“Hitler is a Bully”: Middle School Students’ Perspectives on Holocaust Education in Greater Victoria, British Columbia

by

Natasha Wood
B.A., University of Victoria, 2011

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates middle school students’ interest in learning about the Holocaust, which methods are the most effective at teaching the Holocaust and how the testimony of Holocaust survivors can be retold to the next generations of middle school students. In order to answer these research questions, my study uses surveys with three classes of current middle school students in Greater Victoria, British Columbia, a focus group with graduate students at the University of Victoria and an interview with Larissa Weber, the director of the Anne Frank Exhibition in Berlin. These quantitative and qualitative results are analyzed using a mixed methods approach. The middle school students’ perceptions regarding effective educational methods when teaching the Holocaust in my limited sample (n=77 in the first survey and n=58 in the second survey) suggest that there is a connection between personal narrative and empathy when teaching the Holocaust in middle school classrooms. These findings are contextualized with a summary of the history of Holocaust education in Canadian public schools and a discussion regarding the role of empathy in learning about the Holocaust.
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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my grandmother, Chris Fechner. Thank you for being a constant source of inspiration and support in my life.
Introduction: Reaching the “Crisis Point”

We are reaching a “crisis point” in Holocaust\(^1\) survivor testimony. As time passes after the Holocaust, some personal narratives of Holocaust survivors are disappearing as the population of survivors decreases. According to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the number of Holocaust survivors will have dropped by more than thirty percent in 2015 (“One Holocaust”). A Canadian census-based report estimated that in 2001, approximately 23,660 Holocaust survivors lived in Canada and that by 2020, only 8600 survivors will remain (Torr, Miller and Beck 4). Holocaust memory has become extremely fragile; as survivors age their memories may die along with them unless they are documented which leads us to this “crisis point” in Holocaust memory (Peterson 167). The fragility and disappearance of Holocaust memory could have a serious effect on the students of today’s classrooms as the use of Holocaust survivor testimony is common in Holocaust remembrance and education (Magen). According to Magen, the personal narratives told by Holocaust survivors restore the identities of those affected by the Holocaust and help students empathize with them. Survivors who share their personal testimony with young students and educators from around the world are partners in perpetuating Holocaust memory, “bearing witness” until “the last generation” (Gutterman and Rozett).

The Holocaust has become a global point of reference for the subject of mass violence in classrooms around the world and educators in British Columbia often use presentations by Holocaust survivors in order to teach students about the events and

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\(^1\) The term “Holocaust” used in this thesis refers to the definitions provided by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum: “the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of approximately six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators” (“Why Learn”). I have chosen to use the term Holocaust rather than Shoah for the sake of clarity as that is the term used by British Columbia’s school curriculum.
lessons of the Holocaust (“Why Learn”). For example, the curriculum in British Columbia states that teachers should attempt to bring a Holocaust survivor into their classrooms to speak to their students (British Columbia, “Social Studies 11” 61). Educators use the Holocaust to teach their students important lessons regarding racism, homophobia, bullying and stereotyping. For example, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum states that the study of the Holocaust assists students in developing an understanding of the ramifications and roots of prejudice, stereotyping and racism in any society (“Why Teach”). According to the museum, the Holocaust also provides a context for students to explore the danger of remaining apathetic, indifferent or silent in the face of the oppression of others. Further, the museum maintains that a study of the Holocaust helps students think about the abuse of power and their roles and responsibilities as individuals when confronted with civil rights violations (“Why Teach”). Primo Levi describes the need for Holocaust education with his words, “we cannot understand [the Holocaust] but we can and must understand from where it springs and we must be on our guard. If understanding is impossible, knowing is imperative, because what happened could happen again” (qtd. in Short and Reed 2). Short and Reed explain that it is the need to develop an understanding of the Holocaust in the hope of preventing a repetition that constitutes the raison d’être for teaching the Holocaust in schools (2). Therefore I argue that it is important that we continue to teach the Holocaust to students and to use the testimony of Holocaust survivors to help students with their understanding of this complex event.
As the aging population of Holocaust survivors decreases, archival projects are attempting to document and record their stories. For example, in 2012, a new archival project was initiated at the University of Victoria called *Building an Archive: Local Stories and Experiences of the Holocaust* (Sharpe). This project is unique in preserving and communicating the experiences of Holocaust survivors across generations by representing their testimony in various forms from video-recordings to poetry and even music (Sharpe). My involvement in this project as “project partner” raised some important questions regarding the documentation of the personal narrative of Holocaust survivors. After videotaping the presentations of local Holocaust survivors at the University of Victoria, I thought about how Holocaust survivors will soon no longer be able to present their stories in front of classes of students at school or at events like the Victoria Holocaust Education Symposium (sponsored by the Victoria Holocaust Remembrance and Education Society) or the YCI Camp (Youth for Change and Inclusion) which is dedicated to raise awareness of social justice issues in Victoria, British Columbia. To determine what the best way would be to retell the personal narratives of Holocaust survivors to future generations of students, my research questions are aimed to discover what public school students recognize as the most effective methods of Holocaust education. These research questions consist of determining whether or not students are interested in learning about the Holocaust, which methods they find to be the most effective and how the testimony of Holocaust survivors can be presented effectively to future generations of students. In my preliminary research, I noticed that many studies used the perspectives of teachers to determine student attitudes and thoughts towards learning about the Holocaust. While these studies contribute
meaningful insight into the subject of Holocaust education, I wanted to hear from the students directly. Therefore I decided to create my own unique study that asked current middle school students about their perspectives on Holocaust education. I hypothesized that students would find hearing the testimony from Holocaust survivors to be the most effective method of Holocaust education and that this could be attributed to the relationship between personal narrative and empathy when learning about this subject area.

The inspiration for my interest in Holocaust education in British Columbia’s school system emerged from my participation in a group project during my undergraduate degree at the University of Victoria in 2010. Our class was about the Holocaust and we had decided to focus our project on how current middle school students are being taught about the Holocaust. We determined that although academic articles on the subject area were very informative and helpful, it was difficult to understand the needs of the students without hearing directly from them. So we decided to set off on a mission to ask public middle school and high school students what they thought about Holocaust education in their schools.

I visited eight different high schools and middle schools in the Victoria area and met with their principals to discuss our project. We were turned down by most of the schools because we did not have the proper Human Research Ethics approval. However, we were able to conduct an informal survey with a class of middle school students and I recently received approval to include a brief discussion of these results in the form of this thesis. The students were given a blank sheet of paper with the words “what does the Holocaust mean to you?” written at the top. I noticed that there was a trend amongst
some of the responses where students connected their school lessons about bullying with their lessons about the Holocaust. For example, one student drew a mind map that included bully to describe the perpetrators of the Holocaust. One response which particularly inspired me was a picture of a stick man with an arrow pointing towards it and the caption “Hitler is a bully”. This simple statement was indicative that even though the Holocaust occurred over sixty years ago, our responses suggested that the lessons from the Holocaust seem to be relevant to students today. I believe that being able to understand the parallels between the discrimination during the Holocaust and the discrimination found in school classrooms and school yards is the first step to combating intolerance in the future leaders of the next generation. This group project ignited a passion inside of me to pursue my interest in Holocaust education by volunteering to record the presentations of Holocaust survivors as part of the UVic Holocaust archival project. This interest ultimately resulted in my own study where I conduct an interview with an international authority on Holocaust education, a focus group with graduate students and two surveys distributed to current middle school students before and after they attended the Victoria Holocaust Symposium in Greater Victoria.

Chapter one contextualizes my study with a discussion of Holocaust education in Canada as well as a summary of how the Holocaust is treated in British Columbia’s school curriculum. I discuss several studies that focus on Holocaust education in Canada ranging from how the Holocaust is treated in Canadian textbooks to teachers’ perceptions and attitudes regarding teaching the Holocaust. While these studies provide insight into the issues surrounding Holocaust education in Canada, they do not specifically address the “crisis point” in Holocaust survivor testimony that is quickly approaching. My thesis
attempts to bridge this gap in the discussion of the Holocaust and will act as a launching pad for future studies in this area.

Chapter two discusses my research questions and methodology. I wanted to ascertain which methods of Holocaust education are the most effective for middle school students in the Greater Victoria area to determine the best way to retell the stories of Holocaust survivors to future students. I explain why I decided to use a variety of methods in my study, including an email interview with the head of exhibition at the Anne Frank Zentrum in Berlin, a focus group with graduate students and two surveys with middle school students. This chapter explains the process and limitations of each of these methods as well as how they were used to complement one another in my study.

Chapter three addresses the results of my study. I discuss Larissa Weber’s recommendations for Holocaust educators as well as her thoughts regarding individual learning. This chapter summarizes the discussion of the graduate students and their suggestions for teaching the Holocaust to young students. The results of my pre-symposium and post-symposium surveys conducted with three classes of middle school students in the Greater Victoria area are also discussed in detail, suggesting the importance of empathy and personal narrative in Holocaust education.

The final chapter of my thesis discusses the role of empathy in teaching students about the Holocaust. Using the results of my study, I provide a list of recommendations for future research as well as a set of recommendations for Holocaust educators. Although the scope of my research is narrow, my thesis intends to be used as an example or launching point for other researchers interested in pursuing their own studies about Holocaust education with students enrolled in public schools in British Columbia.
Chapter 1: Holocaust Education in Canada: History, Studies and Curriculum

1.1 A Brief History of Holocaust Education in Canada

After the end of the Second World War, very little written material was published by the Canadian mainstream press on the Holocaust aside from the edited Anne Frank’s diary and even that had a very limited readership during this time (Short and Reed 20). Holocaust education in the 1950s hardly existed because of the complex and delicate climate of the postwar years during the Cold War. Arye Carmon argues that it was during this time that a distinction was made between “knowing” about the Holocaust and being “aware” of the Holocaust (Carmon xvii).

In 1961, Raul Hilberg published *The Destruction of the European Jews*, which raised heated public debates with its disdain for Jewish passivity (Short and Reed 20). After the publishing of Hilberg’s work, Rolf Hochhuth’s stage play *The Deputy* opened on Broadway in 1964, further contributing to the emergence of the Holocaust as a topic to be publically discussed in North American news and media (20). In the 1960s survivor memoirs were also starting to emerge while the high-profile Eichmann trial brought attention to the Holocaust in the news. In 1961, Hannah Arendt was sent by *The New Yorker* to cover the trial and her article “Eichmann in Jerusalem” and its use of the term “banality of evil” to describe Eichmann as an ordinary person ignited a passionate public debate about the Holocaust. Eichmann’s claim that he was simply “doing his job” and was not legally guilty for the atrocities he committed triggered the public discussion surrounding how people who committed such crimes could appear to be normal everyday citizens and not the horrific monsters that one may have expected would commit such horrendous acts (Overbey).
Throughout the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, Holocaust survivor memoirs also contributed to a significant body of literary work regarding the Holocaust. After the war, approximately 40,000 Holocaust survivors immigrated to Canada in the late 1940s (“The Post-WWII Period”). The large size and vitality of the Holocaust survivor community in Canada as well as the publication of memoirs such as Elie Wiesel’s *Night* increased the general public’s awareness of the tragedies faced by European Jews (Short and Reed 22).

The increasingly ethnically diverse population of Canada inspired Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau to make a federal policy commitment to the principles of multiculturalism and created the Multiculturalism Act of 1971 (20). This act stated that there is no official culture and that no ethnic group takes precedence over another which made ethno-cultural preservation a goal of public policy (20). This shift led to the creation of educational curricula that emphasized multiculturalism and provided a platform for Holocaust education.

The 1970s and 1980s in Canada experienced the development of many educational curricula dealing with multiculturalism (22). Courses focusing on the history of Canada’s ethnic groups were encouraged and funded by local school boards (22). In 1973, the National Holocaust Remembrance Committee of the Canadian Jewish Congress was established, followed by many local Remembrance Committees and Holocaust museums in Canada (22). Although other members of these committees contributed greatly to the development of Holocaust education in Canada, Short and Reed argue that the single most important determinant regarding this development is the level of activity of the survivor community and their contributions to these committees as well as these Holocaust museums (25). The core of many of Canada’s Holocaust Remembrance
Committees was formed by survivors and the creation of most of the main Holocaust memorial museums was also fueled by Holocaust survivors (25). Many of these survivors also spent their time visiting classrooms across Canada to spread their stories and to educate Canadian children about the Holocaust, contributing to the increasing momentum of Holocaust education in Canada. Although the discussion of Holocaust education was slow to rise after the war, once the subject was opened up to public debate with the publication of memoirs, the televising of the Eichmann trial, the implementation of the Multiculturalism Act and the growingly diverse population of Canada, it soon became part of scholarly debate and many scholars focused their attention on how the Holocaust should be taught in the Canadian public school system.
1.2: Canadian Studies about Holocaust Education

Joel Epstein addresses how the Holocaust is treated in twenty-five Canadian textbooks published between 1966 and 1985. Epstein’s 1997 study found that in high-school level general textbooks there is a wide variety in the quality of the coverage of the Holocaust between textbooks (270). Some textbooks only mentioned the Holocaust in a brief sentence while others described the Holocaust as a subtopic of the Second World War (270). Epstein also found that even in the best general textbook accounts, the Holocaust is not treated as a major historical event in post-secondary textbooks (270). For example, the events of the Holocaust in these textbooks are discussed in chapters covering the rise of Fascism or World War II but are not given their own chapters. According to Epstein, more space is dedicated to subjects such as the military history of the War than the Holocaust (270).

Epstein explains that the extermination of the Jews is still treated as a “sub-event” and that many in the history profession in Canada regard courses on the Holocaust as “faddish” (270). Unfortunately, the textbooks Epstein analyzed are now outdated. Yet, Epstein’s study can still provide us with a glimpse as to how the Holocaust could be taught. Epstein believes that having an entire chapter devoted to the Holocaust in a general text on Western Civilization is not a realistic expectation or goal (271). He contends that our century is over-saturated with violence and mass murder and believes that a chapter dealing with violence in the twentieth century might be a better place to include Holocaust education (271).

Epstein emphasizes that learning about the events of the Holocaust in a single linear sequence would help develop a stronger understanding of how such a tragedy can
develop (271). Breaking up the Holocaust in between chapters regarding the details of military warfare and other topics can make an event as complicated as the Holocaust appear even more inaccessible or incomprehensible (271). Therefore, Epstein recommends that a concise chapter regarding violence in Western Civilization should be created that includes a section on the Holocaust in a way that describes the events in a sequential order (272). In summary, Epstein finds the treatment of the Holocaust in these textbooks to be varied in quality and that the Holocaust should be addressed under the subject of violence in Western Civilization rather than as a subtopic of the Second World War where its sequence of events is fragmented and disconnected. This study provides some valuable suggestions that can still be applied to the creation of new textbooks to be used in Canada when teaching and learning about the Holocaust.

Novogrodsky and Reed (2000) also provide insight into the topic of Holocaust education but instead of focusing on textbooks, they look into the effects of incorporating the Holocaust into antiracist education with their study. Some scholars and educators assert that the Holocaust should fall into the antiracism category of education and in recent years, antiracist education has been criticized for its neglect of the Holocaust (Novogrodsky and Reed qtd. in Short and Reed 26). In fact, Short and Reed explain that it is sometimes suggested by scholars that Jews were not seen as an ethnic minority in the antiracist movement (31). However, antiracist education is concerned with the nature of stereotyping and how this process can be used to justify discriminatory behaviour. Therefore I contend that the Holocaust is relevant to antiracist education as it relates to a range of victim groups and a range of stereotypes through its study.
Short and Reed discuss David Gillborn’s arguments that the Holocaust should not be included in antiracist education (30). Gillborn purports that certain issues cannot be fully explored within the limited time in a classroom and that there is a tendency for antiracist materials to be used only if the opportunity comes forth and that this can lead to the appearance of antiracism to be “incidental”, making it seem less credible to the students (qtd. in Short and Reed 29). Gillborn believes that if a topic is not perceived as a traditional subject, students will not take it seriously and will see it as a form of “preaching rather than teaching” (qtd. in Short and Reed 29). Students who feel this way, Gillborn alleges, may then oppose these lessons because they feel artificial and forced.

In order to determine the attitudes of their students regarding lessons about antisemitism included in their antiracist education, Novogrodsky and Reed carried out a small-scale survey of teachers who instruct courses with substantial units on the Holocaust in Toronto in the year 2000 (qtd. in Short and Reed 37). Questionnaires and in-depth interviews were conducted with twelve teachers (seven in secondary schools and five in middle schools) which aimed to determine whether or not students would protest against including antisemitism in their lessons about antiracist education (Short and Reed 37). Novogrodsky and Reed reported that many of the Canadian teachers felt uneasy when dealing with the Holocaust in this way because of a fear that Holocaust education would be seen as privileging the struggle against antisemitism over that of colour prejudice (37). Despite this fear, the majority chose to teach about the Holocaust and reported that their students found these lessons to be engaging regardless of their ethnocultural background (Novogrodsky and Reed 516). The teachers responded that resistance to learning about the Holocaust was the exception rather than the rule (516).
The study states that for one teacher, their openly gay students expressed interest in learning about this subject and another teacher found that some of their Muslim students were reluctant at first but almost immediately became interested in the topic (Short and Reed 37).

The study was also focused on whether or not teachers would experience resistance from their visible minority students. Short and Reed conclude that most students linked the struggles between visible minorities and prejudice aimed at Jews and even connected their own struggles to the struggles related to antisemitism (37). This connection and feeling of identification is linked to the ability of these students to empathize with other minorities, enabling them to imagine the struggles those who were affected by the Holocaust must have gone through. In conclusion, Novogrodsky and Reed suggest that perhaps the distinctions between different minority groups matter to academics and social scientists but do not matter as much to the rich diversity of students “living, studying and trying to get along together despite their varied backgrounds” (qtd. in Short and Reed 38).

The focus on the opinions of teachers rather than the opinions of students is a trend amongst many studies regarding Holocaust education. For example, when Short wanted to learn about how the Holocaust is treated in Canadian classrooms, he used interviews and surveys with history teachers to answer his questions. In 1998, Short conducted a study with 23 history teachers (13 men and 10 women) who all taught the Holocaust as part of a Canadian history course to students in grade 9 or 10 (Short qtd. in Short and Reed 65). The teachers were taken from 17 randomly selected high schools in the Toronto area and five of the schools were Catholic while the other 12 were non-
denominational (65). Short asked these teachers about the length of time dedicated to teaching the Holocaust to these classes. The amount of time used to teach the Holocaust varied greatly; the mean length of time dedicated to the subject was just over five hours, while one teacher spent up to twelve hours and some only took one or two hours to cover the subject (65). There was no consistency between teachers as to how much time they invested in the topic of Holocaust education.

Nearly all of the teachers agreed that the Holocaust should be taught to students in grades 9 and 10 and approximately half of the teachers wished for more time to specifically teach the causes of the Holocaust, in particular, the history of antisemitism (66). In response to which methods were used in these classes, all of the teachers responded that the participating schools owned and relied on films to teach students about the Holocaust (66). When asked about survivor testimony, only female teachers participating in the study responded that they used the narratives of Holocaust survivors. These teachers taught survivor testimony in the form of Elie Wiesel’s Night and The Diary of Anne Frank (Short qtd. in Short and Reed 66).

The main focus of Short’s study is on teachers’ attitudes and reactions to Holocaust education. Some teachers expressed their concerns about “Holocaust fatigue” where Holocaust education is “over-done” and students lose interest in the subject area (67). I argue that to keep students from feeling this fatigue, it is important to ask the students about which methods they find to be the most effective. Methods that were used in the past may not be relevant today, which is why it is useful to interview or survey the students in today’s classrooms to find out which methods work for the current generation of students. While Short’s study is informative regarding the views of teacher’s on
Holocaust education in Canada, it does not address the opinions or thoughts of students about their own education. Although it is important to learn about how students are being taught, I argue that it is just as important to learn how students would want to be taught based on what they consider to be the most effective methods.
1.3 British Columbia’s School Curriculum

British Columbia’s curriculum for Social Studies K-11 is designed to “develop thoughtful, responsible, active citizens who are able to acquire the requisite information to consider multiple perspectives and to make reasoned judgments” (The Canadian Jewish Congress et al., “The Holocaust: Social Studies 6” 9). The provincial curriculum provides students with “opportunities as future citizens to critically reflect upon events and issues in order to examine the present, make connections with the past and consider the future” (9). I believe that learning about the Holocaust can teach students important lessons about racism and intolerance that can help students make connections with the past and to identify with those who suffered from tragedy.

In British Columbia’s curriculum, the Holocaust is listed as a suggestion in Social Studies 6 (British Columbia, “Social Studies K to 7” 41). The curriculum is written in the form of Prescribed Learning Outcomes (PLO) and Suggested Achievement Indicators. The Holocaust is only mentioned once in the PLOs in grade 6 as an optional example under section B2 (British Columbia, “Social Studies K to 7” 81). The section states that it is expected that students will: “compare Canadian society with the society of another country” (British Columbia, “Social Studies K to 7” 81). The Suggested Achievement Indicator states that students who have fully met the PLO are able to:

Describe examples of different approaches to cultural diversity in Canada and in other cultures and societies studied, such as segregation, assimilation, integration, and pluralism (e.g., multiculturalism policies, settlement patterns, residential schools, Apartheid, the Holocaust, internment of Japanese Canadians, Chinese Head Tax, caste and class systems. (81)
The Holocaust can easily be missed in this list and teachers may choose whether or not to use it as a class achievement indicator. After grade 6, the Holocaust is not listed in the curriculum for grade seven, eight, nine or ten.

