

**REMEMBERING THE HOLOCAUST: TEACHERS' NARRATIVE CHOICES AND  
STUDENTS' HISTORICAL THINKING**

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

(Curriculum Studies)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

August 2007

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study investigated teachers' narrative choice and students' historical thinking. The research examined the influence of varying curriculum materials, including a graphic novel, feature film and discovery trunk, on student thinking about the Holocaust. The study was conducted in three social studies 11 classes, taught by the researcher, in an urban public secondary school. Data used in the study consisted of student essay samples and informal classroom observations. The study's findings revealed that students' thinking about the Holocaust was multi-dimensional and fairly complex. Students' thinking, at the end of the unit, was categorized into themes: preservation of Holocaust artifacts and relics, the use of museums as sites of memory, learning lessons from the Holocaust about humanity, and the intrinsic moral weight of the Holocaust as a historical event. The use of varied resources did not provide substantial evidence of differentiated historical understanding, but there was some evidence to suggest that the varied resources impacted student understanding on a general level. In light of these findings the thesis concludes that studying the Holocaust is a valuable topic for students because they will find the narratives compelling, confront personal moral frames and benefit from thinking through the historical complexity of the Holocaust.

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## **Acknowledgments**

Many thanks to all those that made this study possible and supported me during the research and writing process. The encouragement and support provided by my advisor, Peter Seixas, allowed me to push through the most difficult times. He has helped me to grow as a scholar, teacher and most importantly, a person. Through his teaching and advice I have learned so much and developed an appreciation and greater understanding of the complexities of teaching history to adolescent age students.

Thanks also to my committee members Walt Werner and Penney Clark for their invaluable input, direction and support. I would also like to extend my gratitude to my students, whose thoughtful responses, insights and commitment energized me throughout the research phase. I have also enjoyed the valuable advice, support and encouragement of my teaching colleagues and to them I extend my deep appreciation.

# **1 Introduction**

## **1.1 Introduction**

Teaching history must have a purpose beyond the transmission of culturally relevant accounts of the past or the ideological inculcation of citizenship values. From my earliest classroom experiences as a social studies teacher it was clear to me that history provided a platform to access and nourish the moral and affective domains of my students. History teaching should be more than reciting names, dates and facts or creating timelines. Early encounters with high school texts left me unimpressed with their lack of depth, poor treatment of ethnic narratives and superficial treatment of the many controversial moments in Canada's past (Paxton, 1999). An effective history program should lead students to make connections between the past and their lived experience, evoking powerful memories and challenging current perspectives (Aoki, 1993). Canada, as a multiethnic society, must live up to the promises of fairness, inclusion, acceptance, equality, and opportunity heralded by politicians. The history classroom can use studies of the past to prepare youth for full and active participation in society. However, it is necessary to open the past to intense scrutiny, to question conventional narratives and engage doing history with a critical lens. In opening the past to questioning we can use history to heal old wounds, undo past injustices and work to prevent recurrences of wrongful acts. Teaching history provides opportunities for students to explore important concepts like injustice, to learn from the missteps of our past, and to create understanding and purpose in our students through a careful

examination of those past wrongs. We can harness the moral power of history to prepare our students for the challenge of living in a multiethnic society.

During my pre-service teaching I began to explore issues of injustice in Canada's past and to teach history for its moral dilemmas and ethical issues. One particular moment entrenched my commitment to social justice teaching and choosing compelling narratives that engaged the lived experience of my students. In my third year of teaching I came upon an editorial in *Mehfil Magazine*, a magazine marketed at second and third generation Indo-Canadians, where the author criticized the public school system for neglecting to teach about the Komagata Maru incident and the institutional racism evident in BC during the early 1900's. I had been teaching my students about the Komagata Maru, the Chinese Head Tax and the Japanese Internment in my social studies 11 class for three years and could not disagree more with the conclusions drawn by the editorial. I naively believed that the majority of social studies teachers across the province were doing as I was, by engaging the lived experiences of my students and teaching narratives from a range of ethnocultural, socioeconomic and gender perspectives. Further reflection and discussion with colleagues helped me to understand that the educational experience of the author was not isolated and likely to reflect the experience found in many social studies classrooms around the province. The encounter renewed my commitment to teach for social justice and to use every opportunity the curriculum allowed to explore morally challenging terrain. I wanted to engage them in a thorough examination of Canada's history, warts and all, but also to stretch their moral reasoning and intellectual capacities in the belief that this would prepare them to deal with the complexity of living in Canada's multiethnic society. The



commitment led me to co-author curriculum units on the Japanese Internment, institutionalized racism and human rights.

After ten years of teaching history to high school students I became curious about the impact my choice of narratives was having on student moral reasoning and historical understanding. These self-reflections motivated me to complete a MA degree as an avenue to examine my teaching practice and reconceptualize it, grounding it in theory and knowledge rather than intuition and perception. The coursework enabled me to explore the concepts of racialization, identity formation, agency, social justice, and historical consciousness. Moreover I gained a more sophisticated understanding of how these concepts impact curriculum development and lesson design. The coursework and reading provided me with the language to conceptualize and refine my approach to teaching history and to chart new directions for my research and classroom teaching. In questioning my commitment to social justice teaching it became clear that what I had wanted all along was that my students would take away powerful moral lessons from my classroom that could influence their conduct and behaviour in the future. It consolidated my belief that in order to have my students learn powerful moral lessons from history the selection of narratives was important. I had never been restricted in my curriculum choices by administrators, parents, colleagues or the school board. It was clear to me that the Holocaust is suited to the development of students' historical understanding and moral reasoning in a way that would not be true if they were to study the life of a pioneer family. Histories filled with complex moral and ethical issues must be taught in our social studies classes and they should form a significant portion of the curriculum.

Curriculum in BC's secondary schools is developed and implemented by the Ministry of Education. Historically the social studies curriculum has promoted teaching traditional nation building narratives in secondary social studies classes. Even the most recent iteration of the curriculum continued support for teaching the national myths. Specific references to controversial topics like the Indian residential schools, institutional racism and gender discrimination continue to receive minimal reference in the curriculum documents and prescribed textbooks. The social studies/history curriculum has witnessed several iterations since the first comprehensive document released in 1927 (BC Department of Education, 1927). With each revision, the curriculum developers built the social studies program around content that taught Canada's nation building story including exploration, conquest, settlement, and colonization. The first significant revision occurred in 1956 with a few changes to instructional topic areas but significant changes to methodologies (BC Department of Education, 1956). The new curriculum organized the social studies around in the following four broad themes, "Knowledge, Love of Truth, Humanitarian Sentiments, and An Understanding of the Rule of Law" (Department of Education, 1956, pp. 9-10). The curriculum guides in 1927 and 1936 devoted entire units to Canada's French and English colonial roots, English parliamentary traditions, Canada's political system, and the historical evolution of Canada and this was carried over in the 1956 curriculum in greater detail (BC Department of Education, 1927, 1936, 1956). In 1960, after two years of evaluation and review, the province of British Columbia published the findings of the Royal Commission on Education (the Chant Commission) and directed social studies teachers to move away from reliance on the social sciences toward more stress on "mastery of factual

knowledge", emphasizing the traditional disciplines of history and geography, but still drawing upon all of the social sciences (Royal Commission, 1960, pp. 308-310). The Report did not recommend a complete shift from the previous curriculum but a change in focus with an increased emphasis "upon the subject-matter courses" (p. 308). In 1968 a new curriculum based upon the recommendations of the Chant Report was implemented throughout the province. The structure of the program shifted with more attention to teaching inductive thinking skills, values education and teaching the traditional disciplines of history and geography (BC Department of Education, 1968, pp. 21-35). However, the scope and sequence maintained a commitment to teaching the nation building narratives common to earlier iterations of the document.

In 1985 (Ministry of Education, 1985) the provincial government implemented another series of revisions loosely based upon the recommendations written in *The Provincial Assessment of Social Studies* (Aoki, Langford, Williams, Wilson, 1977). Notwithstanding changes in the content and framework of the new curriculum guide the document continued to support the split coverage of Canadian history between the grades and maintained a commitment to nation building. In 1996 the province embarked on its fourth revision of social studies and teachers remain under its guidelines today, although streamlined learning outcomes and achievement indicators were introduced recently (Integrated Resource Package, Ministry of Education, 1997, 2005). Also in 2006 social studies teachers witnessed the introduction of standardized exams for Social Studies 11 and Civic Studies 11. The recent addition of a provincial exam created additional pressure on social studies teachers to prepare students for the exam, making it more difficult to teach detailed studies of social justice narratives. In spite of

the changes the social studies curriculum maintains the tradition of teaching the nation building narratives indirectly supporting a citizenship building approach to teaching history.

In developing my teaching unit on the Holocaust I drew upon the design and methodology of three human rights topics that I had taught in my classroom: Canada's role in the Holocaust, the internment of Japanese Canadians, and the rape of Nanking and Japan's invasion of China. All three units were published by the Ministry of Education between 1999 and 2005 as part of a commitment to support minority voices in the social studies curriculum (*Canada and The Holocaust: Social Responsibility and Global Citizenship*, 1999, *Human Rights in the Asia Pacific 1931-1945*, 2001, *Internment and Redress: The Japanese Canadian Experience*, 2005). The units examine issues of fairness, equality, human rights, international and domestic laws, redress, reconciliation, and compensation. The units compel students to think critically and use a variety of evidentiary sources in defending an argument on behalf of the victims and transgressors. Each resource presents students with the tools, processes, concepts, and framework to work through complex moral questions, enhancing historical understanding. The Holocaust is a particularly compelling topic for students because of its symbolism, moral weight, volume of documented evidence, graphic nature of the evidence, and wealth of powerful narratives. Recent scholarship on the perpetrators questions the role that average Germans played in acts of cruelty, indifference and murder. The Holocaust allows an opportunity to locate the conversation in the present, to ask questions about the conditions under which such crimes could occur today and have students question personal values and beliefs.

Recent research into the teaching, learning and knowing of history has helped identify a number of critical questions for history educators in Canada. Particularly the question of what history we teach and why. Scholarship on the issue offers a wide range of answers to these questions and recent research has brought into question traditional approaches to teaching, learning and knowing history. Historical narratives taught at the secondary level frequently contain moral themes with the potential to instruct and develop the moral dimension of teaching history for our students. The complexity of history offers many examples of explicit moral messages and there are numerous opportunities to teach these moral dimensions and develop historical thinking in our students. The complex composition of modern classrooms demands that history educators bring the curriculum to life, drawing connections between an increasingly unfamiliar past and the complex present while maintaining the integrity of the prescribed curriculum. This diversity within the classroom creates challenges for educators sifting through the choices in the prescribed curriculum in search of meaningful and powerful narratives that will create nexus points for student growth. One way for history educators to negotiate this challenge is to choose narratives that focus on moral reasoning, develop historical thinking and enhance historical understanding. The complexities of teaching moral history lessons remain challenging but can provide invaluable opportunities for our students to critically engage in making connections with the past. Teachers must have the freedom and the commitment to make narrative choices within the prescribed curriculum that allow students to examine complex, uncomfortable, contestable issues that stretch their thinking and understanding.

## **1.2 The Research Question**

The investigation examined a teacher's narrative choice and students' historical thinking and the use of varied resources in teaching a unit on the Holocaust. The question I examined was: *How is student thinking, about remembering the Holocaust, influenced by the teacher's use of varied instructional resources?* The question focuses on the connection between the teacher's narrative choices in the classroom and the opportunities students have to engage in historical thinking. The research question also called for an examination of how students understand the obligation to remember historical tragedy like the Holocaust. The research question opened a discussion of the difference between learning *about* the Holocaust and learning *from* the Holocaust. In learning about the Holocaust students are required to do more than know dates, people and mere facts, but to reason through complex moral questions and draw some level of understanding of the context in which the tragedy occurred. In learning from the Holocaust the students consider what, if any, lessons can be drawn from human suffering on an unprecedented level. It is central to the investigation that student action and civic identity are shaped by encounters with history, specifically with historical narratives that require students to engage their moral stance and wrestle with the role of history in the present.

## **1.3 Assumptions**

Significant assumptions are imbedded in the research question. Firstly, an underlying function of teaching history is in providing opportunities for students to wrestle with complex moral and ethical issues. History is inherently a moral enterprise because we constantly judge the past from the lens of the present. Studying history is

about making judgments and students must be taught how to engage historical study, avoiding simplistic or unfounded interpretations of the past. Students and teachers must be wary of the implicit and explicit moral messages transmitted from the curriculum. Secondly, studies of complex, multilayered historical events allow students to draw upon those events when confronted with moral/ethical dilemmas in the present. Students can learn about the dangers of remaining silent or displaying apathy as others are facing institutional discrimination and oppression. Thirdly, notwithstanding the value of all history curricula, not all are well suited to the development of moral reasoning in adolescents. Such curricula must offer specific opportunities to engage the moral frameworks of our students and in ways that will impact their reasoning. Finally, teachers' narrative choices matter if the objective is to develop historical thinking, understanding and empathy in our students. Curriculum instruments guide and direct study, but within the curricula teachers can make choices and select narratives that have relevance to the lived experiences of their students.

Current research and scholarship illustrate a number of points important to teaching history for its moral dimensions while demonstrating awareness of implicit and explicit moral messages. The complexity of the moral messages in narratives like the Holocaust means teachers must confront a number of problems. For example, in attempting to relive the past in the present we may oversimplify and transpose the messages and meaning of tragic historic events (Boix-Mansilla, 2000). Messages about the heroism of those who tried to save Jews may cause students to believe that large numbers of non-Jews risked their lives to do so when this is not true. Furthermore, the methodologies used to teach such events cannot be true to both the experiential and

knowledge objectives creating challenges for students in understanding moral lessons. Attempting to teach the experiential dimensions of the Holocaust or other historical tragedies cannot truly recreate the horror, emotional and psychological trauma of such events and therefore appear disrespectful in their intent to recreate the emotional and psychological experiences of the victims. Students come to understand and to demonstrate historical empathy with the victims but cannot relive the experience or fully grasp the psychological and emotional conditions. Additionally one encounters the problem of transposing the facts of the Holocaust in a comparative manner to modern genocide causing students to oversimplify the events and their limited connections (Boix-Mansilla, 2000). The genocides in Cambodia in 1975, Yugoslavia in 1992, or Rwanda in 1994 are not the same as the Holocaust in Europe, yet students may want to draw such comparisons to aid understanding. Students may confuse the unique social, political and economic factors in one event with those in all other similar events losing the significance and moral complexity of each event. If done poorly such lessons do little to probe the complex factors that contributed to the genocide and serve only to bring a level of empathy to the victims and survivors (Boix-Mansilla, 2000, Schweber, 2004). Thus, teaching about and learning from the Holocaust present numerous moral challenges if teachers are to reduce the complexity of messages brought to the students.

A second assumption underpinning the study is that in studying the past teachers can impact current and future student conduct. The use of social studies classes to develop moral frameworks or impose value systems is well documented in the literature (Peters, 1973, 1979, Likona, 1976, Nucci, 1989, 2001, Puka, 1998) In most moral



education models the objective is to change student conduct or behaviour in the present through the examination of cases, ethical dilemmas or in learning the tools of dispute resolution. Much of the literature emphasizes school conduct, the resolution of hypothetical moral and ethical dilemmas and attainment of a moral virtue through consistent application of moral exemplars (Likona, 1976; Nucci, 1989; Puka, 1998). This is typically done teaching the tools to deal with moral conflict, advocating a moral framework, and providing generic issues to resolve. Such strategies do not depend upon teaching a particular kind of historical narrative because the lesson is not centred on learning, knowing or understanding the narrative, rather it comes from applying the tools. Historical understanding is not a prerequisite in this kind of moral education because the issues are not contextualized for the student. However, there is a distinction between history taught to promote the transmission of knowledge and instruction given to instill values, moral attributes and critical judgment (Todorov, 1995). Instruction for the purpose of transmitting knowledge of dates, names and facts does not involve an exploration of bias, critical pedagogy or questioning the purpose and objectives of such instruction. Whereas, teaching to instill moral qualities, values and a critical mind have a different purpose and more importantly a different set of curriculum choices (Todorov, 1995).

If teachers wish to engage the hearts and minds of our students narrative choice is important because it can dictate student interest and investment in the subject matter (Aoki, 1993). This is the third assumption. Narratives rich with complexity, moral dilemmas or multiple interpretations engage the minds and moral frameworks of students in ways different from the conventional recitation of facts and dates (Becker,

1932; Holt, 1990; Seixas, 1999; Wright, 2000). Not all historical narratives serve the goal of educating for moral reasoning because they do not offer opportunities to engage in a critical dialogue that engages the moral frameworks of students. Events or people linked with issues of injustice, discrimination, inequality, fairness, or virtue open up possibilities for critical analysis allowing students to test established perspectives, beliefs and stances on challenging topics. Considerable research supports the belief that students will be engaged in history if there is relevance to their own lives (Becker, 1932; Holt, 1990; Aoki, 1993; Seixas 1996; Roman and Stanley, 1997). An examination of the BC high school social studies curriculum indicates only a moderate shift in the breadth and depth of study on topics outside the traditional nation-building story. From social studies 9 through social studies 11 the bulk of the curriculum is founded upon a retelling of Canada's historical evolution from the perspective of the dominant Anglo-Saxon culture. A brief survey will find units on discovery, exploration, conquest, settlement, territorial evolution, and economic expansion (Ministry of Education, 2005). Little is found in the curriculum with respect to the many narratives and perspectives of aboriginal peoples, minority cultures, colonial and post-colonial exploitation, or the victimization of ethnic minorities. Students will not easily embrace history that neither meets their own experience or their understanding thus we miss many opportunities to engage the hearts and minds of our students (Wertsch, 2000, Wright, 2000, Paris, 2000). Students should be engaged in critical examinations of the past to fulfill the potential of the narratives we teach.

It is my final assumption that a correlation exists between narrative choice and student understanding of the past. If one is engaged in teaching for the purpose of

nation building or citizenship transmission this will inform the curriculum choices made and influence the impact those choices have on student understanding. There is a large body of research on the use of history and social sciences to promote citizenship. These approaches often focus on teaching history chronologically and primarily as part of a nation building narrative (Osborne, 1975, 1987, 1995, 1996, 1999). The underlying objective in teaching for citizenship is the inculcation of democratic values, rights claims and civic duties within the context of national identity (Osborne, 1999; Kymlicka, 1999). Such models often prescribe a particular kind of history, frequently including narratives that support nation building and elaborate on national mythology to build ties to the nation (Decarie, 1989; Fowler, 1995; Francis, 1997). Students cannot often identify with the narratives common to nation building curriculum as the past is far removed from their lived experience. Such narratives are not designed to challenge dominant tropes, ideologies, values, or perceptions of race, identity or nationhood but to support existing institutional structures and systems. The models emphasize issues analysis, teaching common understandings of the political structures and acceptance of the core institutions of society. They do not emphasize minority narratives, labour studies, class struggle, colonialism, or social justice narratives because the function of citizenship education is to transmit a particular body of beliefs not to challenge them, though they may examine such narratives as part of an issues approach.

#### **1.4 Definitions**

This research study focuses on the connections between a teachers narrative choices and students' thinking about the Holocaust. In the previous section I laid out the assumptions that underpin my research goals, particularly the need to find ways to use

history in the service of moral reasoning and developing historical thinking in our students. The research question enables an examination of a number of key concepts including narrative choice, historical understanding and moral reasoning. In this section I will unpack each of these terms and put them in context with respect to the research study.

#### **1.4.1 Narrative choice**

Teachers make curriculum choices daily in lesson and unit planning. Notwithstanding the prescribed curricula, teachers have latitude to make choices independent of the influence of administrators, curriculum guides, school board directives and departmental objectives. However, the various Instructional Resource Packages (I.R.P.s) designed and implemented by the Ministry of Education influence the boundaries within which narrative choices can be made. Recent changes to these I.R.P.s and the implementation of provincial standardized exams for Social Studies 11 and Civic Studies 11 further limited the freedom and flexibility classroom teachers have when selecting specific curricula for lesson and unit plans. However, regardless of the specific guidelines given by ministerial curriculum documents and exam pressures, classroom teachers can make choices that impact learning, knowing and understanding history, breaching the temporal gap that alienates students from integrating the past with their lived experience. Choices in units of study, teaching strategies, resources, textbooks, and historical source documents can impact the study of history and influence student understanding.

The thematic structure of the various IRPs from grades eight through eleven provides space to enrich students' experience with narratives that probe, question and

analyze the traditional stories of Canada. For example, under the theme *Autonomy and International Involvement* in Social Studies 11, there is a learning outcome stating that students will “assess Canada's role in World War II and the war's impact on Canada” (BC Ministry of Education, SS 11 IRP, 2005, p. 33). Within the learning outcome the achievement indicator recommends that this may be met by “describing Canada's military participation in the Allied war effort” and lists a number of significant battles in which Canada played a role (IRP, 2005, p. 33). Nowhere does it mention the specific role Canada played in liberating Nazi death camps or with any other aspect of the Holocaust. Yet, in any study of the Second World War many classroom teachers find it valuable to teach about the Holocaust independent of any connection to Canada's historical involvement. Connections do exist in aiding liberation of the death camps, supporting refugee placement and supporting the prosecution of war criminals at Nuremberg. The Holocaust is one of the most compelling and historically tragic events of human history rich with narratives rooted in survival, personal courage, brutality, human cruelty, institutional racism, and numerous other themes. The prescribed curriculum does not make it explicit that teachers should go outside the parameters of the document to teach the Holocaust, but it does not prevent them from doing so in the service of other learning objectives. There is a tension here between the prescribed curriculum, standardized exam and broad learning outcomes and the need to engage students in deeper, thoughtful analysis of issues and events not explicitly stated in the document. Classroom teachers feel this tension and are empowered to make curriculum choices that service more than the base learning outcomes and examination

specifications described here and it is an important aspect of this research to illuminate this tension and its impact on student understanding and moral reasoning.

