Unusual Approaches to Teaching the Holocaust.

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Introduction (*Láníček*)

Holocaust pedagogy keeps evolving. Educators all over the world develop new lecture materials and in-class exercises, select new resources to engage emerging generations of students with the topic, and design assessment tasks that test diverse skills, but also challenge students to re-think perhaps familiar topics. In an era when students can easily access a large volume of resources online – often of problematic quality, and when the film industry keeps producing Holocaust blockbusters in large numbers – we as educators need to be selective in our decisions about the material we use in face-to-face or virtual classrooms. Apart from technological advances in the last decades which facilitate but also complicate our efforts, we are now quickly approaching the post-witness era, the time when we will not be able to rely on those who "were there". This major milestone carries various challenges that we need to consider when preparing our curriculum in the following years.

But we have reason to be optimistic. Student interest in Holocaust courses remains high, and also the general public and governmental agencies recognize and support the need for education in the history of genocides. If we focus on Australia alone, a new Holocaust museum was just open in Adelaide, South Australia, and there are progressing plans to open Holocaust museums in Brisbane and Perth, the capitals of Queensland and Western Australia. All of these institutions have received financial support from the budget of the federal government. Soon most of the Australian states will host a permanent Holocaust exhibition.

With this groundwork available, and with the support of the federal and state governments for secondary Holocaust education, the ball is in the educators' court. There is a large amount of literature on Holocaust pedagogy now available, and the aim of this co-authored article is to further contribute to this discussion.[1] It includes contributions from five Holocaust educators, who discuss what we call "unusual" approaches to teaching the Holocaust. The term "unusual" carries diverse meanings for each author. Some of them discuss particular approaches to student-centred learning, in terms of formative and summative assessments, or in-class exercises. Others discuss "unusual" resources that they use in the classroom to facilitate student learning. The further benefit of this contribution stems from the fact that the authors teach in different geographic and educational settings. They represent educators from the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia. Although most of them lecture to University students, one contributor teaches at the secondary level. The aim of the article is to stimulate discussions about

various educational approaches, their benefits, but also their pitfalls. In 2020, educational systems all over the world suffered unprecedented challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is possible that this crisis will forever change the way in which we deliver information and how we engage with students. In some cases, it has hastened the move to online teaching, which had started years ago, but now even educators who had been reluctant to enter the online space have had no other option available. After receiving crash courses of several hours, they were thrown into the deep water of online teaching. The forced move to Zoom, Blackboard Collaborate Ultra or Teams unleashed energy among educators who tried to design new approaches to student learning, benefitting from the immense amount of online opportunities. Not all of the approaches discussed in this contribution have to be delivered online and they can easily be implemented in face-to-face settings as well. But hopefully these ideas – coming from highly-esteemed educators as well as junior scholars – will be of interest to our colleagues and will contribute to the development of teaching strategies globally.

Using primary sources for blended learning in the Holocaust classroom (*Westermann*)
Throughout higher education across the globe, the novel coronavirus forced a change in the widespread paradigm of face-to-face instruction. Even prior to the outbreak, some scholars had identified the need for "disruptive change" within higher education, including a call for a new era of "technology enabled" competition and innovation in which virtual delivery would supplant the in-class experience (Christensen and Eyring, 2011: 10). Concerns about classroom safety for both students and faculty have created a renewed emphasis on online course delivery, or at least efforts to create hybrid classes in which in-class time is limited to once a week with an additional on-line assignment as a supplement to the face-to-face session. Regardless, of the model chosen, hybrid or online-only, one of the key challenges involves identifying teaching methodologies and assignments that engage student learning and promote critical thinking skills. This part of the article provides techniques for incorporating primary sources, written and visual, in a hybrid or online-only environment that have proven successful in my teaching of courses on the Holocaust and Nazi Germany at Texas A&M University San-Antonio, a majority-minority university serving a traditionally underrepresented Latinx population on the city's southside.

One of the key transitions made by students from secondary school instruction to undergraduate and graduate programs involves the increased requirement for long-form reading, including textbooks, articles, and scholarly monographs (Duda, 2019). While these assignments allow for broader coverage and increased levels of analysis and argumentation, they also tend to prove more challenging for students to analyze and evaluate in an online format, absent direct dialogue and discourse with the professor and

their fellow students. In a hybrid class, the assignment of long-form reading is therefore most effective when it occurs in conjunction with the face-to-face portion of the class. In contrast, the use of textual and visual primary sources to include official documents, diaries or memoirs, propaganda images, survivor artwork, military orders, and video recorded testimony, provides an extremely effective means for engaging student learning online.

The effective use of discussion boards for the online portion of a hybrid course is especially important for ensuring student learning. Discussion boards consist of a question or questions posted by the instructor in a Learning Management System such as Blackboard, in which the student is required to evaluate a source and post a response. The expectations, structure, and content associated with student posts requires a deliberate approach. In my courses, I provide the following guidance on discussion boards in the course syllabus for my students: "Student responses should be at least one complete paragraph of no less than 150 words. The discussion grade will be based upon four factors: (1) evidence used to support your response, (2) level of analysis (3) length/completeness of the response, and (4) writing style/proofreading." The minimum word requirement provides a means for insuring that the student provides enough detail to include a specific element of evidence (for example, brief citation, image element, etc.) from the source that is instrumental to an analysis of its historical significance. With regard to writing style and proofreading, discussion boards are treated primarily as "low stakes" versus "high stakes" writing in which the emphasis is more focused on reflection and what the students are learning from the specific sources based on their own analysis versus a strict adherence to grammar (Elbow, 2012: 291). While I do note cases in which grammar and proofreading mistakes detract from the post, the most key aspect of these assignments is that they allow students to model the fundamental skill of a historian by interpreting the source within their own cognitive framework and placing it within the broader context of the Shoah.

There are two critical steps related to the posting of the student responses. First, I use the option in Blackboard that requires the student to post their response prior to being able to view the responses of their peers. This condition allows the individual student to engage with the source on their own, without being influenced by earlier posts, and it prevents the student from only reading other student posts rather than the source associated with the assignment. Second, I always reply to student's post individually, which allows me to highlight a particularly insightful or salient point as well as to pose additional questions, to correct factual issues, or to challenge elements of the analysis. Similarly, after having answered each of the posts, I reopen the discussion board to allow students to read my responses and I highlight several student responses as "noteworthy" based on the insights or evidence provided. and encourage their peers to review these responses. The reposting

process stimulates peer learning and provides a model for future assignments and frames expectations for the quality and depth of future posts.

The instructor's selection of sources for the online discussion board needs to be intentional in several respects. First, the selected source used in the online lesson should be one that foreshadows material or learning objectives related to the proceeding in-class lecture. For example, in the discussion board prior to a classroom lecture dealing with Jewish life in the ghetto, I incorporate excerpts from the diaries of Adam Czerniakow and Janusz Korczak that illustrate the different experiences and concerns of specific individuals within the Warsaw ghetto and the diverse genres of diaries and styles of writing used by those imprisoned there.[2] In a similar manner, I incorporate a discussion on the impact of gender and the experiences of Jewish women in the Warsaw ghetto using the diary of Mary Berg.[3] In the case of published diaries and memoirs, it is important to limit the length of these sources not only to allow for focused reading by the student, but also due to copyright issues related to reproduction and the doctrine of fair use.[4] For example, in examining the start of the mass deportations to Treblinka from Warsaw in July 1942 and Czerniakow's reaction, the reading can be limited to the entries between July 15 and July 23, a total of six pages (Czerniakow, 1979: 380-385).

In contrast to copyright restrictions associated with published diaries and memoirs, numerous contemporary government documents dealing with Nazi Germany, including texts of laws, meeting protocols, official reports, and military orders, can be found online or in public document collections, allowing for easy access by students and unrestricted use within the classroom.[5] For example, the in-class lesson dealing with discriminatory legislation aimed at German Jews can be preceded in the prior online discussion board with questions related to posted English language translations of copies of the "Reich Citizenship Law" of September 1935 and the "First Regulation to the Reich Citizenship Law" of November 1935, more commonly known as the Nuremberg Laws. Although relatively brief, the texts of these laws generate valuable discussions related to the loss of the rights of citizenship as well as raise questions concerning prohibitions such as flying the "German Flag" or employing "Aryan" women under the age of 45 years-old within Jewish households.

In my course, one of the documents featured in a discussion board is the "Guidelines for the Conduct of the Troops in Russia" issued by the High Command of the German Armed Forces prior to the invasion of the Soviet Union on June, 22 1941. The guidelines were one of a series of criminal orders that led to the "barbarization of warfare" on the Eastern Front.[6] The guidelines themselves can be reduced to one page for student analysis and require a response to the following questions:

(1) What is the purpose of this document and what types of behaviors does it legalize with respect to the treatment of the Soviet population?

(2) What do you believe is the effect of such a document on German troops in the East? Explain your answer and state why this is important for our understanding of the war in the East.

The pedagogical intent of these questions is to first have students focus on the specific types of behaviors that the guidelines allow while asking them to use this evidence to develop an insight about how they radicalized the nature of warfare in the East.