To graduate with a Dogwood Diploma in British Columbia, a student must complete at least one of Social Studies 11, History 12, Civic Studies 11 or BC First Nations Studies 12 (British Columbia, “Grad Planner” 6). The Holocaust remerges in the curriculum under Social Studies 11 with an emphasis on Canada’s role in the Holocaust. The curriculum is divided into Planning for Assessment and Assessment Strategies. Students are expected to write an essay on Canada’s role in the Holocaust under the Planning for Assessment column and teachers are instructed to use “a variety of resources and approaches to teach students about the Holocaust” (British Columbia, “Social Studies 11” 61). Some suggested sources include a 91-page textbook called *Canada and the Holocaust*, a 22-minute news video discussing issues of censorship and free speech on the Internet, a 44-minute video called *My Dear Clara* that focuses on the challenges of Jews immigrating to Canada during the Holocaust, a 24-minute video featuring twenty-five personal accounts from Holocaust survivors called *One Human Spirit*, a thirty-minute video called *The Holocaust: A Teenager’s Experience* about a 12 year old boy who survived the Holocaust and a link to the Virtual Museum of Canada which features information on the Holocaust. The curriculum also suggests that the teacher should invite a Holocaust survivor to speak to the class (British Columbia, “Social Justice 12” 61).

Civic Studies 11 does not mention the Holocaust in the Prescribed Learning Outcomes or Suggested Achievement Indicators but does list a textbook titled *Canada and the Holocaust* as well as the link to the Virtual Museum of Canada, which lists the
Holocaust as one of the suggested topics (British Columbia, “Civic Studies 11” 119). History 12 includes the significance of the Holocaust as a Prescribed Learning Outcome and requires students to gain a more in-depth understanding of details of the Holocaust such as the Wannsee Conference, Kristallnacht, death camps, ghettos, Nuremberg Laws, etc. (British Columbia, “History 12” 41). The Prescribed Learning Outcomes suggest that students complete an overview reading from a textbook about the Holocaust as well as group activities which require research and presentations (69). There is also mention of the Denial of the Holocaust as a suggested area for a group to research (71). Lastly, Social Justice 12 is another elective which mentions the Holocaust but only briefly as a possible example in a list of options of how the Criminal Code of Canada has been used to address hate crimes (in the context of Holocaust denial) and the Prescribed Learning Outcomes do not address the Holocaust itself (British Columbia, “Social Justice 12” 41).

In the year 2000, the Ministry of Education for the province of British Columbia aided by the Canadian Jewish Congress and the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre published a resource guide for Social Studies 6 teachers as well as Social Studies 11 teachers as part of the curriculum (The Canadian Jewish Congress et al., “The Holocaust: Social Studies 6”, “The Holocaust: Social Studies 11”). The resource guides contain guidelines for teaching about the Holocaust, instructional procedures, suggestions for assessing student performance, teacher resource material, student handouts and further resources on the subject area. These guides were created with the help of educators from multiple school districts in British Columbia as well as associations such as BC ALPHA (Association for Learning and Preserving the History of World War II) and the Vancouver Talmud Torah School. This diverse group of contributors resulted in two
detailed guides for teaching the Holocaust to students in British Columbia, Canada. It is interesting to note that one of these two guides was created for Social Studies 6 classes even though the Holocaust is not included in the curriculum as a topic to be covered in that grade. The creation of this guide suggests that there is a need to provide teachers with learning objectives and lesson plans about the Holocaust despite its lack of the representation in the curriculum.

If students choose BC First Nations Studies 12 or Civic Studies 11 as their elective in the Social Studies area, they could possibly graduate without ever experiencing a class discussion or lecture about the Holocaust. With so much misinformation regarding the Holocaust existing on the Internet and in other sources, I believe that it is crucial that students receive an education about the Holocaust that aims to answer many of the difficult questions that might arise when learning about such a complex part of history. If a student does not choose Social Studies 11 or History 12 (the only classes which cover the details of the Holocaust in their Prescribed Learning Outcomes) they are left to educate themselves about one of the most complex tragedies in human history.
Chapter 2: Teaching the Holocaust to Middle School Students: Research Questions and Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to outline and discuss the different research methods used in my study. Initially I set out to analyze student perceptions of Holocaust education by conducting surveys and focus groups with students at four different levels: middle school students, high school students, university undergraduates and graduate students. I also hoped to interview Holocaust survivors and Holocaust educators. For the purposes of this thesis, however, it soon became clear that this plan was much too ambitious. In addition, some of my initial plans were not feasible due to time constraints. For example, I met with local high school students involved with Youth for Change and Inclusion (YCI) with the intention of conducting a focus group with them later in the semester. Due to timing issues with Human Research Ethics notification and high school final exams, organizing a focus group with these students was not feasible. Timing also played an important role when I attempted to conduct a survey with undergraduate students at the University of Victoria but I did not receive Human Ethics notification until the examination period had begun. Therefore, I decided not to conduct surveys or focus group sessions with these two constituencies.

In an attempt to learn more about middle school students’ perspectives on Holocaust education in Greater Victoria I conducted an email interview, focus group and two surveys with a variety of participants. I conducted the email interview with Larissa Weber, an authority on Holocaust education and the head of exhibition at the Anne Frank Zentrum in Berlin. I met with Weber in the summer of 2012 to discuss her thoughts on how middle school aged students respond to learning about the Holocaust when they visit
the exhibition. Weber provided great insight into some of the issues surrounding Holocaust education and agreed to participate in a formal interview. The interview provided me with an educator’s viewpoint on Holocaust education that contrasted and complemented the opinions of students also included in my study. Secondly, I conducted a focus group with graduate students who had recently taken a graduate class about the Holocaust. I chose to include these students because they were recently engaged in detailed discussions surrounding issues regarding Holocaust memory and testimony, therefore they were able to provide responses that applied their readings and lessons about the Holocaust and combined them with their own opinions as students who went through the Canadian public education system between five and ten years ago. The graduate students in the focus group provided a different perspective on the issues surrounding learning about the Holocaust in middle school as they are not educators (like Weber) and are not currently enrolled in public middle school (like the students who participated in my survey).

Lastly, my study uses handwritten surveys distributed to current middle school students as a method of research. The students chosen to be participants in my study shared the common characteristic of being registered to attend the middle school session of the Victoria Holocaust Education Symposium, sponsored by the Victoria Holocaust Remembrance and Education Society. I chose to target the students who attended the symposium because they were exposed to a variety of methods used to teach about the Holocaust including photographs, biographies, lectures and a presentation from a Holocaust survivor. For many of these students, this was their first time hearing a Holocaust survivor share their testimony in person. These middle school students
provided my study with a contemporary and current perspective on the issue of Holocaust education.
2.1: Human Research Ethics

Due to the inclusion of human participants in my research, my study required Human Research Ethics approval. Human Research Ethics ensures that UVic research involving human participants meets the ethical standards required by Canadian universities as well as the national regulatory bodies. In the case of my study, the process of obtaining approval included added steps because my study was conducted inside public schools with middle school students. Therefore, my research required not only the consent of the participants but also the approval of the involved school districts, principals, teachers and parents or guardians. Originally, I applied for ethics approval to conduct a survey with undergraduate students enrolled in a class called GMST 353 Literature and Film of the Holocaust and “Third Reich”. I used the experience of conducting the undergraduate survey as a pilot test for my middle school surveys and when developing the middle school student surveys I applied what I had learned from this first attempt. For example, to improve the survey response rate, I designed the middle school student surveys to be distributed by the students’ teachers and completed during class time. My original Human Research Ethics application included approval for the email interview I conducted with Weber, the undergraduate survey, the focus group with the high school students involved in YCI, the graduate student focus group as well as interviews with Holocaust survivors. The Human Research Ethics approval for the pre-symposium and post-symposium surveys with the middle school students was granted through a request for the Modification of an Approved Protocol.

In order to receive approval from Human Research Ethics to use the middle school students in my study I also needed to apply for approval from the school districts
with classes registered to attend the symposium. Each school district has different requirements to be fulfilled that are necessary to receive this approval. School District 61 (Greater Victoria) required a principal form to be completed which required a signature of approval from the principal of each school that was involved in my study. I also needed to speak with the involved teachers to obtain their signatures and to make sure they were willing to participate. Other school districts did not require this additional step.

I received approval from both School District 61 and School District 62, followed by permission from three different classes from two out of the seven schools I contacted in School District 61. For the sake of the students’ anonymity, I will refer to these schools as Middle School A (MSA) and Middle School B (MSB). Two classes from MSA and one class from MSB agreed to participate in my study providing me with 135 survey responses in total. Once I obtained the signatures of the principals involved, I received approval from the school district and then submitted an application for a Modification of an Approval Protocol, which was granted on 4 March 2013. In the appendices of my thesis are my consent forms, invitations to participate, and the survey and focus group questions to provide more detail about the specifics of my study and to provide a guide for future researchers when dealing with Human Research Ethics. Although the process of gaining permission from ethics to survey middle school students is detailed and time consuming, Human Research Ethics protects the students as well as the researcher from risks associated with their study, making it a worthwhile and important step in research of this nature.
2.2: Research Questions

My research questions developed throughout my years as an undergraduate and graduate student in the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies at the University of Victoria. My interest specifically in Holocaust survivor testimony evolved after I volunteered as a project partner to video record the presentations of Holocaust survivors at the UVic Holocaust Speakers Series in 2012 to be used as a form of documentation in the UVic Holocaust archive project. My first research question was to find out how interested students are in learning about the Holocaust. This question is important as it provides educators with an idea of whether or not their students are interested in the subject area in the first place or if they need to find a way to ignite their interests before delving into their lessons about the events of the Holocaust.

My second research question asked which methods of Holocaust education are the “most effective” for public middle school students. As the number of Holocaust survivors decreases, archival projects are looking for ways to preserve and document the testimony of Holocaust survivors before it is too late. As mentioned previously, the provincial curriculum suggests that teachers invite a Holocaust survivor to present to their classes but when there are no survivors left to teach students about the Holocaust, they are left to rely on the recorded personal narratives of these survivors. Therefore I believe it is important to determine which methods of Holocaust education are considered to be effective for public middle school students as steps could be taken to record or document these narratives in a way that is considered to be a powerful or useful learning tool for students. However, it must first be determined whether or not hearing a Holocaust survivor present in person is considered to be effective by middle school students in
today’s classrooms. Perhaps students are more interested in methods that incorporate modern day technologies such as YouTube videos rather than hearing a Holocaust survivor present. My hypothesis was that presentations by survivors would be considered to be the “most effective” by the middle school students who participated in my study. This hypothesis led me to my final research question which was how the personal narratives of Holocaust survivors should be captured and shared with future generations of students.

These research questions are pertinent to the field of research regarding Holocaust education because they can be used to determine how archivists and scholars can document the testimony of Holocaust survivors in a way that is engaging and useful for middle school students before there are no Holocaust survivors left to work with. Otherwise, scholars, educators and students are limited to recordings or transcripts that have already been mediated and documented to fit a certain format, which may or may not accommodate the learning needs of today’s middle school students.
2.3: Email Interview Methodology and Limitations

After meeting Larissa Weber in person, I knew that I wanted to ask her to touch on some of the questions I asked her in our previous discussion. However, the distance and time difference between Germany and Canada made conducting a face-to-face interview difficult. Therefore, Weber agreed to participate in an email interview with me on 29 May 2013 (see Appendix: Interview Questions). Although the email interview provided me with interesting insight regarding Holocaust education, there are benefits and limitations to this method of research.

Firstly, Weber’s responses are intended to provide insight into these issues but it should be noted that they are only the opinions of one authority on Holocaust education. Although Weber meets students from across the world at the exhibit, there are cultural differences between Holocaust education in Germany and Holocaust education in Canada that should be noted. For example, Weber mentioned how students in Germany are confronted with the history of the Holocaust more frequently than those born and raised in Canada (Weber). Therefore, for some German students, there is a larger issue of getting students interested and excited to learn about the Holocaust that she argues may not be as great of an issue for students from other countries like Canada (Weber). Nevertheless, Weber does have extensive experience dealing with students from various countries so her insight into the issues surrounding Holocaust education is not limited to only German students.

Conducting an interview via email rather than face-to-face or by telephone has both its benefits as well as its limitations. For example, Weber was able to answer my
research questions and other interview questions at her own convenience by responding through email. Therefore the interviewee could choose the most convenient time to respond and write more detailed answers than if she were interviewed over the telephone during an allotted time. On the one hand, Weber was able to think about her responses before they were written and look back on her answers before sending them, allowing her to proofread or edit her replies, an element that telephone or face-to-face interviews do not have. On the other hand, Weber’s answer may have been more spontaneous in a face-to-face or telephone interview and would have occurred without this “extended reflection” (Opdenakker). While written responses can be well thought out and provide Weber with the ability to ensure that she is understood correctly, spontaneous responses may contain answers that are not as “edited” or carefully selected. Opdenakker considers this a possible disadvantage because he argues that spontaneity can be the basis for the “richness of data” collected in some interviews. However, Weber’s answers were also sent in a written format, which may have reduced the possibility of misunderstandings or mishearing her responses over the telephone.

Although being able to read social cues like body language or intonation during face-to-face interviews can be greatly beneficial, email interviews can be a preferred method for asking questions about sensitive or personal topics like the Holocaust. For example, participants might feel reluctant to discuss sensitive issues face-to-face with an interviewer (Opdenakker). There is a sense of anonymity when responding to an email that may encourage interviewees to express their opinions more openly than if they are face-to-face with someone during an interview.
Weber’s role as director of the Anne Frank exhibition places her in a position where she witnesses students learning about the Holocaust who have travelled there from across the world on field trips. For this reason, I anticipated that Weber’s opinion would reflect her years of experience working with young students and teaching them about the Holocaust, making her responses valuable when contemplating my research questions. Therefore my interview was structured to explore these research questions from a different perspective than my other research methods which focus on the responses of students. I asked Weber her opinion about which types of educational tools have been the most effective for the students who have visited the Anne Frank exhibition. During our meeting in Berlin, Weber mentioned how the activity where students wrote letters to Anne Frank was a valuable learning tool. I asked Weber to elaborate about this specific method in our interview in order to investigate the reasons behind why she recommended this method previously. I presented Weber with the identical list of methods that was also given to the middle school students to choose from in their surveys. I included this question in an attempt to contrast the opinions of the students with the opinion of a Holocaust educator. I also asked Weber how the stories of Holocaust survivors can be retold after they are gone to try to gain a different perspective on this research question. My thesis summarizes our discussion to demonstrate the similarities and differences between the middle school and graduate student responses and Weber’s responses to my research questions.
2.4: Focus Group Methodology and Limitations

The focus group conducted with the seven graduate students from GER550/ENGL 503 “Memory Matters”: Eyewitness (I-Witness) Accounts of the Holocaust and WWII was located in a private conference room on the campus of the University of Victoria on 3 December 2012 from 2-3pm. The students spent 15 minutes on the survey and the remaining 45 minutes participating in the focus group. The survey was given to the students prior to the focus group meeting so that the students would have some time for quiet self-reflection on the subject area before they engaged in a group discussion. The survey intentionally raised similar questions surrounding Holocaust education as the focus group guiding questions (see Appendix: Graduate Student Survey and Focus Group Questions). For example, the survey asked students when they first learned about the Holocaust, whether they have a good understanding of the Holocaust, which methods they found to be the most effective in high school, etc. The surveys were conducted as a group in the conference room, which promoted discussion of the questions with one another. Some students discussed the survey together and others preferred to complete the survey individually in silence. The audio recording of the students started only after the completion of the surveys and the students were given a few minutes to discuss their thoughts about the surveys before the recording of the focus group began.\(^2\) The audio device was placed in the centre of the table and I acted as the facilitator of the focus group by reading a list of questions created to encourage discussion of the issues surrounding Holocaust education. I did not intend to analyze the survey results. Instead the surveys were used to set the context for the focus group and as a means to get the graduate students to start talking.

\(^2\) The audio recording and transcription were destroyed in August 2013.
The small number of participants encouraged discussion amongst the students, especially because they were familiar with one another after taking a class together. However, the intimacy of the focus group also limited the number of respondents and thus decreased the amount of different perspectives regarding my research questions. It should be noted that the small amount of participants is a limitation of this method of study and that their responses cannot be generalized or extrapolated to be representative of a larger group. The discussion took place during the end of the semester, a time when many students were finishing their final assignments which may have had a negative effect on the amount of students who participated in the focus group. It should also be mentioned that this was not a random sample of graduate students as they all had voluntarily chosen to take a course on Holocaust memory and testimony and thus demonstrate an interest in the subject matter. These students also spent the last four months before the focus group familiarizing themselves with various texts and sources dealing with the personal narratives of Holocaust survivors. Therefore, one must take into account when interpreting their responses that these students are familiar with one another and have also been actively engaged in discussions surrounding Holocaust education and survivor testimony prior to the focus group.

The intimate size of the group also acted as a disadvantage as some students may have felt shy or concerned about expressing their opinion in front of one another. Further, the students were familiar with me from our interactions during the class and their relationship with me may have influenced their responses. The use of a recording device did not appear to intimidate or distract the students but it should be noted that a major limitation of this method is that some social cues like body language are not picked up by
the audio recording of the focus group. At times, the students also talked overt of one another, making the recording difficult to understand. However, I argue that the focus group was a success as the students provided me with insightful responses to my research questions and the dialogue flowed naturally without much facilitation. Therefore, the results of this focus group are useful in making recommendations for Holocaust educators and archivists as long as it is understood that these results are limited to being representative of the thoughts of these particular students.

The focus group was intended to provide me with a platform to discuss my initial research questions and to investigate the issues surrounding Holocaust education in Canadian public schools. While Weber’s interview provides her expertise in teaching the Holocaust to young students and the responses of the middle school students adds a firsthand contemporary perspective to my research, the graduate students add a unique perspective to my research questions. These students are aware of the theory behind Holocaust memory from their discussions and readings covered in the graduate class. Further, with the exception of one student, the graduate students have also attended public school in Canada so they could identify with how the Holocaust has been recently taught in Canadian classrooms.
2.5: Survey Methodology and Limitations

In April 2013, the pre-symposium and post-symposium surveys were distributed to three different classes at two middle schools in School District 61. Two teachers from middle school A (MSA) and one teacher from middle school B (MSB) agreed to participate in the study. All of the classes were registered for the Holocaust symposium by the participating teachers. I received 77 returned pre-symposium surveys and 58 post-symposium surveys from these three classes, two classes were from MSA and one class was from MSB. The Holocaust symposium was held on 17 April 2013 in the Oak Bay High School auditorium and was sponsored by the Victoria Holocaust Remembrance and Education Society. The symposium held two sessions – one for middle school students and the other for high school students. The middle school students attended the morning session which started at 9:15 and ended at 11:45.

I attended the middle school session for the symposium and helped students find their seats and handed out programs as they entered the auditorium. The middle school presentation of the symposium started with a speech by David Zimmerman, the president of the Victoria Holocaust Remembrance and Education Society, who began his talk with the statement “I am a Jew.” David Zimmerman broke down stereotypes of Jews with the students by talking about them in a bold and candid way to emphasize the importance of recognizing that Jews are individuals; that they do not all fall into the preconceived stereotypes that may exist. After David Zimmerman’s speech, students volunteered to participate in the lighting of the memorial candles, each candle representing one of the million Jews who died as well as the candle of hope. The candle of hope represents the
hope that the world will be a better place and after the candles were lit, the students were instructed to reflect on these words in the dark room lit by the candles at the front.

After the moment of reflection, Phyllis Senese, Professor Emerita in the Department of History at the University of Victoria, presented a historic overview of the Holocaust and conducted an interactive demonstration with the middle school students of the intolerance felt by many victims of the Holocaust. Senese instructed students to stand up and the room filled with loud chatter from the young students. Senese then told the students who were left-handed to sit down. Once these students were seated, Senese commanded the students who needed glasses to sit down. Senese then told students with blue eyes to sit down. Finally, Senese declared that everyone left standing survived the Holocaust and those sitting had their possessions stolen and were killed. One student nearby my seat cheered, another stuck out his tongue to his friend and exclaimed, “I survived sucker!”

After Senese’s interactive presentation, the students heard from the keynote speaker–Lillian Boraks-Nemetz who was born in Warsaw, Poland and survived the Holocaust as a child by hiding under a false identity in several Polish villages after fleeing the Warsaw Ghetto for eighteen months. My pre-symposium and post-symposium surveys attempted to learn about the effects of this symposium on these students as well as which methods of Holocaust education students felt are the most effective and least effective.