#### **1.4.2 Historical understanding**

For many high school history teachers one of the first challenges they encounter is the acquisition of knowledge about the content they will teach. I graduated a history major, but with an emphasis on U.S. labour history and Middle Eastern studies, not an ideal background for teaching the BC social studies curriculum loaded with Canadian and European themes. My ability to teach history was compromised, in these first years, because of a reliance on textbook accounts and superficial investigations of Canada's past. There is a loose parallel here with our students in that they frequently come into our classrooms without the detailed knowledge required to engage in analysis of the historical claims made in the classroom. Thus, the first step toward developing historical understanding in our students is to provide a depth of knowledge so they can critique claims made in textbooks, source documents, film, or the other accounts of the past. Historical understanding is the process of gaining knowledge, advancing one's understanding and having the capacity to question accounts and traces of the past to validate claims and contrast them with complementary, contrasting and contradictory narratives (Lee and Ashby, 2000, p. 200). Students do not bring the advanced set of skills found with professional historians and their understanding of the past is compromised by their inability to access prior knowledge, interpret documents, look for bias, and synthesize counter narratives.

Common approaches described in the literature indicate two apparently contradictory directions found in most history classes; teaching the discipline of history,

sometime called the “skills” approach and teaching historical content, frequently called the “knowledge” approach (Lee and Ashby, 2000; Seixas, 2000). Each approach, or emphasis, has a bearing on the ability of students to understand the past. In practice both approaches are at work all of the time in history classrooms, but the emphasis might lean toward one direction. This is because teaching the discipline of history is dependant on the ability of the teacher to know the historical method and teach it to the students. The “knowledge” approach is frequently argued to be less effective in imparting historical understanding in students because the goal is acquisition of knowledge not synthesis, appropriation or integration. However, it is not possible to understand any narrative, to examine it or call it into question without a base of knowledge. Knowledge, in turn, is acquired through the process of ‘doing’ history and is not separate from acquiring the tools of the historian (Seixas, 2000). In the end historical understanding is not about which approach is applied but the sophistication with which both approaches are used to enhance student thinking about history.

### **1.4.3 Moral reasoning**

Few fields of study in education are more complex, incomplete or difficult to negotiate than examining the moral dimensions of teaching. Moral development, reasoning, literacy, virtues, pluralism, and conduct represent a small sample of the concepts, related to the moral dimensions of the curriculum, that have taken up considerable space in research literature (Likona, 1976; Peters, 1973, 1979; Green, 1999; Puka, 2000; Nucci, 2001). While there is considerable agreement that schools play a significant role in the moral development of our youth, there are vast disparities and gaps in the literature with respect to how this should be done. However, one key

aspect of moral development does find agreement in the scholarly research and that is with respect to providing opportunities for students to reason through difficult moral issues. There is some correlation between increased opportunities to explore moral issues and changes in student moral reasoning (Likona, 1976; Peters, 1979; Nucci, 2001). In working through several analytical steps and choosing case studies that are rigorous, students' moral reasoning is challenged and they are required to integrate new levels of thinking while building a more comprehensive moral framework. Not all historical narratives or exemplars are equal in their capacity to allow students to attain more sophisticated levels of moral reasoning because they do not all allow for the opposition of complex positions, the opportunity to challenge entrenched value systems, or the ability of students to avoid moral relativism. In allowing students to wrestle with complex moral issues, historically based, they have an opportunity to refine personal moral frameworks by integrating new modes of thinking about right/wrong conduct as it relates to human in/action.

The remainder of this study is contained in the following chapters. Chapter Two presents a review of the literature relevant to historical understanding, Holocaust education, citizenship education and nation building narratives. In Chapter Three I will lay out the design and methodology of the research study including a description of the three classes in the study, the Holocaust teaching unit, and the research model. In Chapter Four I provide an analysis of the three different resources used in teaching the unit on the Holocaust, the graphic novel *Maus*, *The Pianist* and the *Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre Discovery Kit*. In Chapter Five I report on my findings from



the student responses. Finally in Chapter Six I present my conclusions and future directions for research on narrative choice and student thinking about the Holocaust.

## **2 Perspectives on History Education**

Schools have a unique and privileged role in educating young Canadians for their participation in our liberal democratic and ethnically diverse society. History education is well situated to meet the responsibility of educating young Canadians about the people, events, narratives, and controversies that have shaped the nation. The classroom history curriculum is drawn from several sources including provincial curriculum guides, exam specifications, teacher knowledge, textbook selection, and a wide range of in-class resources. Films, journal articles, source documents, learning kits, and other supplemental resources fill in the curriculum and enrich student opportunities to engage the past in meaningful ways. These descriptions of processes, instruments of teaching and curriculum guidelines do not explain why we teach history or what history should be taught in our classrooms. Curriculum guides provide direction and offer parameters to orient what is taught, but leave considerable room for independent narrative choice by teachers. For some, the fear of classroom teachers running amok and making autonomous decisions about curriculum and historical interpretation is the antithesis of what should occur in schools. Recently, Governor Bush and the Florida legislature outlawed historical interpretation in public schools (Jensen, 2007, p. 5). In passing the legislation the governor stated that "American history shall be viewed as factual, not as constructed" (Jensen, p. 5). It is ironic that Bush would construct history in the schools of Florida by not allowing the construction of history in his classrooms. The point to note is that teachers in the province of British Columbia, unlike those in the state of Florida, are given the autonomy to choose curriculum and make specific selections about which narratives to teach. Narrative choice is important because it empowers teachers to

educate for purposes beyond citizenship transmission or the blind indoctrination of nation building mythology.

In this chapter I discuss two approaches in history education that influence teachers' narrative choices and impact students' historical thinking. The approaches are not meant as prescriptive guidelines for teaching history, but conceptions that influence what history we teach and how it can be done to improve historical thinking. Prior to discussing current research on historical understanding I will contextualize the Canadian conversation about narrative choice and why it has become increasingly contentious in social studies/history classrooms. From there I will review the literature on historical understanding. Then I will review the literature pertaining to citizenship education and nation building approaches as alternate modes through which narratives are chosen. Finally, I will review the literature on Holocaust education as it has a unique place in the field of history education and it pertains directly to my research question.

## **2.1 What History Should We Teach?**

In the past ten years there has been an examination of what, why and how history is taught in schools across Canada. In June 1999 British Columbia secondary social studies teachers received a report on the state of social studies education from the Ministry of Education Social Studies Task Force (BC Ministry of Education, 1999). The report, three years in the making and based on the BC Assessment of Social Studies 1996 Technical Report (BC Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, 1997), singled out several specific areas of concern with the teaching of social studies: inadequate background knowledge of teachers, limited and uninspiring materials and methods, superficial assessment strategies, avoidance of controversial issues, limited

professional identity, and inadequate professional development opportunities (Task Force Report, 1999, pp. 3-5). Additionally, the report identified the principal purpose of teaching social studies as imparting citizenship values and developing social responsibility in our youth (p. 6). The report did not single out the provincial social studies curriculum as a central factor in the decline of the social studies in BC, but suggested that teachers were not exercising opportunities to engage students in critical reflection on controversial or topical issues embedded within the existing curriculum (p. 4). The report recommended a re-conceptualization of the social studies focused on four elements of the discipline: "developing understanding, making connections between historical and contemporary events and issues, applying knowledge, and practicing active citizenship" (p. 7). The report called upon history educators in the province to bring compelling, controversial narratives back in to the classroom to support the development of socially responsible young citizens.

Not long after the Task Force began its research, a new think tank for the reconceptualization and promotion of Canadian history took root in Toronto. The Dominion Institute was established in 1997 by a group of conservative Canadians "concerned about the erosion of a common memory in Canada" (Dominion Institute, 2003, p. 2). The institute used national surveys, popular media agencies and the academic press to condemn the present state of history education in Canada, specifically the lamentable state of Canadian history courses and curriculum across the nation (Dominion Institute, 2003). A national survey conducted with 1,104 young Canadians aged 18 to 24 indicated that even the most rudimentary facts of Canada's nation-building history were not being learned (Dominion Institute, 2003, p. 2). A

Canada Day survey in 2001 indicated that only "54% of Canadians could identify [our] first Prime Minister, as opposed to 90% of Americans who could name their first president" (Dominion Institute, 2003, p. 2). The message was that young Canadians did not know their history. The developments have much in common but the most tangible link was the distress over the state of history education in B.C. and across Canada. The Dominion Institute advocated for changes to curriculum, the development of new teaching resources and the promotion of Canadian history in print and film to broaden Canadian's knowledge and appreciation for their history (The Dominion Institute, 2003). However, the Institute and its supporters promote a narrow, pan-Canadian approach to history education, one that highlights war, mythic heroes, French-English relations, and civic identity. In both cases connections were being drawn, explicitly or not, that the kinds of narratives we teach our students have a direct bearing on their development as active and socially responsible citizens.

As early as the 1970s educators and scholars in Canada were critical of the direction taken in the social studies that seemed to be diluting the quantity and quality of history being taught in Canadian classrooms and this criticism has continued to the present (Osborne, 1987; Bennett, 1990; Fowler, 1995). Noted Canadian historian Jack Granatstein (1998) added fuel to the history education debate with his seminal work titled *Who Killed Canadian History?* In the monograph he suggested that college and high school history courses were now hostage to political correctness, victimization stories and poor classroom pedagogy and that these recent trends were undermining the purpose of teaching Canadian history (Granatstein, 1998). Feminist, social, anti-racist, and multicultural narratives had replaced the tradition of instructing young

Canadians about their political, military and diplomatic history (Granatstein, 1998, p.23). Some have argued that knowledge of a pan-Canadian narrative is important because it impacts our development as a nation state and that through history education young Canadians are taught the values, morals, traditions, and responsibilities they will undertake as citizens (Osborne, 1995; Granatstein, 1998). Others contend that a pan-Canadian narrative diminishes local, regional and provincial narratives and marginalizes the stories of ethnic minorities. Regardless of one's stance it is clear that the issue of whose history we teach is central to our identity and understanding of who we are and who we will become as a nation. The debate on history standards has energized scholarship, research and teaching history across Canada. In 1999 we saw the first national conference bringing history educators from all levels and locations to Montreal, then Winnipeg, Halifax, and Vancouver in years following in a national discourse on history education (Seixas, 2002). The first few years of the new millennium witnessed significant developments in the dialogue on history teaching in Canada. The developments discussed here shed some light on the importance of narrative choice and students' historical thinking, but more importantly they frame the investigation and provide a context for new directions in history education.

## **2.2 Historical Understanding**

History is the reconstruction of the traces and accounts of the past, or more particularly, selected moments in the past. History in schools is more than the recitation or rote memorization of names, dates and facts. It is the construction of knowledge claims founded upon subjective decisions made by teachers. Narrative choice is a reflection of conscious decisions made by teachers, in part, to develop cognitive

capacities, moral stances, or critical habits of the mind but also in furtherance of larger citizenship objectives. Curriculum choices are not random, inadvertent or unbiased and are used to service any number of competing and complementary objectives including identity formation, common memory projects, moral reasoning, social justice issues, and nation building. However, the best intentions will not succeed if teachers fail to recognize the interdependence of narrative choice, student understanding and pedagogy. Student understanding of the past and historical thinking are directly impacted by each link. The findings coming out of research on historical understanding help shed light on its complexity.

Findings from the scholarly community shed light on a number of perspectives within the research into historical understanding. One perspective is about the question of substantive vs. procedural choices in teaching history, sometimes referred to as the knowledge vs. process debate. Teaching for content knowledge through rote memorization and factual recall without challenging the facts or interpretations of the facts is one common thread, while the other is in doing the discipline of history through document analysis and an application of the historical method (Holt, 1990; Seixas, 1999; Seixas, Stearns and Wineburg, 2000). However, in doing history content becomes part of the pedagogy because one cannot teach how to do history without narratives, source documents or traces from which to apply the historical method (Seixas, 1999). The debate then, is not about content and process but which content to teach and by what process will students engage the content. Holt (1990) argues that student misconceptions about the past are corrected by applying the historical method to document studies because in learning how to do history students see they are part of

the past-present-future continuum. He means that in doing history they will come to understand that they are creating history, interpreting data and making meaning of the past. Student understanding of the past can be enriched by teachers modeling this critical approach to studying history. Students commonly view history as the memorization of names and dates with little or no understanding of what historical understanding entails or of the important steps historians go through prior to constructing a narrative. Ultimately students cannot be historians because they do not have the tools, analytical skills or background knowledge requisite for deep historical interpretation (Wineburg, 1991). However, in each student lies a narrative, a personal history to connect past and present and to organize the "residua of the past into a form meaningful in the present" (Seixas, 1996, p. 777). In doing history students have an opportunity to learn the attributes of the discipline and make connections between past and present, creating deep understanding (Holt, 1990; Osborne, 1995; Seixas, 1999).

Decisions about how to teach the discipline of history represent one part of the dilemma facing secondary teachers looking to make thoughtful choices about the narratives they will teach. Research on adolescent historical understanding has generated a number of important questions about how they learn, know and understand history. These have significant implications for classroom teachers in the selection of resources, teaching methods and narrative choice. For example, Lee and Ashby (2000) found, in their study of students aged seven to fourteen, that the progression in students' ideas about accounts of the past varied widely among the age groups with some "eight-year-olds [having] more sophisticated ideas than most twelve or even fourteen-year-olds" (p. 212). The study, using different accounts of the same event,



concluded that students have a variety of ideas about how to understand the differing accounts (Lee and Ashby, 2000). Some students suggested that the past was "inaccessible", others that the different accounts were the result of "selections" made by the authors, and some stated that the accounts were a result of differences in the availability of information (p. 212). When confronting the issue of narrative choice the study by Lee and Ashby highlights the problem of student understanding and the selection of sources and accounts to study. Student understanding is influenced by age. Narrative selections made with older adolescents can represent themes and concepts that are more complex.

Research into adolescent historical understanding informs educators that teen age students are less prepared to absorb the complexities of history than older learners (Osborne, 1975; Wineburg, 1991; Seixas, 1999; Boix-Mansilla, 2000) and their ability to understand the past is compounded by questions of epistemology, agency and the development of historical empathy (Seixas, 1996). Students do not come to the table with an understanding of how knowledge is formed or knowledge claims can be disputed. Moreover, they are not equipped with the cognitive and analytical tools to deconstruct narratives and hold them to account for their truth claims. Even when they are able to master the facts research suggests that they will not appropriate the narrative if it does not fit existing socio-cultural frames of reference (Wertsch, 2000). How do mastery and appropriation impact historical understanding? Wertsch (2000) identifies knowing as mastery of the past and believing as appropriation of the past. Appropriation of knowledge is significant for it implies some level of acceptance of the claims made about a given narrative and the integration of those claims into an existing

base of knowledge. The movement from knowledge to appropriation is not based on progression, as some students will never fully take ownership of certain narratives. However, one cannot appropriate something one knows nothing about; thus there is a direct link between knowledge of the past and appropriation. However, as Wertsch (2000) notes, mastery of the facts does not always lead to appropriation because the process of internalizing a narrative is embedded in sociocultural factors beyond the control of the classroom teacher (pp. 39-40). The question of appropriation, or ownership of knowledge claims goes beyond the scope of this paper. However, the research of Wertsch should inform teachers' narrative choice making them aware of the connections among mastery, appropriation and belief.

Schools play an important role in creating the collective identity of society, and the narratives commonly taught in schools reflect this objective by giving substance to the myths of nationhood (Francis, 1997; Paris, 2000). In the BC social studies program this is evidenced in the texts prescribed during the past ten years: *Our Land: Building the West* (Bowers and Garrod, 1987), *Horizons: Canada Moves West* (Cranny, Jarvis, Moles and Seney, 1999) and *Counterpoints: Exploring Canadian Issues* (Cranny and Moles, 2001). The textbooks have been authorized by the Ministry of Education for use in schools to teach the social studies curriculum (*Our Land* is no longer prescribed by the Ministry but remains in use). In each example the content of the textbook, at least in part, establishes the mythology of the nation. For example in *Our Land* we find chapter headings like "Development of the West", "Riel and Rebellion" and three chapters devoted to the evolution of Confederation (Bowers and Garrod, 1987). In *Counterpoints* several chapters are devoted to Canada's role in the wars of the twentieth century, for

example: "Canada and World War I", "Canada and World War II" and "The Cold War Begins" (Cranny and Moles, 2001). The most current text for grade 11, *Counterpoints*, weaves narratives from marginalized groups and deals with social justice issues. However, it also provides many of the myths found in previous texts. I illustrate these examples to clarify the connection between acquisition and appropriation of knowledge, to use Wertsch's terminology, and narrative selection. The choices made by teachers are, in part, dependent upon the textbooks used in the classroom. The appropriation of the nation building myths of Canada's past requires familiarity with the narratives, knowledge of the details, an understanding of their place in a larger story of Canada. Acceptance of these narratives as valid accounts of our development would indicate a kind of appropriation in that it forms tacit acknowledgment that this is how we became a nation. In this light, narrative choice takes on considerable significance with respect to how it will influence student knowledge, ownership and understanding of the past. Appropriation may be less of an issue of truth vs. construction and more of a reflection of the narratives chosen by the teacher to tell a given story. Students, in general, believe that what is taught to them is a truthful account of the past because it comes from an authority figure that seems to know what really happened. Students might question the knowledge claims of a text or teacher if they had significant prior knowledge that contradicts the claims they are being provided.

One of the more common reasons given for teaching history is in its value to provide lessons from the past to help us negotiate crises in the present. However, the ability of adolescents to absorb the lessons of history and apply them to the present is impaired by a number of problems. These include an inability to understand the time-

space continuum of history, an absence of tools for transferring knowledge of past events into present action, falling to “historicize” the past, and incorrectly using the past in the service of present political, moral or social agendas (Boix-Mansilla, 2000, pp. 390-392). Boix-Mansilla’s study of eighth and ninth graders in Boston examined students’ comparative analysis of the Holocaust and the Rwandan genocide. The study explored the relationship between “past and present in history education” because it is largely unexplained but an important function of the study of history (p. 390). Of particular importance for the research in this paper are the connections between narrative choices, student understanding and the selection of resources and teaching methods. Broadly speaking Boix-Mansilla (2000) provides two solutions to the problem of helping students make sense of the past. First, provide multiple, supervised opportunities for engagement with the past in rich, contextualized settings (Boix-Mansilla, 2000). Second, teach the past carefully, with forethought about the connections students can draw and provide them with analytical tools to understand the complex nature of the past and its relationship with the present (Boix-Mansilla, 2000). The study highlights the complexity in understanding how students make sense of the past, but it also urges history teachers to make thoughtful choices in the narratives they teach and the tools through which these narratives are taught and assessed.

### **2.3 Nation Building Narratives**

The most commonly offered response to the question of why history is taught in school is that in learning about the past young Canadians embrace the values, traditions and institutions of civic democracy. In learning Canada’s nation building narrative students are prepared for participation in our democratic institutions and

political processes (Osborne, 1987, 1995; Granatstein, 1998; Sears, 2003). In knowing where we came from, our heritage, traditions, leaders, and systems young Canadians are best prepared for full participation in civic life (Granatstein, p.17). Teaching history creates a nexus point between understanding the past and preparation for future action, social agency and participation in legitimate political processes. However, embedded in each nation building narrative, or "master narrative" (Francis, 1997, p. 10), are myths used to tie Canada's history to current traditions, institutions and values. Francis uses the example of the Canadian Pacific Railway to explain how myth differs from reality, or at least how historical interpretation can put a different spin on the same event (Francis, 1997). He explains the myth of the C.P.R. being that it was central to the creation of Canada by uniting the country from sea to sea, economically, politically, socially, and militarily. In reality the railway was used to oppress Canada's aboriginal people, settle their land with immigrants, and exploit the resources appropriated by the Crown after treaties were signed (Francis, 1997). The validity of each myth is less important than its function in expressing truths about who we are, where we have come from and where we are going. Perpetuating the myths of Canada's nationhood fails to serve the voices of those that are marginalized in our texts and school curriculum.

The nation building narratives commonly found in school textbooks support the view that memory, particularly collective memory is used to forge common identity through shared values, knowledge and understanding of the past (Anderson, 1983; Hamilton, 1994; Francis, 1997; Granatstein, 1998; Hutton, 2000). Historians manage memory in the production of historical narratives and in part define who and what we are as a community. These narratives are selectively chosen by curriculum designers to

inculcate specific values, beliefs and support for the institutional structures of our society. The memories, or narratives, that are left out of the curriculum can be as revealing as those that are included as they tell us much about the bias entrenched in school curriculum. The hidden curriculum is one example of how history can be manipulated in the production of common memory; that is what is left untaught is as important as the content expressly outlined in the core curriculum. If one accepts the postmodernist argument that all history is a construction then the role of memory in shaping collective or national identity is a significant issue for history educators struggling to juggle collective memory projects and postmodern skepticism in our classrooms (Seixas, 2000). The creation of collective memory demands that some narratives be told while others are left out. Awareness of the selective nature of school curriculum and the mythology of nationhood offers teachers an opportunity to challenge, alter or reinterpret these narratives to fit the lived experience of their students and to question the veracity of textbook accounts of our past.