In another example, the use of artwork by survivors is an especially valuable source for discussion boards as they stimulate what has been described as "visual thinking strategies" (Yenawine, 2013). First, the sensory impact of artwork allows the students to conceptualize historical evidence in a new way and this is especially true for visual learners. In fact, the use of the artwork by survivors such as David Olère or Paladij Osynka, depicting their experience in Auschwitz provides the historian with insights and details that we might otherwise never know based on the scarcity of photographic evidence of daily activities from within the camp (Osynka, 1946). In this regard, I provide students with the color drawings in Osynka's *Auschwitz: Album of a Political Prisoner* and asked them to select two of the images and to answer the following questions:

(1) What do the drawings that you chose reveal about life in Auschwitz? What is Osynka trying to depict, and what does he want the reader/viewer to understand about the prisoners' experience?

(2) Do drawings like these from a former prisoner in Auschwitz constitute a valuable historical source for the historian? Explain your answer.

For this assignment, the questions call for the students to evaluate the images as depictions of historical experience, but they also must address the higher-level question of the value and importance of using art as evidence within the discipline itself.

In addition to art, recorded testimonies by survivors offer another excellent resource for allowing students to hear the "voice" of those who experienced the Shoah. In my class, I had the students watch the testimony of Helen K., teenaged girl who lived in Warsaw before her deportation to Majdanek. Helen's edited testimony is part of Yale University's Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies and is available online through YouTube.[7] For the discussion board, I asked the students to address the following questions:

(1) What major insight(s) does Helen's testimony provide for your understanding of the events of the Holocaust?

(2) Does Helen's testimony reveal any unique challenges faced by women and girls during the Holocaust? Explain your answer.

The first of these questions ask the student to locate Helen's experience in the larger context of the Shoah, while the second question forces them to contemplate the unique aspects of the lives of Jewish women. With respect to the use of video testimony, there are two important points to consider. First, the availability of subtitles with the testimony is especially important in order to accommodate the needs of students with certain disabilities, a process that is overseen by the university's Disabilities Support Services. Second, the choice of video testimonies should be intentional and related to a specific learning objective for the lesson, which may be related to a geographic area (for example, Poland, the Soviet Union, the Netherlands, and so on), a certain concentration camp, different victim groups (for example, Jews, Sinti and Roma, Soviet POWs, and so on) or a broader topical issue such as gender and sexuality.

Primary sources are uniquely suited for use in teaching the Holocaust either as part of the online component in a hybrid class or as an element in an online-only course. It is clear that primary sources, both textual and visual, stimulate and promote engagement, discussion, and student learning. In response to a course evaluation question on comparing the value of secondary source to primary source readings, one of my students responded, "The incorporation of discussion boards based on primary sources was helpful for learning. Although I enjoyed reading from secondary sources in class, it was really interesting to look at and analyze the primary sources." The student continued, "The comments that were provided after each discussion were useful as well. They helped with [my] confidence and thinking critically."[8] In addition to providing the students with a focused exercise to develop critical thinking skills, the use of discussion boards incorporating low stakes writing exercises also has the added pedagogical benefit of providing students with the opportunity practice and demonstrate composition and rhetoric skills on a weekly basis, an area of increasing focus in the profession.[9] In closing, as we transition to increased use of electronic resources for teaching, the incorporation of primary sources into this process in an intentional manner offers a number of advantages for promoting student engagement with the Holocaust and for developing their foundational skills as historians.

Secret Hitler (*Rathbone*)

One of the most compelling and controversial games available to scholars teaching about Nazism is *Secret Hitler*. Inventors of other popular games including *Cards Against Humanity*, Max Temkin, Mike Boxleiter and Tommy Maranges developed *Secret Hitler* in 2015 during the Republican Primaries and published it in 2016 after a successful Kickstarter campaign (Carpenter, 2020). A social deduction game that takes place in 1930s Weimar Germany, *Secret Hitler* revolves around deception: players lie about political

identities, laws get passed in contravention of democratic practices, and authoritarian actions appeal to all. In my experience, *Secret Hitler* can be useful for teaching about the late Weimar period. Through its gameplay mechanics, it reflects the reality about the fraught politics of the Weimar state, and it is a great way to get students to think more about historical contingency and empathy. At the same time, to get the full benefit of the game, students must have a good background on Weimar history, and the game play might make some students uncomfortable or even deeply offended.

Scholars have raised questions about the value of games as a way to illustrate complex ideas about the past, especially historians whose primary task of studying what happened can seem at odds with games that need multiple possible endings and require players to be able to make meaningful choices. Nevertheless, the use of games, simulations, play, and ludic performances has increased markedly in recent years.[10] Classroom games run the gamut from quick exercises, such as *Secret Hitler*, and weeks long, in-depth scenarios such as the increasingly popular *Reacting to the Past Series*. Much of the literature on classroom games focuses on digital computer games such as *Call of Duty*, the *Total War* series, and *Assassin's Creed* (McCall, 2016). More rarely scholars examine the role of board games including *Carcassonne*, *Princes of Florence*, and *Diplomacy* (Iglesia, 2016)*.* Research shows that games are a form of instruction, they capture students' interest, enable students to experience historical settings and interact with past environments, and teach historical empathy (Hoy, 2018: 115-133). The same work also shows that there are best practices: games need to be foregrounded and followed by extensive classroom discussion (McCall, 2016). Indeed, the dynamics of games, especially controversial ones like *Secret Hitler*, mean that instructors must be continually revaluating their use for their benefits and costs.

Secret Hitler is a social deduction games similar to *Avalon: Resistance* or *Werewolf*.[11] It seems complicated at first glance, but the rules can be explained in five minutes and multiple rounds of gameplay can occur in a seminar length class. Before each round begins, the players are assigned a secret role: they can be either liberals, fascists, or Hitler. While some of the game's mechanics overly simplify the past, including this consolidation of the early 1930s Reichstag into two major groups called fascists and liberals, many of the gameplay features of *Secret Hitler* illustrate problems faced by the Weimar government. Even this problematic feature underlines a fundamental truth about the balance of power in the Reichstag. As late as January 1933, the majority of seats always lay with what the game would qualify as the liberals, representing the other political parties, just as in Weimar Germany the Nazis only won around a third of the vote before Hitler came to power (Nohlen and Stöver, 2010: 762).

Each turn consists of two phases: an election and a legislative round. There are a President and the Chancellor who control gameplay. The

Presidential role moves to the right so that each player eventually gets a chance to oversee the action. The President nominates a Chancellor and players vote in secret *Ja* or *Nein*. Liberals hope to elect liberal politicians who will enact liberal laws, but they cannot be certain of any players secret role. The fascists know all the other fascists and try to frustrate their efforts. To facilitate the formation of a government, players are encouraged to discuss possible Chancellors and their likelihood of voting for them, but of course, fascists, being the minority, should always lie, which the Nazis frequently did in real life.

As happened in Weimar, the players are frequently unable to form a stable government. In the late-Weimar era, political instability led to frequent replacement of the *Reichskanzler*. Between 1930 and 1933, there were four different Chancellors before Hitler: Herman Müller, Heinrich Brüning, Franz von Papen, and Kurt Schleicher. This instability at the top of government enabled the Nazis in their rise to power. In the game, political instability forces the change of President. The failure of three governments in a row to form a government results in the passage of a random measure drawn from the policy deck, frequently bringing the fascists closer to power.

To pass laws, the President selects three cards from the policy deck, discards one, and passes the rest to the Chancellor who selects one to pass. The rest of the players must watch powerlessly as laws are enacted outside of their control. This seemingly anti-democratic procedure – why do not all players vote on measures? – mirrors the actual function of the Weimar government which, following the election of Heinrich Brüning as Reichskanzler, operated largely on the basis of emergency decree (*Notverordnungen*) (Mommsen, 1998: 57-58). The authoritarianism of the Weimar period facilitated Hitler's consolidation of power once he became Chancellor in 1933 as the passage of anti-democratic laws was already normalized.

The *Secret Hitler* policy deck has more fascist cards than liberal ones and the random fall of the cards might mean that even liberal President and Chancellors must pass fascist measures. Liberal measures help the liberals get closer to winning, but fascist measures empower the President with special abilities: they can investigate a player's secret identity, sharing that information, lying about it, or keeping it secret; look at the top cards in the policy deck; call a special election by assigning a new President; vetoing legislation; and even assassinating a player, kicking them out of the game. If the assassinated player is Hitler, the game ends in a liberal victory. Even liberal politicians might pass fascist measures if those measures offer them new ways of dealing with the threat of the right wingers.

While the mechanics of the gameplay are quick to understand, the actual game can be fiendish because it relies so heavily on discussion and deception. In fact, conversations about people's secret identities is a central theme of the game and as a gameplay dynamic the fascists must lie. For

players interested in political theory or game theory, *Secret Hitler* offers opportunities here to think about the nature of communication inside government, but for historians the biggest lessons might be in the way it forces students to think empathetically about the uncertainty that people in Weimar Germany experienced. Students now might assume that Nazism was an easily recognizable evil that they would have undoubtedly avoided, but in 1933 very few people imagined that voting for Hitler could be their last vote or that a vote for Hitler in 1933 would lead to the Holocaust. As the game creators suggest, this was one of their reasons for making the game. They wanted people to realize that "when you're in the moment, it's very difficult to recognize fascists and do anything about them" (Tabachnick, 2016).

In the game, Hitler's identity is unknown, and in Weimar Germany, while Adolf Hitler was known as a politician, he was not yet the Hitler of the Third Reich. Nevertheless, he and the Nazis were avoidable. Before they take my class, most students share the view that German suffering following World War 1 and the Great Depression made it almost inevitable that the Nazis would come to power. In this game, though, the liberals have a clear path to maintain control. They can stymie the Nazis efforts through openness, a clear eye on the danger posed by creeping authoritarianism, and the passage of liberal laws. This too was a possibility for the Reichstag in 1933 when forces arrayed across Germany's political spectrum might have intervened to prevent the Nazis from coming to power.

