

# INTERACTIONS

## Explorations of Good Practice in Educational Work with Video Testimonies of Victims of National Socialism

edited by Werner Dreier | Angelika Laumer | Moritz Wein





Education with Testimonies, Vol.4

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Explorations of Good Practice in Educational Work with  
Video Testimonies of Victims of National Socialism

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**evz** FOUNDATION  
REMEMBRANCE  
RESPONSIBILITY  
FUTURE

**erinnern.at**  
NATIONALSOZIALISMUS UND HOLOCAUST:  
GEDÄCHTNIS UND GEGENWART

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## ABSTRACTS

Stephen Naron

### Archives, Ethics and Influence: how the Fortunoff Video Archive's Methodology Shapes its Collection's Content

The *Fortunoff Archive for Holocaust Testimonies* has been recording the testimonies of survivors, witnesses and bystanders of the Holocaust since 1979. It currently holds more than 4,400 testimonies, comprising over 10,000 recorded hours of videotape. This paper will discuss the Fortunoff Archive's history, "best practices", and foundational principles, as well as present the challenges and promises of a new period in which technology has enhanced the possibility of providing access to and using this now digital collection. ►

Albert Lichtblau

### Moving From Oral to Audiovisual History. Notes on Praxis

Oral History is related to a paradigm shift within historiography. Historians go into the field and create their own sources. Motivations have to be reflected as well as methodological implications or intentions. Digital media made it possible to film interviews which forced Oral Historians to discuss how visual information changes their approaches and methods. Oral Historians had to learn to listen and see. New forms of observations and interactions widened were introduced. The article explains the importance of quality standards for videotaping testimonies and provides useful information on the practicalities of interviewing and recording the interviews. ►

Sylvia Degen

### Translating Audiovisual Survivor Testimonies for Education: From Lost in Translation to Gained in Translation

Survivors' audiovisual testimonies have become increasingly important in educational programs on the history of National Socialism. Given the

speakers' language diversity, the usage of translated material is common, leading to the translation being a critical factor in the success of this transmission. However, creating high quality translations that support the educational goals of the contracting institutions is a complex endeavour – and its success is determined in large part by the working environment. This article discusses some aspects of the practical context in which the translation of audiovisual testimonies for educational purposes takes place. It is based on a study focussing on 24 interviews with a selection of different actors who participated in the translation processes at three major audiovisual archives in Germany – from translators to project directors. The results of this study provide a comprehensive insight into the investigated translation processes and a stable basis for their evaluation. Furthermore, they point to practicable improvement suggestions, which will be discussed in the second part of this contribution. In summary, the lesson to be learned is not simply about the need for funding for expensive, high quality translations. On the contrary, I would like to propose the optimisation of organisational processes and the establishment of clearer quality criteria for translations as an integral part of future projects – and that does not necessarily have to be more expensive. However, these measures require a better understanding of translation – often made invisible in the process – and the services professional <sup>1</sup> translators can offer. The aim of this article is to counter the widespread understanding of translation as merely “the same words just in a different language” and to raise awareness of the opportunities translation can provide for the current educational environment. ►

<sup>1</sup> Here, *professional* describes translators with a high quality standard who have chosen translation as a career, whether or not they acquired a university degree. There are of course translators who have gained the required expertise and specialist knowledge through means other than degree programs specific to translation.

Éva Kovács

### Testimonies in the Digital Age – New Challenges in Research, Academia and Archives

For many years after the Shoah, there was little analysis of survivors' testimonies in historical writing, and if testimonies appeared at all it was only as illustrations of personal experiences in the historians' "grand narrative". However, in the past 20 years, as digital oral history archives have been set up and opened, these testimonies have become sources of mainstream historical analysis. Moreover, memory cultures have changed crucially since 1990. The first part of the paper looks at the most relevant change, the emergence of trauma (cultural, social and historical) in public history, partly rooted in the experiences and memory of the Shoah and the digital "turn" in the archives of the testimony collections. The second part explores new techniques for using personal accounts, including the intuitive analysis of testimonies and qualitative approaches. Finally, I touch on the "post-testimony" age, and how the third generation deals with the legacy left by former survivors. I chose the case of the film *Son of Saul*, in which, in my view, testimonies and personal accounts have found their new voice in the age of post-testimony. ►

Kinga Frojimovics, Éva Kovács

### Tracing Jewish Forced Labour in the Kaiserstadt – A Tainted Tour of Vienna

The special urban nature of the Holocaust experiences of Jewish forced labourers deported from Hungary to Vienna in the summer of 1944 (use of public transport, work in industrial areas, visiting hospitals, etc.) combined with their images and knowledge of Viennese culture and history figure prominently in the survivors' testimonies. Moreover, on a number of occasions, these urban features determine the primary reception of the testimonies by the interviewer, which, in turn, further influences the interviews themselves. It is also very interesting how the new project of The *Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies* (Austria) entitled *Ungarische*

*Zwangsarbeit in Wien*, which is built mainly on these oral history sources, influences (or aims to influence) the recent images of Vienna. The overlap and (accidental, intentional and/or historical and cultural) juxtapositions between Vienna as the imperial “Kaiserstadt” and the locus of the Holocaust experiences of Jewish forced labourers deported from Hungary act as an especially potent way to create and emphasise complex Viennese narrative identities. In the paper we are offering an unusual “sightseeing tour” of Vienna, in which we wish to show the most emblematic tourist sites as the Prater, Schönbrunn, the Opera, and the Wienerwald from a Holocaust perspective. Our primary focus is the period of 1944–45, when thousands of Hungarian slave workers lived and worked all over the city. ►

Annemiek Gringold

### Voices in the Museum. Videotaped Testimonies as Objects of Cultural and Historical Heritage in the Jewish Cultural Quarter Amsterdam

The article explores the uses and relevance of videotaped testimonies and interviews in the Hollandsche Schouwburg and the National Holocaust Museum (currently under development) in the *Jewish Cultural Quarter* (JCQ) in Amsterdam, Netherlands. The Hollandsche Schouwburg (Dutch Theatre) served as “Umschlagplatz” (a collection point where Jews were detained before deportation) between 1942 and 1943. Bearing witness was and is important for some Holocaust survivors, to pass on the legacy and memory of those who were killed. Today, videotaped interviews are pivotal sources for the JCQ. Selected interview clips are used as preparatory lessons for school groups; testimonies are also used in museum exhibitions and other displays around the JCQ, and for historical research; but “new” video recordings are also still being made, centred around survivors, but including museum visitors and audiences. Since the opening of the National Holocaust Museum (NHM) in 2016, staff have hosted live interviews with survivors on a regular basis. These interviews and the interaction with the audiences is recorded and added to the collection. The JHM also experiments with recording memories, stories and anecdotes of museum visitors

during specially organised events. These recordings are not included in the museum's collection. ►

Madene Shachar, Michal Sadan

### Educational Programmes Based on Child Survivor Video Testimonies in the Yad LaYeled Children's Memorial Museum/ Ghetto Fighters' House Israel

The article explores the uses of video testimonies of Holocaust child survivors in permanent and various rotating exhibitions at Yad La Yeled and presents the museum staff's re-evaluations and ongoing reflections regarding the use of videotaped testimonies for young learners. Yad LaYeled developed an assessment based method for choosing the most appropriate videos (see appendix 1 and appendix 2). The article also shows Yad LaYeled's concept of simulacrum installations in its exhibitions and its educational work with plays. The museum is dedicated to creating a collective memory of the Holocaust through its exhibitions, architecture and educational programmes. Its educational philosophy is based on constructivist educational theory and performative strategies and focuses on the young learner and his/her needs and abilities. ►

Anika Reichwald

### The Search for an Appropriate Approach. Video Testimonies and their Use in the Jewish Museum Hohenems.

Videotaped testimonies of Holocaust survivors are seldom displayed in European Jewish museums. This paper aims to question why. It will discuss the purpose of Jewish museums in Europe and the purpose of displaying video testimonies of Holocaust survivors in permanent exhibitions. It will also look at the technical and content advantages and disadvantages of having video interviews in permanent exhibits. The use of video testimonies in the permanent exhibition of the *Jewish Museum Hohenems*, in Austria, is referenced to outline general ideas and thoughts on this topic. In a third section, this paper sums up other uses of video testimony at the Jewish

Museum Hohenems, such as a concept for a temporary exhibit focused on video testimonies; multi-media terminals with additional video material; and the use of video material for specific educational programmes. ►

Susan Hogervorst

### *Distanced by the Screen. Student History Teachers and Video Archives of Second World War Interviews in the Netherlands*

This article discusses the role of live and videotaped testimonies in history education in the Netherlands. It focuses on the use of an online interview portal called *Getuigenverhalen.nl* (Witness stories), which offers about 500 interviews on topics related to the Second World War. There are currently no educational projects being developed around this portal, but teachers and students are the implicit target audiences. Use of the website was studied through web statistics, a web questionnaire, and a focus group interview with student history teachers. This exploratory focus group interview indicated both continuity and change regarding the (intended) use of video testimonies or live guest lectures. Both were regarded as illustrations of the regular curriculum and textbooks. However, seeing a witness on screen rather than in person allowed students to be more critical about that witness as a historical source. ►

Irmgard Bibermann

### *The International Research Project Shoah in daily school life. How do Pupils Use Videotaped Eyewitness Interviews with Survivors in a Tablet Application?*

The question of the right teaching setting for work with videotaped testimonies to ensure that learners obtain maximum benefit for the development of historical competencies has been the subject of theoretical reflection but of little empirical research. For that reason, *\_erinnern.at\_* organised the international research project *Shoah in daily school life*. A teaching unit was developed based on three video interviews with eyewitnesses for use on tablets. The material (questionnaires, pupil

assignments in response to the video interviews, tracking data) offers interesting insights into history teaching and learning processes. The author analyses the data collected on the basis of the central questions of research: What can be inferred about the pupils' history learning processes? How do pupils assess their learning processes and results? Was it a good history lesson from the pupils' point of view? How do pupils make use of videotaped testimonies? ►

Ilene R. Berson, Michael J. Berson

*Tattered Dolls and Teddy Bears Tell Tales of Hope and Perseverance: Developing a Pedagogic Paradigm for Teachers' Use of Holocaust Testimony to Engage Young Students in Exploring Social Injustices.*

This article provides a starting point for exploring digital testimony as intriguing remnants of history that can support young students' active learning and intellectual curiosity. The focus of our research is on how the personal stories of Holocaust survivors captured in video testimony may assist effective implementation of Holocaust education in early learning and elementary school contexts. We have examined pedagogical paradigms for Holocaust education in the early years and considered the complexities involved in selecting digital testimony from Holocaust survivors for use in early childhood and elementary settings. The intended outcome of this work is to identify strategies to build connections to children's lives today and establish a foundation for a spiraling curriculum, in which young children become familiar with the personal stories of individuals in the Holocaust and get acquainted with the historical terms and context. This project builds upon our earlier pilot research in US public elementary schools, which explored how Holocaust survivors' digital testimonies may promote participatory and student-driven learning. In the early years, the focus is on establishing a foundation for historical inquiry through scaffolded analysis of video testimonies. We describe a few examples to help illustrate the use of Holocaust testimony in teaching young children as well as pedagogic applications. ►

Maria Ecker-Angerer

“What exactly makes a good interview?”

