewish people whom Foster et al. (2016) claimed were central to their ideas about the Holocaust. 'There was no general consensus among the pupils as to precisely who the Jews were' (Gray, 2014b: 185), but there was a 'prevalence of negative stereotyping in pupils' answers' (Ibid,191), with students mentioning 'dark eyes' and 'dark curly hair' (Ibid, 181). Gray also found it 'difficult to know whether pupils

understand the Holocaust as referring to only Jewish deaths or to all sorts of Nazi victims' (Ibid, 164). This suggested issues worthy of further exploration. How do Key Stage 3 students perceive the victims of the Holocaust? Do they consider only Jewish people to be victims? How do they think 'Jewishness operates as a marker of identity' (Foster et al., 2016: 46)? How common are these negative attitudes about Jewish people and would students respond to depictions which challenged these beliefs?

Gray (2014b) further suggested students were likely to begin their history lessons on the Holocaust positioning Hitler at the centre of the events, as a combination of cause and perpetrator. Gray asked his students who carried out 'the treatment' of Jewish people and found 'many pupils had simplistic understandings of the issue', with 93% of his 298 pupils writing only one or two answers to this question (Ibid, 210). Their explanations 'revolved around the character of Adolf Hitler' (Ibid, 198). 66.8% mentioned him in their answers on 'who carried out this treatment?' (Ibid, 209) and 212 of 298 students mentioned him on their spider diagrams (Ibid, 156). 'Hitler' was also the third most frequently used term in the students' descriptions of the Holocaust (Foster et al., 2016: 41), irrespective of whether they had learned about the Holocaust in school (Ibid, 60) and 91.4% of students recognised Hitler was 'associated with the Holocaust' (Ibid, 51). 'Hitler appears to be awarded singular agency', is a 'personification' of the Holocaust' (Ibid, 47) and was 'the man who began antisemitism' or 'created antisemitic views' (Ibid, 57). This raised questions worthy of exploration, regarding whether students really believe Hitler was the only or primary perpetrator of the Holocaust, responsible for 'micro-managing Jewish policy?' (Gray, 2014b: 213) or rather use Hitler 'as a synonym for the Nazis' (Ibid, 199), understanding others were also involved.

Students' preconceptions of the 'actions' (Foster et. al, 2016) of the Holocaust focused on events enacted in concentration camps. When describing the Holocaust, most wrote about 'killing', 'murdering', and/or 'taking to concentration camps' and 'Concentration camps appear to play a centrally important role in students' conceptions of the Holocaust. In many students' descriptions, the two terms seemed to be used and understood synonymously' (Ibid, 37). In Gray (2014b), when asked what they knew about the 'treatment of Jews during the Second World War', the students' 'most repeated theme [. . .] was that of the camps' which connected to 'the second most common type of answer, which was statements concerning Jews being

killed or dying' (Ibid, 156). Many students cited significant aspects of what happened in the camps, and many 'mentioned either camps directly or indirectly through work, slavery or gassing' (Ibid, 219). However, the camp system seemed to cause students confusion. Camps held 'enormous representational significance' (Foster et al., 2016: 49) but students' ideas were not 'underpinned by very comprehensive understanding' (Ibid, 50). The limitations of their ideas were indicated by the fact 71% of all students recognised Auschwitz was 'associated' with the Holocaust, but only 15.2% recognised Bergen-Belsen was, and only 14.9% recognised Treblinka was (Ibid, 51). This suggested it is worth exploring the students' ideas about the camps, where these ideas come from and why some camps appear more familiar to the students than others.

Though students associated camps with the Holocaust, they appeared less familiar with other Holocaust-related sites, being 'very ignorant of the ghettos and the *Einsatzgruppen'* (Gray, 2014b: 248). The role of the *Einsatzgruppen* is apparently unfamiliar to those in Key Stage 3, and only slightly more familiar to older students (Foster et al., 2016: 194). Only 24.3% of all students recognise the *Einsatzgruppen* were 'associated' with the Holocaust (Ibid, 51) which was 'less surprising when cross-referenced with the research of (Pettigrew et al., 2009), which concluded teachers typically ignored or did not know about this important aspect of the Holocaust' (Gray, 2014b: 214). Foster et al. (2016) also found that, though the likelihood of students identifying a definition of a ghetto from a multiple-choice question increased with their age, the students demonstrated a lack of clarity regarding how ghettos connected to the development of the Holocaust (Ibid, 193-4). This raised questions about why the students appeared to have ideas about the concentration camps, but not of the *Einsatzgruppen* or ghettos, and how this might relate to their earlier encounters with depictions of the Holocaust. It also raised questions about how they respond to less familiar aspects of the Holocaust when presented with them during their history lessons.

Though Key Stage 3 students appear to hold some understandings of the victims, perpetrators, and actions of the Holocaust, they had a less clear sense of its historical or geographical context. Fewer referred to a 'specific timeframe or geographical location within their description' of the Holocaust (Ibid, 37). '24.7 per cent referred to a timeframe' and '14.9 per cent located (the Holocaust) geographically' (Ibid, 44). This was not evidence they did not understand these issues but suggested they did not

'prioritise' (Ibid, 41) them whilst writing their descriptions. The locations of the Holocaust confused students. Before learning about the Holocaust, pupils were more likely to think the murder of Jewish people took place in Germany than anywhere else (Gray, 2014b: 272) and, when describing the Holocaust, the most common terms related to a location were 'Germany', mentioned by 590 / 6094 respondents, and 'Nazi Germany', mentioned by 144 / 6094 (Foster et al., 2016: 55). When asked 'which country did the largest number of Jewish people murdered during the Holocaust come from?' Germany was the most chosen response for students from Years 7 to 12, with Poland only becoming the most popular choice in Year 13 (Ibid, 189). This raised the question - where did such misconceptions originate?

A superficial reading of the research suggested students were less confused regarding the timeframe of the Holocaust. Gray (2014b) used the term 'Second World War' in his spider diagram activity, making it difficult to assess whether his participants had previously known the events of the Holocaust took place then. 55.3% of Year 7 students and 61% of Year 8 students correctly answered, on a multiple-choice question, that the Holocaust happened in the 1940s (Ibid, 174). This suggested that, before studying the events, most students had notions of their chronology. However, 40.2% of all students 'believed that the mass killings began when Hitler was appointed Chancellor in January 1933' (Ibid, 175). This suggested many would have chosen '1930s' had this been an option for the question 'when did the Holocaust happen?' This raised further questions regarding how students perceive the Holocaust's connection to the timeframes of Nazi Germany and the Second World War, and how such perceptions relate to their other ideas about the events. Were their ideas about the timing of the Holocaust-related to their perceptions of Hitler, for example? Did they perceive Hitler as so 'profoundly important' (Ibid, 56) that they thought the Holocaust began as soon as he took power? Or were they, rather, using Hitler's becoming Chancellor as a marker which allowed them to pinpoint the events at a particular time?

One final point of interest was that Foster et al. (2016) also explored how much the students believed they knew about the Holocaust, and how confident they were in answering some of the multiple-choice questions which explored their substantive understandings. When asked how much they thought they knew about this history, 56.4% of participants suggested they knew 'lots' or 'quite a lot' about the Holocaust (Ibid, 66). Significantly, some of their collective confidence appeared misplaced.

A graph illustrated, in reference to 11 multiple-choice questions 'The percentage of students who were at least fairly confident they had given the correct answer for each question (Ibid, 68). This was presented against the percentage of students who gave the correct answer. The students were collectively more correct than they were confident in their answers to only two of these questions. These asked 'When did the Holocaust happen?' and 'What were Nazi ghettos?' (Ibid). It is perhaps surprising they appeared both confident and knowledgeable in their answers on the ghettos, given Gray (2014) suggested ghettos were a lesser-known aspect of the Holocaust than the concentration camps. However, I would argue that their answers may have been informed, in part, through a process of elimination. Three out of five optional answers referred to the persecution of non-Jewish individuals - Roma, political opponents and gay men (Ibid, 237). As noted, most students assumed the victims of the Holocaust were Jewish people (page 32). The other incorrect answer related to gas chambers, which students were potentially likely to locate in concentration camps. This left the correct answer, 'Parts of the town where Jews were forced to live, in order to separate them from the rest of the population', as the only answer which would be consistent with their other collective understandings of the victims of the Holocaust and how they were treated. The students were equally confident and correct in answering 'Approximately how many Jews in all of Europe were killed during the Holocaust?' However, they were more confident than correct in answering all eight other substantive questions. This raises questions about where this confidence comes from, and about its implications when students are presented with ideas which contradict the ideas which they appear to believe so strongly.

These studies suggested the ideas about the Holocaust which students taking part in this study were likely to hold at the start of the study. They suggested students' commonly held ideas about Jewish people, and about Hitler's centrality to the events. They suggested students were more familiar with events located within concentration camps than outside of them, and more familiar with the fact the Holocaust involved mass-murder than with the timings or locations in which this was carried out. This provided useful grounding for this study, and allowed, subsequently, an examination of the degree to which my participants held views which were typical of their age.

However, these studies also raised questions about where such ideas come from which were also explored in Richardson (2012), Gray (2014b) and Foster et al. (2016).

Students' initial encounters with depictions of the Holocaust

These studies suggested that, before learning about it during their Key Stage 3 history lessons, students are likely to encounter depictions of the Holocaust in a series of places. These include the primary school, other subjects in secondary school, and books and films. In books and films, two narratives appear particularly important: the stories of Anne Frank and *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*. Students also have 'subliminal, cultural exposure to the subject' of the Holocaust, encounter it as 'just one of those things' or 'know about it without realising that they've learned about it' (Foster et al., 2016:76). The literature suggested the ideas which students potentially take from these encounters, partially explaining the ideas about the Holocaust they initially hold.

28.5% of students claimed to have learned about the Holocaust before beginning secondary school (Foster et al., 2016:74). Yet little is known about 'the extent that the Holocaust is part of the primary school curriculum; how the topic is approached; the knowledge of non-history specialist primary teachers delivering the subject; the impact that learning about the Holocaust has on children' (Hale, 2018: 222). There is debate on whether students should be taught about the topic at primary age. Cowan and Maitles (2017) discussed the potential of primary school lessons on the Holocaust to develop students' sense of citizenship, advocating for learning about the events at such an age as part of a spiral curriculum. However, this idea is contentious.

Szejnmann suggested 'that learning about the Holocaust is important to primary students' understanding of the Second World War and to their understanding of the world in which they live' (Szejnmann, 2018: vi). Yet the editor's acknowledgment that 'It is unlikely that (the) book will change critics' minds' (Ibid, vi) indicated the strength of opinion on this issue. Those opposing teaching about the topic at primary age include organisations leading teaching and learning about the Holocaust. The Holocaust Educational Trust, for example, 'does not believe that wartime persecution and murder are appropriate topics for this level' (Holocaust Educational Trust, 2016c: 3) and the Imperial War Museum, London, recommends a minimum age of 14 for visitors to their Holocaust Exhibition. Yet, echoing a pattern in the literature on teaching

about the Holocaust more generally, more has been written on what can or should be taught to primary school pupils than on what is being learned, how, and with what consequence. There is a 'stark absence' of research into teaching about the Holocaust in primary schools which explores 'the potential impact on pupils' cognitive, emotional, or moral development' (Karayianni, 2020: 95). Consequently, Foster et al. (2016) suggested a need to examine 'What do students learn about the Holocaust in primary school? In what contexts? To what extent is this considered age-appropriate?' (Ibid, 222). This research provided an opportunity to explore Key Stage 3 students' recollections of those lessons, and the ideas about the Holocaust which they recall taking from them.

Pettigrew et al. (2009) highlighted subjects in which students study the Holocaust before learning about it in their history lessons, since it is only 'in Year 9 that history becomes the dominant subject area in which teaching about the Holocaust takes place (Ibid, 7). Significantly for the Year 9 students I intended to study:

> if a student encounters the Holocaust at school in Years 7 and 8, it is likely that this will take place in a subject other than history, most notably within RE.
>
> Ibid

This raised questions about how ideas from these lessons contribute to their preconceptions of the Holocaust. Since Gray (2014b) studied students who had not 'formally' studied the events previously, their preconceptions could not have come from such lessons and there is 'considerable consistency in the form and core content of students' conceptions, irrespective of whether or not they have ever been taught about the Holocaust in school' (Foster et al., 2016: 60). This hints that preconceptions held by the students discussed in Gray (2014b) might have remained with them even if they had been taught about the events in other lessons before Gray conducted his study. It also suggests that learning about the Holocaust in other subject areas does not greatly influence the ideas which students take into their Key Stage 3 history lessons on the topic. This has significant pedagogical implications, and would need sensitive exploration within the research, but did raise questions about what, if anything, the students' felt they took from such lessons.

The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas and the story of Anne Frank were 'by far the two most popular sources' (Gray, 2014b: 170) known by students before they learned about the Holocaust. For students aged 11 – 18, *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* was 'by a large margin, the most read book and the most watched film' (Foster et al., 2016: 2). These two narratives were typically familiar to Year 8 students. Of Year 8 students who had read a book on the topic, 80% had read *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* and 59% had read *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Ibid,79). *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* was the most watched film, with 84% of Year 8 students who had watched any film on the Holocaust claiming to have watched it (Ibid, 80). It was essential to explore existing research about both narratives, and the narratives themselves, because 'in all texts, Holocaust emplotment (the way events are sequenced) and enfigurement (the characterisation of historical actors) position students to learn certain lessons rather than others' (Spector and Jones, 2007: 37).

Anne Frank was mentioned by 11 / 6094 students who wrote a description of the Holocaust, and hers was the only name mentioned more than 10 times (Foster et al., 2016: 46). She was also mentioned by 43 / 298 students who completed a spider diagram activity on the treatment of Jewish people during the Second World War (Gray, 2014b: 156). She was the victim of the Holocaust to whom students were most likely to refer when asked about the Holocaust before formally studying it. Anne Frank's story, and its use in the classroom, has been discussed elsewhere. Cole (1999) described the story as 'ubiquitous' (Ibid, 23) before critiquing its use as a narrative on the Holocaust. Culbertson (2016) called it an 'iconic' resource for teaching about the topic (Ibid,133). Parks and Spector (2008) included commentary on teaching using the diary, and Cowan and Maitles (2017) mentioned Anne Frank's story in a discussion of sources for use in primary schools (Ibid,110). Most usefully, Spector and Jones (2007) discussed students' initial perceptions of *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Writing of American eighth-grade students (the age of Year 9 students in England), they wrote that they 'like to think of her as being hopeful, in love, frolicking, and – perhaps most surprisingly – still alive' (Ibid, 36) and see her diary as 'more hopeful than sad' (Spector and Jones, 2007: 39).

Regarding emplotment, the diary is an important historical and educational source. It illustrated increasing persecution faced by Jewish people in Germany, the Netherlands and occupied Europe. It presents the Frank family's decision to leave Germany,

Anne's experience of anti-Jewish laws enacted across the Netherlands after the occupation, the decision to go into hiding, the arrangements required to do so, and the fear of being found. Anne's reflections on her relationship with God demonstrate the diversity in religiosity across those targeted by the Nazis. This has potential for demonstrating not all Jewish people persecuted by the Nazis were practicing. The story of those bringing supplies to Anne and her family adds an alternative narrative to less nuanced accounts of the Holocaust which focus on interactions between victims and perpetrators. The text also challenges misconceptions of the Holocaust. For example, Anne's knowledge of the mass-murder, elicited from listening to radio broadcasts from London, contradicts the notion that 'At least early on, no one amongst the Allied Nations knew about the planned and actual annihilation of the Jews by the Nazis' (Totten, 2002: 72).

However, though important, Anne Frank's is a problematic narrative when used as an account of the Holocaust. Though no historical or biographical account can expect to depict everyone's experiences during an historical era, her story was atypical. Most Jewish people in Europe during the Second World War were not in hiding but were forcibly moved from their homes. Nor were they taken care of by friends and colleagues. The story serves as a reminder of what some non-Jewish people could have done, had circumstances allowed; it does not depict what most did. Nor were the Frank family typical of Jewish people before the war, raising concerns regarding enfigurement. No family absolutely typifies families from any community, but the Frank family owned a business, were middle class, and assimilated within first German and then Dutch society. Anne Frank wrote that:

> Father was born in Frankfurt am Main to very wealthy parents: Michael Frank owned a bank and became a millionaire, and Alice Stern's parents were prominent and well to do.

> Anne Frank, Monday 8th May 1944

Though she explained much of the wealth was lost after the death of her grandfather, the First World War and hyperinflation, she went on to write 'So Father was extremely well bred'. This experience of wealth rendered them different from, for example, most Jewish people in the shtetls of Eastern Europe. This atypicality poses challenges for students trying to understand life for Jewish people before the war. They could find it

difficult to understand the variety of experiences and cultural practices found in Jewish communities across Europe.

These are not criticisms of the diary or the Frank family, but comments on the use of their narrative alone to understand the nature of the Holocaust. Anne Frank's story was also atypical in terms of her experience after the annex was raided. Although sent, after Westerbork, to Auschwitz, Anne was not murdered there. Her death in Bergen-Belsen was by design since the Nazis allowed diseases like typhus to flourish. However, she did not die in the gas chambers in which most of Amsterdam's Jewish population were killed. Though Anne and her family were victims of the Holocaust, their story was different from those of most Jewish people in the Netherlands during the war.

Finally, although Anne Frank wrote about living in Amsterdam before going into hiding, her diary makes relatively little reference to the war being conducted whilst she wrote. Indeed, the first entries suggest the war was over. On June 20th 1942, days after Anne started her diary, she wrote 'After May 1940 the good times were few and far between: first there was the war, then the capitulation and then the arrival of the Germans, which is when the trouble started for the Jews'. Her sequencing of the events could lead the reader to assume the war had ended by the time Anne was writing. This is, of course, a significant misreading. However, given many students, as will be demonstrated, only read what they described as 'the beginning' of the diary, this possible misreading is potentially significant. The next mention of the war was on 12th July 1942: 'I have plenty of dreams, but the reality is that we will have to stay here until the war is over'. This reference, several weeks later, reminds the reader that the war was ongoing; but should students not get this far in the text, this may well elude them.

Given his prominence in students' answers on the Holocaust, the enfigurement of Hitler in the text of the diary required exploration. The term 'Nazis' is never referenced. Anne referred to the occupiers as 'Germans,' throughout. She did, however, refer to Hitler. On 20th June 1942 she wrote 'Our lives were not without anxiety, since our relatives in Germany were suffering under Hitler's anti-Jewish laws'. Anne's depiction of anti-Jewish policies being Hitler's was echoed throughout her diary. On 9th October 1942 she wrote 'Hitler took away our nationality long ago'. On 19th March 1943 she wrote 'The Fuhrer has been talking to wounded soldiers. We heard him on the radio,

and it was pathetic'. On 5th June 1944 she described the Fifth Army occupying Rome as 'Great propaganda for Hitler,' and on 21st July 1944 she wrote about the attempt on Hitler's life during the July Bomb Plot. This inclusion of Hitler, rather than the Nazis, in her accounts of those involved in decision-making, strategising, and celebrations present Hitler at the centre of what happened. More limited references to other Nazi leaders, and the omission of the term 'Nazis' in the text , has implications for how it is read by students.

Much has been written on John Boyne's 2006 novel *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* and its film adaptation by Miramax (2008). They tell the story of Bruno, the son of a Nazi commandant, who befriends Schmuel, a Jewish boy living on the other side of a fence, in a concentration and death camp. At the end, Bruno crawls under a fence to join Shmuel. The climax sees the boys holding hands and walking into a gas chamber, and Bruno's parents' realisation of what has happened to their son. The response to both, within literature on teaching and learning about the Holocaust, was critical. Teachers have been advised 'to exercise caution when using' the text, because of its 'historical inaccuracies' (Cowan and Maitles, 2017:119), because it 'tells us more about the state of Holocaust awareness in Ireland at the start of the twenty-first century than it does about the Holocaust itself' (Jackson, 2020: 140). It has been described as 'a curse for Holocaust education' (Gray, 2014c: 109).

Concerns were raised on the book's publication. In a damning article published in the *Literary Review*, Cesarani described the plot as 'utterly implausible' (Cesarani, 2008). He criticised the depiction of Bruno's naiveté regarding his father's work, and his unfamiliarity with the language of the Nazi regime, indicated by his inability to pronounce 'Auschwitz' and 'Fuhrer' (Ibid). He wrote that a basic conceit of the narrative, that Shmuel, a Jewish child, lived in Auschwitz rather than being killed on arrival, was flawed, and that the fence Bruno 'squirms under' would have been electrified. Cesarani also raised moral issues with the narrative. He wrote that, at the end, 'we are overwhelmed by the grief of a Nazi mass murderer and his complicit Frau over the loss of their nice Aryan boy,' suggesting the overall message of the film appears to be 'you should keep a closer eye on your kids,' (Ibid) and that the death of

Bruno and Shmuel is presented as 'a bizarre health and safety incident' rather than as part of a wider narrative of genocidal murder.

Further moral concerns can also be raised about the enfigurement of Bruno and Shmuel. Shmuel, the Jewish character, is significantly less developed than Bruno, the son of the Nazi Commandant. The story is written through Bruno's perspective, with Shmuel's experiences and thoughts downplayed. One noticeable exception is when Bruno, shaven because of head lice and wearing a prison uniform, faces Shmuel. Shmuel's thought, that the boys were 'exactly the same really,' (Boyne, 2006: 203) was his only thought in the book. It is ironic it was the Jewish character who made the discovery that Jewish people and Germans are 'the same,' rather than the son of the Nazi.

Gray (2014b) suggested a correlation between the book and film's narrative and the ideas about the Holocaust which students hold before they learn about it formally. 'It was not uncommon for pupils to explain Nazi treatment of the Jews through the prism of *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* as though the experiences in this fictional story were typical throughout the period', and perhaps their knowledge of camps but not ghettos or the *Einsatzgruppen* related to the fact these latter aspects are not mentioned in the story (Ibid, 303). Gray found specifics of the story in the students' accounts of the Holocaust, including reference to people being sent for 'showers,' and the propaganda film made in Terezin. He described the use of the phrase 'striped Pyjamas,' as a 'terminological shift in popular discourse (which) appears to be a consequence of *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* as such descriptions of inmates' uniforms do not seem to exist before the publication of John Boyne's novel' (Gray, 2014c:118). Though the phrase pre-dates the book (for example it was used in testimony shared in the Imperial War Museum's Holocaust Exhibition, opened in June 2000), it does appear frequently in students' discussions of the topic, as will be demonstrated.

Further examination suggested other issues with the book and film. That it takes place during the Second World War is not explicit. Bruno says 'I don't like the way we have to turn all the lights off at night now' (Boyne, 2006:8). Mother tells Bruno, 'War is not a fit subject for conversation. I'm afraid we'll be spending too much time talking about it soon' (Ibid,69). Towards the end of the book, Gretel, Bruno's sister, 'hung up maps of

Europe Father had given her, and every day she put little pins into them and moved the pins around constantly after consulting a newspaper' (Ibid, 180). These allusions to blackouts, an approaching war and movement of the front are references to war but implied, not explicit. The narrative can be understood without engaging with them. In the film, soldiers are shown climbing into trucks in the opening montage, as Bruno and his friends run through the street, arms outstretched, playing being airplanes. Bruno is told they will move away 'until the war is won'. Bruno and Gretel's tutor, Herr Lidzt, discuss the 'situation in which our great nation presently finds itself'. Gretel plots the progress of the war on maps on her wall, telling Bruno that people are 'risking their lives for the Fatherland'. An airplane flies overhead during one of Bruno's lessons. Bruno's grandparents are killed in a bombing raid. Towards the end of the film Bruno's father tells him they cannot return to Berlin, because it is 'not safe yet'. The war is alluded to, but the viewer can understand the film without understanding its centrality to the plot. This leads to questions regarding whether students recognise it was set during the Second World War and whether, if not, this contributes to the students' appearing less familiar with the timeframe of the Holocaust than they were with other aspects of what took place.

Similarly, that much of the narrative is set in Nazi-occupied Poland is hardly mentioned in the book or in the film. In the book, Shmuel tells a confused Bruno 'this is Poland' on page 112. Until this point, the reader has only been told the family's new home was, in Mother's words, 'more than a mile away. Quite a lot more than that, in fact' (Ibid, 6). Two characters are described as being from Poland; Pavel, who works in the family's kitchen, and Shmuel. Shmuel tells Bruno that:

> Most of us here (in the camp) are from Poland . . . Although there are some from other places too, like Czechoslovakia and –
>
> Ibid (139)

Shmuel is cut off by Bruno before he can complete the sentence on the nationalities of others in the camp. The fact the camp is in Nazi-occupied Poland is not discussed beyond Shmuel's single statement. In the film, Poland is not mentioned at all.

By comparison, Berlin is mentioned many times in the text, in reference to Bruno's former home, a return visit to attend a family funeral, and a discussion about leaving the camp. In the film, Germany and Berlin are not mentioned, but much of the

iconography of the Nazi era is visible. Nazi uniforms are worn by Father and the other officers. The swastika is visible on Bruno's new home. With relatively little reference to Nazi-occupied Poland, by comparison to references to Germany, Berlin, and Nazi iconography, one can understand the book or watch the film and not recognise where the story is set. This leaves the narrative of *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* free of temporal or geographical context. Auschwitz is named (albeit as 'Out-With') in the book but goes unnamed in the film. Yet it is depicted in both using common visual tropes associated with the Holocaust, many of which relate to Auschwitz-Birkenau. High fences surround the camps. The buildings are wooden. Prisoners wear striped uniforms. Symbols on the uniforms indicate why individuals have been sent there. The boys are sent to their deaths in a gas chamber, deceived into doing so because the crowds they are following are told they are going to the showers. Again, this raised questions explored further in this research. Did the students recognise that the story was set primarily in Nazi-occupied Poland, where the real Auschwitz-Birkenau was located? Or did they think the events took place in Germany? Additionally, if they thought the story took place in Germany, could this connect to their locating the Holocaust primarily in Germany too?

Finally, it was important, given his centrality in the students' ideas about the Holocaust, to examine the enfigurement of Hitler in *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*. Hitler is not depicted in the film but appears in the book. Bruno and the narrator refer to him as 'the Fury' throughout. He is described as 'a rather small man,' with 'dark hair, which was cut quite short, and a tiny moustache' (Ibid, 121). He has a particular interest in Father's career and is reported to have said that 'father was a man to watch' (Ibid, 5). A promotion by him led to Bruno and his family moving to the camp. He gave the family a wreath on the death of Bruno's grandmother. He has personal involvement in the events depicted in the book and is personally implicated in much that happened. He is 'the all-powerful presence' which 'reinforces a totally Hitler-centred explanation of the events of the Holocaust' (Jackson, 2020: 146). This raised questions about the relationship between the students' ideas about Hitler's centrality to the Holocaust and his centrality to this familiar narrative.

Foster et al. (2016) examined students' perceptions of the nature of the story of *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* and found most of those involved in focus group interviews knew it was 'a work of fiction based in a historical epoch' (Ibid, 91). Nonetheless,

concerns have been raised about its potential for students' understandings of the Holocaust, and about the connections between the students' ideas about the Holocaust and their familiarity with this narrative. This research offered an opportunity to examine the meaning they appeared to draw from it, and how they drew on such ideas when presented with alternatives in their history lessons.

An examination of literature on students' encounters with depictions of the Holocaust raised a series of issues which this research examined. The most significant of these were related to Key Stage 3 students' recollections of their primary school lessons on the Holocaust, how they 'read' the narratives with which they are so commonly familiar, and how this relates to the preconceptions of the Holocaust they hold at the start of their Key Stage 3 history lessons on the topic.

Students' later ideas about the Holocaust

A striking aspect of the literature review was that students who featured in Gray (2014b) expressed similar ideas about the Holocaust to those presented by Richardson (2012). This is significant because Gray was exploring their preconceptions of the Holocaust before they learned about it formally, and Richardson was studying students who had learned about the topic in Year 9 lessons like those I intended to explore. This suggested many of their initial ideas about the Holocaust remained intact throughout and beyond their history lessons on the topic. To elicit their 'knowledge and understanding' about the Holocaust, Richardson's students were asked 'what does the word "Holocaust" mean to you'? (Richardson, 2012: 72 - 74). Their responses were used to explore the 'surface level learning' which they had taken from their lessons. Their definitions of the Holocaust were 'generally accurate in content' (Ibid, 90) which echoed Gray's comment that most students held 'meaningful, and in some cases considerable, knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust before they formally study it' (Gray, 2014b: 155). Like Gray, Richardson examined the understandings, finding that they were 'loosely constructed and lacked clarity' (Richardson, 2012: 90), and characterised them as 'little more than fragments of information' Ibid, 98).

The students 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' (Ibid, 95). Yet they demonstrated 'uncertainty' regarding how other victim

groups were treated (Ibid, 90). This suggested they continued to associate Jewish people with the Holocaust but had not developed their ideas about non-Jewish groups who were persecuted. They also appeared to maintain ideas about the Holocaust in which Hitler was central, suggesting his 'prime culpability' since, when mentioning perpetrators, 'half of those who suggested him did so solely' (Ibid, 96). Many students suggested the Holocaust happened because of 'Hitler's desire for racial purity' (Ibid, 93), suggesting Hitler was not just the perpetrator of the Holocaust but also its cause. Further, they presented ideas in which the concentration camps were hugely significant, though 'few students understood the distinction between the concentration camps and death camps' (Ibid, 91) and their answers were 'Auschwitz-centric' (Ibid, 90). In this regard they were echoing ideas about the Holocaust which were presented also in Foster et al. (2016), discussed above.

Though they had learned about the topic in their Year 9 history lessons, the students 'did not generally have a grasp of the historical narrative at the heart of their intended learning' (Richardson, 2012: 106). There is a potential methodological explanation for this. Some students interviewed were in Year 12, so their Year 9 lessons on the Holocaust had taken place several years earlier. They might reasonably have forgotten much of what they had learned. However, had their history lessons significantly changed their ideas on the nature of the Holocaust, one would expect their new ideas would remain with them. Richardson was critical neither of the teaching nor the learning which had taken place during the students' lessons on the Holocaust. Rather, his focus was the emotional learning in which the students had engaged, which gave the lessons significance for the students. For example, he commented that the students' reported being 'moved' (Ibid, 107) during these lessons. Nonetheless, it is of note that there was commonality in students' ideas about the Holocaust which were presented before (Gray, 2014b, Foster et al., 2016) and after (Richardson, 2012) their Key Stage 3 history lessons on the topic. This raised questions which were explored in this study, regarding what happened during those lessons, how students responded to them, and, most importantly, how they responded to ideas which appeared to challenge or contradict their preconceptions.

Students' experiences when learning about the Holocaust

Richardson (2012) examined the types of learning in which students engage when taught about the Holocaust. The text suggested students take part in 'affective learning', related to their emotional engagement with the topic, 'connective learning' through which they connect their learning to their world view, and 'surface level learning', which develops their 'academic knowledge and understanding of the topic' (Ibid, 2) and 'historical knowledge of the Holocaust' (Ibid, 90). The study involved interviews with the head of history who had taught some of the lessons, and students who had experienced them. However, it was not designed to depict those lessons, since these had taken place, in some cases, years before the interviews. Indeed, no existing studies depicted Key Stage 3 lessons on the Holocaust.

Pettigrew et al. (2009) explored what teachers suggested happens in their own lessons. The text shed light on teachers' aims, the resources they use and their definitions of the Holocaust. The study suggested that, when asked to choose from a list of aims, history teachers, like teachers of any subject other than citizenship, were likely to choose 'to develop an understanding of the roots and ramifications of prejudice, racism, and stereotyping in any society' (Ibid, 76-77). Citizenship teachers were as likely to choose 'to learn the lessons of the Holocaust and to ensure that a similar human atrocity never happens again' (Ibid, 76-77). The choice of history teachers is of note because other options presented to them were, arguably, more in keeping with the goals of teaching about the past, including those expressed in the National Curriculum (page 16). These included 'to deepen knowledge of World War II and Twentieth Century history', which builds on students' substantive knowledge, or 'to understand and explain the actions of people involved in and affected by an unprecedented historical event' and 'to explore questions about the foundations of Western civilisation' (Ibid), which arguably relate to second-order thinking. Of these, arguably only the first specifically relates to teaching about the Holocaust. This suggested teachers prioritise 'overarching aims which cut across subject boundaries and disciplines' (Ibid, 77), rather than focusing on distinctly historically informed understandings. This had implications for this study, suggesting what the teachers whose lessons were observed might intend them to achieve.

Another useful aspect of the research was the discussion of resources which teachers use whilst teaching about the topic, which shed light on the resources which the

students in this study might encounter. 527 teachers responded to a survey question which invited them to 'provide details of up to three resources that they found particularly useful or effective in their teaching about the Holocaust' (Ibid, 45). The most referenced was the film *Schindler's List*, mentioned by 127 teachers. '*The Diary of Anne Frank* (in both book and film format)' was mentioned by 54 teachers (Ibid). Other resources mentioned included those from leading organisations in teaching and learning about the Holocaust, including the Imperial War Museum and the Holocaust Educational Trust, and other films and documentaries which were mentioned less frequently.

By 2016, when this fieldwork was completed, the educational landscape was different from that of 2009. *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* was mentioned as one of the 'more recent films' to which the teachers referred (Ibid) but went on to have greater prominence. Also, the study itself contributed to the development of a continuing professional development programme for teachers, which included their introduction to a series of materials for use in the classroom. These are referred to in the chapters which follow as being from UCL Centre for Holocaust Education. These were used in the lessons explored in the chapters which follow, and it is highly likely they will be mentioned by teachers completing a follow up piece of research being conducted by the same research team at the time of writing. However, the text suggested the resources which it could be anticipated the students would encounter during their history lessons on which this study would focus.

Pettigrew et al. (2009) also explored how teachers define the Holocaust. It suggested that, when presented with different options, 52.5% chose 'The Holocaust was the persecution and murder of a range of victims perpetrated by the Nazi regime and its collaborators. They were targeted for different reasons and were persecuted in different ways. Victims included Jews, Gypsies[3], disabled people, Poles, Slavs, homosexuals[4], Jehovah's Witness, Soviet prisoners of war, Black people, and other political and ethnic groups' (Ibid, 65 -66). This multi-victim group definition of the Holocaust was preferred by history teachers as well as those of other subjects. This

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[3] The term 'Gypsies' is used here, and throughout this thesis, only when direct quotation from literature or from a student or teacher participant. It is problematised on page 23.

[4] Similarly, there is discussion around the term 'Homosexual' on page 23.

definition differs from those presented by organisations which lead teaching programmes about the Holocaust in the UK (page 14). The teachers' preference for this definition had implications for what would be observed in the classroom. Particularly, as discussed, students generally presented, before learning about the topic, a specifically Jewish notion of the victims of the Holocaust. An interesting area of study was their responses to accounts of the Holocaust which include non-Jewish victims of Nazi persecution.

Beyond Richardson (2012) exploring aspects of learning about the Holocaust, and Pettigrew et al. (2009) presenting some of the ways teachers teach about the topic, there was a lack of literature depicting students' experiences of learning about the Holocaust during their Key Stage 3 history lessons. This meant there was little literature on what happens in such lessons or on how students respond to ideas presented to them. Developing new ideas, based on the information presented to them by their history teachers, requires students' engagement with cognitive processes associated with 'learning' new ideas about the past. The literature on this area comprised the analytical framework of this research and needed to come from other fields – particularly the field of history education, in which cognitive aspects of learning are discussed more explicitly.

Cognitive aspects of learning about the Holocaust

Discussion of cognition in the literature on teaching and learning about the Holocaust focusses on advocating that cognition rather than affective learning be prioritised when teaching about the topic, rather than specifically examining cognitive aspects of learning about the topic. Eckmann (2015) advocated teaching using a cognitive approach, suggesting that, if there is excessive focus on affective learning and students are 'moved to tears', it risks 'sacralising the Holocaust and turning into an ahistorical event' (Ibid, 57). Duck (2008) also discussed cognitive aspects of learning but did so to demonstrate how they can be utilised to achieve affective learning goals. Yet such texts, typically, focus on teaching over learning. The issue of cognition informs a discussion of how teachers should teach, rather than how students can learn.

This lack of discussion of cognition is not specific to literature on teaching and learning about the Holocaust. 'Very little has been written on the relationship between history

education and cognitive psychology' (Fordham, 2017:42) but such research provided a lens for exploring how students make sense of this past. Such research suggested learning has taken place when new information has been stored in the long-term memory (Kirschner et al., 2006: 77) because 'long-term memory is now viewed as the central, dominant structure of human cognition' (Fordham, 2017:37). The research also suggested it is challenging for students to learn new ideas since:

> if the human brain can be understood as an empty reservoir, then the means of getting information into the brain is a thin straw.
>
> Ibid (38)

This had significant implications for this research. Foremost, it highlighted that, for this research to be a study of 'learning', there would have to be an opportunity to examine the ideas students held in their long-term memories, requiring my working with students for months, if not years, after these lessons had taken place. This was not practical for a piece of PhD research. Nor was this my area of interest. I was concerned with how students respond to the ideas with which they are presented, particularly those which challenge their preconceptions, and how express their ideas about the relationship and interconnectedness between the events of the Holocaust, its participants and its causes and consequences. This was not a study of cognition; consequently, the term 'learning' is rarely used in this thesis which discusses, rather, students' engagement with, responses to, and deployment of, different ideas about the Holocaust. Nonetheless, texts on learning about history were essential to its analysis.

Donovan and Bransford (2005) explored what must be in place for learning to happen. The text emerged from research into aspects of learning, and presented in texts on learning in subject-specific fields, including history. The authors suggested new understandings are constructed from a foundation of existing understandings and experiences (Ibid, 4). This highlighted that when Edwards and O'Dowd (2010), Lindquist (2013), and Totten (2002), and others advocated identifying students' prior understandings of the Holocaust before teaching about the topic, the suggestions were not just pedagogically sound but echoed research into cognitive processes. For learning to take place, students need ideas on which to build. Their preconceptions about the Holocaust could support students' learning during their history lessons.

However, 'Prior learning [. . .] can also lead to the development of conceptions that can act as barriers to learning' (Donovan and Bransford, 2005: 5) and there is a need for further research into which 'preconceptions can help or hinder the acquiring of new knowledge' (Gray, 2014b: 306). This was not discernible from existing research which had not explored how students engaged with competing ideas. It was a focus for this research which drew on observations of the students as they were presented with such ideas in their history lessons.

The power of students' preconceptions about the past, and the difficulties associated with challenging them, have been explored in literature on teaching and learning in history. Conway claimed:

> Pupils' preconceptions can be all-pervasive and extremely subtle, as well as drawn from areas or ideas which have nothing to do with the topic at hand, or even history as a subject. The value of being aware of the preconceptions pupils bring, as well as of taking the time to actively investigate them upon occasion is immense but it is not the work of a single topic or exercise; rather, a constant challenge'
>
> Conway (2006:15)

Lee (2005) suggested that 'when we think we are making a difference, students may simply be assimilating what we say into their existing preconceptions' and 'students have ideas about the past, and about history, regardless of what and how we teach them' (Ibid, 70). 'Learners will persist in maintaining the views they already have despite instruction' (Hein, 1998:37) and new learning can sit on a 'teetering cognitive structure that went virtually unchanged from the start of the course to its finish' (Wineburg, 2000: 309). This gap between what teachers teach and what students learn might exist because 'students link knowledge about the past to pre-existing but inappropriate knowledge derived from everyday life' (Ashby et al., 2005: 79). Such challenges appear significant when learning about the Holocaust. Spector and Jones (2007) wrote that their students 'attempted to maintain the hopeful and optimistic version of Anne Frank they brought with them to the study of the diary' (Spector and Jones, 2007: 42). Potentially, others might attempt to maintain their notions of it taking place in camps, located in Germany, or because of Hitler. Each notion is flawed, and

for students to emerge from these lessons maintaining them would be to emerge with significant misunderstandings.

The literature raised questions only answerable by studying the students' ideas before, during and after their history lessons on the topic. How far do their ideas about the Holocaust change? Do they acknowledge the role of others than Hitler, or the significance of spaces outside of Germany and locations other than camps? Or do they present ideas, as Wineburg suggested, which are 'virtually unchanged' from those they held at the beginning of their lessons?

The second requirement for learning new ideas, according to Donovan and Bransford (2005), is factual, conceptual and organisational knowledge which is challenging to acquire. Lowenthal (2005) discusses the challenges posed when students and teachers do not share essential 'terms of discourse'. This could prove particularly hard in relation to learning about the Holocaust. The terms of discourse are numerous. Gray amended his research methods on realising he and his students did not share a familiarity with the term 'The Holocaust' (Gray, 2014b: 136). Even students familiar with the term still need understandings of terms of reference to engage with its meaning. The Holocaust Educational Trust defines the Holocaust as:

> the murder of approximately six million Jewish men, women and children
> by Nazi Germany and its collaborators during the Second World War.

<p align="center">Holocaust Educational Trust (2016a:22)</p>

To make sense of this definition, students need to understand the notion of 'murder', the figure 'six million', the geopolitical implications of the term 'Nazi Germany', the meaning of 'collaborators' in the context of the Second World War, and some of the history of the war itself. These 'terms of discourse' must be shared for students to appreciate that the Holocaust happened outside of Germany, since Europe and North Africa are not mentioned, but Germany is. They also need understandings of traditional western gender roles of the 1930s and 1940s to appreciate 'women and children' were mentioned to highlight that most of those killed were civilians. Without such understandings, students would be unable to grasp the scope and scale of the Holocaust, where it happened, or who were its perpetrators and victims. Understanding even this relatively straightforward definition of the Holocaust requires

familiarity with multiple terms of reference, which is not a criticism of such definitions, but a recognition of the complexities of the Holocaust.

This had implications for this research. It suggested the importance of eliciting the students' ideas about terms which were essential to the depictions of the Holocaust which they were likely to encounter in the classroom. In addition to the terms discussed above, it seemed essential to explore their ideas about other terms which were essential to a nuanced understanding of the Holocaust – the terms 'Jewish' or 'Jews', for example, and the name Hitler, and perhaps the terms 'ghetto' and 'collaborator' - to explore whether students understood them as part of the narrative of the Holocaust.

Shemilt (2005) discussed the importance of contextual knowledge in understanding how different aspects of the past are connected. He wrote, of the challenges facing students as they grapple with the complexities of the past, that:

> the problem is not so much failure to understand bits of content in isolation as failure to conceive of event-space in ways that can allow them to construe each part in relation to the whole and the whole as more than the sum of the parts.
>
> Ibid (87)

Foster et al. (2016) had suggested students generally had fewer ideas about the timing and location of the Holocaust than they had about its victims and perpetrators, or of what took place. One implication of Shemilt (2005) is that students struggle to understand the geography and timing of the Holocaust because of the complexity of the contextual knowledge required to makes sense of it; conversely, without contextual knowledge about geography and timing, it will be more difficult for the students to develop less simplistic understandings of other aspects of the Holocaust. The Holocaust took place in the contexts of, at the very least, the histories of European antisemitism, the rise of the Nazi Party, and the Second World War. Without knowledge of these contexts, students are unlikely to be able to locate the events of the Holocaust culturally, socially, historically or geopolitically. This highlighted a need for this research to examine not just the students' ideas about the Holocaust but also their ideas about the contexts in which it took place. How familiar are they with, for example, the connections between the progress of the war and the development of the Holocaust? Do they know the Nazis and their collaborators controlled countries

outside of Germany? Are they aware of the existence of antisemitism before the rise of the Nazi Party? Finally, what were the implications of their holding or not holding such ideas for how they would engage with depictions of the Holocaust as they were taught about it during their history lessons?

The final requirement for learning, an awareness of metacognitive processes, (Donovan and Bransford, 2005: 2) is discussed less explicitly in research into learning about the past. Yet literature on how students respond to new and challenging ideas sheds light on such cognitive processes, even if the students themselves were not aware of the processes in which they were engaging. The suggestion that students 'contort the past to fit the predetermined meaning we have already assigned to it' (Wineburg, 1999: 490) is one explanation for their appearing to hold similar ideas before and beyond their history lessons on the topic, even if they are unaware they are doing so. However, Spector and Jones (2007) observed a slightly different approach when students encountered writing by Anne Frank which did not support their initial ideas about her. They suggested students 'repel thoughts that may shatter' their ideas about the past (Ibid, 37) and quoted, particularly, Brooke, a student whom they observed 'expurgating text that didn't match her view' (Ibid, 42). These examples reiterate the power of preconceptions. They also suggested strategies I expected to see students using when engaging with ideas which are counter to their own, including those complicating their beliefs about the personal role of Hitler, or the centrality of the camps, in the narrative of the Holocaust. Additionally, the research suggested that when exploring details which run counter to the ideas presented in *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* or the story of Anne Frank, the students might expurgate them, as if the ideas were not there at all.

The literature highlighted the need to explore students' responses in multiple ways, to elicit ideas they had absorbed, rather than those they presented in immediate response to classroom activities. Lee (2005) discussed 'proxies' for learning which students frequently demonstrate, highlighting the importance of not assuming a student's written work indicated their having learned a new idea. Wertsch (2005) highlighted that students present different versions of the past for different audiences and readerships. He used the term 'mastery' to describe the ability to use an account without necessarily believing it, writing that:

The mastery of a cultural tool involves knowing how to use it. For example, the mastery of historical narratives may be reflected in being able to reproduce them or in the ability to employ them to reason about the causes of events or in the motives behind a group's actions.

Ibid (41)

He distinguished between 'mastery', which involves 'cognitive functioning and has relatively little to do with emotional commitment to narratives' (Ibid) and 'appropriation' where such an emotional commitment is evident. Appropriation 'involves a different sort of relationship between agent and cultural tool than does cognitive mastery' (Ibid) because it involves psychological and sociocultural aspects. He further claimed that:

In contrast to the concept of mastery, on which there is an existing body of research, the issue of how texts are appropriated has hardly been explored at all.

Ibid (42)

An exploration of the types of interpretation which students are more likely to 'appropriate' can be found in Barton (2010) which includes a discussion of how students engage more confidently with personal than institutional explanations of the past (Barton, 2010: 245), perhaps explaining why students engage so willingly with the personal stories of Anne Frank or *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas,* or Hitler*.* This raised questions regarding how students engage with other personal accounts presented to them during their history lessons, and, particularly, how they respond to personal accounts which presented contradictory ideas to those with which they were more familiar.

Wertsch (2005) and Lee (2005) highlighted what I could anticipate seeing students doing when encountering new depictions of the Holocaust. The texts suggested students might 'appropriate' some interpretations of the Holocaust, but 'master' others. I might observe them appropriating ideas echoing their initial impressions of the events, relating to the personal role of Hitler or the role of the concentration camps but mastering ideas which their teachers ask them to engage with but run counter to their initial ideas. Perhaps they would master stories of ghettos and *Einsatzgruppen*, rather than appropriate them into their own ideas, since these aspects of that past do not feature prominently in their initial ideas of what took place. They may even be able to

deploy these during lesson times, presenting 'proxies' for learning, in relation to classroom activities, but not accept them as part of their own version of the events. Such considerations had methodological implications for this research and supported the decision to engage in participant observation to gather 'multiple sources of evidence' (Yin, 2009:3). Such evidence provided scope to discriminate proxies from actual changes in the students' ideas and to separate the ideas they had appropriated from those they had mastered for the purposes of a lesson activity.

