

Institution: University College London		
Unit of Assessment: UoA 23 Education		
Title of case study: Holocaust Education: research that has transformed teaching and learning, guided government and enriched educational practice across England and beyond		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: September 2013 - September 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Stuart Foster	Professor, Executive Director, The UCL Centre for Holocaust Education	September 2000 to present
Alice Pettigrew	Principal Research Fellow	January 2009 to present
Andy Pearce	Associate Professor in Holocaust and History Education	January 2012 to present
Rebecca Hale	Senior Research Fellow	July 2013 to present
Arthur Chapman	Associate Professor in History Education	September 2013 to present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: January 2014 – December 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>Challenging the misconceptions and inaccuracies that persist in common understanding of the Holocaust is of central importance to society. Research by the Centre for Holocaust Education at UCL Institute of Education identified entrenched misunderstandings and significant gaps in student knowledge leading to a step-change in how this history is taught in schools, nationally and internationally. Since January 2014, its teacher development programme has benefitted more than 18,000 English secondary teachers, transformed classroom practice and enriched the knowledge and understanding of millions of students. The underpinning research has also resulted in the production of a ground-breaking school textbook, centrally informed the UK government's national Holocaust Learning Centre and led to the development of a pre-service teacher-training programme for UNESCO, employed in more than 60 countries worldwide.</p>		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>Context: The Holocaust has been a mandatory subject in the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum for history since 1991, yet research with teachers conducted by Foster and colleagues revealed significant limitations in existing classroom practice (R1, R2, R3). In response, the Centre developed a high quality, research informed continuing professional development (CPD) programme to address identified concerns. However, <i>student</i> knowledge and understanding of this complex history remained critically under-researched, internationally.</p>		
<p>Methodology: To address this significant gap, between 2013 and 2016 Foster's team undertook research asking, <i>What do students know and understand about the Holocaust?</i> Exploring the understanding, attitudes and learning experiences of more than 10,000 young people, this remains the largest study of its kind globally. Over 8,800 secondary school students in England completed an extensive survey and 244 were interviewed in focus groups. Descriptive statistical analyses, thematic coding and an innovative analytic framework informed by social constructivist approaches to knowledge were employed (R1).</p>		

Key Findings: Despite its mandatory status within the National Curriculum, student knowledge and conceptual understanding was often limited and inaccurate, for example:

- Over two thirds of students (68%) did not know the term ‘antisemitism’ (R1, R2).
- Students were typically ill-informed about the British government’s response to the Holocaust and unable to critically evaluate Britain’s relationship to the genocide (R1, R4).
- Most students uncritically accepted myths and misconceptions widely circulated in contemporary culture: many vastly overestimated the size of pre-war Jewish populations; gave Hitler-centric explanations; incorrectly located the genocide only in Germany; and accepted stereotypes about Jewish people (R1, R2, R5).
- Students’ ideas of perpetration and complicity were oversimplified: 56% of students in Years 7–9 believed Hitler was solely responsible. This misconception typically prevented them from seeing genocide as a societal crime and limited their ability to make connections with issues in our contemporary world (R1, R3).

The 286-page research report (R1) was referred to several times in the Prime Minister’s Holocaust Commission Report, listed as an example of ‘*excellent practice*’ and described as ‘*world class*’, ‘*pioneer[ing] research*’ (p11) (S1). Responding to the Commission, the President of the Association of Holocaust Organisations asserted ‘*Their research studies are both a model and an invaluable guide for those of us in the field of Holocaust education*’ (S2).

Implications: The student study clearly identified both the dominance and consequence of a well-intentioned yet simplistic moral ‘lessons from’ approach to the Holocaust uncritically promoted by many teachers, non-governmental organisations and policy makers. Within this approach, the Holocaust is presented primarily as a warning of where racism, prejudice, or discrimination can lead. Secure, accurate historical knowledge is not typically prioritised. The team’s research presented an important and far-reaching challenge to this orthodoxy demonstrating empirically that when students are able to draw from meaningful historical knowledge, their understanding of the Holocaust itself is deeper and the connections made with contemporary issues are better informed and more profound (R1-R6).