Educational Work with Videotaped Testimonies at [\\_erinnern.at\\_](http://erinnern.at)

The article is an attempt to find answers to the frequently asked question of what constitutes a good interview. First, a number of didactic principles on which [\\_erinnern.at\\_](http://erinnern.at) bases its work on projects with videotaped testimonies are introduced and illustrated with practical examples from educational materials and practical reports, namely active involvement with what is shown, tuning in to the source, describing one’s own reactions, taking responsibility for one’s own learning process, presenting the source as faithfully as possible and analysing with empathy. On that basis, four answers to the initial question are presented and discussed. ►

James Griffiths, Louise Stafford

Context is Key. A Study on Primary-Aged Children’s Learning with Testimonies of Holocaust Survivors

This paper shares the findings from the latest research undertaken by the National Holocaust Centre and Museum (NHCM) which sought to understand more fully the value to be afforded to videotaped testimony, as opposed to other educational interventions, i.e. the educator, the exhibition and first-hand survivor testimony, in helping primary-aged children learn about difference and developing their knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust. The Learning Programme, *Our Lonely Journey*, consisted of two workshops, delivered in school and which sandwiched a visit to *The Journey* exhibition at NHCM. The research findings overwhelmingly refer to the importance placed by pupils on listening to the testimony of a survivor in person and the ability to engage with their story. However the research also found that pupils place a different emphasis on the other interventions depending on whether or not they are referring to learning about difference or learning about the Holocaust. When learning about difference the students placed the emphasis on the role of the educator compared to videotaped testimonies when learning about the Holocaust. ►

Arlene Sher

**Combatting Afrophobia and Teaching about Moral Choices.  
Using Testimonies in Educational Programmes about the Holocaust and  
Genocide in the South African Context**

In examining how the Johannesburg Holocaust and Genocide Centre (JHGC) uses testimonies to teach about the Holocaust and the genocide in Rwanda, I look at the use of a specific film, entitled *Testimony*. This recounts the testimonies of five Holocaust survivors who settled in Cape Town. It is distributed to educators required to teach about the Holocaust as part of the South African national curriculum. 22 additional video testimonies of survivors from both the Holocaust and the genocide in Rwanda were specifically produced for the JHGC.

These are used to teach about particular South African issues, such as dealing with Afrophobia and helping students discuss South Africa's own difficult past. They form an integral part of the centre's teaching about moral choices – namely the choice of being perpetrators, bystanders or “upstanders”. ►

Dorothee Wein

**Voices of Survivors at Sites of Perpetrators.  
Educational Approaches to Using Video Testimonies at the Topography  
of Terror Documentation Center, Berlin**

The *Topography of Terror* documentation center in Berlin, on the site of the former headquarters of the Gestapo, the SS High Command and the Reich Security Main Office, organises a series of seminars entitled “Voices of Survivors at Sites of Perpetrators”, using photographs shown in the permanent exhibition and contrasting them with the video testimonies of survivors. The essay looks at the variety of educational approaches used at this perpetrators' site as being representative of the different forms of historical learning possible using testimony as a crucial source. It explores how the different approaches tend to overlap in the video interviews, and concludes that it takes time and appropriate settings to process their wealth of content. The video testimonies open doors to the past; they raise

questions about the aftermath in the narrators' lives, but they also call for the viewer's responses. ►

Tony Cole, Darius Jackson

*"I wonder where I will be tomorrow". Using Filmed Testimony to Develop Historical Knowledge and Understanding of the Holocaust with Primary School Children and Students with Special Educational Needs (SEN)*

In January 2015 the British prime minister's commission on Holocaust education (Cabinet Office 2015) identified the need to film and record the memories of Holocaust survivors living in Britain. As a result, a large programme of interviewing and filming Holocaust survivors was established. However, there is a tension in the Holocaust Commission's report between preserving the testimony and using it to construct historical knowledge. It is not enough to collect and conserve the testimony of the victims of National Socialism, this is curating. Historical knowledge is an interpretation of the past based on evidence, so it is essential that students use recorded testimony to help formulate their own understanding. Our paper explicitly relates to the school "environment" theme of the workshop. It shows how the recorded testimony of a victim of National Socialist persecution can be used to further pupils' understanding of how historical knowledge is itself socially constructed. We explore how students use the testimony of Miriam Kleinman, a collection of her personal objects and contextual knowledge to develop a detailed understanding of her experiences as a refugee and her family life in pre-war Belgium. Students place this life within a wider European context and become aware that there are contradictions and ambiguities in people's memories and that this is "part and parcel" of doing real history. ►

Birte Hewera

*Survivors as Subjects of Documentation. The Witnesses and Education Film Series by Yad Vashem and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

The “end of testimony” has been discussed for decades now. But what does the concept of testimony imply in the context of the Shoah? What insights can be gleaned from the testimonies of survivors – especially for education on the history of the Shoah? And what are the differences between literary and digital testimonies? These questions are addressed in this paper with reference to the *Witnesses and Education* film series produced jointly by the *International School for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem* and the *Multimedia Center at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem*. The series comprises 14 biographical films produced on the basis of Yad Vashem’s educational guidelines. In the films, the Jewish survivors of the Shoah are accompanied on a journey that takes them to the places of their childhood and to the scenes of the crimes where they speak about their experiences and sufferings. The protagonists are cast as the subjects, not the objects of documentation. The way in which they present and interpret the historical events is their choice; it is their voices we hear and their faces we see. The audience is thus confronted by protagonists as complex, autonomous individuals, who had to act and take decisions under terrible conditions, and they see that actions and decisions taken by other people (help, betrayal, passivity) played a major role in determining the course of events. History is seen as the result of human action, which makes it possible and logical to establish links with the present in an educational setting. ►

Carson Phillips

*“The Limits of My Language are the Limits of My World”: Using Recorded Testimonies of Holocaust Survivors with English Language Learners*

The recorded testimonies of Holocaust survivors can be effectively used by educators as a pedagogical tool for adult English Language Learners. Combined with specific teaching strategies for language acquisition and retention, recorded testimonies help to build vocabulary, enhance an understanding of

the Holocaust, and provide learners with concrete examples of individuals who immigrated to a new country and acquired the necessary linguistic and cultural skills to effectively integrate into a new host society. Through these shared experiences of immigration and integration, the recorded testimonies of Holocaust survivors offer a new entry point to learn about the Holocaust. In the first section, the author describes the pedagogical strategies underpinning this approach, moving into concrete examples drawn from the practical application of the methodology. The final section contextualises the Canadian society that many survivors of the Holocaust encountered in the immediate post-war period. Using archival images to illustrate some of the issues present in Canadian civil society of the era, the author demonstrates how the multicultural and diverse characteristic of Canada, and Toronto in particular, evolved over time. Throughout, the immigration and integration experiences of Holocaust survivors serves as a model for future generations of newcomers to Canada. ►

Kori Street, Andrea Szőnyi

### Videotaped Testimonies of Victims of National Socialism in Educational Programs: The Example of USC Shoah Foundation's Online Platform IWitness

This paper explores how testimony-based education is delivered across several geographical locations through the USC Shoah Foundation – the Institute for Visual History and Education's (referred to as the Institute) educational platform *IWitness*. It references the most recent evaluation of the *Skittles*, *Deplorables*, and *All Lives Matter* program to demonstrate the potential of testimony-based education. It also shows the opportunities presented by *IWalks* – a learning experience that blends testimony with an interrogation of historical spaces in contemporary time. The Institute follows constructivist learning theory and is guided by the Theory of Change, which says that if individuals such as students and teachers engage with testimony they will experience attitudinal and behavioral changes that will make them more likely to contribute to civil society. The Institute defines contributing to civil society at minimum as making responsible choices –

refusing to tolerate racist ideas or prejudicial treatment, and countering attitudes and acts of hatred. ►

Dorothee Wein, Šárka Jarská, Natalia Timofeeva

### The Web Application *Learning with Interviews. Forced Labor 1939–1945 for German, Czech and Russian schools. Common Ground and Country-Specific Differences*

Funded by the Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future (EVZ), partners in Germany, the Czech Republic and the Russian Federation (Freie Universität Berlin, *Živá paměť*, and the *Regional Center for Oral History* at the Voronezh Institute of High Technologies) developed digital learning platforms based on the videotaped testimonies of former forced labourers. The essay introduces the common structure, educational principles and country-specific differences of the website, which is devoted to using video testimonies for teaching in three countries with controversial histories. Taking into account the specific educational contexts in the three countries, shared strategies were found, in spite of differences in their cultures of remembrance. The paper sheds light on the specific approaches adopted and concludes with a summary of some useful educational guidelines. ►

Teon Djingo

### Tracing Videotaped Testimonies of Victims of National Socialism for Educational Programmes. The Macedonian Case

The project *Oral history interviews of the Former Yugoslavia Witnesses Documentation Project in Macedonia* is part of the collection of the *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum* (USHMM) in Washington, D C. As part of the project, I conducted 30 interviews with non-Jewish witnesses who saw or participated in the deportation of Jews from Macedonia in 1943. They gave us precious information regarding conditions in Macedonia during the Second World War and the anti-Jewish measures imposed by the Bulgarian and German authorities. Testimonies described ordinary life in the cities of Shtip, Bitola and Skopje between the wars, local stereotypes about the

Jews in Macedonia, the arrival of the German and Bulgarian forces and the looting of Jewish property, but also information regarding conditions in the Monopol tobacco factory in Skopje, where Jews were held before they were deported to the Treblinka death camp. The interviews are used in primary and high schools in Macedonia during history classes dealing with the Holocaust and the deportation of the Jews. They are also often used in lectures and workshops at the Holocaust Memorial Center for the Jews of Macedonia in Skopje. ►

Iryna Kashtalian

### [The Educational Use of Videoed Memoirs and Material on the History of the Minsk Ghetto and the Maly Trostenets Extermination Site](#)

The article describes using videotaped interviews for educational purposes in Belarus to teach about the Minsk ghetto and the Maly Trostenets extermination site. Official school history textbooks in Belarus pay little attention to the subject, or the Holocaust. The *Leonid Levin Historical Workshop* is trying to raise awareness and broaden knowledge of these events, gathering collected video testimonies into a dedicated electronic archive of witness memoirs and providing an alternative perspective on the history of the Second World War in Belarus. Educational activities involving such sources are used in three areas: an exhibition about Maly Trostenets, an oral history competition for students of various ages, and in special educational materials for schools. ►

Peter Gautschi

### [The Educational Use of Videoed Memoirs and Material on the History of the Minsk Ghetto and the Maly Trostenets Extermination Site](#)

The goal of this paper is to present a systematic overview of the use of videotaped eyewitness interviews with victims of National Socialism in the educational context on the basis of a five-stage analysis. First of all, the videotaped testimonies presented during the workshop are considered as a specific genre. Then a theoretical model is introduced on the basis of

the didactic triangle to describe and localise the educational materials presented. In a third step, the article will look at how children, young people and adults learn about history with the help of videotaped eyewitness videos. In the fourth part, those aspects of the educational materials presented are identified that seem most promising. The objective is to define factors that have a positive influence on the use within the school system of videotaped eyewitness testimonies with victims of National Socialism and to analyse how historical learning can be triggered by the various education programmes presented in the “education” group at the workshop in Vienna. ►



## PREFACE

The *systematic* treatment of eyewitness testimonies from survivors of the crimes of the National Socialists has not entered into the standard repertoire of historical science. Still less has it found a place in classroom and extra-curricular education in many countries. With the spread of oral history as a discipline to the German-speaking countries and above all with the growing willingness in Germany, Austria and Switzerland in particular to face up to the criminal past of the Nazi regime, increased efforts have been made to identify, preserve and process this treasure of memory as a further source of historical knowledge in addition to the classic documents. At the same time, there was growing consternation at the realisation that the last survivors of Nazi crime, who were able to bear personal witness to their experiences, sufferings and coping strategies, would soon be dead. All that also corresponded with a much belated shift in focus in society and politics to the victims themselves, who wished – after decades of mainly public denial of the wrongs done to them – to receive due recognition and increasingly did so. Through facing up to past events and the establishment of a memory culture at the individual level, the anonymity of a million-fold evil was given a face and a voice. And it was not merely fortuitous that these developments were strengthened and focussed in the context of the political debate on the long rejected calls for compensation for the victims of Nazi crimes, namely the many millions of slave labourers and concentration camp inmates.

