

Holocaust and Genocide Studies: An Overview of CT Teacher Implementation in the Classroom

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In the words of one of our educators:

When you think about COVID and its impact, right, and the impact of this virus and people are talking about, oh, well, we need a vaccine and so forth, well, you know, anti-Semitism is a virus. And to me, the vaccine is Holocaust education. And it really is imperative and the duty of all teachers who have it as part of their curriculum, they have to make it their job to inject that vaccine into our students' lives. Because that, I believe, will help to reduce the rise of anti-Semitism and uh, you know, make it unacceptable to engage in those acts that dehumanize the Jews and other groups of marginalized people.

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Part I: Context: Why do we need Holocaust and Genocide Studies in US Classrooms?

Countless studies in the past 10 years have explored the decreasing knowledge about the Holocaust among young Americans. Most recently though, the U.S. Millennial Holocaust Knowledge and Awareness Survey, the first-ever 50-state survey on Holocaust knowledge among Millennials and Gen Z has given us an understanding of the lack of knowledge for these generations. For example, according to the study, almost two-thirds of young American adults do not know that 6 million Jews were killed during the Holocaust, more than 1/3rd believe that number to be under 2 million, and more than one in 10 believe Jews caused the Holocaust (Sherwood 2020). Furthermore, almost half (48%) could not name a single concentration camp or ghetto established during the second world war. Finally, a quarter of respondents (23%) said they believed the Holocaust was a myth, or had been exaggerated, or they were not sure. And while this study looked more specifically at each state, with results varying to a large degree, the overall knowledge and awareness among young adults was disturbing on many levels.

A second, at times more revealing aspect to the study, indicated how exposed this generation is to conspiracy theories that the Holocaust did not happen. Almost 50% of the respondents had been exposed to Holocaust denial theories on social media. The platform social media provides to Holocaust deniers and the more virulent forms of anti-Semitism correlate to more violence against Jews. While Jews have always experienced some anti-Semitism and oppression in the United States, they are facing new forms and increasing violence in the past 5 years. “According to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), there were 1,879 attacks against Jews and Jewish institutions in the United States in 2018, the third-highest year on record since it began tracking such data in the 1970s” (Dreier 2020). We saw this most drastically with the shooting at Tree of Life synagogue in October 2018, where a man killed 11 Jews and injured many more. Various scholars, such as Deborah Lipstadt, have argued that the rhetoric put forward by the previous administration opened the door to allow many of those secretly professing anti-Semitism to not have to hide anymore. What are ways to combat this increasing anti-Semitism? According to some educators and scholars – it is by increasing knowledge about genocides and specifically the Holocaust.

This belief – that education on genocide can prevent future genocides, when the United Nations encouraged its member states to “develop educational programmes that will inculcate future generations with the lessons of the Holocaust in order to help prevent future acts of genocide (UN 2005). Yet since then, there have continued to be atrocities worldwide. Some take this as a failure of Holocaust education and argue against widespread educational programs. However, it seems a tall order to expect a direct correlation between teaching about the Holocaust and reduced violence.

Part II: Background of Holocaust and Genocide Studies

Global and U.S. Context: Shortly after the end of the Holocaust, in 1948, the Convention of the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide meant that the United Nations was legally bound to intervene in episodes of genocide. This meant there was a political necessity for leaders around the world to draw attention to situations happening in their own countries. Yet there was disagreement about what constituted a genocide and how it could, or would be, defined. For the decades of the 1960s and 1970s, there was endless debate about the term, its meaning, and who and what could claim genocide (Fallace 2008). Into this argument entered the idea that there was no way for students to learn about genocide without learning about the Holocaust.

Further, there was a shared belief by members of the United Nations that teaching about the Holocaust might prevent future episodes of genocide. In 2005, they encouraged their member states to “develop educational programmes that will inculcate future generations with the lessons of the Holocaust in order to help prevent future acts of genocide” (UN 2005). Unfortunately, this argument – that learning about genocide will prevent future generations from engaging and participating in genocide – has not come to fruition (Stevick and Gross 2015:3). Since the Holocaust, there have been multiple episodes of genocide that have occurred throughout the world. Nonetheless, while in a global context, this was the primary force for teaching Holocaust education (prevention of future acts of atrocity), this belief was not necessarily the case within the US.

No scholar has done more to explain the progress of Holocaust educational development in the United States than Thomas Fallace. In his 2008 book, *The Emergence of Holocaust Education in American Schools*, he takes us through the evolution of Holocaust education. He explains that the beginning of this path came from a seemingly unlikely place and situation, a group of teachers in Vineland, New Jersey. After years of disparate curriculums regarding the Holocaust and other episodes of genocide, another defining factor in helping to cement the need for Holocaust education was the *Holocaust* miniseries that aired in 1978 (several of our teacher respondents referenced this show, remembering the powerful impact it had on them). After relying on curriculum developed elsewhere, using the Facing History and Ourselves curriculum, and pressure from New Jersey parents wanting their children to learn more about the Holocaust (after they watched the miniseries), New Jersey became the first state to pass a law mandating that Holocaust education be taught in every public school (1994). Fallace outlines four explanations to the way that this education developed in the United States. First, he explains that there was general consensus on both sides of the political aisle about teaching the Holocaust to schoolchildren. Second, he explains that while there was agreement it should be taught, there was disagreement on how it should be taught. Third, it was during the 1980s and 1990s that there was a stronger push for Holocaust education to focus on the basics of the facts. And finally, the increase in the education of the Holocaust came primarily from practicing teachers. We can see at least two of these explanations for how this education developed and became mandated in the state of Connecticut.

CT CONTEXT

In CT, teaching the Holocaust and other episodes of Genocide have been provided as optional course for schools to offer for many years. Many schools in CT were already offering Modern Genocide courses or including Holocaust studies within their established units of World War II history. However, for many advocates in CT – including but not limited to Rabbi Philip Lazowski (a Holocaust survivor living in CT and the State legislature chaplain) and the Jewish Federation – too many CT students were unaware of basic facts about the Holocaust, such as the number of Jews killed, or what Auschwitz was. Therefore, these advocates worked closely with lawmakers to push forward a bill that would require the Holocaust and Genocide studies to be taught in all high schools. In May 2018, CT Governor Malloy signed SB 452: An Act Concerning the Inclusion of Holocaust and Genocide Education and Awareness in the Social Studies Curriculum into law after it passed unanimously three days earlier in the State Legislature. The law required all local and regional boards of education to include the topic in their social studies curriculum beginning in the 2018-19 school year.