The pre-symposium survey was distributed to the students who returned their signed consent forms 1-2 weeks prior to their visit to the Holocaust symposium. The 77 participating students were given the surveys by their teachers and returned them
anonymously by placing them into an envelope, which would then be sealed by the teacher during the time allotted to Social Studies in their grade 7 or grade 8 classes. The 58 post-symposium surveys were distributed in the same manner, except only to the students who had attended the symposium. The number of post-symposium surveys was less because some students did not attend the symposium and some students were not in class during the day the post-symposium survey was handed out. Once both surveys were completed, the teachers contacted me via email and left the sealed envelopes in the school office for me to pick up.\(^3\)

The teachers were advised to give students approximately ten minutes to complete the four page surveys and to have students place the surveys back into the envelope once they were finished. The pre-symposium survey is 17 questions in length and the post-symposium survey is 16 questions in length, with many of the questions requiring only a checked box form of answering to make the survey simple and quick for the students. The surveys also included written-response questions that demanded more time and thought from the students. In hindsight, the recommended ten-minute length may have been too short for students to provide detailed responses for the written answers of the surveys but most returned the pre-symposium and post-symposium surveys with full written responses and the teachers did not report any issues with the suggested ten-minute

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\(^3\)This study does not track individual changes between the pre-symposium survey and the post-symposium survey. In order to track changes between individual responses, the anonymity of the students may have been compromised because they would have been required to identify themselves in some manner. Identification codes or aliases would not have been safe because the teachers were in charge of survey distribution and would have had access to the list. Further, tracking individual responses would have been a larger task than intended for this thesis and would have resulted in a large amount of data that would need more time to sort through and analyze. Therefore the responses are treated as a pre-symposium group and a post-symposium group and the change in responses is analyzed as the change between these two groups rather than individually. Tracking individual responses may be an exciting next step to take this study further.
time. While more time might have encouraged more detailed responses, the survey was designed to be as brief as possible because they were completed during valuable class time. Longer questionnaires can also result in lower response rates and since the responses were completely voluntary, it was important to aim to receive the highest possible response rate (Heberlein and Baumgartner 1978).

After pilot testing the survey with graduate students, I decided to distribute the questions over multiple pages to make the survey design clear and easy to follow with proper spacing between questions (Leslie 1997). Respondent-friendly questionnaires can improve response rates, making clarity and simplicity crucial for the pre-symposium and post-symposium surveys (Dillman, Sinclair and Clark 290). I attempted to increase my response rate with clarity and simplicity by choosing simple phrasing, short questions, large check boxes, large spaces between lines for the written responses and by using underlines and bolding for key words. These steps also helped decrease the possibility of misunderstanding the questions, which would also result in a higher number of flaws in the data.

The amount of personal information asked for in a survey can also have a large effect on response rate and the tone of the responses of the survey. Some scholars argue that surveyors should only include requests for sensitive information when the responses are necessary to the survey’s objectives (Dillman, Smyth and Christian 27). For example,

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4 I understand that the reading comprehension abilities of university students are at a different level than those of middle school students. However, the students were instructed to read the survey as if their skills were at a middle school level. Unfortunately, I did not have permission to conduct a pilot with middle school students before I received Human Research Ethics approval which was received just in time to conduct my study before the students attended the symposium. In a future study, a pilot test with students who share common characteristics with the study group would be beneficial to the creation of my surveys.

5 The middle school students were not asked about their socio-economic backgrounds because of the personal and identifying nature of this question.
although asking students to state their gender may have given interesting insight into the differences between Holocaust education for boys and Holocaust education for girls, looking at differences in gender and education was outside the scope of my study. Asking the students for their gender in the surveys may have also skewed the data as the more personal identifying questions students are asked, the more they may become defensive when answering a survey and they may give answers that are not necessarily true but they think are “right” or “expected”. This could result from a fear that it would be easier to identify the survey takers when more personal identifying questions are required. Therefore while learning the gender of the respondents of my surveys would have provided insight to my study, the school curriculum is intended for co-ed classrooms and dividing educational methods based on gender may result in the segregation of the classroom. There is also the possibility that one method may be more effective for one gender. Learning about different ways to teach the Holocaust depending on gender would be an interesting and informative direction to take this study in the future but because of the issues mentioned above I decided to leave that road untraveled.

Ensuring that the survey respondents were motivated to respond to every question on the survey was a major concern because although the teacher was present, the surveys were intended to be self-administered and there was no incentive offered to the students to complete the surveys. Unlike classroom participation marks or grades which are used to encourage students to participate to the best of their abilities, my surveys could not use these methods to increase the response rate and effort put in by the students. As the surveys had to be administered by the teachers, I was also not present to encourage the students to report complete and accurate answers and to help students with any questions
they may have regarding the phrasing of the survey. Therefore it was extremely important that I constructed the questions to be as straightforward and clear as possible and it is important to keep these possible issues in mind when analyzing the survey data.

In order to create a survey that would be user-friendly for the students, I chose a combination of open-ended, closed-ended, partially closed-ended and ordinal (scalar) question formats. The open-ended questions were chosen to produce more descriptive data while the ordered closed-ended questions allowed for an easier and more accurate summarization of results. A variety of question formats was used to keep the students interested and to reduce survey fatigue as they would be asked many of the questions twice (once in the pre-symposium survey and again in the post-symposium survey).

Only the students who visited the symposium and who filled out a pre-symposium survey were given a post-symposium survey to answer. The post-symposium surveys were distributed one to two weeks after the symposium by the same teachers to the participating students in their classes. The one to two week time frame for the teachers to have their students fill out the surveys after the symposium intended to capture the initial reactions of the students and their impressions of the symposium.

Although my pre-symposium and post-symposium surveys were intended to answer my research questions in an efficient and useful manner, there are still limitations to this study. It should first be noted that I received 77 pre-symposium responses and 58 post-symposium survey responses. This discrepancy between the number of responses is due to the fact that many of the students who wrote pre-symposium survey responses did not complete the post-symposium survey. The teachers involved in my study ensured that only the students who completed a pre-symposium survey and who attended the
symposium were given the post-symposium survey to complete. Therefore it is impossible to know which students who responded to the pre-symposium survey also responded to the post-symposium survey. Thus, drawing comparisons between the pre-symposium and post-symposium survey results could be misleading and the results of the pre-symposium and post-symposium surveys should be considered separately.

Another limitation that should be considered is the small sample size of my study. The survey responses are only representative of a small number of middle school students from two different middle schools in the Greater Victoria area. There are 48 pre-symposium survey responses from MSA and 29 responses from MSB. There are 38 post-symposium survey responses from MSA and 20 post-symposium responses from MSB. There are also different amounts of responses from each class for the pre and post symposium surveys. Therefore it should be noted that the survey responses are not equally distributed between classes or between schools and that the responses are representative of students from both grade 7 and grade 8. The responses are limited to students who are from the same area and from only two different schools, which may have implications such as similar economic or cultural backgrounds or similar policies regarding teaching methods that may have an effect on their responses.

Further, it should be mentioned that when the students were asked to choose the most effective methods of education, many of the respondents had been exposed to one educator’s teaching style regarding the Holocaust, which is not representative of how teachers approach the subject in general. Further, as demonstrated by the fact that only 6 pre-symposium respondents and 5 post-symposium respondents said “yes” to having met a Holocaust survivor before the symposium, most of these students had never met a
Holocaust survivor before the symposium. Therefore, when the students were asked how effective meeting a Holocaust survivor in person is, there is a risk that their responses only reflect how they perceived this particular survivor’s presentation and not what they think about Holocaust survivor testimony in general. Each personal narrative and presentation is unique to the Holocaust survivor and therefore it is important to acknowledge that these responses cannot be generalized to represent a larger population or give insight into how students feel about Holocaust survivor presentations in general because these results are specific to the students who participated in the surveys and their personal experiences.

The pre-symposium and post-symposium surveys were meant to collect descriptive data, which was used to produce descriptive statistics in an attempt to provide insight into the issues at hand and suggestions for further study using more advanced methods such as inferential statistics. Importantly, it should be mentioned that the results of descriptive research present a limited or narrow picture of the area studied (Johnson 241). These limitations are extremely important to consider because with the descriptive approach, quantity can be easily misunderstood as significance (242). The responses in my study are not intended to describe a larger population but to provide a starting point for other researchers to consider. An inferential study might include a larger survey sample covering a more representative group that could be generalized to a larger population. My use of descriptive statistics is meant to be a fruitful launching pad to be considered for further study.

There are also limitations specific to the use of surveys as a research method. For example, without meeting with the students in person, the researcher cannot pick up on
the social cues like body language or facial expressions from the students as they complete the survey. In this way, it is difficult to determine how receptive the students were to the surveys and what the atmosphere was like when they were completed. Unlike interviews or focus groups, which can be guided based on the reactions and responses of the students for the purpose of promoting discussion, surveys are static and cannot be altered to fit the perceived needs or interests of the respondents. Another issue with surveys is that they collect data about both the cause and effect at the same time, making it difficult to prove that one response is the cause for another response in the survey. For example, a student may rank the importance of learning about the Holocaust as very low and also rank their excitement for attending the symposium as low. It cannot be assumed that the students’ lack of excitement is caused by their view that learning about the Holocaust is not very important. There could be other factors influencing their level of excitement such as the disturbing and emotional subject matter or the fact that they will not be attending regular class.

Although surveys lack flexibility and insight into cause and effect, this method of research also has its advantages. For the purpose of my research, I wanted to use as little class time as possible (as to not take it away from valuable class time) yet I also wanted to receive as much information as I could. Surveys allowed me to narrow the scope of my questions and only ask those that were most pertinent to my research. The surveys also allowed me to standardize the questions, it can be known in confidence that each student was asked each question in the exact same manner and in the same phrasing which can have a large effect on how one might respond. Further, by allowing teachers to distribute the surveys, I did not have to gain Human Research Ethics approval to enter the
classrooms. The influence of the teacher’s presence may have benefited my research by giving legitimacy to my study, thus encouraging a higher response rate. However, one might consider the possibility that the presence of the teacher may have inhibited the students or altered their responses to meet the teacher’s expectations. Students may have also been more concerned about their anonymity because of the teacher’s presence during the surveys, which may have also had an effect on the accuracy of the responses. Most importantly, I decided to use a method that could combine written responses with multiple choice, ordinal scale, and interval scale question formats. Intonation or body language is difficult to convey when reporting the results of an interview or focus group, but when a student provides a written response to a question they have chosen their words deliberately and provide an answer that might be more thought-out and carefully constructed than if they were to respond on the spot. The other types of questions (multiple choice, etc.) provide students with a quick and effective way to answer questions in an attempt to increase the response rate and lessen the amount of time it would take to complete the survey.
Chapter 3: Email Interview, Focus Group and Survey Results

While considering the methodology and limitations of the interview, focus group and pre-symposium and post-symposium surveys, this chapter discusses the results of my research. First, the key findings of the email interview with Weber is addressed. This section includes Weber’s opinion as an international authority on Holocaust education. I discuss Weber’s thoughts regarding identification and empathy when dealing with personal narratives of the Holocaust. Weber provides advice regarding the most effective methods of Holocaust education and offers suggestions to future educators of the Holocaust. Next, the results of the graduate student focus group are summarized and their responses to my research questions are discussed. The graduate students responded to my research questions and provided insight into the issues surrounding Holocaust education in today’s classroom. Finally, chapter three concludes with a mixed methods approach to the analysis of the pre-symposium and post-symposium survey responses. The results of the survey questions asking students to circle or check their responses are followed by a qualitative analysis of the students’ written responses. The discussion of these results is followed by the conclusion of my study.
3.1: Email Interview Results

As the director of the Anne Frank Zentrum in Berlin, Larissa Weber often helps guide students through the interactive exhibit that teaches students about the personal narrative of Anne Frank. During my trip to Berlin, Weber opened the exhibit located in the famous Rosenthaler Straße to give me a private tour without the busy lines of students and tourists streaming through its small quarters. The centre contained two different exhibitions, one that was more traditional in its methodology and one that utilized modern technology to teach the underlying themes of the exhibit.

After experiencing the exhibit, I sat down with Weber and discussed the questions I had prepared for our visit. Through her experience with students from across the world, Weber was extremely knowledgeable about which methods of education were the most effective for the students who visit the Anne Frank exhibit and she also shared some interesting insights into the issue of Holocaust education and about how students react to the exhibit. Due to Human Research Ethics regulations, I am unable to include our face-to-face conversation in my study. Fortunately, Weber agreed to participate in an interview via e-mail to further discuss some of the topics we covered in our meeting.

In our e-mail interview, Weber emphasized the importance of including diverse methods of education so that the different learning styles of each student are covered, “it is a plus to have various tools, so that every student gets the chance to find his or her own way to connect to the topic of the exhibition” (Weber). Further, she explained how the exhibition uses a lot of photographs but that it is important to recognize that there are those who prefer other media like artifacts or posters. Exposing the students to various media accommodates different styles of learning and allows students to focus on the
medium they prefer. During our meeting Weber spoke about a part of the exhibition where students wrote letters addressed to Anne Frank herself. These letters were part of a special activity created for the 70th anniversary of Anne Frank’s diary. Weber describes how the youngsters wrote about a lot of different things, mainly about how they were connected to Anne Frank, that they feel that she “was a brave girl and a great person. Some [students] wrote that they feel sorry for her fate and what she and her family had to deal with. Others wrote questions, what she would tell today, if she had survived the Holocaust, what she would think about her diary published worldwide” (Weber). Weber explains how the exercise gives students with diverse social and learning backgrounds the chance to deal with the life of Anne Frank in their own words.

When asked which part of the exhibition generates the strongest emotional response from the students Weber explains that the exhibition and the centre’s educational work do not aim to generate an emotional response and that if there is an emotional response, it is an individual process (Weber). She explains that a negative emotional response is counter-productive as it can often lead to students becoming discouraged and uninterested in learning about the Holocaust. Weber finds that it is the photos and quotes from the diary that students can identify with, like when Anne Frank describes her family, that are the most useful for making the historical background accessible to the students (Weber). The diary entries that describe Anne’s time at school, her friends, her relationship with her mother and her love for Peter are listed by Weber as the parts that allow students to identify with Anne Frank, which also allows them to empathize with her. Weber suggests that these diary entries aid students in the development of empathy when learning about the Holocaust (Weber).
When responding to which methods are the most effective at teaching students about the Holocaust in a school setting Weber was given the same list of options that was given to the middle school students. She chose reading a diary, meeting a survivor in person, watching a video recording of a survivor, visiting a former concentration camp, participating in a group discussion, visiting a museum and making a creative project (poster, film, etc.) to be the “most effective” methods (Weber). Watching a feature film (ie. Schindler’s List), reading a memoir, listening to a lecture in class, reading a textbook, looking at photos or watching a documentary film were methods not chosen by Weber in response to this question (Weber).

Weber emphasizes the importance of having an open-minded approach to Holocaust education and accepting that every generation and every youngster has their own way of connecting with this topic (Weber). Weber stresses that we have to provide students with various methods and that working with biographies offers an opportunity to connect the topic to someone’s own life (Weber). Weber also emphasizes the necessity of building a bridge between history and daily life in order for students to understand that they have the ability to change society today and to learn from the past (Weber).

After being asked for advice regarding Canadian teachers trying to teach students about the Holocaust, Weber responded that the first step is to question yourself, to figure out why you want to teach the Holocaust and what your personal connection is to the topic (Weber). Weber believes that understanding your own interest in Holocaust education helps you find a personal way to deal with the topic (Weber). Weber advises instructors that students may not feel sad or shocked and that shocking the students should not be the aim of teaching the Holocaust because it may have the opposite effect
(Weber). She warns that fostering such feelings could lead to the result that students are no longer open-minded or wanting to deal with the topic of the Holocaust (Weber).

Lastly, Weber argues that there is never just one version of history and that “it is important to use different perspectives—[those of] victims, bystanders, perpetrators, helpers” and to look at how Canadian society acted during the time and what role it played during the Holocaust (Weber).

My email interview with Weber suggests the importance of individual learning and how students may develop their ability to empathize through identifying with what they are learning about. Weber advises teachers against attempting to force certain emotions from students like sadness or shock as they might lead to students closing themselves off from the subject area. How important it is to have a broad and open-minded approach to Holocaust education that encompasses all different types of learning styles using a combination of methods is also emphasized by Weber. After reading the responses of the interview I noticed that Weber’s responses suggest that empathy may play a role in how the Holocaust can be taught to students as a way to develop their ability to use empathy as an educational tool to understand the events of the Holocaust.
3.2: Focus Group Results

In order to set the context for the focus group, the graduate students answered a quick survey immediately prior to the discussion. With the exception of one student who chose “neutral”, all students participating in the focus group described themselves as agreeing with the statement that they have a good understanding of the Holocaust. All students scored the Holocaust as very important or somewhat important in response to the question “how important is it to learn about the Holocaust today?” When asked which methods of teaching the Holocaust in public school classes were the most effective for them, students were divided and no single method was agreed upon. However, when asked which method was the least effective, four students chose “history textbook” in response to this question.

When asked during the discussion, “how has meeting survivors face-to-face changed your understanding of the Holocaust?” one graduate student responded that hearing from those who have survived and continue to flourish throughout their lives despite terrific psychological damage is very impressive to witness and that recording their stories–filming them during a presentation–would be the best way to continue with Holocaust education after they are gone. Another student argued that meeting a survivor in person has a humanity imbued in it that is lost through years of reading books and watching films about the Holocaust. Further, another graduate student stated that “it makes your understanding of the Holocaust that much more visceral. Video recordings are useful but they neglect the human element. Perhaps this is where stories from children of survivors may be helpful.” When asked to explain what this “human element” is, the

6 These survey responses are not intended to give insight into which methods students find to be the most effective in general because the number of responses (7) is so small – they are included to provide context to the following focus group discussion.
students agreed that being able to identify and thus empathize with a Holocaust survivor is how they become humanized instead of only being defined by their experiences during the Holocaust. “Meeting a Holocaust survivor in person allows you to see that they have hobbies, careers, families and love stories as well,” explained one student. The issue with video recordings not getting at the “human element” of the narratives of Holocaust survivors and that film is a “cold medium” (Shortt and Pennebaker 175) is a comment I continuously found throughout my research.

The discussion of the effects of meeting survivors in person continued into the beginning of the focus group session with the graduate students. One student described how speakers who are survivors seem “a lot more real” compared to other methods of Holocaust education because you can tell that the memories they share with you of the Holocaust have shaped who they are today. Another student described this experience as very raw compared to any other medium and did not think there was a way to recreate that effect. When asked why a recorded presentation of a survivor would not give the same effect as meeting one in person, a student responded that the issue lies in the fact that there is an aspect of mediation, that what you are viewing has been edited and mediated by another source whether it is an editor, director, interviewer or even the audience of the presentation. Another issue raised about the medium of film is that the survivors cannot be asked questions by the viewer which makes it difficult for future generations to identify with their stories. Without being as relatable to a contemporary audience, the lessons of the Holocaust may be lost as students may no longer be able to empathize as well with the survivor.
In an attempt to mitigate this issue, some scholars are in the process of recording the testimony of a survivor that actually can respond to questions. New Dimensions in Testimony is a collaboration project between the Shoah Foundation and the Institute for Creative Technologies at the University of Southern California, in partnership with Conscience Display (“New Dimensions”). The project’s goal is to develop interactive 3-D exhibits in which learners can engage in simulated, educational conversations with Holocaust survivors. The project uses ICT’s Light Stage technology and records interviews with survivors using seven cameras as well as natural language technology which would allow learners to engage with the testimonies in a conversational manner. In this way, students could ask a survivor questions and the survivor would respond with relevant spoken responses as if he or she were able to see you. The importance of being able to ask survivors specific questions about their experiences, even after they are gone, is emphasized by this project. The USC Shoah Foundation published a website which describes the ability of young people to ask their own questions directly as a way to encourage them to reflect on the deep and meaningful consequences of the Holocaust – in their own way (“New Dimensions”).

Nevertheless, society will continue to evolve and so will the questions asked of the survivor. I contend that it is not possible to fully anticipate questions from future generations of students and wonder if there is a way to update the 3-D exhibit in a way that preserves the integrity of the survivor’s testimony. However, one can also insist that the messages found in the responses of these survivors are timeless in their meaning. These potential issues aside, the 3-D exhibit allows students to formulate their own questions pertinent to the issues they find relevant. This interaction attempts to break
down this feeling of video recordings being “cold” or “mediated” that many of the graduate students in the focus group mentioned as an issue with recordings of survivor testimony.

Aside from hearing the stories from survivors, one student suggested that “if we no longer have the people who experienced the Holocaust to tell us about these events that maybe we have to be more proactive and go visit concentration camps, if the Holocaust can’t come to you maybe you have to go to it.” While the feasibility of sending students to visit former sites where the atrocities of the Holocaust took place was discussed with issues of cost and time stressed by the students, one can also argue that visiting these sites may present a distorted image of the Holocaust to visitors as they are extremely different from how they were during the Holocaust. As an alternative, some students suggested smaller field trips to museums which deal with these issues like the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC.

One student brought up the idea of having children of survivors speak to classes instead of the survivors themselves. Although the survivors will not always be able to meet with students to share their experiences, their family members would also be able to share these survivor testimonies through what Hirsch describes as “postmemory”–the relationship that the generation after bears to the personal and collective trauma of those who came before to experiences they “remember” only by the means of hearing stories, seeing images, and experiencing behaviours of survivors while they grew up (“Interview”). Hirsch explains that a child of a survivor’s own life stories are at risk of being displaced by the memories they inherit and that memories that are transmitted familially (or culturally) can have significant effects on the lives of these second
generation or third generation children of survivors ("Interview"). The “raw experience” of meeting a survivor face-to-face may or may not be felt by meeting a child of a survivor. The students thought that this may be a way to help students continue to empathize with Holocaust survivors as well as their family members or friends. However, research into the area of the effectiveness of hearing a presentation of a survivor compared to a presentation made by a child or grandchild of a survivor extends outside of my research. Further, as time passes, the memories are passed on but may eventually fade or become lost with the next generation, making this Holocaust education “crisis point” still an urgent problem.