In 2000, the German Bundestag decided that the public *Foundation “Remembrance, Responsibility and Future”* (Stiftung “Erinnerung, Verantwortung und Zukunft”, EVZ) had been established by a federal law not only to pay so-called symbolic compensation to former forced labourers and other victims but also (*quote from the law*): “to keep alive the memory of the injustice inflicted on the victims [of National Socialism] for coming generations”. In the first few years, the *EVZ Foundation* fulfilled this commitment primarily by supporting personal encounters between victims of National Socialism and

young people. At the same time it was clear that, in the foreseeable future, it would no longer be possible to pass on memories in this way. Following the example set by other institutions (for example, the *Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies* launched in 1979, the *USC Shoah Foundation* interviews initiated by Steven Spielberg in the 1990s and *Yad Vashem*), the Foundation set up an international project in which former slave and forced labourers were asked about their life histories. Between 2005 and 2007, almost 600 interviews were conducted in 26 countries. In cooperation with the *Freie Universität Berlin*, these interviews were later prepared for the digital archive *Forced Labor 1939–1945. Memory and History* and were made available to the public for research, training, and educational and media purposes. During this process of coming to terms with the past, the Foundation’s intention was not to brush over the crimes and systemic relationships in favour of promoting undue identification with the testimonies of former victims of National Socialism. Nor would it have been possible to analyse and understand the dynamics of Nazi rule solely from the perspective of the victims. The aim was rather to open up an additional perspective or even different perspectives of former victims which are essential to understanding the history of National Socialism, perspectives which for various reasons and many decades had played only a subordinate role in research and education. One particular challenge we face today, therefore, is to uncover the wealth of documented victim perspectives while at the same time avoiding any exaggerated elevation of the testimonies. The reports of the survivors are not “final” truths. The “status” of the testimonies – what do they stand for? – is one of the basic questions of educational work with these documents. Moreover, we are aware that even personal memory is not a fixed narrative but changes over time. Subjective memory follows current public discourses in order to validate its relevance. Despite that, even changing subjective narratives can claim authenticity, which makes them attractive for educational purposes. They also open the door to further important questions – about perpetrators and structures, about the scope for independent individual action, about the possibility of resistance, about individual responsibility and so on. In this

respect, the perspective of the victims is indispensable. With this in mind, the EVZ Foundation decided at an early stage to make younger people aware of this rich collection of biographical interviews through various educational formats. As time goes on, young people will have less and less direct contact with this history through family members, or no contact at all, and their lives today are fundamentally different from those of the victims in the first half of the 20th century. Together with its partners, the *EVZ Foundation* has developed online teaching materials, taking selected interviews from the digital archive *Forced Labor 1939–1945. Memory and History*, putting them into context and preparing them for educational use. This kind of educational material is already available for the Czech Republic, Germany and Russia and is currently being prepared for use in Poland. Clearly, the conditions for the educational use of these materials are different in the former “victim countries” – the territories occupied by the Nazis – than in the former “perpetrator countries” and different again in, say, the USA. They accordingly have to be adapted to the different conditions and contexts – cultures of remembrance, national debates and education systems – so that the finished materials differ from country to country. In recent years, the EVZ Foundation has also encouraged academics to undertake research into the various and demanding aspects of integrating testimonies of survivors into education work in accordance with sound pedagogical principles, and an international conference entitled “Preserving Survivors’ Memories” was held in Berlin and the results were published in 2016 <sup>1</sup>. The conference was organised in cooperation with *Freie Universität Berlin* and the *USC Shoah Foundation*. It drew attention to a number of challenges:

- We are still at an important turning point – the transition from “communicative” to “cultural” memory. The latter can no longer draw on exchanges with living eyewitnesses. The simple act of documenting as many life histories as possible was in itself an important step in this transition. But it would be naive to believe that by making testimonies available for future generations the job is already finished.

- Cultural memory will be “digital memory” in many important respects. That involves strategies of digital selection and evaluation techniques, which will have a growing impact on what will be remembered.
- We have to be aware of the performative power of those media on which cultural memory relies. Simply speaking, the medium influences the message.
- Finally, we must also address the challenges that arise when video interviews are embedded in different educational formats and environments, for example at memorial sites or in museums or classrooms.

To address this last issue further, the EVZ Foundation invited partners to develop secondary ideas and concepts for an international workshop in 2017 on **“Video-taped interviews”**. The team from *\_erinnern.at\_* undertook to hold a workshop on the subject, **to explore and to develop quality criteria for such interviews** and afterwards to prepare a publication in our “Education with Testimonies” online series | 2 . This is the result. The various contributions clearly demonstrate that, in the interest of sound didactic methods and results based on systematic working and scientific principles, it is necessary to adopt a multidimensional, critical and yet also open approach. In terms of methods, a distinction must be made between the treatment of existing eyewitness testimonies (in this case mainly interviews) on the one hand and the demands to be made of other (new) eyewitness interviews on the other. That is exactly what is meant by “to explore and to develop quality criteria”. One thing that is clearly needed – as with all historical sources – is a source-critical approach to the eyewitness testimonies. They are just *one* – albeit special – historical genre. As sources, they must be treated much like autobiographies – with one significant difference in that they are the result of a communicative process involving an interviewer. Subsequent analysis of eyewitness interviews to be found in existing collections or archives shows that the setting has a decisive influence on what is remembered and communicated – even to the extent that one and the same person will remember or address different aspects from one interview to the next. This relates to

the principal questions concerning such interviews: do these eyewitness testimonies constitute objective formulations or subjective memories of historical events, or are such interviews a (psychological relevant) medium, as it were, for the necessary process of coming to terms with past experiences and sufferings? Or do they represent a medium for the eyewitnesses to reach a longed-for audience – and today achieve “recognition” – after so many years of silence? And how to avoid conducting new interviews in which the interviewees present conditioned memories and simply say what they think people want to hear? Experience shows, for example, that interviews given by witnesses in criminal cases involving Nazi war crimes will differ from those conducted in the context of reconstruction of family biographies. In broader terms, the question is therefore about the definition of authenticity and truth that such interviews (can) represent. Clarification of all these questions, as the essays in this collection clearly illustrate, does not in itself provide a blueprint for the appropriate – i.e. insightful, enriching and also responsible – educational application of eyewitness testimonies. The use in the classroom of the classic sources relating to National Socialism has already involved many cases in which unreflected confrontations with piles of corpses of Nazi victims have not exactly provided an educational experience but rather have led to rejection and incomprehension. The systematic use of videotaped eyewitness testimonies in extracurricular education and especially in the classroom, too, is at a comparatively early stage, and there is still need for further development work, but the results to date are encouraging. The advantage of this medium for adolescents in particular is that they do not have to begin by studying the abstract mechanisms of a regime but rather are able to consider a life-story at the micro-level as a key to history great and small. It is the objective of the EVZ Foundation to facilitate such educational processes and to experiment with these formats, which make it possible to understand history and the actors. In order to safeguard the quality of these educational processes, this requires ongoing reflection on the methods employed, on their strengths and weaknesses. That applies to both educational work and the production of additional interviews. I hope that the various

contributions to this collection will help point the way in responding to some of the above-mentioned challenges.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank all the authors and especially Werner Dreier, Moritz Wein and Angelika Laumer for organising the conference and producing this collection of essays. My thanks also go to Will Firth, Christopher Marsh and Jessica Ring for the English translations, Jay Sivell for the editing and Hedwig Ruf for the layout. At the EVZ Foundation, Sonja Begalke and Ralf Possekel especially deserve a grateful mention for the significant contribution they have made in the last few years in promoting and providing scientific support for such eyewitness projects.

Günter Saathoff

June 2017

Co-Director of the EVZ Foundation

- 1 Apostolopoulos, N., Barricelli, M., Koch, G.(2016). *Preserving Survivors' Memories. Digital Testimony Collections about Nazi Persecution: History, Education and Media*. Berlin: EVZ.
- 2 In the last few years, under my political guidance, the EVZ Foundation has supported a large number of international projects on the subject of eyewitness testimonies from victims of National Socialism and also produced a related series of publications. To access the publications, see <http://www.stiftung-evz.de/handlungsfelder/auseinandersetzung-mit-der-geschichte/bildung-mit-zeitzeugnissen.html>, accessed 21 September 2017.

Werner Dreier, Angelika Laumer, Moritz Wein

## INTRODUCTION

“A Hellish Noise” (2015) is the title of a videotaped testimony of a very special kind. <sup>11</sup> The 21-minute video <sup>12</sup> produced by the artist Tatiana Lecomte centres on Jean-Jacques Boijentin, who was deported from France to the Gusen Concentration Camp in Austria. In Gusen II Boijentin was sent to a slave labour factory located in a large tunnel: There, like many other prisoners, he worked under catastrophic conditions, which many inmates did not survive, assembling jet fighter aircraft for the Messerschmitt company. When eyewitnesses speak of the tunnel, the deafening noise of the machines used to produce the aeroplanes is a recurring motif. Instead of simply describing the noise in the video, which was made in 2015, Boijentin explained the sounds of the underground factory to a sound effects engineer, who then translated the description into the appropriate sounds. For example, the eyewitness Boijentin provided the following explanation: “The timber prop makes no noise when it falls on people; it simply falls and the people fall with it.” The sound effects man thought about it and experimented with ways of imitating the dull thud and abrupt silence that sounds like people falling on top of one another with a timber prop until Boijentin finally said, “Yes, that’s it!” This video is special and fascinating because it reveals the memory and communication work performed by the two: the eyewitness struggling to find a description of his perceptions and overpowering experience that is adequate and understandable for others, and the sound effects engineer struggling to understand the narrative, to empathise with it and translate it into his/her own experiential world. In their interaction, they produce a current social memory of slave labour in Gusen II for future access, reproduction and use in the medium of video. <sup>13</sup> Moreover, the subject of the video is given a social framework, referencing as it does earlier accounts of Gusen II: Specifically, it is about the sound and the noise, which plays a role in many previous narratives.

## Video Testimonies and Academic Holocaust Research

Boijentin, like many other eyewitnesses in the post-war period, frequently visited schools to speak about his experiences. It has already been said that the eyewitness has long become omnipresent (Sabrow 2012; Skriebeleit 2017). We know relatively little, however, about the reception of their testimonies. This omnipresence is due above all to the fact that the interviews have been recorded and collected as videos, which have been made accessible and disseminated and have thus enjoyed a long media life. Numerous collections of interviews with victims of National Socialism have been established in various countries in the last few decades. The motives for recording and archiving the videotaped testimonies vary but a decidedly educational objective is often involved (Taubitz 2016a: 75), namely to ensure that future generations can learn about the Holocaust and slave labour under the Nazis. But how do we explain the genesis of these many collections of videotaped testimonies with victims of National Socialism and the high level of familiarity, not only of the collections but also of the eyewitness as the mediator of history? How is this educational objective implemented in practice at the international level, and how learning processes are triggered by presenting what in cinematographic terms is often criticised as “talking heads” 14 ?