We can see then, many of the advocates pushing to make the Holocaust a mandate in CT schools were public school teachers. In addition, there was consensus between Democrats and Republicans that this was necessary for public school students. And finally, the vague language of the mandate (the language simply states: To include Holocaust and genocide education awareness in the social studies curriculum for public schools) means there was no agreement on HOW the Holocaust or genocide education should take place. Our purpose in this study was to try and understand if and how educators are teaching these topics, what could or would help them in teaching it, and whether there is anything that can be done moving forward to increase the quality of the education.

METHODOLOGY

This project began with a brief conversation between the principal investigator (Beth Merenstein) and Michael Bloom, the executive director of the Jewish Federation Association of CT (JFact), in May of 2019. JFact played a significant and primary role in helping get the legislation passed in 2018. Discussing the new legislation, Michael expressed an interest in exploring how and whether teachers were teaching the Holocaust and other episodes of Genocide. That summer and fall I spent familiarizing myself with the legislation process and the teaching of Holocaust and Genocide studies. There is an ad hoc committee that had worked on the lobbying and language for the legislation, and so I met with this group in February of 2020. I explained that I teach a Community Research Methods class with seniors at CCSU and this class could take on this project.

After considerable discussion, we decided to pursue both a survey to reach as many educators as possible, and an interview to get into more detail with teachers. I created a draft survey and after several iterations, we had a final survey which was released in September 2020. Stephen Armstrong, the Social Studies coordinator for the state of CT, sent the survey out in the monthly newsletter in both September and October (note: our survey results were skewed towards Social Studies and History educators because of this method). We added a short paragraph on the end of the survey and in the newsletter asking for volunteers to be interviewed and offered a \$25.00 Amazon gift card for those interested in an interview. In the end, we received approximately 100 completed surveys (some individuals began the survey and did not complete it, so all results for all questions do not add up). We also completed 16 interviews. Each interview lasted between 30-60 minutes, was conducted via zoom, and then was transcribed word for word, coded, and analyzed. The interview guide was slightly edited from the survey in order to reflect a more nuanced and qualitative discussion of the topic (see Appendix A for interview guide).

The survey was open for responses from September 2020-December 2020, and the interviews took place between October 2020-December 2020. Of the 16 interviews, 3 were male teachers, and 13 were female teachers. We had an additional 4 no shows for interviews. All participants received the \$25.00 Amazon gift card.

Part III: Findings:

These findings are divided into two sections; first the survey results overview and then the interviews. Quotes given are always verbatim and are used as examples of a theme. A quote should not be read as the only explanation of a particular concept, but as an example of what others in the survey or interview were saying as well.

Survey demographics: Of our total number of respondents, 52 were women and 38 were men (and some chose not to answer). They were overwhelmingly white, and both race and gender are reflective of the larger educator community in CT. According to data collected by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (2014), 80% of PK-12 teachers nationwide are white, middle-class women. In CT, that number is 92.9% are white, non-Hispanic (data from 2012). A majority of our respondents checked off Democrat affiliation (57 Dem, 25 Ind, 4 Rep), which again, is not surprising based on CT political affiliation. Age was a clear bell curve, with the majority of respondents between the ages of 35-54. Finally, for the question on religion with a total of 103 respondents, the most number checked off Catholic (34), next Protestant (14), Agnostic/Atheist (14), and Jewish (10).

Our next set of questions had to do more specifically with teaching experience and the schools. Very few respondents had administrative experience, and the majority taught high school. Our respondents were also experienced teachers, with 84% of them having taught between 10-20+ years. Almost half taught at a medium sized school (between 500-1000 students) and a suburban school. Another 40% were at an urban school.

Knowledge of the Act: Almost all the respondents were aware that this Act had been passed, with only 15 educators saying they were unaware. Similarly, most (87%) were already teaching about the Holocaust, and 67% teaching about other episodes as well. Interestingly, 60% responded that they were not aware of what kind of resources were available for help in teaching the Holocaust or other episodes of genocide. Of those who have used resources, there were several in particular that were mentioned repeatedly: the HERO center at the University of Hartford; Echoes and Reflections from the ADL; the Holocaust Museum and Yad Vashem websites; Teaching Tolerance; Facing History, Facing Ourselves; CT Council for Social Studies; Southern Poverty Law Center. All of these were mentioned more than once, with other answers (summer workshops, UConn Dodd Center, the CT state website) only mentioned once by an educator. One of the more important questions we asked on the survey had to do with educators' thoughts on both the strengths and weaknesses of the Act itself.

Strengths: In terms of strengths to the Act, there were some answers that were clearly consistent, and these were similar to the reasons put forward to creating the Act in the first place. Overwhelmingly, there was concern that more *people were unaware of the atrocities of the Holocaust and other episodes of genocide*. As one respondent put it, "Considering event articles describing the lack of knowledge nationwide? It is essential." This sentiment was repeated in some form throughout the answers; concern about the lack of awareness, importance of continuing to teach this important historical event, concern that Holocaust survivors would no longer be available to share their stories. As a male teacher working at a rural school in Windham county said, "The mandate itself forces districts to give attention to the topic. At a time when both knowledge of the Holocaust and genocide in general is lacking in our society and

anti-Semitism and intolerance of diversity is a growing concern the legislation is certainly welcome.”

A second and related strength that many educators saw to the Act requiring the teachings were about the idea that *students needed to learn about the atrocities of the world so they won't be repeated*. As one older teacher with more than 20 years of experience explained, these issues should be taught “for students to understand the atrocities that have happened to others throughout the world and to prevent it from happening again.” Further, as a female educator at a large suburban high school in Hartford county expressed, “Reinforcing the need to teach this history to students at age-appropriate levels in order to promote knowledge of the past, empathy, respect for diversity in their communities, and awareness of signs of hate, discrimination, and genocide in the present day.” Therefore, related to the concern about students simply learning about the atrocities of the world, there was a connected issue for many respondents that learning these examples of genocide would lead students to become more engaged and committed citizens, as well as possibly prevent future episodes from happening. This belief is similar to the explanation stated above about the understanding many educators and policy makers had when creating the mandates in different states for Holocaust education, as well as the UN pressure for teaching Holocaust education. The respondents in CT clearly have a similar belief that teaching about the Holocaust and other episodes of genocide can make students into ‘better people.’ Repeatedly, the educators expressed the idea that “I believe that it is critical for students to understand the past in order for them to be cognizant of the possibility of similar situations arising in the present/future.”