Two graduate students agreed that although it was impactful to meet survivors and hear their stories, it was the PBS Holocaust documentary Memory of the Camps which had the greatest lasting effect on them in the GER 550/ENGL 503 class. These students claimed that they had never seen or read anything as jarring because the imagery exposed the reality of the suffering—something they believed memoirs or stories cannot convey without including such horrific video footage. The students in the focus group described how they would never have been shown a video of such a graphic nature in their high schools but some stated that students today should be exposed to this film in their classes. One student made the argument that students are able to look up graphic imagery on the Internet or see it in video games every day and that students are able to handle more than they are given in school settings. In contention to this statement, the issue that students are not all the same was also raised to assert that some students might be extremely disturbed by such graphic footage and that it should be a personal choice to

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7 Memory of the Camps. Dir. Sidney Bernstein. PBS, 2006. DVD.
view films of such a highly upsetting nature. This leads into one graduate student’s comment that it is counter-productive to rank methods of teaching the Holocaust because there is no methodology that will work 100% of the time. This student declared that they had a fundamental issue with creating a rubric for teaching any subject because every class is different with individual needs. Contrastingly, the other members of the focus group rebutted that each class and each student has different needs and different learning styles which is why it is important to determine the methods and lessons that students find to be powerful learning tools.

One graduate student brought up the issue of teachers who may not have their own vision or expertise on the Holocaust and may want to refer to a curriculum or rubric for advice and the group agreed that determining which methods are the most effective would help construct a more useful guide. After much debate over the goals of public education in general, the focus group participants came to the question of how to engage students in the process of learning about the Holocaust. One suggestion was to give students more independence in terms of which materials they are exposed to in regards to the events of the Holocaust. For example, a student suggested that teachers could tell students to choose a book or watch a movie related to the Holocaust in a way that they find meaningful. Therefore students are not forced to learn from sources they find uninspiring and, considering the large number of literature and films dealing with the Holocaust, the students could find a testimony of a Holocaust survivor that speaks to them and they can identify and empathize with. Through the process of identification, students may be able to practice their ability to use empathy as a tool to engage with the educational material they are presented with. This being said, students may require help
finding their way through the large amount of materials on this subject area. Additionally, the focus group pointed out that a student may pick something inappropriate like a documentary made by Holocaust deniers or may choose materials with which the teacher is unfamiliar when selecting his or her own sources—making it difficult for the teacher to assess the project. Some students suggested that a teacher familiarizes his or herself with a list of different sources from which the students could pick or that the teacher chooses to evaluate this project in a more comprehensive way (participation, insightfulness, etc.).

The student who previously protested against the idea of a curriculum considered the issues surrounding students exposing themselves to anything they could find on the Internet regarding the Holocaust and then agreed that there is a need for a curriculum for teaching the events of the Holocaust.

When the students were asked what can be done to improve learning about the Holocaust in British Columbia’s middle and high schools, one student responded that there should be a stronger integration with other social studies topics while another student voted for a separation from the Second World War and that a few weeks should be dedicated to the Holocaust as opposed to skimming over it as part of the war narrative. The infamous Milgram experiment8, Jane Elliott’s blue eyes/brown eyes experiment9 as well as Ron Jones and his Third Wave experiment10 were brought up by the graduate students as they debated the ethical dilemmas surrounding methods of teaching the lessons of the Holocaust to students. “They can’t do that anymore can they? Is it ethically allowable?” asked one graduate student. Although it is ethically unsound, it would still be

a productive way of teaching the students the lessons of the Holocaust, replied another student. Through these discussions the concept of performative drama was raised and the idea of students acting out something related to the Holocaust was unanimously agreed upon as a suggestion for an effective method to teach the Holocaust in middle school or high school classrooms. “Of course you can’t have students acting out what happened during the camps” stated one student. Another student suggested that for a two week period each student could be delegated an identity and that he or she would not necessarily know the fate of his or her character. The student could then be given the task to role-play this character through researching what his or her life would have been like. In this way, students would be taking on something that is their own and individualizing the experience, which promotes identification and the use and development of empathy.

In conclusion, no consensus was reached regarding Holocaust education but with a subject area known for the debates and controversies that surround it, it is not a surprise that the focus group could not come to a solid conclusion. Nevertheless, the discussion raised some insightful questions about the importance of the individual needs of each student and that activities that encourage students to use their individual interests might be valuable for teachers to implement in their classrooms. Hearing the stories of survivors presented by children of survivors was raised to be a temporary fix for the crisis point Holocaust education is facing. The relatives and friends of the aging survivors may be a possible resource for teachers to use and more research into this area may provide interesting insight into the effects of these second or third generation presentations. Overall, the graduate students seemed intrigued and excited about the possibilities of performative drama to teach the Holocaust to students today alongside other methods that
give students more freedom to choose subject areas within the Holocaust that interest them and appeal to their individual identities, encouraging the development and use of empathy in these lessons.
3.3: Survey Results

One of the first questions of the pre-symposium survey asks students at what age they first learned about the Holocaust. This question was intended to determine how many of the surveyed students are aware of the Holocaust or have some knowledge of the Holocaust before learning about it in school. The students had six options to choose from: 0-5, 6-9, 10-13, 14-18, “Not Sure” and “Never”. No students chose the “Never” option and 12% of the student respondents chose “Not Sure”\(^{11}\). Almost half of the students answered that they first learned about the Holocaust between the ages of 10 and 13, with 49% of the student respondents choosing this answer. Due to the fact that the students who participated in my survey were in middle school, the age category of 14-18 became irrelevant. Between the ages of 10 and 13 was the most popular answer choice for the student respondents, demonstrating that most of these students learned about the Holocaust for the first time in grades 4-8 (assuming they did not fail or skip ahead more than one grade of school) despite the Holocaust not being emphasized or required in British Columbia’s school curriculum for these grades. The second most popular answer was between the ages of 6 and 9 making up 30% of the student respondents. Only 6% of the students reported that they first learned about the Holocaust between the ages of 14 and 18 and 3% of the students answered that they had first learned about the Holocaust between the ages of 0 and 5. Therefore according to these results, 79% of the pre-symposium survey student respondents first learned about the Holocaust between the ages of 6 and 13. Why is it that students are learning about the Holocaust at these ages but the Holocaust is not represented as a topic in any subject in the provincial curriculum?

\(^{11}\) Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole percent.
for students at these ages?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Symposium: How Did You First Learn about the Holocaust?</th>
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<tr>
<td>The Internet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>No Answer</td>
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<td>Museum</td>
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<td>Movie</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holocaust Memoir or Diary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
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<td>Family Member</td>
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Figure 1: Pre-Symposium: How Did You First Learn about the Holocaust?

When these students were asked how they first learned about the Holocaust in the pre-symposium survey, teacher and family member were two of the most popular responses. Out of the 77 student survey respondents, 53 students or 79% first learned about the Holocaust from either a family member or from a teacher. Therefore some teachers in the Greater Victoria area choose to teach about the Holocaust before the curriculum includes the Holocaust in its Prescribed Learning Outcomes. A future study may want to look into whether or not this result is representative of how students learn about the Holocaust across the province or even across Canada.

The pre-symposium survey also asked the students how excited they are to attend the Holocaust symposium. The students were given the option to choose from excitement levels 5 through 0 with the 5 marked as “Very Excited” and the 0 marked as “Not

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12 The 10% of the students who chose the “Other” option listed either non-fiction books or middle-school as their response.
Excited”. These results suggest that most of the surveyed students were in the excitement range 3-4 out of 5. Nevertheless, it is important to consider that the phrasing of this question provides some difficulties when analyzing the data. Some students may have felt uncomfortable using the adjective “excited” to describe an event that deals with such tragic and disturbing events. They also may have been excited for reasons other than the symposium itself. For example, perhaps they were excited to be missing several hours of class or to be seeing their friends from other schools at the symposium. Perhaps a different question would have been clearer for the students and still would have given insight into their attitudes towards the symposium. For example, the students could be asked if they think the Victoria Holocaust Education Symposium is a good idea or how important they think it is to attend the symposium.

The students were also asked how interested they are in learning about the Holocaust in the pre-symposium survey. The students chose their response based on a scale of interest from 0-5 with 0 marked as “Not Interested” and 5 marked as “Very Interested”. A strong majority of pre-symposium survey students (90%) chose an interest level of 3 or higher in response to learning about the Holocaust before they had attended the Holocaust symposium. 17% of student respondents ranked their interest at the highest interest level of 5. Note that 3 (4%) of these student respondents had previously attended the Holocaust symposium before and all of these students who had previously attended the symposium ranked their interest level as 3 or higher. A cause and effect relationship between level of interest and whether or not a student attended the symposium in the past should not be assumed as the number of students who attended the symposium in the past is extremely small.
The students were also asked how important they think it is to learn about the Holocaust before and after their trip to the symposium on a scale of 0-5 with 0 being “Not Important” and 5 marked as “Very Important”. Almost half of the pre-symposium survey students (49%) responded with an importance level of 4. The highest level of importance (5) was chosen by 32% of the pre-symposium students and less than 1% of pre-symposium students chose an importance level of 0-1. A total of 99% of pre-symposium student respondents responded with a 3-5 level of importance when asked how important it is to learn about the Holocaust. There was only one outlier who selected importance level 1. The majority of respondents for both surveys chose an importance level of 3 or higher. Therefore we can determine that almost all of the pre-symposium and post-symposium survey respondents found learning about the Holocaust to be a level of importance of 3 or higher.
The students were also asked about their level of understanding regarding the Holocaust in both surveys. The question was posed as a statement, “I have a good understanding of the Holocaust” and the students were given seven different answer choices intended to measure how strongly they agree or disagree with the statement. The students were asked the identical question regarding understanding in the pre-symposium and post-symposium surveys. Of the students who answered the pre-symposium survey, 8% strongly agree, 39% agree, 32% somewhat agree, 18% are neutral and 3% somewhat disagree with the statement “I have a good understanding of the Holocaust”. Therefore 79% of the pre-symposium respondents agree to some extent that they have a good understanding of the Holocaust already. According to the post-symposium survey results 9% strongly agree, 57% agree, 22% somewhat agree, 7% are neutral, 3% somewhat disagree and 2% disagree with the statement, “I have a good understanding of the Holocaust”.

The students were also asked if more time should be spent on the Holocaust, in the pre-symposium survey as well as the post-symposium survey. In the pre-symposium survey, 54% of the respondents answered “Not Sure”, 28% of the respondents answered “Yes” and 18% answered “No”. Out of the 77 students who took the pre-symposium survey, 36 (47%) had never met a survivor and had never listened to or watched a recording of a survivor. Of these students, 25% responded “Yes”, 17% of these students answered “No” and 58% selected “Not Sure” when asked if more time should be spent on the Holocaust in school. For the 29 out of the 77 students (38%) who had not met a survivor but who had listened to or watched a recording of a survivor, 34% responded
“Yes”, 21% answered “No” and 45% selected “Not Sure” when asked if more time should be spent on the Holocaust in school. According to these results, more of the students who had some experience hearing the story of a Holocaust survivor chose the answer “Yes” to more time being spent on the Holocaust.

![Pie chart showing responses to the question: Should More Time be Spent on the Holocaust?]

**Figure 3**: Pre-Symposium: "Should More Time be Spent on the Holocaust?"

![Pie chart showing responses for students who have never met nor observed a recording of a survivor to the question: Should More Time Be Spent on Holocaust Education in School?]

**Figure 4**: Pre-Symposium: Responses of Students that Have Never Met nor Observed a Recording of a Survivor to "Should More Time Be Spent on Holocaust Education in School?"
When these students were asked about their understanding of the Holocaust, 52% of those who had listened to or watched a recording of a survivor but who had never met a survivor strongly agreed or agreed with the statement “I have a good understanding of the Holocaust”. The 36 students who had never met a survivor nor watched or listened to a recording of a survivor had a lower percentage of respondents who agreed with the statement that they have a good understanding of the Holocaust (42% of the 36 student respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement). Out of the students who had never met nor listened to or watched a recording of a survivor, 81% chose an importance level of 4 or 5 attributed to learning about the Holocaust. Further, 44% chose an interest level of 4 or 5 regarding learning about the Holocaust. 79% of the students who had never met but had listened to or watched a recording of a survivor chose an importance level of 4 or 5 for learning about the Holocaust and 55% chose an interest level of 4 or 5 in the Holocaust.

Figure 5: Pre-Symposium: Percentage of Students Who “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” with the Statement “I Have a Good Understanding of the Holocaust”
Figure 6: Pre-Symposium: Importance and Interest: Never Met a Survivor and Never Listened to or Watched a Recording of a Survivor vs. Never Met a Survivor but Listened to or Watched a Recording of a Survivor

After all of the survey respondents had listened to a presentation by a Holocaust survivor in person at the symposium, the students were asked again if more time should be spent on the Holocaust in school. This time it was assumed that all survey participants had experienced meeting a survivor in person because they had all attended the trip to the symposium where they listened to the same presentation by a Holocaust survivor. 48% of the respondents answered “Not Sure”, 43% of the respondents answered “Yes” and only 9% answered “No”. Therefore, for the post-symposium group, there is a higher percentage of student respondents who think that more time should be spent on the Holocaust in school, a lower percentage of students who thought there should not be more time and a lower percentage of students who are unsure.
Figure 7: Pre-Symposium and Post-Symposium: Do You Think More Time Should be Spent on Learning About the Holocaust in School?

After attending the Holocaust symposium, the post-symposium survey also asked students if their interest in the Holocaust increased, stayed the same or decreased. 50% of the student respondents answered “Increase”, 48% chose “Stay the same” and 2% selected “Decrease”. The next question of the post-symposium survey asked students whether their knowledge of the Holocaust increased, stayed the same, or decreased after the symposium. 81% of the respondents selected “Yes” to their knowledge increasing and 19% chose “Stay the same”. Therefore the clear majority of surveyed students believe that their knowledge about the Holocaust increased and half of the respondents believe that their interest in the topic increased after attending the symposium. Although it does not appear likely for students to respond that their knowledge decreased, I argue that the students who did not feel like they gained anything from the symposium may respond that their knowledge stayed the same. Interestingly, out of the 29 students who answered that their interest increased after the symposium, 93% also answered that their knowledge
increased. However, while it looks as if the results suggest that there may be a cause and effect relationship between interest and knowledge increasing, this is an assumption that cannot be confirmed by the results of my study. Inferential statistics in a future study may be able to explain whether or not there is a significant relationship between these responses.

![Post-Symposium: Interest & Knowledge](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Interest after the Symposium</th>
<th>Interest after Survivor Presentation</th>
<th>Knowledge Increase after Symposium</th>
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<tr>
<td>increase</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>decrease</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stay the same</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>19%</td>
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**Figure 8: Post-Symposium: Interest & Knowledge after the Holocaust Symposium and after Hearing a Holocaust Survivor Present**

The students were also asked specifically about the effect of the survivor’s presentation in the post-symposium survey with a question that asked if their interest in the Holocaust increased, decreased or stayed the same after hearing the Holocaust survivor present. It must be taken into account that these students only heard the presentation of one Holocaust survivor at the symposium and that for the majority of respondents, they had never heard a Holocaust survivor present before. Out of the 58
post-symposium student respondents, 60% reported that their interest increased, 38% answered that their interest stayed the same and 2% selected that their interest decreased after hearing the survivor’s presentation.

![Bar Chart: Post-Symposium: What Is the Best Way to Retell Holocaust Survivors' Stories When They Are Gone?](chart.png)

**Figure 9: Post-Symposium: What Is the Best Way to Retell Holocaust Survivors’ Stories When They Are Gone?**

One of the main goals of both the pre-symposium and post-symposium surveys was to determine which methods students think are the most effective for learning about the Holocaust. When the post-symposium survey respondents were asked which methods would be the best way to retell the Holocaust survivors’ stories when they are gone, documentary was the most popular response with 41% of the 58 students selecting it as the best method.\(^\text{13}\) Memoir (written by a Holocaust survivor) was selected by 22% of the respondents and YouTube video was the next most popular with 12% of the respondents

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\(^{13}\) The students were instructed to choose only one answer as the best way to retell the stories of Holocaust survivors.
choosing it as the best way to retell the stories of Holocaust survivors. The least popular answers were book (written by a secondary author) and presentation (by someone other than a Holocaust survivor).

Although documentary film was chosen as the post-symposium survey’s most popular answer for the best way to retell the Holocaust survivors’ stories when they are gone, it was not chosen as the most popular choice when the students were asked which methods are the “most effective” for learning about the Holocaust in the pre-symposium or post-symposium survey responses.\textsuperscript{14} When answering the surveys, documentary film was chosen by 21\% of the pre-symposium respondents and by 31\% of the post-symposium respondents. “Meeting a survivor in person” was selected by both the pre-symposium and post-symposium survey respondents as the most popular method with 71\% of the pre-symposium survey and 81\% of the post-symposium survey respondents selecting this answer.\textsuperscript{15}

Therefore the pre-symposium and post-symposium survey responses demonstrate a strong preference for meeting a Holocaust survivor in person, a method which will not always be available for the next generations of middle school students. The second most popular method for the pre-symposium survey is tied between “reading a diary” and “watching a feature film (ie. Schindler’s List)”. Each of these methods was chosen by 40\% of the 77 pre-symposium student respondents. “Visiting a concentration camp” was

\textsuperscript{14} The students were able to select multiple answers for the question, “which are the most effective methods for learning about the Holocaust” in the pre-symposium and post-symposium surveys.

\textsuperscript{15} Please note: “survivor” in these results is meant to include all individuals whose lives were affected by the Holocaust (including children in hiding, concentration camp survivors, etc.) This note was included in the pre-symposium and post-symposium surveys to be read by the students before they answered any survey questions.
selected by 31% of the students in the pre-symposium survey followed by “visiting a museum” with 23%, “watching a video recording of a survivor” with 22% and watching a documentary film with 21% of the student respondents selecting these methods as “most effective”. The remaining methods were selected by less than 10% of the student respondents each in the pre-symposium survey.

When dealing with the question, “which methods of Holocaust education are the most effective,” meeting a survivor in person was clearly the most popular choice for both pre-symposium and post-symposium respondents. Interestingly, the number of students who chose watching a documentary film about the Holocaust as a “most effective” method to learn about the Holocaust in the post-symposium group was higher by 10% although watching a video recording of a survivor was chosen by a smaller percentage of students. Further, the percentage of students who chose a class discussion or photographs as effective methods of teaching the Holocaust is the approximately the same in the pre-symposium and post-symposium survey responses.

For the pre-symposium survey, the top five most effective methods chosen by the students for Holocaust education are meeting a survivor, reading a diary, watching a feature film (ie. Schindler’s List), visiting a concentration camp and visiting a museum. The five answers that were selected the least for the “most effective” methods question are other, memoir, photos, creative project and textbook. When responding “Other”, students either left the line blank or listed the Internet as a method. The top five methods chosen by the post-symposium survey respondents as the “most effective” methods of Holocaust education are meeting a survivor, reading a diary, visiting a concentration camp, watching a feature film (ie. Schindler’s List) and watching a documentary film.
The five least popular answers for the “most effective” methods question in the post-symposium survey are other, creative project, textbook, photos and group discussion. Therefore meeting a survivor, reading a diary, visiting a concentration camp and watching a feature film are methods which proved to be popular amongst the student respondents in both surveys whereas textbooks, creative project and photos were unpopular selections for both surveys.

**Figure 10: Pre-Symposium and Post-Symposium: Most Effective Methods of Holocaust Education**

The students were also asked to choose which methods they found to be the least effective. The students in both the pre-symposium and post-symposium surveys ranked learning from a textbook to be the least effective with 57% of the pre-symposium
respondents and 62% of the post-symposium respondents choosing this method. Both surveys also demonstrate listening to a lecture to be the second least effective method of Holocaust education with 48% of the pre-symposium respondents and 62% of the post-symposium respondents choosing this method. Creative projects also ranked high in the category of least effective methods of Holocaust education with 36% of the respondents in the pre-symposium survey and 38% of the respondents in the post-symposium survey choosing this method. The responses to the most and least effective methods of Holocaust education coincide with one another, demonstrating that textbooks, lectures, creative projects, photos and group discussions consistently ranked low with the student survey respondents.

When dealing with the methods the students find to be the most effective, it is clear that meeting a Holocaust survivor was a popular answer with the students as it ranked first in the most effective methods question and only 1% of the pre-symposium student respondents and 2% of the post-symposium student respondents chose meeting a Holocaust survivor for the least effective method question. Documentary film was also a popular answer choice for most effective method question and ranked low on the least effective method question. It is interesting to note that watching a video recording of a survivor ranked relatively low (22% pre-symposium, 16% post-symposium) as an answer to the most effective methods of Holocaust education but when the students were asked which methods were least effective, a video recording of a survivor was not chosen as a top answer choice, meaning it was not frequently chosen as the least effective. In summary, according to the pre-symposium and post-symposium survey responses to the questions of which methods are most and least effective for Holocaust education, it is
clear that meeting a Holocaust survivor ranks first as the most effective method and that reading a textbook ranks first as the least effective method of Holocaust education.