How does this study respond to and build on existing literature?

When this research began in 2012, there was limited research into the ideas about the Holocaust held by Key Stage 3 students before they learned about the Holocaust. Nor was there any research into students' experiences of those lessons, creating a gap in the literature on how the students drew on their earlier ideas of the topic to make sense of ideas with which they were presented. This was possibly a consequence of a focus on teaching rather than learning which was evident in literature on the Holocaust and on history education more widely. This situation changed in 2012 with the publications of Richardson (2012), then Gray (2014b) and Foster et al. (2016). These collectively explored students' preconceptions about the Holocaust before they learned about it in their history lessons, where such ideas might come from, and what types of learning they engage in during those and other lessons, and the ideas they commonly hold beyond those lessons.

Yet the studies only provided a basis for my exploring my research question; they did not answer it. No study intended to examine individual students' ideas about the Holocaust at different points, and none sought to present what happens during Key Stage 3 history lessons on the topic and how students respond to what they encounter during such lessons. Nor did they seek to examine cognitive aspects of learning, in relation to the Holocaust, which rendered literature from the broader field of history education essential to the analytical framing of this research. Such literature suggested challenges facing students as they encounter depictions of the Holocaust which run counter to their initial ideas, and responses they would potentially demonstrate during the lessons.

The aim of this 'Literature Review' was to demonstrate that this research was 'founded in the field of prior knowledge whilst tentatively indicating that it fills a gap within that

knowledge' (Richardson, 2012: 87). Reviewing the literature was an ongoing process which continues even as I write. This is perhaps best demonstrated by the fact Foster et al. (2016), the text on which I drew the most heavily when sculpting my research questions, was published whilst I completed the final stages of my fieldwork. Most importantly, my reviewing the literature did not happen in isolation; it happened as I was researching, trialling, and evaluating my methodology, as the next chapter explains.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This research was conducted as a case study on multiple sites and informed by the approaches of ethnography. This methodology begins with a discussion of the notion of the case study and the ethnographic approaches on which I drew when conducting the research. This is followed by a narrative on how the research was carried out and how it was in keeping with the ethical considerations outlined in BERA (2018). It concludes with a presentation of the research questions, which, as will be demonstrated is in keeping with the research approach used, were clarified whilst the research was being conducted and the data was being analysed.

Case Studies

Case studies take different forms. Stake (2003) includes an exploration of different types of case study and the types of findings they can present. Stake distinguished between 'intrinsic' and 'instrumental' case studies. An 'intrinsic' case study is:

> undertaken because, first and last, the researcher wants better understanding of this particular case. Here, it is not undertaken primarily because the case represents other cases or because it illustrates a particular trait or problem, but because, in all its particularity and ordinariness, this case itself is of interest.

> Stake, 2003:156

Intrinsic case studies differ from 'instrumental' case studies which 'provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization' (Ibid, 156). This research was closer to an 'instrumental' case study where the 'case' to be examined was Key Stage 3 English secondary school students' sense making of the Holocaust within history lessons. It was conducted in multiple sites. As will be demonstrated, the classes in which the research was conducted were chosen because they were quite typical of classes across England. It was anticipated that the findings drawn from these classes would be indicative of what might have been found if the research had been conducted in other, similar classes.

Yin (2009) suggested three criteria for determining whether a research question can be examined through a case study; if the focus of the research is a 'how' question, if the situation the researcher is exploring is outside of her control, and if the research is positioned in a real life situation (Yin, 2009, 2). According to these criteria, a case study approach was appropriate for an examination of the issues at the heart of this research.

This research sought to examine *how* students make sense of the Holocaust. Had the question focused on *what* sense students make of the Holocaust, for example, what moral lessons they take from their history lessons, alternative approaches would have been, arguably, more appropriate. Such questions could be answered through surveys, perhaps, whereby students record the outcome of their learning themselves (see Maitles, 2008). Contrastingly, this research examines *how* the students engaged in the 'learning processes' (Gray, 2014b: 306) thereby meeting Yin's first criterion for examination through a case study.

Secondly, the research was outside of my control since I did not deliver the history lessons during which the data was collated. This was not practical. I was no longer a classroom teacher. Nor was it desirable as I was keen to explore students' ideas without unduly influencing them. Though it was hoped this thesis would have use for a practitioner readership, it was not practitioner research. There is useful practitioner research presenting case studies of teaching and learning about the Holocaust in which the researcher has control over the teaching and writes a commentary on his or her teaching approach without making claims about what is learned during the lessons. These include Jackson (2013) and Edwards and O'Dowd (2010) which are both cited within the study. These case studies were written for a practitioner readership (the readers of *Teaching History*, a journal written primarily for history teachers) to model a particular pedagogical approach, rather than to theorise on an aspect of learning. That was not the intention of this research, which involved my observing students in another teacher's classroom, having no control over what was being taught, in order to examine how students in typical Key Stage 3 history classrooms make sense of their lessons on the Holocaust.

Finally, the research was also conducted in the 'real life contexts' which comprise Yin's final criterion for case studies. The students were observed in the 'real life contexts' of

their history lessons, in the 'real life context' of their schools, and local communities. The research was conducted in an English context, framed by an educational context shaped by the National Curriculum for England. The fact I was in the lessons as a participant observer (see page 62), though likely to have changed the lessons to a degree, was not intended to take the lessons out of the real life context because, as a researcher, I did not control what was taught and how.

My initial intention was to conduct a single 'instrumental' case study, focused on one Year 9 history class. Ultimately, however, it was decided that richer and more interesting data could be drawn from a case study on multiple sites, which drew on multiple case study analysis. In case studies based on multiple sites, research is conducted in several settings bound together by a common phenomenon or 'quintain' (Stake, 2006: 4). The analysis is drawn from findings from across the sites. In this research, the quintain which united the classes was that they were all spaces in which Key Stage 3 students were taught about the Holocaust and needed to make sense of what they learned. The findings were drawn from a consideration of the data elicited from all classes.

Conducting a case study with multiple Key Stage 3 history classes meant studying in several schools. This enabled me to gather large amounts of data. It also allowed me to explore the experiences of students whose history lessons on the Holocaust differed from each other. This provided opportunities to compare and contrast the students' experiences and the depictions with which they were presented, and to consider similarities and differences in the approaches they used to make sense of such depictions.

Using a case study approach suited the requirements and realities of a PhD study. The case study researcher is the '*primary* instrument for data collection and analysis' (Merriam, 1998: 18), which is appropriate for a PhD study in which the data is collected, analysed and presented by the same candidate. In this study, the data was collated through observations, interviews, and 'conversations with a purpose' (Burgess, 1984: 102), which I led myself and which were conducted in the schools and, primarily, during the students' history lessons. Data was also elicited from ephemera collated in the classrooms (teaching resources, examples of students' written work, for example) which comprised 'multiple sources of evidence' (Yin,

2009:3). Collecting and analysing these 'multiple sources of evidence' involved an engagement with approaches associated with ethnographic research.

Drawing on ethnographic approaches

Ethnographic research involves:

> . . . participating, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions – in fact, collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research.
>
> Hammersley and Atkinson (1995:1)

Delamont used the terms 'ethnography' and 'participant observation' interchangeably (Delamont, 2002: 7) and explained that ethnographic approaches include conducting 'life history interviews, oral histories, studying personal constructs and mental maps, and observational studies' (Ibid). Such research processes are 'messy' (Brewer, 2000: 5) and 'chaotic' (Ibid, 103), but ethnographers collect data in a 'systematic manner' (Ibid, 6). They write 'thick description' (Geertz, 1993) to convey their findings. Meaning is not imposed on the data (Brewer, 2000: 6) but drawn from it through 'the ethnographic imagination' which is 'the artful and creative rhetorical abilities of writers of ethnographic texts,' which enable them to make 'the imaginative leap necessary to recognise the authority of ethnographic data' (Ibid, 51).

This study drew approaches associated with ethnography because of three core considerations. Firstly, 'All ethnographic research involves case study' (Brewer, 2000:188) and, as discussed, a case study approach was a useful means of examining and presenting the research findings. Secondly, the epistemological principles of ethnography suited the types of findings this research sought to uncover. Finally, ethnographic research methods were suited to exploring the issue being studied.

The epistemological positions, or theories of knowledge, which underpin ethnographic research suited this study. Ethnographic research presents and examines 'subjective data' from those being researched (Ibid, 20-21) and can be 'exploratory,' and 'generally framed' rather than focused on testing a specific hypothesis, if the framing is informed by relevant literature and the researcher's own 'familiarity with [the] social

setting' (Burgess, 1984: 34). Findings from ethnographic studies do not present testable theses. They shed light on a phenomenon, using the words and perspectives of those who experience it. The understandings taken from ethnographic research are not testable because they reflect the experiences of specific communities in particular moments in time. This leads to criticism that ethnographic studies are unscientific because 'For positivists, the most important feature of scientific theories is that they are open to, and are subjected to, test' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995:5). However, knowledge gained through ethnographic research is considered valid, not because it is testable in other communities or spaces, but because it is supported by data collated in the community or space which has been studied.

There is some overlap between how knowledge is acquired in the study of history, in the field of teaching and learning, and in ethnographically informed research. These overlaps in epistemological position explains why I, a former history teacher now specialising in teaching about the Holocaust, was drawn to using ethnographic approaches in my own research. The study of history, like research conducted through ethnography, is understood from somewhat chaotic and messy research processes, which aim to be systematic but rely on whatever data are available to present the perspectives and experiences of those represented in the study. Ethnographers use an 'ethnographic imagination' (Brewer, 2000: 51) to examine their findings; historians rely on the 'historical imagination (Collingwood, 1935) to construct interpretations of the past. Though there is not such a clear echo between the language used by researchers of pedagogy and ethnographers, those researching learning, too, often present data which is not entirely testable. Teaching and learning is influenced by multiple factors which can only rarely be isolated to present direct and consistent cause and effects. Literature on teaching and learning about the Holocaust also recognises that the events can be interpreted differently. Learning experiences are context specific (Acedo, 2010:1) and students engage with depictions in 'idiosyncratic' ways (Edwards and O'Dowd, 2010: 26).

The nuances of the research interest also rendered it appropriate to draw on the approaches of ethnography, even though such approaches were not used for other studies exploring related issues. The texts most useful in framing this study were Richardson (2012), Gray (2014b) and Foster et al. (2016), none of which used ethnographic approaches. Only Gray specifically mentioned why his research was not

conducted through an ethnography, explaining that students' preconceptions of the Holocaust could best be captured before rather than during their history lessons on the topic (Gray, 2014b: 104-5). Richardson (2012) did not include a discussion of the decision not to use ethnographic approaches. However, Richardson explored the types of learning in which the students engaged when learning about the Holocaust. He explored the students' descriptions of their learning, rather than describing their experiences in the lessons themselves. Engaging in participant observation was not appropriate or necessary; instead, the data was usefully collected using semi-structured interviews. Finally, Foster et al. (2016) used mixed methods, including a survey and focus group interviews exploring issued raised by the survey data. Though these studies provided an essential substantive framework for this research, because of the difference in the research interests they did not provide a model for the research methodology. This research examined how students engage with the ideas with which they are presented during these lessons, so required my observing the students, at the very least, at this point.

Though these most pertinent studies did not draw on ethnographic approaches, other related research did, if the term is used interchangeably with the term 'participant observation' (Delamont, 2002: 7). Meseth and Proske (2010), discussed on page 28, was based on participant observation. Additionally, Spector 'spent 84 hours as a participant-observer' (Spector and Jones, 2007: 39) to explore how students engaged in 'meaning making,' in lessons related to Anne Frank's diary (Ibid, 38). The authors' depictions of students' responses were possible because of Spector's lengthy period in the classroom. Both studies explored aspects of 'the learning processes' (Gray, 2014b: 306) which this study also sought to examine, and their use of participant observation suggested the appropriateness of the approach to this study. Though their studies were from different national contexts (being conducted in Germany and the US, respectively), Meseth and Proske, and Spector and Jones made use of the ethnographically-informed approaches which were not suited to the studies, discussed above, conducted in England. The specifics of the research question, more than the context in which it was conducted, informed the methodological approach on which this research was based.

The most prolific researcher to incorporate observations of lessons into a study of teaching about the Holocaust was Simone Schweber. Particularly influential on this

work was Schweber (2004) which informed aspects of the data collection process, and how the findings were presented and analysed. The text also provided a model for how ethnographic epistemological principles could inform an examination of how students make sense of the Holocaust. In Schweber (2004), the author intended to:

> . . . provide some answers and raise some questions regarding what models to emulate, what pitfalls to avoid, and, mainly, what issues to consider in the important work of Holocaust education and history education more broadly.

> Schweber (2004: 18)

Schweber's desire to 'provide some answers and raise some questions' (Ibid, 18) resonated with the aims of ethnography, and the epistemological position of this research. Neither looked for demonstrable truths but sought to explore an issue. However, the exploration of 'models to emulate' suggested that the text aimed, primarily, to contribute to the literature on teaching rather than learning, in slight contrast to my own research interests. Indeed, the questions Schweber posed were pedagogical:

> What did it mean, for instance, that one course began with extensive revelations about the teacher's life and another unit began with an overview of Holocaust history? What was the significance of one Holocaust unit's ending on rescue and another's ending with the end of World War II?

> Ibid (13)

Nonetheless, in the text, Schweber tried 'to establish what it was that the students had (and had not) learned about the Holocaust from their classroom experiences and their homes' (Ibid,13). This focus on learning rendered the text substantively useful to this research. The text further provided a model for using participant observation to examine issues around learning about the Holocaust. When conducting the research, Schweber spent several weeks in high schools in the US, observing teachers who had 'been teaching about the Holocaust for a long time and who came highly recommended' (Ibid). Schweber studied teaching about the Holocaust; her 'cases' were the curricular approaches of particular teachers. This contrasted with my research interests. I studied learning rather than teaching; the cases were

classes not teaching approaches. Additionally, I wanted to observe lessons which were 'typical'. However, the research activities Schweber conducted inspired mine. She observed lessons, conducted before and after tasks with students to elicit how their understandings changed over time, and interviewed selected students to explore their ideas. She interviewed the teachers to understand the rationales behind their approaches, and presented her research through analytical narratives. This enabled her 'to capture in prose the experiential qualities of the Holocaust courses [she] observed,' (Ibid).

Schweber's examination of different teaching approaches informed the decision to conduct this research as a case study of multiple sites as the text explored different high school history classes. Further, the text demonstrated how such data is presented, with implications for the tone and structure of this thesis. After an introduction in which she explored contemporary issues facing educators teaching about the Holocaust, Schweber presented chapters which each outlined a different teacher's approach to teaching about the topic, and some of the students' responses to it. In each she presented 'vignettes, interspersed with analysis and theory, [which] are one way for ethnographers to write about education' (Mills and Morton, 2014:6). Her writing conveyed 'the immediacy and rawness of educational experiences into a context from which analytical patterns and insights can be discerned' and used 'stories, vignettes and portraits – as part of this process' (Ibid, 2). Schweber wrote the thick description which is 'the central characteristic of ethnographic data' (Brewer, 2000: 7). 'Verbatim quotations' presented within 'thick description' lends authority to ethnographic accounts (Ibid, 138) and Schweber drew on several sources of evidence to present what students took from courses, quoting directly from lesson observations, their written work and discussions with focus groups. Schweber's extended presence in the classroom, and her collation of such varied data, enabled her to write such thick description.

Schweber (2004) also demonstrated how meaning is drawn from collective case studies using multiple case study analysis. In addition to presenting analysis and theory within her accounts of each teacher's approach, Schweber closed the text with an analytical conclusion reflecting on the 'patterns' (Ibid, 18) emerging from studying the cases together. This approach modelled ethnographic writing and multiple case analysis. In ethnographic writing, 'The main analytic tasks are related to establishing

patterns or regularities in the data' (Delamont, 2000: 180) because 'qualitative argument comes from drawing our attention to contrasts and highlighting paradoxes to make the audience look afresh at social phenomena' (Ibid, 182). Paradoxes or 'ironic contrasts' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995: 251) are a further aspect of ethnographic writing. Schweber presented these too. She presented different cases so patterns and contrasts in the students' responses could be analysed in the context of their specific classroom experiences.

In terms of research approach, style, and structure, Schweber (2004) provided a model on which this thesis was based. The core chapters of the text each examined a different teacher's approach to teaching about the Holocaust, and, by extension, the class's experiences when learning about it. These were the 'cases' through which the data was first presented. Schweber's reflections were presented throughout, and as discrete subsections of each chapter, as well as in an analytical conclusion which drew on all the cases. Schweber's voice was present throughout, which highlighted her role in the data collection and the personal authorship which informed the thick description through which the analysis was presented. Schweber demonstrated the 'ability to shift gear, to jolt the reader, and to combine "thick description" and sharp analysis' which marks the best ethnographic writing (Mills and Morton, 2013:28).

The extent to which this research was ethnographically informed

In keeping with the approaches associated with ethnography, the findings of this thesis were gathered through participant observation. This was conducted with six Key Stage 3 history classes. Examples of specific research activities are discussed below in relation to the two phases of fieldwork on which the research was based. These included research activities including lesson observations, interviews, questionnaires and 'conversations with a purpose' (Burgess, 1984: 102) and the collation of ephemera including copies of students' written work and teachers' resources.

Additionally, some of the data is based presented herein through vignettes which reflect the ways in which the findings of ethnographically informed research are presented. For clarity, such vignettes are presented, within the chapters which follow, single spaced and in italics (first illustrated on page 113), so they appear as a distinct form of data and commentary and contribute to the 'thick description' through which the findings are presented. The vignettes are presented in some contrast to shorter

quotations from teachers and students. Shorter quotations which are considered in isolation are generally presented within the body of the text and accompanied by commentary on their implications; longer quotations are presented as they would be if taken from the literature – indented and normally spaced. Multiple short quotations, including answers from several students responding to the same question, are presented indented and in italics, accompanied by the name of the student and their class, unless all the students quoted were in the same class (first illustrated on page 122).

However, this research was not entirely ethnographic. Ethnographic research requires a fuller immersion into the community which is being explored than this research afforded. Ethnography involves 'being in, and negotiating, a complex skein of social networks and relationships' (Mills and Morton, 2013: 67) and, as discussed, participating, overtly or covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time' (Hammersley and Atkinson (1995:1). My research involved some negotiation of such relationships, particularly with those who might be described as the gatekeepers to the participants. These were the teachers who invited me into their classrooms, and the headteachers who allowed me into their schools (pages 70 and 71). Yet I was not as immersed into the 'daily lives' of the students or staff as an ethnographic study would require, observing them in school and during very specifically selected lessons rather than over a more 'extended period of time'. Particularly, the time I spent with the participants was clearly bounded by me as a researcher, interested in exploring the students' experiences during specific lessons, rather than being bounded by the participants themselves in relation to the issues which they felt most worthy of exploration.

As a consequence, this research is described as a case study on multiple sites, which was informed by the approaches of ethnography. Ethnographic texts, and, in particular, the work of Simone Schweber, provided a model for the conducting of the research and the writing of the thesis. However, though the research was conducted through participant observation, it was informed by some ethnographic approaches, rather than comprising an ethnographic study.

What follows is an account of how this research was conducted. It describes how an initial piece of fieldwork was conducted with three classes in two schools in London,

and how the tentative findings of this research raised a series of questions which were explored in a piece of follow up research conducted in three classes in two additional schools. Finally, there is a discussion of the ethical considerations informing all stages of the research, including the writing of the thesis, and a summary of the final research questions which this thesis addresses.

Conducting the initial fieldwork

The first fieldwork on which the research was based involved my engaging in participant observation of three Year 9 classes across two schools in London for just over six months. This allowed me to explore how the students made sense of the past more generally, before looking at how they made sense of the Holocaust more specifically. The main criterion when choosing schools was that they should teach history as a discrete subject (though not necessarily according to the National Curriculum) to students in Year 9 and should include in their history curriculum a discussion of the Holocaust. This contrasted with schools in which history was taught as part of a combined humanities course, where geography, religious education, and citizenship were taught through a cross-curricular course, and schools which were teaching GCSE history courses to Year 9 pupils.

A second criterion was that the schools should be comprehensives (have a mixed ability intake). Observing classes in a comprehensive school had the potential to provide richer data as students of different backgrounds, abilities and beliefs potentially make sense of the Holocaust in different ways, encounter different depictions of the events, and reflect on them using alternative frames of reference. Also, I perceived my role as participant observer to be like that of a teaching assistant, expecting, at times, to help students with their work, since this would provide me with a role in the classroom. 'Sometimes data collection can be combined with developing a 'helping' relationship with one or more participants in the field' (Delamont, 2002: 155). Since this role was akin to 'working' in the schools, I conducted the research in comprehensive schools like those in which I previously chose to teach. I looked for schools in North-West London, where I lived. 'Writing up the fieldnotes from the notebook in a more legible form is essential. The sooner this is done after the data were recorded the better' (Brewer, 2000: 88). Choosing local schools was a 'pragmatic consideration' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995: 38).

One inclination was to contact schools in which I had previously taught. Discussions with friends working in these schools highlighted that in none were Year 9 students studying history as a discrete subject. In the first, students started their GCSEs (non-compulsory national exam courses) in Year 9 and covered courses in which the Holocaust was not a topic. In the second and third, Year 9 students were working on a GCSE in humanities. In the fourth, only students in top set were offered GCSE history, which, again, they started to study in Year 9. On a personal level, this meant I had to look elsewhere for host schools. More significantly it also presents anecdotal evidence on changes to the educational landscape since I began teaching in 1999.

Through friends' recommendations I approached Mr. Patel[2] and Ms. Charlton, heads of history in London, both of whom I had met at least once socially, as well as whilst a supply teacher, but neither of whom I had worked with. They were teaching at Devon Hill School, and Holy Cross School, respectively. I approached both informally by email, and each said they were happy for me to come into their lessons, but that I needed to contact their headteachers before they could commit. I arranged to meet both to discuss the research before more formally contacting their headteachers.

In these initial discussions with Ms. Charlton and Mr. Patel[5] I discussed how I intended to conduct the research, and my ethical responsibilities towards them and their students. Essential to the research was that the teachers delivered their history lessons as 'normally' as possible, which I hoped would be made more straightforward by attending lessons on a regular basis, rather than only occasionally, so they and the class would be used to my presence. Additionally, I reassured them my interest was learning rather than teaching, and I was not there to observe their practice, but rather their students' ideas and responses. I highlighted I would be as unobtrusive as possible and would use my discretion as a teacher to guide me in deciding when it was appropriate to circulate the room and ask the students questions, to not interrupt their delivery of the lessons. I made it clear I would be making fieldnotes, and they or their students could read these at any time and could ask me to cross out anything they did not want to have recorded; I also said I would leave the room if ever they asked and would not attend any lessons if they would rather I not. I told them the

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[5] As mentioned on page.11, all teachers and students mentioned in this thesis are presented using a pseudonym.

school and teachers' names would not appear in the research; instead, pseudonyms would be used. I explained to them my responsibilities toward the students. I asked for the opportunity to introduce myself to the students at the start of the research, so I could explain my intentions and their rights during the research. I showed them the consent form (Appendix 1) which I later asked the students to complete, which explained why I was conducting the research, and their rights to choose a pseudonym, and to see my notes and have any of their comments not recorded or removed. Both said they were happy for me to conduct the research with their classes but asked me to contact their headteachers for final approval. I emailed the headteachers at Mr. Patel and Ms. Charlton's schools. Both gave me permission to conduct my research in their schools. They were able to offer me classes which did not clash, enabling me to observe 3 classes across two schools – 9A and 9B with Ms. Charlton at Holy Cross School and Mr. Patel with 9C in Devon Hill School. The schools and classes are described in the next chapter.

Mr. Patel and Ms. Charlton were the 'gatekeepers' (BERA, 2018:10) to the school, in that they introduced me to their headteachers who gave final approval for the research to be conducted. They were also the 'gatekeepers' to their own classrooms, once the Headteachers had given their permission for me to visit the school, because they invited me into their lessons, and introduced me to the students with whom we hoped I could conduct the research. Both considered that, in their position in *loco parentis*, they could grant me access to their classes, and we agreed that it was best practice for the students to give their consent for their own involvement. The consent form signed by the students can be seen in Appendix 1. This process was in some contrast to the processes involved in conducting the next phase of the research, which is discussed below (page 74).

Ms. Charlton and Mr. Patel indicated they would teach about the Holocaust in the summer term. During the weeks before these lessons, I observed lessons, and engaged the teachers and students in research-driven conversations. I sought to examine, initially, how the students made sense of the past, trying to capture how they referred to any existing ideas during their history lessons, looking for how these prior ideas influenced their engagement with the depictions of the past with which they were presented by their teachers.

'Our data are only as good as our fieldnotes' (Delamont, 2002:59). During lesson observations, I created my fieldnotes in plain A4 notebooks. On the right-hand page I sketched plans of the classroom and wrote my observations; on the left, my reflections. The right-hand page was my commentary on the lessons, and the left my 'analytic notes' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995:191). I subsequently reread both as I drafted fuller accounts of what I had observed, adding reflections, each time in a different colour, illustrating the development in my thinking. These were 'a hybrid of research ideas, research observations, general thoughts, and even a diary' (American Anthropological Association, 2003, quoted in Mills and Morton, 2013:88). It was on similar notes that I based the vignettes which appear in later chapters.

I got to know the students individually, learned all their names by the end of the first few lessons, becoming familiar with some of their interests, mannerisms, points of reference and career hopes. I became more involved in the lessons as they went on, more actively asking students about how they were making sense of what they were learning. If a student made a comment which was likely to have been informed by another subject area, a film, book, or conversation at home, I asked them where their ideas came from and observed if and how they drew on those ideas in their spoken or written responses. I made notes of such conversations, incorporating these into my fieldnotes. I copied these onto Post-it Notes, placing them in scrap-books in which I tracked when, how, and in what context individual students had made such references. Keeping my fieldnote books largely as chronological records of what I had observed in each classroom, these scrap-books, with their moveable Post-it Notes, became a means to explore patterns within and across the classes, at times making multiple uses of comments and incidents.

I conducted discrete research tasks to inform the substantive basis of the research. I asked students to complete autobiography cards, so when I began to depict them in my writing, I could use terms with which they described themselves. I conducted class-specific surveys on films and books with which they were familiar. This gave me a sense of where students encountered depictions of the events outside of their history lessons. The questionnaires asked whether they had seen or read or heard of different films and books (Appendix 5). Some related specifically to the Holocaust, others to the Second World War, and more still to other historical eras, a few of which of which I had heard discussed in the lessons. The first book listed was one I knew the class

were reading in their English lessons, included at the top so all students be able to tick at least one. I was concerned not to make synthetic links in the students' minds between books or films and their study of the Holocaust, not wanting them to read from the survey that any books or films were about the topic. Consequently, I presented the questionnaire to the students well before their lessons on the Holocaust and buried relevant titles in a questionnaire including references to other texts and films. *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Life is Beautiful*, *Schindler's List*, *Defiance* and *The Book Thief*, were placed in a questionnaire which also mentioned *Twelve Years a Slave, The Dictator* and the *Harry Potter* books. I hoped the students' answers would contextualise their responses during these lessons.

When the lessons on the Holocaust began, I observed them especially closely. I made notes on the class discussions and moved around the classroom to ask which aspects of the topic were familiar to the students, and which were less so. I became vigilant in asking the students where the ideas to which they referred during the lessons had come from. I took photos and copied students' responses to written tasks. I kept copies of materials they used in their lessons, collating ephemera to help me to depict and draw analytical conclusions on what I had seen in the classroom.

When these lessons were over, at the end of the school year, I began analysing the data I had collated during my time with 9A, 9B and 9C. I identified some tentative 'inter-related propositions' (Ball, 1981: 280) to explore. Writing about the students' initial ideas about the Holocaust, I characterised them as fragmented, Hitler-centric, camp-focused and decontextualised. If this was the case, I wondered where such ideas came from and why they were so commonly held. How did they relate to the depictions with which the students were, collectively, most familiar, which I had posited were *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* and the story of Anne Frank? I had tentatively concluded that these fragmented, Hitler-centric and decontextualised ideas appeared to remain largely unchanged at the end of the students' lessons on the Holocaust. Was this really the case, and, if so, what accounted for this? Further, how did the students apply the ideas they took from one experience of learning about the Holocaust in the next? How did the students respond, in the moment and in the longer term, when their teachers introduced them to accounts which challenged their initial ideas?

Conducting the follow up fieldwork

To explore the 'interrelated propositions' with which I emerged from this fieldwork, I conducted a further, shorter piece of follow up research in three different classrooms in two new schools. I used similar criteria for approaching schools as for the first extended fieldwork. Since I was living between London and the Midlands by this point, I contacted schools in both. However, it became more challenging to find schools in which the Holocaust featured in the Year 9 history curriculum.

The first school to offer me a class to observe was Rowntree Academy School, whose head of history, Ms. Johnson, I was recommended to contact by a teacher involved in the research which became Foster et al. (2016). As this was the first time I was contacting a teacher I had not previously met, I wrote a more formal letter of introduction, which can be found as Appendix 2. This letter included reference to specific research activities which I hoped to undertake, including:

- Conduct a survey with the students about what they know about the Holocaust before they learn about it in their history lessons.

- Record interviews with some of the students to explore where their understandings came from.

- Observe the lessons on the Holocaust, making some voice recordings of the students' and teacher's discussions to examine how the students make sense of the new sources, depictions and narratives with which they are being presented.

- Conduct a follow up survey with all students and further interviews with some students to explore how their understandings of the Holocaust changed after their history lessons on the topic

That I had cited particular research tasks and foci demonstrated that I planned the follow up research around specific issues which emerged from the initial fieldwork.

Ms. Johnson invited me to meet her to discuss the possibility of observing her Year 9 class, who appear in the study as 9D, and who would be taught by Ms. Rashid, a trainee teacher, with whom we both also discussed the research. In this school, Ms. Johnson was the 'gatekeeper' (BERA, 2018: 8) to the school and to her colleague. She also acted in *loco parentis* to give permission for the research to be conducted

with her students, but, as previously, the students were also asked for their own consent to take part.

I then contacted former colleagues as I had done previously, asking they were happy to host me. Although not teaching about the topic herself, Ms. Goldblum, a former colleague who was a head of department, asked her colleagues if any would invite me into their lessons. In this sense, Ms. Goldblum was the gatekeeper to the school of Capital Academy. In her discussions with her colleagues, Ms. Goldblum gave them the letter of introduction discussed above and included as Appendix 2. Ms. Goldblum's colleagues, Mr. Talbot and Ms. Morris, who taught 8N and 8C, respectively, invited me into their classrooms. They were the gatekeepers to the classroom. At the school, as was increasingly typical by 2016 (UCL, 2021: 1), students were beginning their GCSEs in Year 9, so Key Stage 3 history ended in Year 8, with a discussion of the Holocaust. It was because these classes were in Year 8 that the title of this research included the term 'Key Stage 3' to discuss the age of the students, because the classes involved were no longer exclusively in Year 9.

Mr. Talbot and Ms. Morris asked that, in keeping with school policy, parents be contacted about the research. An additional letter was written and sent home to the parents of 8N and 8C. This asked for parents to contact their child's history teachers if they did not want their child to take part. The letter can be read below as Appendix 4. Significantly, both teachers felt that they, like the other teachers in the study, could give consent in *loco parentis* for the students to take part, (though they would of course accept if a parent withdrew their child), but that this provided an additional level of consent and oversight. Creating an additional consent form for parents, with the option that they could withdraw their child, was in keeping with the recommendation that during educational research the 'institution's own ethical approval and safeguarding procedures' should be followed (BERA, 2018: 10). We were all in agreement that the students should also be asked to complete their own consent form, again, only once it had been discussed with them.

My initial conversations with Ms. Johnson, Mr. Talbot and Ms. Morris were like those with Mr. Patel and Ms. Charlton (page 71). I informed them of the intention behind the research, and their rights and those of their students. Knowing I had specific issues to explore, I asked for their permission to ask the students to complete a questionnaire

at the start and end of their lessons on the Holocaust (see below). Having introduced myself as a former teacher, I offered reassurance I would try not to interfere in the lessons but would appreciate opportunities to ask the students questions about what they were learning but would do this as unobtrusively as possible. I asked for their permission to ask the whole class questions during the lessons, again, promising in doing so I would try not to disrupt the lesson, and that I would use my discretion as a teacher to choose the most appropriate time to do so.

During this follow up research I was in the classes only for their history lessons on the Holocaust, which numbered three to five. Having more refined issues to explore, I conducted more explicit research tasks than in the initial fieldwork, some of which were used across all three classes to provide me with comparable data from students in 9D, 8C and 8N. At the start of their lessons on the Holocaust I asked the students in 9D, 8C and 8N to complete the questionnaire below:

Questionnaire given to students in 9D, 8C and 8N (See also Appendix 6)

The questionnaire was printed on A3 paper, and students were told that they could continue to write outside of the boxes if they needed more space. This elicited some of their initial associations with the term 'The Holocaust' before these lessons began. It also captured the possible origins of such ideas. The question on what happened during the Holocaust was designed to capture some of their substantive knowledge (page 15), as were, to a lesser degree, the questions on who was involved, and when and where it happened. These provided a space for students to demonstrate their

familiarity with terms commonly associated with the Holocaust – terms related to beliefs, Judaism, antisemitism or Nazism, sites like concentration camps or ghettos, events like mass-shootings, or contextual terms like Nazi-occupied Europe or the Second World War. The question asking 'why did it happen?' asked the students to engage more explicitly with second-order thinking on causation, and more implicitly with other concepts like the role of individuals and governments.

Asking a series of simple, discrete, yet interconnected questions allowed me to explore the 'inter-related propositions' (Ball, 1981: 280) which I had taken from my earlier fieldwork. It allowed me to examine connections between individual students' ideas about the Holocaust and the potential origins of those ideas. The questionnaire gave me data to compare across classes, which helped present the findings through multi case study analysis. The questionnaire was not expected to capture the totality of students' ideas about the Holocaust; they completed it in a few minutes, so it was only an indication of ideas they 'prioritised' (Foster et al., 2016: 41) at this point. But it suggested patterns, contrasts, and paradoxes to explore.

I planned to give the students their questionnaires back at the end of these lessons, to amend with new ideas, to enable me to elicit any changes in their thinking. This would allow me to explore the ideas they held after learning about the Holocaust with their history teachers, which I could consider against what I had observed during the lessons themselves. Returning the questionnaires to the students to amend and update was possible with all but 8C. Ms. Morris was absent for the last lesson on the topic, so some students in 8C were, instead, invited to take part in group interviews during a cover lesson led by a colleague.

60 students across the 3 classes were asked to complete the questionnaire during their first lesson on the Holocaust, at a time negotiated with their teachers. Their completed questionnaires are referred to as the 'initial questionnaires' in the chapters which follow. 9D were given it at the start of their first lesson and 8C and 8N towards the end of their first lesson, after they had completed an activity on the lives of Jewish people before the Second World War.

The number of questionnaires distributed and completed were:

	9D	**8C**	**8N**	**Total**
Number of students given a questionnaire	24	17	19	60
Number of students who answered at least one question	24	15	14	53
Number of students who did not answer any question	0	2	5	7

Table 1: Number of students in 9D, 8C, and 8N who were given a questionnaire and the number who answered at least one question

The students who did not answer any question were all in Year 8, and responded:

	9D	8C	8N
Wrote 'I don't know' to each question	-	Suki	Berta
Wrote only 'I did not go to primary school in the UK	-	-	David and Christophe
Wrote 'I have not heard of the Holocaust'	-	Simon	-
Wrote 'I don't know anything about the Holocaust'.	-	-	Norbert
Left every answer blank	-	-	Katja

Table 2: Names of students in 9D, 8C and 8N who were given a questionnaire and did not answer any questions

I considered the ethics of including these seven students in the research, concerned about their consent being informed, given some claimed no familiarity with the term 'the Holocaust' which appeared on consent forms they had previously signed. Most significantly, I reflected on my ability to keep their responses anonymised. My

subsequent interactions with all seven indicated they were interested in taking part. Each contributed frequently to class discussions and were happy talking into my voice recorder. I included them in the research, unlike the two students from 8C who, as will be discussed below, I felt could not give fully informed consent. These students indicated they did not know what the Holocaust was at the start of the study, so the questionnaires they completed at the end of the research proved especially insightful, indicating the ideas they took from lessons on a topic which they claimed to be previously unfamiliar.

The number of students who responded to each question on the questionnaire was:

	9D	8C	8N	Total
What happened?	21	14	13	48
Who was involved?	24	14	12	50
When did it happen?	21	14	9	44
Where did it take place?	22	13	9	44
Why did it happen?	20	13	13	46

Table 3: The number of students who answered each question on the questionnaire

Since the differences between the numbers of responses to each question is minimal, the grid principally indicates the spread of answers from across the different classes. It shows students were slightly more likely to answer on who was involved in the Holocaust than on any other single question. This relates, as will be demonstrated, to the significance of Jewish people in their earliest ideas about the Holocaust. They were collectively less likely to answer questions on when and where the events happened, which chimes with Foster et al. (2016: 44).

In Foster et al. (2016) students were slightly more likely to reference an 'action' in their response, rather than any other issue, whereas my participants were more likely to answer on who was involved. This probably relates to their being asked to do different things. Students participating in Foster et al. (2016) were asked to 'describe' what the Holocaust was, and, though many wrote about who was involved, they were not asked

explicitly to do so. Perhaps many responded by trying to encapsulate the event in terms of what was involved, rather than whom. In this research, they were asked directly, which perhaps accounts for the slight differences in responses. The studies agree, however, that students were less likely to comment on when or where the Holocaust took place than on other issues.

The questionnaire also examined where the students had encountered depictions of the Holocaust before they learned about it in their history lessons, asking whether they had learned about it in primary school, had read books or seen films about it, or learned about it anywhere else. This provided useful data for examining the students' ideas about the Holocaust alongside where such ideas come from, shedding light on the interrelated propositions with which I emerged from the initial fieldwork.

Once the lessons began, I used a voice recorder to capture whole class interactions and conversations with a purpose which allowed me to follow up on issues raised by the questionnaires and during the lessons. The teachers continued to deliver the lessons; with the teachers' permission, I asked whole class questions, eliciting which parts of what they were learning were new to them and which were familiar. I conducted whole class follow up research activities when I saw the potential to gather richer data, like asking the students how surprised they had been by the ideas presented to them during their history lessons or asking for a show of hands for simple questions. By conducting such follow up activities, I could write richer vignettes on whole classroom interactions than from the initial fieldwork, as well as being able to explore individual students' ideas, and how they changed over time.

Assuming from the literature and my previous observations that the stories of Anne Frank and *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* were likely to be the best known to students, at the end of their final lessons on the Holocaust I asked volunteers to tell those stories in their own words, to examine their interpretations of those narratives. I subsequently conducted a quiz about *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas,* the narrative most familiar to the students, to explore their readings of the narrative, framing the questions in response to patterns I noticed in how the students told the story and observations I had made when completing my own analysis of the book and film (page 43).

This asked:

1. When did the story take place?

2. In which country was Bruno born?

3. In which country was Shmuel born?

4. Why did Bruno leave his old home?

5. Why did Shmuel leave his old home?

6. In which country was the camp where Shmuel and Bruno met?

7. What did Bruno think the camp was called?

8. What was it really called?

9. What did Gretel put on the walls of her room and what did they show?

10. Which of the characters knew people were being killed in the camps?

The questions 'When did the story take place?' and 'What did Gretel put on the walls of her room and what did they show?' were designed to explore whether students could place the events in the Second World War, and whether they recognised the allusion to war in the map on Gretel's bedroom wall. Questions 2, 3 and 6 were designed to elicit whether the students understood the events took place outside of Germany and Shmuel himself was Polish and not German. By examining their understandings of these aspects of the story I was able to suggest reasons for the students' common ideas about the Holocaust.

To examine how the students' ideas about the Holocaust changed over time, I asked those in 9D and 8N to amend their initial questionnaires, or to write a new one from scratch. This was to elicit the ideas about the Holocaust which they held after learning about the topic and provided me with data which I could contextualise using the fieldnotes I made during the lessons. Their responses when asked to update their answers are referred to as their 'amended questionnaires' in later chapters.

I also conducted follow up informal interviews with 9 students from 8C and 5 from 9D at the end of the lessons. I showed them a collection of photographs (Appendix 7) depicting aspects of the Holocaust and asking them to tell the story of what

happened. These included images of the boycott of Jewish shops, the aftermath of the November Pogrom ('*Kristallnacht*'), the soup kitchen of the Lodz Ghetto, an *Einsatzgruppen* site, and an image from the 'Auschwitz Album'. The photographs provided a stimulus for the students as they explained what happened. Like the lesson observations and conversations with a purpose, the interviews enabled me to explore more fully the ideas the students had recorded on their initial and amended questionnaires and enabled me to present how their ideas had changed over time. Having observed the intervening lessons, I could explore what might have influenced any changes in the students' ideas.

Finally, I examined the students' written work alongside their contributions to class discussions, and initial and amended questionnaires. I examined how they engaged with ideas which contradicted their initial notions. I could explore which new ideas they included in written work immediately after being presented with them and which they referred to in the lessons and activities which followed, which suggested that they had incorporated them into their ideas about the Holocaust. This enabled me to elicit learning from 'proxies' (Lee, 2005) and shed light on how students make sense of the Holocaust when they learn about it in their history lessons.

Ethical considerations

Whilst writing this thesis, I considered the research against the British Educational Research Association (BERA) *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research* from 2018. BERA recommends that 'ethical decision-making becomes an actively deliberative, ongoing and iterative process of assessing and reassessing the situation and issues as they arise' (BERA, 2018: 2). They further recommend that such decision-making takes place 'at all stages of a project – from planning through conduct to reporting' (Ibid). Consequently, though the research was conducted in line with earlier guidance (BERA, 2011), the thesis, which constitutes the 'reporting' of the research was considered against this more recent framework which came into effect in the final stages of writing up. This is because ethical considerations continued to be as important during the writing up stage as they were when the research was being planned and conducted.

At each stage of research there was consideration, specifically, of the principles underpinning BERA's ethical guidelines (BERA, 2018, 4) which were considered as follows:

Ethical Principle	Reflections within the research
a. Social science is fundamental to a democratic society, and should be inclusive of different interests, values, funders, methods and perspectives.	The research was conducted to be inclusive of the diverse interests and values of the students.
	The students were all following the same curriculum as others in their classes and largely completed the same research activities. Nonetheless there were opportunities to engage students in discussions of their own interests. For example, I was able to spend more time with students in 9C who regularly arrived at their history lessons early (page 98). Additionally, many of the 'conversations with a purpose' (Burgess, 1984: 102) I conducted with students explored insightful comments made by those who referenced films, television programmes, or books with which they were personally familiar (page 72). Additionally, some of the additional research activities were conducted with students who had shown particular interest in a specific story (page 153 and page 160). This allowed me to explore their individual ideas, experiences and interests.
	There was also a determination to use a variety of methods to collecting data from the students in order to be inclusive of students' preferences. For example, though many students were willing to complete short written tasks (page 76 and page 122), the use of a voice recorder to share ideas (page 154) gave students opportunities to share ideas without writing. This proved a popular alternative; on occasion students asked if they could tell

	me what they recalled from a previous lesson into the voice recorder (page 175).
	As discussed below, the students involved in the research came from a variety of backgrounds with the potential to present a variety of perspectives. The teachers involved, though all teachers of history, were also a diverse group.
	There were no concerns regarding funders as this was unfunded PhD study.
b. All social science should respect the privacy, autonomy, diversity, values and dignity of individuals, groups and communities.	**Privacy:** All participants (teachers and students) and schools are known by a pseudonym. These pseudonyms were chosen by the participants themselves. The teachers involved in the research did not know in which other schools it was being conducted. This ensured that the institutions and individual participants were afforded their rights to confidentiality and anonymity (BERA, 2018: 21). **Autonomy:** I met with all the teachers before the research began, to discuss the research and their rights within it and to confirm that they were happy to take part (page 70 and page 75). The teachers agreed, in *loco parentis*, that their students could take part in the research. In order to ensure students gave their own informed consent to take part, they were given a consent form to complete (Appendices 1 and 3). This was read to them, and additional information and examples were shared with them (page 88). Only students who signed the form are quoted in the study. Additionally, in accordance with school policy, a letter was sent home to parents of students at Capital Academy (8C

and 8N), explaining the research and asking parents to inform the class teacher if they did not want their child to take part (Appendix 4).

A further discussion of the principle of 'informed consent' can be found below on page 88.

Diversity:

All of the schools in which the research was conducted had a mixed ability intake. Five of the six classes were mixed ability and one was a top set. One school had a religious ethos and was single sex; all four other classes were religiously and ethnically diverse and included male and female students (and, potentially, though this was not explored in the research, students who were non-binary or trans). This meant that a diverse group of students took part in the research.

Additionally, 2 male teachers and 3 female teachers took part. 3 of the teachers were white British, and 2 were Asian British. The teachers were also at different stages of their careers, ranging from more experienced Heads of Department or Heads of Faculty to Early Career Teachers and trainees. This meant that the teachers were also a diverse group of professionals.

Values and dignity of individuals, groups and communities:

The schools' values were respected through, for example, my following school dress codes, and modes of address, and, in Holy Cross school, standing silently when prayers were said at the beginning of lessons. The school timetable was respected at all times; students were never

| | late leaving school or late to other lessons because of taking part in the research.

The dignity of students was respected through, for example, by my excusing myself at the end of lessons if and when individuals were asked to stay behind with their class teacher to discuss behaviour issues or issues of a personal nature. I respected the dignity of the students, also, by addressing students by name when speaking to them, and thanking them for their contributions to the research activities and discussions. |
|---|---|
| **c. All social science should be conducted with integrity throughout, employing the most appropriate methods for the research purpose.** | The decisions about which were the 'appropriate methods for the research purpose' were informed by:

1. The 'problem' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995) which was to be explored (pages 19 and 59). This required my spending extended periods in students' history lessons, and being a participant observer.

2. The research questions developed throughout the research process (page 92). These required, in addition to my observing the students' lessons, my asking them to complete brief and discrete research tasks to provide me with contextual information to add richness to my findings, and comparable data to consider across the classes.

3. The practicalities of conducting PhD research as the 'sole researcher' (Merriam, 1998: 18) which determined how much time, and over what time period, I could conduct the study.

4. The determination to collect data which would, in itself, present the 'unique contribution to knowledge' required for the award of PhD, which |

	determined the need to create bespoke research activities or other means of collating meaningful data. Decisions about research methods were also informed by the research methods used in related research (page 63). An examination of such research suggested that, because of the distinctions between this and existing research, different methods were required. As discussed, in order to discern if and how students' ideas had changed over time, a longer period, with multiple opportunities to capture such ideas, was required. This informed the decision to complete the research through participant observation, rather than through mixed methods (Foster et al., 2016), surveys (Gray, 2014B), or interviews (Richardson, 2012).
d. All social scientists should act with regard to their social responsibilities in conducting and disseminating their research.	The Impact Statement (page 4) demonstrates considerations of how the research findings can be disseminated, and some examples of how some of the Recommendations (page 229) have already been shared with teachers, and through organisations involved in teaching and learning about the Holocaust.
e. All social science should aim to maximise benefit and minimise harm.	Steps taken to **maximise benefit**: • The Recommendations chapter was written with practitioners in mind and designed to be concise and practical for use by those involved in teaching about the Holocaust (page 226). Steps taken to **minimise harm**: • All participants (teachers and students) were known by pseudonyms to protect anonymity (page 71).