A third concept that was mentioned from various respondents was the *specificity of the Act itself*. In some cases, educators appreciated that the Act named the Holocaust specifically, but that it also included other episodes of genocide. In other cases, respondents mentioned disappointment that the Act did not provide more specifications (see below: Weaknesses). As one younger (25-34) female teacher eloquently expressed, “it is a strength that the act exists; that the act names the Holocaust as a specific event that must be covered; and that the act does not limit genocide studies to solely cover the Holocaust.” Relatedly, some spoke of already teaching these issues, but fully supporting the mandate so that all schools would teach them. And finally, a few respondents mentioned concern that without the Act, many schools would push aside these important topics to cover other educational needs instead. A female educator from a small, rural school in Middlesex county put it this way, “Holocaust education is essential. I know many schools that do not teach the Holocaust, and I fear with the state-wide push to improve math scores, Holocaust education could easily be tossed aside to make room.”

Weaknesses: The weaknesses expressed about the Act fall into four general categories; 1) lack of specification 2) no accountability 3) should not be a mandate 4) too much emphasis on Holocaust and not on other episodes of genocide. The idea that the Act *lacks specification* was mentioned repeatedly by the respondents. There was concern that because the language was left vague, there is no guidance on how long to teach about these topics, when (at what point in a class), or what grade. Furthermore, because of the lack of specification, there was considerable concern that there is no consistency. So that, as one respondent put it, “I know many educators will misinterpret or not understand the full scope- they will believe a mention of the Holocaust will ensure compliance with the law. In reality, the law asks teachers to include genocide studies in different areas of their teaching or curriculum, where appropriate. Without help or guidance, many teachers may not fulfill the spirit of the law.” Or as another put, some teachers will assume it has already been taught, so they don't need to do it.

A second, and related concern, was the *lack of accountability*. Because there is no guidance on when, how, or at what point teachers are teaching these topics, there is concern, as one female teacher explained, that “School districts need to make sure their curriculum aligns between grade levels otherwise students may get exposed to the same resources each year or be taught only about Hitler, rather than highlighting the upstanders, survivors, resistance and lessons about the escalation of hate.” This lack of accountability meant that some educators expressed belief that schools will not be teaching it, but say they are. Further, there was the concern that schools or teachers will simply “check off the box” of teaching these topics without fully exploring them in detail. Or, that some will teach it poorly; “That some may try to twist what really happened,” as expressed by one older teacher with more than 20 years’ experience from Windham county.

Third, there was regular mention that this *should not be a mandate*. Sometimes this belief was because there was hope that teachers were already teaching this material, as a male teacher with 10-15 years’ experience at a small, urban school said, “We should not have to mandate curriculum through law. Teachers should always be seeking to incorporate the stories of oppressed in society into their curriculum.” Others expressed similar ideas, mentioning that they hoped teachers were incorporating these lessons long before there was an Act mandating it. However, other teachers had a different mandate perspective. For them, no lessons should be mandated. This female teacher with 20 years’ experience, working at a medium sized school in Tolland county put it this way, “Legislating curricula is a slippery slope. There are many "interest groups" with valid claims for why it is important to teach "their" history. Better for schools / districts to develop a comprehensive curriculum and for the state to provide resources, PD and support rather than mandates.” And she was not the only one. Others mentioned that “forcing lessons” is not the way education should be headed. This male teacher from a suburban school in Fairfield county put it this way: “There doesn't need to be a law about everything that is curricular in nature. While this topic is extremely important, every unit of study shouldn't have a law attached to it. It lessens the work educators do and makes legislators think they have the tools and knowledge to decide which topics, subjects, facts, and skills should be taught. It also cheapens topics that are not mandated to be taught by law. For example, will there be a 9/11 law mandating the teaching of that topic? If there's not a law about, does it mean that the topic has been deemed less important than topics that do get a law?”

The final area of concern had to do with the belief that the word Holocaust makes it seem that that episode of genocide is more important or should be taught above and beyond others. There was concern that this would lead to teaching the same issues about the Holocaust (as mentioned above) without developing insight into *other episodes of genocide* in history. As this female teacher at an urban school in New Haven put it, “It also seems like studies of other genocides are not emphasized in the act; it seems that, despite the act, students could graduate knowing only about the Holocaust and not about any other genocides.” Some respondents pointed to specific episodes of genocide as examples that teachers might not teach (genocide against Native Americans, against the people of Congo, against People of Color and Queer folk in the US) because of the emphasis on the Holocaust. Therefore, the concern is that the Holocaust will be overemphasized while other atrocities are ignored.

Where are teachers teaching about the Holocaust and Genocide studies: It is important to remember that we were limited in our respondents in terms of primarily reaching History and Social Studies teachers based on where and how we sent out the survey. Because the law

requires the topic in social studies curriculum, these responses should not surprise us. However, it is possible, and likely, that these topics are being covered in other classes, as indicated by our respondents: English Language Arts, World Languages, or special topics classes (such as Honors or Senior capstone courses).

When do they teach it: Most of the respondents indicated that they taught these topics during high school. Some acknowledged teaching certain aspects during middle school (7 respondents), and 1 respondent taught it in 5th grade.

Other episodes of genocide other than the Holocaust: There were many other episodes of genocide that are being taught in the schools, but there were certain episodes that were clearly discussed more than others. In the African continent, both Darfur (6) and Rwanda (33) were the most common episodes taught. In America, many educators mentioned teaching about Native Americans as their example of an episode of genocide closer to home (20 respondents). In Asia, the Armenian genocide (24) and Cambodian genocide (14) took precedence. And in Europe, the Bosnian genocide was the most commonly discussed (8 respondents).

Curriculum Design and Decisions: There are 172 school districts in CT, with the majority of students going to a traditional community or neighborhood school. And based on the answers we received in the survey, every school determines its curriculum structure differently. Answers varied from indicating little to no control in deciding what gets taught in the classroom (the “BOE,” “our central office”), to some control (“Department members, with approval from curriculum director and BOE,” “Collaboration between both high school department chairs, teachers and a curriculum coordinator”), and plenty of decision making on the teacher level (“Teachers in our departments,” “teachers,” “all staff”). Regardless of who creates or designs the curriculum, almost all the respondents indicated that there was oversight by the Board of Education.

Teachers seemed to express a great deal of interest in working with others on these topics (71%), yet less than 50% said they already work with other teachers to teach about either the Holocaust or Genocide. Those who do work together explained that it was primarily working with other teachers across the grade level, and/or by discipline. As one female teacher at a medium, suburban school in New London explained, “Other teachers who teach American History work together to incorporate these topics into our classrooms. Collaboration is mostly for content, each teacher decides which activities to use within their own room.” Some educators explained that they collaborate only on what topics should be included, while others explain that they share ideas for lessons plans and activities. Further, there were some educators who mentioned working with teachers across disciplines (Art teacher, English Language teachers), yet most of the respondents worked within their discipline.