Figure 11: Pre-Symposium and Post-Symposium: Least Effective Methods of Holocaust Education
3.4: Survey Written Response Results

The power of personal narrative and empathy as an educational tool was demonstrated by what the students remembered as the most enjoyable or interesting part of their visit to the Holocaust symposium. For example, 53 out of the 58 post-symposium survey respondents chose hearing Lillian Boraks-Nemetz share her story as a Holocaust survivor as the most enjoyable or interesting part of the symposium. More than half of these students mentioned that it was the description of her family that was the most interesting for them and the students appeared to connect with the parts of Boraks-Nemetz’ they could relate to personally. I have chosen to include the following responses to demonstrate the students’ ability to personally identify with Boraks-Nemetz. When asked, “what was the most enjoyable or interesting part of your visit to the Victoria Holocaust Education Symposium” one student responded that it was “hearing the survivor talk about her family” and another replied that “when the survivor was talking about her personal life I really felt like I could understand what it was like”. There also seems to be an emphasis placed on Boraks-Nemetz’ first-hand perspective of the Holocaust. For example, a student responded that the most enjoyable or interesting part was “the lady who was actually in the Holocaust”. Another student mentioned that it was “just the fact that we got to sit down and really listen to a Holocaust survivor, it was really cool” while another stated that it was because they got to meet “a real Holocaust survivor.” Other responses included statements like “she knows what happened because she was really there” or “the survivor told us the truth about what it was actually like.” One student respondent declared that he or she liked the presentation by the Holocaust survivor because “she saw what happened with her own eyes.” Another response stated
that “it feels more real because she was there.” The responses of these students who describe Boraks-Nemetz as an “actual” or “real” Holocaust survivor suggest that she holds a special “status” as an authority on the events of the Holocaust because of her first-hand experiences. This special “status”, as expressed by statements using words like “truth” or “real”, appears to give the voice of Boraks-Nemetz more legitimacy in the eyes of the middle school students who responded to my survey. Interestingly, many of the responses do not use a name to describe Boraks-Nemetz but instead describe her as “the survivor”. While it is likely that the students could not remember her name, this may also suggest how affected the students are by her “status” as a Holocaust survivor.

The survey responses suggest that most of the middle school students identified with Boraks-Nemetz’ story. For example, one student responded that the most enjoyable or interesting part of the symposium was “the way she told her story because it was really from her 6 year old point of view because she was 6 during then and it could really paint a good picture for me so I could understand deeper how life was like during the Holocaust.” This response suggests that for this student, the use of a younger point of view helped describe the Holocaust in a way that encouraged a deeper understanding of the topic. I argue that understanding how life was like in the past requires the application of historical empathy\textsuperscript{16} as a skill in order to take into account historical facts and attempt to understand what it would have been like for someone living during this time. Another student mentioned that the most enjoyable or interesting part of the symposium was “hearing the survivor talk about her family because it made me think about my family”. Further, one response explained that “when she talked about her family I could

\textsuperscript{16} Please see Chapter 4 for a discussion of empathy and historical empathy.
understand better what she felt and what happened.” I argue that these responses demonstrate that these students are actively identifying with Boraks-Nemetz and using empathy as a skill to improve their understanding of the past.

Almost all of the students found the personal narrative of a Holocaust survivor to be the most effective part of the symposium despite the various methods used to educate students about the Holocaust at the symposium. Of the five students who did not mention the survivor’s presentation as the most interesting or enjoyable, two wrote about Professor Senese’s presentation, one mentioned photographs and two did not reply to the question. One student responded that it was the interactive demonstration of the unfairness of the Holocaust where Senese would call out characteristics and ask students to sit down if they had them that was the most interesting or enjoyable. This student explained that this activity was effective because “it made me feel shocked that just because you are born with something people get targeted.” This thoughtful response proves that the message of Senese’s activity was understood by the student.

The overwhelming majority of students who responded that meeting a Holocaust survivor was the most interesting or enjoyable part of the symposium suggests that personal narratives are effective for teaching the Holocaust to middle school students. However, it is important to remember that these results are reflective of the students and their experiences hearing Boraks-Nemetz speak at the symposium since most of them had never met another Holocaust survivor before. Nevertheless, considering that 53 out of 58 post-symposium respondents chose to write that meeting a Holocaust survivor as the most enjoyable or interesting part of the symposium and that the majority of survey respondents chose meeting a Holocaust survivor in person as one of the most effective
methods of Holocaust education, it is clear just how vital the role of Holocaust survivors can be in educating the youth of our society and how serious of a “crisis point” we are now facing as survivors may not always be around to share their stories.

The pre-symposium survey also asked the middle school students,” if you could ask a Holocaust survivor one question, what would it be?”17 There seems to be a split between questions dealing with physical survival and the actual events of the Holocaust and questions that inquire about the emotional effects of the Holocaust on the survivor. For example, some students asked questions dealing with the events such as “what happened?” or “how did you survive?” Some respondents wanted to know what the worst part was or what the survivor did to survive the camps. However, many questions wanted to get at the feelings of Holocaust survivors. For example, one student asked, “what were your emotions like during the Holocaust?” Many of the questions posed by the students demonstrated that they were interested in how survivors were able to emotionally survive more than how they were able to physically survive. For example, a student wrote “I would ask them what it felt like to be criminalized because of who they are” while another asked, “what kepted (sic) you to keep trying to live when things got super hard?” Another student wanted to know, “what was going through your mind when you were taken from your home?” Some students were specifically interested in the emotional aspect of being separated from or losing family members, asking questions such as “did you have any family that had lost their lives, if so, how did you feel?” and “how hard was it to be taken away from your family?” The dichotomy between responses dealing with emotions and responses interested in historical facts and physical survival leads me to

17 Please note that these responses do not reflect Boraks-Nemetz’ presentation because they were asked during the pre-symposium survey.
question whether or not the differences in responses could be related to gender. Unfortunately, my surveys did not ask about gender for the reasons previously listed and cannot provide insight into this possibility. However, future researchers may want to take gender differences regarding attitudes towards Holocaust education into account.

When the students in my study were directly asked what we can do to remember and share the stories of Holocaust survivors once they are gone, most of the responses focused on remembrance, memorialization, celebration and communication.\textsuperscript{18} Many students responded that we should remember their stories and remember the events of the Holocaust so that they will never happen again. For example, when asked “what can we do to remember and share the stories of Holocaust survivors once they are gone?” one student responded that we must “create a memorial to help us remember them” and another student responded that “we can never forget.” Other responses emphasized different ways to celebrate and memorialize Holocaust survivors. For example, one student suggested that we could “have a kind of memorial day, just for them. A day where we honor them, kind of like Remembrance Day.” Another response suggested that we could “have a funeral for them.” These responses suggest that some of these students believe that the act of actively remembering those affected by the Holocaust would be the best way to remember and share their stories. There were 21 responses that fell into the category of communication, making up more than a quarter of the pre-symposium survey responses. For example, the responses varied from “a story of someone’s past told to children and friends” to “we can interview them and learn their stories while they are alive and write creative documentaries and talk about them after they have passed. For the ones who have told their children, their daughters/sons can talk about it.” Other

\textsuperscript{18} This question was only included in the pre-symposium survey.
students replied with statements like, “we can only remember stories and other things by remembering to talk about them so your mind can remember and think about them,” “to pass on the information we know to others that don’t know about it,” and “we can talk about them.” These responses demonstrate the emphasis placed on communication by the students and how they believe that to share the stories of Holocaust survivors, we have to share them with others and be responsible for this transmission of memory and narrative. Many students wrote about how important it is to communicate and to record and document everything we have relating to Holocaust survivors and their testimonies. For example, one student wrote, “to save these people’s stories we can make video diaries about their lives. Novels or short stories explaining about what they went through.” Another student suggested that we can “record them telling their story” while another student replied that we can make a big book of the names and stories. Different methods of recording the stories of survivors were recommended, for example, one student suggested that “interview them and learn about their lives and then make documentaries.”

One student’s response jumped out at me as particularly insightful as it reflects how Holocaust education and the practice of empathy is directly related to other aspects of these students’ lives. In response to how we can remember and share the stories of Holocaust survivors once they are gone, this student replied, “we can make sure all students are learning about the Holocaust at school and understand how it is related to bullying at school now so that an event like this does not happen again. If everyone can learn from this mistake and treat everyone equally starting at a young age then something like this might be prevented.” I believe that the relationship between learning about the Holocaust and bullying in today’s classrooms demonstrates why it is so crucial for
students to develop their ability to empathize and identify with others at a young age.

Much like the young student who drew the picture of Hitler with an arrow pointing towards it and the words “Hitler is a bully”, this student also sees the connection between the events of the Holocaust and the intolerance felt in their schools and playgrounds today.
3.5 Study Conclusion

The responses from the focus group, interview and pre-symposium and post-symposium surveys suggest the importance of empathy and personal narratives when teaching the Holocaust to young students. Larissa Weber, the head of exhibition at the Anne Frank Zentrum, discussed the importance of identification and empathy in her interview. Although told with a variety of photographs, diary entries, artifacts and other sources, the exhibition uses personal narrative to help students connect with Anne Frank’s life. Weber explained that the diary entries that the students could personally relate to and identify with were effective in teaching the events of the Holocaust to the students. She emphasizes how important it is to use a variety of educational tools because every student is unique and will connect with the subject matter in his or her own way. The exercise where students wrote their own personal narratives in the form of letters to Anne Frank encouraged their ability to empathize with Anne Frank and helped them understand the tragedy of the Holocaust. Therefore the personal narratives used in the exhibition demonstrate how personal testimony about the Holocaust can be a key element in developing empathy amongst young students.

The graduate students in the focus group struggled to reach an agreement about which methods of Holocaust education are the “most effective” for students in today’s elementary school, middle school or high school classes. Nevertheless, all of the graduate students agreed that meeting with Holocaust survivors in person was a valuable and life-changing experience that promoted the development of empathy. The students also suggested that performative drama would be an effective method as students would identify and empathize with their “character” which would help them with their
understanding of the tragedy of the Holocaust. Another point that was stressed by the graduate students in the focus group was how important it is to embrace the fact that every student learns in a unique way and different methods and sources will have different effects for each student. According to the focus group, the encouragement of self-identification is integral to learning about the Holocaust effectively. Through self-identification, students can develop their ability to empathize with others which ultimately teaches them about tolerance and understanding.

The methods considered to be the most effective by the pre-symposium and post-symposium survey respondents also used personal narratives to help students learn about the Holocaust. For example, when asked which methods are the “most effective” for learning about the Holocaust, the overwhelming majority of students responded with “meeting a Holocaust survivor”. I propose that the narrative form of a survivor’s presentation helps students empathize and identify with the survivor’s story. Other popular methods chosen to be the most effective by the students are feature films and diaries written by Holocaust survivors. Both of these methods use personal narratives to connect with their audience or reader. Diaries are arguably the most personal form of narrative as they are written at the time of the events by the survivor his or herself. Feature films often use storylines that focus on the narrative of a protagonist who experiences hardship, giving the students a character to identify and empathize with. Although YouTube videos can consist of feature films or documentaries, YouTube provides students with a platform that is interactive and allows them to watch short clips, related videos or to switch to different videos with the click of a button. Unlike YouTube, where videos are often split into sections or intended for quick consumption, feature films
or documentaries are often presented in their entirety and are intended for students to watch from the beginning until the end, making it a more passive experience. When asked about the least effective methods of Holocaust education, students chose methods that did not use personal narratives to educate others about the subject. For example, textbook was ranked the least effective method of Holocaust education by both the pre-symposium and post-symposium survey responses.

So what makes meeting a Holocaust survivor or watching a feature film different from reading a textbook? One major difference is that textbooks are most often not based on personal narratives but are more focused towards teaching the historical facts. Although survivor testimony may be incorporated into the textbooks, media that uses personal narrative as its driving force tended to rank much higher in effectiveness according to my surveys. Another interesting consideration would be that the students chose methods that appear to require less active participation. For example, watching a film is a passive activity while a creative project requires individual effort and interaction. However, meeting a Holocaust survivor can be classified into both categories. For example, watching the presentation of a survivor could be considered passive, as students listen to the Holocaust survivor speak at the front of the room. Alternatively, students may also choose to actively engage with Holocaust survivors by asking them questions or speaking with them after their talks. Class lecture also ranked low in the responses and can be viewed as both active and passive depending on the level of student participation.

Lectures also vary greatly depending on the teacher or professor and which sources they choose to incorporate in their lessons. Photos were chosen to be one of the
least effective methods of Holocaust education. Although narratives can be told through photographs, as demonstrated by the Anne Frank Exhibition, a photograph by itself may give its viewer a disjointed, static image that does not reflect a personal narrative. It would be very useful for future studies to ask students why they chose these methods to be the most effective to gain more insight into the reasons behind these choices. However, it can be noted that the top three methods chosen by the students rely on personal narratives to tell the stories of Holocaust survivors and the top three least effective methods are likely to not rely as heavily on personal narratives to educate students about the Holocaust.

A variety of personal narratives were used during the Holocaust symposium. The biographies on the back of the programs, the testimony of the Holocaust survivor and the presentations made by the other presenters encouraged empathetic responses from the students by providing them with personal narratives to identify with. When the students were asked if they were excited to attend the Holocaust symposium in the pre-symposium survey, 79% of the respondents ranked their excitement as a level 3 or higher suggesting that this event was something that many of these students were looking forward to experiencing. Although the question specifically asks about their excitement in relation to attending the symposium, there are other possibilities that should be taken into account for why students may choose this response, such as being excited to be missing class or doing something different from their usual studies. Overall, attending the Holocaust symposium had a positive educational effect on these middle school students as the post-symposium group responded that their knowledge about the Holocaust had increased.
Approximately half of the surveyed students responded that their interest in the Holocaust increased after attending the symposium and over 60% of the students responded that their interest increased after hearing a survivor present at the symposium. Although these responses are only representative of the effects of the Victoria Holocaust Education Symposium and Lillian Boraks-Nemetz’ presentation, further research could suggest whether or not these findings can be applied to presentations by Holocaust survivors more broadly.

The written responses demonstrated that the vast majority of students found hearing the Holocaust survivor present in person was the most interesting or enjoyable part of the symposium despite the use of other methods such as photographs or lectures. Students tended to mention parts of Holocaust survivor testimony that they could relate to personally such as when Lillian Boraks-Nemetz mentioned her family or personal life. The written results also suggest that some students give Holocaust survivors a special “status” which is evidenced by how they describe the presenter in their written responses. Boraks-Nemetz’ name was not used by most of the respondents and many responses suggested that it was the fact that she witnessed the Holocaust first hand that made her presentation so enjoyable or interesting. This special “status” suggests that Holocaust survivors may have a greater authority or legitimacy when speaking about the Holocaust due to their proximity to the events. When the students wrote what they would ask a Holocaust survivor, their responses appeared to be divided between questions dealing with emotional survival and questions dealing with physical survival. It would be interesting to investigate further into this division to determine whether or not this is a
trend amongst middle school students more broadly and if gender plays a role in this divide.

Lastly, the students were asked about possible ways to retell the stories of Holocaust survivors. Their responses fell into the categories of memorialization, celebration and communication. These categories contain a variety of responses dealing primarily with methods that respect and preserve Holocaust survivor testimony. There appeared to be an emphasis on proper documentation in the form of documentaries, interviews, memoirs, etc. that I argue supports the claim that there is a difference between what students think are the “most effective” ways to learn about the Holocaust and what students find to be an appropriate way to share the stories of Holocaust survivors. Overall, it is clear that although the students are responding to the presentation and narrative of a single Holocaust survivor, this presentation was effective in an educational sense as it was followed by thoughtful responses from the students who appeared to find the presentation enjoyable and interesting.
You can be that person running down the street
You can be that bird soaring up in the sky
You can be that squirrel playing with light and shadow
You can be the ant deep inside a flower, and know the secrets of a tree.
You don’t need to know magic
You don’t need to wave a wand
You only have to practice empathy
When you empathize
You feel the wisdom of a tree and the forests live
When you empathize
You love the freedom of all life and this Earth can never die
If everyone could feel another’s gladness
If everyone could feel another’s sadness
Love will never leave our world
Love will never leave our world. (Swati Lal qtd. in Ray).

Swati Lal is a teacher at the Calcutta International School who uses an empathy-based approach to teaching and writes an end-of-term play for her students every year. The song quoted above is from the play she wrote for her students in December 2000 called *All Kinds of Cages* (qtd. in Ray). Lal believes in the importance of hearing other people’s stories and contends that the capacity to listen and to validate another’s narrative is the key to become an empathetic person (qtd. in Ray). Lal links the ability to empathize with exposure to the narratives of others. Through the understanding of these narratives, Lal asserts that children get in touch with their own feelings and become more tolerant of differences (qtd. in Ray). Dr. Arundhati Ray is a freelance journalist and consultant with Ashoka’s Innovative Learning Initiative in India who also believes that empathy is the key to the future of our society as demonstrated by her quote, “throughout the world, teachers, sociologists, policymakers and parents are discovering that empathy may be the single most important quality that must be nurtured to give peace a fighting chance” (qtd. in Olson).
Teacher and academic Mary Gordon also believes that empathy is integral to solving conflict in the schoolyard, boardroom, family and war room (xvi). Gordon states that the difference between someone who fights for change and someone who perpetuates hate lies in the capacity for empathy, the ability to identify with others (31). Gordon describes empathy as being able to see the world through the eyes of another and to understand how people in the past saw their world (31). She declares that empathy is crucial to maintain peace in our society and to stop hatred in all of its forms (31). Empathy goes hand in hand with social responsibility, ethics and moral responsibility as it allows students to realize that as much as we are different, we are also the same. Gordon believes that we are all born with the capacity for empathy; the ability to empathize with one another transcends culture, nationality, race, age and social class (32). The more aware a child becomes of his or her own emotions, the more aware he or she will be of the emotional states of others (33). The development of empathy—understanding emotions, awareness of self, attributing emotions to others, taking the perspective of others—is vital for positive socialization (Gordon 33). I argue that it is through listening to the struggles of others, to their personal narratives that we are able to develop this ability to vicariously experience the feelings and thoughts of another (“Empathy”).

This chapter discusses how empathy is rising in popularity as an educational tool. The shift of focus from “hard” skills like arithmetic towards “soft” skills like empathy is reported by some scholars to produce students who are better achievers and may make powerful leaders of tomorrow (Townsend 1). The term “empathy” has many definitions and those that are useful for my study are discussed. For example, historical empathy is
the ability to view the world as it was seen by people in the past without imposing
today’s values and beliefs onto these individuals or groups (Yilmaz 331). In this thesis, I
use the term “historical empathy” as a subcategory of the broader term “empathy” as
defined by Merriam-Webster (“Empathy”). I contend that historical empathy refers
specifically to the understanding of the emotions or thoughts of a group or individual
from the past. This definition becomes complex when dealing with the testimony of
Holocaust survivors. For example, when students watch a recording of a Holocaust
survivor they are using historical empathy because they are attempting to understand the
thoughts and emotions of someone from many years ago. However, when a Holocaust
survivor is sharing their experiences in person, the students are empathizing with both the
character from the past as described through the narrative as well as with the person they
are presently speaking with. In this way, I assert that students use historical empathy as
an applied skill to understand the survivor’s testimony about the past.

I consider “empathy” to be a skill that can be developed through learning about
the situations of other people which can then be applied to interactions with others to
understand the motivations behind their actions. Hannah Arendt describes how “critical
thinking is possible only where the standpoints of all others are open to inspection” (43).
I believe that this statement suggests that to think critically about an event in the past or
current events, it is necessary to inspect and involve the experiences and thoughts of
others. Arendt states that critical thinking, while a solitary business, is not cut off from all
others (43). Inspired by the Kantian notion of “enlarged mentality”, Arendt explains that
enlarging one’s mentality is achieved by training one’s imagination to “go visiting”

19 “[T]he action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and variously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experience of another of either the past or present without having the feelings, thoughts, and experience fully communicated in an objectively explicit manner” (“Empathy”).
(Arendt 43). Han states that for Arendt, empathy destroys critical thinking to the extent that it attempts to know what “actually” goes on in the mind of others as opposed to comparing our judgment with the “possible” judgments of others (Han). For Arendt, the ability to put ourselves in the place of any other person is facilitated by the use of imagination, not empathy (Gatta 1). Arendt criticizes empathy as thinking someone else’s thoughts in an unreflective manner (qtd. in Gatta 1). Contrastingly, Karl Jaspers characterizes empathy as demanding a “laborious onslaught of prejudice” and bracketing one’s own situation in an attempt to absorb or approach another’s experiences (qtd. in Gatta 1). Jaspers furthers this description by explaining that empathy also requires drawing on one’s own situation to help comprehend another (qtd. in Gatta 1). I believe that empathy can be used as an educational tool for students to apply to their lessons as they can use what they know about the experiences of others and apply it to their own lives or vice versa.