Let us begin with the first question: How and why were all these collections created? The historical and political science communities in Austria, the USA and West Germany who addressed the subject of the Holocaust never showed much interest in audio or visual testimonies. *The Destruction of the European Jews* Raul Hilberg's (1961; 1985), which is today's standard work for Holocaust research, focusses on the bureaucratic structures of the Holocaust and is thus based primarily on the documents produced by the perpetrators. Apart from that, it lasted decades before Hilberg's work was published in the German-speaking world. 15 Similarly, Saul Friedländer (2007), who probably devotes more space to the voices of the persecuted than any other historian, places his trust in diaries and memoirs but makes no use of video interviews. Timothy Snyder (2010), who consulted the *Fortunoff Video Archive of Holocaust Testimonies* (Fortunoff Archive) for “Bloodlands”, is the exception in

this respect. While the social science and humanities communities initially found it difficult to include the Holocaust as a relevant subject in their respective canons, and written memoirs were slow to find their way into the history books, Jews began to record their experiences of persecution for posterity during the Holocaust already. A case in point is the secret archive kept by Emanuel Ringelblum in the Warsaw ghetto (see Janczewska 2015). In this volume, Stephen Naron and Éva Kovács refer to initiatives, historical commissions and individuals who collected eyewitness accounts and memoirs of witnesses of the Holocaust immediately after the Second World War (see also Boder 1949; Jockusch 2012; Oppermann 2017). The Allies also created records of Nazi crimes, often with testimonies from Holocaust witnesses (see Keilbach 2016: 205–207). Similarly, the Red Army was already compiling “statements from survivors of the first phase of the Shoah” on the Crimean peninsula in 1942 (Shrayer 2014 quoted after Bothe 2015: 59). In addition, a number of literary works and autobiographies written by victims of persecution appeared in the early post-war period, although they did not at first attract a significant audience.

### Societal Constellations for the Genesis and Popularisation of Video Testimony Collections

Interviewees had to be found and interviews organised, the interviews videotaped, and the testimonies collected and processed, and for all that standardised procedures had to be developed. Andree Michaelis (2013) explains these procedures in the case of the *Visual History Archive of the Shoah Foundation* (VHA) and Noah Shenker (2015) examines them with reference to various collections in the USA. These standard procedures achieved general acceptance in the western world in the post-war period. In their respective collections, the various actors developed standards for making the interviews available and disseminating them. <sup>16</sup> That occurred in interaction with the following societal constellations and contexts: Witnesses became a phenomenon in the *juridical context* as Holocaust witnesses gave evidence in trials of Nazi criminals. For Annette Wieviorka (2006), the 1961 Eichmann trial in Israel is the

beginning of the “Advent of the Witness”. Witnesses of the Holocaust were also called to testify at other trials of National Socialist perpetrators. As they received global media coverage, after the Eichmann trial, these witnesses assumed an immediate reality for the people following the trials in the radio and television reports (Knellessen 2015; Yablonka 2015). The testimonies of witnesses in the Eichmann and the first Frankfurt Auschwitz trial are also available in the Internet today <sup>17</sup> (see also Dorothee Wein’s contribution “Voices of Survivors at Sites of Perpetrators” in this volume). At the Yad Vashem memorial site, on the other hand, such interviews with Holocaust witnesses have been recorded since 1954 and at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem since the 1960s (Taubitz 2016b: 64; Bothe 2015: 60). Merle Funkenberg (2016) has studied the volunteer support provided to witnesses since the first Frankfurt Auschwitz trial. This refers to the *psychological (and psychoanalytical) context* in which the testimonies were given. The Fortunoff Archive was specifically launched in 1979 for psychoanalytical treatment of the experiences of Holocaust witnesses. The accounts were videotaped, as was the interviewer’s act of *listening*, which Dori Laub, one of the initiators of the collection, describes as being so fundamental in trauma coping strategy. In this volume, *Stephen Naron* offers an insight into the beginnings, the objective and the specific character of this archive and into the role of the audience when witnesses of the Holocaust bear testimony. The scientific community has also studied the narratives of Holocaust witnesses and social memory. Representatives of various disciplines have analysed the traumata caused by the Holocaust, survival and the repercussions and have studied the effects these traumata can have for the act of telling or the inability to tell and for the reception of the narratives (see Caruth 1996; Felman 1992; Keilbach 2008: 153–162; Langer 1991). At the same time, criticism has been levelled by cultural scientists and philosophers at the generalising assertion that eyewitnesses are traumatised and at classifications they consider to have generalising effects with regard to whether and if so how the interviewees have access to their own experiences and what impacts they have on their narratives. <sup>18</sup> (See Kansteiner 2004; Michaelis 2013: 220–221; Tresize 2013).

Many of the collections have been created in the context of the *Oral History* movement and – in Austria and Germany – in the context of *face-to-face eyewitness talks in the classroom and extracurricular education*. To share information on the history of the Holocaust and persecution during the period of National Socialism, victims of the Nazis started visiting schools in late 1970s and early 1980s to speak of their experiences. After the establishment of the first concentration camp memorial sites, eyewitnesses worked as volunteers there, telling visitors about their imprisonment and taking them on tours of the sites (for example, see Satjukow 2012). The videotaped testimonies were a form of continuation and further development of oral history and – in Austria and Germany – of the historical research performed in history workshops, as explained in this volume by *Albert Lichtblau* (on differences between face-to-face meetings with witnesses and videotaped testimonies see also Susan Hogervorst, James Griffiths/ Louise Stafford and Birte Hewera in this volume). Some of these history workshops have generated institutions with professional exhibitions. Some testimonies were videotaped in order to preserve the interviews for future educational use, and many videotaped testimonies have been produced *in the context of history exhibitions* held at memorial sites and in museums. Lichtblau explains the importance of quality standards for videotaping testimonies and provides useful information on the practicalities of interviewing and recording the interviews. In terms of mediality, there are similarities and differences between unrecorded oral history interviews and videotaped testimonies: Both are *spoken* media, although the interviews normally have a dialogue structure. Even in the case of interviews with a pronounced narrative character, a second person – the interviewer – is always present, whether visible in the video or not. Oral history interviews and testimonies are sometimes transcribed. In that case the talks also exist in *written form*. The recipients can no longer enter into a direct dialogue with the interviewees; videos can be reproduced, edited and utilised. The – apparent – volatility and interactivity of the interview combines with the permanent, immutable and easily canonised form of the videos and the transcript. On the other hand, the permanent character of the

video becomes volatile again whenever it is cut and recontextualised, for example in the Internet or for an app or an exhibition. Videotaped testimonies conflate the characteristics of oral, written and digital mediality. Christoph Classen (2012: 305–306) has already said with regard to the television age that a strict distinction can no longer be made between communicative and cultural memory. The dissemination and familiarity of video interviews and testimonies as a medium for communicating the history of National Socialist crimes have developed in close interaction with the *television context*. Jan Taubitz, for example, says that the interviews have unconsciously borrowed from presentations in popular culture, “from which, however, they vehemently disassociate themselves” (Taubitz 2016a: 75), and he concludes,

“that comedy |9 (in a narrative-dramaturgical sense) has emerged as the dominant structure of both the eyewitness interview and popular culture” (Ibid.).

The NBC series *Holocaust* and the response in the media marked a caesura; the Holocaust became a subject of social debate in West-Germany and the USA at the end of the 1970s. It could be narrated with reference to individual characters and their experiences and with a specific plot. Recording and collecting videotaped testimonies became an institutionalised activity in the USA: The Fortunoff Archive started recording interviews in May 1979, the *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum* (USHMM) in 1988 (Taubitz 2016b: 89–110). Prior to the NBC series, the Holocaust had already been touched upon on television in a variety of formats including shows: In the 1950s the US reality documentary series *This is Your Life* included the life stories of Holocaust witnesses. In their dramaturgical structure, they had certain similarities with the later testimonies in the collections (Ibid.: 161–185). Taubitz also shows that the testimonies became the subject of comment and reflection in the television culture of the USA, for example in the sitcom *The Sarah Silverman Program* (2010) (Ibid.: 278–280). In Germany, too, the Holocaust was occasionally referenced on television in the 1950s and 1960s (see Bothe 2015: 60). Another example of a relatively early television film involving an eyewitness in Germany is

“Mendel Schainfeld’s zweite Reise nach Deutschland” (“Mendel Schainfeld’s Second Trip to Germany”), which was produced in 1972. From the 1980s onwards, witnesses of the Holocaust made increasingly frequent appearances in German talkshows (Keilbach 2008: 186–189). Last but not least, the History programme developed by the ZDF television channel with Guido Knopp as resident historian has anchored the figure of the eyewitness in the public mind (see Classen 2012; Kansteiner 2012; Keilbach 2008: 190–192). According to Keilbach the term “eyewitness”/“contemporary witness” (“ZeitzeugIn” in German) |10 has been infinitely extended through this kind of television programme, and everyone, including perpetrators, is now bearing witness to the history of National Socialism, for example in the “Holocaust” broadcast by the ZDF in 2000 (Keilbach 2008: 235–236, see also Birte Hewera in this volume). The *cinema context* has also contributed to the popularisation of presentations of the Holocaust. That is particularly clear in the case of the film *Schindler’s List* (1993), since the director Steven Spielberg established the VHA after making the film (see Taubitz 2016b: 240–258). In Claude Lanzmann’s documentary *Shoah* (1985), too, eyewitnesses were presented in moving images (although Lanzmann was highly critical of “Schindler’s List”). In *Shoah*, Lanzmann is shown speaking to victims and perpetrators of the Holocaust. But he also speaks to the Holocaust researcher Raul Hilberg, who is known as a “documents man” and reads from a memoir, the diary of Adam Czerniaków. |11 Czerniaków was chairman of the Jewish council in the Warsaw ghetto and committed suicide in 1942. |12 In the film the researcher Hilberg almost becomes an eyewitness himself: “You were Czerniaków”, says Lanzmann to his interviewee at the end. In parallel to the growing numbers of eyewitnesses presented in films and television programmes and hence in videotaped testimony collections, too, there has been increased activity in the field of film and media research, most of which is cited in this volume and earlier publications in the series *Education with Testimonies*. |13 Videotaped testimonies have thus been established in a societal framework in which representations of the Holocaust have emerged in popular culture with frequently reproduced fragments, motifs, recurring pictorial language and

plots, and with “hypertexts” (Ebbrecht 2013: 121). They have then sometimes disappeared again or remained, as Taubitz has demonstrated in the case of the comedy plot. Further “reproductions” (Ibid.) of the testimonies are available in the form of the 3D eyewitnesses /holograms created by the USC Shoah Foundation. <sup>14</sup> The question is whether there will soon be testimony motifs in video games, too. The subject “Nazi Crimes towards prisoners” is in fact touched upon in the game *Call of Duty World War II*. <sup>15</sup>

Alina Bothe (2015) has drawn attention to the technical changes and thus the constant changes in use of the interviews: Most testimonies are indexed with keywords and sequenced and often easily accessible. That raises the question of how to work with the testimonies when interviewees are to be seen and heard who lose their composure or are not able or willing to proceed chronologically (see Maria Ecker-Angerer’s contribution to this volume). After all: When the interviews were recorded, the interviewees could not always foresee future developments in terms of their use and general dissemination. In other words: Is it appropriate to show these individuals again and again with their vulnerability and overwhelming emotions when they have no influence over the further use of the testimonies? Doubtless, the advantage of videotaped testimonies is to offer a biographical approach to victims of National Socialism. But researchers and educationalists may also be tempted to functionalise a suitable passage in an interview and focus exclusively on that passage so as to underpin a specific theory. How can inventories and online archives be organised and used to give an impression of the multiplicity and diversity of the testimonies? Most video testimony collections are transnational in character as the witnesses of the Holocaust and persecution were interviewed in various countries. In this volume, the translationalist *Sylvia Degen* offers practical tips for responding to this fact and suggests strategies for translating testimonies for inclusion in collections. Another question is how the contents of the interviews can be evaluated in quantitative terms in order to obtain results that are representative. *Éva Kovács* provides answers in her article. Also in this volume, *Susan Hogervorst* analyses how Dutch trainee teachers make use of an online archive and its functions. She also points out

that the targeted use of videotaped testimonies in the classroom is still in knee pants.