	- The observed lessons were conducted by the teachers as normally as possible so that the students' lessons had minimum disruption (page 70). - There was careful consideration of when research activities could be conducted without disrupting the teaching (page 76).

Table 4 Application of 'Principles underpinning the guidelines' of BERA (2018)

BERA (2018) included further exploration of the principles above. Particularly pertinent was the guidance on informed consent. The authors clarified that:

> It is normally expected that participants' voluntary informed consent to be involved in a study will be obtained at the start of the study, and that researchers will remain sensitive and open to the possibility that participants may wish, for any reason and at any time, to withdraw their consent.

<p align="center">BERA (2018: 7)</p>

The issue of 'informed consent' was particularly sensitive because of the particular power dynamics in schools, in which, generally, students are expected to undertake any activity asked of them by any adult. Particular care was taken to ensure, as much as was reasonable given the iterative nature of the research, that the students were aware of what the research would involve before they signed and returned their consent forms (Appendix 1 and 3). As suggested above, each class teacher introduced me to the class. Together we handed out the forms and we asked that the students did not sign them before we had finished explaining them. I then read through the consent form (Appendix 3), embellishing with points of clarification, explaining to the students as follows:

> Reading*: My name is Catrina Kirkland and I am a PhD researcher from the Institute of Education, part of the University of London. I am researching how Year 9 students learn history, and, in particular, how you learn about*

the Holocaust. In order to do this, I hope to observe some of your History lessons this term. I will be making notes on some of the comments made in the lessons, and might ask some of you to tell me more about your ideas. I might also ask to record some of your conversations on a voice recorder, to help me remember what you said. At the end of the year, I will write up my ideas in an 80 000 word thesis (extended essay) which I hope will be written well enough to make me a doctor!

(Clarifying: Does anyone watch the TV programme The Big Bang Theory? *That's a programme where most of the characters are 'doctors', but none of them are doctors of medicine. That's what I'll be when I'm finished – I'd be a doctor of philosophy, not of medicine, and my specialism will be Holocaust education. To get to become a doctor, I need to write a very long essay. If you have ever read any of the Harry Potter books, you'll know that they get longer and longer. 80 000 words is somewhere between the length of the first and second books, so it will take me quite a long time to write!)*

Reading: *I would really appreciate your consent (permission) to observe your lessons. I will usually sit somewhere at the back of the class making notes, but I might ask some of you a few questions too. And I might ask you to complete some written tasks, like your history teacher does. Anything I see or hear in the lessons will remain between us. (The only exception to this is if I think you or someone else might be at risk of being hurt. Then I will have to tell someone who can help.)*

(Clarifying: so if I hear that you have not done your Maths homework, I'm not going to tell anyone. But if I overhear that there is going to be a fight in the playground, I have to let someone know.)

Reading: *You are welcome to see my notes, but I will never show them to anyone not in your class. When I write my thesis, you will get to choose your own pseudonym (fake name) so that no one will know who said what. And, if you do not want to me include in my notes something you have said, it is your right to ask me not to write it down, or to cross it out. And you can change your mind at any time about wanting to be involved in the research.*

(Clarifying: I will always have a pen like this with me, and I can put a line through anything you say which you don't want me to have in my notes. And, if you decide you don't want to be included in the research on a particular day, or want to stop being involved, you just need to tell me.)

Reading: *If you have any questions about my research, you can speak to me after any lesson. Alternatively, you can email me at XXXXXXXXXXX.*

(Clarifying: This is a university email address which you can use to get in touch. But, of course, you can always speak to me or Mr. / Ms. X. if you have any questions.)

Thank you for considering helping me with my research.

It was hoped that the text of the consent form, which the students were encouraged to keep safe in their exercise books, served as a reminder of their rights in the research. It was also hoped that the additional explanation of the form allowed the students to feel informed about the nature of the research, how it would be conducted, and what I was trying to achieve. This was in keeping with the requirement that 'Researchers should do everything they can to ensure that all potential participants understand, as well as they can, what is involved in a study' (BERA, 2018: 9). In this spirit, it was also anticipated that the language (including the term 'how you learn') was familiar enough that the students would understand it, and broad enough that it covered the variety of research activities which might be conducted as I completed the fieldwork.

The fact that the students' involvement was voluntary was also reinforced during the research. Particularly, I was mindful to use language which conveyed that I was asking students and not instructing them to complete particular research tasks. For example, I would preface requests with 'It would really help me if' or 'It would be great if you could', in some contrast to more familiar phrases I use in my teaching, like 'what we are going to do now is' and ' your next task is to'. Additionally, when circulating the classroom to conduct my 'conversations with a purpose' (Burgess, 1984: 102), I would begin each encounter by saying 'would you mind' or 'would you like to . . .?' This, I hoped, also conveyed that the students could choose not to take part in the task, since they were welcome to withdraw from the research at any time. It could, of course, not mitigate against all concerns that students felt compelled to complete the activities. However, I believe it became clear, when there were no consequences for doing so,

that it was acceptable for students to say 'no thanks', not complete research tasks, or not respond to whole class questions. Few did so, but this was respected as a demonstration of their withdrawing their consent.

Additionally, the students' right to withdraw from the research was made clear to them in the discussion of the consent form (page 88). This was essential because 'Researchers should recognise the right of all participants to withdraw from the research for any or no reason, and at any time, and participants should be informed of this right' (BERA, 2018: 18). One on occasion (see page 101) a student made a comment which suggested she wanted to withdraw, and as a consequence she was no longer specifically approached to answer any research questions.

Finally, it was stressed in the consent form that the students' comments would be anonymous and that, in the thesis, they would be known by a pseudonym. However, it was also important to clarify my position should I hear a disclosure and to ensure I was following appropriate safeguarding procedures. As mentioned in BERA (2018), 'If behaviour reported by participants is likely to be harmful to the participants or to others, the researchers must also consider disclosure', (BERA, 2018: 25). Consequently, it was specified in the consent form (where it was clarified that there were exceptions if someone could get hurt) that there were some limits to the confidentiality I could offer them as participants. Additionally, when discussing the meaning of the consent form, additional examples were shared (page 101), with the intention of ensuring that students were aware of the limitations of the confidentiality I could offer. The examples chosen (not completing homework, and fighting in the playground) were selected because they were possible, if not common, occurrences in schools.

Finally, though this was not mentioned on the consent forms given to students, the original, non-anonymised, data was destroyed once it had been transcribed using students' and teachers' pseudonyms. This was in keeping with the recommendation from BERA that 'only anonymised and disaggregated data should be archived' (BERA, 2018: 17).

It was considered that, during the fieldwork and in the writing of the thesis, the recommendations outlined in BERA (2018) were followed, and that the rights of the teachers and students were made clear and respected throughout the research.

Examples of letters of introduction to schools and consent forms for students and parents can also be found in Appendices 1 - 4.

Finalising the research questions

This thesis is entitled 'How do Key Stage 3 students make sense of the Holocaust when they learn about it in their history lessons?' What follows in the remaining chapters is, first, a description of the classes involved in the research, which provides context for the findings chapters which follow, and then a chapter on each research question with which I emerged from this later fieldwork. These read:

- What ideas about the Holocaust do Key Stage 3 students hold at the start of their history lessons on the topic?

- Where do these ideas come from?

- What ideas about the Holocaust do the students hold at the end of their history lessons on the topic?

- Why do students hold these ideas at the end of their history lessons on the topic?

The thesis then concludes with 'Recommendations' which emerged from this research, which discuss how educators can support students in making greater sense of the Holocaust.

Chapter 4: The six classes

This chapter describes the six classes which comprised the cases on which this study was based. A summary highlighting the most pertinent information is provided on page 110. The cases are presented 'in terms of their own situational issues' (Stake, 2006:10) and this chapter provides context for the next chapters which interpret 'patterns within each case, and then analyses cross-case findings to make assertions' (Ibid, 10).

9A at Holy Cross Girls School

Holy Cross Girls School in London had a Catholic ethos which was reflected throughout the school building, in displays, texts, religious symbols, and the fact lessons began with prayer. I was invited by Ms. Charlton, Head of Humanities, to observe her two Year 9 history classes, 9A and 9B.

In 9A, the largest proportion of students by ethnicity was Black-British or African-Caribbean. This was discerned from the autobiography cards the class filled in towards the end of the research. All the students were girls, and 9A and 9B were the only single sex classes involved in the research. Ms. Charlton described 9A as 'a little chatty' but said they generally got on with the tasks she set. They were a mixed ability group, many of whom clearly enjoyed discussing history. They largely welcomed me from the moment I stepped into their classroom and whenever I asked them to complete research tasks. There were 27 students in the class.

9A attended history lessons for the first full term and penultimate half term of the school year; otherwise they had geography lessons with another teacher and Ms. Charlton taught 9B. Of all the classes involved in the research, only those at Holy Cross School had rotations of history and geography lessons; all other classes had history lessons throughout the year. This meant the curriculum for 9A and 9B was structured differently from that of the students in all other schools. However, because they had two lessons a week, rather than just one as the other classes did, they spent a similar amount of time in their history lessons as others in different schools.

9A had four lessons on the Holocaust. The first was entitled 'What was the Holocaust?' This began with the students watching a film clip introducing the topic, and a class discussion of what the students already knew about it. This asked the students 'who' was involved, 'what' happened, 'when', 'where' and 'why?' This, as will be demonstrated, provided a useful opportunity to capture their initial ideas. For much of the lesson they explored photographs depicting the night of '*Kristallnacht'*, scenes of Auschwitz-Birkenau and the Warsaw Ghetto, and prisoners in striped uniforms. Throughout their lessons, whenever images of such uniforms were shown (four or five times), there were mutterings of 'striped pyjamas' as the students referred to the film which many subsequently told me they had seen. After a discussion focusing on a selection of the photographs, the students were shown a handful of the anti-Jewish laws introduced in Germany by the Nazis. They were asked to decide whether each led to social, political or economic change for Jewish people. This lesson ended with Ms. Charlton sharing with them a summary of the Holocaust. This read 'The Holocaust finished with the mass killings of Jews and Gypsies[6] and other groups'. This description, which mentioned non-Jewish victims, was quite distinct from the ideas about the Holocaust which these and other students presented during the lessons. This proved to be an interesting issue to explore.

9A's second lesson on the Holocaust focused on the story of Anne Frank, and why she and her family went into hiding. It began with the students being asked to discuss what they knew about Anne Frank; they then read a series of her diary extracts and answered questions on what these told them about the family's experiences. The lesson finished with students reflecting on life in the annex and writing about what they would most hate about being forced to live in hiding. 9A were the only class who looked at the story of Anne Frank, and read parts of her diary, with their history teacher. Their comments on what they already knew proved useful in exploring the students' initial ideas about her.

Their third lesson on the Holocaust explored the question 'How did the treatment of Jewish people in Europe change between 1933-1945?' It began with a few students sharing what they remembered of the early stages of the Nazis' persecution of Jewish

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[6] As discussed on page 23, the term 'Gypsies' is problematic and used here as a direct quotation from a teacher. It is not in inverted commas here or elsewhere when it is presented as written.

people, which generally involved their discussing the anti-Jewish laws. The girls were then introduced to the term 'testimony', before examining sources presenting examples of how the persecution worsened over time. They were asked to identify the most significant turning points for Jewish people and explore the events of 'Kristallnacht' through further testimony, before being asked how this was a turning point for Jewish people. The lesson then focused on questions around how much knowledge the Allies had of the concentration camps. Ms. Charlton explained the different types of camps and was the only teacher across the six classes to have done this. She explained that the death camps had been established in Nazi-occupied Europe and shared with the students the arial photographs which showed that the Allied military leadership were aware of Auschwitz-Birkenau. The students analysed the photograph to try to elicit what they understood from it. As the students considered the source, many asked Ms. Charlton questions about what they saw in the photograph, framing their questions, in many cases, around their recollections of *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*.

During their final lesson on the Holocaust, Ms. Charlton was absent and 9A were taught by Ms. Brown, a teacher from a different department. She began by presenting the students with a poem written by Elisabeth Wise about the concentration camps. The girls discussed, as a class, what the poem told them about life in the camps. Ms. Brown then led a discussion of what students already knew about the Holocaust. She framed this around the 'who, what, when, where and why' questions which Ms. Charlton had used at the start of their first lesson. This provided an opportunity to explore how the students' ideas appeared to have changed over time. 9A were the only class to have been asked by a classroom teacher to share what they thought at the beginning and at the end of their history lessons on the topic. As will be discussed, this class discussion proved highly useful in trying to explore what the students had taken from their history lessons on the Holocaust. After this discussion, the students were then given a series of statements related to the concentration camps, for example 'No child survived in the camps'. They were asked to find evidence from a collection of pieces of testimony to support or challenge each one. The students were still discussing these statements in pairs when the bell went for the end of the lesson.

9B at Holy Cross Girls School

9B also studied at Holy Cross Girls School. They had their history lessons when 9A were studying geography. They were just as welcoming as I attended their history lessons. Like 9A, most of the students in 9B were Black British or African-Caribbean, and again this was discerned from their autobiography cards. Like most of the classes involved in the study, they were mixed ability, and one student worked particularly closely with a teaching assistant, Ms. Lynn, who also supported other students in the class. There were 26 students in the class. Ms. Charlton described them as 'a little quieter' than 9A and they had their lessons on the Holocaust towards the very end of the school year, losing at least one lesson to a school trip. This meant they had slightly different lessons on the Holocaust to 9A, taught by the same teacher.

9B had three lessons on the Holocaust. The first, like 9A's, focused on 'What was the Holocaust?' and at the very start of the lesson the students were asked to write down three things they already knew about the topic. These responses, and the discussion which followed, provided useful evidence on their prior ideas about the Holocaust and allowed for an exploration alongside 9A's responses to a similar activity. They, like 9A, also watched a short film clip introducing the topic; this also included images of individuals in concentration camp uniforms, which elicited similar whispers of 'striped pyjamas'. After discussing the film and their initial ideas about the Holocaust, the students examined the photographs which 9A had looked at and were asked to write down what they could learn from each. Their final task was to read a list of anti-Jewish laws and record whether each was a challenge to the social, political, or economic rights of Jewish people.

9B's second history lesson explored the question 'How did the treatment of Jewish people in Europe change between 1933-1945?' After a brief discussion recapping what the class had learned from the previous lesson about the anti-Jewish laws, Ms. Charlton shared a quotation from Wleck Luksenburg, describing the curfew imposed on Jewish people. The class discussed what they inferred from it about the treatment of Jewish people in Poland. They then looked at a collection of photographs presenting further aspects of the treatment of Jewish people. The photographs showed a Jewish shop being boycotted, a Nazi rally, a shop destroyed on '*Kristallnacht'* and a picture of the Warsaw Ghetto, and the students were asked to write what they inferred from each about how Jewish people were treated under the Nazis. The next activity focused on

the question 'Did Britain know about the concentration camps?' Ms. Charlton showed an aerial photograph of Auschwitz-Birkenau and told the class about the Kindertransport as a way in which some Jewish children were saved. She introduced a set of written sources which told of conditions in the camps, and how individuals outside the camps were aware of them.

As the class began to finish reading the sources, Ms. Charlton asked for their attention again, and asked which country the death camps were in. There was a general muttering of 'Poland' and, making her own reference to *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, Ms. Charlton explained that the camps were set up in Poland so the German people would not object. 9B were the only class whose teacher mentioned *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* during their lessons. That Ms. Charlton did so to highlight that the death camps were in Nazi-occupied Poland was of note because this, as will be demonstrated, was the source of much misunderstanding for many students. The students' next task was to complete a source grid in which they discussed what knowledge there was of what was happening in the camps. The lesson finished with the students watching the end of *Schindler's List*. Ms. Charlton explained it was based on a true story, showed the closing minutes of the film, and told the class it showed the 'Schindler Jews' and their relatives who were walking to his memorial. Their watching this film clip meant the students encountered at least brief depictions of survivors of the Holocaust after the war. Most classes were presented with depictions only of what happened before and during the war, so this was a slight distinction in their experiences.

The title of 9B's final lesson on the Holocaust read 'Who was responsible for the Holocaust?' The students watched a BBC documentary in which the diary of an American woman living in Nazi Germany was dramatised using her original words as a voiceover. The film depicted the woman witnessing the book burnings, seeing youth camps, and writing about 'The Night of the Long Knives'. She saw young men in military style uniform, and lamented they would all become 'cannon fodder,' a phrase Ms. Charlton explained as the lesson closed. Ms. Charlton closed the lesson by asking why people supported Hitler. These discussions of who was responsible for the Holocaust and why people supported Hitler proved useful in raising questions which were explored more fully in the follow up fieldwork regarding how the students

perceived Hitler's role in the Holocaust. Some students were still discussing this question as they left at the end of their final lesson.

9C at Devon Hill School

9C attended Devon Hill School, a non-denominational comprehensive in North-West London. The school had recently converted to academy status. Heads of department like Mr. Patel, head of history, had flexibility regarding whether to teach according to the National Curriculum, which Mr. Patel told me he did as he thought it included what should be covered. Mr. Patel invited me to observe his history class, 9C.

The class had approximately equal numbers of boys and girls. The largest ethnic group was Asian-British students, who comprised about a half of the class, which Mr. Patel told me in advance of the first lesson and was typical of classes across the school. The class was mixed ability. There were 32 students in the class and the room was at capacity when all the students were attending. I would base myself at the back of the classroom, leaning on a set of drawers to write my fieldnotes but if a student were absent, I would sit in their seat. This provided me with an opportunity to get to know individual students more fully than sitting in the same seat each lesson. 9C all appeared content to join in with my research activities, including those which I conducted with a cover teacher when Mr. Patel was not in school. Particularly, a handful of students regularly arrived at the classroom early, as did I, and often asked me how I was getting on with writing my 'book'. Throughout the lessons on the Holocaust, 9C generally worked in almost silence when working on individual tasks, and their class discussions were led in such a way that students always spoke one at a time. This allowed space for many students, when invited to do so, to answer questions without interruption, which contrasted with the discussions in other Year 9 classes, in which students often spoke over each other.

In Year 9 the class studied the Twentieth Century, with specific explorations of the First World War, the changing role of women, Nazi Germany, the Second World War and, for the final few lessons of the school year, the Holocaust. They were taught a more chronological curriculum in which they learned about Nazi Germany before being taught about the Holocaust, which made them distinct from the other classes in this study, who were taught more thematically. During their lessons on Nazi Germany, many students demonstrated initial ideas about the Holocaust, as will be explored in

later chapters. During their first lesson on the topic, Mr. Patel asked them to write down three things about Hitler; in response, almost all had written at least one point related to the persecution of Jewish people. A few lessons later, the students were asked to prepare a group presentation on life in Nazi Germany, focused on a particular theme. These included control, work, women, youth, and leisure. After each group led their presentations, Mr. Patel invited questions from the class. I noticed almost all questions related explicitly to the experiences of Jewish people, even though none of the presentations had done. Many students in 9C appeared to see the persecution of Jewish people as an essential element of the topics of both 'Hitler' and 'Life in Nazi Germany', which led me to explore how their ideas about each were connected.

Students in 9C had four lessons on the Holocaust. Their first was entitled 'The Holocaust – An introduction' and focused on how life changed for Jewish people in Germany between 1933 and 1939. The students read a series of statistics relating to different aspects of the Holocaust, including the number of deaths, the life expectancy of inmates in Auschwitz and time it took people to die in the gas chambers. The text included a definition of the Holocaust which referred to 'homosexuals'[7], 'Gypsies' and the Nazi 'euthanasia' programme. The questions asked the students to record their first thoughts on reading these statistics and were asked which statistic caused them the most 'alarm', what problems were posed by using statistics to understand the Holocaust and what other questions they would ask to find out more about the topic. In a class discussion which followed, Mr. Patel asked what meaning the students had taken from the statistics, and what questions they had about the Holocaust. As many in the class raised questions, one by one, he explained most would be answered through the next few lessons. Mr. Patel showed the class photographs, cartoons, and paintings to introduce them to aspects of life for Jewish people living in Nazi Germany. He mentioned the boycott, anti-Jewish graffiti, being banned from activities and public spaces, the Nuremberg Laws (mentioned by name), the destruction of a synagogue, the development of a ghetto, and its accompanying smells and evidence of starvation, and finally, people being put 'like animals' onto a train, 'destination unknown'. As a

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[7] As discussed on page 23, the term 'homosexuals' rather than 'gay men' is used here because it is a direct quotation from a teacher.

final activity the students looked at a 'human graph' which explored the levels of safety and security felt by Jewish people at different times of the 1930s and 1940s.

The start of the second lesson on the topic began with a role-play activity in which Mr. Patel demonstrated how Jewish people were discussed and treated in schools in Nazi Germany. He demonstrated the use of propaganda, scapegoating and how language was used to target Jewish children in the classroom. He then asked the students what such a school environment would have felt like, and why the Nazis were so concerned about controlling what young people were taught. Mr. Patel read out a poem depicting the experiences of a young girl living in Nazi Germany. In the poem, the girl's peers gradually pulled away from her, in school and out, until she was entirely isolated. The students were asked to elicit from the poem what they learned from it. This was an early example of a class being introduced to the account of a single individual's experiences of persecution by the Nazis, and a discussion of how students engage with different types of individual stories is presented in the following chapters.

Mr. Patel was absent during the third lesson dedicated to the Holocaust. A cover teacher, Mr. Jones, took the lesson and the students watched the film *The Pianist*, for as long as time allowed. Mr. Patel asked me to introduce it to them, and to explain that it related to the topic they were studying. As they were watching the film, the students were to write down any questions it raised for them.

9C's final lesson on the Holocaust began with a discussion of the term ghetto. Mr. Patel asked the students what the term meant. This was one of the most explicit discussions of the ghettos in any of the classes, so the students' answers proved useful in exploring another aspect of their ideas about this past. The students' read a poem called 'Fear,' written by a Polish girl whilst she lived in a ghetto and were asked what they learned from it about living in Nazi-occupied Europe, which they initially considered individually and then discussed as a class. Mr. Patel drew from many of their responses to explain more about the ghettos, and their use by the Nazis. He then set a source-based activity, in which the students were presented with a series of sources which told them about life in the ghettos and were asked to examine their utility and reliability. These included the poem 'Fear'. Typically, the class worked quietly through the task. When most had completed it, Mr. Patel shared with the class

a map of Nazi-occupied Europe, with the question 'what will happen to the Jewish communities living in areas taken over by Germany?' This was the first time any class had been shown a map of Europe and this would prove unusual across the six classes involved in the study. Mr. Patel explained the role of the concentration camp system in the treatment of Jewish people and presented a summary of when and where the death camps were introduced. The students made notes on this narrative as the final lesson came to an end.

9D at Rowntree Academy School

Rowntree Academy School was on the outskirts of a city in the Midlands. Ms. Johnson, the head of humanities, invited me to observe 9D. 9D were taught for the lessons I observed by Ms. Rashid, a trainee teacher. Ms. Johnson observed some lessons and was always close by, meeting me before and after every lesson. 9D were the most ethnically diverse class involved in the research, with no ethnic group being numerically dominant; this was discerned from the school's own statistics. As a top set, they were the only class I observed which was not mixed ability. The students generally appeared happy to take part in my research activities, though on one occasion a student did say to a peer 'that researcher is always asking me questions', after which I kept my distance. The class was set up in rows of two or four, making group discussions easier for some students than others, which explains my speaking more frequently to particular students.

The students in 9D had four lessons on the Holocaust, and their class teacher, Ms. Rashid, drew particularly on resources provided by the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education. Their first lesson on the topic began with a discussion of an image of a shoe, which was shown to the students to encourage them to reflect on who it might have belonged to and, ultimately, how this related to the Holocaust. The students then worked in pairs to read through case studies of victims and survivors of Nazi persecution, and the policies enacted against them. Ms. Rashid explained that these individuals were 'persecuted or tortured in the Holocaust' and were 'not all Jewish'. In this comment, Ms. Rashid was suggesting a definition of the Holocaust which included non-Jewish victim groups. 9A and 9C, above, and 9D were the only classes involved in the research who encountered a description of the victims of the Holocaust in which non-Jewish victims were mentioned. As was discerned from the research, this was in

some distinction to the initial ideas about who the victims were which were held by the students themselves. The students placed the cards on a timeline around the classroom, about which Ms. Rashid led a class discussion which explored the experiences of different minority groups, and the policies through which they were persecuted.

9D's second lesson was entitled 'Why the Jews' and focused on the histories of antisemitism. It drew on further materials from the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education, which were also discussed in Jackson (2013). The students began answering, in their books, the question 'why the Jews?' Their answers provided interesting evidence on their initial perceptions of Jewish people, and why they were persecuted. The students then watched a film on the lives of Jewish people before the Second World War, after which Ms. Rashid led a discussion on what it told them. They then watched a second short film on the histories of antisemitism, which mentioned examples of conspiracy theories, scapegoating, 'Social Darwinism' and the specifics in Nazi antisemitism. The next part of the lesson focused on the histories of antisemitism. The students read cards citing examples of Medieval antisemitism and were asked to organise them into columns according to whether they related to 'power', 'religion' or 'prejudice'. They were, a few minutes later, asked to complete a similar activity for examples of antisemitism from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As a final activity, they reorganised both sets of cards into a Venn diagram to identify which forms of antisemitism existed in each period, and which existed in both. In the final minutes of the lesson, Ms. Rashid showed the class an example of local recent antisemitism, in which a Jewish cemetery was vandalised. The students wrote down two examples of scapegoating against Jewish people, and the reality of the situation for which Jewish people were blamed.

In 9D's third lesson on the Holocaust, the students, again, engaged with resources provided by UCL Centre for Holocaust Education. The students were introduced to the story of Barney Greenman, whose family had been living in the Netherlands when they came under Nazi control. The family were sent to Auschwitz where Barney and his mother, Else, were murdered. The students were asked to examine the roles and responsibilities of a series of individuals who is some way contributed to their deaths. They were introduced to the terms 'perpetrator', 'collaborator', and 'bystander' and were asked to decide how they would characterise the actions of those individuals.

Towards the end of the lesson, they were asked to decide who was responsible for Barney's death. Their written responses, when considered against their amended questionnaires (page 76), provided an opportunity to examine whether they had different explanations for why the Holocaust happened and why individuals like Barney were murdered.

Their fourth lesson focused on preparing the students for an assessment activity which would take up much of the lesson. The students began by recording in their exercise books what they remembered they had learned in the past three lessons. Miss Rashid asked selected students to share their ideas. The students then watched a video. It used footage of survivors from camps, including Auschwitz and Terezin, explaining their experiences. In one segment, a former Sonderkommando prisoner spoke of his experiences being forced to work in the camp. The students were asked to reflect on the dilemmas he faced and the reasons why he ultimately carried out the work he was instructed to do by the camp guards. After discussing what they learned from the video, the students began to complete the assessment in silence. This assessment task provided the greatest opportunity across the six classes to examine the students' independent work. From their responses it was possible to examine how they responded to specific source material when working without support from their teachers. Since the assessment was completed in silence, the students were asked to hand these in on their way out of the classroom and their final lesson ended without any further discussion from the students.

8N at Capital Academy

Capital Academy was on the outskirts of London. Despite being in an area with quite a large Jewish community, the school had very few Jewish students, perhaps because there were several Jewish schools close by. I was invited to attend the school by Ms. Goldblum, a friend and former colleague who was a head of department who did not teach about the Holocaust to her own classes. She asked Ms. Morris and Mr. Talbot if they would be happy to host me. Both agreed.

I met 8N first and they were taught by Mr. Talbot. 8N were a mixed ability class of 19 students, which the school's records suggested were ethnically diverse, with no single ethnic group being numerically dominant in the group. Several of the students in the class were Muslim, which was only significant because many were not in school for

one of their history lessons which took place during Eid. Their history lessons took place in a classroom in which most of the students sat at desks in a large horseshoe formation, with one group of five sitting around a table at the front of the classroom, positioned directly in front of Mr. Talbot's desk. This formation facilitated classroom discussions in which Mr. Talbot could manoeuvre around the room asking for contributions from students, and enabled the students to work, easily, in pairs and small groups. The class were generally welcoming; many seemed excited at the opportunities to share ideas in my voice recorder. Because of the set-up of the room, it was easy for me to move around the room quickly to ask the students to record their thoughts.

The class had four lessons on the Holocaust. Many involved the students being introduced to resources provided by the Holocaust Educational Trust, which were also used by Ms. Morris when teaching 8C. These resources included those used during the students first lesson on the Holocaust, which focused on pre-war Jewish life. At the start of the lesson, Mr. Talbot asked the students to consider why photographs are taken and how they tell us about the past. The students then examined a series of photographs which each depicted a Jewish individual or community. He did not tell the students at this point that the photographs were of Jewish people. The students looked at the photographs in pairs, after which Mr Talbot led a discussion on what they had seen. After Mr. Talbot told the class that all those in the photographs were Jewish, he led a discussion on Jewish life before the war, highlighting the differences between the Jewish individuals and communities. Towards the end of the lesson, the class looked at a map which depicted the size of the Jewish populations across Europe. They then completed a written task in which they summarised what they had learned.

8N's second lesson on the Holocaust focused on power and control in Nazi Germany. Only 8N and 8C, below, took part in a lesson in which they examined life in Nazi Germany within, rather than before, their series of lessons on the Holocaust. 9C had examined the issue during their earlier lessons on Nazi Germany; 9A, 9B and 9D had not looked at this at all. During this lesson, the students looked at a drawing depicting a street scene purporting to be from Nazi Germany. They were asked to identify the use of propaganda depicted through loudspeakers, flags and slogans, and the use of fear, suggested by the presence of the secret police. Mr. Talbot then shared with them images of, and information about the concentration camps established in Germany,

before showing the class a film which discussed aspects of opposition to the Nazis, and why this was so dangerous.

8N's third lesson began with a recap of what they had learned in their lesson about Jewish people before the Second World War. The students were then introduced to a resource from the Holocaust Educational Trust in which they examined, compared, and contrasted different organisations' definitions of the Holocaust, before writing their own. This activity, which took place at the beginning of the third of four lessons on the topic, provided useful evidence of the students' thinking at this mid-point. The students took part in a class discussion about the similarities and differences between the definitions presented by the Imperial War Museum, the United States Holocaust Museum and Yad Vashem, and the students used the ideas from this discussion to write their own definition. They then watched a film also produced by the Holocaust Educational Trust, called *Footballers Remember*, which was focused on the visit of the men's England football team to Auschwitz. The film included a discussion of the visit, framing it in a presentation on pre-war Jewish life, the increasing persecution of Jewish people, and the use of concentration camps and development of the death camps. It included interviews from Zigi Shipper and Sir Ben Helfgott, Holocaust survivors. As the students watched the film, they wrote answers to questions about its content. Mr. Talbot led a discussion on these once the film finished, then returned to the photographs which the students had looked at during the first lesson on pre-war Jewish life and told the students what had happened to the individuals, families, and communities they depicted. He then showed the class a definition of antisemitism and asked them to reflect on when they thought it began. Their responses proved a useful means of examining the students' initial perceptions of the origins of antisemitism and Hitler's relationship with such beliefs.

Between this lesson and the next, a small number of students were able to attend an extra session in which Holocaust survivor Freddie Knoller shared his testimony. Many students were absent for Eid. At the start of the following lesson, Mr. Talbot shared a printed biography of Freddie. This was the first example of a class in which some of the students had different experiences from each other during their lessons, which offered opportunities for interesting analysis which follows on page 176. In this final lesson on the Holocaust, the students took part in what Mr. Talbot called 'progress checking'. He summarised what the students had looked at in the previous three

lessons, and the students completed an activity where they decided if a series of statements were true or false. The students then examined the anti-Jewish laws which were introduced in Nazi Germany from another resource from the Holocaust Educational Trust. They used these to discuss how the persecution of Jewish people changed over time, and any turning points they identified. Many of the laws were introduced before the Second World War, in the period often taught about in primary schools. The students' responses to, and familiarity with, these laws shed light on whether they had learned about the topic at that age. The students took part in a discussion on their reflections on the laws, and Mr. Talbot connected the increasing number of laws introduced in 1938 to the violence of '*Kristallnacht'*. The students read pieces of testimony from individuals affected by the violence or who were incarcerated in concentration camps. For their final activity on the topic, the students took part in an activity called 'Dilemmas, Choices and Responses', also provided by the Holocaust Educational Trust. Through this they read cards depicting individuals who had been involved in the Holocaust, and used the terms 'perpetrator', 'bystander' and 'resister' to categorise their actions. This terminology echoed that introduced to students in 9D when they were looking at the story of Barney Greenman. This proved useful for examining how students discuss those who contributed to the events of the Holocaust. 8N's final lesson on the Holocaust was also their final history lesson of the year. Mr. Talbot finished the lesson by thanking the students for their hard work throughout the year.

8C at Capital Academy

8C also attended Capital Academy. They were taught by Ms. Morris. Their classroom was in slight contrast to that of 8N. It had tables permanently attached to the walls around the outer edges of the room so many students faced away from the front of the classroom when working on their own, turning to face Ms. Morris when she was addressing the group. The other half of the class sat at small groups of tables facing the front of the class, which enabled them to talk to each other more easily during discussion tasks which Ms. Morris led quite frequently. The classroom set-up made it more difficult to circulate the classroom with a voice recorder as I did with 8N.

Ms. Morris told me behaviour in 8C was occasionally a little challenging, but they had recently been doing well. The set-up of the classroom and the expectation the students

would follow a set seating plan meant that I inevitably got to know a few students more quickly and better than others by virtue of their being easier to reach. The class of 19 were perhaps the most mixed in ability across the six who I observed and included two students who were supported by a teaching assistant, Ms. Hall, who on occasion supported other students. These two students had particular special educational needs which meant I did not feel it was appropriate to include them in the fieldnotes and they do not appear in the accounts which follow. Due to the nature of their needs, I could not guarantee their consent would have been fully informed, nor anonymise their responses to the point they would not be recognised by their peers. They completed all the research activities, like the rest of the class, so as not to draw attention to this fact, but their answers do not feature in the study. 8N were the only class involved in the research in which there were more students who the school described as 'White British' than students of other ethnicities.

8C studied the Holocaust for three lessons. Like 8N's, their lessons began with a discussion of the lives of Jewish people before the Second World War. Ms. Morris told me, before the start of their first lesson, why she thought this was so important. She told me she felt it was important to present Jewish people as 'real' and she had heard a few antisemitic comments from other classes in the past. She told me 'With most other topics we try to show how the events they are learning about are relevant to the students. With the Holocaust, we are not so much showing the relevance to the students, we are showing how important it is to know about it'. Ms. Morris's comments were the clearest indication of an individual teacher's aims when teaching about this topic which I heard across the fieldwork. 8C's first lesson, in which they examined and discussed images of Jewish people before the Second World War, had much in common with 8N's first lesson. That two classes examined the same photographs allowed a useful examination of how they made sense of them.

8C's second lesson on the topic was also like 8N's. It also allowed them to discuss control in Nazi Germany. They, too, were introduced to the image of a street scene in Nazi Germany and elicited from it the examples of propaganda and terror. They then also read about the use of concentration camps, and the role of the SS and the Gestapo. They watched a video which discussed aspects of opposition, including the

White Rose group and the July Bomb Plot. The issue of opposition to the Nazis was only discussed in 8N and 8C. In these discussions the examples mentioned were not specific to the events of the Holocaust. Nonetheless, the students drew on the ideas presented to them during their lessons when reflecting on what they had taken from their lessons on the Holocaust at the end of their final lesson on the topic, presenting ideas which were not evident in the responses from students in other classes.

8C's final lesson with Ms. Morris began with a recap on the Jewish communities of Europe before the Second World War, which the students had looked at two weeks previously. The class then watched a film from the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, which told the story of Ivor Perl, a Holocaust survivor who had been imprisoned in Auschwitz. They took part in a class discussion about what they recalled from his story and one or two of the students made the 8C's first overt references to *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*. The students were then introduced to a definition and explanation of antisemitism, both from the Medieval period and through reading extracts of Hitler's speeches and a timeline of anti-Jewish persecution. This provided further opportunities to explore how familiar the students were, before these lessons, with the notion of antisemitism, and what they believed about its origins. The students took part in a discussion of the increasing persecution of Jewish people, which included a discussion of anti-Jewish laws, the violence of 1938, and the use of concentration camps. In the final stages of the lesson the students watched extracts from *The Pianist* and *Schindler's List* to find out more about the role of the ghettos in the persecution they had been discussing. This was the most explicit discussion of the ghettos in any of the six classes' lessons on the Holocaust, so provided useful data on how the students engaged with the topic.

A few students in 8C were also able to attend the session mentioned above, in which students from 8C and 8N listened to Freddie Knoller share his testimony. Only a handful were in school that day, which coincided with Eid. However, three students who attended mentioned Freddie's story in their interviews and discussions in the following lesson, which, again, offered an opportunity to explore the meaning they drew from it. 8C's final lesson of the school year was taken by a cover teacher, Mr. Adejuyigbe, in Ms. Morris' absence. During this lesson, several students agreed to be

involved in group interviews on what they knew about the Holocaust. These interviews were an alternative to the students amending their questionnaires to reflect what they now understood of the Holocaust, and the students involved in the final interview were so keen to share their ideas that their discussions continued after the bell rang for the end of the lesson.

A summary of the six classes involved in the research

Description of schools, classes and ethical procedures

	Observed during the **initial** fieldwork			Observed during the **follow up** fieldwork		
	9A	**9B**	**9C**	**9D**	**8C**	**8N**
Teacher	Ms. Charlton	Ms. Charlton	Mr. Patel	Ms. Rashid	Ms. Morris	Mr. Talbot
School name and description	Holy Cross School Girls' school / Catholic ethos	Holy Cross School Girls' school / Catholic ethos	Devon Hill School Mixed comprehensive	Rowntree Academy Mixed comprehensive	Capital Academy Mixed comprehensive	Capital Academy Mixed comprehensive
Location	London	London	London	The Midlands	London	London
'Gatekeeper'	Ms. Charlton contacted initially; Headteacher approved research	Ms. Charlton contacted initially; Headteacher approved research	Mr. Patel contacted initially; Headteacher approved research	Head of Department contacted in the first instance and approved the research	Head of Department contacted in the first instance and approved the research	Head of Department contacted in the first instance and approved the research
Informed consent process	Consent form discussed with and signed by students. Appendix 1	Consent form discussed with and signed by students. Appendix 1	Consent form discussed with and signed by students. Appendix 1	Consent form discussed with and signed by students. Appendix 3	Consent form discussed with and signed by students. At school's request, letter sent home asking parents to contact the school if they did not want their child to take part. Appendices 3 and 4	Consent form discussed with and signed by students. At school's request, letter sent home asking parents to contact the school if they did not want their child to take part. Appendices 3 and 4.

Table 5 Description of schools, classes and key ethical procedures

Summary of lesson content and key data collection sources

	Observed during the **initial** fieldwork			Observed during the **follow up** fieldwork		
	9A	**9B**	**9C**	**9D**	**8C**	**8N**
No. of lessons on the Holocaust and key topics covered	1. What was the Holocaust? 2. Anne Frank 3. How did the treatment of Jewish people in Europe change between 1933-1945? 4. The concentration camps*	1. What was the Holocaust? 2. How did the treatment of Jewish people in Europe change between 1933-1945? 3. Who was responsible for the Holocaust?	1. **The Holocaust – An introduction 2. Persecution of Jewish people in Nazi Germany 3. *The Pianist* 4. Ghettos and what happened to Jewish people in countries taken over by Germany?	1. What was the Holocaust?*** 2. Why the Jews? 3. Who killed Barney Greenman? 4. Recap of prior learning; testimony from concentration camps and death camps; End of Unit Assessment	1. Pre-war Jewish life 2. Power and control in Nazi Germany 3. Antisemitism and Ghettos 4. ****Freddie Knoller's testimony	1. Pre-war Jewish life 2. Power and control in Nazi Germany 3. Definitions of the Holocaust 4. ****Freddie Knoller's testimony 5. Dilemmas, choices and responses to the Holocaust

Key data collection sources	Observations	Observations	Observations	Observations	Observations	Observations
	Biography cards	Biography cards	Biography cards	Initial questionnaire	Initial questionnaire	Initial questionnaire
	Film and book survey	Film and book survey	Film and book survey	Amended questionnaire	*****	Amended questionnaire
				Interviews with 9 students	Interviews with 5 students	Interviews
				Boy in the Striped Pyjamas tasks	*Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* tasks	*Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* tasks
Notes	*Ms. Charlton was absent for this lesson, which was delivered by Ms. Brown		**9C Studied Nazi Germany before studying the Holocaust; they were the only class to do this	***Ms. Rashid discussed other minority groups as victims of the Holocaust	**** Took place outside of regular lesson time. Many students did not attend as they were off school for Eid. *****Ms. Morris was absent during the final lesson, so questionnaires were not amended	**** Took place outside of regular lesson time, and during many students did not attend as they were off school for Eid

Table 6 Summary of lesson content and key data collection sources

Chapter 5: Starting points - Students' preconceptions of the Holocaust

Identifying the students' starting points

Observing 9A, 9B and 9C before they learned about the Holocaust enabled me to capture their comments as they heard they were going to do so. Comments made by two students in 9A, in Holy Cross School on London, were striking and contrasting.

Marceline (9A) suggesting she valued learning about the Holocaust:

Towards the end of their final lesson of the term, the students began tidying away and handing in their books. A student asked Ms. Charlton what they would study next. Ms. Charlton said 'You're studying geography next half term, and when you come back from your geography lessons, we'll be learning about the Holocaust'.

Marceline immediately said 'The Holocaust? Like Anne Frank? Finally, something of use!'[8]

> Fieldnotes, 9A, Holy Cross School, history lesson on Crime and Punishment

Marceline's tone and comment suggested she was enthusiastic about learning about the Holocaust. It would transpire that Marceline had done so at primary school in unusual depth (page 148) and appeared to look forward to revisiting it, perceiving learning about the Holocaust as something unusually 'of use'. By contrast, Alexis, also in 9A, had spoken to Ms. Charlton outside lesson time a few weeks before learning about the Holocaust with her, expressing her views on how much time she spent learning about the events. Ms. Charlton recounted the conversation to me when I was next in the school:

Alexis (9A) suggests 'they talk about the Holocaust much more than slavery'

Ms. Charlton explained that, after her religious studies lesson on Holocaust Memorial Day, Alexis approached her and asked 'Miss, which was worse? The Holocaust or slavery?' and went on to tell her how she thought slavery was 'underrepresented'.

Ms. Charlton told me 'underrepresented' was a direct quotation. She had been impressed by Alexis' using it. She said, 'I told her "That's exactly the sort of thing Ms.

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[8] This text is in italics and single spaced because it is a vignette based on fieldnotes. Page 67 explains how different types of data are presented in different formats throughout the thesis.

Kirkland is interested in!"' It was, so I spoke to Alexis later to ask if she remembered what she had said. She knew exactly what I was referring to.

'They talk about the Holocaust much more than slavery,' Alexis told me. 'Slavery lasted 400 years. You hear all about Jewish people being sent to camps. But it would have been kinder to kill people than to let them go through what the slaves went through'.

'Who do you mean by "they?" The school? Or more generally?' I asked, hoping Alexis would tell me what had inspired such a comment.

'Both,' Alexis said. 'Like you just hear a bit about slavery during Black History Month. But that's only once a year'.

> Fieldnotes from a discussion with Ms. Charlton and Alexis (9A), Holy Cross School

Rather than seeing the Holocaust as a topic which was particularly 'of use', Alexis suggested the topic was talked about more than other significant topics which were 'underrepresented'. Alexis was not reluctant to learn about the topic when her history lessons began; indeed, she appeared in my fieldnotes repeatedly, joining in with discussions, asking questions, and referring to films she had seen which helped her make sense of what she was studying. Nonetheless, the contrast between these two unsolicited comments is striking. Though the two students were expressing different views about learning about the Holocaust, their comments indicated that both, like most students by the time their history lessons on the Holocaust began, had encountered some depictions of the events elsewhere, and brought some ideas about what happened into those lessons. These comments highlight the contrasting attitudes voiced by two students in 9A; this chapter explores the students' more substantive 'starting points'– their initial ideas about the Holocaust.

The teachers involved in this study all conducted activities through which their students' starting points could be discerned. These were not for the sake of my research, but rather as part of the 'real life' (Yin, 2009: 1) lessons I was there to observe. Indeed, apart from the moments when I asked the teachers if I could lead specific research activities, they taught the lessons as they had always intended to do. These activities took different forms. 9A, in Holy Cross School in London, were introduced to footage from the liberation of the camps, before discussing what they knew about the Holocaust, in pairs and then in a class discussion. 9B were asked to

write down what they knew about the Holocaust, individually, before watching a similar clip. 9D in Rowntree Academy, in the Midlands, were asked to consider a photograph of a shoe which had connections to the Holocaust, so Ms. Rashid could elicit from their responses some of their ideas about the topic. Back in London, 8N and 8C explored images of Jewish people before the Second World War before completing my questionnaire which explored their first ideas about the Holocaust. Uniquely across the study, 9C in Devon Hill School studied Nazi Germany before studying the Holocaust and were asked to write three things they knew about Hitler before Mr. Patel began their first activity on that topic; many included in their answers some mention of the Holocaust or issues related to it.

Each activity provided the teachers as practitioners, and me as a researcher, insight into the students' preconceptions of this past. These were only indications of what the students 'prioritised' (Foster et al., 2016: 41) during such moments. However, they provided me with notions to explore further through students' written work, class discussions, and responses to research activities, including, most usefully, the initial questionnaires completed by 9D, 8C and 8N during the follow up research (page 81). Students across the classes responded to different questions and stimulus material, so each class is featured discretely in the vignettes and discussions below, with some classes and individuals appearing more frequently and in richer detail than others. This variety of activity provided opportunities to present a diverse set of classroom observations, the likes of which have not been presented in previous research, which outline the 'starting points' of the students – the ideas about the Holocaust which they held before beginning their history lessons on the topic.

An overview of the Holocaust: 9A discuss 'Who, what, when, where and why?'

Ms. Charlton told the class, 'So, I put the word "Holocaust" into YouTube and this is one of the clips I found. I'd like you to watch it and then we'll talk about what it shows'. The clip focused on the liberation of the concentration camps at the end of the Second World War. It included images of some of those liberated and footage of Bergen-Belsen as it was cleared by British soldiers. A voice-over included testimony from British soldiers involved in the liberation. The clip lasted around three minutes, after which Ms. Charlton asked the girls in 9A to discuss in pairs what they already knew about the Holocaust.