Han further explains that in trying to feel the emotions of someone else, Arendt believes that empathy makes it difficult to respond politically because it destroys the distance between individuals (Han). Despite this assertion, I contend the opposite by believing that empathy can actually be used as an applied skill to think critically and objectively. Patterson identifies four stages in developing empathy: the moral component (becoming receptive to another), the cognitive component (putting oneself in his or her place), the communicative component (communicating one’s understanding of another’s situation) and the relational component (validating another’s perception of their situation) (qtd. in Goodwin and Deady 128). I believe that this definition is helpful in viewing empathy as an applied skill that can be learned by students in their classrooms.
I agree with Jaspers’ definition of empathy as trying to situate oneself in another’s situation while remaining aware that what one is feeling is “mediated by one’s own self” (qtd. in Gatta 5). Jaspers explains that a psychiatrist can perform empathy by immersing his or herself in the behavior of one’s patients, by studying their written self-descriptions and by questioning them as they provide accounts of their experiences (Gatta 6). I believe that students watching Holocaust survivor testimony whether in person or recorded and reading memoirs or diaries are also facilitating empathy. Gatta’s recommendation that psychiatrists should mediate their own insights with elements retrieved from other sources can also be applied to the concept of students supplementing the personal narratives of Holocaust survivors with textbooks, class lessons and other information regarding the Holocaust. Interestingly, Arendt’s statement that she forms an opinion by considering an issue from different viewpoints and by making present the standpoints of those who are absent appears to demonstrate how empathizing with Holocaust survivors can contribute to a student’s understanding of the Holocaust (qtd. in Gatta 9).

I disagree with Arendt’s suggestion that empathy discourages objectivity and instead suggest that the ability to understand or vicariously experience the feelings and thoughts of others provides one with the context needed to explain why a person may be acting in a certain way which ultimately leads to objectivity. For example, if someone is being rude or seemingly unreasonable, a student who has practiced their ability to empathize would be able to understand the possible motivations or factors involved. Therefore they may have a greater ability to understand the behaviours of others in a way that allows them to remain objective as opposed to getting emotionally involved or offended. Although I recognize that understanding these motivations may lead to
emotional involvement in various forms such as sympathy, I believe that empathy is an important tool that can be used to remain objective when interacting with others. The work of Stanislavski perpetuates the notion that empathy can be used in an objective manner by stating that to facilitate empathy towards another, one must consciously use an unprejudiced approach that is receptive and treats the other with positive regard (Goodwin and Deady 128).

Gordon argues that to understand historical events, students must be able to place themselves into the time periods and understand how people living in a different time or different culture would feel or act (31). Gordon believes that learning about the Holocaust helps students connect with Holocaust survivors and attempt to understand the suffering they went through (31). As explained by Hoffman, empathy is what triggers one’s response to help others, making this skill vital to future generations and a peaceful society (Hoffman 32).

This chapter continues with a discussion of empathy as an educational tool and a discussion of two major studies about empathy as it relates to Holocaust education. The chapter concludes by suggesting that there is a relationship between the development or activation of empathy and personal narratives of the Holocaust, leading us to question how we can continue to encourage empathy when survivors are no longer here to share their testimony in person.
4.1: Empathy as an Educational Tool

Townsend describes the new direction for education which has emerged in the recent years as one that emphasizes “non-cognitive skills” (1). Townsend explains that these skills are the ability to empathize with others and insists that this ability can make young people more productive, better achievers and future leaders (2). The failure of empathy can lead to apathy and complicity as well as violence (Gordon 31). In today’s classrooms, students are confronted with bullying and intolerance in a variety of new and old forms. Students will be faced with bullies throughout their school years from verbal abuse on the playground to cyber-bullying on social media websites. Gordon believes that a strong characteristic of the bully is a lack of empathy for onlookers (31). She declares that the ability for students to feel or act on empathy is outweighed by fear of the bully (31). Therefore to prevent bullying and to encourage tolerance and acceptance in the classroom, Gordon purports that we need to promote the development of empathy (31). But what exactly is “empathy” and how do we encourage its development in students?

Hoffman argues that some psychologists define the term empathy as the cognitive awareness of another person’s internal states and the vicarious affective response to another person or “feeling what the other feels” (29). According to Hoffman, the key requirement of an empathetic response is the “involvement of psychological processes that make a person have feelings that are more congruent with another’s situation than with his own situation” (30). Basically, this definition describes that feeling of anger one may experience when you watch someone insult an innocent bystander or the sadness you feel when you watch a couple struggle to pay their rent in a dramatic film. The term
“empathy” has a wide range of interpretations, which can cause confusion over the idea of teaching it to students. For example, Ashby and Lee argue that empathy cannot be confused with “sympathy” (“Empathy” 25). They believe that empathy cannot be considered as dependent on sharing feelings because it is impossible to share the exact feelings of another (25). Empathy as historical understanding demands hard thinking based on evidence and requires students to know some history and to use that knowledge to explain actions (25). There is a distinction between empathy as a natural emotional response and empathy used as an applied skill to remain objective or to increase one’s understanding of a person or experience. Empathy as a skill is achievable after one has done the hard thinking and then can engage in the understanding of others even when their ideas or beliefs might be different from one’s own (25). Teaching historical understanding is in part an exercise in giving students a different intellectual apparatus, different assumptions and strategies that they gain from applying empathy to a situation (25). Ashby and Lee argue that the development of historical empathy is what gives students more powerful ideas than what they started with (25).

As stated by VanSledright, historical empathy helps us appreciate the significant differences between the present world and the world being described while simultaneously bringing that world, theoretically at least, much closer to us (57). Historians must bring empathy to their inquiry to analyze the actions, events, and words of key figures in history (Yeager and Foster 13). Yeager and Foster want to avoid a definition of historical empathy that is based on exercises in imagination (“imagine you are also in the concentration camp”), over-identification (“try to identify with Hitler”) or sympathy (“sympathize with the victims in the camp”) (13). Instead, Yeager and Foster
consider the development of historical empathy in students to be an active process that is rooted in historical method and involves the analysis of human action, the understanding of historical context, the analysis of different interpretations and pieces of evidence and the construction of a narrative framework used to reach historical conclusions (Yeager and Foster 14). Further, Yeager and Foster contend that, “if the task of the historian or history student is to make sense of a past of which only a partial knowledge exists, then the use of empathy may be crucial to the process of understanding” (14). In this way, we can infer that for a historical subject as horrific and inconceivable as the Holocaust, empathy may play an important role in helping students understand the events and what caused them which then helps them discover how to stop events like these from happening again. Historical empathy is crucial to the process of inferential thinking that allows the student to make sense of past actions (14).

Portal states that students can achieve empathy through a balance of “methodical investigation” and “imaginative speculation” in historical inquiry (34). Ashby and Lee believe that students who can achieve empathy may be more likely to cope with the present world and have a better understanding of how their own actions affect others (Ashby and Lee, “Children’s Concepts” 64). Therefore learning about the Holocaust and learning to use empathy while learning about it may affect the way that students see the world today, enabling them to make wise decisions for the future. Yeager and Foster believe that historical empathy should not be abandoned because of how difficult it can be to pin down a precise meaning of the concept or because some of its applications may be viewed as “capricious” (18). In fact, the studies that deal with the role of historical empathy (and empathy in a broader sense) in Holocaust education address this ability to
understand the thoughts and emotions of others as a legitimate and serious educational tool.
4.2: Studies in Empathy, Personal Narrative and Learning about the Holocaust

McDougall and Litvack-Miller (1992) examined the attributions of blame to the Jews or the Nazis for the Holocaust in relation to high or low empathy, gender and different methods of presenting information about the Holocaust (85). The study consisted of 72 adolescents from Calgary, Alberta, between the ages 16 and 18 (85). The students responded to the Interpersonal Reactivity Index to determine their level of empathy and then completed an attribution of blame questionnaire. Before some students received the questionnaire, they learned about the Holocaust from either a presentation from the Canadian education organization Second Generation or a video recording of a Holocaust survivor’s personal narrative (85). The results of the study demonstrate that highly empathetic adolescents blamed the Nazis more for the events of the Holocaust than those who scored low in empathetic understanding. Hormuth and Stephan (1981) argued that when identification occurs within a power group, they attribute less blame to the power group (in this case the Nazis) (qtd. in McDougall and Litvack-Miller 85).

McDougall and Litvack-Miller’s study also points out Heider’s (1958) balance theory, which explains that to simultaneously blame and identify with the Nazis would result in cognitive conflict and concludes that those who are given descriptions of the Holocaust blamed the Nazis less.

Students in the first group of McDougall and Litvack-Miller’s study were given the Second Generation presentation, which consisted of a first-person account by a survivor of the concentration camps (McDougall and Litvack-Miller 85). The survivor spoke for 35 minutes and described his pre-war life, the fate of his family, liberation and his life after liberation. A daughter of a survivor spoke for ten minutes about the goals of
the Second Generation organization and emphasized the relevance of the Holocaust to the future. Students in the second group were given a videotaped film consisting of a 60 minute account of a conference on the Holocaust held at Kent State University in 1982. The videotaped film is called *From Dust and Ashes* and includes first-person accounts by survivors of the concentration camps and documentary film clips of the treatment of Jews and their reactions before, during and after liberation. The control group consisted of a third group of students who did not experience the presentation or view the film.

In order to assess the participants’ level of empathy, the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (Davis 1980) was used in the form of a questionnaire. The students marked each statement according to one of five degrees of similarity to themselves (McDougall and Litvack-Miller 85). The attribution questionnaire used in the study was designed by Hormuth and Stephan (1981) and consisted of eight commonly used explanations for the Holocaust that attributed blame to either the Jewish people or to the Nazis. Respondents indicated the importance of each reason as an explanation of the Holocaust on a scale of nine points with extreme positions labeled as “not at all important” or “very important” (McDougall and Litvack-Miller 85).

McDougall and Litvack-Miller compared the pretest and post-test attribution scores and discovered that the individuals whose tests showed them as generally highly empathetic blame the Nazis more than those who are low in trait empathy (87). McDougall and Litvack-Miller argued that this finding indirectly supports the conclusions that empathetic persons are less likely to blame the victims (87). In summary, this conclusion supports Heider’s balance theory because to blame the Jews and to empathize with them would be in conflict (87). The study’s conclusion also
supports the finding of Aderman, Brehm and Katz (1974) who found that derogation of the victim does not occur under conditions of empathetic arousal (qtd. in McDougall and Litvack-Miller 87). They discovered that perspective-taking instructions designed to evoke empathy eliminated the derogation of an innocent victim, meaning that when participants were encouraged to use their ability to empathize with a victim they were less likely to view or judge them negatively (qtd. in Batson, Ahmad and Stocks 365). Further, McDougall and Litvack-Miller argue that this inference is congruent with the more general conclusion that empathy is influential in developing pro-social behaviour (McDougall and Litvack-Miller 88).

The results of the study also demonstrate that the first-person survivor account of experiences during the Holocaust was enough to change how students attribute blame, by decreasing the amount of blame they place on the Jews and increasing their empathetic reactions (88). Interestingly, this effect was different depending on gender. According to the results of this study, boys who viewed the Second Generation presentation blamed the Jews less than the girls as measured by mean blame attribution scores (88). However, all groups blamed the Nazis more than the Jews for the Holocaust and blame apportioned to the Nazis greatly exceeded that attributed to the Jews (88). Unlike the girls who attended the Second Generation presentation which included in person testimony from Holocaust survivors, the girls in the video tape presentation group blamed the Jews less than the boys (88). McDougall and Litvack-Miller suggest that greater identification with the victims may have occurred for the girls because the videos included film clips of innocent women and girls taken to concentration camps (88). Unlike the presentation made by the male Holocaust survivor, the victims in the film were women and McDougall and
Litvack-Miller argue that the traditional notions of female passivity may have made them appear even more helpless than the male victims (88). However, the boys in the group would have also been familiar with these traditional views of women.

I question the idea that a student placing blame on the Nazis or Jews is indicative of his or her level of empathy or identification with each group. Perhaps the placement of blame is also related to the facts presented in the films regarding the events of the Holocaust or the portrayal of Jews and Nazis in the film or the survivor’s testimony. The study does not leave room for the suggestion that it would be possible for students to both attribute blame and empathize with a group. Further, McDougall and Litvack-Miller do not discuss the information that was covered in the film or the presentation and I suggest that the attribution of blame placed on the Jews or Nazis is not synonymous with participants’ feelings of empathy towards each group as it is possible to feel sorry for someone’s hardship but to also believe that it was their own doing.

McDougall and Litvack-Miller contend that the Second Generation program should include a female survivor and continue to have video tapes with documentary film coverage of female victims and that the program for boys should include a male survivor’s testimony (88). Nonetheless, what should be used when survivors are no longer able to present? According to the results of this study, there is a difference in blame attribution depending on the medium of expression and this difference is also dependent on gender. Therefore I purport that testimonies and information from both female and male victims of the Holocaust should be included in the classroom. McDougall and Litvack-Miller’s study was published in 1992, a time when the survivor population was aging but there was not the crisis point which exists today. The
recommendation that both female and male survivors should visit classrooms and present is no longer as relevant and we need to determine how students can still identify and empathize with the narratives of those affected by the Holocaust when we can no longer rely on their physical presence in the classroom.

Kate Kessler, a teacher from Chambersburg High School in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, learned that asking her students to write their own narratives in diaries helped them gain the ability to empathize with the Holocaust narratives of others. Kessler wrote about the frustration she felt when she first began teaching the Holocaust in her article “Teaching Holocaust Literature”. She starts by describing how frustrated she felt by how insensitive her students could still be after they had read Elie Wiesel’s *Night* or Anne Frank’s diary (Kessler 29). Kessler recounts how students drew swastikas on their notebooks and saluted each other in the hallways (29). After teaching the Holocaust to students for a few years, Kessler argues that students need to experience some commonality before they can feel empathy (29). Kessler discovered that the best approach for her was to accept her students’ positions without condemning them or having certain expectations (29). Kessler asked students to write narratives in their journals about a time when they had been the target of discrimination and how it made them feel (29). This exercise could start the process of identifying with Holocaust victims because students could then realize that they have something in common with the victims—a shared experience of being discriminated against. All students can relate to being discriminated against whether they have been teased or judged based on their ethnicity, hair colour, sexual orientation or even told they cannot engage in certain activities like driving or drinking alcohol due to their age as young adults or children.
Kessler learned about the power of narratives when her students read a play version of Anne Frank’s *Diary of a Young Girl*. Kessler believes that the students were more likely to identify with what they read because they were presented in the form of a personal narrative to be acted out (30). Kessler was faced with opposition to her techniques by other teachers who argued that she should not take an approach that encourages emotional involvement and that distance and objectivity should be maintained in the classroom when teaching the Holocaust (30). However, Kessler found that it was the personal connections made when identifying with narratives that evoked empathy from the students which made learning about the Holocaust meaningful to her class (Kessler 30).

The effects of narrative on the development of empathy when learning about the Holocaust are also discussed by Shortt and Pennebaker in a 1992 study that measured skin conductance levels (SCL) and heart rate (HR) to determine how stressful listening to a Holocaust survivor’s story can be (164). The study consisted of 66 undergraduate students enrolled in introductory psychology classes (42 females, 24 males) who watched a 1-2 hour videotaped interview of 1 of 33 Holocaust survivors disclosing their experiences. The students were offered extra-credit as incentive to participate and the ages ranged from 17 to 30. Physiological measurements were taken simultaneously of Holocaust survivors as well as the subject listeners in one minute long blocks and correlated with each other (Shortt and Pennebaker 164). Although the study focuses on the effects on both Holocaust survivor and listener, for my purposes I will focus on discussing how hearing the stories of Holocaust survivors affects the listener in this study as it will provide insight into the relationship between Holocaust narratives and the
development or encouragement of empathy which makes speaking to a survivor face-to-face such an effective learning tool for students.

Shortt and Pennebaker argue that the act of sharing traumatic experiences with another has important social effects on the listener and the discloser as well as the relationship between them (165). In their study, videotaped interviews of Holocaust survivors were shown to undergraduate students in an attempt to assess the physiological impact of traumatic information disclosed to the listener. The SCL and HR of the survivor were measured during the interview and the SCL and HR of the listener was monitored while they viewed the videotaped interview of the survivor. Shortt and Pennebaker made two hypotheses for their study. They called the first hypothesis a “confronted-by-trauma” hypothesis, which predicts that hearing a discloser’s problem is physically stressful to the listener and may cause anxiety (165). The second hypothesis was deemed the “empathy” hypothesis. This hypothesis suggests that listeners with strong empathic tendencies will show SCL responses similar to the Holocaust survivor (discloser) during moments of intimate disclosure because they are experiencing similar emotions (170). The study defines empathy as a response that is congruent with the emotions of the other person as well as “a cognitive perception and understanding of the other person’s welfare and situation” (Shortt and Pennebaker 170).

The videotapes used in the study consisted of the testimony of 33 Holocaust survivors, which were collected as part of a different experiment conducted in 1989 (Shortt and Pennebaker 170). One group of listeners was given ‘empathy instructions’ which told them to try to empathize with the person on the television, to let go of their emotions and to put themselves in the other person’s place. The other group of listeners
received general instructions that told them to watch the interview and to listen carefully to the person on the television. After the videotape ended, the listeners answered a post-experimental questionnaire, which assessed the degree to which the subjects emphasized with the discloser (Shortt and Pennebaker 171). The level of empathy was measured using the Holocaust Empathy Scale (HES) that was designed for this study and asked 19 questions regarding the degree to which the listeners experienced the same emotions as the survivor. For example, one question asked to what degree the listener felt the same kind of emotions as the person in the interview (Shortt and Pennebaker 171).

The study found that listeners with a similar SCL pattern as the disclosers were more likely to have high scores on the Epstein Feelings Inventory and report feeling similar emotions as the discloser on the HES (174). As the survivors experienced drops in SCL when they were confronting their trauma and disclosing personal feelings, the listeners experienced surges in SCL (175). The listeners whose SCL patterns corresponded to the survivors were more likely to score high on the Epstein Feelings Inventory, which measures emotional empathy (175). The study found that only those listeners with high dispositional empathetic tendencies were able to empathize with the disclosers despite the instructions to do so (175). However, of those with high dispositional empathetic tendencies, students empathized more with the Holocaust survivor after receiving the “empathy instructions” (175). This result suggests that

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I argue that these questions could be problematic as they place the student in an uncomfortable situation. If a student answered no to feeling the same kind of emotions as the Holocaust survivor, he or she might be concerned that the response could come across as cold or careless. If a student answers yes, it might sound like he or she is trying to appropriate the suffering of another. Some students may feel that there is no way they could experience the same kind of emotion as a survivor because they have not experienced something as horrific—a thought which demonstrates a high level of empathy and could be missed by the study.
empathy can be applied as a skill rather than an involuntary reaction to hearing the personal narrative of the Holocaust survivors.

Shortt and Pennebaker argue that the use of videotapes lessened their desired effects and describe recorded videotapes as a “notoriously cold medium” (175). The screen of the television is described as a buffer that shields and prevents listeners from getting emotionally involved in the survivor’s traumas (175). Shortt and Pennebaker’s study finds that the level of tension and anxiety felt by the survivors prior to their disclosures decreased, the inverse happened to the listener (176). In fact, the listener experiences a high level of tension after the disclosure, similar to the tension felt by the survivor before the disclosure (176). Shortt and Pennebaker describe viewing a survivor’s testimony similar to watching a horror film, where the viewer experiences high levels of negative anxiety due to seeing another person’s trauma (176). What increases these negative effects of listening to testimonial trauma is that the listener is unable to influence the content of the disclosure, cannot predict the nature of the disclosure and cannot interact and offer support to the discloser (176).

Perhaps this inability to communicate with a video recorded discloser explains the difference between meeting a Holocaust survivor and watching a recording of one. When meeting a survivor and hearing his or her story, the listener can express feelings of empathy to the survivor at the end of the testimony by expressing gratitude and by discussing his or her emotional response to the survivor’s personal narrative. While watching a video, the viewer may feel a sense of helplessness; depending on the content of the video, he or she cannot necessarily see whether or not the survivor has had positive experiences after the Holocaust. In a film that only depicts the events of the Holocaust,
there may appear to be no life after the Holocaust because the narrative stops when the film ends. Only a glimpse of the Holocaust survivor’s life is captured in a film, which does not provide a complete picture of a survivor as a fellow human being to empathize with. The recorded videos may not include smiles or the sound of happy chitchat that sometimes occurs before or after the survivor’s live presentation. Perhaps the inability to help the survivor who appears to be trapped within the screen affects the development of empathy within the film’s viewers.

More research would need to be conducted in order to determine whether the development of empathy is affected by the ability to use it towards the person with whom one empathizes. If a listener knows that he or she cannot offer support or comfort because he or she is only viewing a film, will it lessen his or her ability to empathize with what is seen on the screen? Would he or she feel that his or her desire to reach out and comfort the survivor would be futile? These specific questions extend outside of my area of expertise or scope for this thesis but would contribute to an understanding of why meeting a Holocaust survivor in person is such a powerful tool for Holocaust education. Ultimately, Shortt and Pennebaker’s study provides insight into the role empathy plays when Holocaust survivors share their narratives with student listeners. The increase in anxiety suggests that empathy is aroused through the discussion of these personal narratives.

Laub and Auerhahn’s argument contradicts these conclusions with their statement that the experience of listening to a survivor, in person or in a recording, does not form an “empathetic memory” (388). They assert that the details and facts are fragmented by the memory or emotions of the Holocaust survivor (388). Laub and Auerhahn believe that for
the listener, the survivor/narrator does not seem to be part of the narrative and that this severed rendition of the stories told does not evoke empathy in listeners and further traumatizes survivors (388). Shortt and Pennebaker’s study also demonstrates a statistical correlation between empathetic listeners and an increase in anxiety for these listeners when they hear the stories of Holocaust survivors. Therefore I argue that these narratives, although some may be fragmented, still produce an effect on the listener that allows others to empathize with them as fellow human beings.