The construction of national memory and collective memory projects infused most modern nation states, through education systems in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The power of collective memory, state mythology and education is well documented. In her seminal work *Long Shadows: Truth, Lies and History*, Erna Paris writes about the power of memory and history in history education (Paris, 2000). The book is multi-layered and examines issues of identity, race, nationhood, and justice from the perspective of memory and how it is preserved, reconstructed, mythologized, and manipulated. A nation that hides from the injustices of its past will not address the wrongs of the present or safeguard the future (Kymlicka, 1999; Paris, 2000). The crux of the history debate,

where fact and myth are reconstructed to tell narratives that will be held in collective memory, is in the question of how to be true to the past without fragmenting it into meaningless pieces. Paris presents the example of Maurice Papon, a senior bureaucrat in charge of deportations during the Vichy government that reigned in southeastern France from 1940-1945. He was directly responsible for the organization and relocation of thousands of French Jews ultimately sent to their deaths in Auschwitz. In the 1990's he was put on trial as a Nazi collaborator. The trial question of Papon's guilt or innocence became less important than the emerging story of how France's post-war history had been manipulated and forged to hide the truth of collaboration and hence the responsibility for war crimes and other state sanctioned injustices (Paris, 2000). The truth had been suppressed by the regime of Charles de Gaulle in an effort to rebuild the psyche of the French people in the aftermath of defeat by Nazi Germany. The French even had a phrase for their false history, *la boue* (the mud) indicating the complexity of terrain they did not want to negotiate or reopen to close scrutiny (Paris, 2000, pp. 80). Collective identity had been forged through the schools, monuments, memorials, museums, and media, but the trials of Klaus Barbie and Maurice Papon forced the French to open a window to the past and examine the truth of what they had come to believe. In the end Papon was convicted (sentenced to ten years imprisonment) for his collaboration with the Nazis and the collective memory of the resistance and collaboration forced a reconsideration of the national memory.

The postmodernist movement opened the door to questioning what is the truth and in history education the truth is viewed as a construction of the traces and accounts from the past (Seixas, 1999). Historical accounts are not mere fabrications, although

they are constructions. The fact that one cannot claim a given interpretation as the truth does not mean that history is mere fiction or that any historical account can be made valid. If this were the case then Holocaust deniers like David Irving would have the same support in the scholarly community as academics like Primo Levi. Research on the connections between history, memory and relics builds on the position that all historical narratives are negotiations between the actual lived past and our memories of that past (Lowenthal, 1985; Holt, 1990; Seixas, 1996; Nora, 1989). Much of the thinking is built on the premise that we can never truly know the past, it will always be removed from our own experience and understanding; therefore all history is constructed for a purpose other than mere knowledge (Lowenthal, 1985). There exists an interrelationship between memory, history and the relics of our past; as time passes memories of the past fade and only reconstructions of the past, aided by relics, can provide a sense of those experiences (Lowenthal, 1985; Holt, 1990; Nora, 1996). Secondary school curricula present fragments of a lived past, largely through textbook sources and often fail to illuminate students to other fragments or narratives. Teachers should consistently apply critical pedagogy to challenge the embedded and hidden messages of such curricula and search for narratives that challenge dominant cultural myths, enlighten new perspectives and question the foundations of society.

The trial of Papon opened connections among memory, history, truth, and reconciliation of the past. Recent events in South Africa with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission are forcing that nation to reexamine its past (Moodley, 1993). In July 2007 the Congress of the United States passed a resolution demanding that Japan apologize to China, Korea and the Philippines over its military's sexual



enslavement of young women during the Second World War (Associated Press, 2007). National narratives, whether they are from France, the United States, Japan, or Canada are important because they aid the formation of collective identity and reinforce cherished ideals, values and institutions (Francis, 1997). They also serve as a base of comparison for counter narratives that challenge the commonly held values, ideals and common memory of the past. However, an ongoing tension exists between these master narratives and counter narratives put forward by feminists, labour historians, First Nations, and others looking to challenge the veracity of the national story. Recognition of this tension is a first step for classroom teachers with respect to making narrative choices. School textbooks and provincial curriculum guides reinforce national myths, however, through careful selection of alternate resources, appropriate assessment tools, critical inquiry, and creative approaches to engage these myths classroom history teachers can expand student understanding of our links to the past.

## **2.4 Citizenship Education**

Schools and more specifically social studies classrooms have been considered ideal places to prepare young Canadians for participation in democratic life and to develop democratic citizenship values like fairness, freedom and equality (Barr, Barth and Shermis, 1977; Longstreet, 1989; Gwyn, 1995; Osborne, 1987, 1995, 1996, 1999; Sears, 2003). The evolution of the nation-state in the 20<sup>th</sup> century necessitated the entrenchment of common values and civic identity and this was most easily accomplished through mandatory schooling. Citizenship is more than legal status or a particular political identity but a set of values and commitments commonly held by the majority. In educational terms it is the transmission of common values and civic identity

to our students. In Canada, as elsewhere, citizenship in this context usually contains four elements: national consciousness or identity, political literacy, the observance of rights and duties, and the indoctrination of values, particularly those associated with liberal democracy (Osborne, 1999, Evans and Hundy, 2000). Osborne (1999) clearly articulates the role of history in the making of citizens, he writes:

History was the major vehicle for the creation of national identity and patriotism. Anything that could be shown to contribute to the building of the nation was duly commemorated and described as good. Anything that did not was either condemned or ignored as irrelevant (p. 31).

In the context of teaching history for citizenship transmission in Canada, one could emphasize colonial conquest, European exploration, confederation, mythic heroes, and the pioneer settlers. In this construct of national history the narratives of women, aboriginal peoples, the working class and ethnic minorities are often excluded (Osborne, 1999, p. 31). While other approaches to teaching history for citizenship exist, they are less likely to be found in current social studies classrooms.

Clark and Case articulate a rationale for citizenship education as fitting in one or more of four categories including social initiation, social reformation, personal development, and academic understanding (Clark and Case, 1999, p. 18). Content and rationale in citizenship education are similar from model to model, however a review of scholarship on the topic suggests a wide range of uses of history within citizenship education models and methods. In an attempt to illustrate the differences Clark and Case use the example of John A. Macdonald, describing four approaches to teaching about our first prime minister, each loosely fitting a rationale for citizenship education. A study of Sir John A Macdonald could be done to debunk the mythology about his life (social reformation), support his status as a national hero (social initiation), provide

evidence of both cases and give students the tools to decide for themselves (academic understanding), and allow the students to choose whether to study the issue of Macdonald as a national hero (personal development) (pp.24-25). The framework is useful to illustrate how different approaches to the citizenship question can impact narrative choice and teaching methodology. The approaches are not discreet or to be taught independently of one another, but they do not lend themselves easily to simultaneous application in the classroom (p. 24). Social initiation, akin to Barr, Barth and Shermis' (1977) concept of citizenship transmission, is likely to be constructed around a mononarrative and single authoritative text source for the transmission of national mythology (p. 25). Whereas, a program built upon a social reformation approach would advocate the use of counter narratives, alternative interpretations and multiple accounts and sources (Clark and Case, 1999).

The use of history to indoctrinate citizens with propaganda is well established, one need look to any of the fascist or totalitarian regimes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century for evidence. How then can an argument be made to support teaching Canadian history without being excessively nativist, patriotic or ideological? Conversely, is it possible to teach history without it becoming a collection of moral narratives, unstructured and tied together only by a humanist construct? In a modern multiethnic state like Canada the challenge is significant. There are too many narratives, perspectives and values to teach; therefore, choices must be made (Osborne, 1995). This brings the conversation back to the issue of narrative choice. History provides lessons to help identify what Fenton termed "a good man", "a good life" and "a good society" (Fenton, 1971). Fenton did not express that history alone could instill, in our students, the requisite knowledge

necessary to answer these humanistic concepts, but he articulated the underlying goals, a conceptual pathway with which choices in subject matter could be made (Fenton, 1971). Research in history education, developments in other social science disciplines and changes in historiography, since Fenton, offer other conceptions of what should direct curriculum choice. What we can take from his framework, among many others, is the need to make careful choices in curriculum that are clearly tied to specific goals and pedagogy that will aid student understanding and meet the overarching objectives. Narrative choice is critical, but so are the methods and teaching strategies that must help students learn, know and understand the lessons embedded in the curriculum. Shared political principles like justice, equality, tolerance, and civility are helpful in meeting the goal, but without a larger framework, a narrative structure to forge a common identity, these ideals serve no purpose. Narrative fills the gaps between the ideals, values and principles we want to teach and a way of connecting these constructs to real lives, lived experiences and future action.

## **2.5 Holocaust Education**

Teaching about the Holocaust brings significant challenges to history educators, but it also provide some of the most fertile ground for engaging our students' in lessons about apathy, indifference, abuse of power, identity, peer pressure, justice, fairness, and obedience. Study of the Holocaust speaks to students interests because it raises questions about things they confront in their daily lives, making connections with their lived experience. "The history of the Holocaust provides one of the most effective, and most extensively documented, subjects for a pedagogical examination of human behaviour." (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2001,p. 1). Critics argue that

there is little that can be learned from an event so inaccessible and so far removed from our lived experience (Novick, 1999). How do students learn from watching a mother torn from her child, then buried alive? Feinberg and Totten (2001) suggest that one must start by understanding the difference between learning *about* the Holocaust and learning *from* the Holocaust (p. 11). In the resource guide provided by the museum the USHMM provides fourteen methodological considerations for teachers wanting to teach the Holocaust. The list is comprehensive but focuses on being specific with language, avoiding simplistic cause-effect explanations, using the historical method, contextualizing the events, and demonstrating sensitivity in choice of narratives and resources (USHMM, 2001, pp. 3-8). Research on teaching about the Holocaust moves the conversation in a large number of directions about selection of materials and topics, methodological approaches, cautions, the lessons, and of its place in common memory. This section will review these findings and relate them to issues of historical understanding, students' historical thinking and narrative choice.

Findings from research suggest that rationale, methodology, resource selection, and content choice have a significant impact on student learning when studying the Holocaust (Feinberg, Fernekes and Totten, 2001, Schweber, 2004). How do teachers commonly instruct their students about the Holocaust? Simone Schweber examined the classroom practice of four master teachers, each teaching the Holocaust using different methodological approaches (Schweber, 2004). One followed the curriculum and guidelines of the *Facing History, Facing Ourselves* organization; the second relied on lecture and moral aphorisms; the third used a simulation game; and the last relied on film and drama mixed with historical accounts (Schweber, 2004). Her analysis of the

four classroom experiences led her to conclude that the students learned more about themselves, the nature of others and humanity than the specific subject matter of the Holocaust (Schweber, 2004). Moreover, she suggests that the moral impact of the Holocaust may have come from the way in which the units were taught and not so much the topic (Schweber, 2004). Moral education, not Holocaust education seems to be the winner in the four classrooms she examined in the study. Novick (1999) has suggested that the overpowering moral weight of the Holocaust precludes any kind of independent historical lessons to be drawn. Feinberg and Totten (2001) counter that argument and state that an effective Holocaust curriculum encourages active engagement of the students, critical thought and reflection, multiple narratives, and historical complexity.

Are there inherently moral messages in the Holocaust? Is it possible to look beyond the overwhelming weight of historical empathy when studying the Holocaust? Novick suggests that the dichotomy of universal moral messages and the uniqueness of the event may cause students to trivialize other crimes, rather than developing awareness (Novick, 1999). Students would falsely compare the Holocaust with other genocides and reduce their tragedy in an effort to comprehend more recent examples. Furthermore, the moral messages we seek may only come about by "pre-empting" the Holocaust to use its grim details to fortify commitments to moral lessons (Feinberg and Totten, 2001). The Holocaust is reduced to a tragic series of barbaric acts, used to service a moral agenda and reinforce the value of liberal democratic institutions deemed incapable of setting in motion violations of human rights on an epic scale. Schweber (2004) argues that moral messages are transmitted when teaching about the Holocaust and are implicit in the selection of materials and explicit in the humanist objectives of

teaching about human tragedy and injustice. They are implicit because a history curriculum built around the Holocaust must confront the students' sense of right, wrong, just, and unjust regardless of how the lessons taught. The messages are explicit in the specific manner in which the tragedy is taught, discussed, portrayed, or described. Lessons structured on experiential, value laden or fact-based approaches contain moral messages and meanings intended or not (Schweber, 2004, p. 151). Unlike learning tennis or playing music students cannot decline the moral messages in the curriculum. It is an inheritance, though they may choose how to employ this inheritance for good or ill (Carr, 2000). If the Holocaust is to become one of many historical lessons fit to teach or habituate a set of moral principles then it loses much weight in the battle over narrative choice in the classroom.

A distinction can be made between the function of history for its ability to instill values or provide moral lessons, and history instruction that promotes the transmission of knowledge (Todorov, 1995). It is the difference between teaching lessons about the Holocaust as opposed to teaching lessons from the Holocaust. Both occur in social studies classrooms across the province and are not mutually exclusive goals. In teaching about the Holocaust one would focus on factual details, chronology, context, and its evolution. In learning from the Holocaust one would focus on lessons about humanity, good and evil, respect for human life, and the determination to change the world. However, as Schweber notes, the orientation, rationale and methodology will dictate what the students learn regardless of what a teacher might intend (Schweber, 2004). Common knowledge of the facts of the Holocaust does not indicate accurate knowledge. Lessons must be structured to provide the necessary depth, detail, context,

and understanding needed to allow students to traverse the “inaccessibility” of the Holocaust (Feinberg and Totten, 2001). In using historical tragedy to redeem the past and educate we tap into a humanist approach, one that lies in the “universality of humanity” (Todorov, 1995). Yet, in the case of the Holocaust, we are confronted with Novick’s (1999) dichotomy; how can it be unique and universal? Totten (1998) responds to the question of its unique status and the value of the event to leverage future action:

The Holocaust is not simply another event in the history of the world; it has immense ramifications. It colours who we are as human beings and what it means to live in a world in which genocide has become rather commonplace. For these reasons, it is vitally significant to devise powerful and pedagogically sound lessons that enable students to glean unique insights into the history of the Holocaust and leave them with something of importance to ponder far past the conclusion of the lesson itself (p. 30).

Notwithstanding the challenge in teaching the Holocaust the research suggests that there is considerable value for teachers and students in the study of the event. The selective and purposeful use of film, text, photographs, artifacts, first hand testimonies and art can allow educators to support student learning about and from the Holocaust. Its uniqueness in world history can be harnessed effectively if done with a clear sense of purpose, sound pedagogy and thoughtful selection of resources.

Trauma histories, like the Holocaust, internment of Japanese Canadians, or rape of Nanking require history educators to choose methods, materials and intended outcomes thoughtfully. Trauma history is different from other kinds of history because the claims of the victims and the suffering they endured compel educators and students to find the truth, to find someone to blame for such inhumanity. We want to know how and why it happened, and who to blame. It is part of the human condition to want answers in the face of terrible physical, emotional and psychological suffering. Internal



positions on identity, prejudice, discrimination, and morality are brought by our students to trauma studies and must be confronted, accepted and considered prior to teaching. We are conflicted by the desire to accurately promote and support the claims of the victims of terrible atrocities while keeping an open eye to being critical of the traces and accounts for bias, error, inaccuracy, or distortion (La Capra, 2001). The testimony of survivors, a critical link in the evidentiary base for such histories, is complicated by the failings of oral histories limited by time, space and perspective (La Capra, 2001). The issue of historical empathy is clouded by "objectified approaches, cruel judgments, and the feelings of being emotionally burned by the evidence" with events like the Holocaust (La Capra, 2001). The sight of one crematorium, death camp or naked corpse will profoundly influence the objectivity of any student. Yet, historical study asks us to cast a critical eye, to be skeptics. It is difficult for students to rationalize both positions. We cannot adequately display historical empathy because we cannot assume the voice of the victim no matter what methodology is employed (La Capra, 2001). Yet, a study of the Holocaust inevitably leads to the desire to do right by the victims and survivors. It is ethically desirable to come to terms with such trauma to serve memory both individually and collectively, but how we come to terms with it and for what purpose remains difficult for teachers and students (Habermas, 1989).

### **3 Teacher as Researcher**

#### **3.1 The Case Study**

The research design for this investigation followed a case-study methodology, in that it defined a research question, selected appropriate cases, determined data gathering and analysis techniques, collected data in the field, and analyzed the data (Soy, 1997; Palys, 1997). It is one of several traditions in the field of qualitative research, widely used in education research (Borg, Gall and Gall, 1996). Case study research is commonly used to investigate groups, communities and organizations, and is an effective means of doing comparative studies, thus it is well suited for use in classroom investigations (Best and Kahn, 1998). The case study method is employed to accomplish one of three things: "produce descriptions of a phenomena, to develop possible explanations of it or to evaluate the phenomena" (Borg, Gall, Gall, 1996, p. 549). This research study adopted a case study approach to help explain the relationship between teachers' narrative choice and students' historical thinking. A case study approach must, of course, identify discreet cases for research. In this study three classes of Social Studies 11, studying the Holocaust, formed the base case for comparative analysis. However, this investigation also incorporated a within-case analysis of the three teaching resources used in teaching the unit. As a within-case comparative analysis I examined the impact of narrative choice on each class by investigating the outcome of using three different teaching resources. The study examined the effects of teaching Social Studies 11 students using different Holocaust narratives and resources in each class, looking for causal or relational patterns.

In the study I played the dual role of teacher and researcher. There are disadvantages inherent in playing both roles while conducting an investigation. The relationship between teacher and student is one of the most trusted, yet, imbalanced relationships because power is not equally distributed or applied. Students feel compelled to give specific types of answers to avoid controversy and display a tendency to provide answers the teacher would like, as opposed to giving authentic responses (Palys, 1997). Subjectivity is a concern when conducting research as a participant and observer to the process, particularly with respect to the impact of internal bias on the findings (Borg, Gall, Gall, 1996). The "power of the text" is in the hands of the researcher, therefore, the students cannot influence how their words and ideas will be interpreted or used after the data are collected (Palys, 1997, p. 206). For some students this can impact how they approach the unit of study, influence participation in assigned tasks and potentially alter the kinds of responses given. In acknowledging the influence of bias and preconceptions on the research setting I reduced internal bias by confronting how these impacted the findings. However, it is certain that the research was affected regardless of precautionary steps on my part. In this investigation bias was evident in my selection of Holocaust narratives, resources and learning outcomes. Each formed an integral part of the research setting reflecting bias toward social justice teaching, moral education and an emphasis on critical inquiry. While the students were free to draw independent conclusions the unit was shaped in such a way as to make them confront the moral dimensions of the Holocaust, thus, they were not free to write on topics that did not relate to my research question. The impact of this bias on the classroom setting will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 6.

Notwithstanding the limitations of playing both teacher and researcher roles in an investigation there are some advantages. For example, it allowed me to make informed decisions in the selection of resources and to account for the different student dynamics in each block. The teaching resources and lesson plans were well supported by my knowledge of the students' academic and behavioural characteristics. The familiarity with individual students, classroom setting and curriculum made the transition to this unit of study seamless, reducing the disruption to routines and expectations that would occur if I were to conduct my research in a new setting. Additionally, there is support in qualitative research literature for playing both roles effectively with minimal impairment to the validity of the findings (Borg, Gall, Gall, 1996; Palys 1997). The findings are comparative in nature and do not rely excessively on individual student responses, again minimizing the impact of my playing both roles. Logistically the investigation would have assumed a more complex structure and challenging implementation if I were to investigate in a different classroom. It would have been equally difficult to get a colleague to teach the lessons I designed, while I observed. Both changes could offer different insights and findings. However, in this case they were not plausible given constraints of time, location and support.

The data-collection process is an important aspect of case study research. Counting, categorizing and summarizing data are common to the qualitative research process (Borg, Gall, Gall, 1996; Palys, 1997; Best and Kahn, 1998). Data collection requires careful consideration of techniques, analysis and interpretation. Commonly used forms of data include observation notes, interviews, document review, and questionnaires (Best and Kahn, 1998). For this investigation the data came from student

essay responses collected at the end of the teaching unit, and secondarily from very informal classroom observations (these were not supported by a journal/notebook). The data were used to support or refute causal links between teachers' narrative choice, resource selection and students' historical thinking. Student interviews were not conducted as part of this study because of time constraints, although there would have been considerable value in doing post-unit interviews. The use of pre-test and post-test data would also have supported the study. They were not considered valuable at the time of the investigation because I was not specifically looking to measure changes in knowledge about the Holocaust. However, in hindsight this would have added a valuable dimension to the analysis and interpretation of data. The limitations of the data sample used here will be discussed in greater detail in Chapters 5 and 6. The data pool consisted of student writing and was analyzed to develop categories for sorting and grouping. None of the categories or subcategories had been developed prior to the investigation, each coming solely out of the data. In the first run through the data twenty-eight categories were created (see Appendix 5). The categories were then revised and simplified by finding concepts common to one or more of the initial categories, forming subcategories and reducing the total to four (see Table 5.2 in Chapter 5). These "threads" and "themes" as they are termed were used to analyze and interpret the data. A more detailed analysis of the data, threads and themes can be found in Chapter 5.

The investigation was structured around teaching a unit on the Holocaust to three classes of Social Studies 11 students, then examining their responses to an essay question on remembering the Holocaust. My interest was to find causal links between

student writing and the narrative choices made in the teaching unit. I was also looking for links between differences in student responses and the three varied teaching resources. The essay called upon the students to reflect upon their understanding of the Holocaust and assert or refute an obligation to remember the event. The study evolved in four distinct phases. In phase one students were provided with a primer on the Holocaust using text readings, a slideshow (powerpoint) presentation and primary source materials. In phase two each class was provided with a learning resource that was different in structure, format and narrative. These included a feature film, graphic novel (comic book style) and a discovery kit filled with artifacts. In phase three the students wrote an essay about memory, obligation to remember and forms of remembrance. In the last phase the essay samples were collected, sorted, categorized, analyzed and interpreted.

Each class was provided with one resource distinct from the others to open opportunities for differences in experiential learning. One class viewed Roman Polanski's feature film, *The Pianist*, to further explore and enrich their study of the Holocaust. The film engaged student auditory and visual senses, drawing them in to the tragedy emotionally, and with a sense of immediacy. The second class read Art Spiegelman's two part graphic novel *Maus*, engaging tactile and imaginary capacities of the students in a manner distinctly different from the film. The third class examined and interpreted artifact resources from the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre's discovery kit, titled *Outside the Attic Walls*. The kit, contained in a suitcase, has artifacts including photographs, clothing, toys, documents, and other physical representations of the Holocaust. The items engaged the sensory and tactile senses, but in a manner

different from the graphic novel. A more detailed description of the three resources can be found in Chapter 4.