The discussions began straight away, and no student asked for clarification on what the Holocaust was. As they were starting their discussions, Kelly sitting at the very front of the class, said, addressing Ms. Charlton but within earshot of most of the class, 'You know the stripes? That reminds me of The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas'. *Kelly turned to the students sitting behind her and would have seen and heard many of her peers nodding or agreeing.*

The discussion continued, and after a minute or so, Ms. Charlton asked for the class's attention, before giving more guidance. 'I'd like you to focus on the history questions - who, what, when, where and why?' she told them. After a few minutes of further discussion, Ms. Charlton stopped the class, asked for their focus, and led a class discussion on each question.

'So, who was involved in the Holocaust?' she asked. May, who frequently joined in class discussions, raised her hand immediately, and was invited to answer. 'Jews', she said.

At this, Daisha, without being invited to speak, said 'Also, "Gypsies"'. Ms. Charlton acknowledged this and asked Cathy for another answer.

Cathy said, 'Hitler was a part of it'. Ms. Charlton agreed and moved the conversation onto the question of 'what?'

There was no suggestion from Ms. Charlton or the girls that this was an exhaustive list of all those involved, but nor did any students have their hands left up or call out any other answer as Ms. Charlton steered the discussion in a new direction. Rather, the conversation moved quickly, serving as a brief introductory discussion rather than an exploration of all the students knew about the topic.

'So, what happened in the Holocaust?' Ms. Charlton asked. A sea of hands shot up. 'It's something about persecution', said Monica, using a term on the whiteboard. Cathy asked what the difference was between persecution and prosecution, and Ms. Charlton explained the meaning of each. By the time Ms. Charlton posed the question again, most hands had dropped.

Daisha, who in previous discussions was fairly quiet, called out another answer, saying 'Jewish people were told to strip, and were told that they were going into the showers'.

Shida, sitting next to her, turned to her partner, and asked, 'Why did they strip them?' Ms. Charlton answered that this is part of what the class would be learning about, subtly signposting what the students would come to study in the lessons which would follow.

The discussion moved onto 'where' the Holocaust took place. Germany and Poland were mentioned, and Daisha was first to mention an individual victim of the Holocaust, saying 'Holland. Anne Frank was from Holland'. Responding, Ms. Charlton explained the class would be learning about Anne Frank and her family and moved the discussion on to 'when' the Holocaust took place. This led to less certainty from the

students. Nobody raised her hand. Ms. Charlton called on Gem, asking her 'When did you say it took place?'

Gem, clearly not sure, said '1940…'. as if she had not completed her answer. Ms. Charlton helped the class to place the events chronologically, saying the Holocaust happened as the Second World War was going on.

Cathy, able now to answer, said 'So . . . approximately 1939-1945'. Ms. Charlton agreed.

In the final part of the discussion, Ms. Charlton asked if any students had an answer to 'why the Holocaust happened?'

Again, Daisha was keen to answer, and when asked, said 'Because Germany was having a hard time because of the Depression, and Hitler said that he could solve their problems. He blamed all the problems on the Jews'. Ms. Charlton thanked Daisha and drew the conversation to a close.

<center>Fieldnotes, 9A,Holy Cross School, Lesson 1 / 4 on the Holocaust</center>

This account from 9A's first lesson on the Holocaust suggested some ideas 9A held before beginning their lessons on the topic. The speed with which they began their discussion in pairs suggested they were somewhat familiar with the topic and needed no further clarification of the task. The students recognised 'Jews' were involved in the Holocaust, but those 'Jews' were discussed in collective, not individual, terms; the only victim of the Holocaust named by a student was Anne Frank. There was only a single mention of non-Jewish victim groups, through Daisha's reference to the persecution of Roma and Sinti, through her comment of 'Gypsies'. When discussing what happened, the students presented 'fragments' (Richardson, 2018: 98) of the narrative, mentioning 'persecution' and Jewish people being 'told to strip' and 'told that they were going into the showers'. Many of these 'fragments' related to how Jewish people were persecuted in concentration camps and death camps. Other places in which persecution took place, like ghettos and mass-shooting sites, were not alluded to. The students also appeared to lack confidence in expressing when the Holocaust happened and mentioned only a few countries in which it took place. Finally, when discussing causes of the Holocaust, they focused on Hitler. Cathy suggested he was 'part of' the Holocaust, and Daisha's lengthier comments were framed around his promises and attitudes. Her comments on the Depression served to provide a context for those attitudes which she presented, typically, as the Holocaust's actual cause.

9A's 'starting points' were quite typical of the starting points of students across the six classes, and according to Foster et al. (2016), of students nationally. Students commonly recognised Jewish people were involved in the Holocaust but presented them in rather simplistic terms. Most students had some ideas about what happened. The speed with which the students began their paired discussions, and my observation that 'a sea of hands shot up' suggested many of the students, like those subsequently cited in Foster et al. (see page 35) were confident in their answers. Their answers focused on events enacted in the camps, rather than elsewhere, suggesting camps had 'representational significance' (Foster et al, 2016, 49) in their perceptions of what happened. The students commonly did not recognise the number of countries in which the Holocaust took place, and many were confused about when it happened. They were generally less confident in placing the events within 'a specific timeframe of geographical location' (Ibid, 67). Most presented Hitler having 'singular agency' (Ibid, 47) as the primary perpetrator of the Holocaust, and its sole cause.

Who were 'the Jews?'

Almost all students involved in this study recognised, before studying the Holocaust in their history lessons, that 'Jews' or 'Jewish people'[9] were involved. 34 / 50 students from 9D, 8C and 8N, who, on their initial questionnaire (page 76 and Appendix 6) answered the question 'who was involved?' (17/ 24 in 9D, 9 / 14 in 8C and 8 / 12 in 8N) mentioned 'Jews' or 'Jewish people'. 50 / 53 answering any question (23 / 24 in 9D, all 15 of 8C and 12 / 14 of 8N) mentioned 'Jews' or 'Jewish people' somewhere on their questionnaire. The terms 'Jews' or 'Jewish people' featured on more questionnaires than any other terms. This suggested that 'the single strongest association that students made in their descriptions of the Holocaust was with 'Jews' or related references to 'Jewishness' (Foster et al., 2016:44). My time in the classroom allowed me to explore some of the students' perceptions of who Jewish people were, and how these were elicited from, and, in some cases informed by, the activities undertaken by their classroom teachers.

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[9] As discussed on page 22, the term 'Jews' is used here, and throughout the chapters which follow, only when it is a direct quotation from a teacher or student or from existing literature. Otherwise, the term 'Jewish people' is preferred.

8N discuss photographs depicting Jewish people before the Second World War

At the start of 8N's first lesson on the Holocaust, Mr. Talbot distributed a collection of A4 cards from the Holocaust Educational Trust's resource 'Pre-war Jewish Life'. On one side of each card a photograph depicted a Jewish individual, family, or community from Europe during the 1920s or 1930s. These showed Jewish people from different countries, involved in various activities. In most photographs the people were not demonstrating their Judaism through their clothing or actions, though others were more Orthodox and their Judaism was implied by their traditional dress. On the back of each card were three questions. Two related to the content of each photograph; the other read 'Can you tell anything about these people's nationality or religion from this photograph?'

Not telling them at this stage that the photographs depicted Jewish people, Mr. Talbot asked the students to look at the cards in pairs and discuss the questions on the back of each. When they had looked at their first photograph, the students swapped with other pairs, studying several before the class discussed them. I moved around the classroom to hear their comments.

Pratik and Berta were sitting next to each other and discussed their photograph, which showed a young woman walking a dog. 'You never know, she might be Jewish', said Pratik.

'She doesn't look Jewish. Jewish people wear hats', answered Berta.

'Only some do. My teacher at primary school just wore normal clothes', Pratik replied.

'Miss, do Jewish people drink alcohol?' Anika asked me as I approached her corner of the horseshoe of desks at which most of the students sat.

'Yes', I answered. 'Why do you ask?'

'We were looking at the picture of the two women in a bar. I'm not Muslim, but I know Muslim people don't drink alcohol. And if Jewish people don't drink alcohol, they couldn't be Jewish', Anika replied.

I asked her and her partner, Poonam, what they knew about Jewish people.

'Hitler didn't like them', answered Anika, immediately.

Poonam agreed 'And they got killed in World War Two'.

'Yes', continued Anika. 'About a million of them'.

'Do you know anything else about Jewish people?' I asked.

Both the girls shook their heads and said 'no'.

'Miss, do Jewish people eat chicken?' Norbert asked me, as I walked past his desk, next to Anika's. He pointed at his photograph, showing a young girl feeding chickens. 'I know she's not a Muslim, because if she's a Muslim, she'd be wearing Hijab. She's

not wearing Hijab, so she must be Jewish or Christian. Can Jewish people keep chickens?'

I explained that, yes, some Jewish people eat chicken, and some keep chickens, and asked if it was possible to say the girl was Jewish just from looking at her. Norbert said it was possible to tell she was not Muslim but you could not really tell anything else.

Fieldnotes, 8N, Capital City Academy, Lesson 1 /4 on the Holocaust

These fieldnotes depict a few minutes of lesson time before Mr. Talbot led a discussion on the photographs and revealed the people in the photographs were Jewish. The extract highlighted common themes in the students' initial ideas about Jewish people. Anika and Poonam understood Jewish people primarily in relation to their experiences under the Nazis. They and Norbert thought Jewish people share habits relating to clothing, food, or drink, and framed questions around what Jewish people are or are not allowed to do. Finally, Berta, again, quite typically, suggested Jewish people 'look' a particular way. Comments from these students and those in other classes (see page 122) suggested many were 'influenced by prevailing myths, contemporary stereotypes and vestiges of Nazi propaganda' (Gray, 2014b: 208). Most common of these was the influence of 'contemporary stereotypes' about Jewish people sharing a 'look'. Strikingly, many students had clearer perceptions of physical features which they believed Jewish people do not have (cited as 'blue eyes and blond hair') than features they 'do'. Most also discussed Jewish people as a singular, monocultural group, rather than in the diverse terms in which Jewish communities from across Europe can more meaningfully be understood. Additionally, though they may not have accepted all 'vestiges of Nazi propaganda' as fact, others were aware of how Jewish people were presented in such propaganda.

Students in 8C, also at Capital Academy, looked at the same images in their first lesson on the Holocaust. Their responses on finding out all the people were Jewish were indicative of some of these common perceptions:

8C discuss photographs depicting Jewish people before the Second World War

For ten minutes the students examined the photographs, and answered the questions in their books, having considered them in pairs. Then Ms. Morris asked for the class's attention and led a discussion on what the students had found out from the

photographs. After discussing where a selection might have been taken, and the potential nationality of those depicted, she moved onto the question of their religion. 'Was anybody able to accurately work out the religion of the people?' she asked.

Jamie put up her hand and held up a picture of a young girl feeding chickens. She answered, 'We thought she can't be Muslim, she can't be Hindu, she can't be Buddhist, she can't be Jewish, so she had to be Christian'.

'So through a process of deduction, you figured out she was possibly a Christian,' suggested Ms. Morris. Jamie agreed. It was interesting Jamie offered no explanation for her 'process of deduction', but her response did hint that if the girl in the photograph had been Jewish (or, indeed, any cited religion other than Christian), she would have been able to tell.

Then Jordan put up his hand and showed a picture which depicted four people, likely to be two couples, from two generations of the same family, with the elder couple sat on chairs, and the younger couple behind them. He told the class 'I think they're Muslim because the woman is wearing a headscarf and the man has a full-grown beard'.

'OK, so potentially, there are some pictures of a Muslim family, as well' Ms. Morris agreed. 'Now I need to explain something to you', Ms. Morris told the class. 'The reason why I did this activity is to show you something very, very important. These people are all Jewish'. There was an audible gasp from one or two students, and a 'told you', from another, though I did not spot where either had come from.

'It's really important that you understand why I did this activity,' Ms. Morris continued. 'The reason why I didn't tell you how it was related to the thing we are looking at, at the moment, is so that we understand that all of these people are just ordinary people. They are in different countries across Europe. They are just ordinary people. There is nothing different about them compared to other ordinary people at the time. And the reason why I want you to understand that now is so that when we look at the Holocaust in more detail and we look at the way the Nazis treated Jewish people, we can see how absolutely wrong that was and we can see that there was no reason for this particular group of people to be selected'.

Fieldnotes, 8C, Capital Academy, Lesson 1/4 on the Holocaust

In this classroom interaction there was less overt discussion of Jewish people than in 8N's discussion. The only time Jewish people were mentioned was when students concluded, with little explanation, that people in the photographs were not Jewish. The students who gasped were clearly surprised the people in the photographs were Jewish; the student saying 'told you' anticipated it. This raised questions about what this suggested about the students' initial perceptions of Jewish people.

At the start of their following lessons, I gave students in 8N and 8C a blank postcard and asked them to write whether they were surprised to find out the people in the photographs were Jewish, and a reason for their answer. Across the two classes, 27 students answered. 17 wrote that they were surprised and 10 wrote they were not. Of the 10 who were 'not surprised', six wrote that they knew they were studying the Holocaust and assumed the photographs related to it. Their answers included:

> *'No, because of what we are doing about how Hitler targeted the Jews and so I thought it would be Jewish families'.* (Dawn, 8N)

> *'No, because we know that we are learning about the Holocaust, but I wasn't thinking about it at the time'.* (Linda 8C)[10]

These students used, as a point of reference, what they knew of their future history lessons, rather than their understandings of Jewish people. This is no criticism, merely an observation of how they made sense of the photographs and why the student in 8C who said 'told you' had probably anticipated this was the case. Two students who were 'unsurprised', however, expressed some perceptions of Jewish people. Interestingly, they disagreed on whether the people in the photographs 'looked Jewish', writing:

> *'I was not surprised because I remember before we finished the term that we were going to learn about the Holocaust. But by the photo it did not look like they were Jewish'.* (Isabella, 8C)

> *'No, because all looked the same. Their hair was like how Jews' hair looked'.* (Emilio, 8N)

These two students made explicit references to Jewish people sharing a similar 'look'. This idea was presented by others claiming surprise at the fact the people in the pictures were Jewish. Their responses included:

> *'Yes, I was surprised. They didn't look Jewish and I was surprised'.* (Khalid, 8N)

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[10] These responses are in italics and indented as they are quotations from multiple students responding to the same question. Page 67 explains how different types of data are presented in different formats throughout the thesis.

> *'I was extremely surprised because they all looked like from a different religion, and from different places. They looked just completely normal'.* (Jason, 8C)

> *'Yes, because some looked like Muslims and also some looked like Christians. They also didn't look (like) Jewish people in the pictures'.* (Diaz, 8C)

These students were not necessarily demonstrating negative attitudes towards Jewish people; rather, they presented quite simplistic views of Jewish people, suggesting they look or dress similarly.

No student was asked 'what does a Jewish person look like?' by me or their teachers. This would have guided them into making statements which were stereotypical at best and antisemitic at worst. However, during the introduction to their second lesson on the Holocaust, some students in 9D, taught by Ms. Rashid in Rowntree Academy in the Midlands, gave an indication of what they thought Jewish people look like at the start of a lesson on antisemitism. When asked to 'write down why the Jews were persecuted during the Holocaust'. Their answers included:

> *'Because they never had blond hair or blue eyes'.* (Precious, 9D)

> *'Hitler wanted everyone to be blond haired and blue eyes and the Jews did not'.* (Marian, 9D)

> *'They didn't have blond hair or blue eyes'. (*Lydia, 9D)

The repeated references, across the classes, to 'blond hair and blue eyes' echoes the language used by students who wrote a description of the Holocaust cited in Foster et al (2016). Of 6094 students who wrote a response, 118 used each term. Contrastingly, other terms which more aptly relate to why Jewish people were persecuted, like 'prejudice', 'racist', and 'antisemitic', appeared 49, 58 and 61 times respectively. The students quoted above shared a view of how Jewish people did not look, focusing on their perceived lack of blue eyes and blond hair. Though not necessarily indicating they held negative attitudes towards Jewish people, these students' answers suggested they believed they had common physical traits; indeed, it was a perceived lack of the common trait of blond hair and blue eyes to which these students appeared to attribute their persecution. This belief would be echoed elsewhere. The assumption Jewish people lacked particular traits was significant in part because the students

appeared to use different reasoning to discern whether someone might have been Muslim. For example, Jordan (8C) suggested the individuals in his photograph could have been Muslim, because 'the woman is wearing a headscarf and the man has a full-grown beard'. Similarly, Norbert (8N) suggested the girl in his photograph was not Muslim 'because if she's a Muslim, she'd be wearing Hijab'. These two students suggested it is possible to tell whether someone is Muslim because of what they are wearing; however, many students appeared to suggest it is possible to tell someone is Jewish because of their hair colour or eye colour. The issue of where such ideas come from seems ripe for further study in the future.

Their answers suggested several of 9D, as in 8N and 8C, perceived Jewish people as a mono-cultural group, similar in look and practice. The implications of not holding understandings of Judaism before learning about the Holocaust were suggested in Short (1994b), Foster and Mercia (2000), and Gray (2013) which advocate that students learn about Jewish people and Judaism before learning about the Holocaust. The students quoted above clearly had some notions of who Jewish people are but presented them in simplistic terms. One tentative suggestion is that the students might have learned about Jewish people as a religious community, and as a distinct cultural group, rather than learning about diversity within and across Jewish communities. Arguably, one pitfall of learning about Jewish people only as a religious group is that students can perceive them in singular and simplistic terms. A potentially interesting area of further study is to explore students' initial ideas about Jewish people as explicitly as this research explored their initial ideas about the Holocaust, to enable an examination of how these are referred to during lessons on the Holocaust, and if and how they are changed after such lessons.

There was also evidence that Poonam and Anika (page 119) were not alone in basing their perceptions of Jewish people on Nazi attitudes towards them. Others wrote, of the individuals in the photographs, that:

'In some instances they looked Jewish but not all of them looked Jewish which surprised me due to the fact that Hitler made them sound horrible even though they had normal lives like everybody else'. (Ramon, 8N)

'They didn't really look Jewish and they were doing things that normal people do. And they weren't what people claimed they were, like the Nazis and Hitler'. (Jamie, 8C)

Jamie and Ramon recognised the pictures contrasted with the Nazi depiction of Jewish people, with which they, too, appeared more familiar. Encouragingly, they appeared to have taken note of Ms. Morris' comments that 'there is nothing different about them compared to other ordinary people at the time'.

It could be drawn from these classroom interactions that the ways in which the teachers led these activities influenced the students' ideas about Jewish people. 8C and 8N, for example, were introduced to images of Jewish people from before the Second World War before, in the lessons which followed, learning about antisemitism and the Holocaust. Many recognised how such images 'surprised' them and articulated how they challenged their views of Jewish people. At least two subsequently echoed Ms. Morris' comment that Jewish people were targeted despite being 'normal', suggesting that, in the short term at least, they had developed new and more nuanced ideas. By some contrast, many in 9D appeared to hold similar initial ideas about Jewish people. Yet, perhaps because these ideas were not overtly challenged at the start of their lessons on the topic, and they were not asked to reflect on what surprised them (an engagement with an aspect of metacognition; see page 55), they continued to draw on such simplistic ideas when answering questions on antisemitism during subsequent lessons. Many deployed such ideas when asked why Jewish people were persecuted and appeared to use them to rationalise, at least partially, Nazi antisemitic beliefs.

Though this research was intended as a study of learning rather than teaching it is impossible to separate the two entirely. Here was one example of the potential implications for teaching approaches on the ideas from which students draw when discussing aspects of the Holocaust. It highlights the importance of eliciting from the start a range of the students' initial ideas, because of the consequences of their drawing upon unsound notions of the events and those involved in them. Had 9D been able to reflect upon their ideas of Jewish people, as 8C and 8N had done, perhaps they would have been able, subsequently, to engage in discussions of antisemitism

by drawing on more nuanced ideas. Instead, when asked 'why the Jews?' like students interviewed in Foster et al. (2016), their answers lacked rigour (Ibid, 135). They did not have contextual knowledge to deploy, so could only draw on simplistic ideas about Jewish people themselves. This theme is explored more fully in the 'Recommendations' chapter which follows.

Who was Hitler?

Hitler was central to the students' initial ideas about the Holocaust. The first indication students saw connections between Hitler and the Holocaust appeared during the initial fieldwork, in a lesson with 9C. Mr Patel explained to the class that they were going to be learning about Nazi Germany. As he took the register at the start of the lesson, he asked them to write down three things they knew about Hitler. 9C were the only class to take part in a lesson specifically on Hitler, so they offered the only writing specifically addressing what they knew about him. More commonly, the students were asked what they already knew about the Holocaust (9A, in the opening of this chapter, and 9B, who were also taught by Ms. Charlton) or about the antisemitism at its heart (8C, 8N and 9D). Significantly, the students' responses to such questions also highlighted some of their common ideas about Hitler.

In their three facts about Hitler, almost all the students in 9C mentioned the persecution of Jewish people, including:

> *'Hated Jews and killed them'.* (Tahir)
>
> *'He wanted to create a race of people with blonde hair and blue eyes; He did not like Jewish people'.* (Sarah)
>
> *'Hitler killed Jewish people because he thought they were the reason they lost World War One; Hitler used poisonous gas to kill the Jews'.* (Nick)

I noted in my fieldnotes that the class 'got straight down to the task without asking questions of Mr. Patel or each other', which was an indication of their confidence in their ideas. These students clearly connected Hitler to the events of the Holocaust and made references to those events or the attitudes or policies at their heart when presenting initial ideas about him. This was to be expected, since 91.4% of students cited in Foster et al. (2016: 51) indicated Hitler was 'associated' with the Holocaust, significantly more than the proportion who indicated the association between the Holocaust and any other term.

When writing what they knew about the Holocaust, 9B at Holy Cross School wrote similar answers to 9C's answers on what they knew about Hitler, as this extract demonstrates:

9B discuss what they knew about the Holocaust

At the start of 9B's first lesson on the Holocaust, Ms. Charlton asked the girls to 'write down three things you know about the Holocaust'. Due to other activities happening in the classroom at the same time, as students handed in homework and collected new exercise books, few completed this task. They wrote:

> *'Hitler wanted a perfect race – AKA – blonde hair, blue eyes, light skin'. (Nicola)*

> *'Involved Jews'. (Sakura)*

> *'Adolf Hitler was the person responsible for the Holocaust. The Holocaust happened in Germany. Jewish people were persecuted'. (Melissa)*

> *'It happened during the Second World War. It involved persecuting Jewish people.*

> *Hitler kept Jewish people in concentration or death camps'. (Jade)*

> *'Hitler wanted a perfect race – blond hair, blue eyes. The Nazis agreed to what Hitler was saying. Hitler persecuted Jews and Polish people. Concentration camps / Auschwitz concentration camp'. (Kate)*

> *'Hitler wanted people to have blonde hair and blue eyes. It involved Jewish people'. (Linda)*

> *'Hitler wanted a perfect race'. (Avalon)*

After the girls had had a few minutes to record their ideas, Ms. Charlton led a discussion on what they knew about the Holocaust. Nicola contributed first. She read the comment from her exercise book, reading 'Hitler wanted a perfect race – AKA – blonde hair, blue eyes, light skin'.

Cecelia followed up with 'It involved Jewish people'.

Kat said 'he tortured Jewish people who didn't have blond hair and blue eyes'. Interestingly, Kat appeared to be referring to Hitler, who, after being mentioned by Nicola once at the start of the discussion, was not named again.

Aylin, who answered next, spoke also of Hitler, saying 'Apparently he was half Jewish himself'. Aylin's comment led to Ms. Charlton moving the discussion on to what makes a person Jewish.

'Is it when your dad's Jewish?' asked Cecelia.

Ms. Charlton smiled and said, 'the other one'.

Cecelia corrected her answer, saying 'your mum'.

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The discussion continued, with Nicola raising points further to those she had recorded in the first task. 'He only kept Jewish people alive if they were useful to him'. Then, as if such thoughts had reminded her of something else she knew, Nicola exclaimed 'Oh! Anne Frank!' and wrote in her book.

Fieldnotes, 9B, Holy Cross School, Lesson 1/4 on the Holocaust

In their responses, all but Sakura mentioned Hitler. He was considered 'responsible' for the Holocaust because he 'kept Jewish people in concentration camps' and 'wanted' a 'perfect race'. Their written answers suggested the students perceived Hitler central to the Holocaust. Noticeably, the students used the term 'he' as they shared their answers aloud, suggesting they were presenting the events through the actions of an individual who we can assume to be Hitler, given he was specifically mentioned. More striking, however, is the echo of 9C's responses in those written by 9B, despite their being asked different questions. Their collective responses suggested Hitler was central to their initial ideas about the Holocaust and vice versa.

The initial questionnaires completed by students in 8C, 8N, and 9D during the later fieldwork (page 76 and Appendix 6) allowed an exploration of how they considered Hitler and the Holocaust to be connected. Interestingly, Hitler was not the most common term used when the students alluded to those who could be described as perpetrators. 50 / 53 students answered the question 'who was involved in the Holocaust?' When mentioning perpetrators in this answer they wrote:

	9A	8C	8N	Total
Nazis	16	8	3	27
Hitler	11	4	6	21
Germans	7	2	4	13
Nazi Germany	2	0	1	3

Table 7: Frequency with which each common term for perpetrators was used to answer 'who was involved in the Holocaust?':

In these answers, the most common word relating to perpetrators was 'Nazi,' used alone, or, less frequently, within the term 'Nazi Germany'. This suggested that, though

Hitler appeared in 21 / 53 answers, students in 9D, 8C and 8N largely recognised other perpetrators were 'involved' in the Holocaust.

However, Hitler's name did appear *somewhere* on 39 / 53 students' completed questionnaires. This raises questions about what they considered his role to be. When the entire questionnaires were considered, 'Hitler' replaced 'Nazi' as the term students used most in relation to the perpetrators:

	9A	8C	8N	Total
Hitler	18	10	11	39
Nazis	19	9	5	33
Nazi Germany	3	0	1	4
Germans	7	2	4	13

Table 8: Frequency with which each perpetrator-related term was used somewhere on students' questionnaires

The students' perceptions of Hitler's role became clearer in their answers on 'why did the Holocaust happen?' Here, students in 9A, 8C and 8N mentioned Hitler significantly more frequently than 'Nazis':

	9A	8C	8N	Total
Hitler	18	8	10	36
Nazis	2	3	1	6
Germans	0	1	0	1

Table 9: Frequency with which each perpetrator-related term was used to answer 'why did the Holocaust happen?'

When answering why the Holocaust took place most students focused on Hitler. There was close to consensus that Hitler was the reason why the Holocaust happened, even if they recognised others were 'involved'. Though 27 wrote that Nazis were 'involved',

and 13 wrote that Germans were 'involved', 36 wrote Hitler was 'why' the Holocaust happened. Six students only mentioned Hitler in their answer to the question 'why', suggesting that though the Holocaust 'involved' Nazis or Germans, it happened because of Hitler. Foster et al. (2016) concluded students considered Hitler 'profoundly important' to what took place (Foster et al, 2016: 56). My research further suggested that students considered him to be the reason it happened. Without being asked 'who was responsible?' as students in Foster et al. had been (Ibid, .235), the students were apportioning blame to him.

Hitler's apparent responsibility for the Holocaust was also indicated by students who wrote that it happened because of him, but did not answer other questions on their questionnaires. Five did not answer 'what happened?' but mentioned Hitler in their answer to 'why?' Additionally, Siobhan (8N) did not answer any other question, but wrote, in answer to the question 'what happened?' that 'It had something to do with Hitler'. Several others expressed that the Holocaust happened because of Hitler, but did not write what happened, when, or where. Paradoxically, many apportioned responsibility to Hitler for something about which they were very unclear.

As well as holding Hitler responsible for the Holocaust, many believed Hitler 'began' or 'created' antisemitism (Foster et al., 2016: 57). During their final lesson on the Holocaust, students in 8C (Capital Academy) read a definition of antisemitism, and a text discussing aspects of its history which mentioned examples from the Medieval and Early Modern periods. I asked whether they had previously known antisemitism existed before Hitler or thought the ideas were his. Their answers were:

> *'I knew that it wasn't just in Germany. But, it's hard to explain! I knew that people didn't see them, as . . . that they didn't fit in. I thought it started with Hitler'.* (Damienne)

> *'I know there was a lot of hate against them. In some places. Like some people dislike them. I've heard about racism in Edgware. I know that they do dislike them. But it's really only been about Hitler that I know about. I only know about antisemitism from Hitler to now'.* (Jason)

> *'I think it started with Hitler'.* (Jordan)

> *'I thought it started with Hitler'.* (Andy)

> *'I thought it started with Hitler. He was the one that changed everyone's minds. Turned them against them'.* (Suki)

The students held a common perception that Hitler first introduced antisemitism. Suki also claimed Hitler 'changed everybody's mind' and turned people against Jewish people. She appeared to place all the responsibility for the acceptance of antisemitism on Hitler. In addition to believing the Holocaust happened because of Hitler, these students attributed the antisemitic attitudes at its heart to him as well. Students in 8N, also at Capital Academy, appeared to believe the origins of antisemitism coincided with the origins of Nazi Germany or the Second World War, with many also attributing them to Hitler, as this extract demonstrates:

8N discuss when antisemitism began

'We're going to finish the lesson looking at antisemitism,' Mr. Talbot told the class. He reminded them of the definition they had seen at the start of the lesson, reading 'hatred and persecution of Jewish people' and asked them to talk in pairs about when they thought antisemitism began. They had two minutes to do this. A few students answered into my voice recorder, saying:

> *'I think it was when Germany was in power. Of Poland'.* (Anika)

> *'I think it started long before. Because it's racism against Jewish people, and there's always going to be racism'.* (Poonam)

> *'I think it started in about 1940'.* (Jonty)

As Jonty whispered into the recorder, Mr. Talbot asked the students to focus on him. He led a discussion in which students were asked when they thought antisemitism began and who they thought came up with the idea. Several were asked for their answers, and Mr. Talbot went from student to student, without commenting, other than to thank each for their answer and call on the next. They suggested:

> *'1933'.* (David)

> *'I don't know. 1939? Maybe with an SS commander?'* (Karen)

> *'1939. With the Nazis'.* (Emilio)

> *'1933 – Hitler'.* (Michael)

> *'1932 – Adolf Hitler'.* (Roger)

> *'1933 - and the Nazis'.* (Jonty)

> *'I think it started in the 13th Century. A lot of religions have been going on for a long time'.* (Hector)

Mr. Talbot thanked all those who had answered and ended the discussion on the students' initial ideas to present them with information on the actual histories of antisemitism.

Fieldnotes, 8N, Capital Academy, Lesson 4/4 on the Holocaust

Most students had believed antisemitism began in the 1930s or 1940s. Though not necessarily mentioning Nazi Germany or the Second World War, they suggested the beginning of antisemitism coincided with one or the other. Several also initially agreed with those in 8C who thought Hitler was the first to suggest such ideas. Only Poonam and Hector explicitly recognised antisemitism pre-dated the Nazis. Interestingly, neither included information in their answers about the specific experiences of Jewish people in their responses; they suggested antisemitism has been around for a long time because 'racism' or 'religions' have been. Of note too, Jonty appeared to alter his answer in response to hearing from his peers, initially locating antisemitism's origins in the 1940s before changing his answer to '1933' and 'the Nazis'. Presumably, on hearing his peers' answers, he thought this was more accurate. The responses from 8C and 8N suggested the students did not initially understand that the attitudes at the heart of the Holocaust had existed for several centuries and were part of a Europe-wide set of prejudices which the Nazis voiced rather than constructed.

Without using the term 'antisemitism', which did not appear on any students' initial questionnaires, many across 9D, 8C and 8N wrote about antisemitic beliefs, attributing them specifically to Hitler. Answering 'why did the Holocaust happen?' several wrote that Hitler disliked or hated Jewish people, writing, for example:

'Hitler didn't like Jewish people'. (George, 8C)

'Because Hitler didn't like the Jews'. (Poonam, 8N)

'I think it happened because Hitler hates Jewish people'. (Malcolm, 8N)

'Because Hitler didn't like the Jews'. (Precious, 9D)

Many connected this dislike of Jewish people with intentions to kill all Jewish people, which they also attributed solely to Hitler, writing, for example:

'It happened because Hitler wanted to eradicate the Jewish people'. (Damian, 8C)

> *'Hitler did not like Jewish people and it was the only solution to get rid of the Jews before they lost their power'.* (Anika, 8N)

> *'Because Hitler didn't like the Jews so he wanted to kill them'.* Monica (9D)

Dani (9D) wrote:

> *'It happened because Hitler and the Nazi Party hated the Jews, but Hitler especially hated them because when he was in a bad place he saw how Jews were seen as better than him. He thought that they were immigrants taking all the jobs and that they should be punished'.* (Dani, 9D)

Though Dani referred to the Nazis and alluded to immigration and unemployment, the crux of her answer was that such wider issues account for Hitler's attitudes which were the actual cause of the Holocaust. Her answer echoed Daisha's comment (page 117) in mentioning aspects of the context of the Holocaust to explain Hitler's beliefs.

Other students also tried to explain Hitler's beliefs. They appear typical when considered against Foster et al. (2016) which cited students who presented ideas about Hitler's personal history when explaining the Holocaust. Their explanations included:

> *'I think they killed his parents'.* (Bilal, 9D)

> *'He blamed them for Germany's loss in World War One and he thought they were greedy'.* (Rebecca, 9D)

> *'Because Adolf Hitler believed that the perfect human had blond hair and blue eyes. Hitler had a deep hatred of Jewish people'.* (Hector, 8N)

These students elaborated on their perceptions of Hitler's attitudes, expressing reasons for them. This indicated that even students with additional understandings of the attitudes at the heart of the Holocaust used them primarily to explain Hitler's beliefs and intentions; they held a shared belief that 'the Holocaust was a consequence almost exclusively of Hitler and the Nazi Party's personal beliefs or desires, choices or fears' (Foster et al., 2016: 56).

In 9D's second lesson on the Holocaust, they were asked 'why the Jews?' Many suggested Jewish people were targeted because of how they looked (page 120). However, several discussed beliefs they attributed to Hitler, and explained these beliefs referring to his personal experiences. Their answers included:

> *'Jews mocked him when he was homeless'.* (James)
>
> *'Because his art teacher who denied his place was Jewish'.* (Lorraine)
>
> *'Apparently his mother died while being treated by a Jewish doctor'.* (Clarence)

They appeared to be 'trying to attribute logical or rational reasons for why Hitler and the Nazi regime may have hated the Jews' (Gray, 2014b: 206). A pedagogical explanation of this is that the question to which the students were responding read 'why the Jews?' Perhaps this question led students to assume such 'logical or rational reasons' did exist, and their response was to use what they felt they already knew about Hitler's attitudes to account for Jewish peoples' persecution.

This research was not intended as a study of pedagogy; however, the students' responses to this question highlight the importance of considering the questions posed to them. In this case, the question 'why the Jews?' arguably introduced the students to the notion the events of the Holocaust can be rationalised; yet when asked to rationalise them they could only draw on their existing ideas. Since these related to simplistic notions about Jewish people being a monocultural group, and Hitler's personal responsibility for the Holocaust, the only explanations they could offer were connected to these two factors. They could not yet draw on more useful contextual knowledge of antisemitism's long history. Students in 9D would, like those in 8C and 8N, above, go on to explore this history. However, as will be demonstrated, many continued to hold on to the notion that the Holocaust can be explained through a discussion of who Jewish people were, and how Hitler felt about them, without any real appreciation of the wider issue of existing antisemitism.

The students clearly connected the Holocaust to Hitler and vice versa. When asked to record what they knew about one they generally mentioned the other, suggesting shared perceptions of a connection between the two. This was the case even when

they apparently held few ideas about the Holocaust. In addition to suggesting that Hitler was involved in the Holocaust, they generally framed their explanations of why the events took place around a discussion of what they perceived as Hitler's views or intentions. They generally suggested antisemitism started at the time of the Nazis, and Hitler himself was the first to introduce it. When accounting for why he held these views, they were more likely to attribute them to his apparent personal experiences than to wider social or historical factors. Indeed, when asked why it was Jewish people who were persecuted by the Nazis, the students commented on characteristics they attributed to Jewish people to explain Hitler's beliefs rather than discussing the wider histories of Jewish persecution. This correlates with their perception that Hitler was the first to hold antisemitic beliefs, which precluded their appreciating the existence of historical antisemitism. What proved particularly interesting was that, as will be demonstrated, students in all classes were taught about the Holocaust with little reference to Hitler, and frequent, overt, and presumably deliberate use of the term 'Nazis' and in fewer cases the term 'collaborators'. Nonetheless, so powerful were these initial ideas about Hitler's personal role in the events that they appeared to remain with the students throughout and beyond these history lessons.

Camps, ghettos, and mass-shootings – students' ideas about what happened during the Holocaust

The account on page 115 - 117 suggests students in 9A were more confident in answering 'what happened during the Holocaust' than any other question posed by Ms. Charlton. 'A sea of hands' was raised as so many students wanted to contribute. When completing their initial questionnaires, students in 8C, 8N and 9D who answered 'what happened during the Holocaust?' generally recognised that the Holocaust involved the killing of Jewish people. This was anticipated. 'Killed' was, after 'Jews' / 'Jewish people', the second most frequently used term when similarly aged students described the Holocaust (Foster et al., 2016: 42). Students in this study wrote, for example:

> *'Jews got put in camps and gas chambers'.* (Dawn, 8N)

> *'Jews were killed'.* (Poonam, 8N)

> *'Many Jews were killed and experimented on'.* (Pearl, 9D)

'That Jewish people were put in concentration camps and gas chambers'.
(Ada, 9D)

The students' initial ideas about the Holocaust focused almost entirely on events which took place in concentration camps, which they commonly called 'camps'. In their initial questionnaires, 19 students from 9D, 8C and 8N used the words 'camp' or 'camps' in their answers on what happened. Additionally, 18 mentioned 'gas chambers' or 'gas', three referred to experimentation and three mentioned people being forced to work. These references, with the exception, perhaps, of forced labour which also took place in ghettos, related to what happened within the concentration camp system. Consequently, 31 / 48 students answering 'what happened during the Holocaust?' wrote about events taking place in camps. In contrast to mass-shootings and ghettoisation, aspects of what took place in concentration camps were generally familiar to the students before they learned about the Holocaust. This also further supports the findings of Foster et al. (2016) in which 'camps' was the fourth most used term in the descriptions of the Holocaust written by students in Years 8 and 9 (Ibid, 42).

Significantly, there was no evidence suggesting students were aware of different types of concentration camps. Rather, the students' combined references to Jewish people being killed, and to the use of 'camps' suggested they were more familiar with the use of death camps than of other forms of concentration and labour camp. Indeed, there was no indication any student appreciated there were different types of camp, and that it was only in the six death camps established in Nazi-occupied Poland in which Jewish people were, in significant number, killed on arrival.

This research provided opportunities to explore how familiar students were with other sites of persecution, and whether they did not 'prioritise' (Ibid, 41) them in their answers, or did not know about them. My observations suggested it was the latter. Their collective lack of familiarity with ghettos as an aspect of the Holocaust was initially indicated in the first piece of fieldwork:

9C define the term 'ghetto'

During their final lesson on the Holocaust, Mr. Patel wrote the term 'ghetto' on the whiteboard and asked the students to define it.

'A coven or a community of people,' Kush suggested.

'A slum,' offered Monica.

'A closed off area,' furthered Tahir.

'I've heard of it,' said Billy. 'Like the inner-London ghetto. Like gangsta'.

'Like a ghetto blaster,' said Monica.

Fieldnotes, 9C, Devon Hill School, lesson 4 /4 on the Holocaust

This brief interaction suggested students in 9C were more familiar with the term 'ghetto' from modern contexts than from the context of the Holocaust. 9D in Rowntree Academy, in the Midlands, were introduced to the term in a more historical context. When reading about antisemitism in the Middle Ages, some suggested they shared 9C's lack of appreciation of the connections between ghettos and the Holocaust:

Ada, Khadija, and Rebecca (9D) use 'ghetto' as an insult

As the students were reading case studies of historical antisemitism, I heard friends Ada, Khadija and Rebecca laughing at the term 'ghetto'.

Pointing at Ada, Khadija said 'you're ghetto'.

Ada said 'Miss, she's insulting me', though she was clearly not upset.

I asked Khadija and Ada, 'where have you heard the word before?'

'It's, like, street', Ada said.

Khadija agreed. 'It's like run down'.

Fieldnotes, 9D, Rowntree Academy School, lesson 2 / 4 on the Holocaust

Before reading the resources provided by Ms. Rashid, the students knew the term 'ghetto' only in a modern sense, apparently unfamiliar with its relevance to the Holocaust. The students' collective lack of appreciation of the role of ghettos during the Holocaust was also suggested by their initial questionnaires, on which only one student mentioned them. Hector (8N) wrote:

> *'Jewish people were herded into ghettos and then transported to concentration camps. They were either worked to death if they were healthy but gassed in gas chambers'.* (Hector, 8N)

Ghettos did not appear to feature in students' initial ideas about the Holocaust. If they were familiar with the term, it was from another context.

It was also evident students were unfamiliar with the role of the *Einsatzgruppen,* or the importance of mass-shootings to the Holocaust. No students wrote about either on their initial questionnaires, and in 8N's final lesson on the Holocaust:

Mr. Talbot asks 8N if they had heard of the Einsatzgruppen

Mr. Talbot gave the students cards depicting the actions of individuals involved in the Holocaust. They were taken from resources from the Holocaust Educational Trust's lesson entitled 'Dilemmas, Choices and Responses'. He asked the students to decide if each was a perpetrator, rescuer or bystander, then led a discussion eliciting examples of people who fall into each category.

'Let's move down to bystander,' Mr. Talbot said. Karen was asked for an example and read the card reading 'Attending the scene of an Einsatzgruppen action (a mass-shooting) for the purpose of filming the events'. Mr. Talbot asked the class if anyone knew what the Einsatzgruppen were. No student raised their hand.

Fieldnotes, 8N, Capital Academy, Lesson 4/4 on the Holocaust

There was no indication any student was aware of the *Einsatzgruppen*, or of mass-shootings before learning about the Holocaust during their history lessons. When specifically asked, all suggested this was unfamiliar. This was unsurprising; Gray (2014b) noted, from Pettigrew et al. (2009), that 'teachers typically ignored or did not know about this important aspect of the Holocaust' (Gray, 2014b: 214). However, it raised questions, explored in the next chapter, about why the students' held such ideas before working with their Key Stage 3 history teachers.

Students in 8C, 8N and 9D all took part in activities exploring the role of ghettos during the Holocaust, and 9D also took part in activities mentioning the *Einsatzgruppen*. These had the potential to demonstrate to students that much of the Holocaust took place outside the concentration camp system. Nonetheless, their camp-centric notions remained essential to their ideas about what happened during and beyond these history lessons. The implications of this are discussed in the 'Recommendations'.

When and where did the Holocaust happen?

Activities conducted by teachers across each class allowed an exploration of students' notions of Jewish people, the role of Hitler and the Nazis, the histories of antisemitism, and some events of the Holocaust. The students' ideas about when and where the Holocaust took place were not so fully discernible from their classroom activities and discussions alone. However, the lesson observations suggested students had less confidence in answering this question than other, related questions.

That the students lacked confidence in expressing when the Holocaust happened was suggested in the first fieldwork. The issue confused 9A (page 117), who needed prompting by Ms. Charlton before Cathy said it happened in 'approximately 1939-1945'. Although the Holocaust did not coincide perfectly with the Second World War, once it was established in 9A's class discussion they took place at a similar time, Ms. Charlton moved on the discussion. In 9B's discussion, Ms. Charlton asked the students for their ideas before guiding them through a similarly structured question and answer session. When writing their facts about the Holocaust (page 127), only Jade mentioned 'the Second World War'; no other student mentioned any time frame. As Jade did not contribute to the discussion, the timing of the Holocaust was not raised. Additionally, although many in 9C mentioned the Second World War in their facts about Hitler (page 126), because they were not exploring the Holocaust, explicitly, there was no follow up discussion of when the Holocaust happened.

Perhaps there was also less scope for lengthy discussion of the timing of the Holocaust in the earliest discussions. Since the events developed in different places at different times, such issues are arguably better explored when students have more understanding of what took place than was required during these initial tasks. It was possible to identify through their classroom activities that some in 9A, 9B and 9C recognised the Holocaust took place during the Second World War. However, it was unclear how many knew this, and not yet possible to explore their ideas more fully. Exploring the students' common beliefs about when the Holocaust happened became an explicit focus in the final piece of fieldwork.

Initial questionnaires completed by 9D, 8N and 8C shed light on this. When answering 'when did it happen?' 33 / 47 suggested the events took place during the Second World War or between 1939 and 1945. This was a greater proportion of students than those cited in Foster et al. (2016), only 1/4 of whom mentioned a timeframe in their descriptions of the Holocaust. However, this is an example of a methodological difference. I asked the students when the Holocaust happened, and Foster et al. did not. Most of those in Foster et al. who mentioned a timeframe in their descriptions mentioned the Second World War (Ibid, 52), suggesting the ideas held by students in my fieldwork were typical of students of similar ages in England.

11 / 47 students in 9A, 8C and 8N wrote an answer which was either incorrect (for example suggesting it happened during the First World War) or vague enough to indicate confusion (for example 'the 1900s'). Interestingly, however, many of these 11 had, elsewhere in their answers, expressed some of what happened, where or why, so they could write answers to these other questions but were unable to provide a timeframe for such answers.

Two students cited a timeframe and explained some of the context of the Holocaust, writing:

> *'It happened in WW2 when Hitler was taking charge'.* (Fatima, 9D)

> *'It happened in the Second World War where Germany were at the peak of their power'.* (Hector, 8N)

These comments indicated they recognised the Holocaust took place in a wider context, even one as broad as the rise of Hitler (Fatima) or the dominance of Nazi Germany (Hector). Perhaps because they were not asked to, no other student made explicit comments on the wider context of the Holocaust when answering when it took place. Across the students' questionnaires, except for these two students, 9D, 8C and 8N could, at best, write that the events took place during the war; however, many did not place it in any timeframe.

The students also demonstrated limited ideas about the geographical context of the Holocaust. This was first suggested in the initial fieldwork. In their first classroom activities, where their 'starting points' were explored, few mentioned where the Holocaust took place. 9A cited only Germany, Poland, and 'Holland' in their discussion (page 116). In 9B, only Melissa mentioned a country in her three facts about the Holocaust, and writing 'Germany' (page 127). Also, in 9C, of the students who discussed aspects of the Holocaust in their facts about Hitler (page 126), only RR mentioned a location, writing 'He killed all the Jewish people in Germany', suggesting he misunderstood the scale or locations of the events. A tentative reading of this was that the students generally did not appreciate the events of the Holocaust took place all over Europe, in all the countries the Nazis and their collaborators controlled.