If hearing a Holocaust survivor’s story triggers high levels of anxiety in empathetic individuals, perhaps it can also be suggested that the empathetic response is what causes these feelings of stress because the empathy a listener feels towards a discloser causes them anxiety. Shortt and Pennebaker’s study as well as McDougall and Litvack-Miller’s study suggest that there is a relationship between empathy and listening to survivor narratives about the Holocaust. As described by Shortt and Pennebaker, when someone feels a sense of empathy, he or she experiences distress and this distress inspires people to help one another. In this way, there is a relationship between empathy and moral courage. Hoffman agrees that empathy triggers a response in others to help those in need by explaining that there is an association between empathetic arousal and “helping behaviour” (32). Students cannot attempt to relieve the pain of a survivor on a videotape or recording but they can reach out and thank the survivor in front of them. Although my results are limited to a small number of student respondents, their overwhelming preference towards meeting a Holocaust survivor as the most effective method of Holocaust education supports how important it is to create a set of recommendations or
guidelines to be used by future educators as well as for researchers in an attempt to make Holocaust education as effective as it can be for today’s generation of students.
4.3: Recommendations for Middle School Teachers

So how can we remember the stories of Holocaust survivors and the tragic events of the Holocaust once they are gone? Keeping the limitations of my study in mind, the results of the surveys combined with the focus group and interview with Larissa Weber suggest that the most effective methods of Holocaust education are linked by a common theme – the use of personal narrative. For example, the students who participated in my surveys chose meeting a survivor in person, feature films and diaries as the “most effective” methods of Holocaust education. Each of these methods uses personal narrative to encourage identification, which allows students to practice their ability to empathize with others. I argue that it is the personal and story-like narrative that makes these methods useful in helping students empathize with those who were affected by the Holocaust and thus aids them in gaining a better understanding of the events of the Holocaust. As Arendt explained, students are also able to form an opinion by thinking about an issue from various viewpoints and by bringing the absent viewpoints into the present (Gatta 6).

When survivors are no longer here to share their stories, we could present future students with versions of their stories that emphasize the personal narrative quality of the survivor’s testimony. Although little details about daily life may seem mundane or irrelevant when considering the broader historical context of the Holocaust, they can actually be the most helpful at allowing students to identify with the Holocaust survivor’s story. These little details are what make the stories of Holocaust survivors come alive for students. When asked what the most interesting or most enjoyable part of the Holocaust symposium was, most students responded with specific details about Lillian Boraks-
Nemetz’ story that involved her everyday life. When a student identifies with these
details, each personal bit of information gives students something to hold onto and helps
guide them as they continue to approach the subject. The methods chosen by the students
as the most effective (such as meeting a survivor, diary, etc.) also hold a certain narrative-
like quality. Diaries, feature films and presentations by Holocaust survivors often employ
story lines that encourage their audiences to relate to them, triggering an empathetic
response in individuals. Further, personal narratives provide students with a platform
where they can practice their ability to empathize as a skill. For example, students in
today’s society cannot relate to the horror of the death camps or mass murders but they
can relate to what it feels like to miss their brother or sister or how much it can hurt when
someone makes fun of you for being “different”. Written responses such as “when she
talked about her family I could understand better what she felt and what happened”
suggest that middle-school-aged students are capable of using empathy as a tool to better
engage with what they are learning in class.

In terms of which methods teachers should employ in their classrooms to teach
their students about the Holocaust, my study suggests that meeting a Holocaust survivor,
reading a diary and watching a feature film are amongst the most popular responses.
Keeping the previously stated limitations of my research in mind, my results suggest that
incorporating these particular methods into the classroom may improve the effectiveness
of Holocaust education. However, it should be noted that what students find to be the
most effective method is not necessarily representative of which methods are actually the
most effective at teaching them about the Holocaust. The term “effective” is vague and
can have many meanings. Would a lesson be effective if a student cried and was
emotionally influenced by it? Or would it be effective if a student was able to recite
detailed facts about the Holocaust afterwards? For the purpose of my study, I defined
“effective” to refer to which methods students generally think are the best, that teach
them the most, be it in a way that emotionally affects them or teaches them the strict
facts. The term was not defined in the survey, focus group, or interview and was therefore
open to individual interpretation.

The students who responded to my surveys chose feature film as one of the top
three “most effective” methods suggesting that teachers should look into incorporating
the use of such films in their classes. Shapiro and Rucker argue that in an attempt to
create an emotional response, movies that recount historical events, combine characters,
create tensions and invent dramatic episodes that never actually occurred (447). The idea
of passivity is also mentioned by Shapiro and Rucker when they explain that during the
space of a movie, the learner is not expected to do anything (447). Even though the
student could be trained to make critical decisions, they cannot take charge during a film
and are forced to remain in their role as a viewer. Watching a movie “forces the primacy
of emotional response,” allowing the viewer to indulge in their emotions because they are
not expected to perform or respond during the film (447).

Therefore, feature films can be used to improve a student’s ability to empathize
by allowing them to take a passive position to engage with their emotions fully. Perhaps
it is the passive characteristic of reading the story of a Holocaust survivor in a diary or
watching a Holocaust survivor present that is the key to explaining why these methods
were chosen to be as the most effective by the students. Unlike group discussions or
creative projects where students are expected to actively engage and produce, students
can listen to a Holocaust survivor’s personal narrative and allow themselves to engage in the act of empathy.

I agree with Larissa Weber’s suggestion that the individuality of students should be respected and therefore a multitude of learning styles should be used within the classroom. However, my results suggest that methods that place the student into a passive position and incorporate personal narrative were ranked higher in effectiveness by the student respondents. Therefore I contend that these methods should be used but only in combination with other methods that promote active learning on behalf of the student because while passive activities like watching a film or reading a diary may encourage the development of empathy, there is also much to be gained by the sharing of information with others in class discussion or by employing these skills in the form of a project or assignment. Here, I turn to the recommendation of performative drama by the graduate students in the focus group.

Although the graduate students did not have tangible evidence of the benefits of this method of education, they asserted that it allows students to apply their ability to empathize with others in a way that encourages actively engage in the act of empathizing by attempting to vicariously experience the thoughts or experiences of another and communicate these experiences or thoughts with others through performance. Matharu, Howell and Fitzgerald investigate the practical uses of drama to cultivate empathy and state that participating in a learning process in an interactive group setting contributes to the development of empathy (443). Learning actively in this way not only engages the attention of the students but may stimulate empathy cultivation on a biological level (443). By extension, if performative drama leads to emotional resonance in a student, this
may promote understanding of “the other” or those with different physical, social and cultural backgrounds from the student (443). Matharu, Howell and Fitzgerald posit that “mirror” neurons are active in a subject’s brain when he or she experiences a primary emotion or when he or she observes it in others (443). Researchers have suggested that this reaction may be the neurological basis for cross-cultural communication and emotional maturity, both important qualities for students to develop throughout their years in school (443). Students who learn how to improve their ability to use empathy as a skill to increase their understanding of history may be able to apply this skill to other areas of study such as the history of residential schools in Canada or the Japanese internment camps in Canada. This ability can also be extended to the personal relationships between students and how they behave as responsible citizens in Canadian society.
4.4: Recommendations for Future Research

As mentioned throughout this thesis, my study is intended to provide future researchers with a guideline or launching pad that they can use to aid them in the creation of their own studies. Conducting a study with middle school students currently enrolled in public school in a way that involves their participation during class is not an easy task and it is my hope that my thesis will provide researchers with an example of the steps needed to achieve Human Research Ethics approval for their studies as well as interesting and informative results. As discussed previously, a large amount of preparation must be completed before applying to Human Research Ethics. The process and requirements of different ethics boards vary depending on the institution or organization. My research involved the Human Research Ethics Board at the University of Victoria; therefore the process and requirements mentioned in this thesis are applicable to this specific board. The application required me to provide an invitation to participate, a consent form and a list of the interview, focus group or survey questions. Additionally, in order to include middle school students, the application required that the consent forms include a signature from a parent or guardian as well as the approval from the school district. It is crucial to remember that each school district has different requirements and processes regarding the research they allow their students or faculty to participate in. Some school districts specifically require principal approval forms, which also require the approval of teachers. Other school districts only require an explanation of one’s study.

The Human Research Ethics Board at the University of Victoria suggests that the ethics review process can take 4-6 weeks for first-time applications. This amount of time can increase depending on how busy the time of year is. I recommend submitting an
application as early as possible prior to the date you want to complete your surveys, interview, focus group, etc. As research questions develop and emerge, it is likely that one might want to submit a modification for approval and thus appropriate time should be left for these revisions. I suggest providing at least 8 months for the process of Human Research Ethics approval from start to finish. Timing is also paramount for a successful study as many school districts will have other studies they are participating in at the time so they may not be able to commit to another research study. Further, the attitudes of the students and teachers towards participating in a study of this nature depend on how stressful or busy the semester is at that time. I recommend establishing contact with the principals and teachers early so that teachers can prepare to include the survey, focus group or interview into their scheduled class time. Another option would be to schedule your study to take place outside of class hours however this may pose an issue with incentive for students to participate.

As for my study, if I were to complete my Human Research Ethics application again I would attempt to gain permission to enter the classrooms in person so that I could use a system of code names or pseudonyms in order to track changes between the pre-symposium and post-symposium survey responses. The ability to track changes would aid in making the data more useful for inferential statistics and would thus provide more concrete results. Further, after realizing the effectiveness of the focus group with graduate students in receiving detailed and thought-provoking answers, I would consider conducting multiple focus groups with middle school students. For further research, I would also attempt to go back to my original idea of gathering data from students at the middle school, high school, undergraduate and graduate levels. Since the middle school
students in my study only heard the narrative of a single Holocaust survivor, it would be interesting to introduce a group of students who watch the same testimony except in the form of a video recording as well as a control group in a future study. For example, one group of students could listen to a Holocaust survivor present in person (which would be recorded at the time), a different group of students could watch this video recording while another group would be exposed to neither method. Further, another group could be added that reads the transcript of the presentation. Although the groups would consist of different participants, it would be interesting to note the differences in response to each method of education. I also recommend including an analysis of gender in future research about Holocaust education. The earlier note that only female teachers in Short and Reed’s study relied on the use of personal narratives in the form of memoirs and diaries suggests that perhaps gender plays a role in what some consider to be the most effective methods of Holocaust education.

The role of empathy and personal narrative emerged throughout my research during my study and I contend that the relationship between Holocaust education and empathy would be a valuable topic to explore. In an attempt to gain more insight into these potential benefits or disadvantages, a measurement of the ability to empathize must be considered. Some of the studies I referred to in this thesis may be useful when considering how to measure a student’s level of empathy such as Shortt and Pennebaker’s Holocaust Empathy Scale (HES) or the Epstein Feelings Inventory.

Some interesting issues arise when dealing with empathy and education. Hannah Arendt asserts that empathy impedes our ability to think critically about the issues at hand while others like Jaspers or Patterson contend that empathy can be used as an applied
skill to remain objective when interacting with others. The use of empathy as a skill to understand tragic historical events is not without its controversies. For example, are students expected to empathize with perpetrators as well as victims? Would empathizing with perpetrators result in a lessening of the blame attributed to their actions? How might this affect how we view history? Questions regarding this moral grey zone are far outside of the scope of my study. More research regarding the educational benefits and disadvantages of empathy would be useful to create more specific recommendations to be used by future educators in their classrooms. Some potential research questions to consider include: what is the best way to incorporate personal narratives and the use of empathy as an applied skill into the provincial curriculum, what factors play a role in why the students in my study found video-recordings of Holocaust survivor to be less effective than meeting a Holocaust survivor in person and how can we mitigate the difference between these two methods to share the personal narratives of Holocaust survivors to future generations of students?
4.5: Conclusion: The Power of Empathy and Personal Narrative

Although the rise of Holocaust education in Canada was slow to start after the Second World War, the discussion of how to teach the Holocaust to this generation of students is one of great controversy and debate as demonstrated through my research. Amongst the many different studies regarding the best approaches or most effective methods to teach the Holocaust, my study is unique as it uses the direct responses of current middle schools students. Through the results of my study, I have discovered that there is a relationship between personal narrative and empathy as an applied skill in Holocaust education.

When I began my study, I wanted to know if middle school students were interested in learning about the Holocaust. According to the results of my pre-symposium and post-symposium surveys, it appears that these students were interested in learning about the Holocaust. These responses only reflect the opinions of a small amount of students and further research would need to be done to fully answer this research question. My second research question wanted to know which methods of Holocaust education are the most effective for middle schools students. According to the middle school students who participated in my study, meeting a Holocaust survivor was the most effective, while reading a diary, watching a feature film and visiting a (former) concentration camp were the other most popular answers. Weber did not select a certain method to be the “most effective” but instead emphasized the importance of meeting the individual needs of all students and that in her opinion, students tended to identify the most with materials they would personally identify with. The focus group discussion suggested methods that would help students identify with Holocaust survivors such as
performative drama or self-directed studies. My final research question asked what would be an effective way to share the personal narratives of Holocaust survivors with future generations of students. My study suggests that using techniques involving identification and the use of empathy as an applied skill should be taken into consideration as a possible way to effectively communicate the narratives of Holocaust survivors to middle school students.

Learning about the Holocaust provides teachers with a way to encourage the development of empathy in young students. This ability to identify and empathize with others is the key to understanding and embracing cultures, ideas, appearances, and beliefs other than our own. While empathy can be considered to be an emotional reaction, I contend that it can also be used as an applied skill to increase a student’s understanding of the subject of Holocaust education. I also argue that this ability to use empathy as a tool can be developed through the study of Holocaust education. Gordon states that the difference between those who fight for change and those who stand by and watch others be taken advantage of lies in our ability to empathize and identify with the feelings and perspectives of others (Gordon 31).

On a less global or historical scale, teaching empathy through learning about the Holocaust may also have an effect on bullying in today’s classrooms. When students learn to empathize with a Holocaust survivor they are simultaneously improving their ability to empathize with their peers. Gordon reminds us that research on bullying confirms that a strong characteristic of the bully is a lack of empathy (Gordon 31). The lessons of the Holocaust may improve the ability of students to understand one another and to practice tolerance towards others inside and outside of the classroom.
Hirsch and Kacandes maintain that as a pedagogical strategy, identification with victims is both powerful and dangerous as it risks being appropriative and projective (15). Dominick LaCapra warns us that it is difficult to see how one may be empathetic without “intrusively arrogating to oneself the victim’s experience or undergoing surrogate victimage” (qtd. in Hirsch and Kacandes 15). Hirsch and Kacandes suggest that teachers might want to question the ethics of identification with their classes to prevent over-identification or appropriation of survivor experiences by their students. Despite these potential issues, Hirsch and Kacandes insist that the use of personal narratives of the Holocaust is still a powerful tool for developing the ability of students to empathize with others (15). I agree with Hirsch and Kacandes that teachers should first engage their classes in a discussion surrounding the issues of appropriation before incorporating personal testimony and identification into their lessons to promote the development of empathy when teaching the Holocaust.

As students are faced with examples of intolerance, racism, homophobia, stereotyping and bullying in their daily lives at school, learning about the Holocaust provides students with important universal lessons in understanding one another. The ability to empathize with others is an important tool that can help students learn to treat each other with respect and kindness. As we face this crisis point where Holocaust survivors will no longer be around to remind us of the mistakes of the past, let us use these personal narratives to encourage the development of empathy in the students of tomorrow. Although they may never be able to meet a survivor in person, we can only strive to continue to tell survivors’ stories in a way that encourages students to identify and empathize with them. Written in a city thousands of miles away, the wise words of a
passionate teacher remind us of the potential power of empathy, “if everyone could feel another’s gladness, if everyone could feel another’s sadness, love will never leave our world” (Swati Lal qtd. in Ray).
Works Cited


Dillman, Don A., M. E. Sinclair, and J. R. Clark. “Effects of Questionnaire Length, Respondent Friendly Design, and a Difficult Question on Response Rates for


Weber, Larissa. Email interview. 29 May 2013.


Appendix A: Invitation to Participate (Focus Group)

You are invited to participate in a study entitled “‘Hitler is a bully’: Middle School Students’ Perspectives on Holocaust Education in Greater Victoria, British Columbia” that is being conducted by Natasha Wood. I (Natasha Wood) am a graduate student in the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies at the University of Victoria. As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a degree in German (MA).

The purpose of this research project is to investigate Holocaust education in British Columbia’s middle schools. My aim is to discover the most effective methods of teaching about the Holocaust and learn how to incorporate the narratives of local concentration camp survivors into the classroom after they are gone.

Research of this type is important because we are at a “crisis point” where Holocaust survivors and their stories are quickly disappearing. These stories teach lessons of intolerance, discrimination and racism which are crucial to the education of today’s youth. Learning about these events directly applies to the lessons students learn about bullying in today’s schools therefore learning about the Holocaust is an effective way to teach students about the implications of homophobia, bullying and racism.

If you consent to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include filling out a short survey (10 minutes) regarding Holocaust education as well as conducting a 50 minute focus group at the library of the University of Victoria. Participants will not be identified by name in any materials. Written notes and audio recording will take place during the focus group. Since Dr. Thorson, my supervisor, is also your course instructor, it is important to note that course grades will not be affected if you elect not to participate.

If you would like to participate in this study or have further questions please contact me (Natasha Wood) by telephone 250-589-2315 or e-mail at natashaw@uvic.ca.

Thank you for your time and interest.

Sincerely,
Natasha Wood
Graduate student in the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies
University of Victoria
Appendix B: Invitation to Participate (Interview)

You are invited to participate in a study entitled “‘Hitler is a bully’: Middle School Students’ Perspectives on Holocaust Education in Greater Victoria, British Columbia” that is being conducted by Natasha Wood. I (Natasha Wood) am a graduate student in the department of Germanic and Slavic Studies at the University of Victoria. As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a degree in German (MA).

The purpose of this research project is to investigate Holocaust education in British Columbia’s middle schools. My aim is to discover the most effective methods of teaching about the Holocaust and learn how to incorporate the narratives of local concentration camp survivors into the classroom after they are gone.

Research of this type is important because we are at a “crisis point” where Holocaust survivors and their stories are quickly disappearing. These stories teach lessons of intolerance, discrimination and racism which are crucial to the education of today’s youth. Learning about these events directly applies to the lessons students learn about bullying in today’s schools therefore learning about the Holocaust is an effective way to teach students about the implications of homophobia, bullying and racism.

If you consent to voluntarily participate in this research, you will participate in a 30 minute online e-mail interview. You may choose to be identified by name or pseudonym.

If you would like to participate in this study or have further questions please contact me (Natasha Wood) by telephone 250-589-2315 or e-mail at natashaw@uvic.ca.

Thank you for your time and interest.

Sincerely,
Natasha Wood
Graduate student in the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies
University of Victoria
Appendix C: Invitation to Participate (Middle School Students)

You are invited to participate in a study entitled “‘Hitler is a bully’: Middle School Students’ Perspectives on Holocaust Education in Greater Victoria, British Columbia” that is being conducted by Natasha Wood. I (Natasha Wood) am a graduate student in the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies at the University of Victoria. As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a degree in German (MA).

The purpose of this research project is to investigate Holocaust education in British Columbia’s middle schools. My aim is to discover the most effective methods of teaching about the Holocaust and learn how to incorporate the narratives of local concentration camp survivors into the classroom after they are gone.

Research of this type is important because we are at a “crisis point” where Holocaust survivors and their stories are quickly disappearing. These stories teach lessons of intolerance, discrimination and racism which are crucial to the education of today’s youth. Learning about these events directly applies to the lessons students learn about bullying in today’s schools therefore learning about the Holocaust is an effective way to teach students about the implications of homophobia, bullying and racism.

If you consent to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include filling out a short survey (10 minutes) which will be distributed by your teacher once before and once after visiting the Victoria Holocaust Education Symposium organized by The Victoria Holocaust Remembrance and Education Society. Participants will not be identified by name in any materials and surveys will be collected anonymously.

If you have further questions please contact me (Natasha Wood) by telephone 250-589-2315 or e-mail at natashaw@uvic.ca

Thank you for your time and interest.

Sincerely,

Natasha Wood
Graduate student in the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies
University of Victoria
Appendix D: Participant Consent Form (Focus Group)

Project Title: “‘Hitler is a bully’: Middle School Students’ Perspectives on Holocaust Education in Greater Victoria, British Columbia”

You are invited to participate in a study entitled “‘Hitler is a bully’: Middle School Students’ Perspectives on Holocaust Education in Greater Victoria, British Columbia” that is being conducted by Natasha Wood.

Natasha Wood is a graduate student in the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies at the University of Victoria and you may contact her if you have further questions by telephone: 250-589-2315 or e-mail: natashaw@uvic.ca

As a graduate student, I (Natasha Wood) am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a degree in German MA. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Helga Thorson. You may contact my supervisor at 250-721-7320.

This research is being funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

Purpose and Objectives
The purpose of this research project is to investigate Holocaust education in British Columbia’s schools. My aim is to discover the most effective methods of teaching about the Holocaust and learn how to incorporate the narratives of local concentration camp survivors into the classroom after they are gone.