### **3.2 The Three Classes**

The classes chosen for this investigation were composed of students enrolled in Social Studies 11 at an urban secondary school. All of the classes were under my care for the 2006-2007 school year. The school is an 8-12 high school in a neighbourhood with mixed residential, light industrial, agricultural, and small business land use. The school is entering its eleventh year of service, replacing the old junior high when the school district changed from a junior high/senior high system to an 8-12 system in 1996. The school is situated in a socio-economically and ethnically diverse section of the city with a large percentage of English as a second language students and a large number of families that have immigrated to Canada in the past ten years. An informal survey of languages indicates over fifty different home languages common to the students enrolled in the school with most speaking a language other than English at home. Ethnically the school has significant representation from South Asia including Indian, Chinese (Hong Kong, Taiwan and China), Filipino, Vietnamese, as well as Central America groups (Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua) and an increasing number of students from the Middle East (Afghanistan, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, and U.A.E.). The students come from a wide range of religious affiliations and there are temples, mosques, synagogues, churches, and a gurdwara geographically central to the school and community. Never ranked in the top fifty of the Fraser Institute's Annual Report on Schools the school has always had a broad mix academically with many high achieving

students graduating with scholarships, but also a large number pursuing an interest in trades and a significant number of students with learning challenges.

The students chosen for the research investigation were enrolled in three Social Studies 11 blocks taught by me during 2006-2007. A total of six blocks of Social Studies 11 were run in that year, thus, my classes represent half of the total enrolled in Social Studies 11. The blocks were not on the same day with blocks B and C on day two and block A on day one of a rotating timetable (these are not the actual block designations). Classes repeat the same time slot and day once every two weeks because the timetable rotates between days (one and two) and time slots (four periods of 75 minutes). This is significant because the energy level of students and teachers can be impacted by the time in which a class operates. The composition of the classes was very similar in the range of ethnocultural backgrounds, income levels, class size (27, 28 and 27), and gender balance (45%-55%). The high school does not offer honours or enriched social studies programs separate from the standard course options in grades 8-11. Thus the counselors attempt to balance all classes with regard to academic ability and need, gender, English language proficiency, and class size. Notwithstanding changes to class size, composition and language proficiency under the provincial Liberal government the classes would not represent a deviation from that found in many urban public schools across the province.

In the course of teaching the classes it became evident that block C was not as academically capable or committed as my two other classes. It had more students repeating Social Studies 11, two students that had not passed Social Studies 10 but were promoted into the class, several had second language issues, and many



demonstrated poor attendance or tardiness. Additionally, the block had a number of students with identifiable learning issues requiring modification or adaptation of the learning outcomes and expectations. Modification and adaptation impacts the design of lessons, assessment practices, teaching strategies, and class discussion. Over the course of the first and second semesters the median grades achieved in the three classes show that block C had lower rates of academic success; this was linked to poor attendance, tardiness issues, and disinterest in class wide discussions on topical or historic issues. The opposite can be stated for block A, with block B very similar to A. See *table 3.1* for the grade distribution for all three classes.

*Table 3.1     Distribution of Grades*

Block	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation	High Score	Low Score	Number of students below 60%
A	66%	68%	19%	93%	15%	9
B	66%	74%	18%	87%	28%	9
C	61%	62%	17%	89%	25%	14

The composition of the classes had an impact on student achievement and overall tone. Block A had two grade 12 students repeating the course, one student with an identified learning issue, four ESL students, but consistently productive and vibrant issues-based discussions. In contrast, block C had five students repeating the course, four with identified learning issues, two transferred from the district alternative school, eight English as Second Language students, and seven grade 12's.

The mean grades for the three classes indicate a significant difference between block C and the other classes. Blocks A and B have a similar mean grade at 66% while

the mean in block C is 61%. However, the mean grade only tells a part of the story because the average does not reflect the apathy or indifference toward the study of history. At the beginning of third term blocks A and B had nine students below 60%, whereas block C had fourteen. Students between 40%-49% in social studies 11 receive the option to take remedial summer school, while those below 40% receive a failing grade and must repeat the course. In contrast block C had eight students below 50% and five of those would receive failing grades. Thus, block C had more than twice as many students failing and a third more earning a minimal pass. Blocks A and B had a higher percentage of students above 60% grades, with 18 and 19 students respectively while, block C had only 13 students above that standard at the start of third term. The gender balance between the classes was similar with each class falling within a range of 45% -55% male/female students. These issues informed both my choice of learning resources and my interpretation of the data collected from the classes at the end of the teaching unit. This will be discussed in greater detail in the next section.

### **3.3 The Teaching Unit**

A study of the Holocaust opens significant opportunities to explore issues relevant to living in contemporary society, such as anti-Semitism, the denial of civil, political and economic rights, imprisonment, torture and extermination, confiscation and sale of property, and state sanctioned systemic discrimination. A study of the Holocaust demands that the students confront their moral frameworks, values and belief systems. The event is well situated for study in Social Studies 11 as the B.C. curriculum dedicates a section to the study of World War II as well as Canada's Jewish refugee policies, liberation of death camps, and participation in the Nuremberg trials. The varied

narratives of the Holocaust offer numerous opportunities for students to engage with morally complex themes and to approach them through a range of media. Many students are familiar with the stories of Anne Frank, Oscar Schindler, Elie Weisel, and of the death camps at Auschwitz, Treblinka, Sobibor and Bergen-Belsen. Within each narrative and many others lie opportunities to explore the history of the Holocaust in all of its complexity and trauma. The unit challenged the student's belief systems, understandings of the Holocaust and connections between past injustice and present moral dilemmas. In recognition of the complexity of the unit I attempted to use vibrant, diverse and academically challenging resources in the classes. The curriculum materials used in teaching the Holocaust included: a student backgrounder (a power point slide show), textbook *Counterpoints: Exploring Canadian issues* (Cranny and Moles, 2001), primary source documents on the Nuremberg Laws and Kristalnacht, and the individualized teaching resources built around *The Pianist*, *Maus* or the *VHEC Discovery Kit*.

On the first day of the unit the topic was introduced and the students were asked to reflect on two questions provided in a handout, prior to engaging textbooks, documents or other sources of information about the Holocaust. It called upon them to use only their prior knowledge. The first question asked, why did the Holocaust happen, while the second was, what lessons can be drawn from a study of the Holocaust? This gave students an opportunity to evaluate their present understandings and prior knowledge of the Holocaust before entering into the substance of the teaching unit. It also allowed me to form some preliminary thoughts about the base of knowledge held by each class and their general interest in the topic. Additionally, we were able to clarify

some of the misconceptions about the Holocaust prior to engaging in the study. For example, the classes discussed the idea of single cause explanations, oversimplification of factors and misdirected comparisons to other genocides. No writing was collected and all of the discussions were done without specific reference to text resources or other sources of information. The depth of knowledge and understanding was largely superficial and each of the classes identified a number of important questions that were unclear at that point, particularly with respect to the perpetrators and their motivations (an introduction to the unit and the questions can be found in Appendix 1). It should be noted at this point that about seven to ten students in each class had completed research and writing on the Holocaust as part of a human rights unit in which they had studied Canada's role in accepting Jewish refugees in the late 1930's and after the end of World War II (see *Canada and The Holocaust: Social Responsibility and Global Citizenship*, BC Ministry of Education, 1999).

The second class began with a review of our informal discussions from day one and an explanation of our next steps largely constructed around the slide show. The slide show was presented over a series of blocks in times ranging from 20-45 minutes totaling six classes over a ten day period, and was repeated for each of the three classes. Students were tasked with completing a set of web-notes loosely following the topics presented in the slide show and were told to review their *Counterpoints* (Cranny and Moles, 2001, pp. 92-98, 119-122) text, to fill in additional details. The classes were informed that the web notes would be graded and were to be used in support of the summative writing assignment coming at the end of the study. The slide show, designed and prepared by me for this set of lessons, contained an overview of the Holocaust, a

primer of sorts, organized on the following headings: *Historical Background, Eugenics and Race, Evolution 1933-1945, The Perpetrators of The Holocaust*. Within the segment titled *Evolution 1933-1945*, subheadings included *Concentration and Labour Camps, Persecution, Euthanasia, Ghettos, Death Squads, Extermination Camps and Death Marches*. The section titled *The Perpetrators of The Holocaust* presented the key points in Daniel Goldhagen's controversial work *Hitler's Willing Executioners* (Goldhagen, 1996). In it he proposed a non-conventional view of what motivated average men and women to carry out horrible acts of barbarity during the Holocaust. It should be noted that his work came under intense criticism in academic circles (Hilberg, 1997). However, his framework was used to give some direction to class conversations about the perpetrators and open questions into the complexity of causal links. The presentation concluded with a series of six questions asking students to reflect on connections between the past, present and future with respect to remembering the Holocaust. The slideshow not only provided a base of facts, dates, place names, people, and events about the Holocaust, it illustrated the complexity of its evolution and progression. It was particularly important that the students understood that the severe anti-Semitism shown by many of the German people was a product of many layers of racial, economic, social, religious, political, and historic developments. I was very concerned with avoiding simple explanations for the barbarity of the perpetrators and that the students would want to find one neat and tidy explanation for how such an event could have transpired. Thus, slides that focused on race, racialization, eugenics, Nazi ideology, and economics were discussed in some detail to help contextualize the evolution of the event without demeaning the cruelty displayed by the perpetrators. It

was not intended to explain or justify the acts but as an opportunity to see the complexity of what transpired in the years leading into the Holocaust.

In addition to the slideshow and text readings students were provided with two primary source documents. One was a translated copy of the *Law for the Protection of German Blood* commonly referred to as the Nuremberg Laws and the second a translation of Reichsmarschall, Herman Goering's diatribe on *Kristalnacht*, with accompanying summaries to assist students in contextualizing the event within the Holocaust history. These two documents were selected to provide students with an opportunity to work with actual traces of the past as sources, and because each spoke to the race-based ideological stance of the Nazi Party. The documents were edited translations and were discussed in class as examples of how the racist ideology of the Nazi Party was embedded in the broader German public by force of law and the imposition of severe state sanctions. Here the students engaged in 'doing' history and were provided with a document analysis rubric and set of guiding questions (see Appendices 6 and 7). Lastly, students were given copies of a *Social Studies Eleven: Student Workbook* (Falk, 2005, pp. 91-93, 110-112) to round out the web notes and complete the background knowledge component of the unit. The notebook defines common terms, outlines key events and presents information in chronological order supporting student learning. A total of seven classes, each seventy-five minutes long, were needed to complete the introduction, backgrounder, notes, document analysis, and preliminary discussions about the Holocaust.

The classes that followed were structured around the use of three different resources to complete the unit and prepare the students for their summative writing

assignment. Roman Polanski's film *The Pianist*, Art Spiegelman's graphic novel *Maus*, and a *Discovery Kit* of artifacts from the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre. Each of the resources will be described and discussed in further detail in Chapter 4, however a brief overview of the resources is provided here to contextualize their placement in the teaching unit. The three were selected because they provide a variety of interactive entry points in the study of the Holocaust and for the differences in how they would impact the different senses of the students.

The film *The Pianist* conveys cinematic directness and emotional candor in a manner quite different than found in the other commonly used film on the Holocaust, *Schindler's List*. Its power rests with the film's absence of a clear explanation for why Szpilman survives while others die, thus avoiding neat or tidy simplifications for the variety of experience we encounter when studying the Holocaust. Cartoonist Art Spiegelman's graphic novel *Maus* tells the story of the Holocaust through the testimony of a survivor, Art's father Vladek, but in a form and format that defies the seriousness and humility with which one expects with depictions of the event. However, it is the juxtaposition of the comic form and the horror of the Holocaust that reaches out to the reader's and engages them in the story. The *Discovery Kit* brings a kind of experience to the students different in emotional attachment and sensory involvement. In using artifacts or traces of past lives, the students were invited to touch and to feel the Holocaust experience, if in a very selective and restrictive manner. The artifacts do not inherently have the emotional draw of *The Pianist* or *Maus* but invite the students to cross temporal boundaries and feel items that actually came from the time and event in question (some but not all of the artifacts were replicas), and they engage the

imagination of students in a manner unique to the three resources. The placement of the resources after providing students with background knowledge about the Holocaust was intentional. Each resource required prior knowledge to draw out the depth and complexity they offer and to ground the different narratives in context, allowing the students to orient their historical thinking.

Each of the three resources was chosen for the specific kind of experience it would bring to the students and the impact the resources might have on student understanding. This is discussed in more detail in Chapters 4 and 5. The choice of which resource to pair with each class was done with considerable forethought. The block C class consistently demonstrated disinterest in class-based discussion, thoughtful reflection of meaningful issues, and an inability to empathize with historic events. For these reasons they were assigned the *VHEC Discovery Kit* as I thought it would compel the students to engage their imaginations and bring them directly in contact with artifacts from the Holocaust. The trunk held numerous artifacts, analysis templates and directions for a stations teaching strategy. The students would move from station to station handling, interpreting and reflecting on these traces of the past. At each station they were asked to complete a standardized rubric in which they interpreted the substance and meaning of each artifact in relation to the Holocaust.

Block A was assigned the feature film *The Pianist*, an Academy Award winning film from 2002 directed by Holocaust survivor Roman Polanski, while block B was provided with the graphic novel *Maus*. The forethought for each of these blocks was not as significant as with block C because the comparative differences in academic achievement and class participation are not as evident in these two classes.



Notwithstanding the similarities I believed that the block A was more capable of engaging in the visual and emotional experiences provided in *The Pianist* because of my perception that this class was more thoughtful and deliberate in their approach to assignments that required reflection or analysis. A review of the data collected from the class provides support for my perception because the students in block A had the highest percentage of completed response journals (this is discussed in Chapter 5). I also believed that the block B class would be more engaged by the graphic novel and its unique way of telling a very complex narrative. This group was highly engaged in the novel study and completed the various question sets and analysis questions from which we based a number of classroom conversations on the complexity of the Holocaust and its impact on Art and his father.

In the final phase of the unit, after the classes had finished with *The Pianist*, *Maus* and the *VHEC Discovery Kit*, the students were directed back to the Holocaust slide show with a section on the perpetrators. A brief discussion was held with each class about what motivated the perpetrators of the Holocaust. Using a framework outlined by Goldhagen (1996) five perspectives about the motivation of the perpetrators were introduced (pp. 10-12). The perspectives, taken from the research literature, included theories about external compulsion, willful blindness, social pressure, and fragmentation. The class was then presented with Goldhagen's conception of motivation or cause that moves away from traditional theories about the perpetrators to bring culpability to a much larger swath of German society. The view was and remains controversial but was an important step to help the students move away from simplistic explanations or understandings about why and how people could commit such barbaric

and inhumane acts. The questions and discussion also aided me in pulling together one of the core concepts discussed with the class during the background phase of the lesson sequence with the themes in Goldhagen's book. I specifically wanted to link the involvement of ordinary people in the Holocaust and the race theories in my slide show. I hoped that by illustrating the connection between identity, race and persecution my students could make relevant connections to the present. It was important for me to help the students in each class see that a number of complex intersecting elements created the environment in which the Holocaust occurred and not a man, an ideology or the military.

In preparation for the final writing phase students were provided with a focus question and six prompts relating to memory, trauma, history, and preservation of the past. The question called upon the students to consider sites of memory, physical traces of the Holocaust, legislating teaching the Holocaust, the prosecution of Holocaust deniers, and the construction of museums. The discussion started with some reflection on how we are connected to the past. The students had discussed the topic earlier in the semester but it seemed appropriate to reintroduce it here to frame the essay topic. The essay question was framed as: *To what extent do we owe an obligation to remember the Holocaust?* The prompts offered some idea of how such an obligation could be met, but did not direct them to any one conception. The prompts included statements about memorials, museums, school curricula, and preservation of the relics of the Holocaust as means through which an obligation could be settled. The only guidelines were that they address the question directly and they give some reference to the prompts. The students were not directed to discuss the varied instructional

resource, but it was expected that they would make use of the various sources of information from the unit. The essays were collected, graded and returned prior to their use in this study. A summary and analysis of the students' essays is found in Chapter 5.

#### 4 Textual Analysis of The Pianist, Maus and VHEC Discovery Kit

How does one begin to consider what resources, medium or genre to use when teaching the Holocaust? Philosopher Berel Lang (1990) in *Act and Idea in the Nazi Genocide* noted that in the years following the Holocaust those that faced the attempted annihilation, those that perpetrated or were indifferent to it, and those with good intentions “found themselves at a moment when there was little to be said, when nothing that might give a shape to the future seemed likely or even possible beside the actuality that had occurred” (Lang, 1990, p. 228). The act of genocide on the scale perpetrated in the Holocaust confounds any measure of interpretation, description, depiction, or rendition, then or now (Lang, 1990). Yet, he acknowledged that in the years soon after, discourse began with hypotheses, narratives, denials, and works of judgment. This was followed by the institutionalization of the event in memorials, museums, film, literature, schools, and libraries (Lang, 1990, p.229). For educators Lang relays an important message about the limitations of any text that attempts to convey meaning about the Holocaust. Some critics have noted that the Holocaust “requires an elevated genre, that it is the stuff of high literature and should not be desecrated by allowing low genres to communicate the destruction of the European Jews” (Leventhal, 1995, p.1). In the six decades since 1945 representations of the Holocaust have taken all of these forms, as well as feature film, documentary, photo collections, and many others. Narrative choices made when teaching the Holocaust require greater sensitivity than in other historical events, because of the graphic and brutal nature of the crimes committed.

This chapter will review and put into context the three resources chosen to teach about the Holocaust in my classroom: the graphic novel *Maus*, the film *The Pianist* and the discovery kit *Outside the Attic Walls*. Robert Leventhal (1995) exposes the complexity of texts and representations of the Holocaust, but does so by supporting the use of the graphic novel *Maus* as an appropriate and compelling narrative rendition of the event. He suggests that in the discourse about the Holocaust critics have elevated the event making it “the stuff of ‘high’ literature” (p.2). Claude Lanzmann’s film, *Shoah* (1985), and Elie Wiesel’s Holocaust memoir, *Night* (1958), would represent the ‘high’ genre. Art Spiegelman in his use of the comic book as the textual medium succeeds in breaking the “taboo or ritualized fixity of confronting the Holocaust” in a form considered non-traditional for a representation of the Holocaust (Leventhal, 1995, p. 2). However, *Maus: A Survivor’s Tale* allows an accessibility to the event and the complex trauma suffered by his family in a medium that speaks to a large and diverse audience, both young and old, but it is of particular value to adolescent age students because of the fusion of graphic art, caricature, story telling, and human suffering. In the dramatic film *The Pianist*, director Roman Polanski succeeds in telling his story of Holocaust survival through the eyes of noted pianist Wladyslaw Szpilman. Film has the capacity to engage the emotional and affective domains of students through the use of powerful imagery, dramatic narration and the emotive force of music. The power of images as text cannot be understated when studying historical tragedy because implicit and explicit messages require careful deconstruction to aid student understanding (Werner, 2002). The *Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre Discovery Kit* uses genuine and replica artifacts to teach about the Holocaust. The kit represents a different educational medium than

that of film or graphic novel in that the artifacts require the direct engagement of the student to bring the tragedy into the present.

#### **4.1 Maus: A Graphic Novel**

Art Spiegelman's *Maus* was first published in *Raw* magazine between 1980-1991 as a series of episodes periodically mixed in with the standard storylines. The complete work, *Maus: A Survivor's Tale*, was written in two volumes, the first released in 1986. "*Maus* is the use of a traditionally low genre -- the comic strip or book -- for serious, grave material. It is a conscious, intentional inversion of a norm, a hierarchy of a cultural order" (Leventhal, 1995, p. 2). The work confronts the seriousness of the Holocaust, in an art form used for satire, parody or humour to depict a grave historical event. It is the representation of one survivor's tale and the oral, recorded transmission of experience to the son, cartoonist Spiegelman who uses a non-traditional literary form to tell the story. The narrative is both a chronicle of his father's life and his own recounting of growing up in a traumatized household. The power of the work rests in how it conveys the emotional legacy of the Holocaust, played out in the uneasy relationship between father and son. At first glance the novel appears simplistic in design and structure, but upon deeper analysis it is complex in theme, timeframe and design. "The intentional reduction of the characters as cats (the Nazis), mice (the Jews), pigs (the Poles) and other national stereotypes is a conscious, intentional miniaturization, reduction and simplification of the Holocaust" and shows the sophistication with which Spiegelman has tackled the subject matter (Leventhal, 1995, p. 2). The use of animals to represent Nazi stereotypes of 'races' is powerful and invaluable in teaching students the complexity of

race and identity formation. The use of animal figures draws students in and alerts them to the reality that this is a different way of looking at history.

The book offers educators multiple entry points into a study of the Holocaust because the narrative is layered, but deceptively simple. The book contains multiple narratives and texts that will engage readers:

...in addition to images, dialogue boxes, and commentary, we find maps of Poland and the Camps, diagrams of hideouts, photographs from the family archive, detailed plans of the crematoria, an exchange table for goods in Auschwitz, and a manual for shoe-repair (Leventhal, 1995, p.2).

The two volumes move the reader through the life of Art's father, Vladek, in Poland before the outbreak of war, while he was in hiding with his wife Anja, her suicide, his experiences at Auschwitz, and his life in Rego Park after the war. Spiegelman explains his motivation for including the personal and private details of his father's life, he writes, "But Pop-It's great material. It makes everything more real-more human" (Spiegelman, 1986, p. 23). Leventhal (1995) explains, the "reader moves through several different historical subject-positions and narrated events; there are the pre-Holocaust, the Holocaust, and the post-holocaust, but also, within one time frame, there can be other times and places co-present as well" (p. 2). The reader at one point is viewing events through Vladek's eyes, then through Vladek in the present, then Artie in the present and always with intent and purpose forcing the reader to confront the time-space continuum of history and trauma. The reader moves between a variety of temporal and geographic settings, past and present, in Rego Park, Germany and Poland lending depth to the story and always reminding the reader that the past has not left Artie or his father.