The game ends in one of four ways: if five liberal measures are passed, six fascist measures are passed, if Hitler is assassinated, or if Hitler is elected Chancellor after three fascist measures have been passed. The alignment of students onto two sides – liberal and fascist – and the requirement that one student play as Hitler raises issues that for many may be insurmountable. The most obvious problem is that many people must be fascists and that one person must play Hitler and the role is assigned randomly. Jewish students in particular might find this uncomfortable or even offensive. The game's creators recognize the controversy. Interviewed by the *Pittsburgh Jewish Chronicle*, Max Temkin defended himself saying that "the name 'Secret Hitler' adds a little bit of levity to the title, which I think bothers people" (Tabachnick, 2016). To get around that issue Jeremy Caddel, an instructor of Political Science at Washington University in St. Louis, who has also used the game in the classroom, suggests renaming "the Hitler player" and calling "it a more generic dictator" (Caddel, 2020). In my classroom, in a unit on fascism and resistance in interwar Europe, this solution would not work. I have stuck to the original concept with foregrounding the game with significant background in Weimar history, offering trigger warnings at the beginning of the semester, speaking openly with the students about best behaviour while playing the game, offering alternative assessments, and continuing to re-evaluate my use of *Secret Hitler* with colleagues and students. All the same, it is discomfiting to see people in my classroom

cheering on a Hitler victory, even if those same shouts are louder and more ecstatic when the liberals manage to win by assassinating him.

In 2016, Max Temkin and his friends, afraid that "World War II and the Holocaust are passing from living memory," and watching with worry the rising sense of authoritarianism in the United States, invented *Secret Hitler* as a way to educate people through play (Tabachnick, 2016). I have used *Secret Hitler* in the classroom several times and I have also had the opportunity to play with students online. It largely succeeds in offering unique opportunities to get students engaged with the past, to force them to think about the failures of the Weimar state, to consider the temptations of authoritarian rule, and to experience the uncertainty faced by German voters in 1933. At the same time, while I will continue to use *Secret Hitter* in my units, I remain on guard for its downsides and the impact it might have on students with close connections to the Holocaust.

Using *Harry Potter* to teach the Holocaust (*Raffaele*)
*** Spoiler Alert for all Harry Potter novels***

> "I told you not to hang around with riffraff like this! Too late now, Potter! They'll be the first to go, now the Dark Lord's back! Mudbloods and Muggle-lovers first!" Draco Malfoy in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*.

> "[My parents] thought Voldemort had the right idea, they were all for the purification of the Wizarding race, getting rid of muggle-borns and having pure-bloods in charge". Sirius Black in *Harry Potter and The Order of the Phoenix*.

The Holocaust did not begin with killing; it began with words. The rhetoric of hate slowly bled into acts of prejudice, discrimination, violence, and ultimately genocide. One of the challenges in teaching the Holocaust to secondary students is imparting an empathetic understanding of the moral and ethical consequences of antisemitism. Research into historical fiction and feature films has demonstrated success in fostering empathy in students, however, the use of literature and fiction beyond the historical scope is currently unchartered in the history classroom. I propose the adoption of fiction outside the realms of the Holocaust as a method for teaching empathy by conveying the historical experience through characters and narrative. Fiction can be a powerful gateway to historical truths that are sometimes lost in facts. The *Harry Potter* books have captured generations with their universal themes of love, friendship, power and choice. They are accessible to teenagers and are famous for the connection they foster between their readers and the characters. *Harry Potter* offers a multitude of parallels to Hitler's Third Reich, tapping into the Nazi psyche of racial purity, fear and

control. They point to the morality of the "righteous among nations", upstanders and resistors, and offer a cautionary tale reminiscent of the Final Solution. Finally, they provide a lesson in the power of words and the construction of hate, as experienced by the characters encountering prejudice and violence through their lives and relationships. I argue that in uncovering these themes, the *Harry Potter* books provide an allegory for students to contemplate and imagine Holocaust history and its associated ethical dimensions. What *Harry Potter* offers is a doorway to empathy when teaching students about the consequences of hate by instilling a sense of justice and ethics as they study Holocaust history and navigate forms of prejudice and antisemitism today. I explored the parallels between *Harry Potter* and the Holocaust with a Year 10 Jewish History class in mid-2020, focussing on the second novel, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, as the focus for the text study.

A growing body of research has been dedicated to the benefits of using fiction to teach history, especially with the use of feature films and novels that surround a particular historical event (Metzger, 2017). Recent studies in Australian and American high schools have demonstrated that using historical movies in the classroom have helped to create empathy in students and raise historical consciousness by sparking their interest and engagement in the topic (Metzger, 2017; Wineburg et al., 2017; Stoddard, 2012; Marcus et al, 2006). Films and novels also have the cultural power to shape the thinking about historical events for generations and bring them to light in new and often unseen ways. In an American educational study of 15 families, parents and their children alike spontaneously drew on *Forest Gump* for their knowledge of the Vietnam War (Metzger, 2017; Wineburg et al., 2017). Likewise, films such as *Hidden Figures* and *Dunkirk*, or novels like *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *The Book Thief*, provide a window into the human experience of historical time periods that are often closed off for adolescents. In exploring this deeper, I have been examining what fiction can tell us about history. In utilising the *Harry Potter* novels to teach the Holocaust, I treat the texts not as historical fiction but as works of fiction that have powerful allusions to historical events and human behaviour.

The *Harry Potter* novels have seized the attention of modern scholarship, where a number of scholars in academic disciplines, including education, law, political science, sociology and international relations have published on the novels' themes and reasons for popularity (Curthoys, 2012). The novels form a hybrid of school and fantasy literature which draw on fairy tale, folktale, myth and legend as well as classical, biblical and medieval allusions. These themes are intertwined with a large cast of dynamic characters and compelling plots of conflict, fights, battles, contests, escapes and conspiracies, paired with the adolescent experiences of school, friendships, crushes, betrayals, falling out and making up (Curthoys, 2012). The novels evoke the universal themes of love, friendship, power and choice,

along with ethical and practical dilemmas that resonate with the modern world and are accessible and relevant for teenagers. Furthermore, scholarship has identified the novels' use of the genre of *bildungsroman*, meaning moral formation or dealing with a person's formative years or spiritual education (Curthoys, 2012). I argue that in reading *Harry Potter*, adolescents embark on a perceived symbiotic relationship with the characters and the texts which directly impacts the moral development in their formative years.

Throughout the seven volumes, there are clear links to major historical events of the 20th century, namely the rise of totalitarianism, especially the Nazi regime, which I will be exploring in this section. It is for these reasons that I have chosen to use *Harry Potter* as a paradigm for teaching the Holocaust; because *Harry Potter* is an important part of contemporary popular culture and consciousness, because it speaks to moral development and finally because it is a fictional story that provides powerful historical analogies to the Third Reich. The major analogy of focus in the construction of my History lessons is the blood status within the novels. Within the Wizarding World there exist different blood statuses amongst witches and wizards based on their magical and Muggle ancestry. A Muggle refers to someone of no magic and who is oblivious to the presence of magic and the existence of the Wizarding World, unless they have relatives who are witches and wizards (such as Harry's family the Dursleys). A witch and a wizard are magical people of diverse ancestries and can be classified into various blood statuses: Pure-blood (of pure magical ancestry, such as Ron Weasley and Draco Malfoy), Half-blood (ancestry split between muggles and magic folk, such as Harry Potter and Lord Voldemort), Muggle-born (a witch or wizard who has muggle parents; they are often subjected to slurs such as "Mudblood", for they are perceived to be polluting the magical bloodline, such as Hermione Granger) and Squib (someone who is born of magical parents but does not possess any magic themselves, such as the Hogwarts caretaker Argus Filch).

Those of pure-blood, half-blood or Muggle-born are indistinguishable from each other and neither possess more potent magic nor skills over the other. The majority of the wizarding population pays little to no attention to someone's blood status. Yet the themes of race and racism permeate all of the novels, with an ongoing struggle within the wizarding world between the desire by some for racial purity and the acceptance and welcoming by others of all blood statuses: wizards, Muggles and those descended from both. Those who support the rights of Muggle-born wizards and treat them with equality are called "blood traitors" by those of proud pure-blood ancestry, especially those who are followers of Voldemort. The overt discrimination of blood status was not something new to reach the wizarding world with the rise of Voldemort. Many historical examples abide, including one of the founding members of Hogwarts, Salazar Slytherin, who advocated to not allow Muggle-borns into Hogwarts and originally refused Muggle-born wizards

into the Slytherin house. This was a major cause of contention amongst the other three founders: Gryffindor, Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw, and led to Slytherin leaving the school. This fact is introduced in the second instalment to the series, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, which was the novel of focus when introducing this analogy to my History classroom.