Importance of this Research
Research of this type is important because we are at a “crisis point” where Holocaust survivors and their stories are quickly disappearing. These stories teach lessons of intolerance, discrimination and racism which are crucial to the education of today’s youth. Learning about these events directly applies to the lessons students learn about bullying in today’s schools therefore learning about the Holocaust is an effective way to teach students about the implications of homophobia, bullying and racism.

Participant Selection
You are being asked to participate in this study because as graduate students in ENGL 503/GER 550 “Memory Matters”: Eyewitness (I-Witness) Accounts of the Holocaust and WWII you are participating in a class that discusses issues surrounding memorialisation of the Holocaust. Therefore conducting a focus group and survey with you would provide me with further insight into methods of Holocaust education.

What is involved
If you consent to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include filling out a short survey (10 minutes) regarding Holocaust education as well as conducting a 50 minute focus group at the library of the University of Victoria. Written notes and audio recording will take place during the focus group.
Risks
There is the possibility of emotional and psychological discomfort during the focus group due to the subject matter of the Holocaust. Should you experience any discomfort during the study you have the option to take a break or to stop participating in the focus group at any time.

Benefits
The potential benefits of your participation in this research include:

To the Participant: Providing participants with a platform where they can express their opinions regarding Holocaust education and aid in the improvement of this education in today’s classrooms. Participation in the focus groups will enrich the educational experiences of the university students involved as they will be discussing very similar topics in their classes about the Holocaust. Participation will encourage academic discussion between students.

To Society: The Holocaust teaches students about discrimination, intolerance, and racism. Learning about these events is crucial and directly applies to the lessons students learn about bullying in today’s high schools. Learning about the Holocaust in an effective way teaches students about the implications of homophobia, bullying and racism therefore my research will aim to make recommendations for the improvement of Holocaust education in today’s schools.

To the State of Knowledge: My research will be used to make recommendations for the improvement of Holocaust education therefore increasing the state of knowledge of students in British Columbia’s schools. Therefore the state of knowledge regarding topics such as racism and intolerance for the next generation of students will be increased.

Voluntary Participation
Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. You may decline to answer any question. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study after completing the survey, your survey data cannot be deleted because of the anonymous nature of the surveys. A summary of the focus group discussion will be written by me and will contain no identifying information of the participants.

Anonymity
In terms of protecting your anonymity the surveys will be conducted anonymously as well as comments made in the focus group. Further, pseudonyms will be used to refer to any participants in the study.

Confidentiality
Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected by the use of a locked filing cabinet to store the surveys and focus group notes.
Dissemination of Results
It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways in a published thesis and presentations at scholarly meetings.

Disposal of Data
Hard copies of data (surveys, focus group notes) will be shredded and electronic data (including the audio recording) will be erased after the completion of my thesis in August 2013.

Contacts
Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include:

Researcher: Natasha Wood (please see top of consent form)
Supervisor: Dr. Helga Thorson (please see top of consent form)

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-545 or ethics@uvic.ca). Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study, that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers, and that you consent to participate in this research project.

________________________                      ________________________________  ____________
Name of Participant                                Signature                           Date

A copy of the consent form will be left with you (the participant) and I (the researcher) will also keep a copy.
Appendix E: Sample Participant Consent Form (Interview)

Project Title: “Hitler is a bully”: Middle School Students’ Perspectives on Holocaust Education in Greater Victoria, British Columbia

You are invited to participate in a study entitled “Hitler is a bully”: Middle School Students’ Perspectives on Holocaust Education in Greater Victoria, British Columbia” that is being conducted by Natasha Wood.

Natasha Wood is a graduate student in the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies at the University of Victoria and you may contact her if you have further questions by telephone: 250-589-2315 or e-mail: natashaw@uvic.ca

As a graduate student, I (Natasha Wood) am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a degree in German MA. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Helga Thorson. You may contact my supervisor at 250-721-7320.

This research is being funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

Purpose and Objectives
The purpose of this research project is to investigate Holocaust education in British Columbia’s schools. My aim is to discover the most effective methods of teaching about the Holocaust and learn how to incorporate the narratives of local concentration camp survivors into the classroom after they are gone.

Importance of this Research
Research of this type is important because we are at a “crisis point” where Holocaust survivors and their stories are quickly disappearing. These stories teach lessons of intolerance, discrimination and racism which are crucial to the education of today’s youth. Learning about these events directly applies to the lessons students learn about bullying in today’s schools therefore learning about the Holocaust is an effective way to teach students about the implications of homophobia, bullying and racism.

Participant Selection
You are being asked to participate in this study due to your extensive knowledge regarding the Holocaust and Holocaust education.

What is involved
If you consent to voluntarily participate in this research, you will participate in a 30 minute online e-mail interview.

Risks
There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.
Benefits
The potential benefits of your participation in this research include:

To the Participant: Providing participants with a platform where they can express their opinions regarding Holocaust education and aid in the improvement of this education in today’s classrooms.

To Society: The Holocaust teaches students about discrimination, intolerance, and racism. Learning about these events is crucial and directly applies to the lessons students learn about bullying in today’s schools. Learning about the Holocaust in an effective way teaches students about the implications of homophobia, bullying and racism therefore my research will aim to make recommendations for the improvement of Holocaust education in today’s schools.

To State of Knowledge: My research will be used to make recommendations for the improvement of Holocaust education therefore increasing the state of knowledge of students in British Columbia’s schools. Therefore the state of knowledge regarding topics such as racism and intolerance for the next generation of students will be increased.

Voluntary Participation
Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. You may decline to answer any question. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study after completing the interview, your data will be disposed of prior to the date of January 1st 2013.

Anonymity
You have the choice to remain anonymous or to reveal your name. If you prefer to remain anonymous you will only be referred to by a pseudonym.

Confidentiality
Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected by a password-protected online file.

Dissemination of Results
It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways in a published thesis and presentations at scholarly meetings.

Disposal of Data
Hard copies of data will be shredded and electronic data will be erased after the completion of my thesis in August 2013.
Waiving Confidentiality
Please choose which option is preferred.

a) I consent to be identified by name / credited in the results of the study.

__________________________

Or

b) I consent to be referred to using a pseudonym and generic description (program officer at a major Holocaust museum).

__________________________

Contacts
Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include:
Researcher: Natasha Wood (please see top of consent form)
Supervisor: Dr. Helga Thorson (please see top of consent form)

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-545 or ethics@uvic.ca).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study, that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers, and that you consent to participate in this research project.

__________________________  _______________________  ________________
Name of Participant            Signature                Date

A copy of the consent form will be left with you (the participant) and I (the researcher) will also keep a copy.
Appendix F: Participant Consent Form (Middle School Students)

Project Title: “‘Hitler is a bully’: Middle School Students’ Perspectives on Holocaust Education in Greater Victoria, British Columbia”

You are invited to participate in a study entitled “‘Hitler is a bully’: Middle School Students’ Perspectives on Holocaust Education in Greater Victoria, British Columbia” that is being conducted by Natasha Wood. Natasha Wood is a graduate student in the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies at the University of Victoria and you may contact her if you have further questions by telephone: 250-589-2315 or e-mail: natashaw@uvic.ca

As a graduate student, I (Natasha Wood) am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a degree in German MA. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Helga Thorson. Dr. Helga Thorson is also the Vice-President of the Victoria Holocaust and Remembrance Society as well as the Registration Coordinator for the Victoria Holocaust Education Symposium. You may contact Dr. Thorson at 250-721-7320 or at helgat@uvic.ca

This research is being funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

Purpose and Objectives
The purpose of this research project is to investigate Holocaust education in British Columbia’s elementary schools, middle schools and high-schools. My aim is to discover the most effective methods of teaching about the Holocaust and learn how to incorporate the narratives of local concentration camp survivors into the classroom after they are gone.

Importance of this Research
Research of this type is important because we are at a “crisis point” where Holocaust survivors and their stories are quickly disappearing. These stories teach lessons of intolerance, discrimination and racism which are crucial to the education of today’s youth. Learning about these events directly applies to the lessons students learn about bullying in today’s schools therefore learning about the Holocaust in an effective way teaches students about the implications of homophobia, bullying and racism.

Participant Selection
You are being asked to participate in this study because as current middle school students who are attending the Victoria Holocaust Education Symposium you will be participating in an event which discusses issues applicable to my research such as intolerance, homophobia and the Holocaust. I want to understand the effects of the symposium on your understanding of the Holocaust as well as gain insight into the most effective teaching methods of the Holocaust. Therefore conducting a survey with you would provide me with further insight into methods of Holocaust education.
What Is Involved
If you consent to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include filling out a short survey (10 minutes) regarding Holocaust education as well as your visit to the symposium. The survey will not provide new information about the Holocaust but strives to determine which educational methods you find most valuable.

Risks
There is the possibility of emotional and psychological discomfort during the survey due to the subject matter of the Holocaust. Should you experience any discomfort during the survey you have the option to take a break or stop participating at any time.

Benefits
The potential benefits of your participation in this research include:

To the Participant: Providing participants with a platform where they can express their opinions regarding Holocaust education and aid in the improvement of this education in today’s classrooms. Participation in the focus groups will enrich the educational experiences of the students involved as they will be discussing very similar topics in their classes about the Holocaust. Participation will encourage academic discussion between students.

To Society: The Holocaust teaches students about discrimination, intolerance, and racism. Learning about these events is crucial and directly applies to the lessons students learn about bullying in today’s schools. Learning about the Holocaust in an effective way teaches students about the implications of homophobia, bullying and racism therefore my research will aim to make recommendations for the improvement of Holocaust education in today’s public schools.

To the State of Knowledge: My research will be used to make recommendations for the improvement of Holocaust education therefore increasing the state of knowledge of students in British Columbia’s schools. Therefore the state of knowledge regarding topics such as racism and intolerance for the next generation of students will be increased.

Voluntary Participation
Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. You may decline to answer any question. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study after completing the survey, your survey data cannot be deleted because of the anonymous nature of the surveys.

Anonymity
In terms of protecting your anonymity the surveys will be conducted anonymously. Pseudonyms will be used to refer to any participants in the study.

Confidentiality
Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected by the use of an enveloped which will be sealed once all surveys from your class are completed until they are delivered to me. The surveys will then be stored in a locked filing cabinet.

**Dissemination of Results**
It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in a published thesis and presentations at scholarly meetings.

**Disposal of Data**
Hard copies of data (surveys) will be shredded and electronic data will be erased after the completion of my thesis in August 2013.

**Contacts**
Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include:
Researcher: Natasha Wood (please see top of consent form)
Supervisor: Dr. Helga Thorson (please see top of consent form)

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-545 or ethics@uvic.ca).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study, that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers, and that you consent to participate in this research project.

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**Name of Participant**  
**Signature**  
**Date**

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**Name of Parent/Guardian**  
**Signature**  
**Date**

---

A copy of the consent form will be left with you (the participant) and I (the researcher) will also keep a copy.
Appendix G: Interview Questions

1. The Anne Frank exhibition consists of many different types of educational tools (photographs, posters, artifacts, interactive videos, etc). In your experience, which types of tools have had the greatest effect on the students who have visited the exhibition?

2. When we met in Berlin, you mentioned a part of the exhibition where students write a letter to Anne Frank herself. Can you describe this task in more detail? What kinds of messages do students write? Do you think this part of the exhibition is effective and why?

3. Is there a part of the exhibition that generates the strongest emotional response from the students? Which part?

4. Which methods do you think are most effective at teaching students about the Holocaust in a school setting?

   - Reading a diary
   - Watching a feature film (ie. Schindler’s List)
   - Reading a memoir
   - Listening to a lecture in class
   - Reading a textbook
   - Meeting a survivor in person
   - Watching a video recording of a survivor
   - Visiting a concentration camp
   - Participating in a group discussion
   - Visiting a museum
☐ Making a creative project (poster, film, etc)
☐ Looking at photos
☐ Watching a documentary film
☐ Other ______________________

5. How can we keep Holocaust education relevant to today’s students? Do you recommend using new media (like YouTube) as educational tools or more traditional methods like textbooks and lectures?

6. The Anne Frank exhibition has a “traditional” exhibit on one side and a “modern” exhibit on the other. The “traditional” exhibit consists of photographs and written materials whereas the “modern” exhibit had many different television screens and interactive videos depicting young students talking about issues of identity and intolerance. Do you think the “traditional” or the “modern” exhibit is more effective at teaching the students about the Holocaust? Do you think one makes a stronger emotional impact than the other? Which do you think the students prefer?

7. What do you think we can do to continue telling the stories of Holocaust survivors after they are gone?

8. Do you have any advice for Canadian teachers trying to teach students (ages 10-18) about the Holocaust?

9. Additional Comments

Thank you so much for your participation!
Appendix H: Graduate Student Survey and Focus Group Questions

1. Have you taken a class about the Holocaust before?

2. What is your area of study?

3. Why did you decide to take a class about the Holocaust?

4. When and where do you first remember learning about the Holocaust?

5. I have a good understanding of the Holocaust:
   strongly disagree/disagree/neutral/agree/strongly agree

6. How important is it to learn about the Holocaust today?
   no opinion/not important/somewhat important/very important

7. Which methods of teaching the Holocaust in B.C.’s public school classes are most effective? Choose three, in order of preference (1 = most effective)
   a) Diary
   b) Feature film (ie. Schindler’s List)
   c) Memoir
   d) Documentary film
   e) Presentation by a survivor
   f) Visiting a museum
   g) Visiting a concentration camp
   h) Group discussion
   i) Lecture
   j) Creative project
   k) Photos
   l) History textbook
8. Which methods of teaching about the Holocaust did you find the least effective in public school in British Columbia? Choose three, in order of preference (1 = least effective)

a) Diary  
b) Feature film (ie. Schindler’s List)  
c) Memoir  
d) Documentary film  
e) Presentation by a survivor  
f) Visiting a museum  
g) Visiting a concentration camp  
h) Group discussion  
i) Lecture  
j) Creative project  
k) Photos  
l) History textbook  

9. Which methods of teaching about the Holocaust had the greatest emotional impact on you in high school?  

Focus Group questions:  
1. When and where do you first remember learning about the Holocaust?  
2. Is it important to continue teaching students about the Holocaust in today’s classrooms?  
3. What can be done to improve lessons about the Holocaust in British Columbia’s public schools?  
4. Which methods of teaching about the Holocaust are the most/least effective for public
school students?

5. How do you think we should tell the stories of Holocaust survivors once they are gone?

6. For today’s technologically advanced youth, how can we incorporate these technologies to teach the Holocaust?

7. How did meeting survivors face-to-face change your understanding of the Holocaust? What made these presentations so effective? How can we attempt to replicate this experience?

8. How can we incorporate the narratives of Holocaust survivor’s into today’s school classes?

9. Why do you think the Holocaust not represented on a provincial examination in British Columbia?

10. Should the Holocaust be represented on a provincial examination in British Columbia?

11. Do students apply the lessons of the Holocaust to other aspects of their lives? (intolerance, bullying, multiculturalism, homophobia)

12. Are traditional (diaries, documentaries) or modern (YouTube, Facebook, Twitter) methods more effective at teaching the Holocaust?
Appendix I: Pre-Symposium Survey

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. This survey is part of a study entitled “‘Hitler is a bully’: Middle School Students’ Perspectives on Holocaust Education in Greater Victoria, British Columbia” that is being conducted by Natasha Wood. Natasha Wood is a graduate student in the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies at the University of Victoria. The survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Your answers will be completely anonymous. Please answer each question to the best of your ability.

*Please note: “Holocaust survivor” in this survey is meant to include all individuals whose lives were affected by the Holocaust (including children in hiding, concentration camp survivors, etc.)

Which grade are you in?

☐ Grade 6 ☐ Grade 10
☐ Grade 7 ☐ Grade 11
☐ Grade 8 ☐ Grade 12
☐ Grade 9

What age were you when you first learned about the Holocaust?

☐ 0-5
☐ 6-9
☐ 10-13
☐ 14-18
☐ Not Sure
☐ Never

How did you first learn about the Holocaust? (Please check only one box)

☐ Family member
☐ Friend
☐ Teacher
☐ Movie
☐ Holocaust memoir or diary
☐ Textbook
☐ The Internet
☐ Museum
☐ Other________________________
How interested are you in learning about the Holocaust? Please check one of the boxes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Interested</th>
<th>Not Interested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 4 3 2 1 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Is this your first time attending the Victoria Holocaust Education Symposium?

☐ Yes
☐ No

How excited are you to attend the Victoria Holocaust Education Symposium this year? Please check one of the boxes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Excited</th>
<th>Not Interested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 4 3 2 1 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

How important do you think it is to learn about the Holocaust? Please check one of the boxes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Not Interested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 4 3 2 1 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Do you think more time should be spent on learning about the Holocaust in school?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Not sure

Have you met a Holocaust survivor before?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Have you ever watched or listened to a recording of a Holocaust survivor?

☐ Yes
☐ No

If you could ask a Holocaust survivor one question, what would it be?
Are you planning to enroll in History 12?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Undecided

Define the term “Holocaust”

______________________________

“I have a good understanding of the Holocaust”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which are the **most** effective methods for learning about the Holocaust?
Please number your top **three** answers. (1 = most effective).

☐ Reading a diary
☐ Watching a feature film (ie. *Schindler’s List*)
☐ Reading a memoir
☐ Listening to a lecture in class
☐ Reading a textbook
☐ Meeting a survivor in person
☐ Watching a video recording of a survivor
☐ Visiting a concentration camp
☐ Participating in a group discussion
☐ Visiting a museum
☐ Making a creative project (poster, film, etc.)
☐ Looking at photos
☐ Watching a documentary film
☐ Other ______________________
Which are the least effective methods for learning about the Holocaust? Please number your top three answers (1 = least effective)

☐ Reading a diary
☐ Watching a feature film (ie. Schindler’s List)
☐ Reading a memoir
☐ Listening to a lecture in class
☐ Reading a textbook
☐ Meeting a survivor in person
☐ Watching a video recording of a survivor
☐ Visiting a concentration camp
☐ Participating in a group discussion
☐ Visiting a museum
☐ Making a creative project (poster, film, etc.)
☐ Looking at photos
☐ Watching a documentary film
☐ Other ____________________

What can we do to remember and share the stories of Holocaust survivors once they are gone?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Appendix J: Post-Symposium Survey

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. This survey is part of a study entitled “‘Hitler is a bully’: Middle School Students’ Perspectives on Holocaust Education in Greater Victoria, British Columbia” that is being conducted by Natasha Wood. Natasha Wood is a graduate student in the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies at the University of Victoria. The survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Your answers will be completely anonymous. Please answer each question to the best of your ability.

*Please note: “Holocaust survivor” in this survey is meant to include all individuals whose lives were affected by the Holocaust (including children in hiding, concentration camp survivors, etc.)

Which grade are you in?

☐ Grade 6    ☐ Grade 10
☐ Grade 7    ☐ Grade 11
☐ Grade 8    ☐ Grade 12
☐ Grade 9

Was this your first time attending the Victoria Holocaust Education Symposium?

☐ Yes
☐ No

After attending the Victoria Holocaust Education Symposium did your **interest** in the Holocaust:

☐ Increase
☐ Stay the same
☐ Decrease

After attending the Victoria Holocaust Education Symposium did your **knowledge** about the Holocaust:

☐ Increase
☐ Stay the same
After hearing Holocaust survivors present, did your interest in the Holocaust:

☐ Increase
☐ Stay the same
☐ Decrease
☐ N/A

What do you think was the most interesting part of the survivors’ presentation?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

What do you think would be the best way to retell the Holocaust survivors’ stories when they are gone? Please check one of the boxes.

☐ YouTube video
☐ Documentary film
☐ Memoir (written by a Holocaust survivor)
☐ Audio recording
☐ Presentation of their story by another person
☐ Book (written by a secondary author)
☐ Other ________________________

How important do you think it is to learn about the Holocaust?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you think more time should be spent on learning about the Holocaust in school?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Not Sure

Had you met a Holocaust survivor before the symposium?

☐ Yes
☐ No
Have you ever watched or listened to a recording of a Holocaust survivor?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Are you planning to enroll in History 12?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Undecided

“I have a good understanding of the Holocaust”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tr>
<td>☐</td>
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<td>☐</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which are the most effective methods for learning about the Holocaust? Please number your top three answers. (1 = most effective).

☐ Reading a diary
☐ Watching a feature film (ie. Schindler’s List)
☐ Reading a memoir
☐ Listening to a lecture in class
☐ Reading a textbook
☐ Meeting a survivor in person
☐ Watching a video recording of a survivor
☐ Visiting a concentration camp
☐ Participating in a group discussion
☐ Visiting a museum
☐ Making a creative project (poster, film, etc.)
☐ Looking at photos
☐ Watching a documentary film
☐ Other ____________________
Which are the least effective methods for learning about the Holocaust? Please number your top three answers (1 = least effective)

☐ Reading a diary
☐ Watching a feature film (ie. Schindler’s List)
☐ Reading a memoir
☐ Listening to a lecture in class
☐ Reading a textbook
☐ Meeting a survivor in person
☐ Watching a video recording of a survivor
☐ Visiting a concentration camp
☐ Participating in a group discussion
☐ Visiting a museum
☐ Making a creative project (poster, film, etc.)
☐ Looking at photos
☐ Watching a documentary film
☐ Other ____________________

What was the most enjoyable or interesting part of your visit to the Victoria Holocaust Education Symposium?

__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________