In documenting, then narrating, the experiences of his mother and father during the Holocaust, Spiegelman (1986) exclaims that his father "bleeds history". His reference is a powerful reminder of the fact that those who live through trauma cannot help but be shaped and forever changed by such experiences. These memories are an important source of evidence in our interpretation, reconstruction and understanding of the past (Kavanagh, 2000; Hutton, 2000; Lowenthal, 1985; Nora, 1995). Spiegelman creatively tells the story of how his father's life was forever changed by the Holocaust experience, but also how his relationship with his father is impacted by horrific experiences long since past. While authoring the work Spiegelman was confronted with the imprint the Holocaust left on his father's physical, psychological and emotional being. More akin to historical remembrances, the comic book story *Maus* is certainly one of the most powerful and effective historical narratives of the Holocaust. Students are engaged by such narratives not simply because of the comic book format but because they accept these accounts of the Holocaust as truths as told through the eyes of a survivor. Here there is opportunity to instruct about the challenge of writing the past and of why competing narratives can exist for the same moment in the past. Oral histories when presented as historical remembrances are powerful tools for history educators but cautions abound as they are interwoven with the bias of the victims and the authors of their stories (Dougherty, 1999; Hutton, 2000). The bias evident in any historical remembrance will largely go unchallenged by high school students, but this allows an entry point to expand students' understanding of the past and how it is alive in the present.



Spiegelman's use of animal imagery is particularly powerful and opens a number of entry points for teachers including race and identity, misrepresentation and stereotyping, Nazi ideology and race politics, and the paradoxical characteristics of the animal figures. The suggestion has been made that this form creates an obvious allegory, in which the different 'races' are characterized in a simple, one-to-one manner with the characteristics of the animals (Leventhal, 1995). Depicting Jews as mice, for example, summons up a host of contradictory associations which, in fact, convey different attitudes towards Jews: "small, loveable (like Mickey Mouse), harmless, on the one hand, and yet verminous, repellent and ugly on the other" (Leventhal, 1995, p.3). It has been well documented that the Nazi propaganda machine intentionally chose to depict Jews as rats, mice or vermin in film. In the ongoing oratory presented to the German people, upon Hitler's ascendancy to power in 1933, we find evidence of the dehumanization of the Jewish people. Portraying the Germans as cats brings out the evil intent of the Holocaust experience, "the point being that cats do not simply kill and consume mice; they capture them, play with them, and then kill them" (Leventhal, 1995, p. 3). Spiegelman does not use these stereotypes because they are his own creations but because they were chosen by the Nazis to separate and segregate the races and dehumanize the Jewish people. This portrayal can be of educational value when teaching students about the complex race theories that fed the hatred toward Jews and general prejudice towards many ethnic groups throughout Europe. For students questions of identity, race, stereotype, and history are particularly compelling because of the general tumult that adolescent students have in their own identity formation. It

allows the reader another layer of complexity to the Holocaust issue and the use of race as a tool of oppression, exploitation and genocide.

The comic book style is uniquely equipped to achieve the layering of subject-reader positions because it can keep past and present alive before us in a way different from other texts:

In dealing with a comic book, the readers always experience a particular boxed image in relation to those around it and to the entire layout of the two pages. The shape of the boxes, their size relative to each other, and the visual patterning of images and the calligraphy of the script all help to shape our response to the text, but always in the context of other images on the page. And, most important, the reader controls the pace of the experience—he/she can linger on a particular image, shift their attention back to a previous one, move on quickly to a dominant image further ahead on the page, and so on (Johnston, 2001, p. 1).

The use of facing pages permits Spiegelman to “juxtapose present and past in a way that keeps alive the central thrust of the text”, the relationship between father and son, past and present (Johnston, 2001, p.4). The style does not encourage a simple reading as we are being moved through his father’s memories, not in a neat chronology, but back and forth in a variety of locations and situations. For example on pages 12-13 of *Maus Volume I* we find contrasting panels depicting Vladek in Sosnowiec, Poland, before the war and in Rego Park, New York riding his stationary cycle. Other panels depict Artie sitting at his desk illustrating the novel and on the same page he is spending time with his father in Rego Park (Spiegelman, 1991, p. 63). The complexity of the text means students must be given the tools to “read” the images and interpret their meaning. Werner (2002) outlines three instructional conditions for teaching students to read visual texts; authority, opportunity and capacity, and community. In brief he argues that students must be positioned to interpret texts, provided multiple opportunities to

engage different readings and to do so in a communal space where students are empowered to explore different interpretations (Werner, 2002). A rushed or superficial reading will lose much of what *Maus* has to offer in a study of the Holocaust.

The novel is filled with subtle and sophisticated messages about power, identity and trauma. Another stylistic tool employed by Spiegelman to considerable effect is in the use of masks to identify the various ways in which he views his position in the life story of his father. Throughout both volumes there are numerous moments when Artie, Vladek or any other characters in the novel are shown wearing mouse masks, as opposed to being drawn as a mouse with a human body. Here Spiegelman is playing with the metaphor of the mask; he wears the mask to explode the metaphor established by Nazi propaganda, yet continues to assume the metaphor as if uneasy with its meaning and uncertain of whether to depict himself as a mouse, a man, or a man masquerading as a mouse. Spiegelman uses the comic book genre to great effect by keeping the reader detached from the story through the use of masks and animal caricatures, while drawing the reader in with the power of the metaphor. The issues of identity presented here are complex and challenge students' understanding of how identity is shaped and infused by the past, but this is precisely why *Maus* is an excellent resource for students and teachers studying the Holocaust.

#### **4.2 The Pianist**

In the award winning film, *The Pianist*, director Roman Polanski depicts the brutalities and dehumanizing experiences that Polish concert pianist Wladyslaw Szpilman endured during the Holocaust. Unlike the "low" genre of comic book art, cinema is generally viewed as a "high" genre for its capacity to narrate on a more

sophisticated plane. This, of course, is dependent upon the quality of script, story, direction, cinematography, character development, and music score. The film is based on his memoirs titled *The Pianist: The Extraordinary True Story of One Man's Survival in Warsaw, 1939-1945* (1999) and was released as a feature film in 2002. In *The Pianist* (2002) we follow his life as an eyewitness, victim and survivor who experienced the atrocities of the Holocaust first hand. We observe the experience largely through his eyes, hidden behind curtains, doorways and closets in the various hideouts that he inhabits. There is no movement through the past-present-future continuum, no working-through the trauma of the Holocaust as we have in Spiegelman's *Maus*. What the audience witnesses in *The Pianist* is Roman Polanski's interpretation of Szpilman's and his own Holocaust experiences. In an interview found on the DVD version of the film, Polanski explains that a number of the events portrayed in the film were either fictional recreations from his remembered experience or reenactments taken from the historical record. Thus, the film is more than the retelling of Szpilman's memoirs because Polanski's overlays Szpilman's story with his own moments of significance and an assortment of well documented moments from the historical record. In this sense the audience is witness to Polanski's moment of working-through the trauma on film while retelling the story of the memoir that aided Szpilman work through his Holocaust experiences. In comparing *Maus* and *The Pianist* we meet with two different presentations of trauma, yet both speak to the audience and provide powerful messages about humanity.

Focusing on the journey of pianist Wladyslaw Szpilman and his immediate family, events begin to unfold in 1939 as bombs drop on Warsaw during his piano recital for the

national radio station. As the Nazi occupation begins to take hold, Szpilman and his family endure humiliation and countless violations of their rights. Restrictions begin gradually with rules about park benches, restaurants, work permits, living accommodations, and restrictions on identification (Star of David). Things escalate quickly as over 300,000 Jews are walled into a ghetto and must struggle to find work, food and basic living conditions. The infamous Warsaw Ghetto, a holding tank for the distribution of Polish Jews to extermination centres, is the central locale for the telling of Szpilman's story. A chance escape separates Szpilman from his family and, as the ghetto's occupants are forced onto trains bound for the extermination camps, he becomes a fugitive hiding in a variety of apartments, a German hospital and finally in a bombed out residence on the Polish side of Warsaw. Living in terror and isolation, he evades capture and tries to stay alive during the destruction of the ghetto and elimination of all inhabitants. We witness the intrigues of various Jewish resistance groups, Polish resistance fighters and common citizens risking their lives to save Jews during the Nazi occupation. At each point when Szpilman appears destined for death or injury, he manages an escape, occasionally aided by a friend, but frequently through luck and the will to survive. Throughout the film the audience is reminded of what drives his inner spirit, his will to live and the dream of performing once again. The most poignant moment, coming at the end of the film, involves Szpilman playing for a German army officer. Szpilman himself spent many years after the war searching out the German officer, Willem Hosenfeld, because he helped save his life.

*The Pianist* recreates the horrors of the Warsaw ghetto, and yet there is no milking them for effect and the film's protagonist, a concert pianist who finds himself

alone in the ghetto, is passive and un-heroic, surviving more by luck than design. The audience views the horrors of the Holocaust from a distance, with few exceptions, because Szpilman's story is not told from the atrocities of the death camp experience but as a survivor in the ghetto of Warsaw. The power of the film is in its first hour as we witness the transformation of a vibrant Jewish community into the disease plagued, economically oppressed and often violated victims of Nazi policy. The fine detail given to the changes to daily life, wearing the Star of David, hiding money, selling books to make ends meet, watching the daily suffering of the streets, and the brutality of the Jewish Police present a different Holocaust story than depicted in previous films. Polanski uses the Nazi brutalities to fuel his tale and the first hour of the film is filled with one horrible act after another, as Jews are first humiliated and beaten, then later hanged and shot. One scene shows Nazis throwing a wheelchair-bound man out of his apartment window to his death, while another shows Jews being hunted in the street like dogs. There are so many sequences of victims being lined up against walls and executed that one loses count. This has the impact of shock and compels the audience to confront the brutality but it cannot be understood because we are far removed from the experience.

For a long time, the fact of mass extermination on an industrial scale was considered so morally daunting, the horror visited on European Jewry so unimaginable, as to place the Holocaust beyond the reach of popular film. After Auschwitz, said Frankfurt School social philosopher, Theodor Adorno, "to write a poem is barbaric" (Adorno, 1973, p.365). The Holocaust had scarred human kind so deeply and on such an unimaginable level that to sit and write creatively, for the purpose of reflection was

no longer purposeful. Parisian filmmaker Claude Lanzmann found the idea of making a narrative film about the genocide similarly reprehensible. On the release of Stephen Spielberg's *Schindler's List*, Lanzmann (1994) commented that the Holocaust "erects a ring of fire around itself that cannot be crossed, because there is a certain degree of horror that cannot be transmitted. Fiction is a transgression." (p. 5). He had already resolved this moral dilemma by deliberately avoiding the use of archival footage or dramatic reconstruction in favour of filming witness interviews to create the nine hour documentary *Shoah* (1985) considered by many to be the foremost film on the Holocaust (Applebaum, 2003). In capturing the authentic testimony of survivors he sought to avoid transgressing, trivializing, misinterpreting, or deforming the true horror and meaning of the event. The problem of telling the story through film is that one cannot adequately transmit the pure horror, the lived experience of the victims yet it needs to be told, remembered and embedded in common culture. A feature film must be a recreation, an interpretation of moments, events and experiences. The commercial success of *Schindler's List* (1993) indicates the support given the film and the extent of its coverage across the globe. Detractors criticized his use of sentiment and melodrama to convey the life and experiences of Schindler and his workers, but these are the conventions of Hollywood cinema. The story of redemption and heroism does not reflect the experiences of most victims of the Holocaust, but it is a powerful retelling of genuine accounts.

*The Pianist* provides teachers with an excellent platform to teach the Holocaust and students to learn about stereotyping, racism and institutional discrimination. Film brings an emotional and immediate effect on students in its capacity to engage visually,

graphically and musically. Students are media junkies and the use of a feature film to tell a very serious and traumatic narrative heightens anticipation and interest. The story of Wladyslaw Szpilman and its retelling in the film offers a very different perspective on the Holocaust, historical remembrance and the depiction of trauma than we find in *Maus* or the VHEC'S *Discovery Kit*. The complex historical subject positions we find in *Maus* are not present in *The Pianist* because the film does not explore the challenges faced by Szpilman in his years after the Holocaust. We do not meet family members, children or grandchildren, nieces or nephews, wife or others that would have had to understand how the trauma affected his spirit and psyche. The film only offers a few moments at the end when we find Szpilman giving a concert recital and the audience is left to ponder his life after the Holocaust. The graphic brutality of the Nazis and Polish anti-Semites is portrayed with convincing realism in the film, but is also evident in *Maus* in more subtle ways. The power of film is in its ability to transcend time and take the audience to the moment, to live the moment with the character on screen and this has an innate power to impact the emotions of students, even those sanitized to violent acts in media, and to confront their moral reaction to such dehumanizing and cruel behaviour.

#### **4.3 Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre Discovery Kit**

The Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre is a teaching museum that delivers Holocaust-based anti-racism programming through the use of exhibits, school programs, teacher conferences, outreach programs, and the production of teaching materials. Since 1994 its prime mandate has been to support the remembrance of the Holocaust and to combat intolerance (VHEC, 2007). The VHEC has videotaped the testimonies of more than 200 local Holocaust survivors and built an archive of materials



including photographs, documents, artifacts, and exhibits to promote knowledge and understanding and remembrance of the Holocaust. Exhibits have included *Vancouver's Schindler Jews*, *Shoes of Memory: Holocaust Ceramic Work*, *Open Hearts-Closed Doors*, and *Canada Responds to The Holocaust 1944-1945*. The Centre has also been actively publishing and promoting resource books for high school and elementary teachers including: *Canada and The Holocaust: Social Responsibility and Global Citizenship*, *Janusz Korczak and the Children of the Warsaw Ghetto*, and *Open Hearts-Closed Doors*. From its inception the VHEC has dedicated itself to the teaching, learning and understanding of the Holocaust for young adults but it is also a centre for research and dialogue. In February of 2007 the Centre sponsored the 5<sup>th</sup> Biennial Shafran Teacher's Conference on teaching the Holocaust with a keynote by Dr. Simone Schweber, workshops featuring lessons and courses dedicated to studying the Holocaust and a session on critical thinking. The conference exemplifies the commitment to Holocaust education shown by the Centre and offers invaluable classroom support and multiple opportunities to bring the trauma of this event into classrooms. Each year, since 1995, the Centre has provided the Kron Award to a teacher that demonstrates a commitment to teaching the Holocaust. The support of the VHEC has been instrumental in helping local teachers' incorporate powerful lessons in their classrooms.

The VHEC has designed, produced or promoted many resources for classroom use in support of teaching the Holocaust. One of the more popular and effective learning resources is the Discovery Kits, putting artifacts, documents and images together to create opportunities for hands-on learning. The Centre offers three discovery

kits built around the following themes, war orphans, child survivors, hiding and resistance, Jewish refugees to Canada, and the stories of survivors that settled in Canada following the end of World War II. The kits *Journey to Canada: The War Orphans Project 1947* and *Holocaust War Orphans: A Scrapbook Set* deal with the selection, journey, arrival, and settlement of Jewish war orphans in Canada. Canada took in 1,123 Jewish war orphans and placed them in Jewish foster homes across thirty-eight communities. Each kit contains artifacts such as diaries, news articles, photographs, visas, identification papers, and a resource guide providing lesson structure and guidelines for teachers. Discovery kits are designed to put primary documents and artifacts into the hands of students. Students are encouraged to examine, describe and analyze the artifacts as a way to investigate issues of discrimination, segregation, hiding and resistance, as well as the aftermath of war and immigration (VHEC, 2007).

For the teaching unit I chose the discovery kit titled *Outside the Attic Walls* which complements the study of *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*, and features artifacts such as a Jewish star sewn onto a coat, a child's toy, identity cards, ration coupons, and photographs belonging to child survivors. The artifacts are designed to engage the sensory faculties of the students by touch, smell and visual perception. The artifact collection is based on the items taken into hiding by Jewish families and children, like Anne Frank, in the Netherlands. These kits promote a view of history teaching that encourages students to engage in doing the discipline by making connections between these traces of the past and the present (Seixas, 1996). The kits offer an opportunity to teach the historical method and to understand the complexity of examining fragments of

the past in the present, while trying to avoid oversimplified explanations, failure to historicize the past and misinterpretation. However, they are challenging because the use of replica artifacts requires that students bring meaning to the objects, imagining their place in time and drawing inferences that challenge student understanding. For example, imagine the challenge of appreciating the value of the wooden toy dog to a Jewish child in hiding when the students live in a world filled with high-tech media toys like the iPod, Xbox 360 and portable video consoles. The importance of contextualizing the artifacts and preparing students with a sense of historical empathy is an essential component to teaching with the artifact kits.

The discovery kit brings a different experience to the students than that found with the graphic novel or feature film. Where *Maus* and *The Pianist* are interpretations of Holocaust experiences the discovery kit is more of an exploration of the Shoah. The kit does not tell a story without the engagement of the imagination of the students and their ability to interpret the meaning of each item. The artifacts are traces of a larger story and the interpretation of the traces is significantly more challenging to students where there is no accompanying narrative to spell out the meaning and purpose. The artifacts do not speak to us or transmit information, apart from the meaning brought to them by each student. This is different from encounters with a graphic novel or film because these forms inherently provide an interpretation of the past and present a particular kind of truth claim. The absence of a guiding external narrative or script pushes students to be creative and analytical when working with artifacts. The value for teachers is in the freedom the students have from preconceived meanings and interpretations. They come to each item with bias, but no preconception of how each fits into a larger

narrative. The artifact kit challenges the imaginative and intellectual abilities of students because they may only be able to bring a simple interpretation or meaning to the artifact without knowledge of its broader context. There is a sense of distance created by items that come from a time period far removed from students' lived experience. The motivation of each student is challenged because an artifact collection does not provide neat, concise or simple knowledge claims and meanings; these must be adduced by the students through rigorous reflection on their meaning, context and relationship to the broader events.

The discovery kit does not lend itself easily to complex historical subject positions we find in *Maus*, but it does demand that students at least consider the time continuum because they are examining and interpreting the artifacts from the past in the present. Unlike *The Pianist*, the discovery kit allows the students to freely interpret or negotiate meaning within a present context. We are not confined to one moment in time, a narrow geographic location or limitations on imagination that we encounter with film. The items allow, through imagination and meaning making, the students to place themselves in the past and to consider the Holocaust in human terms and impact it had on the daily lives of the victims. Where the graphic novel *Maus* challenges Nazi stereotypes and creates opportunity for students to question and broaden their understanding of stereotype, scapegoats, race ideology, and institutionalized persecution the discovery kit does not directly open opportunities for such discussions. The artifacts can be used to open opportunities for these discussions, but the artifacts do not allow for an easy reading of the larger narrative in which these traces are an important legacy. The depth of knowledge and understanding students bring to the process limits the possibility of

sophisticated readings of the objects, unless they are coached through more detailed analyses. They are most effectively used in conjunction with clear frameworks for analysis, background reading, and supporting documents that give context to their significance.

All three of the resources share the power of historical remembrance in that they represent fragments, traces and accounts of past experience. Each resource has a foundation rooted in accounts of the past but in very different formats. The format or medium of the message has a direct impact on the pace at which students can engage the narrative and work through the time continuum to grasp the meaning of the Holocaust as a historical event and recognize its importance in their lives today. In reading the graphic novel students may engage the narrative at their own pace reading quickly through sections or taking more time with the panels with more detail or depth. They can move forward and backward through the story to grasp its literal and figurative meanings and to develop an internal orientation to the story. They can pause on specific images, dialogue boxes or experiences to grasp a deeper understanding of the narrative. *The Discovery Kit* also offers students the opportunity to encounter the traces of the past at a controlled rate but not like that of the graphic novel. With an artifact kit one is compelled by tasks, class time limits and teacher expectations to move through each artifact with some degree of efficiency and pace. While students had time to study, reflect and reorient their understandings it was not possible to link the items together as a whole or to look back at previous artifacts without disrupting the process. These conditions could have been altered depending on the manner in which the lessons were taught, but even in an alternate platform, such kits do not offer the same temporal

flexibility and pacing that is found with the novel study. In film we are even more restricted, not just because of obvious classroom time restraints but because the director has a particular pace at which he wants the audience to experience the film. Even within the film there are moments at which things develop rapidly and other moments where time seems to drag. Much of this is due to the challenge of compressing six, eight or ten years of historical time into a ninety to one hundred eighty minute format commonly found in feature film. The music, camera angles, sounds, scenes, and cinematography conspire to push the audience along at a particular pace experiencing the event as the director chooses. Students are not free (without access to a copy of the DVD) to revisit scenes, to look for the nuances and subtleties found in a third or fourth viewing. Moreover, students cannot fix on a particular image, moment or event without disrupting the intended film experience and distorting the meaning and purpose.

## **5 In the Classroom: Students' Thinking About the Holocaust**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Teaching historical trauma challenges history educators to be thoughtful in selection of resources, purposeful in the orientation of lesson topics and mindful of the implicit and explicit moral messages embedded in such histories. Trauma histories may be taught to impart historical knowledge, understanding or empathy. However, they are not exclusive goals but interdependent directions through which connection with the past may be developed in our students. Teaching about the Holocaust can offer students rich opportunities to challenge their moral frameworks and develop more sophisticated levels of moral reasoning but this requires knowledge, understanding and some level of historical empathy. I was particularly interested in examining the student writing samples to gain insight into their interaction with the teaching unit and to uncover historical thinking. Furthermore, I was interested to see if the essays revealed any findings with respect to the different narratives provided by the varied resources. I was also curious to observe how the students dealt with questions of memory, trauma and moral obligation with respect to preserving, teaching and remembering the Holocaust. In studying narratives from the Holocaust students must confront present moral stances while reflecting on the social value of remembering, learning and preserving traumatic historical events. In this chapter I describe the analysis of student work on remembering the Holocaust. The chapter will review sorting, collecting, and analyzing the data, present the four themes identified by sorting the process, and discuss the three resources.