When completing their initial questionnaires, 9D, 8C and 8N demonstrated similarly limited ideas about the geographical scale of the Holocaust. Seven left blank the question 'where did (the Holocaust) take place?' presenting ideas about the Holocaust without a geographical context. Contrastingly, two students connected, explicitly, countries where the Holocaust was carried out, demonstrating an understanding of its geo-political context, writing:

> *'Germany and other Nazi-occupied countries'*. (Clarence, 9D)

> *'It took place in all the areas Hitler controlled'*. (Ramon, 8N)

They were exceptional across the students completing the questionnaire. A more common response was to present the Holocaust in solely German terms; those going beyond such terms wrote nothing about connections between the countries they cited. Only 'Germany' was written by 18 students, suggesting significant numbers of students did not appreciate the geographical scale of the genocide and could, like 54.9% of students surveyed in Foster et al. (2016) have believed that most of the killings of the Holocaust took place in Germany (Ibid, 190). A slightly higher number of students stated that the Holocaust took place in either 'Europe' (12 students) or in European countries which they listed (5 students). These later were:

> *'Holland, Poland and Germany'* (Dani, 9A)

> *'In Germany and some parts of Poland'* (James, 9A)

> *'Austria, Germany'* (Ada, 9A)

> *'Mainly Germany, Austria and Poland'* (Karen, 8N)

> *'Poland, Romania, Germany'* (Emily, 8C).

These answers were, potentially, more nuanced than the answer 'Europe'. They referred to specific aspects of the geography of the Holocaust. However, mentioning a limited number of countries but not all of those affected suggested these students, too, under-appreciated the geographical scale of what happened.

The geographical context of the Holocaust, like its timeframe, is part of the 'organisational knowledge' (Donovan and Bransford, 2005: 1) students need to draw on to develop new ideas about what happened. Many held limited or flawed initial ideas. As will be demonstrated, by the end of the lessons many of those who initially

located the events only in Germany incorporated other countries into their answers by the end of the lessons. However, by not recognising the connections between these countries, and continuing to cite them individually, rather than as a collection of countries which shared the experience of occupation (in some form), these students arguably presented similarly limited ideas about where the Holocaust took place at the beginning and at the end of their lessons on the topic.

Conclusion

This chapter explored the students' starting points – the ideas about the Holocaust which they held before learning about the topic with their history teachers. They generally recognised Jewish people were involved in the Holocaust but perceived them in somewhat simplistic terms. They presented Hitler as personally responsible for what happened, and believed he invented antisemitism. They were largely only familiar with the Holocaust as being enacted in concentration camps, and not in other sites of persecution and mass-murder. Being a participant observer allowed me to gather evidence so enabling cross-referencing between individual students' responses which was not possible in previous research. This approach highlighted notable paradoxes in some students' thinking. Many suggested Hitler was 'why' the Holocaust happened, whilst unclear about what happened, or when or where. This suggested that the students' ideas were, initially, largely Hitler-centric, and often fragmented.

The next chapter suggests reasons for these patterns. It explores why the students viewed Jewish people as a mono-cultural group, held Hitler-centric notions of the Holocaust, were only familiar with events of the Holocaust which took place in concentration camps, and appeared confused by its timeframe and geographies. It draws on evidence from the six classes, and explores the ideas held by specific students, cross-referencing answers they provided at different points of their lessons and shedding further light on the origins of their initial ideas about the Holocaust.

Chapter 6: What are the origins of students' initial ideas about the Holocaust?

The previous chapter discussed students' common initial ideas about the Holocaust. This chapter analyses the origins of those ideas, exploring the most common ways in which the students encountered depictions of the Holocaust before studying it in their history lessons. It examines how they described such encounters and sheds light on how specific encounters contribute to students holding particular notions of the Holocaust.

The first and most explicit opportunity to explore students' previous encounters with depictions of the Holocaust arose during 9A's first lesson on the Holocaust (page 115).

Daisha and Shida (9A) discuss where they have learned about the Holocaust previously

The girls in 9A discussed, in answer to Ms. Charlton's question, what they already knew about the Holocaust. I sat with Shida and Daisha. As they discussed the questions, 'who, what, when, where and why?' it became clear Daisha had many ideas to share.

 'They sent them to gas chambers and gave them tattoos', she told us. 'It was Jews, gay people, Black people and 'Gypsies' mostly'.

Shida agreed that the Holocaust was about Jews, saying 'they' (a group of people neither defined) wanted to kill 'all Jews'.

I asked Daisha where her ideas had come from, struck at how willing she was to share what she knew about this topic, compared with her reticence joining in with class discussions previously. 'We learned about it in primary school', she told me. 'We watched and read The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas *and went on a visit to the Jewish Museum and Imperial War Museums in London. And we read* The Diary of Anne Frank.

> Fieldnotes, 9A, Holy Cross School, Lesson 1 / 4 on the Holocaust

Daisha's comments highlighted places where many students had encountered depictions of the Holocaust before their history lessons on the topic. Many learned about it at primary school, whilst studying the Second World War. Additionally, at primary school, Daisha encountered the two narratives most familiar to the students – the stories of Anne Frank and *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*. Her visits to the museums were more unusual, but Daisha's other encounters were common to many students. This was suggested by their responses to research tasks and by the lesson observations.

During the initial fieldwork, students in 9A and 9B at Holy Cross School, London. completed a survey on books and films with which they were familiar (page 72 and Appendix 5). Their responses suggested they were most familiar with the stories of *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* and Anne Frank:

	9A			9B			Overall
	Yes, I have seen or read this	I've heard of this, but have not seen or read it	No, I've not heard of this	Yes, I have seen or read this	I've heard of this, but have not seen or read it	No, I've not heard of this	Total number of students who wrote they had seen or read it
The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas	23	0	0	22	1	0	45
The Diary of Anne Frank	13	9	1	18	3	2	31
Life is Beautiful	1	6	16	1	8	14	2
Schindler's List	3	6	14		12	11	3
The Reader	4	5	24	3	7	13	7

Table 10:Number of students in 9A and 9B who claimed to have read / seen or been familiar with books / films related to the Holocaust

During the second fieldwork, the best indicators of students' earlier encounters with depictions of the Holocaust were the initial questionnaires completed by 9D, 8C and 8N. 53 students completed the questionnaire which asked.

- Did you learn about (the Holocaust) in Primary School? If so, what did you learn?

- Have you read any books about it? If so, which ones?

- Have you seen any films about it? If so, which ones?

- Have you heard about it or learned about it anywhere else? If so, where?

Their responses confirmed they were most likely to have encountered depictions through reading or watching *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, or exploring the story of Anne Frank, and several had learned about it at primary school.

When asked 'Have you read any books about it? If so, which ones?' the students responded:

	9D	**8C**	**8N**	**Total**
Anne Frank	5	3	4	12
The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas	3	0	0	3
Another book	0	0	1	1

Table 11: Number of students in 9D, 8C and 8N who cited Anne Frank, *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, or another book when asked on their questionnaires if they had read any books on the Holocaust

If students claimed to have read a book about the Holocaust, it was most likely to be about Anne Frank. This was not necessarily her diary; some who mentioned the diary wrote they had read 'some' of it.

When asked 'Have you seen any films about it? *If so, which ones?*' they responded:

	9D	8C	8N	Total
Anne Frank	4	1	1	5
The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas	15	0	2	17
Another film	1	0	1	2

Table 12: Number of students in 9D, 8C and 8N who cited Anne Frank, *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, or another film when asked on their questionnaires if they had seen any films about the Holocaust

This demonstrated the students were more likely to have watched *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* than any other film, suggesting it was through the film rather than the book that this work of fiction has overtaken Anne Frank's as the story with which young people are most likely to be familiar (Gray, 2014b).

Finally, when asked 'Did you learn about the Holocaust in primary school?' the number of students who wrote that they had done so was:

9D	8C	8N	Total
3	4	6	13

Table 13: Number of students in 9D, 8C and 8N who claimed on their questionnaires that they had learned about the Holocaust whilst in primary school

The 13 students out of 53 to respond 'yes' equated to 24.5% of participants. Foster et al. found a similar 28.5% of participants recalled doing so (Foster et al., 2016: 74), suggesting the students in 9D, 8C and 8N were typical in this respect.

This chapter examines how the students' earlier encounters with depictions of the Holocaust explain the ideas they brought into their history lessons. It discusses what they recalled learning in primary school and the implications of this for the use of a 'spiral curriculum' (page 29). It builds on the ideas expressed in the 'Literature Review' by exploring what students thought happened in the stories of Anne Frank and *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, and the relationship between their understandings of

these narratives and their initial ideas about the Holocaust. This chapter sheds light on why the students commonly began their history lessons on the Holocaust with ideas about concentration camps but not ghettos or mass-shooting sites, believing Hitler was the primary perpetrator and sole cause of the Holocaust, and with limited ideas about when or where the Holocaust took place. Further, it suggests implications of these earlier encounters, which are explored in the 'Recommendations' chapter.

The primary school

The students had varied recollections of what they had learned about the Holocaust at primary school. Daisha (page 143) recalled having read and seen *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* and reading Anne Frank's diary. Her lessons also involved visiting the Jewish Museum, London, and the Imperial War Museum. Her recollections were particularly vivid, and she seemed to have spent an unusual amount of time focussed on the topic. Her classmates in 9A recalled varying experiences of learning about the topic at primary school, but there were patterns in what they remembered. Several mentioned learning about Anne Frank, with Marceline claiming to have heard from Miep Gies who supported the Frank family whilst they were in hiding. Students recalled learning about:

> *'Anne Frank, concentration camps and politics'.* (Cecelia, 9B)

> *'The war and a bit about the Holocaust'.* (Mikette, 9A)

> *'The Holocaust and about the leader of the Nazi Party'.* (Gem, 9A)

> *'Anne Frank'.* (Linda, 9A)

> *'We did a project in Year 6. It was a one-year project. Miep came into our school'.* (Marceline, 9B)

In the second fieldwork, 9D, 8C and 8N's questionnaires suggested only 13 students remembered learning about the Holocaust at primary school, but their recollections resembled the descriptions from 9A and 9B. Most remembered exploring the story of Anne Frank. However, several who claimed initially not to have learned about the topic in primary school realised, during their history lessons, that what they were learning was familiar. This was first highlighted when 8N studied the anti-Jewish laws

introduced by the Nazis. As they read about the laws in pairs, I asked if any of what they were learning was familiar. They told me:

> *'I knew about star. We did it in year six'.* (Siobhan)

> *'I knew that Jewish people weren't allowed to go to university or school. Because I did it in like Year 6, like, a bit of it. And they said that can't go to school or university and get good jobs, so that's how I knew'.* (Katja)

> *'I knew about the star one, because before this year I learned about the Holocaust through primary school'.* (Michael)

> *'I knew that doctors weren't allowed to treat Jewish and about they're not allowed to drive, they're not allowed to use telephones, and they're not allowed to have pets. That's all I remember. At the end of Year 6 we were studying topic, the Holocaust, as well and that's when someone came in to talk about it. And that's when we learned about the laws and what people went through, and the death camps'.* (Pratik)

Of these, only Pratik had written on his initial questionnaire that he had learned about the Holocaust at primary school and even he wrote little about what he had learned, mentioning only 'World War One and the Holocaust and camps', which raised questions about whether he had recognised the connections between all of these topics. Their responses suggested the students were more likely to have learned about the Holocaust in primary school than their questionnaires indicated. The simplest explanation for this is that the students did not remember these lessons when completing their questionnaires. This would explain why more students in Year 8 than in Year 9 mentioned primary school learning on their initial questionnaires; their more recent lessons were easier to recall. This raises methodological issues regarding the utility of requiring students to remember experiences from years ago without a stimulus to highlight what these experiences might have involved. This has implications for whether more than 28.5% of participants of Foster et al. (2016) also learned about the topic at this point.

However, I contend that, for many students, there was a disconnect between the events they learned about in primary school, and the Holocaust. Students found familiar, for example, some anti-Jewish laws, particularly around the right to go to school, or the requirement to wear a yellow star, having learned about them in primary school. But only when they learned about these specific laws again and were asked whether they were familiar did they recognise that the themes and events were

connected. Perhaps they needed repetitions of, or bridges between, these different depictions, to build a less fragmented account of what happened. As Shemilt thoughtfully argued:

> . . . until people are able to locate present knowledge, questions, and concerns within narrative frameworks that link past with past and past with present in ways that are valid and meaningful, coherent, and flexible, the uses that are made of history will range from the impoverished to the pernicious.
>
> Shemilt (2005: 99-100)

New learning must be based on a foundation of existing understandings and experiences (Bransford et al. 2005:4) so students need to recognise which understandings and experiences can act as such a foundation. This is essential if a 'spiral curriculum' (page 29) through which students revisit familiar topics and study them in more complex terms, is going to be successful. This will be explored more fully in later chapters.

The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas

One indication of the significance of *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* in the students' initial ideas about the Holocaust was the speed with which it was first mentioned in their history lesson. Here, Sally (9D) mentioned it during her first activity:

Sally (9D) suggests a shoe in a photograph belongs to the fictional Shmuel

Ms. Rashid introduced the class to a photograph of a shoe. 'We're going to start studying the Holocaust by looking at this picture of a shoe,' she told the class. 'I'm going to pass around a picture, and in groups I'd like you to answer the question from the board: "Who might be the owner of this shoe?"'

Before Ms. Rashid reached her table with their copy of the picture, Sally started to answer. 'Shmuel,' she said, audibly, but almost under her breath. As Ms. Rashid. approached her desk, she said again, more loudly, 'Shmuel. Miss, is it Shmuel's?'

Minutes later, as the students were recording ideas on a mind map, I asked Sally if she remembered her first response the picture. 'Do you remember the first thing you said when you saw it?' I asked.

'No,' she replied.

'You said it belonged to a particular person. Do you remember who?'

'Oh,' she quickly remembered. 'Shmuel . . . Shmol . . . whatever his name is'.

'And who's that?' I asked.

'He's from The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*'.*

'What made you think it belonged to Shmuel?' I asked.

'Because it's really small. And from the Holocaust. So it made me think of him'.

<div align="center">Fieldnotes, 9D, Rowntree Academy, Lesson 1 / 4 on the Holocaust</div>

Sally thought of Shmuel, the titular character in *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, as soon as she saw an image related to the Holocaust. She may have been guided to do so, in part, because the shoe in the image belonged to a child. Nonetheless, it is notable that her suggestion was that the real artefact belonged to a fictional character, and that that fictional character would be discussed in history lessons about real events. Sally mentioned the story more instantaneously than any other student in the study. However, at least one student mentioned it in the first lesson on the Holocaust of most other classes.

9A's first lesson began with the class watching a short film introducing the topic, after which Kelly commented that the 'stripes' in the film reminded her of the story. Others agreed (page 116). 9B, also taught by Ms. Charlton, saw similar footage during their first lesson on the topic, and I noted in my fieldnotes that 'As the class watched the clip, there were whispers from more than one student of 'striped pyjamas,' which were audible when the film footage showed liberated camp inmates'. Mr. Patel taught 9C about Nazi Germany before they learned about the Holocaust. When the class were writing the three things they knew about Hitler (page 126), Zay-Zay asked me the names of 'the Nazi camps in Poland' and when I asked how she found out about them, she told me 'we were reading a book . . . *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas'*.

The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas was referred to within moments of the start of the discussions of the Holocaust or Hitler, depending which the classes studied first, in the history lessons of 9A, 9B, 9C and 9D. In 8C and 8N, this was not the case. A potential explanation is that 8N and 8C began their history lessons on the Holocaust by examining images of Jewish people before the Second World War (page 119 and 120). Their earliest lessons were substantively different from those of the other classes, which all began with a discussion of the Holocaust of Hitler. Their first stimulus

was of images of Jewish people before the war and the images did not prompt them to mention the work of fiction based during the Holocaust. The implications of this are discussed in the 'Recommendations' chapter.

In addition to the speed with which the story was mentioned, there was evidence some students expected everyone to be familiar with it. Rosa (9A) clearly thought her class should be. In their third lesson on the Holocaust, the students heard from Ms Charlton that Jewish people were told they were going to have a shower, before being sent into the gas chambers. Hearing this, Alexis asked 'So it was a trick?' and Rosa answered, immediately, 'Haven't you seen *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*?' I noted her tone of incredulity in my fieldnotes. Clearly, Rosa expected the students would all have seen the film and should remember from it the 'trick' played on Jewish people. Others also suggested it was an important film to watch. Shida (9A) asked Ms. Charlton, during their penultimate lesson on the Holocaust, 'Can't we watch *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*? Just to refresh our memory?' and Chantel (9B) had asked a similar question during her second of three lessons on the topic. However, Rosa's comments are most striking when considered against her reading of its narrative.

Rosa made her first reference to the story during her second lesson on the topic. As the class heard that Anne Frank's sister, Margot was told to report to a work camp, Rosa said 'They used to make video of the camps showing that they were fine, and that they'd take care of your children'. When asked, she told me she had seen this in *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*. Rosa returned to this film within a film the following lesson. As 9A discussed the forced deportation of Jewish people, prior to discussing ghettoisation, Rosa asked 'You know in *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*? They showed that film. Who would they show it to? Jewish people or German people?' For Rosa, this film within a film appeared significant to her perceptions of the events.

Gray (2014c) recognised the familiarity of this propaganda film to the students. It appeared in the book and the film of *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*. Gray commented that it was relatively poorly circulated, would have been seen by few, and would not have been shown to Jewish people, but, rather, provided as evidence for the visit to the camp by the Danish Red Cross. But Rosa took from the story that this film was significant, using her ideas about it to explain how the Holocaust was conducted. She had understood an aspect of the narrative of *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*,

considered it typical of what took place during the Holocaust, and deployed it to explain, mistakenly, what really happened during that period.

More problematic is another comment Rosa made about the film. During their third of four lessons on the topic, Ms. Charlton showed aerial photographs taken by the Allies depicting Auschwitz-Birkenau. There was discussion of where the camp was located, and Cathy told the class that it was in Poland. At this, Rosa raised her hand and asked, 'You know in *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*? Why are all the people English?' This comment suggested Rosa had viewed the film uncritically, unaware the characters spoke English because that was the language of the film, not of themselves. Whereas her other comments indicated she was familiar with the film and cited what happened therein, this comment indicated she had not understood its setting. Though familiar with some of the minutiae of *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, Rosa had significantly misinterpreted what she had seen, with potential implications for her understanding of the Holocaust itself.

Rosa's confusions with the narrative raised questions regarding how others made sense of it. The issues of how students engage with the story, what they think happens, where and why, and how this influences what they believe happened during the Holocaust, was previously unexplored. Cesarani (2008) wrote on the misconceptions it presented, Gray (2014c) on a correlation between students' familiarity with the book and film and their preconceptions of the Holocaust, and Foster et al. (2016) on the extent to which students believed it to be historically informed. But none had asked students what they thought happened in the story, when, where and why, and analysed their answers alongside their ideas about the Holocaust.

The questionnaires completed by 9D, 8C and 8N suggested a correlation between individual students' familiarity with *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* and their ideas about the Holocaust. Five students across the three classes claimed to have encountered a depiction of the Holocaust *only* through a version of *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*. This is a very small sample. But, noticeably, on their questionnaires, all five wrote that the Holocaust involved the killing of Jewish people and four referenced people being in killed in the gas chambers which were central to the story's climax. Yet three of the five wrote that the Holocaust took place in Austria or Germany, and two cited no location. None mentioned that the Holocaust took place in Nazi-

occupied Poland, where most of the story was set. Additionally, all gave as a reason for the Holocaust that Hitler disliked Jewish people. A tentative conclusion was that familiarity with this narrative helped students recognise the Holocaust involved killing using gas chambers. Yet it did not appear to help them locate the events geographically or understand that others than Hitler were responsible for what happened.

Other students familiar with this narrative demonstrated significant misunderstandings about the Holocaust. Nine out of 15 students who wrote only 'Germany' in their answer to 'where did the Holocaust take place?' claimed to have read or seen *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas,* so appeared to have read a Holocaust-related story set in Nazi-occupied Poland, but not recognised it as such. Three who had claimed to have read or watched it did not answer the question 'where did the Holocaust take place?' suggesting further confusion about where the story or the events or both were set. Similarly, 9 of the 20 students who did not write that the Holocaust took place during the Second World War were familiar with this narrative. Being familiar with the narrative did not appear to enable students to identify the temporal or geographical context of the Holocaust.

My examination of the emplotment within the story (page 43) led to the conclusion that the timing and location of the narrative only very implicit within the text and film. It also led me to examine what the students themselves thought happens in the story, when and where it takes place, and how the events unfold. Cesarani (page 42), raised concerns about the book on in its publication. He described its plot as 'utterly implausible' and criticised Bruno's naiveté about what was happening in the camp which the author intended as Auschwitz. He also raised objections regarding the moral messages it presented, particularly suggesting its conclusion, 'we are overwhelmed by the grief of a Nazi mass murderer and his complicit Frau over the loss of their nice Aryan boy', with little regard for the loss of Schmuel, the Jewish character about whom we know little.

I examined how students retold the story, and the implications for their ideas about the Holocaust. Eight students from across the classes wrote their account of what happened in the story. All had mentioned it on their questionnaires or during their history lessons.

Jordan (8C) gave the longest account:

'So basically there was a family in Germany and the father was a Nazi leader in the area. So they had to move houses. And then there's a boy who used to play with other boys in the old house, so when they moved he was so bored, and his mum never used to let him out, so the boy always used to look out of the window. And then one day the boy looked out and he saw smoke coming out in the far distance in the garden. So one day the boy went out to, like, an adventure, to see what was there. So when he went there it was like a camp where the Jewish people stayed, but the boy didn't know. And then he saw another boy in there. So they were just talking. And then a Nazi leader in the camp said to come. So the boy, the one that was in the camp, said 'can you bring some food back?' So the boy went home and told his parents about it and his dad shouted at him saying to not go there. And then, one day, the boy went, and he bought him food, and then the other boy brought him clothes. And then the boy digged a hole underneath the ground. So, the boy went into the camp with the other boy, to look for his father. And when they went in there, the Nazis took them into a room and said that they needed to have a shower. But it wasn't a shower. It was like this gas that entered, and they all died. And the father found out that he went. And the father tried to go there, to stop it. But it was too late'.
(Jordan, 8C)

Jordan's account suggested he read aspects of the story as Cesarani had feared. He accepted Bruno's naiveté, believing he 'didn't know' what was happening in the camp. His comment that 'the father tried to go there, to stop it. But it was too late' suggested he felt some sympathy for Bruno's family at the end of the story.

Damienne (8C) presented the story almost entirely through the actions of 'the German boy', also commenting on the end of the story:

'So there's a German family, with a little boy and he goes to play and he finds a boy, similar to his age, behind a fence. And he's wearing the clothes that they put in the concentration camps. And the German boy thinks that they're Pyjamas. And he tries his best to join the little boy. And it ends very terribly. Both of them end up dying, by getting gassed'. (Damienne, 8C)

Similarly, Lorraine (9D) framed the story through Bruno's experiences. Her final line was ambiguous, since there is no mention of what happened to Shmuel.

A boy called Bruno moved house because his dad was a Nazi. He didn't like it. One day he went into the back garden and hopped a fence went through the woods and saw a little boy called Shmuel and they became

friends. One day he snook in and he got put in the gas chamber and died.
(Lorraine, 9D)

Jonty (8N) suggested that Shmuel survived Bruno, writing:

'The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas', what happened was there was a family of Germans but the dad is a sergeant, behind the shed there was fences bordered the Holocaust prison. So the boy swaps with the Jew and the German boy dies in a shower but the Jewish kid survives. (Jonty, 8N)

In Jonty's conception of the story, the 'nice Aryan boy' (Cesarani, 2008) dies; Shmuel does not. Raising concerns about whether Jonty was supported whilst reading the book or watching the film, he used the phrase 'Holocaust prison', suggesting he did not yet have the vocabulary to explain where the story took place.

Students did not need to demonstrate misunderstandings of the plot to suggest concerning readings of the book and film. Monica (9D), for example, suggested only Bruno's father, the Commandant, knew what was happening in the camp, writing:

A boy called Bruno moved house with his family because his dad was in charge of a camp. No one except the dad knew what the camp was. One day Bruno went to the camp and met Shmuel and he told him he lost his dad. So the next day Bruno dug a hole and swapped places with Shmuel then when his family tried to save him he had already been killed. (Monica, 9D)

This arguably echoed a common misconception about the Holocaust itself, that the mass killings were hidden away. Monica, like Jordan and Lorraine, presented the act of entering the camp as straightforward. This is another unhelpful aspect of the story because it raises the question of why, if a nine-year-old boy could dig his way in, did the prisoners not dig their way out? This contributes to a common misconception of Jewish apathy, or a lack of willingness to resist persecution during the Holocaust.

Additionally, no student referred to Nazi-occupied Poland, or the Second World War. Jordan located the family 'in Germany,' at the start of the story, but did not express where they moved to. There was no mention of Nazi-occupied Poland anywhere in his account. Damienne mentioned that the story involved a 'German family' but gave no location to the story. In fact, none of the students who volunteered to write an account located it either geographically or temporally. I wondered whether this meant they did not understand these aspects of the narrative, or did not prioritise them (Foster et al.,

2016:41) in their summaries. If it was the former, did this contribute to the students' collective lack of confidence in explaining when and where the Holocaust took place?

14 students who claimed to be familiar with the story completed a quiz on *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, featuring questions designed to explore these issues (page 81). The questions aiming to elicit whether the students understood the events took place outside of Germany and that Shmuel himself was not German proved the most useful. When answering 'in which country was the camp in which Bruno and Shmuel met?' no students mentioned Nazi-occupied Poland. Four left the answer blank. One wrote 'Auschwitz'. One wrote 'Germany / Austria' and the remaining seven wrote that it was in 'Germany'. There was confusion about where Shmuel was born. Though he was Polish, only one student answered 'Poland'. Once again, the most common answer was 'Germany'. Five students gave this answer. Two left it blank. One wrote that he was born in 'Austria'. Demonstrating another misunderstanding of the geopolitical context of the narrative, one answered 'Israel'. By comparison, 12 out of 14 students correctly answered that Bruno was German.

Others have written on the potential impact of *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* on students' understandings of the Holocaust. This research shed light on how students understand its narrative. Being familiar with the film or novel does not help students recognise the death camps were in Nazi-occupied Poland. Students' perceptions of the Holocaust's taking place in Germany and involving, primarily, German people, correlated with their readings of this narrative. Additionally, students can be familiar with this narrative without recognising that the events took place during the Second World War. There appears a correlation between students' common ideas about the Holocaust and their readings (and mis-readings) of the story. Whether they bring problematic ideas to the story and read it through the lens of their own misconceptions or take such misconceptions from the story on first reading is unclear, and a useful area for further study. In either case, I agree that the story was a 'curse' (Gray, 2014c) for Holocaust education, for reasons further to those presented previously. It is not simply problematic on moral grounds, or on grounds of plausibility. It also appears to reinforce simplistic, flawed and decontextualised misconceptions of the Holocaust, which students then bring into their history classrooms, and which, as will be demonstrated, prove difficult to replace.

The story of Anne Frank

I anticipated that some students would be familiar with Anne Frank's story (page 80). Existing research highlighted some ways in which students engage with the story. Most significantly, Spector and Jones (2007) observed students who had perceptions of the story as they encountered quotations from the diary which contradicted their views of Anne Frank as 'hopeful' (Spector and Jones, 2007: 42). They quoted 'Brooke', a student who 'literally drowned out with "blah, blah, blah" the contradictory material' she found whilst reading aloud from Anne Frank's diary (Ibid, 43). I was able to explore further the Key Stage 3 students' ideas about Anne Frank.

Anne Frank was the only individual victim to be mentioned on the initial questionnaires completed by 9D, 8N and 8C and several students from across the classes, who learned about the Holocaust in primary school, recalled exploring parts of her story. Her name came up in some of the classes' earliest discussions about the Holocaust. She was mentioned first in 9A's final lesson before they learned about the Holocaust, when Ms. Charlton told the class what their next topic would be. Additionally, Marceline had immediately said 'The Holocaust? Like Anne Frank? Finally, something of use!' (page 113). She was mentioned again in 9A's first class discussion of the 'who, what, when, where and why' of the Holocaust, with Daisha contributing 'Holland. Anne Frank was from Holland' (page 116). Also, in 9B's first lesson on the topic, which began with Ms. Charlton asking the students to write down what they already knew about the Holocaust, Nicola also cited her name (page 128).

She was also mentioned by Effie when Ms. Morris introduced the topic to 8C in Capital Academy. Towards the end of the lesson, the students were asked to answer a final series of 'Summary Questions' on what could be learned from photographs about Jewish life before the Second World War (page 121). As they were completing this task, Effie asked Ms. Morris, 'Miss, are we going to be learning about Anne Frank?'

Anne Frank's story was not mentioned by as many students as *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, and when she was mentioned, I did not notice nods of agreements as when, for example, Kelly mentioned 'striped pyjamas' in 9A's first discussion (page 116). However, I examined how the students understood it and how this related to their understandings of the Holocaust itself. One opportunity to examine students' ideas

about Anne Frank's story arose during 9B's second lesson on the Holocaust:9B discuss what they know about Anne Frank

9B discuss what they know about Anne Frank

The title on the whiteboard read 'Why was Anne Frank forced into hiding?' Ms. Charlton asked the girls to write three things they knew about Anne Frank.

As the students were doing so, I heard Cathy, Miley and Halle talking about pop star Justin Bieber, who had recently visited Anne Frank's house and written in a visitors' book that he hoped she would have been a 'Belieber'. Though I did not record their ideas in full, I found it interesting that all three were aware of this incident and wondered if others were too. I wondered whether there would be, over the course of my periods in the field, other incidents reported in the news which related both to the Holocaust and popular or youth culture.

A few moments later Ms. Charlton lead a discussion on what the class knew about Anne Frank.

Shida was first to offer an answer, telling the class that 'most of her family died from an incurable disease'.

Cathy followed this up telling them that 'she was nice. She wrote poetry. And she moved to Holland'. Daisha said 'she wanted to be a writer'.

Alexis added 'I think she got her diary for her birthday'.

And Zara contributed 'She was Jewish and her family were killed in a concentration camp'.

At this point, Ms. Charlton told the class that they were going to find out more about her story during the lesson.

Fieldnotes, 9A, Holy Cross School, Lesson 2/3 on the Holocaust

Most students' comments related to Anne Frank's interests, background, and ambitions. These are all parts of her identity, and the students' comments helped them present her in humanised terms. This is important given the observation that the students largely presented Jewish people in simplistic and collective terms. However, most of these comments shed little light on the significance of the Holocaust to her story. Shida's comment that 'she died of an incurable disease' hinted that the manner of her death was significant but was devoid of context. She made no mention of where she died, when or why. Only when Zara contributed that 'She was Jewish and her family were killed in a concentration camp' did the conversation clearly relate to the Holocaust. That these students prioritised information about Anne Frank's identity

beyond her being a victim of the Holocaust could, of course, be read in a variety of ways. Perhaps the students other than Zara believed her religion and place of death to be common knowledge, unnecessary to repeat in the lesson, particularly given the lesson was on the Holocaust. Perhaps these were the aspects of her story which most interested the students. Or perhaps they were not as familiar with her story as a narrative of persecution, hiding, betrayal and, finally, death through deliberate neglect. Perhaps they saw it in the more 'hopeful' terms through which the students in Spector and Jones' study had perceived it (Spector and Jones, 2007: 42).

I examined the ideas about the Holocaust held by students familiar with Anne Frank's story. Effie wrote on her initial questionnaire that she learned about Anne Frank in primary school and had read 'a bit of her autobiography'. She made no reference to other narratives and placed Anne Frank at the centre of her initial questionnaire, writing:

Who: *Asian countries and Germany*

What: *She died because of Hitler*

When: *World War Two*

Where: *In Germany and around Europe*

Why: *Because she was Jewish and Hitler don't like.* (Effie, 8C)

So central was Anne Frank to Effie's depiction of the Holocaust that she answered the questions in relation to her personal experiences, writing 'she died' and 'she was Jewish'. Yet she did not mention Holland when answering where the Holocaust took place. She mentioned Anne Frank's 'autobiography', without mentioning the location in which it was written. On her initial questionnaire, Rachel (9D) also mentioned reading 'some' of Anne Frank's diary. She also did not mention Holland when answering where the Holocaust happened, citing only 'Nazi Germany'.

Seven other students also mentioned only the story of Anne Frank in questions about their prior encounters with depictions of the Holocaust. All but Dawn (8N) and Pearl (9D) wrote that the Holocaust took place during the Second World War, suggesting minimal evidence for my supposition that students did not recognise Anne Frank was writing during the war (page 41). But none mentioned the involvement of Holland. They wrote that it happened in Germany (three students), Europe (two students), Poland

(one student) and 'the areas where Hitler controlled' (Ramon, 8N). Also, all but one of student familiar only with this story suggested the Holocaust happened because of Hitler alone, with only Diaz (8C) recognising the role of others, writing 'Because Hitler and the Nazis wanted to get rid of the Jews'. A familiarity with the story of Anne Frank did not necessarily lead students to see the Netherlands as significant to the Holocaust. Furthermore, as I had suggested when problematising the narrative (page 41), it did not lead students away from Hitler-centric ideas about what happened.

Towards the end of their final lessons on the Holocaust, I asked volunteers in 9D, 8C and 8N to write what they knew about Anne Frank. The most detailed account was written by Dawn (8N) who wrote:

> *Anne Frank was a girl from Holland who got sent to a Jewish school for Jews and then she went into hiding when it came to the invasion in the back of her father's shop. When the German army found her because someone told the police they were there. And then she got taken to the camps where her dad survived, her mom died, her sister and her all died even the other family who were hiding died.* (Dawn, 8N)

Typically, Dawn mentioned that the Frank family were 'hiding'. She located the place of hiding in her father's shop and she recognised the family was betrayed and sent to a concentration camp where most of the family died. But Dawn, also typically, demonstrated confusion regarding space and time. She wrote that Anne Frank was from Holland, unaware the Frank family moved from Germany to Holland to escape persecution before the war. She also suggested they hid as soon as the Nazis took over, 'when it came to the invasion'. In fact, the family did not go into hiding until July 1942, over two years later. These confusions about the timings of Anne Frank's story which were echoed in other students' accounts.

Most students who wrote an account mentioned Anne Frank went into hiding. These included:

> *'She hid from the Germans due to her being a Jew. I also know she has a diary which recounts her life whilst hiding from the Nazis. She hid in an attic with some of her family and I believe maybe friends'.* (Ramon, 8N)

> *'She was hiding behind her bookshelf in her house'.* (Effie, 8C)

Diaz (8C) framed her story slightly differently, as a story of 'escape' rather than 'hiding,' writing:

> *'Anne Frank was a Jewish girl escaping from the Nazis. Also she had a diary for her birthday . . . Her life was very difficult and she wrote it in her diary'.* (Diaz, 8C)

Few offered a timeframe in their accounts. Those who did, like Dawn (above) demonstrated confusion. Anika (8N), for example appeared to think she was in hiding for longer than she significantly longer than 25 months, writing:

> *'The whole of her family had to hide from the Nazi, for most of her life, while they were hiding she kept a diary. Few years later her family got caught and then they died in a concentration camp except for her father'.* (Anika, 8N)

Hector (8N) gave a similarly confused account of time, appearing to believe Hitler's rise to power and the outbreak of war happened in quick succession, writing:

> *'Anne Frank was a young girl who was Jewish at the time when Hitler came to power and WWII started. She and her family were in hiding from the Nazis'.* (Hector, 8N)

Pearl (9D), by contrast, recognised Anne Frank was hiding during the war but appeared to perceive her experiences as quite typical. She wrote that she learned, from reading about Anne Frank, 'How people were coping, they were sheltered, and the rationing that took place'. These responses demonstrated that, though these students were familiar with Anne Frank's story and recognised it as a story of hiding, they misunderstand significant aspects of how it relates to the wider narrative of the Holocaust. They found it difficult to place it in a specific time or place and some read as typical experiences which were particular to the Frank family. These students were no more likely to be able to place the events of the Holocaust in a correct timeframe than those who were unfamiliar with the story. Nor did a familiarity with her story lead to students mentioning Holland or Nazi-occupied Poland, both of which were central to its narrative. Rather, the students who knew a little of her story were still likely to locate the events in Germany (where Anne eventually died) and suggest Hitler was personally responsible for what happened. Though students' familiarity with Anne Frank's story led to her being the only victim of the Holocaust named at the start of their history lessons, it does not appear that knowing about her life helped students recognise how her story related to the wider narrative of the Holocaust.

Atypical prior experiences

As important as it was to explore the common experiences of the students, it was equally important to consider the ideas held by students with unusual experiences. Students who, atypically, were familiar with more than one depiction of the Holocaust, appeared to hold more ideas about the nature, scope and scale of what happened. Dani (9D), Hector (8N) and Damienne (8C) suggested a familiarity with several Holocaust-related narratives and demonstrated more developed ideas than most about what happened.

Dani wrote on her initial questionnaire that she was familiar with *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, the story of Anne Frank, and 'books and films'.

Her completed questionnaire response read:

Who: *The Jews who were targeted and discriminated against. Hitler and the Nazi Party who made people hate the Jews*

What: *Jews were taken from their homes and put in either concentration camps or death [sic] they were treated as nothing or wild animals and everything was taken from them, even their name.*

When: *World War Two*

Where: *Holland, Poland and Germany*

Why: *It happened because Hitler and the Nazi Party hated the Jews, but Hitler especially hated them because when he was in a bad place he saw how Jews were seen as better than him. He thought that they were immigrants taking all the jobs and that they should be punished.* (Dani, 9D)

Hector's questionnaire suggested he had read *The Diary of Anne Frank* and watched documentaries on the Holocaust, and he mentioned in a lesson that he had read *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*. His completed questionnaire read:

Who: *Adolf Hitler, The Nazis and Jewish people.*

What: *Jewish people were herded into ghettos and then transported to concentration camps. They were either worked to death if they were healthy but gassed in gas chambers.*

When: *It happened in the Second World War where Germany were at their peak power.*

Where: *In Germany in purposeful concentration camps. Jewish people were captured and transported here.*

Why: *Because Adolf Hitler believed that the perfect human had blond hair and blue eyes. Hitler had a deep hatred of Jewish people. The Holocaust was referred to as the 'Perfect Solution' by Adolf Hitler.*
(Hector, 8N)

Dani and Hector presented something unusual in their questionnaires. Dani mentioned Jewish people being 'targeted and discriminated against', and 'concentration camps or death camps', demonstrating ideas about different stages of their persecution and some notion that there were different types of camps. Hector made an unusual reference to the use of ghettos (page 137). Damienne (8C) was absent for the questionnaire task. I spoke to her at the start of the next lesson. She told me she knew about the Holocaust from 'many films, from primary school and researching at home'. I asked her to write what happened; she wrote:

'The Holocaust was the genocide of the 'Jews'. Hitler and the other Nazis tried to get rid of them by putting them in concentration camps and ended up gassing them – they told the Jews that it was a shower. I also know that the Nazis separated the males and females. The males would have had their head shaved. Some of the women would make themselves bleed so they could use their blood to add colour to their cheeks (they did this because. if they were pale looking, they would be classed as sick and would probably be killed, but if they looked healthy, they would be kept alive and given a job'. (Damienne, 8C)

Damienne, also did something unusual. She expressed that people had different experiences of the Holocaust based on their gender.

There was a correlation between students who had encountered several depictions of the Holocaust and those with more nuanced ideas about what happened, when, where, and why. There are likely to be several explanations for this. These include the students' apparent interest in the topic, their access to such stories, their willingness and ability to write lengthy answers on their questionnaires, and their ability to understand the depictions which they have encountered. The potential significance of such myriad factors means the connections between their encountering many depictions and holding more complex ideas about the past can only be presented as

a relationship and not as cause and effect. Nonetheless, the implications of this correlation are discussed in the final chapter.

Contrastingly, some students claimed to be very familiar with a single narrative; and in similar contrast, they presented the events of the Holocaust in less developed and arguably more problematic terms.

Jordan (8C) claimed to have seen *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* 'many times' and described its narrative with confidence (page 154). He also related details from this narrative to what he was hearing in his history lessons; he told the class, after watching a piece of animated survivor testimony mentioning 'gassing', that 'The Nazis would have said that you were going to have a shower, but instead they're going to gas them all'. This comment reflected what happened in *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* which is where he told me he knew this from. Yet in his questionnaire he demonstrated confusion about the timeframe of the Holocaust, writing that it happened in the '19th century'. He did not know when or why.

Similarly, Sally in 9D told me she had seen *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* 'loads of times'. She immediately mentioned Shmuel when she saw a picture of a child's shoe at the start of her first lesson on the Holocaust (page 149). She and Rebecca joined a class discussion on how Jewish people were gassed:

Sally and Rebecca (9D) confirm what they hear using *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*

'They shaved them, and sent them into the showers,' Ms. Rashid told the class.

'Shaved them? Like shaved?' asked Sally.

'Yes', answered Ms. Rashid. 'They took their hair off. So they went into the shower chambers. And what do you think came out of the shower chambers?'

'Gas', said Sally.

'Yes', said 'Ms. Rashid. 'The gas came out. And they dragged out the dead bodies and burned them'.

'Miss, that happened in The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas', said Rebecca.

'Yes', Ms. Rashid agreed. 'Did you read that or watch it?'

'Watched it'. Rebecca answered.

Fieldnotes, 9D, Rowntree Academy, Lesson 1 / 4 on the Holocaust

Rebecca and Sally used aspects of *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* to confirm what they heard in their history lessons. Yet despite their familiarity with this narrative, both demonstrated a lack of understanding of the context of the events in their initial questionnaires. Rebecca showed confusion about their timing and location and wrote a typically Hitler-centric explanation of what happened:

Who: Hitler and his Nazi squad

What: Hitler made the Jews slaves and serve him, he tried to kill all Jews they were starved, beaten etc …

When: After the First World War

Where: Germany, Europe and Israel

Why: Because Hitler didn't like Jews and he blamed them for the Germany's loss in WW1 and he thought they were greedy.

(Rebecca, 9D)

On Sally's questionnaire, she demonstrated other confusions. She wrote that 'Innocent people got killed, thousands and thousands of people. They used gas chambers and gas masks'. But she placed the events in 'Germany' in the 'Twentieth Century'. She gave no reason for them.

I found little evidence that familiarity with any single narrative led to more historically informed ideas about the Holocaust than came from a single viewing or reading. If anything, this familiarity, as will be discussed, was a barrier to more nuanced historical ideas, particularly when it was fictitious. The students appeared to consider more fully aspects of new narratives which corroborated stories with which they were familiar than those which contradicted them. Most significantly, perhaps because of the nature of these most popular narratives, the students' familiarity with any one depiction did not mean they were able to explain its geographical or temporal context, why its narrative developed as it did, or, most importantly, the implications of the narrative for the Holocaust more generally.

Conclusions

This chapter explored the origins of the students' initial ideas about the Holocaust. It identified that students were most likely to have encountered depictions of the Holocaust in their primary classrooms, or through reading or watching *The Boy in the*

Striped Pyjamas and that many had previously learned something about the story of Anne Frank. It outlined what students recalled of their primary school lessons on the topic, and how they retold the stories of *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas,* shedding new light on how their readings of these stories potentially connects to their ideas about the Holocaust.

A key finding was that students who learned about some aspects of the Holocaust whilst in primary school do not necessarily recognise the connection between this learning and the topic they were discussing in their later history lessons. Several claimed not to have studied the events when they were younger, only to find some aspects familiar. This has two significant implications which will be discussed in the 'Recommendations' chapter. The first is that, when exploring with students what they already know, teachers should be aware that the students might not recognise which prior understandings are relevant to the topic. The second is that, for the 'spiral curriculum' (page 29) to be successful, there needs to be collaborative planning across the key stages, from Key Stage Two (in the primary school) to Key Stage 3 (in the secondary school), and this poses teachers with additional practical challenges. Students themselves are unlikely to recall all their prior learning; but they might also not recognise connected learning as such.

A second finding was that many students are familiar with some aspects of Anne Frank's story. It was suggested many previously encountered the story in primary school, where it appeared to be a common topic. An awareness of some aspects of the story did not necessarily lead to students' having more understanding of the involvement of the Netherlands in the Holocaust than those who were unfamiliar with the story. More significant in terms of pedagogy, however, though many students had learned about Anne Frank in primary school, they revisited her story in the Key Stage 3 classroom. As discussed (page 40), it is no criticism of the Frank family that they and their story were atypical of German Jewish people before and during the Second World War. However, teachers might want to consider the value of learning about the same family's experiences on two occasions, arguably at the expense of learning about other, more common experiences, or a wider selection of narratives.

Finally, this chapter demonstrated that the students' collective familiarity with *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* is more problematic than existing literature suggested. Its

narrative is flawed and it presents morally dubious messaging; but more challenging is how students can understand it. Students can be very familiar with the story, and believe its characters to be English, its setting to be Germany, and its Jewish character to survive the Holocaust when the son of a Nazi commandant was killed. Being familiar with the story appears to help students appreciate that the Holocaust involved murder using gas chambers. But it brings to the students more confusion than clarity and its use in the classroom should be avoided.

'Recommendations' based on these findings contribute to the final chapter of this thesis. The chapter which follows examines the ideas about the Holocaust which students held at the end of their history lessons on the topic. Significantly, it highlights that, after studying the Holocaust with their history teachers, many of the students' initial ideas, including those derived from these common initial encounters with depictions of the Holocaust, remained intact.

Chapter 7: End points: Students' later ideas about the Holocaust

This chapter explores the ideas which students involved in this study held at the end of their history lessons on the Holocaust, considering them against the ideas they demonstrated initially. These ideas are presented as their 'end points' and compared with the 'starting points' presented in Chapter 5. Richardson (2012) previously explored ideas about the Holocaust which students demonstrated having learned about the Holocaust in their Year Nine history lessons (Richardson, 2012: 68). Particularly pertinent were his findings on the 'surface level learning' they recalled from such lessons, which related to historical knowledge of the events.

This study allowed an examination of the ideas which students held at the end of their Year 8 or Year 9 history lessons on the Holocaust, and, specifically, how they related to the depictions of the Holocaust with which they were presented during these lessons. I framed my initial analysis of the students' 'end points' around several 'inter-related propositions' (Ball, 1981: 280). These were based on the observations of students' initial ideas about the Holocaust (explored in Chapter 5) and my observations of their history lessons. Different classes encountered different depictions of the Holocaust during these lessons. When exploring individual students 'end points', it was possible and necessary to contextualise them with reference to the specific ideas which their teachers had shared with them.

Having observed that students initially considered Jewish people in simple mono-cultural terms, often framed by their knowledge of how they were portrayed by the Nazis, I explored whether students who were taught about the diversity of Jewish people before the Second World War demonstrated more nuanced ideas about them at the end of their history lessons. Another proposition was that most students initially presented Jewish people, alone, as the victims of the Holocaust. I examined how those presented with a multi-victim group depiction described the victims after their history lessons. It was suggested in my earliest observations that most initially regarded Hitler as having responsibility for and being the primary perpetrator of the Holocaust. This posed questions about how they presented his relationship with the Holocaust if their teachers presented depictions in which others were implicated. A further supposition

was that the students initially perceived the Holocaust as having been conducted in concentration camps, which prompted questions regarding whether they would incorporate into their ideas the role of the ghettos or *Einsatzgruppen*, if these were discussed during their history lessons. A final issue related to whether the students presented with more contextual information about the Holocaust would subsequently hold more ideas about its chronology, geography, and relationship to existing antisemitism and the Second World War. This chapter draws on findings from lesson observations and discrete research tasks to explore the extent to which the students' initial ideas informed their perceptions of the Holocaust at the end of their history lessons on the topic.