Comfort level in teaching Holocaust and Genocide studies: Although some educators said they had not taught about the Holocaust, a full 84% said that they felt either very confident or confident teaching about it. But even more than that, 97% of the respondents expressed that they feel very comfortable or comfortable teaching about the Holocaust, as well as comfortable in their ability to create a climate for discussing the Holocaust. Nonetheless, when pressed, there were some areas where educators felt less comfortable addressing it in the classroom. These fell into two general categories: 1) adequately expressing the atrocities and horrors without overwhelming or horrifying the students. As one female teacher with 10-15 years’ experience

said, “I feel uncomfortable in regards to making sure I’m teaching students the reality of the horrors of the Holocaust while also being sensitive to their age.” 2) Teachers expressed difficulty in always being able to explain the root causes and trajectory of the Holocaust. Several discussed trying, and failing, to answer the ‘why’ questions; why did it happen, why didn’t anyone stop it, why were the German people seemingly so willing to go along with it? And related to that, a few teachers brought up the difficulty in connecting it to current events (“For example, students have begun to recently ask whether and to what extent the current Trump administration can be compared to other authoritarian regimes that committed genocide.”).

In terms of teaching about other episodes of genocide, it was clear that teachers had less confidence. While still in the majority, only 68% felt very confident or confident teaching other episodes (and 85% comfortable or very comfortable). In terms of areas where educators felt less comfortable with particular issues with regards to other episodes of genocide, these fell into two very areas: 1) discussion of particular forms of atrocity – in particular, rape was mentioned multiple times. Teachers are worried about fully discussing this in a class, for fear of a student perhaps having experiences sexual trauma themselves. And 2) there was more concern about simply not having enough knowledge about the many different episodes of genocide worldwide. This can be summed up by a female teacher from Fairfield county with more than 20 years of experience, “I do not have enough knowledge/background/experience to be comfortable teaching other episodes of genocide yet.”

Possible avenues for assistance: The final section of our survey turned to asking respondents about what they think would help them in teaching about the Holocaust and other episodes of genocide. First, in asking about resources, there were four specific forms of resources that educators requested: nonfiction books, websites, films, and guest speakers. Additionally, some provided write-in answers, and these focused on one thing in particular: *more succinct material*. The respondents mentioned the difference between needing to educate themselves versus the material they would share with students.

A strong majority (62%) of respondents have already participated in a workshop to help them teach these topics. While there were many examples of workshops (some one-day seminars, some multiple day long conferences), there was quite a bit of overlap for respondents. The following workshops were mentioned multiple times: The US Holocaust Museum, the ADL Echoes and Reflections, UConn Dodd Center, Facing History and Ourselves workshops, Belfer National Conference for Educators, and the University of Hartford. The ones that made the greatest impact had two things in particular: a guest speaker/s with personal experience and the educator walked away from the experience with specific and hands on activities and lesson plans.

We followed up this question about workshops with asking why a respondent might NOT have taken any workshops. The answers can be grouped into three categories: *First*, the respondent felt confident already in their knowledge. Sometimes this was because they had a personal connection to the Holocaust, and/or other times they had educated themselves on the topics (“I have a direct family connection to the Holocaust, have visited the camps, and educated myself on the period my entire life. I have collected resources from other educators and have grown a large collection of the materials needed”). Related to this, some respondents felt that there is already so much information out there, and easily accessible, that they do not need to attend a workshop to get more. The *second* category is that they simply do not have the time to commit to more professional development. And *third*, quite a few respondents said that they did

not know about any workshops available. However, less than 30% said that if they had the opportunity, it was unlikely or very unlikely that they would participate in any workshops or programs to aid in teaching about the Holocaust or other episodes of genocide. Of those, time was again the largest factor in why they would not attend a workshop.

Educators said they faced minimal challenges when teaching about the Holocaust and Genocide. Of those who did face any challenges, the most frequent ones were from parents or students. As one female middle-aged teacher from Litchfield county explained, “All too often in Social Studies parents do not want their children to be exposed to topics for a variety of reasons including: religious beliefs, racial beliefs, intolerance for events or people that involves violence.” Additionally, some teachers mentioned students’ difficulties in connecting the past with the present (“Students sometimes struggle and resist modern information that correlates. For example, we looked at a current event where students at a high school in America (in recent years) took a prom picture doing the "Sieg Heil" salute and some students couldn't understand the issue or laughed from the discomfort”).

Other issues or barriers: Our final question on the survey asked if the respondent had any other information to share. Some of the comments reiterated what they had said earlier: they would very much like more age-appropriate materials. This was particularly the case for the middle school teachers who complained that most of the material is more high school age appropriate. A second issue that was addressed on several occasions was the lack of time to properly address these topics. Teachers explained all they had to compress into one year: “My 9th grade World History course starts with Ancient Greece and Rome and ends with WWII. It's very difficult to give topics such as the Holocaust the depth and breadth it deserves when packed in between other events and also chronologically taught at the end of the school year.” Finally, some of the issues they brought up are best left in their own, complete format:

“Making sure educators are teaching about the origin of the United Nations definition and what is considered officially recognized as genocide as well as the limitations of the term its application and non application to historical events. Also the political ramifications of the term and the interventions/lack of interventions that have occurred by major world powers. I also think the stages of genocide are an important resource/took to teach students in understanding the historical pattern over time.” Female, 25-34, Litchfield county

“The challenges of teaching about the Holocaust and genocide reflect the general issues facing the teaching of the social studies/sciences in general: the subjects are not tested and the content can be contentious so apathy and benign neglect seem to prevail, at least in my district. Since there’s now a social studies curriculum framework (recommendations) and legislative mandates requiring Holocaust and genocide education perhaps the state could do better than just asking for voluntary reporting from districts on how well the curriculum framework and legislative mandates are being implemented. Future generations will thank the SDE for doing more than merely conducting a paperwork review.” Male, 45-54, rural school district

“Bias is the biggest barrier. As I learn more about antiracism I am exploring my own bias and I need to be aware that 8th graders do not necessarily realize they have a bias. I have to provide a safe environment for kids to express themselves and ask questions but at the same not be blatantly offensive.” Female, 35-44, rural Middlesex county

Interview results:

Reasons for teaching:

“Perhaps one of the most valuable elements of Holocaust education is exactly this: the opportunity to provoke and facilitate honest self-reflection about our own choices in life, our points of view, attitudes, and actions, and our independence or dependence on others. How impressionable, how compliant and passive are we, and how independent and active would we like to be or to have been?” (Hondius 2015: 92)