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

R1 Foster, S., Pettigrew, A., Pearce, A., Hale, R., Burgess, A., Salmons, P. & Lenga, R.A. (2016) *What do students know and understand about the Holocaust? Evidence from English secondary schools*. London: UCL. https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/1475816/14/Foster_What-do-students-know-and-understand-about-the-Holocaust-2nd-Ed.pdf

R2 Foster, S. Pearce, A. & Pettigrew, A. (Eds.) (2020) *Holocaust education: Contemporary challenges and controversies*. London: UCL Press. <https://www.uclpress.co.uk/products/131536>

R3 Pettigrew, A. (2017) Why teach or learn about the Holocaust? Teaching aims and student knowledge in English secondary schools, *Holocaust Studies*, 23(3), 263–288. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17504902.2017.1296069>

R4 Pearce, A. & Lawson, T. (2020) *The Palgrave Handbook of Britain and the Holocaust*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-55932-8> Book available on request.

R5 Hale, R. (2020) ‘It made me think how I should treat others and how I should help people who need it’: The complexities of exploring the impact of Holocaust education, *Oxford Review of Education*, 46(6), 788–803. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2020.1791062>

R6 Foster, S. & Karayianni, K. (2017) Portrayals of the Holocaust in English history textbooks, 1991–2016: continuities, challenges and concerns, *Holocaust Studies*, 23(3), 314–344. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17504902.2017.1296087>

Research quality indicators: All research outputs have been through a rigorous peer-review process and the underpinning research and its dissemination were awarded the BERA Public Engagement and Impact Award 2020. The research was funded by the Department for Education and Pears Foundation as part of a sustained commitment by both organisations to individually invest GBP500,000 per annum in the Centre every year since March 2013.

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

The findings of this study provided evidence that existing teaching and learning about the Holocaust were failing to address many widely held myths and misconceptions. Accordingly, it highlighted the imperative to improve teachers' – and by extension, students' - substantive and conceptual knowledge of this history. In response to these findings, Foster and his colleagues developed a series of transformational professional development and Beacon School programmes which have demonstrably improved teaching and learning across England, impacted educational practice in at least 60 further countries and benefitted society as a whole.

Impact on national policy and development

The pioneering research undertaken by Foster and his team (**R1**), was cited extensively in the Prime Minister's 2015 Holocaust Commission Report, *Britain's Promise to Remember*, as evidence that effective Holocaust education was failing to reach young people (**S1, S3, S4**). Personal correspondence from the Prime Minister David Cameron (dated 25th January 2016) stated: *'Early access to your report... provided much of the evidence base for the recommendations the Commission made. The full final report will be a great help to the [UK Holocaust Memorial] Foundation'* (**S4**).

One outcome of the Commission was the commencement of a GBP100,000,000 pound National Memorial and Learning Centre to be built next to the Houses of Parliament signifying its central importance in popular and political consciousness. Projected to open towards the end of 2024, the Centre is expected to attract one million visitors annually. The team's research (**R1, R2, R4**) shaped and influenced this important initiative from the outset as *'an invaluable part of [the UK government's] ongoing efforts to ensure that Holocaust education in the UK and internationally is delivered in a confident, effective and credible way'* (**S3**). Foster is a member of the Academic Board ensuring that the Centre's empirical insight and analyses continue to perform a critical advisory role.

The impact of the team's research was also cited extensively by government officials, NGOs and teachers in an Education Select Committee Inquiry into Holocaust Education in 2015 (**S2**). Written evidence from the Department for Education, for example, emphasised the unique importance of the Centre's empirically rooted expertise in positively informing the practice of thousands of teachers who annually attend its courses. Most recently, the Centre's model of robust research directly informing transformational professional support for teachers was cited as *'an important blueprint for an effective research-led teacher education programme'* within the Runnymede Trust's current, high profile, 7 Actions to Change the History Curriculum campaign (**S5**). The campaign has drawn specific attention to the Centre's research (**R1**) to galvanise public and political support behind the proposed creation of a national programme of teacher education on empire, colonialism and migration, directly emulating the Centre's approach.