## **5.2 Data Collection: Sorting, Categorizing and Analyzing Student Essays**

The data on student thinking came from informal observations and the response essays written at the conclusion of the teaching unit. Other assignments were collected, graded and reviewed by each class, but they do not form any portion of the evidence for the analysis provided here. Students did not provide pre-unit data for comparative analysis, and they were not interviewed at any time to supplement the research conclusions. This was a miscalculation on my part as I was confident the written responses would provide the required data. It presented me with a considerable challenge, knowing that the primary source of data would be student writing samples and that collection of this data was contingent upon two factors, 1) student/parent consent and 2) completion of the summative writing assignment. As a result the study was affected by a large number of incomplete essays and low return rate for consent forms (50%). I could not draw from a larger sample of student work because the study was reduced by 40 essay samples out of a possible base of 82 students across the three classes. *Table 5.1* provides a breakdown of the classes including the number of students enrolled in each block, the number of consent forms returned in each block and the number of affirmative consent forms. Additionally, in the last three columns I have provided a breakdown of the essays completed, incomplete essays by block and the total number of essays used by block.

Out of eighty-two essays only eighteen were not completed or turned in for grading. Some correlation between the lack of consent and incomplete written work can be made. In each of the eighteen examples of incomplete work the student also failed to turn in a consent form. I suggest that this is an indication of student apathy or



indifference to the assignment and consent process and not a conscious protest of the assignment or my research. All of the students were told before the teaching unit began that their completion of all assignments was to continue irrespective of consent and my use of their work in this research. A review of *Table 5.1* indicates that twenty-two of the sixty-four essays, completed and graded, could not be used because consent was not provided. Therefore, the data analyzed here represents 42 of 64 assignments completed, but only 42 of 82 possible. Block A had the highest rate of completion for the essay assignment at 89%, while block the C the lowest at 66%. Fully one-third of the students in block C did not complete the essay and this had a significant impact on my ability to draw connections between the varied teaching resources used and learning outcomes. Although block A had the highest rate of essay completion, block B provided the largest number of writing samples for the study based upon student consent at 18 of 22 samples.

*Table 5.1 Consent Forms*

	1	2	3	4	5	6
SS 11 Class	Students Enrolled	Forms Returned	Consent Provided	Essay Completion	Missing Essays	Essays Used in Analysis
Block A	27	15/27	14/27	24/27	3	14/24
Block B	28	18/28	18/28	22/28	6	18/22
Block C	27	10/27	10/27	18/27	9	10/18

At the end of the teaching unit students were asked to complete an essay on the following question: *To what extent do we owe an obligation to remember the Holocaust?* The question was presented to each class within the context of a larger discussion, one

that had been discussed previously and was reintroduced here: *How are we connected to the past?* The two questions were designed to encourage students to reflect on the relationship between past and present, including our obligation to remember the past by preserving it, teaching about it, and understanding its relationship to our world. When presenting the question about our obligation to remember the Holocaust students were provided with examples of how societies have chosen to honour and remember the past and they were asked to consider these examples prior to drafting the essay. Examples included building monuments and constructing memorials, preserving physical remains, and collecting evidence to be archived in museums. These prompts were used to aid student understanding about the many ways in which societies preserve, memorialize, educate, and use history in the service of present and future objectives. I am certain the writing samples would have been less focused without the six examples used to trigger student thinking about the Holocaust. The prompts were used to inform the written responses and provide a framework for students to approach the larger question of obligation to preserving the memory of the Holocaust. The examples were discussed with the students and the question and answer session aided student understanding prior to engaging the writing process. The examples also aided me with categorization of the data.

The examples proved useful for organizing and categorizing student responses as the themes in the student essays frequently correlated with the examples provided in my prompts. However, it should be noted that the order of presentation, variety of choices and inferences drawn from the examples were entirely independent of my direction and demonstrate independent thinking and understanding about the larger

question of obligation and remembrance. Student responses were analyzed and categorized into twenty-eight preliminary "threads". They came out of my first read through all of the papers and were selected for the connection to the question of obligation or because it indicated some degree of historical thinking. The most common responses emphasized the use of memorials and museums to preserve the past, the moral weight of the Holocaust as an event, and supporting teaching moral and ethical principles via Holocaust case studies. The papers made consistent reference to the need to preserve the physical traces of the Holocaust including the death camps, personal articles and documents. Examples of common threads include, we "must remember the past or be doomed to repeat it", "physical remains provide evidence to validate history", "history provides us with moral and ethical lessons", "museums educate, share knowledge and develop understanding", and "the lessons of the Holocaust provide examples of moral courage for all to follow" (for a complete list of my initial 'threads' see Appendix 5). I then used a frequency table to tally the total number of times each thread appeared in the essays. In some cases threads appeared several times and in other instances threads appear in one paper but not the next. The purpose of tallying the threads was to help organize them around a smaller number of more comprehensible themes and to create some sense of coherence that could support my inferences and conclusions. In keeping with the qualitative nature of the research the student responses were examined for consistency and breadth.

Although these trends evident in my first run through the data had value for me in understanding students' historical thinking, they were too unrefined for detailed analysis and many seemed to run parallel to one or more other threads. Thus, it was necessary

to refine the threads into manageable themes; the threads were sorted into four themes for analysis and conclusions (see *Table 5.2*). The four themes or organizers were not predetermined in advance of the research but do have a clear connection to the prompts provided to the students prior to writing the summative essay. Each theme is rooted in the threads and the student prompts (the correlation between the threads and themes is presented in *Table 5.3*). Student responses were varied but trends within the four themes can be derived from an examination of the frequency chart provided in *Table 5.3*). The two themes most frequently raised by the students relate to the importance of preservation of physical traces and the role of museums in educating Canadians about the Holocaust. The student papers also put emphasis on the need to teach, understand and remember the Holocaust for its tragic impact on world history. Less frequent but evident in the student responses were those dealing with the moral implications of history and our moral obligation to preserve compelling stories like the Holocaust.

*Table 5.2 Student Response Themes*

1. The Holocaust is significant for its size, scale and severity in human history (moral weight of an event is important). Forgetting is not acceptable for an event of such magnitude and human suffering.
2. The Holocaust offers specific kinds of lessons for students/mankind. These lessons are necessary to learn from past wrongs, avoid repeating horrors of our tragic past, and offer lessons on compassion, fairness and social responsibility.
3. Museums preserve evidence, educate, transmit knowledge, bring past to present and validate history. Museums are central to the preservation of memory through education and collections of artifacts.
4. Physical remains (sites, artifacts, structures) shape memory, bring past to life, create historical empathy, invoke painful memories, are graphic reminders, carry embedded messages and bear witness to the human spirit.

*Table 5.3* provides the categorization of threads into themes organized by number, frequency, class, and percent of student responses. Column one links the specific threads to a theme, while columns two through four provide the frequency of those threads by class. In columns five through seven the total number of responses by theme are presented as a percentage and category total.

*Table 5.3 Student Response Frequency Chart*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>Themes</b>	Correlation to 28 Threads	Block A Frequency	Block B Frequency	Block C Frequency	Total Responses By Class	Total Responses All Themes	Theme as % all responses
<b>1</b>	1,12,21,25,28	9	16	10	35	35/194	18%
<b>2</b>	3,4,8,15,16, 17,18,23,26,27	18	23	19	60	60/194	31%
<b>3</b>	5,6,11,14,19	15	12	14	41	41/194	21%
<b>4</b>	2,7,9,10,13, 20,22,24	23	21	14	58	58/194	30%

For the purpose of discussion and analysis I have simplified the thematic categories in *Table 5.2*. The themes are discussed in the following four sections of this chapter and are titled as follows: the moral weight of the Holocaust, the lessons of history, preservation, memory and education, and the residua of the past. Each theme is described in detail using student quotations wherever possible.

### **5.3 Theme 1: The Moral Weight of the Holocaust**

Many of the students' papers described the Holocaust as an event unparalleled in human history and deserving of remembrance for the magnitude of tragedy and impact on humanity. By moral weight I am referring to the serious and grave manner in which teachers' and students' approach the Holocaust because of its severity. Moral judgment is inevitable and it was evident that many of the students viewed this event as having moral overtones about good and evil, just and unjust. Eighteen percent of responses acknowledged the moral weight of the Holocaust and supported the view that it must not be forgotten in our schools or as part of the consciousness of all Canadians. Most supported this position by suggesting that the education system had an obligation to develop knowledge and understanding about the Holocaust. They saw something in the human tragedy, the scale of human suffering and cruelty, suggesting a different kind of treatment in our schools. One student thoughtfully noted, "forgetting [the Holocaust], would be like saying the event was not worth remembering" and that to forget would imply that it was an insignificant event in human history (Anne). Her desire for preservation of the history of the Holocaust is supported by a conscious connection between the power of memory and the construction of collective moral character. We owe an obligation to remember because of the scale of human suffering and victimization of the Jewish people. The students' responses align with the criticism of Novick (1999) who commented that "extremity" of the Holocaust overwhelms us and it is not possible to look past the weight of injustice evident in its retelling (p. 14).

A few did not share this opinion. Donna emphasized the tremendous number of existing memorials, museums, courses, books, and movies that maintain our collective

awareness of the Holocaust. She noted that by "just maintaining the remaining museums" the Holocaust is remembered. Tina moved the conversation in a different direction by arguing that Canada does not have an obligation to build museums or memorials because "they [the victims and perpetrators] are not from" Canada. Tina identified with the victim's suffering, but does not see the Holocaust as part of Canada's history. Her statement indicates that history is something that nations possess and possession is linked to an obligation to remember. Harold carried this line of thinking a little further when he wrote that the "specific countries linked to the Holocaust though, owe so much more then, now, and in the future". One student brought the Holocaust down to a regional level in suggesting that there is no need to build memorials, monuments or museums because "we don't have a very big Jewish community" and that the obligation to do so is on those European nations that witnessed the atrocities first hand. In each of these examples there is a distinction being drawn between teaching about the Holocaust (all of the students quoted agreed that it must be part of our school curriculum) and the specific preservation, construction and proliferation of memory sites.

Some went so far as to state that what is taught in our schools is sufficient and that other topics are important. Ajit suggests that other histories are important and if we spend too much time learning about the Holocaust "we will miss something else which could be equally important." Ajit did not follow up with any examples so it is unclear what event might parallel the Holocaust from the perspective of a student. The point illustrates the challenge of choosing compelling topics that meet the lived experiences of our students and have meaning to their lives. For Ajit the Holocaust is one of any

number of historical events that have relevance, but not more so. Another student, Alice, made a different comparison relating the Holocaust to a natural disaster. While acknowledging the Holocaust as a human tragedy she argues, "it wasn't a natural disaster or anything which gives it even more importance." Alice focused on degrees of human suffering, but ignored the moral implications of man-made tragedy like the Holocaust. While some of the student papers wrestled with the question of building museums, memorials or monuments to preserve the memory of the Holocaust, all were resolute in the affirmation about the obligation our schools have in teaching new generations about the Holocaust. One student, Nickey, clearly articulated that the obligation has been paid in full because we have built museums, maintained memorials, preserved physical traces of the event, and continue to teach about this tragic event. The perspective, supported by Donna, suggests that knowledge, awareness and understanding should be the focus of our educational approach to teaching about the Holocaust.

In the end, it really does not matter how many memorials or museums are built for any epic event. What matters is that the people are aware and understand why these tragedies occurred and what we must learn in order not to repeat these atrocities. (Donna)



#### **5.4 Theme 2: The Lessons of History**

In the eyes of some students to forget the Holocaust is to deny humanity an opportunity to learn from its tragic past. Here the students' thinking has distinguished learning about the Holocaust with learning from the Holocaust. The shift in thinking is deliberate, but it is unlikely that they are expressing a specific educational stance and more likely they have recognized on a superficial level the value of learning from the past. In understanding the Holocaust the possibility of redeeming ourselves by teaching our young to stand up against oppression and discrimination at every turn and to encourage our civic leaders to lead by example will prevent such great tragedy in the future. Some saw, in the examples of personal courage, bravery or heroism committed during the Holocaust models of virtuous conduct to be upheld as examples for students to follow. Carmen noted that we could all "benefit from learning what courage people had even from the roughest torment they had to face." Others viewed the physical remains of the Holocaust, specifically the buildings, as holding particular meaning for people. The buildings and homes should be preserved "to remind us of what the victims had to live through and endure" (Chad). Some acknowledged that the survivors of the Holocaust need special consideration and the preservation of their history is a way to honour the sacrifice, suffering and horror they experienced. Mike stated that memorials must be built so "at least the survivors will know that we care." One insightful student added that the preservation of Holocaust history must also honour the many "Dutch families that risked their lives and some even sacrificed their lives to hide and help the Jewish people". The recognition of personal courage and sacrifice extended beyond the

Jewish victims of the genocide to the Poles, French, Dutch, Germans and other nationalities who risked personal safety to aid the victims.

The most common thread in the student writing reflected on the lessons that can be drawn from the Holocaust and history in general to support human progress, link past to present, illuminate examples of human frailty, courage and barbarity, and educate our youth for a better future. This theme generated a response in 31% of the writing samples. Students identified a number of threads within the theme, including the value of history in teaching moral lessons, the use of historical knowledge to aid human progress, the Holocaust as a specific case study for schools, and the use of historical understanding to direct future action. History curriculum aids in remembering and preserving the past and it has the power to transcend generations in its institutional permanence through our education system. A number of the students viewed history as a cure-all through which mankind can avoid repetition of past wrongs and injustices. "If we do not learn the history of great tragedy we will repeat our tragedies of the past" wrote Robyn. The same student went so far as to quote the American philosopher George Santayana who reminded us that those who do not know their history are doomed to repeat it. History in this line of thought serves to correct the human condition by reminding us of our propensity for violence and hatred. John noted, "people can learn from the mistakes that occurred during the Holocaust", while Vera moved the discussion to a more precise level when she stated that in a "multicultural society [like] Canada it is crucial to know what happens when racism and prejudice towards one group of people goes loose." Vera and John articulated a common position taken by the students' with respect to the value of learning history to avoid repetition of wrongs. Yet,

history is rife with examples of our failure to learn from the past. Students latch on to this conception of historical understanding because it fits in with views about the passage of time and human progress, that is, as time passes humankind becomes more sophisticated and learns from past mistakes.

Some of the students emphasized the connection between historical tragedy and present action or conduct. One of the objectives of the teaching unit was to challenge the moral reasoning of the students and confront them with the complexity of moral issues embedded in studying the Holocaust, thus allowing opportunities to challenge the moral frames of my students. A study of the Holocaust provides numerous case examples of immoral, unjust, inhumane and cruel conduct but it also allows us to find powerful examples of redemption, healing and survival of the mind, body and spirit. These case examples create learning opportunities in the curriculum to challenge student thinking about issues of race, power, ethics, and morality. As one student noted, it "can teach the young people the dangers of hatred and prejudice in society so that they would learn how not to obey immoral orders and learn how to resist [unjust] actions" (Jean). The problem for history educators is that in trying to redeem the tragic past we may inadvertently transpose messages and meaning, oversimplify complex phenomena or minimize the horror witnessed by so many victims (Boix-Mansilla, 2000, Schweber, 2004).

For the most part the student written responses avoided simplistic finger-pointing assessments and focused on the need to remember the event for its educational, social and humanitarian value in addition to demonstrating historical empathy for the victims and survivors. However, some like Smith oversimplified the event and fell victim to

reducing the Holocaust to the responsibility on one man, Adolph Hitler. Smith was not alone, as a small number of students assigned blame for the entire event to the Nazis, Germans, or Hitler. Others fell into the trap of comparing the Holocaust with other genocides, particularly the example in Rwanda. John suggested that the Rwandan genocide and the Holocaust were "similar" and that we have not learned from previous examples of human brutality. Sylvester suggested a far greater peril if we did not teach students about the Holocaust when he wrote, "if we are not careful we might see another Holocaust or a World War." One student drew a comparison between Nazi Germany and the United State's invasion and occupation of Iraq as parallel cases of oppression and injustice. Ajit, tying in the idea that we must learn from the past, claimed that the United States had targeted Iraq in the same way that Nazi Germany targeted Jews. They are repeating the mistakes of the Germans in committing atrocities against the Iraqi people. Ajit failed to explain in any detail how the cases are analogous, but asserted that they U.S. did not learn from the lessons of the Holocaust. These oversimplifications and misdirected comparisons were few but illustrate the concerns highlighted by Schweber (2004), Boix-Mansilla (2000) and Novick (1999).

The student essays did offer a number of examples of moral reasoning and of thoughtful consideration of the moral dimensions that come from the study of historical injustices like the Holocaust. Numerous student responses tied the obligation of remembrance to the moral lessons that can be gleaned from a study of the Holocaust. Moral education theory has supported the use of case studies to develop the moral frames of students (Peters, 1973, 1979; Likona, 1976; Nucci, 2001).

Carol tied the conception of morality to the development of student understanding of ethical principles like fairness, justice and equality when she wrote:

It is our fundamental obligation to all those who were put through the terror of the Holocaust to remember those who perished... Learning about the history of the Holocaust engages humans to reflect upon moral and ethical questions; where studying the Holocaust can help [us to] understand the effects of prejudice, racism, and stereotyping...while raising questions of fairness, justice, identity, conformity, indifference and obedience.

The passage is rich with insights and Carol has articulated a number of key points with respect to the moral dimensions of history. Her orientation toward present and future action with regard to teaching and learning about the impact of state sanctioned discrimination indicates an understanding of the value of history in locating moral conversations in the present. Such conversations, rooted in knowledge of where we come from, aid the articulation of socially just acts in the present and future. Carol's articulation of how the lessons of the Holocaust may serve present and future generations reminds us that morality is ultimately about action, and the pursuit of a better world. The ethical stance taken with respect to honouring those who were victims demonstrates a strong sense of historical empathy rooted firmly in her moral stance; it would be wrong not to honour the victims of these crimes and continue to allow humankind to fall prey to such tragedy. Jean argued that the lessons of the Holocaust must be used to teach our youth to have "the moral courage" to disobey directives that are immoral or harmful to others. Her stance suggests a strong ideological commitment to free choice, but within the limits of common decency and utilitarian values. She has taken the historical truths of the Holocaust, its hate, racism, state-sanctioned extermination, and indifference to others, and brought it into the present to formulate a strong personal moral stance.

The moral positioning of the students was evident in other passages directed toward understanding the role of government in disseminating and propagating hatred or discrimination towards identifiable groups. Both Robyn and Carol noted that the lessons of the Holocaust could be used to educate our youth to speak out against state sanctioned hatred or discrimination and to reinforce the need for vigilance on the part of the citizenry to stop oppression and speak out when necessary. Concern with how to act in analogous future circumstances indicates a sophisticated moral framework; looking beyond the self, peer group or nation to mankind as a whole (Higgins, Kohlberg, Power, 1989). Carol astutely writes that "the Holocaust might not have occurred if government leaders had spoken out" and the common citizens had stood against the racist ideology of the Nazi government. Robyn reminds us of how our "morals can easily be corrupted" in furtherance of state sanctioned objectives. They speak of a kind of moral courage and implicitly recognize that it is something to be nurtured and developed, in part through education, with an eye to future abuses of power. Both drew upon the lessons of the Holocaust, yet both also noted that the events in Rwanda and Darfur remind us that state sanctioned violence and oppression are a part of the human condition.

While not always explicitly stated, many of the student papers offered evidence of the moral lessons implicit in studying the Holocaust. This frequently ran as an undercurrent to the positions taken on memorials, museums and monuments and other forms of remembrance and honouring the memory of the victims. The frequency and passion with which many of the students argued for a commitment to remembering the Holocaust indicates a strong moral position that to fail to do so would be wrong, an

injustice to the millions that died. Many of the student papers discussed and reflected upon the issue of remembrance and the need to honour the memory of this particular event in schools, museums, artifact preservation and scholarly writing. A second trend in the writing addressed the moral dimensions of teaching the Holocaust by stating that Canadians have a moral obligation to honour and remember the event, use our knowledge of past injustices like the Holocaust to direct future civic action, and to teach youth about ethics, values and principles using case studies from the Holocaust.

### **5.5 Theme 3: Preservation, Memory and Education**

A third theme that clearly emerged from the student writing focused on the need to preserve the past and educate current and future generations with museums. Many of the students suggested that museums act as a conduit through which knowledge of the past is preserved, transmitted and archived to validate, share and research historical events. They also recognized that the museum is a location at which we make meaning of the past as people interact with photographs, artifacts, displays, and exhibits. Some linked the idea of preservation with a developing sense of human progress and the interaction between humans of different time periods. Naïvely, many of the students equate the passage of time with progress and progress with civilization. By implication they believe that humanity is in a better state today than sixty years ago during the period of the Holocaust and link the idea of preservation and remembrance with mankind's capacity for progress in ethics, morality, fairness, justice, and equality. One can draw the inference from their responses that the students believe preservation of the past can allow us to progress, building upon the lessons of history. Some noted that in preserving accounts and traces of the past, building monuments and supporting

museums we can store the memory of what transpired, then we can always look to these traces and accounts to support our present course of action. The reality is far more complex and the distinction between and interdependence of memory, history, the past, and sites of memory is hotly contested ground (Lowenthal, 1985; Nora, 1996; Paris, 2000). However, the writing samples make it clear that for students there are connections between what we teach, preserve and memorialize and the lessons that humanity can draw from these many forms of remembrance. However, students are not often concerned with truth, authenticity or validity in the traces and accounts of the past found in museums or texts.