This notion that learning history, and specifically, the Holocaust and other episodes of genocide can be beneficial to students was repeated regularly in the interviews. One word that was mentioned throughout the interviews was *empathy*. We asked the question, “so what skills and knowledge do you think students gain from learning about these issues?” and repeatedly, the answer referred to teaching students about being empathetic citizens and not being simple bystanders to the wrongs in the world. There was the overarching belief that students need to learn about the Holocaust or other episodes of genocide in order to help not repeat history, and that they “need to look at the world with more humanity, instead of regionalism um or political affiliation or umm, gender even. Right, that the holocaust forces people to look at is sheer human beings. How we treated human beings Regardless of what we want out of our politics” (female, large urban school). There was some distinction between whether the educator taught in the social studies versus the English Language Arts. The latter group focused much more on the overall themes (empathy, evil, indifference) while the former were more focused on political and social causes, as well as timelines and specific events, especially as they relate to World War II.

Beyond the important, yet somewhat vague concepts of empathy and compassion, teachers mentioned the need to teach about genocide and fascism because of the *world we live in now*. Some teachers discussed the more recent (past 20 years) examples of genocide occurring, and how they used the Holocaust to then go into a discussion of these other episodes. As one male teacher from a rural community said, “That's one of our main focus as a US history course we're looking at World War II. You know, why didn't we know what was going on? There were, you know corroborated reports why didn't we do anything? In the same with you know, like the Rwandan genocide why did the Clinton administration not do anything when they knew what was transpiring?”

Other teachers talked about “fake news” and teaching students to see the signs of fascism and knowing what to believe from our government. They also talked about helping students grapple with critical thinking; not just learning the numbers and facts, but having them truly think through the question, “what would you have done?” And finally, related to this would be the concept of *tolerance*. Our respondents used this word several times; believing that teaching about genocide teaches students about others and about our responsibility to be accepting of people different from ourselves. Related to this idea of tolerance was that teaching these topics would also teach students about stereotypes and prejudices in a broader sense. A female teacher/administrator from a magnet school explained, “the idea that what might feel like a more innocuous um stereotype or prejudice is on the same continuum as violence and genocide.”

Educators teaching high school and middle school choose their discipline – and because of that, it can give us insight into how they understand the purposes of teaching history. As one female teacher from a technical high school explained, “I was always passionate about history growing up and umm understanding that society as itself cannot grow unless it has a firm understanding of the past and pathways to have gotten us to where we are in the present and the

occurring future. so that's part of the reason why I chose that area. Umm, but I also think it's the one subject that can connect students from all walks of life as well as open up their eyes to things that may not be concrete but they bring in a human side."

According to Michael Polger (2019), there are two primary reasons to teach the Holocaust: *prevention* and *reparation*. What our respondents said could easily be placed into one of these two categories: the idea of preventing future acts of violence and atrocity, the hope of students learning empathy for others, that this empathy will translate into taking meaningful action to help prevent violence towards others, these all fall under the category of prevention. Further, the idea teachers expressed that teaching about the Holocaust and other episodes of genocide might somehow make the world a better place (by making their students better people) falls under the idea of reparation. As Stevick and Michaels (2016) explain, "more than any other educational field, Holocaust education recognizes the importance and power of personal testimonies and individual experiences in cultivating understanding and nurturing empathy" (1).

Strengths to the Act requiring teaching Holocaust and genocide studies: Teachers recognized that in math and English there are common core principles that all students must learn, and so they saw the mandate to teach Holocaust and genocide studies in a similar way. There was often mention of the standardized tests students have to take, but no one is testing them on their social studies knowledge.

While some teachers we interviewed were already teaching the Holocaust or other episodes of genocide, they also felt strongly that there was a benefit to some uniformity and ensuring that all students learned about the atrocities in the world. Additionally, as mentioned previously, many of the educators we spoke with discussed the benefits long term for students in learning these issues: that it would make them more informed citizens and empathetic to the struggles of others.

More than one teacher talked about how the Act motivated them to learn more and find more resources so they could teach it properly. As one female teacher with over 20 years of experience put it, "The act not only increased it, but it motivated me to learn how I could teach it more effectively, and with greater impact."

How to teach about the Holocaust and Genocide: One issue that came up was the lack of consistency in how these atrocities were being taught. Similar to the survey data, there was concern that because the Act did not specify how or when or where these were taught, that teachers might not discuss it in full. Teachers almost uniformly supported the idea of the Act, but consistently referenced the fact that, as one put it, "there's spirit and there's intent. And I think that it's, it-- I don't see how it's enforced."

Interestingly, several teachers referred back to their own educational experiences and their learning, or lack of, about the Holocaust as their reasons for wanting to ensure it is taught now. As one female teacher at a rural regional school explained, "I had a whole semester class on the Holocaust when I was a senior in high school and I am learning this as I continue teaching but the farther away we get from the Holocaust the less these students know." Other teachers discussed not learning of it (beyond a basic comprehension that it occurred) until they got to college or graduate school. And for one teacher, who received a Masters in American History, she never learned about it during any of her schooling. This informed the idea of ensuring that students learn the full development – not simply just that the Holocaust occurred. As one female teacher explained:

“I think that’s important uhhh, for, for all members of society to understand that it’s not just a switch that flips. Umm there’s social, political, cultural... umm ramifications and you know it, when things aren’t kept in check, when people are not allowed to exercise their rights as humans or citizens of their nations that it can escalate to this level and that if there’s no intervention from other, uhh other communities or countries where its “oh that’s not my problem” then that’s why things are allowed to happen.”

When to teach it: Related to this was the idea that there could, and should, be a progression to the learning. That middle schoolers could begin learning the information and then it gets built upon each year. The resources used would be different based on the age group, and appropriate materials would help students build their knowledge. There was some difference of opinion among our respondents about whether these topics should be discussed in middle school, or perhaps just approached in a very basic way, rather than fully developed and discussed. As one teacher explained, hearing about these things once will not have as great an impact as hearing about them multiple times and in different ways. Additionally, one respondent mentioned that reading books like *Anne Frank*, the younger students might relate knowing she was their age.