In my classroom, I explored the themes of racial hatred and historical analogies across two methodologies: Character Studies and The Pyramid of Hate. To prepare for the lessons, students ideally completed reading the book or watched the film *The Chamber of Secrets*, and all read a chapter summary and analysis from SparkNotes.com with a focus on Chapter 7: *Mudbloods and Murmurs* and Chapter 9: *The Writing on the Wall*. As a class, we examined the interactions between the characters in these scenes and reviewed the plot overview with a focus on Draco Malfoy calling Hermione a "mudblood", the various victims of the Basilisk (Muggle-born students and a squib) and the death of Moaning Myrtle. The purpose of the first activity was to develop empathy in students by examining the moral choices of characters through the model of the Perpetrator, Bystander, Collaborator, Upstander and Victim. Through this lens, we undertook a character study of those in the novels who embody each of these personas to view their motivations and behaviours on a human level. Students were placed into small groups to determine which role the characters fitted into based on their actions (which was not always clear, since the characters have many layers). Some student samples from the group work are below (A and B), explaining their reasoning for each category:

Group Activities

1: Character Studies

Categorise the following characters into one or more of the categories below and explain why. Use examples from the text to justify your reasoning.

Victim, Bystander, Perpetrator, Collaborator, Upstander

Hermione Granger → [victim, upstander] - She is picked on for being 'muggle born' - She stands up for characters who are victimised and herself.	Slytherin and Gryffindor Quidditch Teams → [bystanders - they just watched Hermione being bullied and didn't say or do anything about it.
Draco Malfoy → [bystander, perpetrator, collaborator. - He whitnesses dumbledoors death - Bullies Hermione - He collaborates with Voidermort and his ideals.	Ron Weasley → [upstander - He stands up for Hermione
Moaning Myrtle → [victim - She was killed for being a muggle born.	Salazar Slytherin → [perpetrator - He created the basalisk which killed muggle born.
Dumbledore → [upstander, victim. - He was killed for being an upstander. - He stood up for students being descriminated against.	Tom Riddle → [perpetrator - He is Voldemort.

Student A

Group Activities

1: Character Studies

Categorise the following characters into one or more of the categories below and explain why. Use examples from the text to justify your reasoning.

Victim, Bystander, Perpetrator, Collaborator, Upstander

Hermione Granger o Victim → get's discriminated because she's muggle born. o upstander → work with Harry and Ron against perpetrators.	**Slytherin and Gryffindor Quidditch Teams** o bystanders → they watch as Hermoine gets bullied o Slytherin may have been collaborators
Draco Malfoy o perpetrator → bullies people who aren't pure blood (Hermoine) o collaborator (joined death eaters and supports Lord Voldermart)	**Ron Weasley** o upstander → stands up for Hermoine
Moaning Myrtle o victim → got murdered	**Salazar Slytherin** o perpetrator → went after people who weren't pure blood and killed them
Dumbledore o bystander → actively watched things happen o upstander → helped Harry defeat the Basilisk when he sent the phoenix	**Tom Riddle** o perpetrator → manipulated Ginny to open the chamber of secrets, which endangered others. o awakened the Basilisk

Student B

It is evident through Student Samples A and B that students categorised characters based on their actions, where some were even given different titles, such as Dumbledore between a Victim/Bystander/Upstander, highlighting students developing a nuanced understanding of behaviour and actions (Student A demonstrated thorough knowledge of the series, as Dumbledore is not killed in Book 2). The intention of this exercise was to expose students to different types of behaviour that parallel the discrimination to the Jewish population in 1930s Germany, as well as develop empathy and understanding of how complex and nuanced human nature can be. This activity was further built upon through the study of the Pyramid of Hate.
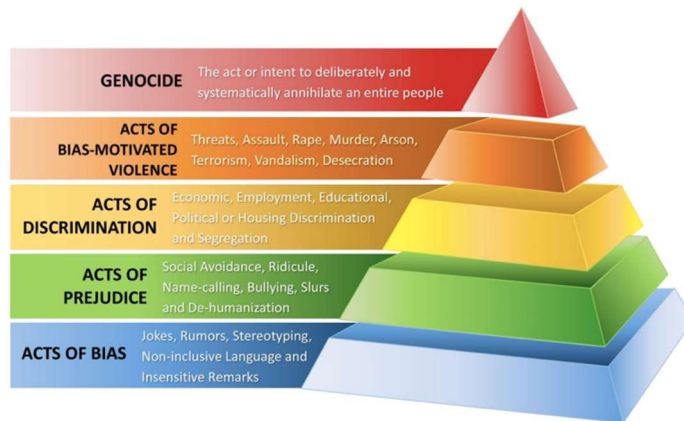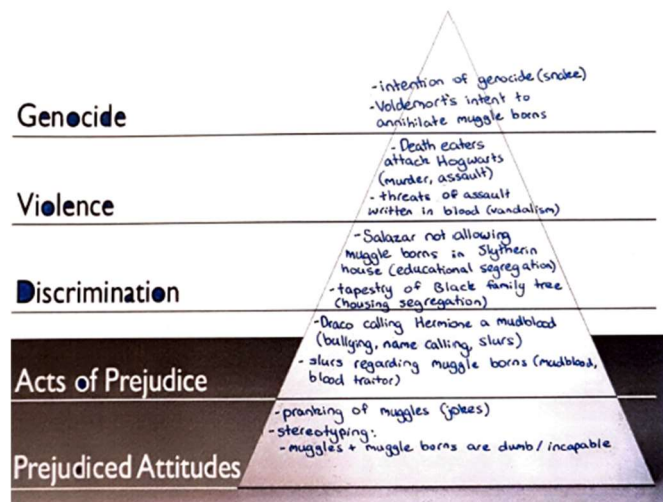
The Pyramid of Hate, 2016 Anti-Defamation League

A way to study and identify the forms of hatred in the wizarding world, and to see such parallels to Nazi Germany, is through the model of the Pyramid of Hate. The Pyramid of Hate was developed by the Anti-Defamation League, an international Jewish NGO based in the United States, to demonstrate how hate becomes escalated from Acts of Bias/Prejudiced Attitudes to Genocide, illustrating how upper levels are supported by and dependent on the lower levels. In the second group activity, students were asked to map the various forms of prejudice and hatred in the wizarding world against the Pyramid of Hate as a way to visually see and display the escalation of biased attitudes leading to genocide. Some student samples from the group work are below (C and D), explaining their reasoning for each category:

Student C

2. Pyramid of Hate

Categorise the various prejudice acts addressed from the *Chamber of Secrets* into the different levels of the Pyramid of Hate. Explain why they fit into this category.
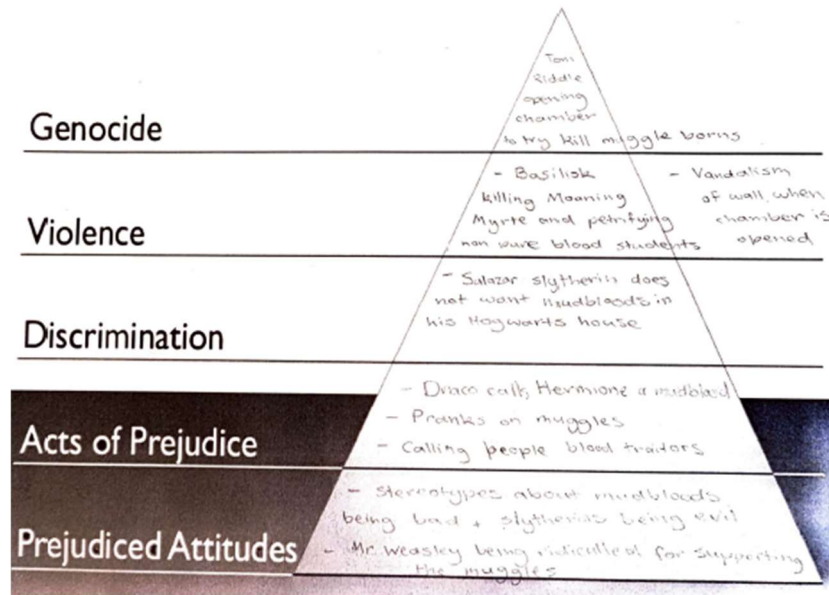
Genocide — Tom Riddle opening chamber to try kill muggle borns

Violence — Basilisk killing Moaning Myrtle and petrifying non pure blood students — Vandalism of wall when chamber is opened

Discrimination — Salazar slytherin does not want mudbloods in his Hogwarts house

Acts of Prejudice — Draco calls Hermione a mudblood — Pranks on muggles — Calling people blood traitors

Prejudiced Attitudes — Stereotypes about mudbloods being bad + slytherins being evil — Mr. Weasley being ridiculed for supporting the muggles

Student D

Students developed skills in identifying and categorising various acts of prejudice from their study of *The Chamber of Secrets*, starting with **Prejudiced Attitudes**, such as wizards who hold beliefs that Muggles are stupid and inferior and the stereotyping of Muggle-borns as blood polluters; **Acts of Prejudice** were seen in the scene when Draco Malfoy calls Hermione "A filthy little mudblood", calling wizards "Blood traitors" or when wizards play practical jokes on unsuspecting Muggles; **Discrimination** was seen when Muggle-borns were historically rejected from the Slytherin house; **Violence** begins to be seen with vandalism of the school wall written in blood and when Muggle-born students are attacked; and finally **Genocide** was witnessed when Tom Riddle opens the Chamber of Secrets in the 1940s murdering the Muggle-born student Moaning Myrtle, and later re-opens it in Harry's time in an attempt to purge the school of unworthy Muggle-borns with Salazar Slytherin's giant snake, the Basilisk. Numerous examples from across all seven novels could be further provided to paint a fuller picture of discrimination, however these broad brushstrokes from *The Chamber of Secrets* demonstrate how the Pyramid of Hate functions as an illustrative model for students to follow the progression of racial hatred in the narrative.