Some of the responses linked the need for preservation, remembrance and education with a desire to honour the sacrifice and suffering of the millions of victims. "We should also remember all of the Jews that died, so that their lives are not forgotten and considered worthless", wrote Sam. Carol argued that the value of remembrance is in its power to demonstrate the terrible evil that humans can inflict upon one another when our social and political leaders stand aside in utter silence. Schools and educational institutions have a particular responsibility to transmit knowledge and preserve our memory of the past. Many students noted that school curricula had an important role in shaping our memory of past events and of maintaining continuity between past and present. For some students the draw of the museum was in its capacity to preserve a sensory experience, to touch, smell and 'feel' the past. Gordon explains that "museums are a way of actually feeling, close up and personally, what actually happened to these people." The museum was viewed generically as a repository of things and knowledge to be preserved and shared. Others like Nina were



concerned that without museums we would lose the physical evidence of the Holocaust and eventually the event "will be gone from the history books..." Some were cognizant of the fact that museums organize the traces and accounts of the past so that they can be learned and understood. Museums "put everything together and educate people through text, photographs, [and] artifacts which is very effective" (Lynn). Museums also allow those who cannot travel or live near the actual sites of memory to experience some aspect of the tragedy. They provide a common entry point into the memory of a specific event and allow students to feel they are coming in contact with the past, physically and emotionally. The preservation of physical traces, in museums, was part of a larger theme about the value of physical remains to educate and validate the past.

#### **5.6 Theme 4: The Residua of the Past**

The physical remains of the Holocaust, including sites, artifacts, and relics preoccupied many of the students in thinking about remembrance. The frequency chart in *Table 5.4* indicates that three in ten papers made some mention of the significance of physical remains, traces and accounts of the past. Students' conceptualization of the theme is evident in references to sites of memory like the death camps, memorials to the victims or war structures. Their interpretation of these things as places where memory of the Holocaust is preserved to validate the past, honour the many survivors, convey messages about the failings of man, or simply to help us remember. Some students noted that the physical traces of the past, specifically the death camps, are much more powerful learning tools than mere texts or photos. Beth wrote that the "physical remains of the Holocaust should be preserved since it can take people back to these times in a way which no other thing could ever do." Bob noted that the "physical

remains of death camps are more powerful than any textbook picture or textbook writing” Others noted that these sites of memory were powerful aides in developing historical empathy for the victims and the survivors. Vera wrote that the “people who have not been through the horrors of the Holocaust need to be able to see what it was like living in a death camp” Vera’s commitment to historical empathy and to preserving the relics of the Holocaust is compelling. Carmen writes that a “physical reminder, like a monument, would let us realize that we have come along way from the painful memories of yesterday to the now hopeful wishes of tomorrow.” Carmen’s statement indicates an understanding of the symbolic value monuments as structures that engage and shape memory, but she has falsely identified monuments as physical traces of the past.

While the students recognized the role relics and monuments play in shaping present memory, they historicize them by reconstructing their meaning to serve present minded goals like equality and tolerance for ethnic groups. Monuments and relics are like reminders, tangible connections with the past that can be seen, felt or even smelled, but all serve the role of preserving our memory of something past. Interestingly some students distinguished between monuments built to remind us of moments of courage, suffering, heroism or tragedy and monumental structures, preserved as evidence to validate particular versions of the past. The misinterpretation of what a monument is accounts for some of the misunderstanding about the role of monuments in collective memory and history. Memory, history and relics are the sources of the past with which we can construct meaning in the present (Lowenthal, 1995). These things aid our reconstruction of the past, but cannot deliver the past as it happened because the

passage of time infuses bias and misinterpretation in these reconstructions (Lowenthal, 1995). The students are inadvertently attempting to deal with the complexity of history, memory and the past by investing different capacities to relics, monuments and traces of the past in service of the present.

Some noted that the extermination camps of Auschwitz, Hitler's bunker and relics of the war are different kinds of reminders than memorials, cemeteries or statuary dedicated to survivors or events like the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. Robyn wrote that viewing "Hitler's bunker would be enriching, as it would show people the levels political and military leaders went in order to ensure their personal safety." The interest here is not judgmental, not condemnation or support for Hitler's actions, but of preserving pieces of evidence that shed light on the lives of prominent figures, heroic or barbaric. Other students like Tina viewed the preservation of these traces as critical tools in the validation of the events. Tina noted that in preserving the physical remains, death camps, buildings, and artifacts a body of evidence is preserved to combat Holocaust denial and aid remembrance of the event. Many other student papers noted the need to preserve physical remains as a form of validating the past. It is an indication of the belief that history can and will be manipulated, altered or denied to serve specific interests. More importantly, some of the students believe that it is possible to find a true account of the past if the evidence is adequately preserved. Conversely, they are suggesting that destroying relics will destroy memory of the past and increases the likelihood of forgetting. False accounts and counter narratives will replace more truthful accounts. Neither is correct, there is no true accounting of the past and preservation of relics does not guarantee remembrance in schools or collective consciousness.

## 5.7 Teaching Resources: Three Approaches

One of my research goals was to assess the use of varied instructional resources in teaching the unit on the Holocaust. Each of the classes was provided with the same base information, text sources, document studies, and historical background, but each was also provided with one different resource to complete the study. Block A viewed the feature film *The Pianist*, block B read Art Spiegelman's graphic novel *Maus*, and the block C class worked with the artifacts from the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre's *Discovery Kit*. Each selected resource had unique qualities, attributes and narratives thus presenting different perspectives on the Holocaust experience. The amount of class time allocated to each resource was roughly equal and the types of assignments given were proportioned so that none of the classes would be at a disadvantage. The kinds of assignments provided with each of the resources were similar, each largely comprised of question sets designed to have the students digest the substance of the resource. However, each class was also given tasks that required them to think analytically about the issues raised by the resource. With the VHEC *Discovery Kit* the students were required to interpret the relevance and meaning of each artifact within the context of the Holocaust and to build their own narrative out of the artifacts. The students reading the comic novel *Maus* were assigned a series of questions probing the technical and creative design of the story and to uncover the symbolism in the art. Additionally, they were asked to probe the relationship between the author and his father, a survivor of the Holocaust, and comment on the significance of healing or working-through trauma. The students that viewed the film *The Pianist* were asked to do character sketches of the principal actors in the narrative and to

extrapolate a broader understanding of the Holocaust experience from the example of Vladek Szpilman. This group was then given a 'free write' in which they had to choose three of five topics from the film which demanded that they reflect more deeply on the life of Szpilman and the examples of survival found in the Warsaw Ghetto (see Appendices 2, 3 and 4 for the individual assignments).

The block C group provided me with the greatest challenge and some interesting results from their encounter with the VHEC *Discovery Kit*. The class had underperformed throughout the year, although there were a fair number of solid academics in the class, and I was concerned about finding a way to motivate them in this unit of study. I did not want to reward them with watching the film because I did not believe they would use the opportunity to enrich their study of the Holocaust; rather they might see it as a break from the monotony of social studies class. I considered having the class read *Maus* but was not certain that they would engage with the book to the depth of either of my other blocks. Thus, they were assigned the *Discovery Kit*. The kit included a suitcase, photographs, a wooden toy dog, identity papers (actual and forged), ration coupons, and a jacket with the Star of David sewn on the lapel. With some reflection I came to believe this would be ideal as it would demand that they become more engaged in the process while examining the artifacts but also because the sensory and personal connection with the artifacts might stimulate more interest. More specifically I believed the stations approach, used to examine the artifacts, might engage the less dynamic boys of the class in keeping with some of the current research about the corpus callosum and its stimulation (Macdonald, 2006).

The students initially approached the stations with some enthusiasm and asked pertinent questions indicating thoughtful reflection as they shifted from object to object. However, this was not borne out in the written assignments or the informal presentations done in the classroom. Many of the students were disengaged and confused by the analysis rubric that directed them to examine each artifact and analyze its form, substance, function, and connection to the Holocaust. Brief and informal conversations with some of the table groups allowed me to conclude that they were not making connections with the individual objects. There was no relevance or context with which they could draw upon personal experience to bring meaning to the objects. I altered my lesson and asked each student to bring in one object that was meaningful to them for next class and to be prepared to discuss its importance and meaning to the class. Approximately two thirds of the class brought artifacts to discuss including a wristwatch, photographs, bracelets, currency, and a passport. The discussion was lively and the students enjoyed telling their stories to the class and sharing a small piece of their own histories. Tying the object to their lived experience contextualized the history and linked memory, identity and the past in a manageable way. This seemed to spark more engagement with the remaining artifacts, but in the end it was apparent in the writing and our summative discussions that the students did not bring much imagination, thoughtfulness or depth to their understanding of the artifacts.

The block B class viewed *The Pianist*, a powerful film about the experience of Wladek Szpilman a famous concert pianist from Poland. The film is filled with powerful visual elements, shocking scenes, poignant moments, and graphic footage of Nazi brutality. However, it also depicts the complexity of the times with Germans, Jews,

Poles, and Russians taking turns at villainy and inhumane conduct. I felt that the cinematic power of the film, its compelling story line and the complexity of the characters would offer fertile ground for the class to explore the context of the Holocaust hoping to move them away from simplistic interpretations. While the film and others like it have been criticized (Lanzmann, 1994) it was a better alternative than the critically acclaimed *Shoah* (1985). Paradoxically I chose not to use *Shoah* with my students for the very reasons it was acclaimed in that it was too real, too dark in its mood, and does not contextualize the story of the Holocaust in the manner we find with feature film. Documentary film has its place in the classroom but it is challenging to have students draw out so much from survivor testimony; in feature film the imagination works freely and the story fits with the tidy image adolescent students tend have of the world. This is not to say that Lanzmann's *Shoah* should not be shown to high school students, but it would require teaching the students the critical tools necessary to explore the documentary and assess the oral testimony it relies on.

Students were provided with some guiding questions for the film and a "free write" to complete on three topics at the end of the movie (see Appendix 2). The film impacted their view of the Holocaust several ways. Firstly, few if any of the students fell into common stereotypes of the German soldiers or officers portrayed in the film. However, they maintained a clear sense of responsibility for the Nazi regime and its leadership for the Holocaust. Secondly, they expressed a greater understanding of the complex context through which many Jews, and non-Jews, experienced the Holocaust. Thirdly, the students began to grasp the horrors and suffering of the victims while acknowledging that what separated the survivors from the dead was often little more

than luck. Finally, it helped bring an understanding of the many subtle ways in which the lives of European Jews were affected by the Nuremberg Laws and other policies long before the horror of the Final Solution began. The film embedded a greater understanding of the Holocaust even if in a narrow context of one survivor's story.



## **6 Conclusions, Implications for Schools and Further Research**

This research study examined the connection between students' historical thinking and a teacher's use of narrative choice. It began with my desire to understand the connection between teaching and learning about and from the past. It ended with many questions about the lessons of the history, the moral and redemptive power of narratives and the capacity of the Holocaust to sensitize my students about oppression and atrocity. In looking to the Holocaust one must consider significant layers of complexity because it is both an event like no other and an event not dissimilar from others in history. "If there is... any wisdom to be acquired from contemplating an historical event", Novick (1999) wrote, "I would think it would derive from confronting it in all its complexity and its contradictions; the ways in which it resembles other events to which it might be compared as well as the ways it differs from them" (p.18).

Notwithstanding the complexity of the Holocaust and the many cautions supported in the literature (Novick, 1999; Boix-Mansilla, 2000; Schweber, 2004), teaching about the Holocaust offers numerous opportunities to engage students in thoughtful reflection. The emotional power, moral dimensions, and historical complexity of the event allow for reflection on issues like the human propensity for violence, trauma and healing, confrontation of one's beliefs and prejudices, moral and legal responsibilities, ethics; the event also compels students to wrestle with historical questions that have no clear answer.

This chapter reviews my findings with respect to the research into a teacher's narrative choice and students' historical thinking. The chapter has been organized to follow the research question with a section on students' historical thinking and teacher's

narrative choice, but also includes my findings on the three teaching resources. It will then explore the implications of this study for me, for other teachers, and for further research highlighting both the challenges and opportunities facing the teacher-researcher.

## **6.1 Students' Thinking About the Holocaust**

The students' writing focused to a large extent on the connections between memory and history. Most presented memory as neutral, like the hard drive on a computer it merely stores a clear record of the past. For them the relics, monuments, physical traces, and other residua of the past aid memory and validate history. The truth, however, is more complicated because memory is selective, temporary and infused with bias (Kavanagh, 2000). The students did not recognize this difference and this is likely a reflection of an undeveloped understanding of memory, particularly as it relates to our knowledge of the past. Much of the student writing emphatically argued for preservation of the traces and accounts of the Holocaust for three reasons. Firstly, they were arguing for preservation as a way to validate the narratives of the Holocaust and to refute counter-narratives that challenged shared understandings in our common consciousness. Secondly, they saw these physical remains as the medium through which memory is triggered and the truth perpetuated for succeeding generations. Finally, some of the students argued that relics and accounts of the Holocaust have the capacity to enrich our connection with the past in a way that textbooks, film or websites cannot.

The students recognized that memory aids the reconstruction of history and its placement in our collective consciousness, but they did not articulate clear connections

between memory and history. Some demonstrated a clear understanding of the power of memory and linked the idea of forgetting the Holocaust with a failure to honour the sacrifice made by victims and survivors. I would contend that demonstrating some understanding of the power of collective memory and its symbiotic relationship with history is a significant step toward a deeper level of historical understanding. Some of the students acknowledged in their writing that society's understanding of the Holocaust must change when the survivors of the Holocaust are gone. They see in the survivors a direct link between the event and the lived experience that will be forever severed when they die. None of the students commented on the possibility that the link can be preserved by the children of survivors, as witnessed by the example of Art Spiegelman. They argued that it is the responsibility of schools, museums and societies to preserve the memory of these witnesses to human tragedy and pass it to the next generation. With each generation being further removed from the event and its witnesses, the preservation, education and documentation becomes more important in their eyes, as a means to know about the Holocaust. This indicates a kind of thinking we should encourage in our students when studying history.

Much of the student writing centred on the lessons of history, particularly the redemptive moral power of the past. Scholarship on the issue of learning from history suggests that lessons can be learned but that they are limited by knowledge, lesson structure and narrative choice (Novick, 1999; Boix-Mansilla, 2000; Feinberg and Totten, 2001). However, the danger of directing history lessons toward the development of a moral response is that the lessons may become simplistic, and propagandistic in orientation and purpose (Barton and Levstik, 2001). History is frequently interpreted and

accepted by students as truthful replications of past events (Lee and Ashby, 2000). The inherent danger in using history in the service of a moral agenda is that students simplify, misunderstand, misappropriate or confuse the meaning of events in the past (Barton and Levstik, 2001). Students studying a topic like the Holocaust could be manipulated, or merely misled into a number of erroneous or oversimplified positions (Novick, 1999; Boix-Mansilla, 2000; Barton and Levstik, 2001; Schweber, 2004). With these cautions in mind I took care in scaffolding the students' understanding of the Holocaust, paying particular time and attention to the context in which the events transpired. This included considerable discussion and information on Darwinist racial theories, the history of anti-Semitism in Europe and the complex intersection of race theory, eugenics, post-war economics, and political and social developments during the inter-war years.

Notwithstanding my preparation there is evidence in the student writing of oversimplification and erroneous transposition of historic events. Recall the student, noted in Chapter 5, who linked the Rwandan genocide with the Holocaust as similar historic events, and the one who blamed the entire Holocaust on one man, Adolf Hitler. However, in teaching the Holocaust for its moral dimensions careful attention to detail and thoughtful planning can reduce the impact of simplistic responses. The recommendation of Boix-Mansilla (2000) to offer multiple opportunities for students to engage in the study of historical tragedy can offset some of the challenges posed by this form of history. Research in moral education, character education and values education suggests that students need numerous opportunities to confront their own moral frameworks, examine conflicting positions, and advance their personal moral

growth (Likona, 1976; Lockwood, 1976; Turiel, 1989; Nucci, 2001). Arguably the Holocaust is no more suited to the development of moral reasoning than other compelling tragedies in history, but it is certainly no less valuable and a much more accessible event for teachers and students interested in rich and detailed studies (Novick, 1999; Feinberg and Totten, 2001). One of the findings from this research was the overwhelming degree of historical empathy evidenced by the student's writing. Most of their responses made some reference to the trauma and tragedy visited upon the victims of the Holocaust and a compassionate, and legitimate, desire to honour them through remembrance and education. The transference of historical empathy to the daily behaviour of the students is too much to hope from a single study of the Holocaust, but with time and other opportunities to engage in similar lessons such transference can develop. The connections between knowing, understanding and applying or acting on the lessons of history are yet to be clearly linked through research and offer intriguing possibilities for future research.

## **6.2 Teachers' Narrative Choice**

I believe that the narratives we choose must be compelling, meaningful to the lives of our students, and support moral reasoning in our learners. The ways in which we understand the acquisition of knowledge and historical understanding is undergoing extensive research within the field of history education. If history is but a fragment of the lived past and the construction of our narratives are necessarily selective, then the choices we make about teaching and understanding history take on importance. The call in Canada for greater emphasis on teaching the grand narrative, our nation-building history (Granatstein, 1998, Dominion Institute, 2003), rings hollow in the face of the

questions raised by recent research. Students will appropriate narratives that have meaning to them and ones in which the connections between past and present are clear and substantiated by experience and not because they came from history books (Wertsch, 2000). Moreover, research suggests that a greater focus on teaching the tools of the discipline in conjunction with relevant narratives can increase student understanding of the past (Seixas, 1998, 2000, 2006). Curriculum developers and history educators in BC should take these considerations into account and not simply adhere to traditional, ideologically biased, narrow accounts of founding fathers, war heroes and French-English relations.

Curriculum choice is effectively in the hands of the classroom teacher, given the broad parameters of the British Columbia curriculum guides (see a more detailed assessment in Chapters 1 and 2). Within the prescribed curriculum teachers may choose narratives that are compelling and rich with opportunities. However, there are classroom factors that limit narrative choice, for example, the class composition, student skill sets and access to quality resources. Class composition is an important factor in teaching. The range of academic abilities in many classrooms is from the low end to the high. Some schools have eliminated honours, enriched or incentive classes, resulting in a broad mix of students, from those needing scribing, learning support or ESL support, to those who are high achieving and intrinsically motivated students. The analytical abilities needed for rich and substantial investigations into the past are simply not developed in some of our students. This compounds the complexity of choice and the sophistication at which one can instruct the class and design lessons. The skill set and knowledge base of the classroom teacher also dictates narrative choice. Recall the

criticism of the Task Force Report in BC (BC Ministry of Education, 1999) that singled out inadequate background knowledge, limited and uninspiring teaching methods and superficial assessment strategies as reasons for a decline in student interest in history. Narrative choices will not impact student thinking if not followed up by sound knowledge of the topic, appropriate and effective teaching methods and assessment strategies that support learning.

In spite of these challenges the student writing samples offer numerous examples of complex moral reasoning, substantial historical understanding and thoughtful reflection on the connections between the past and present. Their responses lend credibility to the argument that the history we teach must have the power to engage the minds and hearts of our students and offer them meaningful opportunities to develop critical minds. This is best done through the selection of narratives that are rich in moral complexity and have real connection to the lived experience of our youth. The quality and quantity of work coming out of block's A and B support a general conclusion that the film and graphic novel contributed to their interest and learning. The narratives presented in *The Pianist* and *Maus* engaged the affective domain of the students, lifting their connection to the lives being played out on paper and film. In spite of the appearance of interest and success at inviting deeper thinking through the use of rich narratives I cannot conclude that the elevated interest was not more a reflection of the Holocaust in general, as opposed to my specific narrative selections. As noted by Novick (1999) and Totten (1998) the Holocaust casts a large shadow making it difficult to understand students' thinking about the event. I believe students are intrinsically motivated to learn about human tragedy, to remedy past injustice and to learn about the

failings of humankind. However, the research leaves me uncertain as to whether narrative choices in my classroom will harness such narratives effectively.

### **6.3 The Three Teaching Resources**

Did the varied instructional resources impact student learning and understanding about the Holocaust? In the essay responses substantive differences from block to block are minimal and cannot be directly linked to the use of the differentiated resources as opposed to student ability, personal interest or prior knowledge. One of the complexities of drawing comparison between the classes is that there were significant differences in the academic abilities of the students, particularly with block C. As noted in Chapter 3, block C had a substantial number of students who were repeating the course, had poor attendance patterns and were weak academically. Additionally, this block returned the fewest number of consent forms and completed the lowest number of student papers. To draw comparisons on the impact of the resources would require similar control groups and this was not possible with the classes I taught. The student writing samples offer modest examples of different perspectives being taken but I cannot account for these as being attributable to the varied resources as opposed to the intrinsic motivation and ability of the students. Yet, in my initial planning I was aware that the classes were not similar in general aptitude, ability, conscientiousness, or commitment and I used this knowledge to direct the organization of the three different resources. Paradoxically as I oriented the lessons around the differences among the classes I did not consider that this would later interfere with my ability to draw conclusions rooted in sound evidence collected from the classes.



Notwithstanding the challenge of drawing out the impact of the varied resources I believe differences are evident in the student writing. Assessment of written assignments collected from the classes during the lessons demonstrated much richer responses from the *Maus* and *Pianist* classes than from the class using the *Discovery Kit*. The most consistently detailed and thoughtful responses in written work came from the class (block A) that read *Maus* and they were highly engaged in reading the story and discussing the guiding questions. The question sets provided with the comic novel opened opportunities for thoughtful discussion on matters of race, stereotyping, power, historical empathy, and the impact of tragedy on family. The father and son focus of the story and the exploration of the psychology of their relationship gripped the students, perhaps because it had a relevance to their own family relationships. However, both *The Pianist* and the *Discovery Kit* had a family focus and I expected the connections to be strong but the level of on task focus and the depth of our discussions did not live up to expectation in blocks B or C. The graphic novel is an appealing medium for students used to reading *manga* (Japanese cartoon novels) and may account for increased interest evident in block A. The only significant difference in the writing samples I collected is reflected in the depth and thoroughness of the block A samples in comparison with block B or C. The consistency with which block A reflected upon the question suggests a more thoughtful approach to the assignment. This may be attributed to the use of the graphic novel but it could also be reflective of the academic depth of the students and their internal motivation to complete assignments thoroughly as this was the general trend for the class all school year.