Some teachers felt strongly that students should be exposed to these topics at a younger age while others believed it should wait until high school when students are more mature (see below re: handling different levels). Arguing for the former, this male teacher from a regional school in New Haven said, “I think middle school, at least from 7th to 8th grade in terms of really diving into the topic, I’d say 6th grade to get a basic understanding. If you want to dive in, I’d say middle school. Some of the questions I ask my kids are how many have studied the Holocaust in middle school.” A female middle school teacher felt very strongly that these issues should be discussed at all levels of education, “I think it needs to be a k-12 initiative. I think that it needs to start with simple simply kindness up through when you’re talking about hate speech and how hate speech can then lead into genocide. So this is a 5, a k-12 problem, or curricular fix.”

Other episodes of genocide: Teachers also discussed the importance of not just focusing on the Holocaust. They believed it was important to teach, but that by no means should it be the only genocide taught. Some explained that they tried to use more recent episodes of genocide and compare and contrast them to the Holocaust (“I do think it’s kind of important for them to compare and contrast kind of what’s going on . Like Myanmar, things that have recently happened” female teacher from New Haven). Unfortunately, they did not feel that they have enough resources to discuss these other episodes of genocide as fully as the teaching of the Holocaust. As one female teacher from Newtown explained, “I feel very limited. Uh, the only other genocide I feel comfortable teaching about is that of Rwanda. Um, but, I know of course there are the Armenian genocides, and um, I know that there are some others in there escaping my mind right now. But I, they’re just not part of the curriculum that I teach, so I wouldn’t know where to put them in.”

One way that teachers dealt with this was by ending their conversation on the Holocaust by bringing in more modern episodes of genocide to show students that it was not simply once in history. Another way, that came up more than once, was that the teachers have their students research a particular episode of genocide as an end project to the lessons on the Holocaust. That way the students can see it gets repeated in history and is not as long ago as they maybe believed.

Successful teaching: The more successful teachers (in terms of teaching these subjects) were very passionate and explanatory in how they taught the issues. They described their process of building it up for the students (“setting the stage”), so that they were not simply sharing dates and facts. They engaged the students in understanding how a society so similar to ours (i.e. Germany) could commit such an atrocity. They explained that they lead the students on a path to understanding and in this way they hoped the students would learn how relatively easy it is for this to happen if we are not aware. And it is in this way that they hope they are making “informed citizens” of the world.

We heard stories of teachers assigning roles to their students and following that role (i.e. a Jewish doctor living in Berlin in 1933) throughout the lesson plan. We heard other descriptions of using witness scrapbooks (tracking and saving memories of ways to be an ally) and using this method to teach the students about the importance of speaking up and “following their gut” of right and wrong.

Resources: Similar to our survey results, the educators we interviewed relied on the HERO project, the Uconn Dodd Center, the Holocaust Museum, Facing History Facing Ourselves, and almost everyone who actively teaches the Holocaust discussed using *Schindler’s List* and/or *Night* by Elie Wiesel. Internet resources seemed to be the preferred method of receiving information. Educators were able to look at the websites on their own, and use them in the classroom, or assign internet searches – within parameters - for students.

Student responses: Educators were aware that this material can be difficult for students. They discussed both students’ reactions and what they do about it. This male teacher from Hamden provided the full gamut of students’ responses when he said,

“I have had students who try to make jokes during Holocaust conversations which can be kind of uncomfortable for me when there’s kids in the back of the class making these jokes. Um we take it very seriously and it’s usually an office referral but that can still make sort of an uncomfortable environment. You have some kids who are overwhelmed and some kids who are apathetic and don’t care and some kids who are very emotionally involved and then some kids who find them this all a farce or at least covering up their feelings with that response.”

As another teacher explained, sometimes students laugh when they are uncomfortable so it is important to not get angry and handle their emotions with care and discussion. Others discussed the benefit in having Holocaust education being towards the end of the school year; more than one discussed that by then, the students are more comfortable with each other and the teacher, so the difficult subject matters are easier to learn. Similarly, a female teacher from New Haven with over 20 years of teaching experience, has been teaching about the Holocaust and other episodes of genocide (specifically Rwanda and Myanmar) and when asked about student responses, she said “I just had students who just did not think it was important. They didn’t take it very seriously and it’s all harder when kids make jokes about something or now put things lightly but it’s that’s more also feeling uncomfortable or maturity.”

There was some mention by a few respondents that they are not sure if students are being forthright in their thoughts about the Holocaust. As one female teacher explained, “Sometimes I am concerned that there might be students who have heard or who think that it really didn’t happen, you know, Holocaust deniers. And that that might be underneath and that’s not really bubbling out. I have yet to have a student outwardly say, oh, that never happened. That doesn’t

mean they don't think that or that they haven't heard that." Only one teacher out of all our interviews shared an experience of having to meet with parents of a student – they wanted their child to opt out of the unit on the Holocaust because they “did not think it was a fair representation of Hitler and his achievement which was a very bizarre conversation to have with other adults but it's definitely out there.” Yet, quite a few teachers talked about the “occasional” swastika or Heil Hitler being heard or seen at their school, but they **all** dismissed it as not the norm. Nonetheless, it was often through mentioning these examples that the teachers expressed the continued need to learn about the Holocaust.

Who decides what's taught: There was not consistency among our respondents in terms of who got to make the decisions about curriculum in their schools. Some expressed concern that the decisions were moving more towards the Board of Education or a central office/person and not allowing it to be in the hands of the teachers. “The last five or six years its been directed from consultants and central office which I guess would be the equation of like a board of Ed, and its come through that way. Umm which is unfortunate because it's like a lot like really the teachers should be the one pushing the uhh, the agenda,” (Female, 37).

All the educators, even those who complained about the Board of Education having too strong of a say in the curriculum, still explained that they had some freedom within that curriculum. This teacher expressed this idea when she said, “Yes, there is a curriculum that has been created and passed by the Board of Ed. And while teachers do have some freedom as to how they can teach the content, there are specific objectives and vocabulary and content topics that we're expected to cover.” Or, another middle school teacher who said, “so to some extent yes, there is choice within a guideline, within a framework.”

What could help: While most of the educators recognized and knew about the various resources available (especially books, films, and guest speakers), there were a few other things discussed that they believed could help in teaching these difficult topics.

One, a *mentor* or veteran teacher who is already comfortable and familiar with teaching about genocide. As one teacher explained, when she was just starting out, she was not confident in her abilities to teach about these difficult and sensitive subjects, but that she had a mentor who guided her and helped her. She expressed concern that this was no longer happening (at least at her school). Related to that, having a mentor or a strong curriculum specialist could help with the times that a student gets upset, or a parent complains, or even when a teacher is not sure how to present graphic material.