Likewise, when paired with the actual historical progression of hatred in Nazi Germany, clear links can be established between the two.

A number of historical examples became apparent to students during this exercise, such as the discrimination of the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 introducing the Reich Citizenship Law and the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honour, with a special guiding poster to demonstrate who qualifies as pure-blood, mixed-blood or Jew, as well as the Violence of Kristallnacht or later the Genocide within ghettos and camps. Likewise, the terrorising acts of Hitler's SS and Gestapo parallel Voldemort's Death Eaters later in the series. J. K. Rowling herself spoke about how she drew on Hitler and Stalin for her inspiration of Voldemort as a megalomaniac and paranoid figure (*de Volksrant*, 2007) and consciously drew parallels between the blood status in her novels and the Nuremberg Laws:

> The expressions 'pure-blood', 'half-blood' and 'Muggle-born' have been coined by people to whom these distinctions matter, and express their originators' prejudice. As far as somebody like Lucius Malfoy is concerned, for instance, a Muggle-born is as 'bad' as a Muggle. Therefore Harry would be considered only 'half' wizard, because of his mother's parents. If you think this is far-fetched, look at some of the real charts the Nazis used to show what constituted 'Aryan' or 'Jewish' blood... the Nazis used precisely the same warped logic as the Death Eaters. A single Jewish grandparent 'polluted' the blood, according to their propaganda (Rowling, J. K. from the FAQ page on www.jkrowling.com; Haber, 2004).

Parallels could also be drawn to the biased attitudes of Social Darwinism and notions of racial hierarchy that captured the scientific thinking of the 19th century, spawning the Eugenics movement of removing "degenerate" and "undesirable traits" in humans through sterilisation, later informing the racial policies of the Nazi Party.

At first, *Harry Potter* may sound like a bizarre point of reference for teaching the Holocaust. However, the analogy proves to be a powerful classroom tool, capturing the imagination of students to draw parallels to characters and scenes they may not have otherwise made, in turn developing empathy and building on the skillset of identifying the abuse of power, oppression and the short steps to Genocide. This shift in student thinking is evident in the reflections from the following students (E, F, G and H):

Student E:
Engaging with the Harry Potter analogy of the Holocaust has changed my perception on how I look and view both Harry Potter and the Holocaust. It has also enhanced my knowledge on how to categorise hate and label people with characterises depending on their actions. It [the lesson] was interesting and differs from typical lessons which was goof and it was a change and essentially a different way of learning through engaging aspects and

collaborative work. Although I was unfamiliar with Harry Potter it still provided me with additional insight into both topics.

Student F:
This [lesson] has changed my perception on both Harry Potter & [sic] the Holocaust as I never though [sic] about fiction or particularly Harry Potter in terms of racism & [sic] discrimination. In particular, the blood status part was extremely interesting and the direct corelation with German Blood Purity Laws/ Nuremberg Laws. Thank you! Great class!

Student G:
I feel that I will now view Harry Potter differently, not badly though. I found the activity very interesting and I have a better understanding of what the jews [sic] experienced during WWII.

Student H:
After listening to this presentation, I know [sic] have a different perspective on the Holocaust. This is because I know [sic] realised how slow and gradual the lead up to the Holoaust was in fact. I also know [sic] have a better understanding of [what] the pyramid of hate was. I also really enjoyed it [the lesson] as it was engaging and made me think about different perspectives.

In seeing the pain and suffering caused to beloved characters by the perpetrators, bystanders and collaborators, students were able to experience on a personal level the ramifications of hatred. Further, in connecting and empathising with the main characters, especially the upstanders and resistors as those who stand against racial hatred and violence, even at great personal cost, students witness the importance of making moral choices and, in turn, empathise with the devastation of what happened when such choices were ignored only 85 years ago.

Using local context in Holocaust education in Australia (*Láníček*)
"The Holocaust must be taught and taught well", conclude Laura J. Hilton and Avinoam Patt (2020, 14) in the introduction to a recent volume on Holocaust education. The Holocaust as a subject is currently taught at all educational levels in countries all over the world. Historians, sociologists, anthropologists, literary and film scholars, as well as legal specialists offer diverse perspective on one of the worst cases of human rights violations in history. Australia is not an exception. The importance of the topic is not decreasing, and the Australian government has recently made several endorsements of Holocaust education in the country. In 2019, the Australian government has announced a new commitment to improve the "understanding and commemoration" of the Holocaust to combat anti-Semitism (*Australian statement in the UN Gen. Assembly*, June 2019). In the

same month, Australia became the 33rd full member of the *International Holocaust Research Alliance* (IHRA), which requires the government to support the "academic, educational, and public examination of the country's historical past as related to the Holocaust period". The Holocaust has now become part of the national curriculum. In 2020, the government of Victoria made Holocaust education in state high schools compulsory. When announcing the move, James Merlino, Victoria's education minister, stated that "he hoped more education about the Holocaust would help address racism and prejudice".[12] The situation with Holocaust education at a University level is more complicated. Such courses are of course not mandated, and the changes to the University fees, recently passed by the Australian government, could make Holocaust courses out of reach for many students (The so-called "Job-Ready Graduate Package"). University students who start their degrees in 2021 will pay 113% more for humanities courses than their peers who started their degrees in 2020 or earlier. Humanities courses will be up to four times more expensive than other – mostly STEM – units. Holocaust education at the University level could become accessible only to those from affluent families, or those who are willing to take on an increased burden of student loans. Lecturers who teach courses on the Holocaust will also have to spend more time and energy to persuade students to take their units.

There are numerous reasons why teaching and studying the Holocaust is still relevant in 2020. The Holocaust as a theme permeates the public space all around the world. It is the epitome of genocides and a universal symbol of suffering, which allows us to learn about human societies *in extremis*, about interethnic relations, and the power of ideology, media, hate and propaganda. The subject keeps attracting students, some of them because of family or community relations, others because of Hollywood blockbusters or popular literary representations that lead them to a more in-depth study of the subject. But there are also numerous challenges that Holocaust educators face seventy-five years after the end of the war. Andy Pearce in his recent study points to at least four of them, dealing with the fast-approaching post-survivor era, but also with rising antisemitism, populism, and the so-called post-truth era. He concludes that "If the field of Holocaust education is to continue to exist … then it will be essential for substantial changes to be made in the very near future" (Pearce, 2020, 25).

I personally approach the subject from the perspective of an educator who teaches the Holocaust in a country that is geographically and mentally far removed from the "Old Continent", where the genocide happened. It is also a society that does not really believe it had any historical connections to the Holocaust and does not considers itself part of the "Holocaust geography". The Holocaust is simply the story of Europe, and of European history. This could potentially create problems with Holocaust education, if we do not attempt to stress historical connections between Australia and the Holocaust,

and do not attempt to show that the Holocaust was also part of Australian history. These concerns have led me to rethink parts of the course on the history of the Holocaust I have been teaching at the University of New South Wales in Sydney since 2012.

My strategy has been to put more emphasis on the local Australian context, and Australian responses to the Holocaust. This decision stemmed from my firm belief that by studying the Holocaust in our local context we may keep the history relevant to the new generation of Australians. Australia is rarely included in courses on the history of the Holocaust, including those taught locally, and I also believe that Australian connections are not adequately represented in the main Holocaust exhibitions in the country. But such an unusual educational approach could stimulate students' interest in the subject also in the years to come, and with all the future challenges Holocaust education faces in Australia in the post-survivor era.

I employ various methods to make connections between Australia and the Holocaust. The theme is part of our regular face to face classes, as well as of the formative and summative assessment. Each of the methods stimulates or tests diverse students' skills. The main example I discuss in this contribution is the first assessment in my level 2 course on the Holocaust. The course is part of the history major, but it is also taken by Bachelor of Arts students who major or minor in European studies, as well as students from other Bachelor of Arts majors, or those undertaking a Bachelor of Education. There are also Law, Media, or Criminology students in the course, and others from all over the University who take it as a general education elective. In recent years, usually around 80 students have enrolled in the course each time it is offered. The assessment consists of a personal reflection on public representation of the Holocaust in Australia, in which students argue about the reasons why Holocaust commemoration and education are still relevant in the Australian context. The exercise is not a standard academic essay which students prepare at the end of the course, and tests a different set of skills. In contrast with a standard essay, I encourage students to work with online sources and present their personal perspective.

Because the topic rarely appears in Holocaust courses in Australia – which students who had learnt about the Holocaust at the primary or secondary level confirmed – I decided to offer a comprehensive scaffolding that guides students during the preparation of the assessment. I reserved one tutorial for the discussion of the task, and used a pre-recorded lecture, outlining the history of Australia's responses to the Holocaust, and of Holocaust commemoration in Australia (the second part was delivered by Dr Avril Alba, University of Sydney). I also provided students with detailed instructions, explaining my rationale behind the assessment, and included a step-by-step guide on how to prepare the reflection. Students were expected to write approximately 1,000 words, which perhaps limited the space they had

to develop their thoughts on the topic, but in general it proved to be an adequate length for this task.