International impact

The Centre's research is of internationally recognised importance within the field of Holocaust education and its 2016 study (**R1, R3, R5**) *'led to the revitalization of teacher training in this field in the UK and beyond'* (**S3**). On the basis of this reputation and the Centre's *'unique position and high degree of expertise'*, in 2018, UNESCO and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)) commissioned Foster and colleagues to create a research-informed curriculum framework for pre-service teachers and school directors addressing antisemitism and intolerance (**S3**). The Centre's materials for this project were disseminated to government ministries in the 57 Participating States of the OSCE across Europe, Central Asia and North America as well as UNESCO Member States across the world, and used to train key policy makers and teacher trainers from over 60 countries of all regions through workshops organized by UNESCO and ODIHR at ODIHR (Warsaw), UNESCO (Paris) and the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (Geneva) (**S6**).

Several other institutions worldwide have referenced the impact of the Centre's research on their own work. For example, in a written testimonial given to the Education Select Committee on Holocaust Education, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum emphasised, '*no institution has been more influential in our work in Holocaust education*' (S2). Similarly emphatic testimonials to the impact and influence of the Centre's research were also given by, amongst others, the Association of Holocaust Organisations, the Mauthausen Memorial Site and the World Holocaust Remembrance Centre at Yad Vashem (S2).

The research (R1, R2, R6) has informed policy directions set by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), the preeminent intergovernmental organisation working in this field, for example, in influencing IHRA's latest international teaching and learning recommendations. The Centre's Programme Director sits as one of only two members of the UK delegation within IHRA's Education Working Group. This appointment reflects the impact of the Centre and its research to the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office who consider it, '*integral to [Britain's] work promoting good Holocaust education across the world*' (S3).

Impact on teaching and learning

Research into Holocaust Education undertaken by Foster and his team has drawn attention to real issues that teachers and learners face. By utilising these findings, the team has developed initial teacher education, CPD, MA and Beacon School programmes to form a pathway of professional development targeting teachers' needs at every stage of their careers. The courses address contemporary issues within Holocaust education, explore appropriate pedagogical approaches and model the Centre's resources and lesson plans to support teachers in the classroom and build capacity for exemplary practice in schools. Since January 2014, more than 18,000 teachers have attended such programmes. Each is uniquely responsive to the Centre's empirical research and recognised by leading organisations including the IHRA and UNESCO as representing '*best practice internationally*' (S3, S6). Data collected by the Centre for the Department for Education show crucial impact on students' knowledge. For example, in a sample of 886 students from eight schools the Centre has worked with, 90.7% of the students knew what antisemitism referred to after learning about the Holocaust, compared to 21.4% in a national sample of control schools (S7). Tangible impact reported by teachers and corroborated by programme evaluation includes increased confidence, expanded and better informed content choices and improved subject knowledge among both teachers and students (S7, S8).

The Centre's Beacon School Programme – a nationally recognised and government-supported award – is especially significant in improving teaching standards, raising pupil achievement, and '*transform[ing] teaching and learning, both in Holocaust education, and across many other areas of school curricula*' (S8, S7). Since 2014, 155 schools across England have become Beacon Schools working with a network of over 1,550 additional local schools to annually impact the educational experience, understanding and attitudes of around one and a half million students. Both classroom teachers and senior leaders have extensively praised the '*extremely powerful*' impact of the programme within their schools and multi-academy networks (S7, S8). A Beacon School teacher reports, '*it completely changed our approach and transformed the learning that our pupils experience*' (S7) while one CEO of a multi-academy trust emphasises its '*positive impact on the knowledge and understanding of approximately 10,000 of our students to date*' (S8), whilst highlighting the importance of the Centre's dissemination activity, in conjunction with its CPD offer, in shifting practitioner perspectives. '*Before the CfHE conducted their ground-breaking research, the prevalence of such misconceptions was unknown to those working in the field, including schools and teachers*' (S8). At all times the Centre ensures research findings are accessible to teachers and made directly relevant to actual classroom practice. Insight drawn from each of the Centre's major research publications (e.g. R1, R2) and more recent analyses (R3, R4, R5) is regularly summarised through targeted research briefings, interactive web-site pages and other ongoing communication with a national network of more than 15,000 teachers.