Second, related to the earlier discussion of recognizing that middle schoolers need *different material* than high schoolers, there was a consensus that there need to be different resources and lesson plans for different grades. As one male teacher from Colchester expressed, “I almost always teach seniors now. And it's because they're just about adults. They, you can talk to them. You can talk about- complex controversial topics and have a reasonable discussion and get reasonable responses. And we can talk to them as opposed to the younger grades, like the freshmen, where you're, you're really, really limited on some of the things that you can talk about. They're not mature.” Another female teacher in Fairfield county had a similar opinion, “I think that the older the student is, the more mature they are and... the more likely you're able to have those deeper conversations. Uh, you can have controversial conversations, and they can, and they can manage it a little bit better. Whereas freshmen tend to lack the depth and experience needed to go deeper.” Recognizing that students have different levels of maturity in different

grades might mean tailoring different resources to different grades, rather than bringing together all the resources. Furthermore, returning to the idea that there is a lack of consistency or implementation clearly defined, teachers talked about not knowing what was taught in other grade levels. They wanted to be able to build on what the students knew already, but they had no awareness of what other grades were doing (either lower high school grades or the middle school). As the female middle school teacher rather forcefully explained, “I think it needs to be laid out and there also needs to be accountability. Ya know, this needs to be in this grade level at this time. Not just you know, I think the bill as it stands right now is just ya know, “teach the holocaust somewhere k-12” WHAT . So it needs to be more structured and there needs to be some sort of follow through and it needs to be easy for districts to do.” Or as another teacher expressed most eloquently, we need to “unpeel layers repeatedly over time in those years about all topics.”

Third, while our survey was mostly focused on social studies and history teachers, our interview respondents had a *variety of disciplines*. One of the interesting things to emerge was a recognition that issues about the Holocaust or genocide could be taught in many other classes aside from just history. As one French teacher at a regional school explained, “I also could do different things with French speaking Africa. If I were to incorporate it because, I forgot, you know, there's other areas of genocide, other areas where genocide have taken place. So I think they would learn, like my students would learn a lot of new vocabulary for, in order to talk about these things. And they would learn, um, like in reading different pieces of literature, writing, like I'm thinking, like Anne Frank diary kind of thing. They would learn about writing, like writing in a journal, and, um, documenting events. But I think my kids would learn mainly a lot of history.” What is interesting here is that we can see this teacher begin to explore some of these ideas through the process of answering the question. At first, she struggled to see where she could incorporate it into her classes, but then she realized there were many ways in fact. From listening to this teacher, it is clear that more resources in other subjects could help.

Fourth, *pressed for time*: some teachers spent a considerable amount of time on the Holocaust, but others talked about how they were always struggling with how much they were expected to cover in their classes. For example, a World History class began with Ancient Rome and Greece, so that by the time the curriculum came around to WWII, when they began to discuss the Holocaust, they had limited time. This also meant little time to address any other episodes of genocide they might want to discuss. Closely related to this, there was discussion that there are too many materials on the Holocaust and some teachers might find that overwhelming. As a rural teacher from the northwestern corner of CT explained,

“I think to compartmentalize type of lessons that you could get that again, have the background on the subject something that's concise that can be done you know in a lesson period. It somehow integrates into you know broader subject areas either U.S. history or American governments. I think you know for a lot of teachers that probably would make them more comfortable just take it off the shelf and use it especially if their knowledge of the event wasn't that great. But I think that's probably the end and there's so much material out there now I think that maybe too much material for people to sort of sort through. I know people like to have choices but sometimes too many choices makes it difficult to narrow down you know this is what we're going to use and maybe it's a trial and error thing.”

Finally, other teachers requested more help in *materials on other episodes of genocide*. They felt fairly confident not only in their own abilities to teach the Holocaust but were aware of

and had access to the many online resources. Yet, as a female teacher explained, “I would like to know more about Armenia and Rwanda and um even maybe the Apartheid and the Aborigines. Like I could know more about um similar experiences. I think it would be pretty powerful, especially for sixth graders and older to look at the experiences of all these marginalized groups and find out what are the similarities and how did they begin.”

Overview for Recommendations:

- 1) A social studies coordinator in every district, who regularly met with their counterpart from other school districts.
 - a. Almost all the teachers who responded and completed an interview were well versed in teaching the Holocaust. They primarily had been teaching about the Holocaust well before the Act was passed in 2018. Therefore, they tended to have strong feelings that teaching about it needed to be done “right” and not just a box checked off. Related to this, most of the educators we spoke to had already been involved in workshops on teaching the Holocaust, and quite a few had even gone to Europe, been to concentration camps, and taken further trainings through Echoes and Reflections, or the Holocaust Museum.
 - i. For these teachers, the one area of improvement or support could center around how to handle problematic students. While we know from the surveys and interview respondents, that teachers did not deal with an overwhelmingly large number of “problem students,” they did discuss the students who joke or laugh during these conversations, the Nazi symbols on school property, and the increasing Holocaust deniers that pervade the internet.
 - b. These teachers used a multitude of resources; films, books (fiction and nonfiction), websites, group activities. But above all, they felt that the guest speakers and personal stories had the greatest impact on students. This came through in the surveys and the interviews. The idea that nothing can replace the experience of hearing about the atrocities through the voice of someone who has experienced it. In Gross and Stevick’s book, *As the Witnesses Fall Silent*, Hondius discusses some of the reasons for this. He says, “One explanation for the success of the meetings between generations is the distance in age and experience. For young people, it can be an eye-opener to see, and speak with, someone who has been directly involved in something. For the older eyewitnesses, finding a willing ear and audience among young people is usually a rewarding and positive experience...” (2015: 91). He goes on to explain that the experience can be beneficial for the teacher as well, who would be wise to watch the students’ reactions and the interactions between the speakers and the students. Unfortunately, there is growing concern (see Foster, Pearce, Pettigrew 2020) that entering the 21st century, we are headed into a post-survivor time period where there will likely be fewer and fewer survivors to share their story. Nonetheless, Michael Polgar points out, descendants of Holocaust survivors can also contribute to Holocaust consciousness (2019:112).
 - c. There was considerable concern by our respondents that other teachers (not themselves) were not teaching the Holocaust and genocide studies in the “right” way. And while many researchers and scholars disagree on what the right way is, they are not wrong that teaching these issues the wrong way can actually be detrimental. As Eckmann (2015) explains, there is a balancing act that must occur between the moral implications and the lessons of the history. Too many educators work hard to make moralizing statements about these events without allowing the students to come to the conclusions themselves, while others make

efforts to draw lessons from the history before the students know enough of that history.

- i.** Therefore, for both the interview subjects and the survey respondents, they felt that a major criticism of the Act of 2018 was the lack of specificity. They believed that too much was left up to interpretation, and that teachers could easily teach the subject poorly, or dismiss it all together.