The strongest link that can be made between the differentiated teaching units and student understanding is that in each case the resource contributed another piece to help contextualize the Holocaust and prove its relevance to the present. The student writing samples are thick with references to the need to preserve, remember and teach about the Holocaust in all high school classrooms and the community at large. An underlying current of respect for the sacrifices of the victims and the suffering of families then and now is tangible in their writing. Anne notes in her passage that everyone "has a connection to the Holocaust, either by family relation or just by being part of the country. Even as Canadians we are not completely free from the horrors of the Holocaust." Some students supported preservation and education, not as a moral obligation to the past, but to validate and prove what happened so that no one can deny its occurrence. Yet, even this sentiment is powerful because it illustrates the belief that only by confronting the demons of our human past can we strive to improve the human condition and fight oppression and persecution as it arises. As Vera writes "[the] people who have not been through the horrors of the Holocaust need to be able to see what it was like" and we must preserve the physical traces of the event because it may be used against those who wish to deny the Holocaust and refute its real horror. Perhaps the student perspective is best summarized in this passage by Donna who wrote that in the end "it really does not matter how many memorials or museums we build [what] matters is that the people are aware and understand why these tragedies occurred and what we must learn in order not to repeat these atrocities."

## **6.4 Implications for Further Research**

This study's findings support some of the existing research on historical understanding in adolescents and with the Holocaust's value in teaching lessons for contemporary society. However, it opens the door to a number of new directions for research. I would like to highlight four areas of concern: student understanding, impact of differentiated teaching resources, teaching moral lessons from the Holocaust, and the impact of narrative choice on student learning. Some students did not demonstrate a clear understanding of the causes of the Holocaust and others fell prey to oversimplification or single cause explanations. Further investigations could target student understanding by doing more formal and summative assessments throughout the research phase. Formative data could be used to adjust lessons and target specific areas of concern. At the end of the study it was not clear if the differentiated teaching resources enhanced students' understanding of the Holocaust. Even if differences were evident it would have been challenging to claim they were the result of the differentiated resources, as opposed to academic ability and class composition. Future investigations would require a cleaner model with control groups to limit the variables. The students' writing indicated that moral lessons could be drawn from a study of the Holocaust. However, the study cannot draw specific links among the teaching unit, varied resources and students' moral frames. Here it could be fruitful to engage in a more complex analysis using a model like Rusen's (1989) four point typology to analyze the moral stance and potential moral growth of students in a study of the Holocaust. The study did not clearly show a connection between my narrative choices and student

understanding. Future research could target each narrative with specific sets of questions, pre and post-testing and interviews to draw out more data.

The student samples, while showing evidence of moral reasoning, do not show clear connections between understanding the Holocaust and using the moral lessons it provides to orient personal action. One of the initial goals I had for the study was to assess the application of moral reasoning, developed in a study of the Holocaust, to a contemporary moral issue. Further research could find connections between the kinds of narratives we teach and the capacity of these narratives to affect student moral frames. The historical empathy demonstrated in much of the writing needs further exploration as it cannot be determined if this is a product of deep historical understanding or a response to a tragic event in history. Student agency is receiving considerable attention in research and this study demonstrates the need for more research on the connections between curriculum and agency.

Another area of concern was the poor participation rates of the students with respect to providing consent for the use of their writing samples. As noted earlier the analysis and conclusions drawn from my research were impacted by a drop in the total number of writing samples available for analysis. Column two of *Table 5.1* (Chapter 5) provides the total number of consent forms returned in each class, showing that a total of 39 forms were not returned thus limiting the available pool of essays. This was not necessarily because consent was refused, but that the forms were not turned in. It is not possible to determine if the incomplete consent forms were a product of the preference of parents/students or mere disinterest, apathy, forgetfulness, language barriers, or other explanations. Column three of *Table 5.1* provides the number of affirmative forms

with only one student not providing consent (compare columns two and three). The returned forms indicate strong support for participation in the study from those students and parents who completed and returned forms. While the process limited the number of papers for my analysis, the final sample of 42 essays allowed significant insights. Steps that might improve the rate of return could include direct communication with parents about the study, more frequent reminders and added pressure from the form administrator. My absence from the distribution and collection process directly impacted the number of returned consent forms.

In hindsight an important misstep on my part was in not having a clearly focused objective while designing the research methodology. In spite of having a clear research question and an understanding of what I wanted to examine, the research process was not thought through carefully enough to avoid the problems described here. My awareness and understanding in the field of Holocaust education and case study research has been refined, but was limited at the inception of the study. Gaps in knowledge and technique created problems in the data sample and limited my ability to make concrete claims. Having completed this research exercise, I now see how the study might be refined and deepened including, pairings of students that are balanced academically and have similar ethnic backgrounds, perhaps even similar immigration profiles; pairs would be high achievers, in the mid range and a lower level. Additional sources of data could enrich the research conclusions. For example, student assignments during the unit and not just at the end and student interviews throughout. Records of classroom discussions and observation notes would aid the interpretation and analysis of the data. Furthermore, pre and post unit tests could offer some measure

of student success at retaining knowledge of the material. This would add an interesting layer to the study, opening opportunities to draw correlations between the various elements of the study and the students' level of factual recall. Finally, I would revise and extend the final written exercise. While I was pleased with the quality of responses received on the question of obligation, it fell short in allowing me to assess their understanding of the Holocaust and to probe some of the other moral questions. Many of the students fell back on the idea that the Holocaust must offer lessons for humanity without indicating what the lessons were, how we could apply them and why humanity has not learned from the experience of the Holocaust.

## **6.5 Teacher as Researcher**

Secondary school teachers work in isolation much of their careers with few genuine opportunities to engage in purposeful self-reflection that leads to changes in classroom practice. These opportunities are important to reflection for testing new ideas or strategies in our classes, and for reenergizing classroom practice. For me this study has been invaluable because it forced me to challenge my conceptions of history and reflect on the fundamental goals that I have for teaching history. The difficulty of teaching and researching at the same time is considerable and the ethical issues are well established in research. I believe my students benefited from my presence during the investigation by keeping the transition to this unit of study seamless. They also benefited from my knowledge and understanding of their academic capabilities and behavioural tendencies. However, as noted earlier, my familiarity also influenced my choice of curricula for each class and this did not work out well for the block C group. The most difficult challenge was to find the time for reflection and analysis of student

work while teaching and juggling extracurricular commitments. It is much more difficult to be introspective of one's own teaching practice and to maintain objectivity. Yet, insights into teaching about the Holocaust that I have gathered from my research are substantial and will direct my lessons and curriculum planning in new directions. For the students I believe the experience was rewarding. The topic lent itself to rich discussions and thoughtful questions. They demonstrated deep interest in the narratives and were moved by the challenges faced by so many victims and survivors.

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## **Appendices**

<b>Appendix 1</b>	Introductory Assignment
<b>Appendix 2</b>	The Pianist: Student Assignment
<b>Appendix 3</b>	Maus: Graphic Novel Study Questions
<b>Appendix 4</b>	VHEC Discovery Kit: Artifact Analysis Rubric
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## Appendix 1

### Holocaust Unit

Student Backgrounder:	Holocaust Slide Show
Counterpoints	pp.93-94-Hitler comes to power pp. 97-98-Canada's refugee policy pp. 115-map with death camps pp. 119-122-Holocaust discovered
Student Reading Guide	pp. 92-93-Hitler and the Nazi Party pp. 110-112-The Holocaust
Documents:	Nuremberg Laws (1935) Kristalnacht (1938)

#### Maus

A graphic novel based on the life of a Holocaust survivor, it explores the relationship with his son, and working through the trauma of the Holocaust.

#### The Pianist

A feature film based on the real life of Polish composer Vladek Szpilman, documenting his Holocaust experience in the Warsaw Ghetto.

#### Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre: Discovery Kit

A suitcase with replica artifacts from the period of the Holocaust and documents/photos designed to assist with our understanding of the trauma.

#### **Student Thinking About the Holocaust:**

- Why did the Holocaust happen?
- Why did no one stand up and stop the Holocaust?
- Why did average German's participate in the Holocaust?
- How did the Nazi Party generate support for its anti-Semitic policies?
- Describe the process through which Jews were denied their civil, economic and political rights.
- What lessons can be learned from a study of the Holocaust?
- What obligation does the German government and its citizens have to preserve and educate its youth about the Holocaust?

## Appendix 2

### ***The Pianist***

Roman Polanski's *THE PIANIST* (2002) is based on the memoirs of the talented pianist Wladyslaw Szpilman (Adrian Brody), a Polish Jew, who miraculously survived World War II. The first half of the film transports viewers to 1939 Poland, and brings it to life clearly and believably. Bombings have begun to torment the citizens of Warsaw, and step-by-step, the Nazis infiltrate, the Jews are branded and set apart from their neighbors, imprisoned in a ghetto, and slowly exterminated. The story is told through Szpilman's eyes, and thus carries as much confusion and fear as disgust and torment. Polanski paints Warsaw in bleak shades of gray and black, expressing the helplessness of the Jewish people and the cruelty of the Nazis with captivating photography.

#### *Points of observation:*

- ☐ How did the treatment of Jews change after the invasion of Poland in 1939?
- ☐ Why did the Germans force Jews into the Warsaw Ghetto?
- ☐ How did Szpilman manage to escape the Death Camps; the Ghetto?
- ☐ Describe the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. How does the resistance speak to the courage of the Jewish people?
- ☐ Do you think Szpilman's experience would be typical of the many Holocaust victims or an exception? Explain using specific examples from the film.

#### *Free Writing*

You are to write on three of the five topics listed below. In a *Free Write* your objective is to write in any direction you choose without the concern for structure in traditional paragraph writing.

1. The barbarity and utter cruelty of the German soldiers and Polish citizens.
2. The powerful examples of courage and humanity shown by Polish citizens, resistance fighters and the German Captain.
3. His survival is attributed to his will to live, his music, or good fortune?
4. Contrast examples of his fear and torment with scenes when he displayed anger or disgust.
5. The separation of his family and their extermination.

## Appendix 3

### Maus: A Graphic Novel About the Holocaust

#### Study Questions for Art Spiegelman's Maus Vol. I-II

1. In general, how does Art portray his father? Do you think this is a fair representation? Why do you think he portrays him in the way he does?
2. To what extent do you think Art accurately represents his father's story? Do you think he has embellished it any way? What might have been added or left out?
3. How does Art portray himself? Why does he include himself in his father's story of the Holocaust?
4. What is the importance, throughout the text, of Art's reflections on the process of putting together this book?
5. What is the relationship between history and the present in the book? Why are many episodes from the present included?
6. To what extent are the characters caught in the past? Are all Holocaust survivors and their children prisoners of history?
7. What are some of the features that characterize Spiegelman's graphic style? How do these contribute to his memoir? How do they shape our understanding of his father's story?
8. In general, how is the Holocaust represented in Spiegelman's text?
9. How does the comic book format affect this representation?

#### Reading questions for Maus:

1. What animals did Art Spiegelman choose to represent different nationalities? Why? Do you agree with those choices? What other animals might he have chosen? Is this comic strip format a good way to tell about the Holocaust?
2. How accurate is the information in this story, as far as the "historical facts" of the Holocaust go?
3. Do Art or Vladek offer any explanations for WHY the Holocaust happened? If so, what are they?
4. What do you learn about Auschwitz? How does it compare to Dachau?
5. Is Vladek's story a typical one? Is this what many or most victims of the Holocaust experienced? Is there anything in Vladek's personality that made it more likely for him to survive?
6. What problems do historians who were not there face in "telling the story" of the Holocaust?
7. What legacies do his parents' experiences have for Art? What "lessons" has Vladek learned from his odyssey through the Holocaust?

Questions adapted from: Spiegelman, A. (1994). *The Complete Maus CD-ROM*. New York: Voyager.

## Appendix 4

### VHEC Discovery Kit: Outside the Attic Walls

#### Task 1: Reading the Object

For each item proceed through the following series of steps. Prepare to share the findings of your group with the class.

1. Hold and Examine.
  - a. What are your first thoughts?
  - b. Examine the construction and detail.
2. Describe.
  - a. Write words or phrases to describe the object.
3. Think and Write.
  - a. What would you like to know about the object?
  - b. Write down any questions you have.
4. Predict.
  - a. Make an educated case about the function of the object.
  - b. What do you think it was used for? Who used it?
5. Read.
  - a. Read the testimony of the survivor that owned this object (this will be provided by the teacher).
  - b. What did you learn from their testimony?
  - c. Compare your prediction with the testimony.
6. Compare.
  - a. Compare your object with items from the present.
  - b. Can you compare it with something you own or something you have seen that is similar? Explain.
7. Question.
  - a. What questions remain?
  - b. Where can you get more information about the object?

## Appendix 5

### Student Writing Samples: Categorization of Responses

1. The scale of the Holocaust matters and this affirms its significance for study in our schools.
2. Memorials aid in the preservation of the past/history.
3. We must remember the past or be doomed to repeat it.
4. Historical knowledge is a prerequisite to human progress.
5. Museums preserve representations and artifacts from the past.
6. Museums bring history alive and make it available to all people.
7. Museums, relics, physical traces and accounts of the past form 'evidence' to validate historic truths.
8. History provides an endless source of lessons for humanity.
9. Visual sources, physical traces and accounts of the past shape memory in the present.
10. Physical remains induce and provoke painful memories for survivors and families.
11. Museums serve to educate, share knowledge, and create understanding of historic events.
12. To forget is to fail memory and ignore the sacrifices of the many victims of the Holocaust.
13. Physical remains, the traces of the past, validate the truth of events like the Holocaust. They must exist to combat those who deny the truth (specifically Holocaust denial).
14. New and succeeding generations require museums, memorials, relics and monuments to learn the lessons of the past (those with lived experiences will not live on to share their narratives).
15. Events like the Holocaust provide specific lessons for Canadians (and other multi-ethnic nations) about the dangers of systemic discrimination, racism, prejudice and stereotyping.
16. The Holocaust demonstrates the human potential for evil. It is an ideal case study for lessons in universal values.
17. History serves to validate the present and future actions of society (we cannot go forward without understanding where we came from).
18. The Holocaust is only one example of many historic events that serve to educate us.
19. Museums, memorials, relics and monuments are locations where past and present are linked and we can make meaning of the present via our understanding of the past.
20. The preservation of sites and artifacts of the Holocaust allow a sensory experience (we can 'feel', 'smell' and 'view' the past).
21. We will forget more than we remember, so it is important to choose what we will remember carefully and with a purpose.
22. Physical remains, relics and artifacts are graphic and powerful reminders to learn about the past, in ways that cannot be accomplished by reading history texts alone.
23. We have a moral obligation to take action against oppression (this can be learned by studying events like the Holocaust).
24. The 'messages' of the Holocaust are embedded in the physical traces of the event.
25. We are obligated to remember all events in which Canadians played some role.
26. The Holocaust bears witness to the power of the human spirit.
27. The Holocaust offers rich examples of moral courage (examples to model our conduct in the present).
28. The 'moral weight' of some events dictate that they be taught and remembered.

## Appendix 6

### Document Analysis Guide

1. Is this document a primary or secondary source? How do you know?
2. Is the author recording his/her own observations or quoting somebody else? Was the author present at the event described? How do you know?
3. Number all of the sentences in the document.
4. Read each sentence and write either the sentence or its number under one of the following headings: fact statements, opinions, can't tell statements, inferences.
5. Read the statements again and carefully look for adjectives, adverbs or descriptive phrases and decide whether these are neutral or intended to convey judgment.
6. Answer the following questions:
  - a. Is the document an objective account of events or is it intended to be an objective account? Explain.
  - b. Is the document designed to persuade the reader to a particular point of view? Why?
  - c. Does the author succeed in his/her purpose? Explain.
7. Examine the information you have gathered about the document and answer the following questions:
  - a. Why did the author write this document?
  - b. Is the document a reliable source of information? Explain.

## **Appendix 7**

### **The Nuremberg Laws (1935)**

*Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor  
(September 15, 1935)*

Entirely convinced that the purity of German blood is essential to the further existence of the German people, and inspired by the uncompromising determination to safeguard the future of the German nation, the Reichstag has unanimously resolved upon the following law, which is promulgated herewith:

#### **Section 1**

1. Marriages between Jews and citizens of German or kindred blood are forbidden. Marriages concluded in defiance of this law are void, even if, for the purpose of evading this law, they were concluded abroad.

**What was the purpose of this section? How would you feel knowing that you were not free to marry whom you chose?**

2. Proceedings for annulment may be initiated only by the Public Prosecutor.

#### **Section 2**

Sexual relations outside marriage between Jews and nationals of German or kindred blood are forbidden.

**If Jews were forbidden to marry Germans of pure blood why would this restriction be necessary?**

#### **Section 3**

Jews will not be permitted to employ female citizens of German or kindred blood as domestic servants.

**What is the significance of this section?**

#### **Section 4**

1. Jews are forbidden to display the Reich and national flag or the national colors.

**Why would the government prohibit Jews from displaying their loyalty and patriotism to the Reich (many Jews had fought for Germany in W.W. I)?**

2. On the other hand they are permitted to display the Jewish colors. The exercise of this right is protected by the State.

**Why would the state encourage Jews in the display of the Star of David or other symbols of the Jewish faith?**



### **Section 5**

1. A person who acts contrary to the prohibition of Section 1 will be punished with hard labour.
2. A person who acts contrary to the prohibition of Section 2 will be punished with imprisonment or with hard labour.
3. A person who acts contrary to the provisions of Sections 3 or
- 4 will be punished with imprisonment up to a year and with a fine, or with one of these penalties.

**Evaluate the proportionality and severity of these punishments. Are they reasonable? Explain.**

### **Section 6**

The Reich Minister of the Interior in agreement with the Deputy Fuhrer and the Reich Minister of Justice will issue the legal and administrative regulations required for the enforcement and supplementing of this law.

### **Section 7**

The law will become effective on the day after its promulgation; Section 3, however, not until 1 January 1936.

### ***The Reich Citizenship Law***

(September 15, 1935)

The Reich Citizenship Law stripped Jews of their German citizenship and introduced a new distinction between "Reich citizens" and "nationals." Certificates of Reich citizenship were in fact never introduced and all Germans other than Jews were until 1945 provisionally classed as Reich citizens.

### **Article 1**

1. A subject of the State is a person who belongs to the protective union of the German Reich, and who therefore has particular obligations towards the Reich.

**What "obligations" to the Reich might a German citizen have had at this time?**

2. The status of subject is acquired in accordance with the provisions of the Reich and State Law of Citizenship.

### **Article 2**

1. A citizen of the Reich is that subject only who is of German or kindred blood and who, through his conduct, shows that he is both desirous and fit to serve the German people and Reich faithfully.

**Outline the criteria for being a citizen of the Reich. What "conduct" might be necessary to demonstrate ones loyalty to the state?**

2. The right to citizenship is acquired by the granting of Reich citizenship papers.

**Why would it be necessary to grant all German's citizenship papers? Is it necessary for Canadian citizens to carry such papers? Explain.**

3. Only the citizen of the Reich enjoys full political rights in accordance with the provision of the laws.

**What political rights, freedoms and privileges did German citizens hold in this period? How would this law impact the Jewish population of Germany?**

***Article 3***

The Reich Minister of the Interior in conjunction with the Deputy of the Fuhrer will issue the necessary legal and administrative decrees for carrying out and supplementing this law.

**How was the Reich's Minister accountable to the people of Germany (was Germany a democracy during this period)?**

Translated version from: *The Jewish Virtual Library (January 2007)*



The University of British Columbia  
Office of Research Services  
**Behavioural Research Ethics Board**  
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## CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL - FULL BOARD

<b>PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:</b> Peter C. Seixas	<b>INSTITUTION / DEPARTMENT:</b> UBC/Education/Curriculum Studies	<b>UBC BREB NUMBER:</b> H06-03945
<b>INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT:</b>		
<b>Institution</b>	<b>Site</b>	
N/A		
<b>Other locations where the research will be conducted:</b> HJ Cambie Secondary School 4151 Jacombs Road, Richmond, BC V6V 1N7		
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<b>SPONSORING AGENCIES:</b> N/A		
<b>PROJECT TITLE:</b> Teaching history, teaching morality: Narrative choices, historical consciousness and moral development		
<b>REB MEETING DATE:</b>  January 11, 2007	<b>CERTIFICATE EXPIRY DATE:</b>  January 11, 2008	
<b>DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THIS APPROVAL:</b>		<b>DATE APPROVED:</b> February 5, 2007
<b>Document Name</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Consent Forms:</b>		
Parent consent/student assent form	1	December 19, 2006
Parent consent/student assent form	2	January 24, 2007
<b>Questionnaire, Questionnaire Cover Letter, Tests:</b>		
Demographic questionnaire	1	December 20, 2006
<b>Other Documents:</b>		
Letter to Richmond including research description	N/A	December 12, 2006
Richmond School District Approval	N/A	December 14, 2006
<p>The application for ethical review and the document(s) listed above have been reviewed and the procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.</p> <p style="text-align: center; margin-top: 20px;"> <b>Approval is issued on behalf of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board and signed electronically by one of the following:</b> </p> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <hr style="width: 80%; margin: 0 auto;"/> <p>Dr. Peter Suedfeld, Chair Dr. Jim Rupert, Associate Chair Dr. Arminee Kazanjian, Associate Chair Dr. M. Judith Lynam, Associate Chair</p> </div>		