The assessment consisted of three steps:

Step 1 consisted of a critique of a Holocaust exhibition. I asked students to visit a Holocaust exhibition in Australia and analyse how the curators attempt to connect Australia to the events of the Holocaust. Initially I planned to visit the Sydney Jewish Museum, but because of the COVID-19 lockdown we had to use the virtual tour of the Jewish Holocaust Centre in Melbourne (https://www.jhc.org.au/education/virtual-learning/virtual-tour/). This was an adequate substitute, because the online exhibition allows visitors to "walk" though the physical space of the museum, check the items on display and even read the description and historical explanations. In the assessment instructions I offered a hypothesis stating that, in my opinion, one of the weaknesses of the Holocaust exhibitions in Australia is that they rarely take our specific Australian context into consideration and lack any direct connection between the Australian society, at that time or now, and the events of the Holocaust. Not all students agreed with my assessment, but the aim of my statement was to make them think about the exhibition in unusual terms, and from a slightly different perspective than they would usually do. I aimed to stimulate their critical reading of the exhibition.

Step 2 was the core of the reflection. I asked students to select a specific example, or a case study, that supports the argument that the study and commemoration of the Holocaust is still relevant in Australia in the 21st Century. The key task was to consider the question of how they would bring the history of the Holocaust closer to a new generation of Australians. They had to properly introduce the case study and justify their selection. I made it clear that I was not looking for a particular answer and that it was an open exercise. At the same time, I provided several examples that they could consider in preparation of their reflection:

- It could be a specific example from the history of the Holocaust that connects the Australian population to the events in Europe; they could demonstrate that the Holocaust was not just a distant event that took place far away in Europe;
- It could be an example from Australian history, not directly related to the Holocaust (from the colonial settler society, or from modern Indigenous history). They could argue that the study and commemoration of the Holocaust could also be a way to understand our own history.
- It could be an example from contemporary society in Australia or worldwide, which can be better understood when related to the history of the Holocaust (such as the rise of antisemitism, the refugee crisis, or gross human rights violations worldwide).
- Last, I did not want to restrict students' imagination, or force them to agree with my interpretation of the need to relate the history of the

Holocaust to our Australian context. That is why I emphasised that they could also argue that the Holocaust is such a universal symbol of suffering and human rights abuses that there is no need to highlight its importance and relevance by relating it to our local context or to contemporary events.

In the final, Step Three, I asked students to include additional evidence in the form of an image or photo to support their argument and contextualise it with the main case study.

In pedagogical terms, the assessment tested the mid-levels of Bloom's taxonomy of educational learning objectives. Students were asked to apply (level 3 of 6) and analyse (level 4 of 6) historical examples to our local or current circumstances. The exercise thus required a deeper learning engagement with the course material. Although this was a relatively short assessment task, I asked students to go beyond topics normally discussed and analysed in Holocaust courses.

Bloom's Taxonomy
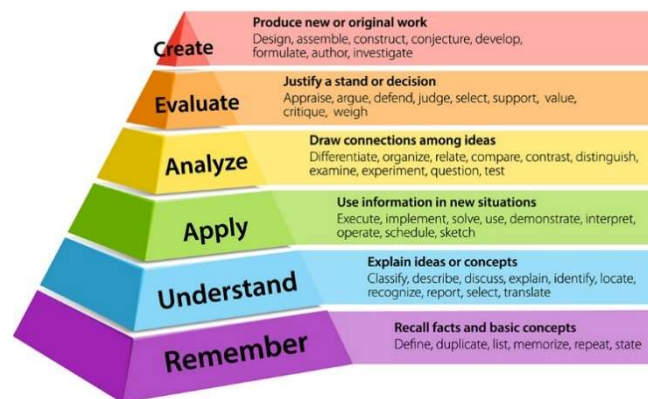
Figure 1 Bloom's Taxonomy[13]

There were four main groups of examples that students used in their reflection. The largest cohort used examples from Australian history, comparing the historical treatment of the indigenous populations in colonial and independent Australia with the history of the Holocaust. The students believed that the study of the Holocaust is also important as a way to understand our own past. They pointed to the similarities, but also did not shy away from emphasising differences between both historical events. They typically made comparisons between the Stolen Generation – the forced removal of Aboriginal children from their communities – and the Nazi persecution of Jewish children, which is not an entirely precise comparison, considering the different aims of both policies. But there were also students who pointed to the similarities between the Stolen Generation and the Lebensborn program (forced removal of non-Jewish children from Nazi-occupied Europe, and their Germanisation), which can be seen as a more adequate example.

The second group of examples looked for historical connections between the Australian indigenous population, the Australian restrictive immigration policies in the 1930s and the Holocaust. They either used the examples of the Evian Conference from July 1938, where the Australian government famously rejected to increase the intake of Jewish refugees, or the story of William Cooper, an Aboriginal elder, who after the Kristallnacht led a protest against the Nazi persecution of the Jews to the German Consulate in Melbourne (Attwood, 2020). These examples demonstrate that the Holocaust had strong historical connections to Australia. As such it should be included in school education and should also be commemorated because of the involvement of the first Australians and their community.

The third group pointed to more recent cases of antisemitic incident in Australia, such as antisemitic graffiti in Australian streets, allegedly antisemitic cartoons in the Australian press, or cases of bullying with antisemitic undertones in Australian schools (Zlatkis, 2020). Such incidents confirmed the need for further Holocaust education to combat such prejudices. This line of argumentation or justification has also been used by Australian politicians (The Guardian, 2019). Some of the students even drew in their conclusions on historiography we discussed in the class, such as the concept of "social death" (Orlando Patterson and Marion Kaplan), as a stepping-stone to genocide. One student concluded the reflection with these apt comments:

> The occurrence of Anti-Semitic bullying against schoolchildren in Australia, demonstrates that our modern society is not as accepting toward other cultures as it is commonly thought. I am not arguing that Australian society is widely Anti-Semitic. However, I would stress that the presence of Anti-Semitic sentiment in a modern nation (particularly from the youth of said nation) must be acknowledged as a pressing issue. In order to keep Australian society listening and learning from our history, we must strive to highlight our current and historical connections to the tragedies of the Holocaust. (UNSW, Student A, Assessment 1, Term 2, 2020, ARTS2285)

The final group of students, though only a few individuals, offered an in-depth contemplation about the fate of the Jewish refugees who came to Australia before the Second World War, and more recent migrants to Australia, with the focus on separated families. This was also my personal view of how we could bring the Holocaust closer to our multicultural society, largely formed by migrants, whose family members or friends still live overseas. Student B related the stories that we discussed in the classroom to their personal migrant background. The student discussed a letter sent from Adelaide in June 1943 by a Polish-Jewish refugee, Symcha Gausman, who reached Australia in 1939, but his wife and two children remained in Nazi-

occupied Poland. In 1943 Gausman contacted a British-Jewish philanthropic agency to send relief food parcels to his family:

> Mr Gausman's compassionate plea, "You can imagine in what conditions a young woman and two little children in Nazi occupied Poland live," tugs at the heartstrings of the reader. My father himself emigrated to Australia for work in 2005 and through his letters and applications my family were able to migrate here and acquire Australian citizenship. It is amazing how two Australian fathers can write such different letters for their families in the space of 60 years. In my opinion, these personal stories are what will ensure that the story of the Holocaust endures the test of time (UNSW, Student B, Assessment Term 2, 2020, ARTS2285).

This was an unexpected learning outcome, which however entirely corresponded with my initial intentions to ensure that students could relate our specific local circumstances to the history of the Holocaust. It demonstrated that the Holocaust can also be used to provide historical examples for students' contemporary personal experiences. Student C also highlighted this strong connection:

> Another reason and means for addressing the issue of Jewish refugees in Australia during the war is in the comparison to other marginalised refugee groups that seek asylum here. Australia has a large refugee population and has opened its borders to almost one million refugees since the end of World War II. Although the experiences of each people group and individual are never identical, it is helpful to recognise the personal suffering that refugees in Australia endure, knowing their relatives remain under persecution. Like the Jewish refugees during the war, refugees from South East Asia, Africa, Korea, the Middle East and other areas of current and past wartime persecution have personally suffered from overseas persecution. This narrative of the Australian refugee story can be better understood over the backdrop of past refugee experiences of which Australian Jews make up. The voices of Holocaust survivors in Australia need to be heard and remembered after they pass away because their stories are part of what makes up the Australian population. To recognise the suffering of refugees in Australia, their history and their successes is to be inclusive, accepting and understanding that persecution overseas affects people globally. (UNSW, Student C, Assessment 1, Term 2, 2020, ARTS2285)

Students who wrote their formal and informal feedback appreciated that the assessment offered them a new, unexpected perspective on the Holocaust, and made them think about the relevance of historical events for the present: "[The course] *covered the most*

important part of this topic well – which is asking why it is still relevant to learn about this period today." (my.Experience survey, Term 2, 2020); "*I really enjoyed the first assessment task. it was useful to reflect on how this is relevant today and specifically in our context.*" (my.Experience survey, Term 2, 2020); "*I believe it is really good to integrate our Australian context into the study of the Holocaust*" (Student email, ARTS2285, Term 2, 2020). This suggests that the assessment fulfilled its purpose, and that efforts to connect the Holocaust to the local context, even in the case of geographically distant countries, could be a beneficial for students' learning. It could be a way to keep Holocaust education relevant even in the following decades.

Unusual approaches to teaching and learning about the Holocaust: A commentary (*Pearce*)

Education is a site, a vector, a driver of change. The nature of this change is multidimensional. It is also somewhat unpredictable, given how change is entwined with variable factors like who is involved, what is being changed, how this is occurring, and why. As teachers and students are the primary agents of change, pedagogy has a special importance. When we recall that "pedagogic settings are always socio-historically and culturally situated" (Leach and Moon, 2008: 169), then the necessity for teaching and learning to continually evolve and adapt comes into sharper view: it is precisely because the contexts of educational encounters shift and reshape that there is a recurring need for new ways of thinking and doing.