### A cursory look at the school books

A cursory look at the books currently used in Austrian high schools reveals that only one of them, namely *GO! Geschichte Oberstufe 7* (2013), makes specific reference to videotaped interviews with eyewitnesses of National Socialism in the form of photos and transcribed excerpts from the interview. We know very little about the extent and the way in which the more than one hundred thousand<sup>16</sup> collected video testimonies have found their way into school books and history classes. It is reasonable to assume, however, that the extent is limited and the cases rare. That may be due on the one hand to historians' particularly strict source-critical approach to the memory interview. The competence needed to read and assess testimonies as a source is complex, and yet it needs to be taught. On the other hand, it may be due to the lack of user-friendliness in the source itself that so little use is made of testimonies in the classroom. Analysis of video interviews takes time, even when the collection is well organised. After all, an interviewed eyewitness does not present a chronological sequence of events; the camera provides a full record – of the guiding questions put by the interviewer, which sometimes facilitate and sometimes hamper the flow of the narrative, of the interviewee's struggle to find the words or even to remember let alone explain the traumatic events, and of the way the interviewee's body language accompanies the narrative, reinforcing or contradicting certain aspects. If we take into account the resulting requirements for working with these interviews, it is hardly surprising that the authors of school books make even less use of this comprehensive source. That may change, however, as electronic teaching aids increasingly find their way into the digital classroom. In that context, videotaped interviews would be an ideal source (see Peter Gautschi in this volume). An overview of current practice with regard to educational work with video testimonies in various countries is provided by this, the fourth volume in the *Education with Testimonies* series produced by the "Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future" (EVZ).

## The Genesis of this Volume

In 2016 the EVZ Foundation issued an announcement for “Funding for an international event on experience with educational uses of video interviews with victims of National Socialism”. Among other things, the Foundation made a major contribution to funding the collection *Forced Labor 1939–45. Memory and History*. In the last few years, on the basis of the testimonies, various educational applications have been created (see Dorothee Wein, Šárka Jarská and Natalia Timofeeva in this volume). In addition, the EVZ Foundation also publishes the above mentioned series of books, which provide an overview of a multiplicity of initiatives and projects that incorporate testimonies or take them as their point of departure, or which reflect on the development of the category of the “eyewitness” and generally shed light on educational work with testimonies. The objective of the invitation sent out by the EVZ Foundation in 2016 was to intensify the exchange of experience and also to produce a fourth volume in the series. The Austrian organisation *\_erinnern.at\_* was chosen to produce this volume. *\_erinnern.at\_* works on behalf of the Austrian Ministry of Education organising school visits for eyewitnesses of National Socialism who are willing to speak of their experiences and has also developed several educational DVDs and web applications based on videotaped testimonies. In 2014–15 *\_erinnern.at\_* ran the research project “Shoah in daily school life – historical learning with video interviews with survivors in a tablet based learning environment”. *Irmgard Bibermann* describes the project and presents results in her contribution to this volume. The concept developed by *\_erinnern.at\_* for “localisation of videotaped testimonies with victims of National Socialism in educational programmes” was targeted at in-depth insights in the use of such interviews in specific projects in classroom and extracurricular education. The aim was both localisation of projects using videotaped testimonies in the educational scene and identification of quality criteria for the eyewitness videos incorporated in such educational materials. Instead of a scientific conference, with invited speakers presenting formal papers, it was decided to organise the event in the form of a workshop to facilitate an exchange of experience and reflection

on the practical outcomes to date and move the discourse forward by generating the relevant questions. After that, it was thought it would be possible, in a second step, to produce the texts needed for the envisaged publication taking due account of the discussions in the workshop. A call for participation sent out in the summer of 2016 attracted sixty proposals from Australia, Canada, Chile, Europe, Israel, South Africa and the USA. On that basis, 23 projects with 33 participants from Canada, Europe, Israel, South Africa and the USA were selected and invitations sent out for the three-day workshop in Vienna, which was organised and chaired by Moritz Wein and Werner Dreier. The event was also attended by Günter Saathoff as Co-Director of and Sonja Begalke, Team Lead for the Department for a Critical Examination of History at the EVZ Foundation. In addition Peter Gautschi (University of Applied Sciences in Lucerne, CH), Piotr Trojański (Auschwitz Birkenau State Museum, Department of Education, PL) and Éva Kovács (Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies, HU/A) agreed to participate as rapporteurs for the fields of Education, Museum/Memorial Sites and Research. Angelika Laumer (D) also attended as editor of the planned publication. The central objective of the workshop was a joint evaluation of individual projects based on eyewitness videos with regard to potential quality criteria for educational materials (good practice). Questions like the degree of congruity between the materials produced and the users' interests, ways of enriching classroom teaching and visits to museums or memorial sites as well as possible difficulties were to be discussed in order to generate conclusions for future productions. In advance of the workshop, participants were sent questions relating to the interviews, their use and the contexts for which the projects had been developed. The questions were meant to stimulate controversial debate, offer participants maximum scope for discussion and support the search for good practice. Several subjects were addressed by the participants in rotating groups on the basis of one main question designed to stimulate discussion plus a list of further questions.

The question for the "school education" groups was as follows: "Video testimonies in school education – are they useful, manipulative or over-

whelming?” One group identified several factors that play a role in the use of videotaped testimonies in the classroom. Priority was given to the “importance of teacher preparation”. The participants also discussed the minimum age at which pupils can and should learn about the Holocaust and the role that videotaped testimonies can play in the case of very young pupils. In this volume, *Ilene R. and Michael J. Berson* present the results of their research on this subject and consider ways in which video testimonies can be used to introduce young learners to the subjects of the Holocaust and social justice (for young learners, see also Michal Sadan/Madene Shachar, James Griffiths/Louise Stafford and Tony Cole/Darius Jackson in this volume). “What is a good contextual setting for video testimonies?” was the question put to the “extracurricular education” groups. One group came to the conclusion that it is country-specific and above all user-specific. The use of testimonies in classrooms with migrants was also discussed. *Carson Phillips* presented a project run by the *Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre*, in which newcomers to Canada learn about the Holocaust through testimonies used in English classes. Phillips stressed the great interest in the subject on the part of the newcomers. In his paper, he shows how easy it is to establish links between the situation of the eyewitnesses who came to Canada as immigrants after the Holocaust and today’s newcomers. There was lively debate on the question whether social media constitute a suitable context, with one participant insisting that they are not a safe place. In fact social media did not play a significant role in either the project presentations or the papers submitted. The articles and presentations also revealed a lack of agreement on the terminology. Some spoke of “Augenzeugen” (eyewitnesses), some of “Zeitzeugen” (contemporary witnesses) and others of “survivors”, while “video testimony” alternated with “eyewitness interview”, “life story interview” and “testimonial film”. In some of the projects, the interviews were treated more as historical sources, and a source-critical approach was applied. In others they tended to serve to bridge the distance between the audience in the present and the human experience in the past and to create empathy for the interviewees, who are often labelled survivors. There was also criticism on

the part of participants who felt that testimonies sometimes served as unquestioned and unquestionable symbols of authenticity. The production and use of testimonies is located between the twin poles of loyalty to the source on the one hand and functionality and pragmatism on the other. Some participants thought it more important to let the interviewees bear witness and the pupils look and listen at length and thus to teach them something about history, including the subjective experience of the history of the Holocaust, of the death of people close to oneself and/or of persecution as well as the interviewees' interpretations of their experiences. In fact the distractions in the use of videotaped testimony, the unchronological narrative – Andree Michaelis (2013: 234) speaks of the “willfulness” of the interviews – are sometimes seen as opportunities for developing reception competence and thus for educational work. <sup>17</sup> *Maria Ecker-Angerer* stresses this point in her article “What exactly makes a good interview?”. Other workshop attendees make use in their work of short videoclips to teach values which are not exclusively relevant to the Holocaust, such as social justice. Those clips were made for a specific use within the institution involved, for educational purposes or for exhibitions, for example. In general, the hour-long interviews are often used in a shortened version lasting half an hour maybe or even only a few minutes. The interviewers and their questions are often cut out but equally, material is sometimes added in the form of documents or photographs or footage from historical documentation. Also, speakers are sometimes used to add connecting words or transitions, translations provided as subtitles or voiceovers and background music added: The affinity with the documentary film is unmistakable. Some educational programmes combine introductory “video portraits” or “biographical films” with testimonies. (On the production of videoclips for their education programmes, see the articles by Cole/Jackson and Arlene Sher in this volume). Some of the group members felt that the narrative provided by the interviewees was so powerful that no entertaining editing was required. One participant wrote the comment, “Entertaining editing = underestimation of both interview and audience”. There was agreement in one group on the need for transparency with regard to

the editing, including the motivation and intentions. What determines the “quality of the interview?” and “Is there something like a bad interview?” were other questions asked in the workshop. The primary criterion for one group was the role of the interviewer and the need to “take care of the person being interviewed”. Whether the interviewers ask good questions, have adequate historical knowledge or simply wish to guide the interview in a certain direction was considered decisive for the quality of the final product. The relevance of establishing a list of quality criteria was put into perspective in one comment: “A bad interview can be a good interview for education.” There was a general consensus, however, on the need for the testimonies used in education to be contextualised and additional historical information provided. In their paper on evaluation of the educational programme at the *National Holocaust Centre* in the UK, *James Griffiths and Louise Stafford* are clearly of this opinion on the grounds that the testimonies appeal primarily to the recipients’ emotions. However, educators sometimes do not have enough time to include or deal with supporting modules.

The “memorial sites” discussion groups addressed the question: “Where to place testimonies? What is the purpose? What is the use?” The question in itself suggests that we know relatively little about the visitors to memorial sites: “What do we know of the responses of the visitors? Does anybody watch video testimonies at memorial sites?” One finding was that exhibitions should not be overloaded with videotaped testimonies.

### Videotaped Testimonies and Space

Videoclips and full length videotaped testimonies are a regular feature of such exhibitions, and most of these institutions have their own collections (de Jong 2011).<sup>18</sup> In this volume, information on how testimonies interact with the urban scene is provided by *Kinga Frojimovics* and *Éva Kovács* in their in “tainted guided tour” of Vienna, in which the accounts of former Jewish slave labourers combine to create a tour leading from one tourist attraction to another. *Annemiek Gringold* discusses the subject of videotaped testimonies in the Jewish Cultural Quarter Amsterdam. *Madene Shachar and Michal*

*Sadan* also offer an insight into curatorial decisions and the educational work with videotaped testimonies performed at *Yad La Yeled Children's Memorial Museum, Ghetto Fighters House, Israel*. For any exhibition it is doubtless a curatorial challenge to present videotaped testimonies in competition with silent objects, written documents, photographs and the exhibition space itself. In this context, there is a need for further discussion of ideas and practical experience on the synthesis and configuration of videotaped testimonies, space and other exhibits as well as visitor responses to the testimonies. Jewish museums primarily focus on Jewish history, culture and religion in their own right, quite apart from the Holocaust. In this volume, *Anika Reichwald* discusses such considerations with reference to the *Jewish Museum Hohenems* in Austria. Educational work with testimonies by Nazi victims is also performed at a location that is a reminder of the National Socialist perpetrators, as *Dorothee Wein* shows in her paper on "Voices of Survivors at Sites of Perpetrators".