2) Curriculum that spans K-12:

- a.** While there might have been disagreement about at what age to begin teaching these topics, there was consensus that some sort of conversation could take place at very early grades. While it might not engage in discussion of the Holocaust or violence and genocide per se, there could be broader discussions about caring for others (empathy), accepting people for who they are (tolerance), and not standing by when others are being hurt (bystander syndrome). The overarching idea that most of the educators pushed was that there needs to be a long arc or continuum of the conversation surrounding these issues, culminating with a deeper conversation in the later grades of high school. And related to this, they would like more knowledge about what others are doing. Teachers felt that they could and would be more successful in their teaching if they knew what other teachers had already taught.
- b.** Grade specific curriculum and resources that are class specific were two other areas educators asked for improvement. The most successful workshops according to the teachers, were the ones where they left with specific ideas, activities, and in class tools.

3) Resources on other episodes of genocide: The 2018 Act mandates not just Holocaust education but other episodes of genocide as well. Presumably, the state mandated this Act not simply because they want students to “never forget,” but because they also want them to understand how learning about the Holocaust can connect to other atrocities. Overwhelmingly, teachers believed that learning about these topics can produce empathy and tolerance in their students; that we can all learn from this history to help reduce future conflicts.

- a.** In light of the need and interest in teaching about atrocities beyond the Holocaust, teachers asked for more help and guidance in teaching other episodes of genocide. As one male teacher explained, “in terms of other genocides my knowledge is horrifically, and ashamedly so small. I taught a global studies class here at high school for a few years and we talked about some of those genocides like the Rwandan genocide and things like that but um my knowledge can very much fit on an index card for a lot of other genocides.” None of the survey respondents or interviewees felt confident teaching about episodes of genocide that were not the Holocaust. Some mentioned a few they touched on in class, but even then, they did so without confidence.
- b.** These other resources could be more information on established websites, it could be more access to books or films on different episodes of genocide, or it could be workshops as well. While many respondents had already taken workshops on Holocaust education, and expressed limited desire to take more, it appears they would be open to extending their professional development to these other episodes of genocide so that they could gain confidence. As Bauer notes,

“students must understand the ways in which the Holocaust was unprecedented, but not unique: genocides often share common features” (2015: 67). Further, if we are aware that we will have less survivors of the Holocaust around to share their stories, perhaps we should be turning to survivors of other episodes of genocide to make the personal connections for students.

- i. And no one expressed it more eloquently than Kofi Annan: “If our goal in teaching students about the Holocaust is to make them think harder about civic responsibility, human rights and the dangers of racism, then presumably we need to connect the Holocaust with other instances of genocide, and with ethnic conflicts or tensions in our own time and place” (2010).

4) The student perspective:

- a. If we truly want to understand accountability to this new mandate, we need to hear it from the students. There are a variety of ways to accomplish this. We asked the survey respondents to tell us about their assessment of students on these topics; if we anonymize the tests, essays, and papers, we could collect this information and have an understanding about what students are actually learning.
- b. Another way to receive this information is to have a survey specific to the students in the different grades. If we conducted these surveys, we could gather information not just about what they are learning, but about what they are retaining from different grade levels.
- c. Third, when thinking about students, we should also consider what they feel when they hear the stories and information from the Holocaust and other episodes of genocide. As Stevick and Michaels say, “Holocaust education can pay a great deal more attention to the emotional experience of children – and of teachers – as they encounter traumas of the past” (2016:3).

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Appendix A

Interview Guide

Demographic questions:

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Religion
4. Race/ethnicity
5. Political affiliation
6. Could you tell me about your own school experiences?
 1. (make sure to follow up with locations, etc)
7. Ask about school
 1. Rural, urban or suburban?
 - i. What do they like about it?
 - ii. What don't they like about it?
 2. Size of school
8. Ask about history of teaching
 1. When did they start
 2. What subject
 - i. Why that subject? What do they like about it? What don't they like about it?
 3. What grades
 - i. Why those grades? What do they like about it? What don't they like about it?
9. Ask about any administrative experience

Awareness:

1. How important is it to you to teach about the Holocaust and other episodes of genocide?
2. What skills and knowledge do you think students gain from learning about these issues?
 - a. At what age do you think it is appropriate for students to learn this material?
 - i. WHY?
3. Were you aware that this Act requiring the teaching of Holocaust and genocide studies was passed?
 - a. What do you consider the strengths of this act?
 - b. What do you think are the weaknesses of this act?
4. Were you teaching about the Holocaust before this Act? Expand A LOT
5. Were you teaching about any other episodes of genocide before this Act? Expand A LOT

Implementation:

1. Tell us about the curriculum structure at your school:
 - a. Is there a particular curriculum you must follow?
 - i. If so, who sets this curriculum and do you get any input?
 - ii. How do you feel about it? (Do you agree with what you have to teach? How would you change it if you could? If you had complete control over what was taught, what do you think the curriculum should look like?)
2. If you are teaching about the Holocaust: DESCRIBE IN DETAIL (How, when, for how long, explain lesson plans, what resources used, etc)
3. If you are teaching about other episodes of genocide: SAME
4. Are you aware of other teachers teaching on these topics at your school?

Knowledge:

1. How comfortable do you feel in your knowledge about the Holocaust?
 1. How/When did you learn about the Holocaust?
 2. Did you learn in graduate school how to teach it?
 3. How do you use the knowledge you have in the classroom?
2. How comfortable do you feel in your knowledge about other episodes of genocide?
SAME
3. How comfortable do you feel in your ability to teach about the Holocaust? TALK HERE ABOUT CLASSROOM CLIMATE; WHAT MAKES THEM UNCOMFORTABLE?
4. How comfortable do you feel in your ability to teach about other episodes of genocide?
SAME
5. Have you ever had a bad experience in teaching about these issues? If so, describe it.
 1. Did you talk to anyone about it?

Barriers:

1. What specific resources do you think you would **need** that would help you teach about the Holocaust or other episodes of genocide?
 1. Books (list all books)

2. Websites (list)
 3. Articles
 4. Films
 5. Guest speakers
 6. Any other forms?
-
2. Have you participated in any workshops or programs to aid you in teaching about the Holocaust or other episodes of genocide?
 1. If yes, please describe it.
 2. If not, please explain why not.
-
3. If you had the opportunity, would you participate in any workshops or programs to aid you in teaching about the Holocaust or other episodes of genocide?
 1. What would be your resistance to participating?
 2. If yes, please describe it.
 3. If not, please explain why not.