Capturing students' end points

The most straightforward opportunity to capture some students' 'end points' was offered during 9A's final lesson on the Holocaust. Ms. Brown, who was teaching in Ms. Charlton's absence, began the lesson leading a discussion on the 'who, what, when, where and why' of the Holocaust. This echoed how Ms. Charlton started the students' first lesson on the topic (page 115) and offered a chance to compare the students' ideas with those they expressed a few weeks previously. It also contributed to the 'interrelated propositions' on which the analysis in this chapter is based.

9A return to the 'who, what, when, where and why?' questions in their final lesson on the Holocaust

Ms. Brown began by asking 'who was involved in the Holocaust?'

The students answered, 'The Nazi Party', 'Jews' and 'Hitler' and Ms. Brown recorded these on the board. It was unsurprising the students cited 'Jews' during the discussion. They used the term during the first discussion too. It was also unsurprising they mentioned Hitler. Several referred to him throughout their lessons on the Holocaust and he was mentioned in their first discussion on the topic (page 115). More notable was their use of the term 'Nazi Party'. This did not appear in that earlier discussion; but during the lessons, Ms. Charlton consistently used the term 'Nazis' to describe the perpetrators. I wondered how significant Hitler would be in the discussions to follow and whether the student who had used the phrase 'Nazi Party', at least, was starting to understand the perpetrators in multiple rather than singular terms.

After Ms. Brown has finished writing on the board, Cathy raised her hand and asked, 'could you also say homosexuals?' Ms. Brown wrote this on the board, too.

This was also of note. Gay victims of Nazi persecution had not been mentioned in 9A's lessons. The only victim group other than Jewish people who had been mentioned were 'Gypsies' (Roma and Sinti people), mentioned by Daisha in the first discussion and by Ms. Charlton in her conclusion to that lesson. Cathy's ideas about gay men's involvement in the Holocaust must have come from elsewhere, before or whilst she learned about the events. It was striking that Cathy mentioned this idea, rather than ideas with which she had been presented by Ms. Charlton.

As she moved the discussion onto the question of 'what happened?' Ms. Brown explained that this would be the focus of the lesson and swiftly asked 'when did the Holocaust happen?'

One student suggested it was 'during the Second World War', to which Alexis responded, without raising her hand 'when did it start?' It was unclear from her question whether she meant the war or the Holocaust. The question of 'when' had been discussed in the students' first lesson on the topic, when the class were told it happened 'during the Second World War', and the dates '1939 to 1945' were mentioned. Alexis appeared unclear on when one began. This suggested she lacked confidence in placing them in a timeframe. I wondered if others did too. Additionally, having observed the students being taught about anti-Jewish laws introduced in Germany before the war, I wondered why they were not mentioned. Did the students consider them part of the context of the Holocaust, not mentioning them (and the dates they were enacted) now because they were not part of the events themselves? Had they forgotten about them? Did they consider them irrelevant? Or were they only offering limited answers, assuming this was all that was required for this discussion?

When Ms. Brown asked 'where' the Holocaust happened, the students initially suggested 'Germany' and 'Poland'. Ms. Brown wrote both on the board and began to move the discussion on. These were the first two countries mentioned in 9A's first discussion, too.

But as Ms. Brown started posing the next question, Cathy added 'It's not just Germany or Poland. It could be France. Or anywhere in Europe'. Cathy was the only student to make overt connections, in this discussion, between the countries in which the Holocaust took place, and even her connections were geographical ('Europe') rather than geopolitical ('Nazi-occupied Europe'). I wondered whether other students in the class grasped this connection too.

Ms. Brown agreed with Cathy's more complex answer, and moved the conversation onto 'why did the Holocaust happen?' This inspired more responses from the students. Their answers followed a linguistic trend.

'He thought the Jews were the problem', said one student.

'He needed someone to blame', said another.

'He wanted the race to be perfect', said a third.

'He' was clearly Hitler, though even the first student left him unnamed. Yet Hitler had not been mentioned in their lessons. Rather, the students had been taught using the term 'Nazis' in reference to the perpetrators of the Holocaust. Here, however, they were using Hitler-centric language when voicing ideas of their own.

I was struck by how, in many ways, the students were presenting similar ideas in this conversation at the end of their history lessons on the Holocaust to those they presented at the start. This was something I could only appreciate having observed that first discussion and the lessons which had taken place since. Though, in this discussion, there was a single mention of the 'Nazi Party', to which Ms. Charlton had referred multiple times in the intervening lessons, it appeared to be Hitler whom the students still held responsible for the Holocaust. There also appeared somewhat limited understandings of the geographies and timing of the Holocaust. Perhaps most interestingly, in many of her responses, Cathy drew on ideas from elsewhere, rather than from what had been discussed during her history lessons.

Fieldnotes, 9A, Holy Cross School, Lesson 4/4 on the Holocaust

9A were the only class to take part in an activity which so explicitly discussed their ideas at the end of their history lessons on the Holocaust. Nonetheless, much of the data is presented as vignettes from classroom observations. Further data came from the amended questionnaires completed by students in 9D and 8N (page 77) and transcripts of the interviews in which a small sample of students used photographs to 'tell the story' of the Holocaust (page 81). Students' responses to these research tasks, discussions, and tasks set by their teachers, are used to explore how their ideas about the Holocaust had changed after their history lessons on the topic.

Perceptions of Jewish people

Students' initial ideas about the Holocaust suggested two common notions about the victims of the Holocaust. The first was that the victims of the Holocaust were Jewish. The second was that Jewish people were a largely mono-cultural group, whom the students perceived in simplistic terms, with several assuming Jewish people share a common 'look'. Having observed the students being presented with alternative depictions, I was interested in whether their ideas changed by the end of their lessons on the Holocaust.

9D, 8N and 8C all saw images of Jewish people illustrating the diversity of Jewish communities before the Second World War with potential to challenge their simplistic perceptions. Ms. Morris in Capital Academy explained to 8C why she had shown them the photographs (page 121) before telling the class that all the people in them were Jewish and 'just ordinary people'. Mr. Talbot, also at Capital Academy, made a similar statement to students in 8N. He told the class 'They're all different. They're all completely different. They live in different countries. Different lives. Different jobs. You saw some of them were very wealthy. Some go places on holiday. Some don't have as much money. So we're talking about a very diverse group of people here, there's not just one group of people'.

Ms Rashid showed 9D a short film about Jewish people, during their second lesson on the topic, as this account demonstrates:

9D respond to a film on the lives of Jewish people in Europe before the Second World War

Ms. Rashid said to the class 'To understand the history anti-Jewish prejudice, we need to look at life before the Second World War. I'd like you to write "What was life like before the Second World War?" in the centre of the spider-diagram and to fill it in as we watch a short film'.

She showed the class a film on pre-war Jewish life. It highlighted a selection of the many jobs undertaken by the approximately 9 million Jewish people living in Europe before the Second World War. It explained that the largest Jewish population at the time was the 3 million Jewish people living in Poland and that, in Eastern Europe, Jewish people lived in cities, towns and villages, living, in the main, as their parents had before. The film highlighted the diversity within and across Jewish communities, reminding its audience that some Jewish people were religious, but others were not; some Jewish people were wealthy, others were not; and that some Jewish people were patriotic, and others wanted a homeland in Palestine. It presented names and images of famous Jewish people from the time.

The film lasted just a few minutes, after which Ms. Rashid asked selected students to describe life for Jewish people before the Second World War.

'They had different ways of life', said Marian, 'some were wealthy, but some weren't'.

'Some Jewish people became scientists', remembered Rebecca, and when asked who the most famous was of all these scientists, a number of students said 'Einstein'.

'Some of them became dancers', said Jake.

'There were many different Jewish people. Some were deeply religious, but some weren't' said Hema. Ms. Rashid agreed that there were lots of differences in how Jewish people lived.

Fieldnotes, 9D, Rowntree Academy, Lesson 2 / 4 on the Holocaust

These classes had been presented with depictions of Jewish communities living in Europe before the Holocaust. Their teachers had highlighted their diversity. At the end of their lessons, I looked for evidence that the students saw Jewish people in more nuanced terms.

My interviews with students in 8C, in which I asked them to 'tell the story of the Holocaust', using a collection of photographs, (page 81 and Appendix 7) suggested several still thought Jewish people looked a particular way. When examining a photograph depicting a clothing shop which was boycotted, Suki (8C) suggested it was being targeted because it was 'Jewish'. I explored this idea with her:

CK	*What makes it a Jewish shop?*
Suki	*It's because, like, I know that most Jewish people have, like, the black band. (Signalled her hair)*
Damienne	*Yeah.*

Interview with Suki, Damienne and Rachel, 8C, Capital Academy

After Ms. Morris' clear articulations that Jewish people were like everyone else, Suki, and Damienne still suggested Jewish people have particular hairstyles. Looking at the same photograph, and answering the same question, 'what makes it a Jewish shop?' in a separate interview, Jamie (8C) answered 'Because the dresses are long'. These comments suggested that, despite spending time exploring images of diverse Jewish communities, at the end of their history lessons these students still held simplistic ideas about Jewish people, which they referred to when interpreting the photograph.

When, towards the end of their lessons, other students demonstrated new ideas about Jewish people, they generally left their initial conceptions intact. This was something of a pattern which materialised elsewhere in the research. When updating their questionnaires, Precious, Ada, Daisy, Julia and Pearl (all in 9D) all added to their initial answer that 'Jews' were 'involved in the Holocaust'. Precious (9D) added 'children, women and men', Ada (9D) added 'innocent people' and Daisy added 'civilians'. Such

terms could be used without their disrupting their initial notions of who the Jewish people were. Two students added extra comments on how Jewish people were viewed by others. Julia (9D) wrote 'Jews that were hated' and Pearl (9D) wrote 'antisemitism'. There was a slight echo here between these comments and those made by students who initially knew about Jewish people mainly in terms of how they were presented by Hitler (page 119). More significantly, when adding to their answers, the students offered little evidence of more nuanced understandings of Jewish people. They incorporated new details into their answers without challenging their initial simplistic conceptions of who they were.

If students demonstrated more personalised depictions of Jewish people on their amended questionnaires, it was generally by mentioning a Holocaust survivor. Anne Frank was no longer the only person, beyond Hitler, to be named by a student. Two students from 8N named Freddie Knoller, a survivor who spoke to a small number[11] of students in 8N and 8C at Capital Academy. Khalid (8N), who had previously written no answer to the question 'who was involved', wrote, when amending his questionnaire, that 'Freddie Knoller was a survivor', and Jean (8N) wrote 'we met Freddie Knoller'. By referring to Freddie's testimony when updating their questionnaires, they were placing some value on this experience, if only insofar as they could recall his name days later and recognise which of their answers it related to.

Though he did not necessarily appear on their amended questionnaires, other students, too, recalled hearing Freddie's testimony and wanted to comment on it. Diaz (8C) came to speak to me at the beginning of his subsequent history lesson, wanting to tell Freddie's story into my voice recorder. He recounted it:

> *Freddie Knoller told us about his experience in World War Two and how he survived it by this doctor who gave him food after every day in the camps and he said without that doctor he would die. He also met this girl but the girl told the Germans that he was a Jew and he had to run away. And he found his brother in America and he also went to Florida and came back to France and came to England and he received a card from the queen for say that he was married for 65 years and he also found some documents about his parents and he showed us the tattoo of his number. Also, his*

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[11] This talk took place during Eid, when many students were celebrating at home and did not attend school.

*pyjamas are in the museum. And he also like around a month ago received a British Empire Medal which means that when he writes his name he can BEM at the end. (*Diaz, 8C)

Two other students from 8C mentioned Freddie, without prompting, in their interviews. Looking at a photograph of a concentration camp (page 257), Jamie (8C) mentioned the striped uniforms which she had heard about from 'when Freddie Knoller came to talk to us'. Linda (8C) mentioned in her interview, too, that Freddie said the train journeys to the camps 'were really smelly because they had to wee in a bucket'.

Reference to survivor testimony also appeared in one further amendment to a student's questionnaire. Pearl (9D) paraphrased a piece of Sonderkommando testimony which she had seen in a short film, when amending her answer on what happened during the Holocaust. She wrote:

Healthy people were used to do jobs such as drag dead bodies with a stick by the chin over to a pit of fire. Some decided to kill themselves by jumping in the pit rather that betraying their own kind. Others were too scared and so desperate for life that they followed orders.

(Pearl, 9D, amendment to questionnaire)

Here was further evidence of a student incorporating the story of an individual into her ideas, having encountered it through first-hand (though not live) testimony.

The students might have been able to draw on these testimonies because of the power of 'stories' (Fordham, 2017) in helping students recall historical knowledge, or because they tell of personal rather than institutional aspects of the past which are more memorable to students (Barton, 2010). However, there was evidence that personal stories which were not told through first-hand accounts were not used so explicitly by students in subsequent activities or discussions. 9D were introduced to multiple individual stories in their first lesson on the Holocaust (page 101). Yet not one of their names were written on their amended questionnaires. Similarly, 8C watched a film mentioning the story of Sophie Scholl. This discussed some of her background and included her photograph. The narrator mentioned she was beheaded. But when trying to recall, in their interview the following week, who they had learned about who had been beheaded, Jamie, Linda and Isabella were confused. This extract comes from a discussion in which I was trying to elicit whether they were familiar with the work of the *Einsatzgruppen*:

CK	*In Russia, and in some of the countries near Russia, the Nazis had a slightly different way of killing people, which wasn't through the gas chambers.*
Jamie	*Did they get beheaded?*
CK	*What made you think that?*
Jamie	*It's what they did in the olden days.*
CK	*It is. But we know of somebody who was beheaded. Do you remember who it was?*
Linda	*Oh, the king.*
CK	*There was a king who was beheaded. But even in this topic there was someone who was beheaded. Do you remember who, Linda?*
Linda	*Was it Anne Frank?*
CK	*It wasn't Anne Frank.*
Jamie	*Was it something to do with Anne Frank?*
CK	*It's not to do with Anne Frank. It's to do with a video we watched in a lesson. Do you remember Sophie Scholl, who was one of the protestors?*
Linda, Jamie and Isabella	*Oh, yeah!*

Transcript of interview with Linda, Jamie and Isabella, 8C, Capital Academy, after final lesson on the Holocaust

The students did not initially recall the name or story of Sophie Scholl, even with prompting. This suggested that it took more than simply hearing the stories of other individuals to incorporate them into their notions of this past. Linda and Jamie assumed I was prompting them to mention Anne Frank, the one individual mentioned by any student before their history lessons on the Holocaust. Their reference to Anne Frank, and assumption I was referencing her, suggests her continuing centrality to their ideas about who was involved.

There was a distinction between students who heard Freddie Knoller's live testimony, and those who read it in a subsequent lesson. At the start of that lesson, Mr. Talbot gave the students a biography of Freddie Knoller, which included his photograph. Time was set aside to read it. Yet, the students who had not met Freddie in person made no reference to his story when updating their questionnaires at the end of the same

lesson. This was in contrast to the response of students who had heard Freddie tell his story live, several of whom, as discussed, referred to it, unprompted, in later activities. That these students mentioned specific aspects of survivor's stories, without explicit prompting, supports the findings of Richardson (2012) and Foster et al. (2016) that students place some value on the experience of hearing from a survivor and tentatively suggests that hearing a survivor's testimony live helps students engage with their story more fully than hearing or reading an account of it.

Beyond some students naming an individual survivor, the students generally presented similar ideas about Jewish people at the end of their history lessons and at the start. Even students who mentioned an individual's story were not necessarily presenting more developed ideas of who Jewish people were. Despite students in 9D, 8C and 8N encountering depictions of Jewish people which demonstrated the diversity of the Jewish communities before the Second World War, there was limited evidence that any appreciated this diversity at the end of their history lessons on the topic.

Other victims of Nazi persecution

One tentative finding from the earliest fieldwork was that the students initially considered only Jewish people to be the victims of the Holocaust. This is not notable because the idea is flawed or simplistic. Indeed, as discussed (page14) most Holocaust education organisations in the UK agree with it. Rather, it is significant because some of their teachers subsequently presented non-Jewish minority groups as victims of the Holocaust. This, too, was unsurprising, since existing literature suggested many teachers consider this to be the case (Pettigrew et al., 2009). What was significant was another interrelated proposition explored through my data. This explored whether students presented with multi-victim group accounts of the Holocaust incorporated individuals from these groups into their later ideas who the victims of the Holocaust were.

9D were told that the victims of the Holocaust included Jewish and non-Jewish communities. Ms. Rashid referenced non-Jewish victims as victims of the Holocaust twice. The first time was after leading a discussion about the owner of the shoe which she presented at the beginning of 9D's first lesson on the Holocaust (page 101). Ms. Rashid changed the image on the screen from the image of the shoe to a series of images of victims of Nazi persecution. 'These are images of people which were killed

or persecuted or tortured in the Holocaust', she explained to the class. 'You're going to look at some case studies. Choose one of the victims and have a look at what happened to them. Please note that they're not all Jewish'. Here, Ms. Rashid made no distinction between Jewish people and non-Jewish victims, telling the class that they were all 'killed or persecuted or tortured in the Holocaust'.

After the students had read the case studies and constructed a timeline of policies towards different minority groups, Ms. Rashid led a discussion on both:

9D discuss the victims of the Holocaust

Ms Rashid explained that 'Homosexuals or gay men were castrated. "Gypsies" were forced into labour camps from 1935 onwards. From 1935 to 1938 there were lots of laws passed. They were seen as having bad racial blood, so therefore they're criminals, in the Nazis' eyes. They were not allowed to be German citizens, to marry German citizens or to have sex with German people. They were kept isolated'. She continued 'We've got people across Europe who actually collaborated with the Nazis, like the French police, to persecute "Gypsies" as well. So it wasn't just the Nazis'.

She asked the class 'Do you know what the euthanasia programme is?'

Rebecca answered 'Is that when they knock you out using like a special medicine?'

Daisy said 'Euthanasia? Isn't that when you kill them?'

Ms. Rashid. explained. 'It's supposed to be with will, including yourself. But disabled people were killed. As the Second World War begins, the Nazis gave orders for disabled people to be killed. The Polish people. They were victims. They were killed. Ethnic Poles were murdered during the Second World War. Soviets, so people from Russia, were murdered as well. In 1941 the mass-killing started'.

<p align="center">Fieldnotes, 9D, Rowntree Academy, Lesson 1 / 4 on the Holocaust</p>

It was not as conclusive here that Ms. Rashid considered the gay men, 'Gypsies', (Roma and Sinti), people with disabilities, Polish people, and 'Soviets' whom she mentioned to be victims of the Holocaust. However, that this was her intention was suggested in her opening comments and confirmed in a question on an assessment the students completed towards the end of their lessons on the topic two weeks later.

In this, the students were asked to:

'Describe how two other groups of Holocaust victims, other than Jews (i.e. homosexuals, Gypsies, Jehovah's Witnesses etc.) were persecuted by the Nazis between 1933 and 1939'.

9D, Rowntree Academy, assessment question

Ms. Rashid's depiction of people who were not Jewish as victims of the Holocaust raised questions regarding whether students in 9D would change their answers on 'who was involved', when invited to amend their questionnaires. Most initially presented Jewish people, alone, as the victims of the Holocaust. Would they now mention non-Jewish victims too?

Only four students added to their answers in this way. Fatema (9D) added 'Thousands of Jews, Gypsies, gays (people who were seen as different) and millions of Germans'. Joe (9D) mentioned 'Germans, Jewish, homosexuals (and Gypsies)'. Rachel (9D) added 'gypsies[12], Jews and homosexuals'. Lydia (9D) added 'homosexuals and gypsies'. The rest of 9D did not change their answer, suggesting they still considered Jewish people the only victims of the Holocaust. This was not incorrect; but it is striking that most maintained their initial ideas after repeatedly encountering alternatives.

It might be concluded that this was evidence of their discerning a difference between the experiences of Jewish people (as victims of the Holocaust) and non-Jewish victims of Nazi persecution. They could have been actively deciding not to include non-Jewish victims in their answers because of their grasping the nuances of the term Holocaust to give name to the genocide of Jewish people. However, as will be demonstrated, the students demonstrated little appreciation of the distinctions between the treatment of different minority groups by the Nazis and their collaborators. Indeed, they demonstrated 'uncertainty about which other groups or individuals were targeted' (Richardson, 2012: 90). Furthermore, patterns highlighted elsewhere suggest a more convincing interpretation was that the students were maintaining their initial ideas

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[12] The term 'gypsies' is written here and elsewhere without capitalisation to reflect how it was written by the student cited. See page 23 for a fuller discussion of its use.

despite being presented with alternatives, because this was how they responded to ideas which were inconsistent with their initial impressions.

There was no evidence in their amended questionnaires that the students recognised that different minority groups experienced different treatment under the Nazis. Their responses to the assessment question (above) were written towards the end of the students' lessons on the topic, shortly before they were invited to amend their questionnaires. Of the four students who mentioned on their amended questionnaire that there were other victims of the Holocaust, only Lydia and Rachel completed the assessment. In their answers to the assessment questions, both focused on events which took place during rather than before the war, and which would also be true of the treatment of Jewish people. Lydia's answer focussed on gay men, and she wrote 'Homosexuals were arrested and sent to be killed' and recounted part of the story of a man called Manfred whom she had read about in her first lesson. Rachel wrote about 'Gypsies' (Roma and Sinti), writing that they were also 'killed'. Both incorporated non-Jewish people into their answers about the victims of Holocaust but did not present their experiences as different from those who were Jewish. This suggested confusion, and challenges the possibility that, when considering who was 'involved in the Holocaust', they only mentioned Jewish victims because they discerned a difference between their treatment and the treatment of non-Jewish people.

Others who had retained their initial (and valid) answer that only Jewish people were the victims of the Holocaust also suggested confusion about the differing experiences of victims of Nazi persecution. When answering the question on their assessment, many focused on experiences which were particular to Jewish people during the war. Bilal specified no group but wrote that 'they were put on a train and told they were going to have a shower but were killed in a gas chamber'. Kumail wrote, of no specified group, that 'the young and old people were killed but the strong were put to work'. Others mentioned victim groups but wrote in non-specific terms about their experiences. Clarence wrote about Jehovah's Witnesses and 'Gypsies' (Roma and Sinti) being 'not allowed to do certain things' and James wrote that 'homosexuals', 'Gypsies' and Jehovah's Witnesses 'were put into camps'. Some gave more specific answers on the experiences of particular groups. Daisy wrote that men who 'acted gay' (a phrase she put in quotation marks herself) were put on trial, and Rebecca wrote about gay men 'being castrated'. But most answers suggested the students were

confused about how different victim groups were persecuted before and during the war. Indeed, students in 9D demonstrated more confused ideas about the victims of the Holocaust at the end of their history lessons than at the start.

8N also discussed other victims of Nazi persecution, but, in contrast to Ms. Rashid, Mr. Talbot told them that only Jewish people were victims of the Holocaust. He led the students through an activity on 'Defining the Holocaust' from the Holocaust Educational Trust. The students read definitions of the Holocaust from the Imperial War Museum (London), the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and Yad Vashem in Israel. Though the definitions agreed that the Holocaust was, specifically, the genocide of Jewish people, each mentioned other victim groups within their definitions. They read this from Yad Vashem:

> The Holocaust was the murder of approximately six million Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators. Between the German invasion of the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941 and the end of the war in Europe in May 1945, Nazi Germany and its accomplices strove to murder every Jew under their domination. Because Nazi discrimination against the Jews began with Hitler's accession to power in January 1933, many historians consider this the start of the Holocaust era. The Jews were not the only victims of Hitler's regime, but they were the only group that the Nazis sought to destroy entirely.

Mr. Talbot then told the class "This is suggesting that the Holocaust is a term which refers to the attempt to exterminate the Jewish population. And whilst the Nazis didn't only persecute this group, this is the group that they were attempting to exterminate'.

Unlike 9D, 8N were told that Jewish people were the only people the Nazis intended to 'exterminate' and that this attempt at extermination was the Holocaust. This was discussed during the lesson, when the distinctions between definitions of the Holocaust were examined before the students wrote their own (page 204). Albeit in different ways, the definitions the class read during the lesson each stated that Jewish people alone were the victims of the Holocaust.

When updating their questionnaires, two students in 8N mentioned non-Jewish victims. Hector added 'other victim groups' and Roger specified 'Jews, gays, black

people, Gypsies'. Like students in 9D, they did not highlight any differences in the treatment of any minority group; arguably they too demonstrated more confusion about who the victims of the Holocaust were at the end of their lessons on the topic than they had at the beginning. Hearing about other victims of Nazi persecution appears to lead to confusion for students about who the victims of the Holocaust were.

There is an alternative way of framing this issue, however. 9D were taught about the Holocaust using a multi-victim description, made explicit in an assessment activity completed just before their questionnaires were returned to them to amend. An explicit aspect of 8N's lessons was an activity in which they interrogated different institutions' definitions of the Holocaust, which referred to non-Jewish groups who were persecuted, albeit distinguishing between them and the victims of the Holocaust. A pertinent question, then, is why did more students not mention other victims of Nazi persecution in their answers on who was involved? Why did almost all continue to present only Jewish people as the victims of the Holocaust? Why did their initial ideas so clearly inform their later answers? These issues are discussed in the next chapter which explores how students responded to depictions which challenged their initial ideas about this past.

Responsibility for the Holocaust

The students initially presented a Hitler-centric account of the Holocaust, in which he was its main perpetrator, personally responsible for what happened. Another issue to explore, then, was whether students presented with depictions of other perpetrators and alternative causes would incorporate these ideas into their later notions of who was involved, what happened, and why. Would they continue, at the end of their history lessons, also suggest Hitler had 'prime culpability' (Richardson, 2012: 96)?

8N heard the clearest articulation that Hitler alone did not cause the Holocaust. Mr. Talbot showed the class the film *Footballers Remember* from the Holocaust Educational Trust and led the students through a discussion of terms it used, including the word 'collaborator':

8N are told 'It doesn't all start with Adolf Hitler'

Mr. Talbot began to clarify how those responsible for the Holocaust were presented in the film. 'They said "the Nazis and their collaborators". And one of the things which it explicitly said was that we were not just talking about German people. Not only

Germans. And when we think about people who were responsible for the Holocaust, we don't just mean the people that did the killing. What other people are we talking about as well? Who else do we consider responsible? What other groups are we talking about?'

A student suggested 'Gypsies,' whilst another said 'Hitler'.

Mr. Talbot said 'Gypsies' were one of the groups the Nazis were against. 'We're talking about who was responsible. So, yes, Hitler, of course, had some responsibility. But he's not the only person. It couldn't have happened with just him'.

Roger mentioned other groups and 'spies and stuff'.

'Yes,' said Mr. Talbot. 'Those other groups who worked for the Nazis have to take some of the responsibility'.

Hector mentioned the people who were 'operating the concentration camps'.

Mr. Talbot agreed. 'Yes, the officials who operated and ran the concentration camps. The timetabling of the different train journeys to the camps'.

Roger suggested the people who ran ghettos and Mr. Talbot agreed. 'We're also talking about the groups of killing squads as well. So, when you're thinking about who is responsible for the Holocaust, Hitler was just a part of this puzzle. It doesn't all start with Adolf Hitler. You need to realise that it was more than that. Much more than that. There are other people who bear some responsibility as well'.

Fieldnotes, 8N, Capital Academy, Lesson 3 / 4 on the Holocaust

Yet when invited to amend their initial questionnaires later that lesson, most students in 8N left unchanged any comments on the perpetrators. They continued using the limited but familiar terms 'Nazis', 'Germans' and 'Hitler' more frequently than terms which had just been introduced like 'collaborators'.

Poonam added 'Also the Nazis' to an answer which initially mentioned only 'Hitler', and Dawn amended her answer from 'Hitler' to 'Germans / Nazis', suggesting new appreciation that others than Hitler were involved.

Some mentioned Nazi organisations. Anika and Karen added 'the SS and the Gestapo' and Hector added 'other collaborators were involved such as the SS and the Gestapo'. Here, Hector utilised language from the lessons, but not necessarily as intended, since the term 'collaborators' generally refers to individuals and institutions beyond rather than within the Nazi party. This was another example of students relying on their initial ideas and adding to them rather than replacing them with new or

competing ideas. Like the ways in which students added terms like 'men, women and children' to initial answers of 'Jewish people' (page 173), this was evidence of this emerging pattern. In 8N, other than Poonam and Dawn, who appeared to move from a single perpetrator to a multi perpetrator answer, the students only added details about aspects of the Nazi Party, leaving their initial ideas about the perpetrators broadly untouched, and largely disregarding the term 'collaborators' to which they had just been introduced.

9D were also introduced to the terms 'bystander', 'collaborator' and 'resister' during their history lessons. As will be demonstrated, they completed an activity asking them to explore the terms and conclude who was responsible for the death of Barney Greenman, a child victim of the Holocaust (page 212). Yet two weeks later, students in 9D hardly mentioned them when amending their questionnaire responses to the question 'who was involved?' Nor were individuals who could be described as such included elsewhere in their answers. Dani added the words 'everyone' and 'bystander' and Khalid added 'people that helped the Jews – rescuers'. But the students did not generally incorporate these terms into their later answers on the Holocaust, suggesting their initial ideas about the perpetrators also remained largely intact at the end of their lessons on the topic.

The students' amendments on 'why did the Holocaust happen?' indicated whether the students' ideas about Hitler causing the Holocaust also remained with them. Students who initially wrote no answer to this question gave an answer when responding later. Siobhan (8N) wrote 'It happened because Hitler became in control and he didn't like the Jews' and Julia (9D) wrote 'because Jews were disliked by many people like Hitler'. These students, who did not express, initially, why the Holocaust happened, appeared to finish their lessons with Hitler-centric ideas which resembled the ideas many students had demonstrated initially. This was despite the fact Hitler himself was hardly mentioned during their history lessons on the Holocaust, and suggests they, like Cathy (page 170) brought alternative ideas into their history classrooms.

Echoing the emerging pattern, many who wrote initial answers suggesting Hitler alone caused the Holocaust added detail to these answers without disrupting their initial assumptions. Dawn (8N) initially wrote it happened 'because Hitler was mental' and added 'because Hitler came to power and wanted to kill all Jewish people'. Lydia (9D)

added to her initial answer that 'It happened because of Hitler's hatred for the Jews' the words 'Hitler hated the Jews because he thought they were taking over Germany'. These students added depth to their existing answers rather than introducing new ideas. They strengthened their Hitler-centric explanations rather than challenging them with reference to alternative factors.

Other students' answers suggested additional confusion. Students in 9D had been presented with a multi-victim definition of the Holocaust by Ms. Rashid. Daisy (9D) added to her initial response of 'Hitler didn't like Jews and wanted to get rid of them all' that 'Adolf Hitler came to power and wanted what he saw as 'perfection'. He labelled Jews, homosexuals, gypsies and anyone who acted against him'. Also, Ada (9D) added to her initial answer of 'because the Nazis did not like the Jewish', the comment 'or anyone who didn't have blonde hair or blue eyes'. Both tried to incorporate multi-victim group explanations into their Hitler-centric answers, but in doing so demonstrated additional confusions regarding Nazi racial theory.

More concerning was that some students added comments suggesting they had found some legitimacy in views which they continued to ascribe, personally, to Hitler. Richardson (2012) had made a similar observation, commenting that some students in his study 'reported the Jews' prosperity as apparent fact', and noting not all students 'avoided inadvertently condoning these ideas' (Richardson, 2012: 94). In this research there were some similar comments from students after they, too, had learned about the Holocaust. Joe (9D) initially wrote it happened 'because Hitler was angry at the Jewish people because he thought they were taking over jobs so he put them in prison'. He amended this to 'Hitler was angry as Jewish people were taking jobs when he was homeless'. Rachel (9D) amended her initial answer from 'Hitler was against Jews' to 'Hitler hated the fact that Jews had enough money for themselves and they had high paying jobs'. Writing Jewish people 'were' taking jobs and that it was a 'fact' that Jewish people had higher paying jobs suggested they appeared to be suggesting some legitimacy to Hitler's views. Though these are of course only limited responses, it is interesting they both came from 9D. This was the class which was asked to answer the question 'why the Jews?' at a point in their lessons in which, as discussed, they could only answer based on limited contextual knowledge (page 126). It is possible the framing of the question encouraged them to seek such legitimacy. The

pedagogical implications of this observation are discussed in the 'Recommendations' chapter which follows.

9D were taught about the existence of antisemitism before the Nazis, which could have enabled them to recognise that the ideas which they attributed to Hitler were not his alone and pre-dated him by many centuries:

9D encounter examples of historical antisemitism

After the students discussed Jewish life before the war, Ms. Rashid showed a second film which began with a definition of antisemitism, followed by images of violence and antisemitic graffiti and vandalism. The voice-over explained the role of 'conspiracy theories' in the history of antisemitism, explaining that such theories were 'the result of lies'. The film highlighted too, that there 'is no such thing as the Jewish race'. It made connections between the 'plague' of Communism and the 'plague' of the Black Death, explaining that Jewish people were blamed for both. It highlighted the role of the forged documents claiming to be written by 'The Elders of Zion,' and it explained some of the context for Hitler's own antisemitism, linking this to 'Social Darwinism', a term explained at some length.

'So the history of anti-Jewish prejudice starts from 2000 years ago', said Ms. Rashid at the end of the film. She asked a few of the students to remind the class of some of the things Jewish people had been blamed for.

'The Black Death', said Jason.

'The Jesus stuff', said Khadija.

'They said the Jews had killed Jesus' said Ada.

'When Hitler lost World War One, he blamed the Jews', said Ibrahim.

And 'taking children's blood,' said Daisy.

Fieldnotes, 9D, Rowntree Academy, Lesson 2 / 4 on the Holocaust

The film mentioned examples of antisemitism from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and contextualised the Nazi views within the histories of antisemitism. In the discussion which followed, though slightly confused, Ibrahim had drawn from the film Hitler's views about Germany's defeat in the First World War. However, most students appeared more drawn to the examples of antisemitism from a much earlier period. Similarly, when amending their questionnaires, many students used examples from the Middle Ages to explain why the Holocaust took place. They wrote:

'They believed the Jews were at fault for the Black Death' (Abraham)

> *'because throughout history people didn't like the Jews as since the Middle Ages they were arrested, separated and accused'* (Rebecca)

> *'Also many Jews were hated from an earlier stage as it was believed that they killed Jesus and also due to the fact Jews were left with only the jobs of collecting tax. As they hated tax, this was another excuse to hate Jews too'.* (Pearl)

Precious had initially written 'Because Hitler didn't like Jews' and added 'because Germans thought that Jews killed Christ. Germans thought Jews were taking blood from children'.

Many mentioned antisemitic attitudes when answering on why the Holocaust happened. Interestingly, they used examples from hundreds of years earlier, when more recent and arguably more relevant examples, like a fear of Communism or the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, had been presented to them. In addition to being confused about the victims of the Holocaust, they were arguably also demonstrating new confusions about the timeframe and context of the Holocaust.

Other perpetrators and collaborators were not mentioned in most students' answers on why the Holocaust happened; nor were they mentioned in the discussions of who was involved. Even when students used plural pronouns to discuss what 'they' believed, or discussed attitudes which existed 'throughout history', they were not ascribing such beliefs and attitudes in relation to other perpetrators, because they did not mention such others existed. At best, the students were acknowledging there were long term causes for Hitler's beliefs, implying that factors other than Hitler contributed to the attitudes at the heart of the Holocaust. However, the influence of antisemitism on people beyond Hitler was not explored, because such other people were missing from their explanations. Echoing a pattern elsewhere, the students who incorporated ideas about historical antisemitism into their explanation of the Holocaust could do so and leave their initial Hitler-centric ideas intact. Indeed, so central and constant was their collective belief that Hitler was responsible for the Holocaust, that some students appeared to accept as fact some of the antisemitic ideas which they attributed to him to provide some rationale for his actions.

The significance of the camps

The students' collective initial ideas about what happened during the Holocaust focused on what happened in concentration camps (page 135). I was interested in whether, after being introduced to depictions of what happened in ghettos, or discussing mass-shootings, the students incorporated such ideas into their later ideas about the Holocaust.

8C are presented with depictions of the ghettos

Ms. Morris told the class that they were going to watch clips from films. 'The first film is called The Pianist*. The second film is called* Schindler's List*. We're going to watch clips from them now, to see exactly how Jewish people were persecuted'.*

She explained that the students had three questions to answer. These read 'What do the Jewish people have to do? How do the ghettos help to continue the Nazi persecution? and 'How does the Jewish family's life change?' The first clip, from 'The Pianist', showed a family preparing to leave their home, discussing what to bring with them, and what being sent from their home meant. After the clip, Ms. Morris asked for answers to the first question. Hands went up.

'They had to hide their money,' Jamie said.

'They had to keep a certain amount of money in the house,' said Jordan.

Ms. Morris explained that, additionally, Jewish people were told to move to a ghetto. She asked what the ghettos were.

Isabella said they were 'like the camps', and Ms. Morris explained, telling the class that they were 'areas in cities where Jewish people were forced to live'.

The class then watched the clip from Schindler's List *in which the Krakow ghetto was cleared. This showed people wearing the Star of David arm band. Shooting was seen and heard. At the end of the clip, Ms. Morris asked the class why they thought the Nazis wanted Jewish people to be put into the ghettos.*

'So that they can all be kept in one place . . . so they can massacre them,' suggested George.

'So they might do something,' suggested Jordan. 'So the Jews would react and they'd have an excuse to kill them'.

<div align="center">Fieldnotes, 8C, Capital Academy, Lesson 3 / 3 on the Holocaust</div>

In this discussion, discussed further in the next chapter, Ms. Morris shared a definition of ghettos, and the students were shown the circumstances Jewish people faced when forced to move into them. Ghettos had been an explicit part of their lessons on the

Holocaust. Yet in their interviews a few days later several did not recognise ghettos as a part of the Holocaust and understood them only in the context of depictions from outside of these lessons, as these brief extracts illustrate:

CK   *Where had you heard the word ghetto before?*

Jamie   *Films.*

CK   *Films about history? Or modern films?*

Jamie   *Modern films.*

   Interview with Jamie, 9C, Capital Academy, after final lesson on the Holocaust

Similarly:

CK   *OK. Linda, had you heard the word ghetto before?*

Linda   *No, not really.*

CK   *Isabella, how about you?*

Isabella   *I just heard it in movies.*

CK   *You've heard it in movies, but not in history.*

Isabella   *No.*

   Interview with Linda and Isabella, 8C, Capital Academy, after final lesson on the Holocaust

Also,

CK   *Suki, had you heard the word ghetto before? (Suki nodded)*

CK   *Where had you heard the word before? How do you know about ghettos?*

Suki   *I think, is it like a Sherlock? Is it a thing he went into?*

Damienne   *Yeah, in English, when we done a Sherlock Holmes story . . .*

   Interview with Suki, Damienne and Rachel, 8C, Capital Academy, after final lesson on the Holocaust

These students were suggesting that the word 'ghetto' was not familiar to them in the context of the Holocaust, even if it was familiar from elsewhere. This was despite their being in lessons in which ghettos were discussed explicitly, and in which they encountered filmic representations of them.

No student in 8N mentioned ghettos on their amended questionnaires, either, but ghettos were not as explicit an aspect of their lessons as they had been for 8C, so this is unsurprising. However, ghettos were discussed more fully in 9D's lessons. 9D were taught about ghettos in the Middle Ages, and as used by the Nazis, in their lesson on antisemitism (page 102). They were reminded of them in two questions in their assessment task. The first was a multiple-choice question reading:

'In the 1930s, before the war, Jews were:

a) Not allowed to go to public schools

b) put into ghettos or

c) carried by trains to the death camps'.

Out of 20 students, only Kumail and Sally correctly identified that, in the 1930s, Jewish children were excluded from public schools. Three suggested they were sent to death camps, which were not introduced until during the Second World War. 15 students wrote that they were sent to ghettos, which were also not used until the invasion of Poland. This suggested common confusion regarding when ghettoisation was introduced. Given the students generally recognised that the Holocaust took place during the war, and involved 'camps', I wondered if most had deduced that the ghettos, with which they were previously unfamiliar, must have been in place before the war broke out and the Holocaust began.

In a further question, the students were asked 'what were the ghettos?' and many wrote an answer suggesting some understandings. Rebecca (9D) described them as 'rough urban areas,' Daisy (9D) wrote that they were 'used to round Jews up and put them in,' Jake (9D) described them as 'poor areas'. Hema (9D) wrote 'it's where they kept the Jews isolated,' and Julia (9D) wrote that they were where Jewish people were kept 'segregated and isolated'. This suggested that, though the students did not appear to know the ghettos were used only after the outbreak of war, they had some awareness of what they were.

But most did not, when asked to complete their questionnaires, incorporate them into their answers on what happened during the Holocaust. Only Dani mentioned them when amending her questionnaire, writing 'the Jews were segregated and put into ghettos and away from everybody else'. This meant Dani (9D) and Hector (8N) were the only two students to mention ghettos in either version of their questionnaires, suggesting that, across the classes, the students generally did not incorporate them into their conceptions of the Holocaust, even if they discussed them explicitly in class discussions or written tasks.

The *Einsatzgruppen* did not appear on any student's amended questionnaire responses. They were discussed far less in the students' lessons on the Holocaust, so this was unsurprising. However, even students who had discussed the *Einsatzgruppen* in the same lesson as their questionnaires were amended did not include them in their revised answers.

8N hear about the *Einsatzgruppen*

Karen was asked for an example and read out the card describing the actions of the Einsatzgruppen. Mr. Talbot asked the class if anyone knew what the Einsatzgruppen were.

Karen said, 'was it, like, they were shooting?'

Mr. Talbot clarified. 'They were a branch of the SS who were, essentially, an execution squad that were used on the Eastern Front, in Russia. And what they start to do, before the Final Solution and the decision to start the mass execution of Jewish people, they're already on the Russian Front, committing acts of, essentially, murder, against different groups, Jewish people and prisoners of war'.

<div align="center">Fieldnotes, 8N, Lesson 4 / 4 on the Holocaust</div>

Though 8N were told about the *Einsatzgruppen* and mass-shootings a few minutes earlier, they did not mention them in their final questionnaires. So it was unsurprising that students for whom they were a less explicit part of their lessons did not mention them either. When asked directly about whether they knew about the *Einsatzgruppen* or about mass-shootings, the students in 8C who took part in their interviews said they did not. The students' initial notions that the Holocaust was enacted only in 'camps' remained intact at the end of their lessons on the topic; but this is not to say their answers on what happened remained unchanged.

Initially, six students did not answer the question 'what happened? This suggested they had minimal ideas about what took place or lacked confidence in expressing their ideas. When returning to their questionnaires, of these, all but Malcolm recorded that the Holocaust involved the killing of Jewish people. They wrote:

'Jews were starved, tortured and killed'. (Monica, 9D)

'They were sent to death camps' (Abraham, 9D)

'They killed Jews' (David, 8N and Rachel, 9D)

'Jews were being humiliated and tortured / killed' (Roger, 8N)

Only Malcolm (8N) initially left the question blank and did not amend it to state that the Holocaust involved killing. He wrote, instead, that 'The Germans mis-treated the Jews', which, though less specific, illustrated he had developed some new ideas. Most students who presented minimal initial ideas about what happened during the Holocaust at the beginning of their lessons emerged appreciating, or more confident in expressing, that the Holocaust involved the killing of Jewish people.

Most students, however, had written an initial answer. When adding to their answers, many left their initial camp-centric ideas about the Holocaust intact, adding detail to their answers but leaving their core notions unchanged. This is best illustrated by a side-by-side depiction of their responses. This grid shows the students' initial answer to the question 'what happened', (written at the very start of their history lessons on the topic) and anything they added at the end of their history lessons, four weeks later:

	Initial answer	**Additional text**
Ibrahim (9D)	They were gassed.	beat and discriminated.
Luke (9D)	Hitler tortured the Jews.	He killed millions of people. A war between Germany and England / France etc
Rebecca (9D)	Hitler made the Jews slaves and serve him, he tried to kill all Jews they were starved, beaten etc …	Hitler and many Nazi supporters, murdered and committed genocide against the Jews.

Julia (9D)	People were killed using gas	Jews were treated as slave and women and children were often killed because they were seen as weak.
Ada (9D)	That Jewish people were put in concentration camps and gas chambers.	Made slaves
Pearl (9D)	Many Jews were killed and experimented on.	People were given the impression that they were going to have a shower however in reality they were sent to be instantly killed as gas was released in the room. Healthy people were used to do jobs such as drag dead bodied with a stick by the chin over to a pit of fire. Some decided to kill themselves by jumping in the pit rather than betraying their own kind. Others were too scared and so desperate for live that they followed all orders.
Poonam (8N)	Jews were killed	And tortured and their lives were ruined
Dawn (8N)	Jews got put in camps and gas chamber	Jewish people got taken from their homes and put in concentration camps
Hector (8N)	Jewish people were herded into ghettos and then transported to concentration camps. They were either worked to death if they were healthy but gassed in gas chambers.	Jewish people and other groups were tortured and humiliated by the Nazis
Roger (8N)	There people going to different countries.	Jews were being humiliated and tortured / killed.

Table 14: How the students added to their initial answers to 'what happened during the Holocaust?

Poonam (8N), Roger (8N) and Hector (8N) added comments on 'torture', and Ada (9D) and Julia (9D) added comments on people being treated as 'slaves', which arguably relate to the treatment of Jewish people within the camps. Similarly, Luke (9D) recognised that the Holocaust involved the deaths of millions of people and Pearl (9D) wrote on the processes through which people were killed, referring to the work of the Sonderkommando. Ibrahim (9D) referred to 'discrimination', which was perhaps an allusion to an earlier stage of the persecution; but he was unusual in doing so. Though adding detail to their answers, most continued presenting the events of the Holocaust as they took place in camps, again, leaving central aspects of their initial ideas untouched. There was some suggestion, in the comments from Julia (9D), Ada (9D) and Dawn (8N), that they recognised that forced labour was an aspect of the concentration camps. However, there is no real sense in their answers that they appreciated that concentration camps could be sites of forced labour, murder through gas chambers, both, or neither. There was no indication the students appreciate that there were different types of concentration camps within Nazi-occupied Europe. Additionally, ghettoisation and mass-shooting is simply not mentioned.

A paradox in the students' amended questionnaires was that some who presented historically accurate ideas at the start of the lessons demonstrated more confusion later. As has been highlighted, some students appeared to be more confused about the victims of the Holocaust, at the end of their lessons on the topic. Additionally James (9D) initially wrote 'Hitler attempted to exterminate the Jews,' but amended his answer to 'He also killed anyone that wasn't his perfect (type?) blonde hair blue eyes,' demonstrating not just that he had extended his definition beyond Jewish people, but also appeared to believe that people were murdered because of how they looked, a misconception he had not suggested initially. Souhail (8N) overestimated the number of Jewish people killed, also rendering his amended response less historically informed than his initial one. He initially wrote 'Nazis killed all Jewish people in nearby countries and tortured them' and added 'Nazis / Hitler killed all Jewish citizens in Europe'. His new response was less Hitler-centric, in that it mentioned the Nazis. Yet he had overestimated how many Jewish people were killed.