In 2019, the Centre partnered with the Holocaust Educational Trust to deliver a Department for Education funded, national educational programme to commemorate and expand students' knowledge of Bergen-Belsen and its liberation, a subject typically given very little attention within

secondary school history (R1, S9). Approximately 1,300 young people and their teachers participated directly in the programme and the Centre's research-informed teaching packs were distributed to all 4,000 of England's secondary schools. As one survivor of that camp describes, the Centre's involvement in the initiative exemplifies its '*critical importance for the field, informing the work that Holocaust education organisations across the country and survivors like me do when we engage with teachers and students*' (S9).

In response to its research showing how problematic and imprecise Holocaust textbooks are (R6, R2), the Centre also created the first empirically informed secondary school textbook to directly confront widespread student misconceptions. In 2020, more than 30,000 copies of '*Understanding the Holocaust: How and why did it happen?*' (Hodder Education) were distributed to 1,000 secondary schools across England, with an annual reach of over a million students. To align with its launch, the Centre offered an innovative, research-informed on-line CPD course focused on textbook portrayals. More than 1,000 teachers participated in this landmark course highlighted by the Executive Chair of Pears Foundation as '*a direct example of the tremendous impact that the Centre can have through making academic scholarship accessible to teachers in the classroom and giving them the resources and training they need to be effective*' (S10). He cites participant responses describing the experience as '*phenomenally invaluable*', '*a huge advancement for the field of Holocaust Education*' and '*the most important thing to happen in KS3 History in years*' (S10). There continues to be high demand for the textbook, and a further 30,000 copies will be sent to another 1,000 schools in spring 2021. Digital 'Teacher Guidance' materials to support the use of the textbook feature on the Centre's website and can also be widely accessed from the Wiener Holocaust Library's website, 'The Holocaust Explained' which receives 1.4 million visits annually.

The Centre's immediate response to the challenges faced by the COVID-19 pandemic offers further evidence of its impactful commitment to ensuring robust empirical research is utilised to build capacity and transform teaching in schools (S10). Between April and September 2020, 34 high quality, lesson plans and materials for online teaching and learning were produced and accessed by approximately 3,000 teachers and parents/carers across the country and three self-guided, on-line CPD courses were completed by more than 2,000 practising teachers. The Centre's intensive Beacon School programme was re-configured and offered in an on-line, interactive format to teachers and senior leaders in 23 schools, more than 50 teachers also participated in the Centre's on-line MA module, 'the Holocaust in the Curriculum', and several hundred joined the webinar with world-renowned historian Holocaust historian, Yehuda Bauer, in June 2020. The launch of a Massive Online Open-Access Course developed with Yad Vashem (Jerusalem) in Autumn 2020 also exemplifies the reach and influence of the Centre's digital offer; the course attracted over 1,000 learners from 88 different countries within just three weeks of enrolment opening.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

S1 Britain's Promise to Remember: The Prime Minister's Holocaust Commission Report (2015), see pages 11, 12, 29, 34-36, 38, 47.

S2 [Holocaust Education Inquiry: Written Evidence](#) (2015) (accessed September, 2020)

S3 Testimonial UK Special Envoy for Post-Holocaust Issues (FCO) and Co-chair of the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation (UKHMF).

S4 Letter from former Prime Minister David Cameron (dated 25th January 2016).

S5 Runnymede Trust '[7 Actions to Change the History Curriculum Campaign](#)'

S6 Testimonial by Programme Specialist for Holocaust and Genocide Education, UNESCO and Executive Secretary of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance.

S7 UCL Centre for Holocaust Education: End of year report for funders, April 2018-March 2019.

S8 Testimonial by the Founder and CEO of the CORE Education Trust.

S9 Testimonial by a survivor of the Holocaust and Partner on Belsen 75.

S10 Testimonial by the Executive Chair of the Pears Foundation.