#### Further Developments in the Archives and Current Practice in Educational Work

Since the 1990s increasing numbers of interviews have been conducted and subsequently archived with representatives of various groups of victims. Both the VHA and the *Forced Labor 1939–1945* archive, for example, contain numerous testimonies by Roma and Sinti, who witnessed the genocide and slave labour under the Nazis. <sup>19</sup> An overview of the objectives and use in the Czech Republic, Germany and Russia of the web applications "Learning with Interviews" from the Forced Labor 1939–1945 collection is provided by *Dorothee Wein, Šárka Jarská and Natalia Timofeeva* in this publication. In his paper, *Teon Djingo* deals with videotaped testimonies from bystanders of the Holocaust in Macedonia. The testimonies form part of the USHMM collection. All the Jews deported from Macedonia were murdered; they were never able to bear witness themselves. In her article, *Iryna Kashtalian* shows how oral history and videotaped testimonies have been used in Belarus for an exhibition about the extermination site Maly Trostenets and how they can

be popularised with the help of a history competition. Noah Shenker (2015: 192–197) considers that, with today’s use of testimonies, information on genocides is being increasingly provided through the “lens of the Holocaust”. The VHA, for example, also provides interviews with survivors of other terror regimes and genocides, such as the Tutsi genocide in Rwanda. In their paper, *Andrea Szóny and Kori Street* offer an insight into the use of the USC Shoah Foundation’s online platform *Iwitness* in an educational programme and show how students relate what they see and hear to their own lives and experiences of discrimination. For her part, *Arlene Sher* presents educational work on the subject of the genocide of the Tutsi and the Holocaust using videotaped testimonies at the *Johannesburg Holocaust and Genocide Centre* (JHGC) in South Africa. As at the JHGC, museums, memorial sites and documentation centres have produced their own videos and built up their own collections. Interviews with survivors are still being conducted today, and *Tony Cole and Darius Jackson* describe how they employ a resulting video for their educational work with primary school children and children with special educational needs. In her article, *Birte Hewera* discusses the goals pursued with the biographical documentary films – or testimonial films – in the *Witnesses and Education* programme created by Yad Vashem and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Finally, *Peter Gautschi* classifies the various papers discussed by the “education” group at the workshop from the point of view of history education and analyses how historical learning can be triggered by the various education programmes.

In spite of the many differences of opinion revealed by the workshop, there was a general consensus at the end of the day that “good practice is dynamic over time” and is tied to specific contexts, goals and target groups. It was also agreed that it is important for the success of the education programmes to define their objectives in advance. Many questions remained open, such as the use of testimonies in exhibitions, how testimonies are or can be used in social media, and what measures are required for teachers to be able to use testimonies in history classes in the face of rigid curricula. The key, it was felt, will always be cooperation, an aspect with considerable potential

for improvement, for example between various professional groups like archivists, teachers in extracurricular and classroom education, and the research community.

Learners will hopefully continue to bring their curiosity to the videos and – like the sound effects man in Lecomte’s video – try to find their way, step by step, to understanding the experiences of the Holocaust, genocide and slave labour and will continue to expose themselves to the sense of helplessness that can overcome them when they see or hear the narrators in the videos. The process will perhaps become easier and more productive if they, too, share and discuss their experiences.

The editors would like to express their sincere thanks to everyone who has been involved in the work on this volume.

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- 1 For the meaning of the German word "Zeugnis" (English "testimony" or "witness") see Assmann, A. (2007). Vier Grundtypen von Zeugenschaft. In Elm, M., Kößler, G. (Eds.). *Zeugenschaft des Holocaust. Zwischen Trauma, Tradierung und Ermittlung*. Frankfurt a. M./ New York: Campus, pp. 46–49. In this English translation, the terms "interview" and "testimony" are used. In this paper, the word "testimony" refers to a special form of interview, in which an eyewitness speaks of his/her experiences during and after the Holocaust or of persecution during the period of National Socialism.
- 2 <http://tatianalecomte.com/ein-morderischer-larm>, and [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DHM\\_Y5tuY-E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DHM_Y5tuY-E), accessed 2 November 2017.
- 3 The video is presented as a work of art, however, and can therefore be expected to be reproduced and used much less frequently than, say, a television programme.
- 4 See Hallensleben, S. (2008). Sprache im Dokumentarfilm. Hierarchie der Töne, <http://www.taz.de/!5175465/>, accessed 3 November 2017.
- 5 See Beckmann, A.: [http://www.deutschlandfunk.de/internationale-tagung-wuerdigt-lebenswerk-raul-hilberg.1148.de.html?dram:article\\_id=399072](http://www.deutschlandfunk.de/internationale-tagung-wuerdigt-lebenswerk-raul-hilberg.1148.de.html?dram:article_id=399072), accessed 1 November 2017.
- 6 These thoughts on the creation of videotaped testimony collections relate primarily to Austria, the USA and West Germany and also touch on Israel and France. It would also be very interesting to study the production and reception of audio- and videotaped testimonies of victims of National Socialism in Socialist countries starting in the 1950s and also in other western countries such as Greece, Italy, etc. Unfortunately,

the competence and capacity are not available to do that here. In the 1980s the historian Annette Leo worked in the GDR on an interview project run by the state-owned film studio DEFA, in which survivors of the Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp were interviewed on their life stories. See [http://www.nng.uni-jena.de/Annette\\_Leo.html](http://www.nng.uni-jena.de/Annette_Leo.html), accessed 1 November 2017.

- 7 Testimonies of the witnesses recorded during the Eichmann trial are available on YouTube. Testimonies from the Auschwitz trial are to be found here: <http://www.auschwitz-prozess.de>, accessed 2 November 2017.
- 8 Wulf Kansteiner (2004) undertakes a critical review of the term “cultural trauma” and the assumption that traumata are automatically transmitted to the following generations. In his opinion, excessively flexible and also inflationary use is made of the term “cultural trauma”.
- 9 Here Taubitz is referring, not to the humorous or mocking element of a comedy but to its narrative structure. Since the “Holocaust” series was broadcast, Holocaust testimonies have typically been structured with a pre-war period followed by the period of persecution and war and then the post-war period, often with a conciliatory ending.
- 10 We have retained the word “eyewitness” (“ZeitzeugIn”) for this introduction, however, because the term “‘survivor’ recalls the border between life and death, a grey zone which – like death itself – is far removed from the everyday experiences of most people today.” In the context of educational work especially, the term “survivor” can involve expectations of fear and horror, “but it also has something attractive about it, particularly when the horrors of the past can be viewed from the relative safety of the classroom”, see Dreier, W. (2016) Testimonies of Holocaust Survivors in School Education – Experiences, Challenges, Open Questions from an Austrian Perspective. In Apostolopoulos, N, Barricelli, M., Koch, G. (Eds.). *Preserving Survivors’ Memories. Digital Testimony Collections about Nazi Persecution: History, Education and Media*. Berlin: EVZ, p. 92. The authors in this collection vary in their views of the subject. We use the phrase “witness of the Holocaust” or “witness of persecution” to denote people who were at risk of being murdered and were persecuted during the period of National Socialism; we do not use the term to refer to perpetrators.
- 11 The historian Christopher Browning used the term “documents man” with reference to Hilberg at the conference on “Raul Hilberg and the Holocaust Historiography. A conference to mark the 10th anniversary of his death”, which was organised by the Potsdam Center for Contemporary History and held in Berlin on 18–20 October 2017. In a presentation entitled “‘I have never begun by asking the big questions’: Raul Hilberg and Testimonial Reenactment in Shoah”, Noah Shenker discussed *Shoah* in detail on 19 October 2017.
- 12 Here are a few examples of publications on the cinematic treatment of National Socialism and especially the Holocaust, including the figure of the eyewitness and interview settings: Baumgärtner, K. S. (2012): Some Filmic Heroines and “Others” in the GDR Documentary Women in Ravensbrück (1968). In Dorchain, C. S., Wonnemberg, F. N. (Eds.). *Contemporary Jewish Reality in Germany and Its Reflection in Film*. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter. pp. 51–70. Bowinkelmann, P. (2008). *Schattenwelt. Die Vernichtung der Juden, dargestellt im französischen Dokumentarfilm*. Hannover: Offizin; Ebbrecht-Hartmann, T. (2016). Witnessing Emotion: Encountering Holocaust Survivors’ Testimonies in Documentary Films. In Apostolopoulos, N., Barricelli, M., Koch, G. (Eds.).

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- 13 With regard to education with videotaped testimonies, see also the previous publications in the series "Education with Testimonies", <http://www.stiftung-evz.de/handlungsfelder/auseinandersetzung-mit-der-geschichte/bildungsarbeit-mit-zeugnissen.html>, accessed 2 November 2017.
- 14 McMullan, T. (2016). The virtual Holocaust survivor. How history gained new dimensions, see <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/jun/18/holocaust-survivor-hologram-pinchas-gutter-new-dimensions-history>, accessed 3 November 2017.
- 15 See Rosenberg, A.: 'Call of Duty: WWII' apparently does more than merely acknowledge the Holocaust [http://mashable.com/2017/09/18/call-of-duty-wwii-story-trailer/#\\_mMF.dR8Piqu](http://mashable.com/2017/09/18/call-of-duty-wwii-story-trailer/#_mMF.dR8Piqu), accessed 3 November 2017 and Wilhelm, Z: Call of Duty: WW2" erschienen: Nazi-Zombiehorden ohne Holocaust <https://www.derstandard.de/story/2000067097786/call-of-duty-ww2-erschiene-nazi-zombiehorden-ohne-holocaust>, accessed 13 November 2017. On the German version of the game Wolfenstein 2 The New Colossus, see Schiffer, C. Wie das Spiel Wolfenstein 2 die Geschichte entsorgt, see <https://www.br.de/radio/bayern2/sendungen/zuendfunk/netz-kultur/wolfenstein-the-new-colossus-nazis-skandal100.html>, accessed 13 November 2017.
- 16 That is an estimate by Tony Kushner for both audio- and videotaped interviews (Kushner quoted after Bothe 2015: 58). Jan Taubitz puts the number of recorded testimonies in the USA alone at 80,000 (2016b: 15).
- 17 See also Elm, M. (2008). *Zeugenschaft im Film. Eine erinnerungskulturelle Analyse filmischer Erzählungen des Holocaust.* Berlin: Metropol pp. 213–218.
- 18 The publication de Jong, S. (2018). *The Witness as Object. Video Testimony in Memorial Museums.* New York: Berghahn promises an in-depth treatment of this subject. At copy date for this volume, it had not yet been published.
- 19 See for example: Svatonová, J. (2015). Use of Interviews with Witnesses to the Porajmos, at the Museum of Roma Culture In Knellessen, D., Possekel, R. (Eds.) *From Testimony to Story. Video Interviews about Nazi Crimes. Perspectives and Experiences in Four Countries.* Berlin: EVZ, pp. 111–115.