These amended responses suggested that when students added to their answers on 'what happened' during the Holocaust they generally did one of two things. They added detail or further examples to their original answers, offering slightly more

development in their later responses, but leaving their central ideas unchanged; or they amended their commentary on the scope of what happened, and offered more confused comments on what had happened, or to whom. They did not incorporate ideas which contradicted their initial perceptions of the Holocaust (like the notion that it was conducted elsewhere than the camps) into their later answers on what happened; this suggested, once again, that their initial ideas about the Holocaust remained largely unchanged after their history lessons on the topic.

Chronology and geography

The final tentative finding on the students' initial ideas about the Holocaust was that many appeared to lack knowledge of its chronology and geography. This raised questions about whether they would elicit from their history lessons more developed ideas about when or where the Holocaust took place. Having seen such notions presented during the history lessons, I explored whether the students emerged with a clearer sense of the European scale of the Holocaust, its development over time, or the fact the antisemitic attitudes at its heart predated Hitler and the Nazis.

8N are introduced to the idea that Jewish people lived all over Europe

'We now know that we are looking, specifically, at Jewish people, before the Second World War', Mr. Talbot told 8N, as he collected in the photographs they had just looked at and replaced them with maps of Europe illustrating the size of the Jewish population in each country.

'We are finding out about this really diverse group of people. Where did they come from? What kind of spread of population did they have?'

He advised the students to look at the maps carefully. 'From looking at the top map, you are going to find countries where there were Jewish communities in 1933. Where did the majority of Jewish people live in the 1930s? If we were to believe Hitler, he would suggest that they all lived in Germany,' Mr. Talbot told the class. 'And you'll be able to see whether or not he was telling the truth, based on what was on this map. Then, look at the map to see, in which city did most of Germany's Jewish population live? Germany is obviously a very important country when we think about the Holocaust, because this is where, partly, it was perpetrated'.

Fieldnotes, 8N, Capital Academy, Lesson 1 / 4 on the Holocaust

Mr. Talbot highlighted to 8N that, counter to Hitler's depictions of them, most Jewish people did not live in Germany, and that the Holocaust was only 'partly' perpetrated in

Germany. He asked the students to explore the sizes of the Jewish populations in other countries.

In the following lesson, he reminded the students that they were not only looking at events in Germany. Introducing the theme of 'Control under the Nazis', he asked them to examine a sketch depicting aspects of Nazi control. He said to the class, regarding the sketch:

> *Whilst it's only a drawing, it gives you a picture of a typical scene in Nazi-occupied Europe. Now, the reason we are looking at this, the reason we are looking at control in today's lesson, is that last lesson we looked at some of the people who were eventually affected by the Holocaust. And we saw that they were just innocent, ordinary people. They were, women and children, they were from all over Europe, different parts of Europe. They had different jobs. We saw that they had family holidays. And the Holocaust, which we've not looked at yet, but will look at next lesson. What we do know is that it involved the mass slaughter of millions of Jewish people, along with other people as well, but the Holocaust refers specifically to the mass genocide of Jewish people. We need to understand why this could happen, such an atrocity. And in order to do that we need to understand how the Nazis controlled Germany and Europe. Because that will help us to understand why it was that the Holocaust was able to take place.*

<div align="center">Mr. Talbot to 8N, Capital Academy, Lesson 3/5 on the Holocaust</div>

Here, Mr. Talbot reminded the students of what they had looked at in the previous lesson, and directly connected the photographs they had seen to the people 'who were eventually affected by the Holocaust' and who 'were from all over Europe'. He also highlighted that 'the Nazis controlled Germany and Europe'. I was interested in whether, given these comments and the activities they undertook around them, the students in 8N would mention in their later questionnaires that the Holocaust took place across Europe.

Poonam, Souhail, Anika, in the most common type of amendment to their answers, changed their initial answer of 'Germany' to 'Europe'. Dawn (8N) amended her less common answer of 'Poland' to 'Poland, Germany, Austria and other parts of Europe'.

This suggested some movement away from German-centric ideas or ideas that the events took place only in Germany and Poland, and a recognition that the events took place in multiple countries.

Students who initially wrote no answer, or wrote 'I don't know' to this question, went on to write more accurate answers than others had written when first answering their questionnaires. They wrote:

'Germany and Poland'. (Khalid)

'It took place in many countries mainly in Europe, such as Germany, Poland, Belgium, Soviet Union etc'. (Siobhan)

'It took place in a lot of countries. The names are Belgium and France'. (Norbert)

'Germany, Austria'. (Katja)

Not having initial ideas about this question did not appear a significant barrier to taking some useful ideas from their history lessons. By the end, several students recognised that the Holocaust took place in many countries across Europe, and only in Germany and Poland, thereby ending the lesson with more nuanced ideas than many had presented at the start.

Unlike students in 8C and 8N (above) the students in 9D were not shown maps of Europe during their history lessons on the Holocaust. Nor did they hear an articulation as clear as Mr. Talbot's about the Nazis controlling Europe. This might have contributed to students in 9D making fewer changes to their questionnaires to suggest new ideas about the geographical scale of the Holocaust. In 9D, Fatema, Lydia and James changed their answers on 'where did the Holocaust take place?' from 'Germany' to 'Europe' and Ibrahim made, arguably, the greatest change to his answer, adding to an initial answer of 'Auschwitz' the comment that the Holocaust took place 'Across German conquered countries in Europe during the war'. But most students in 9D left their answers unchanged, suggesting that, at the end of their history lessons, they still assumed the Holocaust took place primarily, or solely, in Germany and Poland.

8C, like 8N, had undertaken activities in which they had studied the lives of Jewish people before the war, and life under Nazi control. The class did not complete their amended questionnaires, but in an interview with Jamie, Linda and Isabella, I discussed with them, very briefly, how they knew where parts of the Holocaust took place. Discussing with them a photograph of the Lodz Ghetto, I asked them 'in which countries do you think Jewish people had to live in ghettos?' They answered:

Linda   *Germany, Poland,*

Jamie   *Holland*

CK   *What made you say Germany and Poland? There might be two different reasons, I know.*

Linda   *Because Hitler was in Germany and most of the Jewish people lived in Poland.*

CK   *And how about Holland? How did you know about Holland? For the recording, Jamie was pointing to her classroom, because she has been reading about Anne Frank and her story. Isabella, do you know any countries where Jewish people were told to live in ghettos? Any that we haven't mentioned already?*

Isabella   *No.*

CK   *Do you know what all those countries had in common? Germany, Poland and Holland?*

Jamie   *Were they ruled by Nazis?*

CK   *They were. So when was this all happening? When did the Nazis who, as Linda said, came from Germany, when did they have control of Poland and Holland?*

Isabella   *The beginning of World War Two?*

CK   *Yeah, that's right. Because what did they do to those countries?*

Linda   *Took them over.*

Interview with Jamie, Linda and Isabella, 8C, Capital Academy, after final lesson on the Holocaust

A tentative conclusion from this short interview extract is that students are more likely to recognise the involvement in the Holocaust of an individual country if they remember something specific about its experiences before or during the war. These students had specific reasons to connect each country they mentioned to the Holocaust (albeit, slightly incorrectly because there were no ghettos in Holland or Germany). Knowing about the Nazis meant they mentioned Germany, finding out about the pre-war Jewish population sizes meant they mentioned Poland, and finding out about Anne Frank reminded them about Holland. The pedagogical implications of this question are discussed in the final chapter.

Also of interest was whether the students would appreciate, by the end of their lessons on the topic, that the Holocaust did not coincide perfectly with the Second World War. This was more difficult to examine, in part because the greatest articulation of this point came from Ms. Morris, who spoke to 8C who were then unable to amend their questionnaires.

8C were introduced to the idea that the Holocaust happened 'in stages'

Ms. Morris told the class. 'The persecution developed in stages. Let's have a look at these stages now'. The class read aloud a timeline in the textbook.

This referred to Jewish people being banned from working in the Civil Service in 1933, and the introduction of the Nuremburg Laws in 1935, making reference to 'Aryan' people who Ms. Morris described as 'blond haired and blue eyed'. It described the events of 'Kristallnacht' in 1938, the invasion of Poland and the setting up of the Warsaw Ghetto. It mentioned the invasion of the USSR in 1941, and the mass-shootings which followed, and it mentioned the 'Final Solution', from 1942.

Fieldnotes, 8C, Capital Academy, Lesson 3 / 3 on the Holocaust

During this interaction, the students were introduced to a timeline of key dates in the persecution of Jewish people. When I interviewed the students the following lesson, however, some suggested confusion with this narrative:

Ck   *Do you know anything about what happened in 1933?*

Isabella   *Was it the beginning?*

CK   *The beginning of what?*

Isabella, Jamie and Linda	*(Together) The World War.*
CK	*Ah, interestingly, not quite.*
Jamie	*Holocaust.*

Interview with Isabella, Jamie and Linda, 8C, Capital Academy, after final lesson on the Holocaust

All three students thought, at that moment, that the Second World War began in 1933. Perhaps this was because they knew the photographs related to the Holocaust, and had placed them in that timeframe, not anticipating seeing photographs from those earlier stages. This was a small sample of students and I was unable to draw significant conclusions from their brief response. However, the timings of the Holocaust appeared to confuse other students more at the end of their lessons on the topic than at the beginning.

As elsewhere, the greater shift in students' ideas was demonstrated by those claiming no initial ideas of the events, rather than students' developing more nuanced understandings over time. Most of the students who amended their answers to the question 'when did the Holocaust take place?' had previously left the answer blank or written 'I don't know'. Of these, most, including Pearl (9D) and Siobhan, Khalid, Malcolm, Dawn, Norbert, Abdi, Roger from (8N), amended this to 'The Second World War' or '1939-1945', suggesting they now had more ideas about the timeframe of the Holocaust, or greater confidence in writing an answer. These answers were, of course, rather simplistic, in that they appeared to be suggesting that the Holocaust coincided perfectly with the Second World War, but the students were at least positioning the events in a useful timeframe.

Several students who initially wrote that the Holocaust took place during the Second World War amended their responses. Poonam (8N) and Karen (8N) had initially written that the Holocaust happened during the Second World War and added '1939-45' to their response. This is, perhaps, another example of students adding detail to their

responses and leaving their original answers intact, though despite these answers' lacking a little nuance, they were essentially correct.

Other students, by contrast, amended their answers, demonstrating new confusion over the timing and order of events. Hector (8N), who had mentioned ghettos in his initial answer on what happened, initially wrote, on the timing of the Holocaust, that 'it happened in the Second World War where Germany were at their peak power'. He added 'Death camps came into action around 1938, although they were extensively used in the 'Final Solution', apparently placing the extermination camps before the outbreak of war. Also, Rachel (9D) and Precious (9D) had both initially written that the Holocaust happened during 'World War 2,' but amended their responses to '1939' and '1942,' respectively, both suggesting a single year in which the events took place. These students all amended their answers to show that the Holocaust did not solely and completely coincide with the events of the Second World War, but their lack of clarity rendered their answers less accurate than they were initially. Again, they added detail which demonstrated confusions which had not previously been evident.

It appeared many students who could not initially place the Holocaust within any timeframe located it during the Second World War, by the end of their history lessons. But those who had such understandings to begin with in some cases appeared more confused after the lessons than they appeared to begin with. The students' answers raised questions about how they responded to depictions of the Holocaust which suggested the events did not coincide perfectly with the Second World War, and accounts which indicated the policies changed over time. These will be discussed in the next chapter.

Conclusion

Like other research into how young people understand the Holocaust (Richardson, 2012, Gray, 2014b and Foster et al., 2016) this chapter provided a summary of the ideas the students prioritised at a particular point. Building on such existing research by providing a 'before' and 'after' snapshot, these findings echo those of Gray (2014b) and Richardson (2012), a combined reading of which suggested students presented largely similar ideas about the Holocaust before and after they have studied it in their Key Stage 3 history lessons.

This research, however, raised questions unexplored elsewhere. It suggested that, after their history lessons on the Holocaust, the students generally still presented the events of the Holocaust in Hitler-centric terms and asked how they engage with accounts which recognised the roles of others in contributing to the events. It suggested the students continued to prioritise, in their comments on what happened, events which were enacted in concentration camps, which raised questions about how they engaged with accounts of what happened elsewhere, particularly in the ghettos which were discussed explicitly. Additionally, it suggested the students shared continuing confusion about the timing and location of the Holocaust, raising questions about how these confusions emerged and how the students engage with narratives which did not correlate perfectly with the timing of the Second World War. Essentially, the research raised questions about how the students responded to accounts which contradicted the ideas they already held.

Such questions were not answered using existing research, since, as has been discussed elsewhere, no other research was designed to explore students' understandings of the Holocaust before, during and after their history lessons on the topic, and no research conducted in England explored what happened during these lessons. Being a participant observer in these lessons, I was able to analyse the students' responses to different ideas at different points. I was able to consider their written work, written in immediate response to classroom tasks, with the answers they wrote on their questionnaires at the very end of all the lessons. I was able to interrogate their ideas at different points, by continuing to have 'conversations with a purpose' throughout the lessons, and to contextualise the students' questionnaires with ideas they had expressed during the lessons I had observed and transcribed. As a result, I was able to analyse, using multiple sources of evidence, how the students made sense of the Holocaust during their history lessons on the topic. Such analysis follows in the next chapter.

Chapter 8: Why do students hold these ideas at the end of their history lessons on the topic?

It is challenging for students to learn new ideas; 'if the human brain can be understood as an empty reservoir, then the means of getting information into the brain is a thin straw' (Fordham, 2017: 38). The challenge is greater when, to learn new ideas, learners must adapt or replace existing ones, since this requires them to 'accommodate any such new information within underlying schemata that actively prohibit the recognition that this is pertinent knowledge at all' (Foster et al., 2016:65).

Learning new ideas is particularly challenging when learners find their initial interpretations compelling. Learners are more drawn to personal than institutional explanations of the past (Barton, 2010: 245). This perhaps explains many students recalling details of Freddie Knoller's testimony in subsequent lessons, and commonly maintaining the idea that the Holocaust happened solely because of Hitler, even when presented with accounts demonstrating the involvement of others. This latter case also exemplifies students' earlier ideas acting as 'barriers to learning' (Donovan and Bransford, 2005:4). A further challenge facing students is the complexity of the Holocaust and the organisational knowledge (Ibid,1) required to make sense of it. As Shemilt (2005) expressed,

> Until people are able to locate present knowledge, questions, and concerns within narrative frameworks that link past with past and past with present in ways that are valid and meaningful, coherent, and flexible, the uses that are made of history will range from the impoverished to the pernicious.

> Shemilt, 2005 (99-100)

A lack of organisational knowledge might account for students who lacked understanding of the chronology or location of the Holocaust demonstrating confusions about what happened and why.

Nonetheless, the fact the students generally presented similar ideas about the Holocaust before and after they were taught about it in their history lessons is striking. No previous research explored this issue with reference to what happened during such lessons.

This chapter explores how students engaged with ideas which challenged their initial ideas about the Holocaust. It draws on Wertsch (2005, see page 55) to argue that the students 'mastered' some historical ideas and had the ability 'to reproduce them or the ability to employ them to reason about the causes of events' (Ibid). But though they mastered some new ideas on a cognitive level, few appeared to 'appropriate' them on an emotional one (Ibid). This chapter explores which type of ideas the students 'appropriated', and which they 'mastered', and how the students presented 'proxies' for learning (Lee, 2005) which, without interrogation, suggested they had engaged in more learning than had actually taken place.

Making sense of depictions which echo *and* challenge existing ideas

8N's third lesson on the Holocaust provided an opportunity to explore how they engaged with ideas which partially challenged their own. They examined three different definitions of the Holocaust and wrote their own, using resources from the Holocaust Educational Trust called 'Defining the Holocaust'. The guidance to the activity suggested it enabled 'teachers to gauge students' prior knowledge and to begin to guide them towards an accurate understanding of what the Holocaust was' (Holocaust Educational Trust, 2016b: 2). The definitions all referred to non-Jewish victims of Nazi persecution but presented Jewish people alone as the victims of the Holocaust. They also all referred to the Nazis and their 'collaborators' in their presentation of the perpetrators. However, there was some difference in their suggestions of when the Holocaust began. Individually and collectively, they presented ideas which were more nuanced than the students' initial ideas about the events. So I was interested in how the class responded to them. The lesson developed as follows:

8N discuss different definitions of the Holocaust

After introducing the aims of the activity and clarifying the origin of the term 'Holocaust' by reading it from the worksheet he had given the students, Mr. Talbot led a discussion on the definitions it cited. Each was provided by a different organisation.

Ramon read aloud the first definition, from the Imperial War Museum (IWM). This read:

> *The Holocaust was the systematic murder of Europe's Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators during the Second World War. For the first time in history, industrial methods were used for the mass extermination of a whole people. Between 1933 and 1945, Jews were targeted for discrimination,*

segregation and extermination. […] The Nazis enslaved and murdered millions of others as well. Political opponents, Roma and Sinti (Gypsies), homosexuals, prisoners of conscience, people with physical and mental disabilities, Poles, Soviet prisoners of war and others were killed or died in camps as a result of neglect, starvation or disease.

Mr. Talbot put a series of questions on the PowerPoint. These asked the students who was involved in the Holocaust, and how many people were killed, according to each definition.

Mr. Talbot asked the students to highlight the information on the IWM definition which answered each question. In a discussion which followed, Mr. Talbot drew deftly from the students that, according the IWM definition, 'The Nazis sought to destroy all the Jews of Europe,' and that 6 million Jewish people were killed, of whom 1.5 million were children. He further elicited that '"Gypsies", people with physical and mental disabilities, Poles, Soviet prisoners of war, trade unionists, political opponents, prisoners of conscience, homosexuals, and others' were also killed, then summarised what the students had highlighted so far, saying 'so we're going to see if this comes up in the other definitions'.

Mr. Talbot asked Berta to read the definition from Yad Vashem (page 181), before asking the class to find any similarities between the two.

Anika quoted that 'approximately 6 million Jews were killed' and Roger said, 'It says "the Nazis" at the top'.

Mr. Talbot said 'It says "by the Nazis" but it also says something else at the top. What else does it say?'

A few students said, quietly, 'collaborators'. Drawing attention to the term, Mr. Talbot asked the class what the term meant.

Ramon said it meant 'like allies'.

Mr. Talbot asked if the word is usually used in a positive way, and Hector suggested that it could be positive if it meant that people were 'working collaboratively'.

Mr. Talbot agreed saying, 'potentially, it can be positive. In this context, though, definitely not. In this context we've got that six million people were killed by the Nazis but by some other people as well. By "their collaborators."'

Roger said 'I think here it means that the collaborators were, like, those little groups, like spies and stuff from last lesson'.

Mr. Talbot commended him for linking back to last lesson and asked if he was thinking about the picture they had seen. Roger agreed. During the previous lesson, the class had been studying 'Control in Nazi Germany,' and 'spies and stuff' were discussed. The class had examined a sketch of a street scene in which Nazi posters were prominently displayed, slogans were being broadcast from huge loudspeakers and the

Swastika was hung from many of the buildings. The students were asked to try to spot the officers from the secret police, before being told about the role of the SS, the Gestapo, and concentration camps, which they researched for homework.

Mr. Talbot continued the discussion of the definition, drawing the students to its final sentence. 'It says 'The Jews were not the only victims of the Nazis, but they were the only group that the Nazis sought to destroy entirely.' What do you think this means?'

Ramon said 'Basically, the Nazis did almost destroy the Jews but they wanted to destroy the Jews entirely'.

Mr. Talbot agreed. 'So, is this agreeing with the last definition completely, or is it disagreeing?'

Karen answered. 'I would say agreeing. No, disagreeing. Because it said they wanted to destroy it entirely, but in the other one it says destroy all the Jews in Europe'.

'Yes, good,' agreed Mr. Talbot. 'We've got a bit of extra information. In terms of the groups who were included, if we look at the top one, this appears to be including all these groups in the definition of the Holocaust. However, in the bottom section, this is suggesting that the Holocaust is a term which refers to the attempt to exterminate the Jewish population. And whilst the Nazis didn't only persecute this group, this is the group that they were attempting to exterminate, according to this definition'. Here Mr. Talbot was highlighting that the Holocaust was the genocide of Jewish people, but that Jewish people were not the only people the Nazis targeted. I wondered whether the students would grasp this nuance.

Raoul raised his hand. 'Is it true that Hitler didn't like Jews because he had a Jewish teacher?'

Mr. Talbot said that there were 'loads of little facts like that'. Mr. Talbot explained that when Hitler was in Vienna, he was frustrated that he had found it hard to find a job, and he 'already held antisemitic views'. And he saw that some Jewish people were prosperous, 'because they were working as lawyers and teachers and doctors, and they were doing very well. And he resented them because of his own position. So, one of the things that contributed to his own antisemitism was feeling that it wasn't fair. That on its own doesn't lead to this,' he said, demonstrably pointing to Yad Vashem's definition on the screen. 'But it was something which contributed to many German peoples' attitudes towards Jewish people'.

Raoul's question was indicative of those asked by several other students during the lessons I observed, whereby the students asked about an aspect of Hitler's beliefs in a discussion in which he was not the focus. Hitler featured prominently on the students' initial questionnaires about the Holocaust and was clearly central to their ideas on the topic. Noticeably, Raoul raised his question in a broader discussion of the Yad Vashem definition, the only one to mention Hitler at all. Mr. Talbot did not mention Hitler when

eliciting responses from the students, and yet Raoul introduced him into the discussion.

Also, noticeably, Mr. Talbot actively addressed Raoul's mention of Hitler in a broader discussion of the Holocaust, stating that Hitler's antisemitism 'did not lead to' the Holocaust. Mr. Talbot would address the Hitler-centric nature of some of the students' comments about the Holocaust later in the lesson, too, telling the class 'Hitler was just a part of this puzzle. It doesn't all start with Adolf Hitler. You need to realise that it was more than that. Much more than that. There are other people who bear some responsibility as well'.

The discussion resumed and Khalid was asked to read through the final definition, from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM). This read:

> The Holocaust was the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of approximately six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators. During the era of the Holocaust, German authorities also targeted other groups because of their perceived "racial inferiority": Roma (Gypsies), the disabled, and some of the Slavic peoples (Poles, Russians, and others). Other groups were persecuted on political, ideological, and behavioural grounds, among them Communists, Socialists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and homosexuals.

Mr. Talbot said to the class, 'Let's look for comparisons. Is there anything the same?' He directed his question to Katja.

Katja quoted 'Six million were murdered'. When she was asked for who this 'six million' were, she could not specify.

Michael was asked and quoted 'Gypsies' and 'the handicapped'.

Mr. Talbot said, yes, those people were all targeted. 'But who were the six million people? Who, according to this, were the primary victims?' he asked.

Berta answered 'Jews'.

The Jewish specificity of the Holocaust was confusing students. Though most had mentioned 'Jews' or Jewish people in their initial questionnaire on the topic, none had mentioned any other victim group. To discuss them at this point, whilst at the same time suggesting they were not part of the Holocaust, appeared to lead to a lack of clarity for the students. I wondered how this would materialise in the definitions they were about to write. I was also interested in whether any would incorporate this statistical information into their definitions. since none had mentioned it in their initial questionnaires.

Highlighting one more term from the definition, Mr. Talbot asked the class what the word 'systematic,' means. Hector defined it as meaning 'structured and planned'. Mr. Talbot thanked him and agreed.

Mr. Talbot then asked the students to look at what they had highlighted on their sheets and to write their own definitions of the Holocaust. 'You need to take the things that were in common across those three. Now, we're probably going to see some different definitions, and that's not a problem. What you're going to write is what you understand, based on what you have written'. As was typical in the class, the written task was started immediately by almost all students, and conducted, without insistence, in almost silence.

Fieldnotes, 8N, Capital Academy, Lesson 3/5 on the Holocaust

By the end of this lesson, I had 15 students' definitions of the Holocaust captured on the voice recorder or photographed from their written work. I reflected on their responses. Would they grasp the nuance that the Holocaust was the genocide of Jewish people, but that others were targeted at the same time? Would they incorporate the less familiar term 'collaborators' into their definitions? If so, would this reflect a shift in their initial Hitler-centric or Nazi-centric depictions of the events? Would Hitler feature in their definitions at all? Given that neither appeared in the class discussions, would the students include in their definitions a sense of time and space, a context for the Holocaust which was missing from many of their initial questionnaires?

One pattern in their responses was that all 15 students mentioned 'Jews' or 'Jewish people' in their definitions. This was unsurprising; the terms featured frequently in their initial questionnaires and in the three definitions they read. More interestingly, 11 out of 15 included the term '6 million' which did not feature in any initial questionnaires. Hector and Poonam used the number correctly, to reference the number of Jewish people killed during the Holocaust:

> *The Holocaust was the mass genocide of Jewish people. It was masterminded by German leader Adolf Hitler, who bore deep apparent hatred for Jewish people. Over six million Jews were killed, with 1.5 million children contributing to the number. The persecution of the Jews was systematic and highly structured. The plan was executed by the Nazis and their collaborators.* (Hector)

> *The Holocaust was the mass genocide of Jewish people by the Nazis. Six million Jewish people were killed. They were the primary victims. They were the majority of German people killed. The main aim of the Holocaust was to wipe out the Jewish population.* (Poonam)

However, not all the students used it so accurately. For example:

The Holocaust is when the Nazis aimed to kill all the Jews in Europe. Six million were murdered including Jews, gypsies, people with physical and mental disabilities, Poles, Soviet prisoners of war, trade unionists, political opponents, prisoners of conscience, homosexuals. (Anika, 8N)

Anika appeared to perceive the 6 million to include all victims of Nazi genocide. Khalid and Michael also demonstrated confusion about the specifics of the statistic, writing:

I think the Holocaust means a genocidal act by the Nazis to the Jewish people. They targeted the gypsies, the handicapped, trade unionists and Jews. Six million were murdered. (Khalid)

Holocaust: The plan of total annihilation of the Jews / dominance with other races like Gypsies and handicapped. Over 6 million were actually killed. (Michael)

The statistic featured in most responses, although several students were confused by it. By comparison, only Hector (above) mentioned 'collaborators' in his definition. This term, like the term '6 million', did not feature in the students' initial questionnaires; but it was largely ignored by the students in their definitions too, even though it featured in the definitions from Yad Vashem and USHMM and Mr. Talbot had drawn attention to it.

Only two students mentioned Hitler in their definitions, which was striking given his dominance in their initial questionnaires, and the fact that he was discussed during the lesson. These students were Hector and Katja. Hector (above) suggested Hitler 'masterminded' the Holocaust but that it was 'executed by the Nazis and their collaborators'. Katja included the phrase 'Hitler's regime,' writing:

The Holocaust is all about the Nazis trying to destroy all the Jews in Europe. So for six million were murdered, including 1.5 million children. The Jews were not the only victims of Hitler's regime, but were the only group that the Nazis wanted to destroy entirely. The Jews were annihilated in Europe. Jews were the primary victims. 6 million were murdered. The Holocaust was from Greek. (Katja)

Hector and Katja presented Hitler as having arranged the Holocaust, but suggested it was conducted by the Nazis, which was subtly different from the common idea, presented by many at the start of their lessons, that Hitler alone was responsible. Though Hitler and 'collaborators' rarely featured in the students' definitions at this point, the term 'Nazis' was used by 9 out of the 15. This further suggested the students

were moving away from a Hitler-centric account of the Holocaust to one in which the Nazis, if not their collaborators, were more prominent.

However, in their definitions, the students continued to present the Holocaust in decontextualised terms. Only Souhail mentioned any timeframe at all in his definition, writing:

> *The Holocaust comes from the Greece word Holos. It was a mass genocide of the Jewish population. Approximately 6 million Jews were killed between 1941 to 1945. The Nazis sought to destroy all Jews of Europe.* (Souhail)

Similarly, only 4 out of the 15 students referred to a location for the Holocaust. These were Souhail, Anika and Katja (above) and Norbert, who wrote:

> *The Holocaust is when people want to kill all Jewish in Europe.* (Norbert, 8N)

These students all included the term 'Europe' in their definitions. 11 students, however, presented neither a time nor place in their definition, and were defining the events without context.

In their definitions, the students presented the Holocaust in slightly different terms from their initial questionnaire answers. The depictions were arguably as decontextualised as previously, since 11 out of 15 mentioned neither a time nor a geographical context for the events. But collectively, their responses were less Hitler-centric than at first, with Hitler presented as 'mastermind' or leader of a 'regime' in which the 'Nazis' were the ones carrying out actions. More frequently, Hitler was not mentioned at all. Also contrasting with their initial answers, some students presented, through their use of statistics, a sense of the scale of the Holocaust. However, there appeared to be more confusion within these definitions about who the victims of the Holocaust were.

Each institution used a different phrase to explain when the Holocaust took place. IWM placed it 'under cover of the Second World War', and USHMM 'between 1933 and 1945'. Yad Vashem made explicit that historians have different ideas about the timeframe of the events. Yad Vashem timed the Nazi attempt to 'murder every Jew under their domination' from 'the summer of 1941 to May 1945' but suggested that many consider the Holocaust to have started with 'Hitler's accession to power in January 1933'. These are clearly distinct approaches and Yad Vashem made explicit that the exact timing of the Holocaust is contested. This is, arguably, problematic for

the students because there was no consistent message. Additionally, the timeframe of the Holocaust, as presented in these definitions, was not an explicit focus of the students' discussions. It did not appear in the questions the students were asked, and nor did Mr. Talbot ask them about it. These factors might contribute to the students' not mentioning it in their written responses.

Similar reasons could explain why the term 'collaborators' appeared on only two of 15 students' responses. It appeared in two, rather than three, institutions'' definitions, so it was not presented as consistently as, for example, the term '6 million'. Arguably it was not discussed explicitly. Mr. Talbot drew the students' attention to it during this lesson, but the examples elicited from the students suggested they considered 'collaborators' to be those within the Nazi Party rather than outside of it. Mr. Talbot returned to the issue of collaboration in the following lesson, giving the students examples of the work of collaborators from other countries and discussing these explicitly with the students, so this is not a criticism of his approach. In this activity, however, 'collaborators' were not discussed explicitly, which also contributed to their exclusion from most students' definitions. However, perhaps the main reason why the students resisted the notion of 'collaborators' carrying out the Holocaust was because it was highly disruptive of their initial ideas. The terms 'Hitler' and 'Nazis' featured so prominently in their earliest ideas about who was involved in the Holocaust that they were not easily replaced.

The ways in which the students responded to this task shed light on the ideas about the Holocaust which the students 'mastered' (Wertsch, 2005) during their history lessons on the topic. Many 'mastered' ideas around the numbers of people killed, for example, demonstrated by the fact that they deployed them, often with some accuracy, in written work they completed immediately after their introduction to them. Their definitions could not, however, demonstrate whether they had 'appropriated' (Ibid) those new ideas. They illustrated only that they could use such ideas, and not whether they had accepted them.

Their amended questionnaires, updated a few days later, shed light on whether the students did 'appropriate' such new ideas. Strikingly, the students hardly referenced them, when answering questions about who was involved in the Holocaust, what happened, when, where and why. Though seven had cited '6 million' in their definition

activity, none mentioned it on their amended questionnaire. Though two mentioned 'collaborators' in their definitions, only one mentioned it on when amending their questionnaire. None of the four students who mentioned non-Jewish victims in their definitions did so when they amended their earlier answers. The students may have used these terms in when writing their definitions, but they did not use them to express what they knew about the Holocaust at the end of the topic. This suggested that they may have 'mastered' such ideas and were able to deploy them in the immediate aftermath of their reading of the definitions; but had not appropriated them into their own ideas about the events.

There were, perhaps, methodological reasons for this. Perhaps the students did not mention these ideas into their final answers because they were not explicitly asked to do so. Had they, for example, been asked 'how many Jewish people died during the Holocaust?' perhaps many could have done so. The caveat that the questionnaires only captured ideas the students 'prioritised' (Foster, 2016: 41) remains significant. Yet the fact that no student referred to it is striking, as is the rejection by all but Hector of the term 'collaborators'. That there appears such consistency in the students' rejection of such ideas having previously, to differing degrees, engaged with them, is certainly notable. It appears from this activity that they could, when presented with them explicitly, master new ideas about the Holocaust. Indeed, their definitions suggested evidence of new learning; but there were more like 'proxies' for learning (Lee, 2005). The students did not 'appropriate' the ideas which overtly challenged their initial conceptions of the Holocaust.

Making sense of depictions which contradict existing ideas

An opportunity to explore how students engaged with ideas which overtly challenged their own came from 9D's lesson entitled 'Who killed Barney Greenman?' which was the third lesson on the Holocaust. The story of Leon Greenman is told in teaching materials from the UCL Centre for Holocaust Education, the rationale for which states:

> this lesson allows students to test their preconceptions about people in the past against real case studies, and reveals to them a far more complex understanding about how the Holocaust happened, the motivations of people in the past, and the many levels of complicity that are often

neglected in accounts of the Holocaust which focus on stark moral lessons based on mono-causal explanations.

The students read a series of case studies of individuals in some way connected to the Holocaust. They were asked to explain how the terms 'perpetrators, collaborators, bystanders, resisters and rescuers' could describe those mentioned in each. As a plenary, the students were told the story of the Greenman family; Leon, a Holocaust survivor, and his wife Else and son Barney, both of whom were murdered at Auschwitz. They were asked to answer, in their books, 'who killed Barney Greenman?'

I was intrigued by how the students had answered this question. Did they identify a single killer, or present a multiplicity of perpetrators? If they suggested his death happened because of the actions of many, was this a move away from a conception of the Holocaust in which Hitler had sole agency? Would they recognise that the conclusions they drew about responsibility for Barney's death had implications for their ideas about who was responsible for the Holocaust as a whole? Or would they offer different reasons for the death or Barney and for the Holocaust? Would they, ultimately, change the answers on their questionnaires to reflect that people other than Hitler were responsible for what happened?

Most students wrote that Barney died because of the actions of a variety of people. Several used the word 'collaborators'. For example:

> *'The kind of people involved in the murders were perpetrators, collaborators and bystanders. The perpetrators are the murderers and the collaborators just helped the murderers to try to exterminate the Jews. And the bystanders just stood and watched as hundreds of thousands were killed'.* (James)

> *'I think the perpetrators, collaborators and bystanders are all to blame as they were not trying to stop what was happening and let it carry on'.* (Monica).

> *'In my opinion, the collaborators are mostly to blame for who killed Barney Greenman because the perpetrators would not have been able to have a lot of control without any associates. Also, the collaborators are to blame because they would have come up with ideas'.* (Lydia)

Only Rachel wrote that Barney died because of the actions of one person more than others, writing:

> *'I think it was mainly the train driver's fault for Barney's death because they could have stopped the train, they had that control'.* (Rachel)

Similarly, only Joe included Hitler in his answer:

> *'In my opinion there is the obvious answer of the perpetrators like Hitler who arranged the entire Holocaust, but I think the collaborators such as the train drivers and guards who decided to take them into the camp as they could easily have decided not to take them to their death'.* (Joe)

Joe presented Hitler 'arranging' the Holocaust, but gave agency to others, commenting they 'decided' to do as they did. No other students mentioned an individual, and the students largely presented Barney's death as the result of the actions of many. In response to direct questions about the death of Barney, it appeared many 'mastered' the idea that the death of an individual during the Holocaust can be attributed to the actions of many, and that those responsible for this individual death had agency and made choices.

Perhaps this mastery was possible because of similar factors enabling students in 8N to utilise ideas from the definitions of the Holocaust they had examined (above). Writing that people other than Hitler were responsible for Barney's death was undisruptive of their original ideas; they had only just encountered his story and were considering his death for the first time, rather than reconsidering it. Additionally, students could attribute responsibility for Barney's death to others while still maintaining that the Holocaust happened because of Hitler. Again, I wondered about the implications of this for their questionnaires. Did these answers suggest they appropriated new ideas about who was responsible for the Holocaust? Did they recognise Barney died during and because of the Holocaust? If so, would they be able to apply that understanding to their explanations of why the Holocaust happened?

In their subsequent answers to the question 'why did the Holocaust take place?' (written a few days later) the students did not apply their reasoning about Barney's death to this wider context. Rachel, for example, had written that it was 'mainly the train driver's fault' that Barney died, but wrote that the Holocaust took place because 'Hitler hated the fact that Jews had enough money to for themselves and they had high paying jobs'. Her explanation of the Holocaust remained entirely Hitler-centric after writing about Barney's death in alternative terms. Similarly, Lydia had written that 'the collaborators are mostly to blame' for Barney's death, but wrote the Holocaust took

place because 'Hitler hated the Jews because they thought they were taking over Germany'. Joe, who, in his answer on Barney, had included Hitler, train drivers and guards, and the terms 'perpetrators' and 'collaborators,' went on to write that the Holocaust happened because 'Hitler was angry as Jewish people were taking jobs when he was homeless'. No student in 9D wrote on their final questionnaires that the Holocaust happened because of the actions or agency of any individual other than Hitler, and no student referred in their answers to 'collaborators' or 'bystanders,' regardless of whether they had used the terms to explain the death of Barney Greenman. They had not appropriated the notion that people other than Hitler were responsible for the Holocaust.

The notion that the Holocaust happened because of people other than Hitler was highly disruptive of the students' initial ideas. Additionally, they were not asked, explicitly, to draw on these ideas when reflecting on the Holocaust itself, either in their initial written task (a pedagogical factor) or when amending their questionnaires (a methodological one). In neither case, had they been asked to consider how responsibility for Barney's death related to responsibility for the Holocaust, which meant the connections were not made explicit. In being introduced to a greater variety of people who could be considered responsible for the Holocaust, the students were being presented with a more problematic depiction of the issue. The students' responses to a more complex presentation of perpetrators and collaborators involved resisting these new and more challenging ideas and maintaining their original perceptions of who was responsible.

Making sense of aspects of unfamiliar aspects of the Holocaust

Almost all students appeared to believe, initially, that the events of the Holocaust took place only concentration camps, which they presented as places in which Jewish people were killed. There was no evidence that they understood that there were different types of concentration camps, and that Jewish people were sent immediately to their deaths specifically in the death camps of Nazi-occupied Poland. I wondered how they responded to accounts of the persecution of Jewish people at the start of the war, before the widespread use of the concentration camps across Europe, and before the introduction of death camps.

Students in 9D were presented with this source during their last lesson on the Holocaust:

A diary describing Jewish during persecution, 1939

The following is part of a diary entry of a Jewish youth named Yarden, a member of a Jewish rebel group, September 13, 1939

It is hard to get bread; Jews are driven away from all the 'queues'. They are seized, hauled off to labour, and beaten to a pulp. Hell has caught fire. Gangs of hooligans pounce on Jewish shops; looters plunder with impunity. Fewer Jews are visible in the streets; my father and brothers never venture out. Every knock on the door is terrifying; the slightest noise freezes the blood in our veins.

This source challenged the students' common ideas about the Holocaust in several ways. It was written in Poland, not Germany. It did not mention concentration camps since these were not yet established in much of Poland. Also, written days after the start of the war, it discussed the situation before the mass-murder began. I became interested in how 9D responded when asked:

> Using Source A and your own knowledge describe how the Jews were persecuted before World War Two.

I examined 19 students' answers. 12 largely paraphrased the source. This is not a criticism, since they were asked to write a description of the scene it conveyed. Students wrote about Jewish people being in hiding (Daisy), fearful (Bilal, James and Kumail), treated badly (Rachel) or attacked, targeted, or abused (Julia, Sally and Precious).

Seven students, however, discussed of wartime persecution. Abraham mentioned people being sent to 'concentration camps,' and Pearl wrote of people being 'used as slaves'. Luke and Ada mentioned people were 'put on trains'. In contrast, Rebecca, Lorraine and Khadija all made reference to aspects of the persecution of Jewish people in the Middle Ages. They wrote:

> *'Before the horrid wars, Jews were persecuted for witchcraft, kidnapping and drinking from children's blood. This is because in mediaeval times they were accused for the answer for everything religious. They were blamed for*

killing Jesus. Therefore it made it easier for people to build a strong hatred'. (Ilhan)

'They were accused of using children's blood to made bread for their holy holiday, Passover. Also, that they drank blood. Another thing they were accused for making Germany lose the First World War'. (Lorraine)

'Before the World Wars, Jews were persecuted because of the Middle Ages and the things they were accused of. For example they were blamed for killing Jesus Christ and doing evil and things such as drinking children's blood. This cause people to treat them hostile and separate them from society'. (Rebecca)

These students made little, if any, reference to the source, and the examples they used were related to much earlier antisemitism. They present events from the Middle Ages as examples of persecution before the war, rather than the events in the first years of Nazi rule. They recalled some of the key ideas which Short (2003) suggested were important, including the 'potent influence of the long tradition in Germany (and elsewhere in Europe) of Christian anti-Semitism' (Short, 2003, 121). But they were unable to place such events in an appropriate timeframe and expected them to appear in a source written about a much later period.

Arguably, the students who wrote about war-time persecution, and those who wrote about antisemitism from the Middle Ages both used a similar approach when engaging with this source. They appeared to read onto it what they expected to see. Spector and Jones (2007) quoted 'Brooke', a student who 'literally drowned out with "blah, blah, blah" the contradictory material' she found whilst reading aloud from Anne Frank's diary (Spector and Jones, 2007: 43). Students in 9D did the reverse. Rather than skipping over the pieces of the text which disagreed with their ideas, they inwardly spoke over them, incorporating into the source the information they expected to see about concentration camps or much earlier antisemitism. They did not appear to recognise the details of the source as 'pertinent knowledge' (Foster et al., 2016:65) so tried to 'contort the past to fit the predetermined meaning [they had] already assigned to it' (Wineburg, 1999: 490). This was an approach I saw other students use when encountering depictions of ghettos (discussed below).

I was also interested in the ideas which students appeared to expect to find in the source. I anticipated that they might write about concentration camps. Reasons for their collective familiarity with and dependence on ideas about the camps were

presented in Chapter 6. But the students' answers raised questions about why they found the stories of earlier antisemitism so compelling. Why had they 'appropriated' (Wertsch, 2005) these ideas and incorporated them into their ideas about the Holocaust which happened hundreds of years later?

9D, the same class, had watched a film about antisemitism which cited examples from the Middle Ages. They completed an activity discussed in Jackson (2013) entitled 'Unlocking Antisemitism'. The fact there was an activity based around earlier antisemitism probably contributed to the students 'mastering' the ideas. Yet it does not explain why they 'appropriated' them and incorporated them into their answers when responding to an activity completed weeks later. I saw a broadly similar pedagogical approach (watching a short film, engaging in a brief class discussion, and writing notes after working in small groups) used when the students were learning about other topics. For example, a similar approach was used when 8C were taught about ghettos (page 188). Yet the students in 8C could not answers direct questions on the ghettos a week later. It seems unlikely that 9D's ability to do so can be explained by pedagogy alone. Potentially, what was significant was the type of idea with which they were presented, rather than the way in which it was presented to them.

A tentative explanation is that the students appropriated these ideas because accepting that antisemitism existed in the medieval period did not interfere with their existing ideas about the Holocaust. They could accept these new ideas and leave their original notions entirely intact. This also potentially explains why so many used examples of antisemitism from the Middle Ages to explain why the Holocaust happened. They could incorporate these new ideas into their existing conceptions that the Holocaust took place because of Hitler, by using them to explain, primarily, why Hitler held the ideas he did. In so doing, their fundamental ideas did not need to change. Perhaps this made such ideas much more acceptable than other notions (like the importance of the ghettos, which contradicted their notion the Holocaust was conducted in concentration camps) which were more problematic to accept.

I was interested in how students responded to depictions of ghettos as part of a narrative of the Holocaust. These challenged their ideas that the Holocaust was all enacted in concentration camps. I hoped to shed light on why they did not appropriate

them into their own ideas, as a further indication of how they engaged with other less familiar aspects of the Holocaust.

8C were taught about the ghettos during their third lesson on the Holocaust (page 188). When discussing ghettos with Ms. Morris, some students used ideas about a more familiar aspects of the past to try to make sense of them. Isabella offered as definition of ghettos that 'they were like camps,' and others spoke of ghettos being sites of 'massacres' and killing'. Though not unheard of in the ghettos these were not their primary uses. It appeared the students were trying to find, in the film clips, a connection to the camps which were more familiar to them. In this respect they were using a similar approach to that used by many in 9D (above). They projected onto the depiction what they expected to see.

I conducted interviews with two groups of three students from 8C, and two pairs in 9D, partially to explore how they made sense of images of ghettos. The semi-structured interviews focused on a series of photographs which I asked the students to describe and use to 'tell the story' of the Holocaust (page 81). One photograph showed an image of the soup kitchen in the Lodz ghetto, and was labelled 'Picture E' (page 256).

8C had seen film clips depicting ghettos in their previous lesson. They could, potentially, have used visual clues from the clips to help them interpret the photograph. Particularly, the clip from *Schindler's List* allowed them to view the reconstructed ghetto from above. The Star of David was visible on characters, albeit as an armband rather than as a badge as in Picture E. The film was also shot almost entirely in black and white, helping the students to associate it with the images they saw in the photograph. However, when presented with 'Picture E' the students from 8C did not recognise it as a depiction of a ghetto. Rather, they suggested it to be something with which they were more familiar. As I discussed 'Picture E' with Linda, Jamie and Isabella, the conversation developed as follows:

CK   *What do you notice about where they are?*

Linda   *Is that the concentration camps?*

CK   *You are really close.*

Jamie   *No, I think it's the annex.*

CK	*Ah, do you know what an annex is?*
Jamie	*A separate space.*
CK	*Sort of.*
Isabella	*It's like a place where Anne Frank stayed.*
Jamie	*Only for Jews.*
CK	*You're really close.*
Jamie	*Or probably like when they all had to take the people to live in some little places and they were guarded by the Nazis.*
CK	*Can you see any evidence of that in the picture?*
Jamie	*Yeah, there's one person there.*
CK	*And what's he holding?*
Jamie	*And a gun.*
CK	*So there's somebody there with a gun, and all the people with the star on are, of course, Jewish. You're absolutely right, they were all sent to live all in the same place. Do you know what that sort of place is called? It begins with a G. (Pause)*
Jamie	*Ghetto.*

Interview with Jamie, Linda and Isabella, 8C, Capital Academy, after final lesson on the Holocaust

The students did not recognise this was an image of a ghetto. When trying to make sense of it they assumed it to be something more familiar. Linda suggested it was a 'concentration camp', which was an echo of the classroom interaction from the previous lesson. Perhaps more strikingly, Jamie, after hearing it was not a concentration camp, used her other main point of reference to suggest it was 'the annex' where Anne Frank stayed. Only when prompted, with a clue about the word itself and a definition, did Jamie recognise this was an image of a ghetto like she had seen in films just a few days earlier.

Suki, Damienne and Rachel found it equally challenging to recognise this was a photograph of a ghetto.