Innovation in education is of ancient vintage. Even so, the social, cultural, and technological upheavals of the 21st century have given educational innovation new dimensions and added urgency. A number of developments have duly ensued: many national curricula, for instance, now accent the importance of "acquiring competencies such as collaboration, persistence, creativity", look to emphasise the importance of '21st century skills' and seek to cultivate "a deep understanding of content knowledge" (Paniagua and Istance, 2018: 20). There has also been a growing appreciation for the need for humanistic approaches where innovation is conceived as something beyond technical competency and digital literacy. "Innovation in education is about more than new technology", pronounce UNICEF, who suggest it is as much an exercise in problem-solving and future-casting, where "innovation in education matches the scale of the solution to the scale of the challenge".[14]

The above observations have a particular purchase with regard to teaching and learning about the Holocaust. These endeavours have become more widespread over the course of the past two decades: policymakers in multiple countries have promoted the Holocaust in formal educational settings; supranational organisations like the United Nations, UNESCO and the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance have championed

teaching and learning and invested heavily in their advancement; and a set of transnational social, cultural, and political norms have emerged around "Holocaust education".

The scale of these developments has been considerable. And they have had effect: the presence of the Holocaust in our contemporary world and levels of public awareness are greater than they were before, and approaches to teaching and learning today are different to a generation ago. Yet innovation has been driven by other forces too. The mutation of Holocaust denial and distortion, the emergence of "post-truth" cultures, and the dwindling number of Holocaust survivors are all trends which carry significant challenges for how teaching and learning about the Holocaust is understood and practiced.

By virtue of their complexity, these developments are not easily solved. Furthermore, since research suggests existing pedagogies have failed to prevent significant gaps in young people's substantive knowledge and understanding,[15] we are in a moment where innovation would seem apposite, to say the least. Enter, then, the reflections which have emerged from this roundtable on "unusual approaches" to teaching and learning about the Holocaust. Of course, none of the four essays presented here profess to provide fail-safe solutions to some of the challenges we presently face. On the contrary, many of the authors are explicitly clear that their approaches are very much work in progress. Similarly, the contributors to this roundtable are well aware that the pedagogies they are advancing are not without controversy, can produce unintended outcomes, and are open to critique. Such caveats and disclaimers are clearly wise and prudent, but – notwithstanding their limitations – these essays provide intriguing insights into educational innovation in action.

Edward Westermann's contribution can be read very much as a dispatch from the frontier of our contemporary present. Writing about his teaching at Texas A&M University, San Antonio – an institution located in a part of the world that is currently being ravaged by the novel coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2 – Westermann reminds us that unforeseen events like the global pandemic can bring specific challenges and accelerate long-term trends. His case in point is blended learning – that fusion of traditional face-to-face teaching with technological, usually online forms of educational activity. Interest in blended learning has grown substantially over the past twenty years as technical advances in online and communication technologies have created new opportunities and potentialities. However, while "the concept of blended learning may be intuitively apparent and simple, the practical application is more complex". As Randy Garrison and Norman Vaughan explain, this is because in its truest sense, "blended learning is a fundamental redesign that transforms the structure of, and approach to, teaching and learning" (Garrison and Vaughan, 2008: 5).

As Westermann notes, Covid-19 has brought paradigmatic change in modes of teaching, yet the shift to forms of online provision has amplified the importance of pedagogical approaches "that engage student learning and promote critical thinking skills". Westermann's account of how he has used primary historical sources and online discussion boards to meet these needs is interesting and persuasive. He is right to suggest of course that primary sources of all shapes and sizes possess an innate capacity to provoke intrigue and prompt questions; yet, as Westermann shows, it is naïve to presume that students can or will necessarily access this potential. This truism underscores the importance of intelligent and informed intervention on the part of the educator – both in terms of providing the framework in which an educational encounter can occur, and then shaping that experience through personal engagement with individual students. In modelling such practice himself, Westermann's essay valuably demonstrates that changes in educational convention can never be limited to just modes of delivery nor can they be divorced from pedagogical considerations.

This latter point in particular is reinforced in Keith Rathbone's essay, where he outlines his experiences of what he calls "one of the most compelling and controversial games available". *Secret Hitler* is, in the words of its creators, "a social deduction game…about finding and stopping the Secret Hitler".[16] Since its release in 2016, it has indeed attracted controversy: in early 2017, for example, copies of the game were sent to every single member of the US Senate, while the summer of 2017 saw the publication of additional game material in the form of *The Trump Pack*.[17] Two years later, following its worldwide release, the Australian Anti-Defamation Commission publicly condemned the game for "cheapening and trivialising the Holocaust" after receiving numerous complaints, and called for retailers to stop selling it.[18] Similar concerns were echoed in early 2020 by the regional director of B'nai Brith Canada, resulting in three stores in Montreal taking the games off its shelves.[19] Even so, despite this controversy, the game continues to be a commercial success worldwide.[20]

In light of this public furore, Rathbone's decision to use the game in his teaching would – on the surface – appear somewhat perilous. Within the field of Holocaust education, it has long been orthodoxy to avoid so-called "simulation activities"; though, more recently, there have been some modifications to this position.[21] For many, the notion of "gaming" the coming to power of the Nazi regime would likely appear unsavoury and unpalatable – yet, as the popular reception of the game would seem to testify, many more have little to no qualms with such an exercise.

For his part, Rathbone attempts to bring some perspective to any employment of the game in educational settings. He makes clear – repeatedly – that he sees the game as enriching understanding of the circumstances of late Weimar Germany, the specific mechanisms by which Weimar democracy came to atrophy and move towards authoritarianism, and how this came to

benefit the Nazi Party. Rathbone also emphasises how, in his teaching, *Secret Hitler* is not a source of substantive knowledge so much as a conduit for forcing "students to think empathetically about the uncertainty that people in Weimar Germany experienced". None of which is to say that Rathbone is dismissive of the sensitivities involved in, and potentially galvanised by the game; as he indicates, it is precisely because of these that he engages in continued evaluation of students' reactions and responses. Yet, for some of course, such reflexivity will still not be enough to render or reclaim *Secret Hitler* for any educational purpose.

   Secret Hitler is not about the Holocaust. Nor, in its defence, does it purport to be. Instead, it is about how the regime which drove the destruction of European Jewry and pursued the persecution and murder of other groups, was able to emerge out of the democratic decay of the final Weimar years in a position of power. These parameters mean, to some extent, that debating whether or not the game can contribute to teaching and learning about the Holocaust is something of a non sequitur. What it can do – potentially, and with all due caveats – is to stimulate broader reflection on some of the moral dimensions and ethical considerations that emerge out of the ways that we access the past and how we re-present it in the present. This does not mean that we should dismiss the concerns of those who see in *Secret Hitler* wanton disregard for the suffering of millions. But, at the same time, it also not to dismiss how this particular game and other works of potential "Holocaust impiety" (Boswell, 2012) have a capacity to surface issues of morality and ethics. As much as gesturing to the need to contextualise the rise of the Nazis, this feature of *Secret Hitler* may be what ultimately gives it some degree of value.

   Representations of the past in educational settings have a long history, and are by no means exclusive to the Holocaust. Speaking personally, my own encounter with the Holocaust in mainstream education in the mid-1990s consisted of watching *Schindler's List* in a classroom – an experience, I suspect, is perhaps typical of many of my generation. If the use of representations is therefore not new, then what has arguably changed in the last twenty years has been the sheer volume of works a teacher can potentially choose from. The range of filmic and literary works which are *explicitly* about the Holocaust is vast and ever-growing, and have been increasingly supplemented by a body of texts that approach Holocaust-related themes and issues in more subterranean, implicit ways.

   These developments are a boon for teachers looking to find ways to engineer new types of educational encounter. Danielle Raffaele's contribution to the roundtable should be seen by these lights. On one level, there is little out of the ordinary with Raffaele's wish to incorporate fictional works into her teaching and she is not alone in believing that "fiction can be a powerful gateway to historical truths that are sometimes lost in facts".[22] What is different about Raffaele's approach however is her wish to use

"fiction outside the realms of the Holocaust" and to do so "as a method for teaching empathy by conveying the historical experience through characters and narrative". Such an enterprise is not, of course, beyond the realms of possibility. But it does place importance on the process of interpretation being transparent, secure understanding of the function and functionality of analogy, and an awareness on the part of learners of what is fact and what is fiction.

Raffaele's approach is also distinctive on account of the particular literary works that she has used in pursuit of her goals. The *Harry Potter* book series are a global publishing phenomenon, and millions continue to be enthralled with the tales of magic, fantasy and adventure. Yet, it is precisely because of these dominant themes and subject matter that many are likely to find it incongruous to think the books could be used to teach something about the Holocaust. Indeed, it is quite conceivable that some would take umbrage with the prospect of trying to connect the dark lived realities of the Holocaust with the very fantastical nature of the *Harry Potter* universe.