■ DEVELOPING TESTIMONY  
COLLECTIONS



Stephen Naron

## ARCHIVES, ETHICS AND INFLUENCE: HOW THE FORTUNOFF VIDEO ARCHIVE'S METHODOLOGY SHAPES ITS COLLECTION'S CONTENT

The workshop that was the impetus for the papers in this volume was designed as a point of departure for a discussion of “best practices” related to the use of testimony in educational programs. This contribution is not an example of a specific educational initiative, or an attempt to suggest teaching outcomes that should be included as a set of best practices to measure the impact of an educational program, but rather a reflection on one collection, the *Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies (Fortunoff Archive)* at *Yale University*, which provides access to unedited testimonies, and therefore the raw archival materials that form the basis of these types of programs. The article will explore “best practices”, but primarily the practices the archive has developed iteratively over more than three decades. In doing so, it will address the following question posed at the workshop in January 2017: how does an archive like the *Fortunoff* shape and influence the content of the testimonies in its collection? We can attempt to answer this question by examining its mission, methodology and its roots in the survivor community, and by contrasting this with the work done by other archival institutions.

An archive as an institution has great power to shape its collection's content, and to frame and reframe that collection for its patrons. Scholarly literature at the turn of the century addressed the changing role of archives, or what one author called the “archival paradigm shift” (Cook 2001: 4). This shift reflects larger social and cultural changes that are most commonly associated with the emergence of what might best be referred to as the “postmodern turn”. We can define postmodern turn as a departure from the grand ideologies of the modern period to a set of “critical, strategic and rhetorical practices”

aimed at “destabilizing” modern concepts like “identity, historical progress, epistemic certainty.”<sup>11</sup> Prior to the postmodern turn, archivists often identified themselves as “passive guardians of an inherited legacy” (Ibid.). As late as 1947, Hilary Jenkinson, an influential English archivist at the Public Records Office, stated that archives:

“are not there because someone brought them together with the idea that they would be useful to students of the future, or to prove a point or illustrate a theory. They came together and reached their final arrangement by a natural process: a growth, you might say, as much an organism as a tree or an animal.” (1948: 4)

But the archival paradigm shift turned away from Jenkinson’s view, and countered with a recognition of a “tension within the central archival professional myth: enormous power and discretion over societal memory, deeply masked behind a public image of denial and self-effacement”, writes the Canadian archivist Tom Nesmith (2002: 32). The debate had already moved from an examination of “influence” to an actual discussion about “power”.

Often located within the confines of some larger historically-situated institution, the archive influences content and form through the development and application of an array of policies and methodologies, some based on national or international standards, others on proprietary and idiosyncratic local guidelines. An archive develops its own “culture” even a shared “foundational narrative”. It grows its content according to a more or less well-defined collection development strategy, which reflects its home institution’s culture or mission. The archive forms and molds its collection, and how it will be used by patrons, through choices concerning how to catalog and provide access to materials, and by privileging some materials over others, whether intentionally or unintentionally – by highlighting or exhibiting certain documents, or leaving other lower priority collections unprocessed, and therefore “hidden”.

### Founded by Survivors: the Fortunoff Archive's History

At first glance, the Fortunoff Archive is no exception to any of the above. It is “embedded” in a larger institution to which it is bound, and from which it benefits: Yale University Library. With nearly 600 employees and more than 15m volumes, the library is defined as “the heart” of Yale University. And while Yale is the archive’s home, the archive didn’t begin as a Yale initiative. The archive’s roots are in the local survivor community, which in turn molds its policies and practices. By contrast, a collection like Yale University Archives has always been “part of Yale”, a unit within the university bureaucracy, and beholden to the ebb and flow of decisions taken at Yale, changes to administrative priorities, and the desire to document certain aspects of academic and student life on campus. The university archives contribute to the reproduction of the “idea of Yale”, over time, by providing researchers and students with the raw materials for historical inquiry, exhibits, and publications about the university. But the idea of Yale is not wholly fixed. Yale as an institution and the library’s *Department of Manuscripts and Archives* (MSSA) as the archival repository for that institution do change. Over the last 20 years, MSSA has adjusted its collection development policy to include the documentation of marginalized groups at Yale and beyond, including women, who were not admitted as undergraduates until 1969, and records of Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) organizations nationwide. These initiatives could be seen as a concrete example of Maurice Halbwachs’ (1992) theory of collective memory in action. The Yale communities’ values, interests, and demographics are changing, and in response, so is the manner in which the institution needs to remember itself. After all, Halbwachs writes that collective memory, and a collective’s understanding of its past, is not just the “retrieval of stored information, but the putting together of a claim about past states of affairs by means of a framework of shared cultural understanding” – and that “shared understanding” is fluid (Ibid.: 43). Richard Brown and Beth Davis-Brown (1998: 22) note: “Archives are the manufacturers of memory and not merely the guardians of it.” The Fortunoff Archive exemplifies this statement. It indeed does its own “manufacturing”.

Unlike traditional archives like *Yale University Archives*, which “inherits” and collects materials produced by others, such as offices and departments within Yale, the Fortunoff Archive has the unusual distinction of being an archive that produces itself. It produces itself in the sense that it records its own materials. This began in 1979 when the archive’s predecessor organization, known as the *Holocaust Survivors Film Project* (HSFP), was founded in New Haven, Connecticut. It was a grassroots effort of volunteers, including representatives from the survivor community like William Rosenberg, the head of the Labor Zionist organization *Farband* in New Haven. Rosenberg was president of the HSFP and not only encouraged survivors to participate but also raised significant funds for recordings. From the start, it was very much an effort by survivors for survivors. For example, Dori Laub, one of the co-founders of the project, who also served as an interviewer, was a child survivor from Czernowitz, formerly Romania. One of the first survivors to be recorded in 1979, Eva B. (HVT-1), also participated as an interviewer in a number of tapings afterwards. She wouldn’t be the last to exchange roles, to move from one side of the camera to the other. The organization involved survivors at every level, including fundraising, organizing tapings and meetings in their homes. This rootedness in the survivor community was crucial to the development of the archive’s methods and policies, and the form and use of the content in its collection.

The archive as an “archive” was born in 1981, when the HSFP deposited 183 testimonies at *Yale University Library*, thanks to the work of Geoffrey H. Hartman, a distinguished professor of literature and a survivor, and the support of the Yale president, A. Bartlett Giamatti. Testimonies were not only recorded in New Haven, but also sent to New Haven by affiliate projects. More than 30 affiliates were organized to conduct tapings in Europe, Israel, North America and South America beginning in the 1980s. The testimonies recorded by these projects were given to the *Fortunoff Archive*, which obligated itself to catalog, preserve, and make these testimonies accessible for use in teaching and research. Affiliate projects were an extension of the initial “collaborative effort” of volunteers, often survivors and children of survivors, trained by

representatives from the Fortunoff Archive, and embedded in their communities. In this manner, the archive not only “produced” itself, it “reproduced” itself.

### The Tradition of Survivor Documentation

Although it is the longest sustained effort to record survivor testimony on video, it is important to acknowledge the larger story of survivor documentation. Despite the innovative use of video, still a relatively new medium in 1979 and a less expensive alternative to film, the Fortunoff Archive is just one node on a continuum of efforts to document the Holocaust. In the immediate postwar period, there were the historical commissions, many of which are explored in Laura Jockusch’s book *Collect and Record! Jewish Holocaust Documentation in Early Postwar Europe*. She writes:

“These initiatives of Jewish Holocaust documentation arose as grassroots movements impelled by the survivors’ own will and with no government backing [...] Out of fear that the Nazis’ effort to destroy all evidence of their murderous crimes would condemn the Jewish cataclysm to oblivion before its full scope was even known to the world.” (2012: 4)

This also motivated many of the wartime documentation efforts, such as Emanuel Ringelblum’s *Oyneg Shabes Archive* (see Kassow 2007). The historical commissions, Jockusch writes, captured some 18,000 written testimonies, and thousands of questionnaires (2012: 11).

Another important example of a postwar documentation project, employing audio recording, was the groundbreaking work of David P. Boder, a social psychologist at the University of Chicago. Boder traveled through several European countries in 1946 recording audio testimonies on a portable wire recorder in the field. Edited excerpts from these interviews were published in his book *I Did Not Interview the Dead* (1949). Despite differences of perspective or intention, all of these projects gave voice to the victims and witnesses of atrocities, and made important contributions to understanding the survivor perspective, as well as providing additional evidence ensuring the Germans

would fail in their effort to cover up what they had done, to hide their crimes, obfuscate their policies of destruction, or, as Yehuda Bauer wrote: “to murder the murder” (2002: 24).

### Methodology: the Empathic Listener

The methodology employed at the Fortunoff Archive, and by its predecessor the HSFP, did not emerge fully formed from the head of one individual. Methodological development was a collective effort, and an iterative one – changed and codified over time. The application of the archive’s emerging best practices was imparted to affiliates via interviewer training sessions. The first local interviewer training was held in 1984 to expand taping in New Haven. The most difficult skill to teach future interviewers was the art of empathic listening. In *Testimony. Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*, Dori Laub briefly describes the ideal relationship between interviewer and interviewee in our testimonies. He calls it:

“a contract between two people, one of whom is going to engage in a narration of her trauma, through the unfolding of her life account. Implicitly, the listener says to the testifier: ‘For this limited time, throughout the duration of the testimony, I’ll be with you, all the way, as much as I can.’” (1992: 70)

The relationship of the interviewer, as empathic listener, to the interviewee can be described as similar to that between a student and a teacher. The witness is the expert in their life story, the teacher, and the interviewer the student.

The six-week interviewer training program also required interviewers-in-training to read Holocaust history and memoirs, attend lectures, and participate in sessions analyzing video testimonies with a focus on method, not content. As part of the training, the archive emphasized basic research skills as a means for interviewers to prepare for each recording session. The archive also developed some clear rules for behavior inside the studio: do not take notes, do not break eye contact, never look at your watch. Individuals

in the training class then observed several videotaping sessions from the control room, and only after that, participated in several taping sessions with an experienced partner.

Despite this training, there is still an inevitable amount of fluidity in the application of our best practices. Interviews recorded in France may differ from those recorded in the United States. Depending on the affiliate project, the cadre of volunteers, their backgrounds, personalities, knowledge of Holocaust history, and the impact of the surrounding cultural milieu. The goal of the archive's interview methodology has always been to build trust with the witness. That trust promotes the free flow of memory. We focus on the witness' story the way he or she would like to tell it, starting from their earliest memories. Immediately prior to the taping, interviewers tell the survivor that when the camera goes on, the interviewers will state the recording date, place, and their names, and then cue the witness to introduce herself, give her date of birth, her place of birth, and then begin telling her story from her earliest memories. By having the witness introduce himself or herself, ownership of the taping session is given to them.

The testimonies are often episodic rather than chronological. Memories invoke other memories. Interviewers have described feeling like they are listening to someone who is viewing a movie in their head and describing it. The only questions asked should be to clarify time and place, and should be phrased so that if the witness does not know the answer, the flow of memory is not stopped: "Do you happen to remember when this happened? Do you happen to remember the name of the camp?" etc. If too many questions are posed, the witness becomes passive and simply waits for the next question. The free association stops; the mental movie ceases to run, resulting in far less information and reflections.