CK	*OK, so where do you think this picture might be? Picture E.*
Damienne	*It looks like they're going into a building.*
CK	*Going into a building? Any ideas about what sort of building?*
Suki	*This guy has a gun.*
Suki	*Maybe they're going to court or prison or something like that?*
CK	*Maybe. Rachel, what do you think is happening in picture E?*
Rachel	*Erm, don't know.*
CK	*Any ideas where these people have been told to go to? (Pause) Because, you're right, they have been told to go somewhere. (Further pause) Have you ever heard the word ghetto before?*
Damienne and Rachel	*Yes*
CK	*Do you have any idea what a ghetto is? So Damienne and Rachel, you're both saying yes. Do you know what it is?*
Rachel	*It's like, erm, like a small room. It's really worn down.*
CK	*Suki, had you heard the word ghetto before? (S nodded)*

Interview with Suki, Damienne and Rachel, 8C, Capital Academy, after final lesson on the Holocaust

The students in this interview suggested this photograph showed a 'prison,' or people going to 'court' even though those terms were not used during 8C's history lessons. There was an audible hesitation when the students were asked for the word ghetto. When defining the term, despite having watched a film clip in which a ghetto was shown from above, demonstrating its size, Rachel still presented it as 'a small room'. It appeared from the classroom interaction and from the follow up interviews that students in 8C drew on their more familiar initial ideas when making sense of this image of a ghetto.

Students in 9D also struggled to identify the ghetto from the photograph. They had been taught about ghettos during their lesson on the history of antisemitism, and two questions on ghettos featured on their end of unit assessment on the Holocaust (p138). In their assessment, conducted during the previous lesson, they were asked 'what were the ghettos?' In response, Lydia had written 'Ghettos were where Jewish people were rounded up and segregated' which suggested she knew aspects of their use. Precious had written 'The ghettos were where the Jews were tortured and killed. Also isolated towns'. Rachel had written 'rounded up and put into isolated towns'. Although less clear than Lydia's, their answers suggested these students had learned something of the ghettos during their history lessons on the Holocaust.

I gave Lydia, Rachel, Precious and Farah in 9D the same photographs and asked them to work in pairs and to use them and to tell the story of the Holocaust into a recording device. Lydia and Farah's conversation developed like this:

Farah	*So the first one shows, like, a nice shop, with, like mannequins and clothes, so I'm thinking, like, it's like a nice clothes shop. But the second one shows, like an area, and ruined. And there's like, broken glass and stuff.*
Lydia	*That shows that, like something's happened because the people who work there . . .*
Farah	*It could show when they started hating on the Jews and just started ruining their shops and stuff. . . . The third picture shows a few, loads of Jews together.*
Lydia	*It could be when like when they first started collecting the Jews to take to the concentration camps.*
Farah	*Yeah, they have, like, bags with them. The fourth picture (Picture E) shows a soldier with some German people.*
Lydia	*Jews.*
Farah	*Jewish people. So that could show . . .*
Lydia	*When they first collect them to put them on the like the trains or carts to take them to the concentration camps. And, then,*

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basically, the last one, could be when they've all got off . . . The groups.

Farah   *Yeah, they're being put into groups and being checked, obviously, for which concentration camp they're going into.*

Lydia   *And the last one shows people lining up, probably, like, walking into the gas chambers, get changed, and into working camps.*

Lydia and Farah, 9D, Rowntree Academy, response to photograph activity, after final lesson on the Holocaust

In their conversation, Farah and Lydia made no reference to the ghettos, presenting their story entirely in terms of damage to property and the use of concentration camps. They interpreted the photograph of the ghetto as showing 'a soldier with some German people' but did not mention any location. Rather, their account of the Holocaust involves the destruction of shops and deportation to concentration camps, and the photograph of the ghetto is almost dismissed because it does not fit with these two, more familiar, parts of the narrative. Even more striking, when interpreting the photos, Rachel read Picture E as part of a positive story, in which the Jewish people depicted in the ghetto are 'happy', suggesting that, in the photos:

'I think that picture D is the first one because it shows how the Jews had luxury clothes and they could afford that stuff. And picture C shows a shop, which, again shows that they can afford stuff. And then E shows like the Jews being taken to go on holiday, and they're like, happy, and then B might be them gathering to go on the trains and A shows them lining up to get on the train, and F shows them at the concentration camp'.

Rachel, 9D, Rowntree Academy, response to photograph activity, after final lesson on the Holocaust

When presented with images of ghettos, the students did not connect them to the descriptions they had written previously. Perhaps this was because they were asked to use the photographs to tell the story of the Holocaust but resisted the notion that the ghettos comprised part of this story. When presented with images of ghettos, the students read them as images of camps or did not include them in their narratives, thereby resisting reading them at all. Previously, when reading sources on pre-war

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persecution outside of the camps, many students read onto them a more familiar location or narrative. They appeared to be doing something similar here.

There were methodological explanations for why the students were unable to recognise 'Picture E' was an image of a ghetto. The students may have been able to recognise the image of the ghetto had they encountered a similar still, black and white, close-up image of one during their history lessons, and been asked to interpret a similar image when interviewed. Instead, they were challenged to interpret a black and white photograph by referring to moving images (8C) or textual representations (9D) which were in a different format. Perhaps this made it difficult for them to recognise what it depicted. A more convincing explanation, however, is that the students used a similar approach to that demonstrated above. When making sense of a depiction of an aspect of the Holocaust which they were not expecting to see, these students, too, appeared to 'read' onto it what they expected it to show.

Implications

Had the students appropriated the notions at the heart of these learning activities into their conceptions of the Holocaust, they might have described the events in more nuanced terms on their final written answers. From the sources with which they were presented on pre-war persecution, 9D could have understood that the treatment of Jewish people changed over time, becoming more aggressive before it developed into mass-murder. From their definitions task, 8N could have elicited that there are different definitions of the Holocaust, but they largely agree it was conducted by the Nazis and their 'collaborators'. From their discussions of Barney Greenman, 9D could have taken that the Holocaust resulted from the choices of different individuals and institutions well beyond Hitler and the Nazi Party. Also, 9D and 8C might have incorporated ghettos into their ideas about how and where the Holocaust was enacted and recognised that it took place in sites beyond the camps. According to the guidance provided by the institutions which created the resources on which some of these lessons were based, such activities were designed to dispel common misconceptions held by the students at the start of their history lessons on the topic. Indeed, a superficial reading of their written responses and spoken answers suggested some students accepted more nuanced notions in the immediate aftermath of their discussions. However, a more critical reading of their responses, coupled with an

analytical reading of the totality of their written work, suggested that their common preconceptions of the events remained largely intact, and that such alternative notions did not penetrate their core ideas about what happened.

It is likely this is a result of the way in which they engaged with new depictions of the Holocaust with which they were presented during these lessons. They appeared to resist ideas which disrupted their initial conceptions, particularly if they were not presented to them explicitly. If such ideas actively contradicted or appeared unconnected to what the students felt they already knew or understood about the events, they appear to project over them the ideas they were expecting to encounter, hardly recognising such new ideas at all. This is likely to be related to the compelling nature of their initial ideas. It is also likely to relate to the cognitive challenges associated with developing any new ideas. Existing literature suggested these students '"new" learning came on top of a teetering cognitive structure that went virtually unchanged' throughout their history courses (Wineburg, 2000: 309) and the students may not have recognised the ideas which do not support their own (Foster et al., 2016).

The final chapter of this thesis presents recommendations on how teachers can support their students in appropriating more nuanced, historically informed accounts of the Holocaust. A claim made at the start of this thesis was that there is already more research into teaching about the Holocaust than there is about learning about it. So it is slightly ironic this concluding chapter focuses on pedagogy. It is, of course, primarily a reflection on the utility of this research and of its intended readership. The next chapter uses research on cognitive aspects of learning about the past to suggest practical ways in which Key Stage 3 history teachers can help their students make sense of the Holocaust.

Chapter 9: Conclusions and Recommendations

Returning to the Research Questions: A summary of findings

This thesis examined how Key Stage 3 students make sense of the Holocaust when they learn about it in their history lessons. It focused on four research questions:

- What ideas about the Holocaust do Key Stage 3 students hold at the start of their history lessons on the topic?

- Where do these ideas come from?

- What ideas about the Holocaust do the students hold at the end of their history lessons on the topic?

- Why do students hold these ideas at the end of their history lessons on the topic?

The research suggested Key Stage 3 students share some common ideas about the Holocaust before learning about it with their history teachers. These were characterised as their 'starting points'. Students generally recognise the Holocaust involved Jewish people, but present these Jewish people in simplistic terms, often assuming they share a common look as well as a common culture. If they know the name of a victim of the Holocaust, it is probably Anne Frank. The students position Hitler at the heart of the Holocaust, assuming he invented antisemitism and making strong associations with the Holocaust when reflecting on what they know about Hitler, and vice versa. They generally consider Hitler to be the cause of the Holocaust and its primary perpetrator. Many can describe some aspects of what happened during the Holocaust, but their descriptions are generally quite fragmented, and relate almost exclusively to events carried out in concentration camps rather than in other sites of persecution, like ghettos or mass-shooting sites. Finally, few can express, precisely and confidently, when the Holocaust took place, or which countries were involved and how they were connected. Without such chronological, geographical, or geopolitical underpinning, their ideas are commonly quite decontextualised.

This research found that, before their Key Stage 3 history lessons, students commonly encounter depictions of the Holocaust in their primary schools and / or through the

stories of Anne Frank or *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*. Their recollections of what they explored in primary school suggested they focused on events enacted in concentration camps, and students commonly remember learning about both Anne Frank and Hitler during such lessons. This is likely to go some way to explaining why each feature so prominently in the ideas they bring into their Key Stage 3 history classroom. However, it is the story of *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, which the students most immediately cite when making references to what they already know. Additionally, students confidently use the term 'striped pyjamas' to give name to what they see in images of camp uniforms and cite specific and sometimes unusual examples of what happened in the story as if they were common during the Holocaust itself. However, students who are very familiar with the book or film can also hold significant misconceptions of the story and the real events. Students can claim to have seen the film several times, but still be confused by significant aspects of what took place, and when and where the real events to which it alludes actually happened. Students who can cite incidents from the story commonly do not know it, like the sites on which it was based, was located in Nazi-occupied Poland, and students familiar with the story are no more likely than others to know the Holocaust took place during the Second World War.

The ideas which students take from these earlier encounters are problematic, not just because they are flawed, but also because the students seem confident they are correct. This study suggested the students hold similar ideas before and after their lessons on the Holocaust – their 'starting points' and 'end points' had much in common. They are more accepting of new ideas mainly if they do not preclude them from holding onto their existing ones. For example, students appear to absorb examples of historical antisemitism into their ideas about the Holocaust, perhaps because these do not contradict their earlier ideas of what happened. Commonly, however, when writing what they know at the end of these lessons, students elaborate on their existing notions, adding details to previous depictions, rather than replacing flawed or simplistic ideas with more nuanced and historically informed ones. By the end of their history lessons on the topic, the students in this study still held Hitler personally responsible for the Holocaust, and still framed their descriptions of what happened around events enacted in the concentration camps, even after engaging in discussions of other perpetrators and alternative sites of persecution and mass-murder.

The final research question asked why the students appeared to hold similar ideas at the start and end of their history lessons on the Holocaust. It was suggested this can, partially, be explained by research on cognitive aspects of learning, which suggested absorbing new ideas of the past, especially ones which contradict existing notions, is always challenging. Additional challenges are posed by the fact the students' initial ideas were framed around the notion that Hitler, an individual, was responsible for what happened. Explanations of the past which focus on personal factors appear more convincing to learners than those which look at institutional factors (Barton, 2010: 245), like the role of the state in Nazi Germany, or, perhaps, more abstract factors like latent antisemitism, or life under occupation. Yet perhaps the most convincing explanation for why the students' perceptions of the Holocaust are similar before and after their history lessons was that they consider them not as ideas, but as knowledge. Whereas they might consider changing what they think, they are less likely to reflect upon, challenge, or contradict 'what they think they know' (Conway, 2006) – like the idea Hitler was responsible for the Holocaust, or that the Holocaust happened in concentration camps.

Recommendations: How we can help students make more sense of the Holocaust

At the beginning of their history lessons on the topic, students commonly appear confident in explaining what happened during the Holocaust, and who was responsible, even though the ideas they present are often simplistic and flawed. They also appear to lack much of the contextual knowledge (regarding chronology, geography, and cultural history) needed to understand the events in more informed terms. This research suggests that, perhaps because of this confidence, students retain many of their initial ideas throughout and beyond their history lessons on the topic. Much of the 'new and potentially challenging or contradictory information' (Foster et al., 2016, 39) with which students are presented by their history teachers appears 'discounted, forgotten or distorted in order to preserve what is already there' (Ibid, 39). Initial ideas provide the foundational knowledge on which new learning is built (Donovan and Bransford, 2005: 4). But when the ideas are as strongly held, and as concerningly flawed as are students' initial ideas about the Holocaust, teachers do not need to build on them, but rather, to replace them, and help the students to develop new, more solid foundations on which to build. This chapter suggests seven

approaches to helping students unlearn 'what they think they know' (Conway, 2006) to develop more nuanced and historically informed ideas about this past.

1. Explore students' experience-based ideas on a regular basis

The importance of identifying students' prior understandings of the Holocaust before teaching about the topic has been discussed in Edwards and O'Dowd (2010), Gray (2015) and Totten (2016). Such an approach is supported by research into cognitive aspects of learning about the past, suggesting 'If (students') initial understanding is not engaged, they may fail to grasp the new concepts and information' (Donovan and Bransford, 2005:1). Teachers need to be aware of such 'initial understanding' to engage it, too, because, if any flawed ideas are not identified and challenged, students 'could have deeper-set misconceptions about a period or topic which they themselves did not recognise as fallacious and which potentially could sit unnoticed and unchallenged throughout the entire period of teaching and yet shape the pupil's interpretation of what he or she was hearing' (Conway, 2006: 12). Many students involved in this study appeared to hold 'fallacious' ideas at the start of their history lessons on the topic. Indeed, perhaps because they did not recognise them as such, they did not challenge them, themselves, during these lessons. They retained them.

Teachers should, then, aim to identify students' initial ideas about the Holocaust, so they can frame their lessons around the need to actively challenge those ideas which are most problematic. As discussed in Chapter 5, all teachers in this study began their lessons on the topic by eliciting some of the students' 'starting points'. However, this was largely done in a class discussion; only a selection of students' initial ideas was voiced. This could have left some of the individual students 'idiosyncratic' (Edwards and O'Dowd, 2010: 26) interpretations unclear and unchallenged. Asking the students to respond individually might provide teachers with a greater sense of the ideas held by the students (and the confidence they have in such ideas), than class discussions.

This research further suggested a need to keep revisiting these prior ideas, since students are unlikely to share them all at once. In subsequent activities, and in later lessons, several students mentioned ideas which they had not referenced when their teachers explored their 'starting points'. For example, during her final lesson on the Holocaust, Cathy (9A) mentioned, in a discussion about what the class knew about the Holocaust, that gay men were also persecuted (page 170). She had not mentioned

this during her first discussion; nor had it been mentioned during the intervening lessons. Cathy clearly brought that idea into the classroom from elsewhere, but it was not a prior idea which Ms. Charlton could explore with her. Similarly, several in 8N incorporated ideas about Hitler, who had hardly been mentioned in their history lessons, onto their final questionnaires, after leaving their initial questionnaires almost entirely blank. This suggested they had some ideas about him and his connection to the Holocaust but had not shared these initially. Providing students with multiple opportunities to reflect on what they already think they know about the topic should better equip teachers to address any 'fallacious' notions of the Holocaust.

This study also found students do not necessarily recognise all their Holocaust-related ideas and experiences as such. For example, it transpired part way through a discussion of the laws enacted against Jewish people before the Second World War, that many in 8N had studied them in primary school but made no reference to this fact in their initial questionnaires. Advocates of a 'spiral curriculum' should take from this that students need support in recognising that they are revisiting a topic, particularly if the terminology used to describe it does not match that which they used previously. This seems particularly likely in a study of the Holocaust. Leading institutions like the Holocaust Educational Trust (2016c) advocate the Holocaust is not taught in primary school, but the early stages of persecution (like the anti-Jewish laws) should be. Students do not necessarily recognise the topics relate, perhaps because the language used by their primary and secondary school teachers differed; they do not use shared terms of discourse (Lowenthal, 2005). Students' not recognising the connections between past and present learning experiences could lead to teachers misgauging the prior knowledge. It could also lead to their repeating content at the expense of looking at new aspects of the topic.

Students are likely to have more initial ideas than they or their teachers will initially be able to recognise. This can be problematic since many will be simplistic or flawed. Discussing, frequently, what students already know, and giving them space to express what is new and what is familiar, would help support students in connecting new ideas to their prior learning. It also offers teachers greater opportunities to challenge ideas based on misconceptions. Though designed as a research tool rather than a pedagogical one, the questionnaire completed by students in 9D, 8C and 8N (page 76) proved useful in eliciting the students' individual ideas. Teachers might find it

useful to ask their students to complete a similar questionnaire at the start of their lessons on the topic, which will enable them to elicit common ideas, as well as individual's misconceptions. Additionally, asking students to return to the questionnaire frequently during their lessons could also enable the students to recall further ideas and experiences, and, perhaps even more importantly, to recognise how and why their initial ideas have changed during the lessons.

2. Become familiar with common narratives and the misconceptions they convey

Foster et al. (2016) and Gray (2014b) suggested students in England are most familiar with the events of the Holocaust from the stories of Anne Frank and *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*. Gray (2014c) and Cesarani (2008) highlighted issues with the narrative and depictions presented in *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas,* criticising them on substantive and moral grounds. Gray (2014c) called the story a 'curse' for Holocaust education.

This study further suggests reading or watching *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* leads to students appropriating flawed ideas about the Holocaust which become barriers to their acceptance of new, more historically informed understandings. Additionally, it demonstrated further potential connections between the students' readings of these narratives and their ideas about the Holocaust. It suggested students who are familiar with the story are unable to discern from it that the camp in which it was set was in Nazi-occupied Poland, not Germany. Similarly, most were confused regarding the nationality of Shmuel, the Jewish character in the story, believing him to be from Germany too. This suggested students familiar with the story were confused about its context. Their familiarity with the story also partially explains why many students initially wrote that the Holocaust happened only or primarily in Germany. Additionally, as a story set in a concentration camp and death camp, it placed such locations at the centre of students' perceptions of what happened, at the expense, perhaps, of other significant locations, like ghettos or mass-shooting sites. Finally, an analysis of the depictions of the characters in the story suggested that a reading of the text can lead to students viewing Hitler as responsible for much of what happens; it was his decision that Bruno and his family moved to live by the camp. Similarly, this research suggested students' familiarity with the story of Anne Frank did not lead to their appreciating the

Holocaust affected people outside of Germany. Nor did it lead to their recognising the role of people other than Hitler in the persecution of Jewish people.

Given the continuing popularity of these depictions, teachers need to be familiar with both the ideas they convey, and, as significantly, how students interpret them, to challenge the students' 'experience based' misconceptions of this past. An example of a teacher doing this was Ms. Charlton's references to *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, when she highlighted the location of Auschwitz-Birkenau in Nazi-occupied Poland (page 94). Given the continuing popularity of these narratives, teachers should aim to explicitly deconstruct them, and the misconceptions they convey, throughout their teaching. Key Stage 3 history teachers might find it necessary to frame their curriculum around the need to challenge the misconceptions which the students are likely to bring into their classrooms.

3. Challenge popular misconceptions with concrete examples

Totten (2016) recommends teachers have clear rationales before beginning to teach about the Holocaust. This research suggests the key aim for Key Stage 3 history teachers should be to dispel students' misconceptions of what took place, when, where and why. Specifically, this would involve helping them appreciate the events took place beyond Germany, and inside and outside of concentration camps, and Hitler alone was not responsible. So disruptive are these notions to students' common ideas that dispelling them is incredibly challenging and should be the primary focus for teachers teaching about the topic.

When challenging misconceptions, teachers should present 'concrete examples' of historical ideas because 'we find it more difficult to remember abstract ideas than concrete examples' (Fordham, 2017: 39). Simply telling students the events in *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* were 'implausible' (Cesarani, 2008) is unlikely to help them accept more historically informed ideas about what happened. Plausibility is an abstract concept. Rather, teachers are better placed to disrupt students' original ideas if they present them with concrete alternatives. For example, teachers could ask students where they think Auschwitz-Birkenau was located and demonstrate its location on a map. Or they could ask students where they thought the victims of the Holocaust came from, and demonstrate, using photographs of Jewish people from across Europe, why the events affected Jewish people so far from Germany. Explicitly

engaging with misconceptions appears essential to dispelling them, since this research suggested simply presenting students with alternative accounts did not help them to recognise such new ideas.

Mr. Talbot powerfully articulated why it was important for students to recognise the Holocaust did not just happen because of Hitler, telling 8N:

> *Hitler was just a part of this puzzle. It doesn't all start with Adolf Hitler. You need to realise that it was more than that. Much more than that. There are other people who bear some responsibility as well.*

<div align="center">Mr. Talbot to 8N, Capital Academy, Lesson 4/5 on the Holocaust</div>

Despite this clear statement, at the end of their history lessons on the topic, students in 8N still collectively presented the Holocaust as happening because of Hitler alone, perhaps because this statement was quite abstract. Had Mr. Talbot offered concrete examples of 'other people who bear some responsibility as well,' then perhaps the students would have appropriated this notion and included other individuals and institutions in their responses to why the Holocaust happened. Concrete examples include leading members of the Nazi party who played 'a specific role in the formulation or implementation of anti-Jewish measures' (Hilberg, 1993: ix) or those mentioned in 9D's lesson on 'Who killed Barney Greenman?' who the students called 'collaborators'.

Mr. Talbot used a more concrete example in an earlier lesson, discussing an antisemitic trope presented by the Nazis (attributed here to Hitler) and how the students could tell it was not true:

> *From looking at the top map, you are going to find countries where there were Jewish communities in 1933. Where did the majority of Jewish people live in the 1930s? If we were to believe Hitler, he would suggest that they all lived in Germany. And you'll be able to see whether or not he was telling the truth, based on what was on this map.*

<div align="center">Mr. Talbot to 8N, Capital Academy, Lesson 1/5 on the Holocaust</div>

Here, the students were introduced to concrete examples of why some of Hitler's claims were false. Such explicit comments on messaging versus reality have the potential to challenge some of the students' more common misconceptions.

Using concrete examples like 'It wasn't just Hitler who was involved – additionally (X) did (Y)'' or ' we can tell that this idea was not true by looking at (Z)' also enables the teacher to connect new ideas to students' existing ideas about the past. This process of 'elaboration' is suggested by Fordham (2017) who wrote 'Links are very important to long term memory: the more a new idea is linked to existing ideas, the more likely it is that we are able to remember it' (Fordham, 2017: 39). Connecting new ideas to existing ones also makes it more likely students will recognise such ideas in the first place. Further opportunities to use concrete examples to challenge misconceptions involve presenting evidence the Holocaust took place in locations other than in concentration camps. Again, teachers should connect, explicitly, different sites of persecution. Asking students to cite the places where the persecution took place (anticipating they are likely only to mention concentration camps), acknowledging the importance of these, and then explaining and demonstrating that there were other locations too, also helps the students to connect new ideas to their existing ones. If students are presented with these ideas explicitly, they are more likely to appropriate them. Accepting that aspects of the Holocaust happened in ghettos and mass-shooting sites does not mean disrupting the idea it happened in concentration camps too. The idea builds on rather than disrupts students' existing notions of the past, so it should be straightforward for students to appropriate it.

4. Introduce different stories

One way to make unfamiliar aspects of the Holocaust more explicit is through sharing stories of individuals who experienced them. Stories help secure information in long-term memory' (Fordham, 2017:40) and 'we cannot make sense of the facts of the past unless they are embedded in stories' (Counsell, 2021: 154). Being familiar with stories, of course, does not lead to better understandings, if the stories themselves are problematic or their wider contexts are not understood. Students' can recall specific details of narratives with which they are familiar, even if unaware of the wider contexts to which they allude. Students in 9A presented relatively minor details of the life, interests, and ambitions of Anne Frank, without recognising that the Netherlands were directly affected by the Holocaust (p,121) and Rosa (9A) recalled details of the film within a film presented in *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, without recognising the characters would not have been speaking English (page 152).

Nonetheless, it is arguably through listening to the stories of survivors that the students in this study developed the greatest understandings of what took place. Foster et al. (2016) and Richardson (2012) explored the value students place on survivor testimony in the classroom, and my observations of 8C, a few of whom listened to Freddie Knoller's story first-hand, highlighted that several recalled details of what they heard the following week (page 174). One student appeared to find the experience so valuable that, without prompting, he asked to tell the story into my voice recorder the following lesson (page 174). Others referred to details of his story, also without prompting, when making sense of images of a ghetto (page 175). Introducing testimony from individuals who were imprisoned in ghettos could help students to appreciate that events of the Holocaust also took place outside of the camps. In this sense, offering alternative stories might lead to the students developing more sophisticated ideas.

Additionally, eliciting from students the stories with which they are familiar, and making explicit the connections between those stories and the stories they will go on to hear appears essential. If students are familiar with works of fiction, teachers should explore with them which aspects are based on fact and could have happened. If the stories are factual, teachers can explore why those involved had particular experiences, highlighting the significance of location, personal circumstances, gender, age, the relationship of their government to Nazi Germany, and any others which are particularly pertinent. When presenting students with new 'stories' it appears important to connect them to stories with which the students are familiar. In 8C's lesson on the ghettos, one of the students made a connection, herself, between the ghettos and the camps when they were discussing films clips in which they were depicted:

> *Ms. Morris reminded the students that the family were going to be sent to live in a ghetto and asked what the ghettos were. Isabella said they were 'like the camps', and Ms. Morris explained that they were 'areas of the cities where Jewish people were forced to live'.*

> Fieldnotes, 8C, Capital Academy, Lesson 3/3 on the Holocaust

In Ms. Morris' response she alluded to what was different about the ghettos, stating that they were 'areas of the cities'. She could have further suggested ways in which they related to the narratives with which the students were more familiar. This might

have provided more connection between the stories of the ghettos (shown through clips from *Schindler's List* and *The Pianist)* and the students' prior ideas. They might then have found it easier to recall the word 'ghetto' or recognise an image of the Lodz Ghetto in interviews conducted just a few days later.

This research suggested a correlation between students who have encountered multiple 'stories' about the Holocaust and those who can articulate more historically informed initial ideas about what took place, where and when (page 162). There was also evidence that students might encounter the same story more than once whilst at school, and that re-engaging with the same stories does not necessarily lead to new understandings (page 165). By introducing a wider variety of real stories during their history lessons, teachers can provide students with more historical representations on which to build more informed ideas of this past.

5. Actively challenge stereotypes

Several students involved in this study held simplistic views of Jewish people at the start of their history lessons on the Holocaust (page 120). These generally related to notions of how Jewish people 'look', or rather, how they do not. There was evidence that these ideas remained with them beyond the lessons. More concerningly, some students appeared to use some of these simplistic notions, or more problematic, borderline antisemitic notions, to explain and rationalise the attitudes held by Hitler and the Nazi Party (page 18).

Though it is important to teach about antisemitism to explain why Jewish people were targeted by the Nazis, this needs careful consideration. Asking students 'Why the Jews?' before they have developed contextual knowledge about historical antisemitism is likely to lead them to draw on their more limited prior knowledge and seek rationalisation therein. Students in 9D were asked such a question. Several presented as 'fact' that Jewish people took jobs from others, without recognising that this was one of many malicious accusations levelled against Jewish people. This activity, arguably, reinforced rather than challenged any dangerous misconceptions held by the students. It required students to express ideas which at this point could only be based on limited conceptions, many of which were based on stereotypes. Concerningly, some repeated such ideas weeks later, on their questionnaires, to explain why the Holocaust happened (page 187). After asking the students 'Why the

Jews', Ms. Rashid provided students with the most detailed account of the histories of antisemitism seen across the six classes involved in the study. Many students recalled specific details from the lessons and deployed them in later activities. However, some slight reframing of this activity could steer students away from expressing such problematic ideas in the first instance.

A more useful approach is to begin the discussion of the Holocaust not with questions about why Jewish people were persecuted, but rather with a discussion of who the Jewish communities were before this persecution began. 8C and 8N were shown photographs of diverse Jewish communities from before the Second World War at the start of their first lesson on the Holocaust. Many subsequently used these to challenge their own misconceptions. Ms. Morris's conclusion to the activity presented students in 8C with a concrete explanation of what she wanted the students to learn from them (page 122). When reflecting on how they felt on being told that the individuals in the photographs were Jewish, several students used the word 'normal' (page 123). There was a clear echo of Ms. Morris' words here. This activity, and the way Ms. Morris discussed what she hoped the students would take from it, challenged some of the students' earlier, more flawed ideas, and supported them in seeing Jewish people in more nuanced terms. Had Ms. Rashid been able to make such a clear articulation of the purposes of exploring the history of antisemitism, the students in 9D would have been more empowered to avoid 'inadvertently condoning' (Richardson, 2012: 94) antisemitic stereotypes.

6. Locate stories in time and space

The temporal context of the Holocaust appeared confusing to many students before and beyond their lessons on the topic. They were collectively less confident in answering questions on when and where the Holocaust took place. Not recognising that the Holocaust was enacted in many countries and across several years leaves students with limited appreciation of its scale. It is essential, then, to make explicit the timing and location of any account with which the students are presented.

The importance of locating narratives temporally was highlighted by the frequency with which students in 9D used examples of antisemitism from several centuries before the Holocaust to explains its causes. Several wrote about the blood libel and accusations of killing Christ when asked about persecution of Jewish people before the start of the

Second World War (page 217). However, no student mentioned that these were long term, cultural and historical causes. Rather, they presented these examples of antisemitism without a timeframe, suggesting they did not appreciate that they pre-dated the Holocaust by hundreds of years. Teachers need to make explicit when, in relation to the Holocaust, specific events took place, and how the events and ideas are related.

If students are not given clear temporal framing for events, they appear to locate them where they do not disrupt their ideas. For example, many in 9D suggested, in their end of unit assessment, that the ghettos were established before the Second World War (page 190). Perhaps this was because this did not disrupt the two related notions that the Holocaust took place during the war and involved concentration camps. They assumed if ghettos had to be incorporated into a timeframe it had to be outside of the war. Relatedly, students in 9D were presented with an account of the persecution of Jewish people before the war. When asked to describe the persecution, most resisted responding to what was written in favour of eliciting information with which they were more familiar but did not appear on the source (page 216). Most wrote about events which took place in the death camps which were not established until much later in the war, rather than the street violence and arrests which were mentioned in the text. This could be seen as a further example of their putting events into timeframes which do not disrupt their thinking. Arguably, both misunderstandings could be addressed with a clearer presentation of the order and timing of events before, during and after the Holocaust, which students could use as foundational knowledge on which to build a more informed narrative.

Students cannot grasp the significance of the Holocaust without appreciating it as a European phenomenon which developed over several years. The timing and location of every source or story should be made explicit to students as they encounter it. This is particularly significant if students follow a series of lessons like those seen in this study in which they engaged in 'scale-switching' (Fordham, 2017:40). This is a curriculum model in which 'pupils move from depth to overview, and overview to depth, letting their study of one inform the other' (Fordham, 2017:40). Banham (2000) discusses the value of teaching a topic through a combination of depth and overview studies. Such an approach was used at Capital Academy. Students in 8C and 8N were presented in their first lesson with a discussion of the lives of Jewish people from

across Europe, before the Second World War. This was an overview study. In the following lesson, they studied control in Nazi Germany, which was a study in some depth. Similarly, Ms. Rashid used a similarly useful approach in her teaching, often switching from overview to depth discussion within the same lesson. 9D were introduced to the topic through a discussion of a single object, before looking at a timeline depicting much of the Nazi persecution of Jewish people and non-Jewish victims.

A scale-switching approach is presented in materials from the Holocaust Educational Trust and UCL Centre for Holocaust Education, both of which encourage a discussion of what it meant to be Jewish in Europe before the war, and localised studies of persecution in Germany, followed by more of an overview of the development of the Holocaust, presented thematically rather than on a country-by-country basis.

One challenge associated with 'scale-switching', given the students' collective confusion regarding the time and location of the Holocaust, is that the students are unlikely to recognise the rationale behind such an approach if it is not shared with them. Students studying the lives of Jewish people before the war need to be told explicitly (though not necessarily whilst they are studying the lives of Jewish people before the war) that the countries in which those people lived were, at different times and in different ways, controlled by the Nazis and their collaborators, and as a result were directly affected by the Holocaust. They also need to be told why a study of the Holocaust cannot simply focus on Germany. Without such explicit introduction, it appears this point eludes many students. This was demonstrated by the fact that many of 9D did not mention countries other than Germany in their final questionnaires. By some contrast, many in 8N, who had not only seen maps of pre-war and wartime Europe but also heard a clear articulation that 'the Nazis controlled Germany and Europe' were able to recognise, towards the end of their history lessons, some of the European scale of what took place (page 198).

Conversely, if students then go on to explore in depth a community or family in Germany, to which many already connect the events of the Holocaust, they are less likely to resist this information, because it reinforces what they already know; but are unlikely to recognise that it is a localised account. When discussing others who were involved in the Holocaust, students in 8N cited, as 'collaborators', individuals and

institutions which were based in Germany (including the SS and the Gestapo), rather than mentioning collaborators from other countries. This also suggested students were more likely to appropriate ideas which were associated with a German centric account with which they were already familiar.

I would suggest scale-switching is essential to a study of the Holocaust at Key Stage 3 because it presents students with a sense of the European nature of what happened, but allows them to explore some of the minutiae of individual and community's experiences. However, I would caution that to help students to appropriate more nuanced, historically informed ideas of what happened, the content of each lesson needs to be explicitly located in time or place. When presenting images of Jewish people from across Europe before the Second World War, teachers need to explain that this is when and where the photographs are from, and why they are looking at them (as Ms. Morris and Mr. Talbot did). They need to make explicit the location of any depth study, and why they have chosen to focus on this, making explicit that a depth study focused on another location at a different time, presents students with a different account of what happened, because the Holocaust developed in different places, at different times and in different ways.

7. Return to students' initial ideas at the end of their history lessons

One final approach to helping students appropriate more historical ideas about the Holocaust is to support them in dispelling their own misconceptions. This approach engages students in aspects of 'metacognition' in which they use their knowledge of history as a discipline 'to monitor their own understanding and evaluate others' claims effectively' (Donovan and Bransford, 2005:12). Engaging students in demonstrating, using evidence, that common perceptions of the Holocaust are incorrect potentially helps them to appropriate more accurate ideas for themselves. Teachers could utilise the common misconceptions of the Holocaust which feature in the Holocaust Educational Trust's *Exploring the Holocaust: Guide for Teachers* (Holocaust Educational Trust, 2016a: 22) for example, or draw from discussions with the class when they were trying to ascertain students' prior understandings. Such an approach enables students to appropriate new ideas by actively disrupting their earlier, flawed notions of what happened. It also provides teachers with opportunities to address any

latent misconceptions as the students share their ideas at the close of their lessons on the topic.

The students involved in this study demonstrated a keen willingness to tell me the ideas they had held at the start of a lesson, even if those ideas were challenged during the lesson itself. For example, students in 8C and 8N were able to articulate their initial ideas about the history or origin of antisemitism (page 130) whilst completing an activity which demonstrated that those ideas were incorrect. Teachers can capitalise on this willingness in their own teaching by asking their students to reflect on how the ideas to which they have just been introduced challenged the ideas they brought into the classroom. This can be done as an individual written task or as a class discussion; either would normalise the experience of challenging misconceptions and enable the students to engage in the metacognitive processes on which learning new information rely.

Final thoughts

Throughout my fieldwork I observed six classes of students who asked questions, joined in with class discussions, actively participated in classroom activities, and seemed to want to know more about the Holocaust during and beyond their history lessons on the topic. Though many held misconceptions about what happened, when, where and why, and found it difficult to dispel these during their lessons, their collective interest in the topic suggested they would like to be more knowledgeable about what took place. Though the students find familiar ideas more compelling, and disruptive ideas more challenging to accept, teachers have at their disposal the resources needed to support them in appropriating more historically informed ideas about what happened. My most essential conclusion is that teachers need to be explicit in the presentation of alternative ideas about this past, to actively challenge and replace students' misconceptions, and to hold this as the core goal when teaching about the topic.

Appendices

Appendix 1 : Consent forms for students in the Year 9 classes (initial fieldwork)

See also commentary on page 71

<div align="right">

Institute of Education

20 Bedford Way

London

WC1H 0AL

October 2013

</div>

Dear student,

My name is Catrina Kirkland and I am a PhD researcher from the Institute of Education, part of the University of London. I am researching how Year 9 students learn history, and, in particular, how you learn about the Holocaust. In order to do this, I hope to observe your History lessons for most of this year. I will be making notes on some of the comments made in the lessons, and might ask some of you to tell me more about your ideas. At the end of the year, I will write up my ideas in an 80 000 word thesis (extended essay) which I hope will be written well enough to make me a doctor!

I would really appreciate your consent (permission) to observe your lessons. I will usually sit somewhere at the back of the class making notes, but I might ask some of you a few questions too. Anything I see or hear in the lessons will remain between us. (The only exception to this is if I think you or someone else might be at risk of being hurt. Then I will have to tell someone who can help.) You are welcome to see my notes, but I will never show them to anyone not in your class. When I write my thesis, you will get to choose your own pseudonym (fake name) so that no one will know who said what. And, if you do not want to me include in my notes something you have said, it is your right to ask me not to write it down, or to cross it out.

If you have any questions about my research, you can speak to me after any lesson. Alternatively, you can email me at XXXXXXXXXXXXXX.

Thank you for considering helping me with my research.

C. Kirkland

Name …………………………………………………… Date ……………………………..

I have understood what this research involves. I understand my rights within the research, and I know how to find out more about this research if I would like to.

I give my consent (permission) to be involved in this research.

Signed ……………………………………………………………

Appendix 2: Letter of introduction emailed to teachers (follow up fieldwork)

See also commentary on page 74

<div align="right">

UCL Institute of Education

20 Bedford Way

London

WC1H 0AL

14th April 2016
</div>

To whom it may concern,

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am a PhD candidate at UCL Institute of Education, and my research focusses on how students make sense of the Holocaust when they learn about it in their history lessons. I am writing to you because I am trying to find schools in which I can conduct some fieldwork.

I am looking for schools which are teaching about the Holocaust in history lessons to at least one Key Stage Three history class before the end of the school year. I would like to:

- Conduct a survey with the students about what they know about the Holocaust before they learn about it in their history lessons.

- Record interviews with some of the students to explore where their understandings came from.

- Observe the lessons on the Holocaust, making some voice recordings of the students' and teacher's discussions to examine how the students make sense of the new sources, depictions and narratives with which they are being presented.

- Conduct a follow up survey with all students and further interviews with some students to explore how their understandings of the Holocaust changed after their history lessons on the topic

If you think you might be able to support my fieldwork by allowing me to work with one of your classes, I would appreciate it if you would contact me by email on XXXXXXXXXXXX or by phone on XXXXXXXXXX,

so that we can discuss my project more fully. In the meantime, I wish you and your students all the best for the rest of the school year.

Yours faithfully,

Catrina Kirkland

PhD Candidate, UCL Institute of Education

Appendix 3: Consent forms for students in the Key Stage Three classes (follow up fieldwork)

See also commentary on page 75

UCL Institute of Education

20 Bedford Way

London

WC1H 0AL

April 2016

Dear student,

My name is Catrina Kirkland and I am a PhD researcher from the Institute of Education, part of the University of London. I am researching how Year 9 students learn history, and, in particular, how you learn about the Holocaust. In order to do this, I hope to observe some of your History lessons this term. I will be making notes on some of the comments made in the lessons, and might ask some of you to tell me more about your ideas. I might also ask to record some of your conversations on a voice recorder, to help me remember what you said. At the end of the year, I will write up my ideas in an 80 000 word thesis (extended essay) which I hope will be written well enough to make me a doctor!

I would really appreciate your consent (permission) to observe your lessons. I will usually sit somewhere at the back of the class making notes, but I might ask some of you a few questions too. And I might ask you to complete some written tasks, like your history teacher does. Anything I see or hear in the lessons will remain between us. (The only exception to this is if I think you or someone else might be at risk of being hurt. Then I will have to tell someone who can help.) You are welcome to see my notes, but I will never show them to anyone not in your class. When I write my thesis, you will get to choose your own pseudonym (fake name) so that no one will know who said what. And, if you do not want to me include in my notes something you have said, it is your right to ask me not to write it down, or to cross it out.

If you have any questions about my research, you can speak to me after any lesson. Alternatively, you can email me at XXXXXXXXXXXX.

Thank you for considering helping me with my research.

C. Kirkland

Name ………………………………………………………………… Date ……………………………………………………………………

I have understood what this research involves. I understand my rights within the research, and I know how to find out more about this research if I would like to. I am happy for some of my comments to be recorded.

I give my consent (permission) to be involved in this research.

Signed …………………………………………………………………

Appendix 4 – Letter to parents / carers including opt out form

Written at the request of teachers at Capital Academy; see commentary on page 75

Dear parent / carer,

I am a PhD student at UCL Institute of Education in London. Your child's history teacher, XXXXXXXXX, has kindly agreed to let me conduct a research project in your child's history class and I am writing to let you know what this will involve.

My research explores how students in Years 7-9 make sense of the Holocaust. Most of my fieldwork will be carried out through observation of your child's history lessons but I will also invite students to complete short surveys during class time and a small number of students will be asked if they would like to take part in follow-up group interviews. These will take place at school during breaks. No students will miss any planned lesson content through taking part in this research.

Full details of what this research will involve are given in the information sheet overleaf.

If, after reading this information, you decide that you do NOT wish your child to take part in this research project, please complete the reply slip at the end of this letter and ask your child to return it to me in his or her history lessons.

If you do not complete the reply slip I will assume that you are willing for your child to participate in the research.

If you have any questions or concerns or would like further information, please contact me at the email address below.

Yours faithfully,

Catrina Kirkland

PhD student, Centre for Holocaust Education, Institute of Education, University of London.

RESEARCH OPT-OUT FORM

I **do not** authorise my son / daughter . . . .

[*please provide name of student*] to participate in the PhD research project described above.[13]

Signed . . . . Date . . . .

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[13] An email address was included for parents to contact. This appears on the document which was attached and which provided further information for parents. This can be found at the bottom of this document, on page 251.

What does this research involve?

During the history lessons

During the research project your child's teacher will still teach their history lessons as normal. We will ask students to complete some simple survey tasks, which will help me explore what they understand about the Holocaust at different points. The students will be reminded that they can choose not to answer any or all of the questions, and that their answers will be confidential.

During the lessons I will be making notes and might use a voice recorder to keep a record of some of what was said. This is to help me examine what the students understand about the Holocaust at different points in their lessons. I will explain to the students that they can ask me to turn off the recorder, not include the comments when I write up the transcripts, or have their comments blacked out of my note book in front of them at any time. I will also remind the students of their right to withdraw their participation from the research project. Should they choose to do so, they will, of course, continue to attend their history lessons as normal. But I would refrain from recording any of their comments in my notebook and including their comment in the transcripts I make of the audio recordings. Pupils whose parents have withdrawn them using the opt-out slip below will <u>not</u> have any of their comments recorded in my note book and their comments will not be included in the transcripts from the audio recorder.

After each lesson I will transcribe the discussions I captured on the voice recorder and analyse them alongside the notes I made during the lessons to explore the ways in which the students made sense of the Holocaust as they learned about it in their history lessons. Once I have transcribed the audio files, using the students chosen pseudonym, I will delete them.

I will treat the content of the discussions I have with students confidentially. However if a young person discloses something that gives me good cause to believe that they or someone else is at risk of significant harm, then I will pass on my concerns to your child's school.

During the Interviews

Your child will only take part in the interviews if they volunteer – they do not have to take part if they do not wish to. Pupils whose parents have withdrawn them using the opt-out slip below will <u>not</u> be invited to take part in the interviews. If your child takes part, they will join a small group of about five pupils from their class. During the interviews, pupils will be told that they do not have to answer any questions they do not want to answer and can leave the interview at any time. I do not anticipate that participating in the interviews will cause discomfort to pupils. I will remind them that I am not testing their knowledge, but am interested in their ideas, and that there are no right or wrong answers. I am

an experienced researcher and a former teacher, and have had a DBS check (previously known as a Criminal Records Bureau / CRB check). I will discuss the topic in a sensitive and age-appropriate way.

The interview discussions will be about the understandings the students have of the Holocaust before, whilst, and after they study it in their history lessons. After the interviews, I will transcribe the audio recordings. The transcribed interview data will be examined to identify patterns, and get a richer understanding of the students' understandings of the Holocaust. Overall, the interview will give me a context for the understandings the students demonstrate in their lessons, and the final analysis of the interview data will be added to the relevant section of my thesis. In some cases short anonymous snippets of interviews (quotes) will be used to illustrate a point, but I will never identify students' real names.

Further information

I hope that my thesis will help improve teaching and learning in the field of Holocaust education. I also hope that taking part will be an interesting experience for students, and give them a voice in helping to identify the best ways to teach about the Holocaust. All aspects of my research have been approved by the UCL Institute of Education's internal ethics review committee and follow the guidelines set out by the British Educational Research Association (BERA). **However, if for any reason, you do not want your child to take part in the research project then please complete the reply form below and return it to me as soon as possible**. **If I don't receive this form, then we will assume your child can take part.**

If you have any queries regarding this research please do not hesitate to contact me at XXXXXXXXXX or by writing a note for me in your child's planner.

Appendix 5: Exemplar Book and Film Survey

Student Survey

As you know, I am researching how you think about history. It would be really interesting for me to see where you have learned about history topics outside of your lessons. I would appreciate it if you could complete the survey by ticking the boxes, telling me about which of the following you have read and seen.

	Yes, I have seen or read this	I've heard of this, but have not seen or read it	No, I've not heard of this
Any Harry Potter book or film			
Any of the Twilight saga			
Gandhi			
The Diary of Anne Frank			
The Freedom Writers			
The Hunger Games series			
Life is Beautiful			
The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas			
Twelve Years a Slave			
The Book Thief			
The Great Escape			
The Long Walk to Freedom			

	253		
Saving Private Ryan			
Schindler's List			
Downton Abbey			
The Reader			
Defiance			
The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (or The Chronicles of Narnia)			

Appendix 6: Student Questionnaire (given to students in 9D, 8C and 8N and printed on A3 paper)

Did you learn about it in Primary School? If so, what did you learn?

Have you read any books about it? If so, which ones?

Have you seen any films about it? If so, which ones?

Have you heard about it or learned about it anywhere else? If so, where?

Why did it happen?

Who was involved?

The Holocaust

Where did it take place?

When did it happen?

What happened?

Appendix 7: Photographs used for the 'tell the story of the Holocaust' activity

Photograph D: Shop in Berlin, Germany, during the Boycott of Jewish shops, April 1, 1933. Image held by United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Photograph C: The damage to the Lichtenstein leather goods store after the November Pogrom. Image held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Photo E: The soup kitchen in the Lodz Ghetto. Image held by the Weiner Library.

Photograph F: Ukrainian Jews who were forced to undress before they were massacred by *Einsatzgruppe* detachments. Image held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Photograph A: A photograph of a selection, from the 'Auschwitz Album'. Image held by Yad Vashem

Photograph B: A photograph from the 'Auschwitz Album', showing Jewish people toward the gas chambers in Auschwitz-Birkenau. Image held by Yad Vashem.

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