There are, in sum, distinct risks and pitfalls to Raffaele's enterprise – for, as she concedes, "at first, *Harry Potter* may sound like a bizarre point of reference for teaching about the Holocaust". That being said, Raffaele does bring a new perspective to bear on the books themselves and her interpretation is buttressed by J.K. Rowling's own admission of drawing on the Nazi period.[23] Moreover, the samples of students' work Raffaele provides does indeed speak to impact and a deepening of understanding in the directions she intended. In this respect, though Raffaele's approach is certainly unusual, the evidence suggests it is nonetheless successful in reaching its objectives – particularly in terms of "capturing the imagination of students". In that way, Raffaele's essay – like others in this roundtable – underlines the importance of having clear rationale and learning objectives; especially when pursuing an "unusual approach".

Engagement is one of the most frequently used words in education, though its usefulness as a term can be blighted by over-employment and a lack of theorisation.[24] Our understanding of engagement is also complicated by how the act of being engaged does not guarantee that learning is taking place.[25] Still, regardless of how we define it, most would agree that engagement involves – amongst other things – developing a sense of relatedness between the learner and the subject at hand sufficient to hold their interest and engender their investment in the learning process.

In his essay for the roundtable, Jan Láníček highlights the particular importance of cultivating connections when teaching his students at the University of New South Wales. As Láníček explains, whilst there is no shortage of interest in the Holocaust, Australian students come from "a society that does not really believe it had any historical connections to the Holocaust" and subsequently see it as "simply the story of Europe, and of European history". Countering this sense of disassociation and detachment

has subsequently become a principal concern for Láníček, who has duly reworked his teaching to "put more emphasis on the local Australian context, and Australian responses to the Holocaust".

Others share Láníček's belief that the "local" dimensions of the Holocaust are often overlooked or even marginalised in Australia (Joel, Lee-Frieze and Turner, 2018), and this notion is likely to have echo in many other countries too. As he indicates, what makes concerning is not just its implications for the sustainability of Holocaust education in given national contexts, but also the potentiality that future generations fail to appreciate points of contact and overlap between the themes and issues of the Holocaust and the darker aspects of national histories.

Given this, the ways in which Láníček's students responded to his new approach are certainly encouraging. But they are also testament to the difference that can be made when teaching is underpinned by clear planning and due thought for progression in learning. Láníček's outline of his assessment exercise demonstrates this clearly. Though very much about how students view the issue of public representation of the Holocaust in Australia, the groundwork laid by the tutorial and lecture together with the three-step process by which students construct their own assessment, has evidently made a significant impact in developing students' thinking. In this manner, whilst Láníček's approach is novel – both in the sense of focusing on the local context, and rethinking traditional modes of assessment – the outcomes it has produced owe much to well-established principles. These include (amongst others) the importance of student-centred activity, the role of scaffolding, the encouragement of independence of thought and ownership of learning, and the need to plan routes for progression.

In pulling together the threads of these contributions to the roundtable, one question in particular presents itself: what actually *is* an "unusual approach" to teaching and learning about the Holocaust? What defines the adjective "unusual" is difference – in this context, difference to established norms and accepted orthodoxies in how teaching is carried out and how learning occurs. Seeing how change is baked into educational practice, given the inherent need to adapt and evolve in order to respond to changing contexts, the common criteria for judging unusual approaches centre on suitability, practicality, and likelihood of success. Yet when the subject at hand is that of genocide – that is, the conduct of mass atrocity and the human suffering which follows – matters of morality and issues of ethics become unavoidable considerations, too. As a result, any evaluation of an unusual approach is immediately complicated. Furthermore, the incentive to innovate is equally impacted, as the stakes involved in taking risks or making mistakes are considerably raised.

We are left, then, with something of a conundrum: approaches to teaching and learning about the Holocaust need to evolve, have to evolve, yet every new approach must traverse multiple pitfalls and navigate around

numerous tensions. This, however, need not be a counsel of despair – for in working to find ways through these quandaries, approaches can be refined, adapted, reshaped until they emerge, ultimately, as viable or not. In the process, pedagogues and their learners can acquire new insights into the challenges and dilemmas around teaching and learning about the Holocaust – and, perhaps, education more generally.

Notes

1 See, for example: Stuart J. Foster, Andy Pearce, Alice Pettigrew (eds.), *Holocaust Education Contemporary challenges and controversies* (London: UCL Press, 2020); Stuart Foster, Alice Pettigrew, Andy Pearce, Rebecca Hale, Adrian Burgess, Paul Salmons, Ruth-Anne Lenga (2016), *What do students know and understand about the Holocaust? Evidence from English secondary schools* (London: UCL). Laura Hilton and Avinoam Patt (eds.) (2020), *Understanding and Teaching the Holocaust* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press).

2 Adam Czerniakow, *The Warsaw Diary of Adam Czerniakow: Prelude to Doom*, ed. and trans. Raul Hilberg, Stanislaw Staron, and Josef Kermisz (New York: Stein and Day, 1979) and Janusz Korczak, *Ghetto Diary* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1978).

3 Mary Berg, *Warsaw Ghetto: A Diary by Mary Berg*, ed. S. L. Shneidermann (New York: L. B. Fischer, 1945).

4 For a discussion of fair use see Patricia Aufderheide and Peter Jaszi, *Reclaiming Fair Use: How to Put Balance Back in Copyright* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

5 See for example *German History in Documents and Images*, http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/Index.cfm?language=english, and the *German Propaganda Archive* at Calvin University, https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/ww2era.htm. The websites of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum and Yad Vashem provide additional sources for these documents.

6 See Omer Bartov, *The Eastern Front, 1941-45: German Troops and the Barbarisation of Warfare* (London: St. Antony's/Macmillan, 1985). For an excellent and succinct discussion of these "criminal orders" see Geoffrey P. Megargee, *War of Annihilation: Combat and Genocide on the Eastern Front* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 33-41.

7 Helen K. edited testimony (HVT-8035), Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University.

8 Student response to course evaluation questionnaire for History 4319 (The Holocaust) at Texas A&M University-San Antonio, May 5, 2020.

9 See for example William Cronon, "Storytelling," *The Presidential Address at the 127th Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association*, New Orleans, Louisiana, 2013, https://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-

archives/presidential-addresses/william-cronon, and Dana Goldstein, "Why Kids Can't Write," *The New York Times*, 2 August 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/02/education/edlife/writing-education-grammar-students-children.html
10 "Scholars continue to disagree about the exact definition of what constitutes a game, simulation, play or the ludic, (but) most agree that games and simulations are more than just amusing pastimes." Benjamin Hoy, "Teaching History with Custom-Built Board Games," *Simulation & Gaming* 49, no. 2 (2018): 116.
11 "The Rules of Secret Hitler," The Secret Hitler Website, Accessed on 29/6/2020, https://secrethitler.io/rules
12 https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-02-26/compulsory-holocaust-victorian-education/12001214
13 http://www.krausanderson.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Bloom.jpg
14 Unicef, 'Strengthening education systems and innovation'. Available: https://www.unicef.org/education/strengthening-education-systems-innovation. Accessed 06 November 2020.
15 See Stuart Foster, Alice Pettigrew, Andy Pearce, Rebecca Hale, Adrian Burgess, Paul Salmons, Ruth-Anne Lenga, *What do students know and understand about the Holocaust? Evidence from English secondary schools* (London: UCL, 2016); Monique Eckmann & Oscar Österberg, 'Research in German' in Monique Eckmann, Doyle E. Stevick & Jolanta Ambrosewicz-Jacobs, eds., *Research in teaching and learning about the Holocaust: A dialogue beyond borders* (Berlin: Metropol Verlag/IHRA, 2017), 37-54: 44-45.
16 See the homepage for the game at https://www.secrethitler.com/.
17 See the website http://trumppack.deals/.
18 The Jerusalem Post, 'Australian Jewish org slams retailers for Secret Hitler board game', 31 December 2019. Available via: https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/australian-jewish-org-slams-retailers-for-secret-hitler-board-game-612605.
19 The Jerusalem Post, 'Secret Hitler board game removed from 3 Montreal stores', 15 January 2020. Available via: https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/secret-hitler-board-game-removed-from-3-montreal-stores-614209.
20 Times of Israel, 'Jewish group urges Amazon to stop selling "Secret Hitler" board game', 28 December 2019. Available via: https://www.timesofisrael.com/jewish-group-urges-amazon-to-stop-selling-secret-hitler-board-game/.
21 Anti-Defamation League, 'Why simulation activities should not be used'. Available via: https://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/why-simulation-activities-should-not-be-used. For recent shifts, see International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, *Recommendations for Teaching and Learning about the Holocaust* (Berlin: IHRA, 2019): 29-30.

22 See for instance Kimberly Klett & Colleen Tambuscio, 'Incorporating literature into a study of the Holocaust', in *Essentials of Holocaust Education: Fundamental Issues and Approaches*, eds. Samuel Totten & Stephen Feinberg (New York: Routledge, 2016), 147-168: 155.
23 In addition to Raffaele's citation of Rowling, see: 'Author "chilled" to learn Harry's half-blood status has Nazi parallels', *The Scotsman*, 28 July 2004.
24 Christine Challen, 'Engagement in teaching and learning – is it enhanced by the F-factors?' BERA Blog, 5 October 2016. Available via: https://www.bera.ac.uk/blog/engagement-in-teaching-and-learning-is-it-enhanced-by-the-f-factors.
25 Carl Hendrick & Jim Heal, 'Just because they are engaged, it doesn't mean they are learning', *Impact: The Journal of the Charted College of Teaching*, September 2020. Available via: https://impact.chartered.college/article/just-because-theyre-engaged-doesnt-mean-learning/.

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