Silences also play an important role. Laub describes the need for the interviewer to accept the silences that naturally occur when giving testimony. The interviewer must "*listen to and hear the silence* [...]" he must acknowledge and address that silence, even if that simply means respect – and knowing how to wait." (Ibid.: 58)

This emphasis on listening also informed the manner in which the content of the archive was processed after recording. Early on in the project, a decision was made not to produce transcripts of the testimony. There were a number of reasons for this, both practical and philosophical. The production of accurate full transcripts is a significant expense, even today, despite advances in voice recognition software. A recent estimate was US\$3m (€2.6m) to produce transcripts for the entire collection, more than 11,000 hours of video, recorded in over a dozen different countries in as many languages.

However, this expense was not the only reason behind forgoing transcripts. If transcripts were available, researchers might not watch the testimonies, but simply rely on the transcripts. After all, watching testimony takes considerable time. It is much quicker to skim a transcript. Another objection to transcription was that no transcript, no matter how good, would ever capture the full content, visual cues, tone of voice, the pregnant pauses, of a testimony. Misunderstandings would occur. Quotations might inadvertently be misrepresented. Without transcripts, the researcher would be obliged to listen to the testimonies in their original, unedited form – to hear the voice of the survivors who stepped forward, often at great emotional cost, to give testimony.

Another important example of our methodology, and a component of the Fortunoff Archive's "culture", was to allow time and space for reflection and critique of the work. Due to the nature of the project, its small scale, its cadre of dedicated volunteers, the project's participants were able to reflect on testimonies as they were conducted. As a group they discussed: what worked well? Or more importantly, what didn't work? The goal was always to be an empathic listener, always focusing on the survivor's agency. In fact, in the late 1980s, the archive invited survivors who had previously been recorded to return and discuss on camera their memories of giving testimony with interviewers like Dana Kline, Lawrence Langer and Dori Laub. A more dialogic format, the interviewers had viewed and reviewed the original testimonies, and in these "re-interviews" addressed subjects such as the testimony process itself, and the complexity of language and memory. These were testimonies about giving testimony, and examples of the reflective, critical approach

the project has taken from the beginning. The primary focus was on the survivor's experiences, and on making improvements that would facilitate the quite difficult process of giving testimony.

### Making Testimonies Accessible

The concern for the survivor that permeates so many aspects of the archive's methodology even extends to how the materials are cataloged and made accessible. Cataloging, by its nature, is a standards-driven exercise. All libraries apply some standard rules of organization, description and controlled vocabularies. How could ethical considerations affect that? Just one example: no public-facing information containing references to our collection contains the surname of the survivor. Before the testimonies came to Yale, one of the survivors received threatening phone calls following a local broadcast of an HSFP documentary. That experience informed a decision to protect survivor anonymity by truncating the last name of any appearance of a survivor's name, in print or on screen.

Every testimony's listing in Yale's online public access catalog follows these rules as well, to ensure anonymity. This can complicate searching the collection for a specific individual. If you are looking for a specific Jack K., you might find it difficult to identify that particular Jack. It also can complicate efforts to identify and connect testimonies with recordings of the same survivor at other institutions. Nevertheless, there is a clear ethical consideration behind this policy. When researchers want to cite or screen testimony excerpts, they are required to request authorization to publish in advance. This provides the archive with the opportunity to contact the survivor, if they are still living, about the imminent appearance of a citation in print. This insures that a survivor will not open a book, enter a museum, or see a documentary that cites or uses images from their testimony without being informed in advance. While the archive has the legal the right to allow use of these materials – as survivors sign a release form attributing copyright to the Fortunoff Archive – it is our ethical obligation to make a best effort to inform survivors of any public use of their testimony.

Now, with the collection completely digitized and available in a digital access system currently in production in Yale's manuscripts and archives reading room and partner sites worldwide, the Fortunoff Archive makes a best effort to be cautious and respectful. Testimonies are only available at designated workstations inside a monitored reading room at the partner site, which is usually a research center or library at an institution of higher learning. Researchers must register and request materials in advance before coming to the archive. The testimonies are not openly available online. Students can't watch testimony from the comfort of their dorm rooms. They have to make time to come to the archive, they have to focus and listen to testimony.

These policies might seem like an obstacle to wider discovery and use of the collection. Certainly, the restrictive access approach sets this digital archive apart from other library e-resources with which students are familiar. That might be true, but it is important to underscore the ethical considerations that are the basis for these policy decisions. Of course, these policies must be re-evaluated and adjusted over time. After all, what good is a policy based on the need to inform survivors, when survivors themselves are no longer alive?

### Conclusion: the Fortunoff Archives' 'Partisan' Origin

Many aspects of the Fortunoff Archive's methodological approach and culture mark it as something distinct from what Hilary Jenkinson at the Public Records Office would have identified as an archetypical "archive". It did not "accumulate naturally", and was indeed "brought together" to specifically "illustrate" a point or theory. From its very inception, there was an innate rejection of an outmoded idea of archival neutrality. The founding spark for recording testimony was "partisan" in nature. The founders of the Fortunoff Archive intended to unambiguously take sides, to stand *with* the survivor.

For many of those involved with this project this was not just a symbolic display of solidarity, as they were members of the survivor community themselves. They were not there to study the survivors as some unknown phenomenon, but to join in an effort of "self-help", to provide a space where a "contract" between interviewer and interviewee could be formed, to give

survivors an opportunity to express their voice and their story the way they desired. In a sense, it was also “partisan” in its pursuit of a counter-narrative to popular cultural representations of the Holocaust – a desire to inform the public and posterity about how “things really were”.

Lastly, the reflective nature of the archive’s work, the critical re-examination of past work in an attempt to understand the nature of testimony, was a means to both improve the work of recording testimony, but also a way to understand how that work impacted on survivors. Yet, despite this critical spirit, it would be mistaken to see these policies as some cerebral expression of the “postmodern turn” and its impact on the work that archives do, rather it signifies a clear commitment to an ethical approach to the work of recording and using testimony and a deep concern for the survivors, before, during, and after the process of giving testimony.

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Albert Lichtblau

## MOVING FROM ORAL TO AUDIOVISUAL HISTORY. NOTES ON PRAXIS

### Oral Historians' Motivations

This essay discusses some main aspects of audiovisual history, as a continuation of oral history. Oral history moved to interviewing people, audiovisual historians videotape those interviews – rather than “merely” audiotaping or taking notes when interviewing. There are many other aspects that would be worth discussing, such as disambiguation, duration, ethics, transcripts, archiving, interviewer training, privacy and libel laws, research, audiences (real and imagined), content, authenticity, interpretation, taking care of all parties involved – interviewers, interviewees and camera crew, methodological limits, theoretical implications, and even unprofessional errors. But these cannot all be covered in one article. Oral history is a key part of a historical refocusing on ordinary people’s experience, and it has led to a paradigm shift in historiography. The traditional work of historians did not previously include generating the sources for their own research themselves. But going out like ethnographers or anthropologists to observe, listen and talk to people has led to fundamental discussions about methodology. We can ask both why oral historians go out into the field to create their sources and, conversely, why many contemporary historians still don’t. So, what are oral and audiovisual historians looking for when they interview?

“Giving Voice” or “Dig Where You Stand” were slogans of early oral historians in Austria and Germany connecting the methodology to a more inclusive approach, including women’s, working class or minorities’ history. Oral history methods made it possible to focus on those groups who were persecuted under National Socialism. These methods made it also possible to research the Holocaust by interviewing survivors, rather than being dependent (exclusively) on documents that had been produced by perpetrators.

I was always fascinated by how individuals shape their life stories on various layers and try to make sense of their experiences through particular narratives. The memory of emotions is often strong. “Going deeper” fragments life stories into puzzle-like segments. Therefore it needs experienced interviewers guiding interviewees along life stories to make sure that both sides understand the process of individual memory re/building. Working together with teachers and pupils, I experienced how this process can function as a “mirror”, in that discussing other people’s experiences helps to reflect one’s own attitudes. It was eye opening to learn by listening to people describing their own past, because their experience and their own interpretation are often different from the conclusions of historians’ analytic approaches. Above all, it has been exciting to visit interviewees all over the world. It opened many doors and was personally extraordinarily enriching. One of the many motivations to do oral history and to videotape the accounts/interviews was to save voices for future generations and research.

### The Afterlife of Interviews

Of course, oral historians set out with a purpose, although they might not always be fully aware of or transparent about it. Sometimes it is a project and the search for witnesses to a particular event or time who may be able to answer certain research questions. Aside from listening to someone’s life story, oral historians may get access to private archives and otherwise unknown sources such as photographs, letters, diaries, objects, films etc. Whenever I interview someone, I take my computer, mobile scanner and camera with me. I find I approach things differently depending whether I am interviewing for an archive or a project with a specific framework, or a book or an article. I may interview someone simply because she/he interests me. I did not use most of my interviews with Jewish survivors for research purposes, as it was more important to me to save their life story and hand it over to an archive to be preserved. It became essential to find an institution willing to archive and catalogue oral history interviews. In Austria, the *Österreichische Mediathek* |<sup>1</sup> archives testimonies; in New York, I was able to

cooperate with the *Leo Baeck Institute* and the *Österreichischer Gedenkdienst* in a project entitled the *Austrian Heritage Collection Project*.<sup>12</sup> In my professional life, I have filmed interviews needed for school projects or exhibitions.<sup>13</sup> There were a few people with whom I decided to work extensively for a book based on interviews. My first published book began unintentionally when I interviewed a woman whose recollections seemed to be endless. After several visits, I decided to interview her more systematically for publication (Lichtblau/Jahn 1995). For book projects, two interviewers generally record about 40 hours of interviews, which generates approximately 1,000 pages of transcribed text, which has to be edited, corrected and approved by the interviewee.<sup>14</sup> I filmed only one of these extensive interviews.

#### Methods for Audiovisual History

Since the digital revolution in audiovisual media, oral history has opened up to film. This is a new era, as until the turn of the millennium it was almost impossible to film interviews cheaply but to an appropriate quality. To give an example: Steven Spielberg's *Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation* project always hired a cinematographer, who filmed the interviews with a costly camera primarily on analogue Betacam-format.<sup>15</sup> There was a lot to learn from the impressive Spielberg-project: interviewer training, a certain pattern to the structure of the interviews, feedback, supervision, strict guidelines for videographers, release forms etc. It set a benchmark for other projects, such as the *Mauthausen Survivors Documentation Project*.<sup>16</sup> Many oral historians film their interviews for good reason. Contemporary historians often use filmed interviews for exhibitions or other projects e.g. for web-based presentations. Therefore it is crucial that audiovisual historians reflect this new methodology, as there are many differences compared with the basic oral history approach. Oral historians have to develop a sensitivity for listening and an awareness of hidden messages or offers that generate new questions, helping both sides be open to various layers of memory. This gives interviewers the opportunity to stimulate associative or reflective memory and statements. Compared with the audiovisual methodology, audiotaped

oral history interviews offer a more intimate setting, as interviewees often seem to forget that they are being recorded and become more conversational. As an aside, this is not what is intended, as the interviewees should always be aware that they are being recorded. What oral historians were doing was generating spoken life stories based on storytelling using various approaches to structure the interviews (see Lynn 2010; Obertreis 2012; Perks/Thomson 2016; Ritchie 2011; 2015).<sup>17</sup> Many oral historians open their interviews by saying: “Please tell me your life story.” One of the main differences with journalistic interviews is that oral historians do not use the ping-pong, question-answer-question format. Working with audiovisual media has forced oral historians to learn about film language and its methodological implications. It has also changed the role of interviewers, as they now represent the imagined audience and it is essential that interviewer and interviewee continuously interact. An interviewer should, for example, maintain eye contact with the interviewee and be seen to be paying attention, as it would look strange if the interviewee were looking round all the time as if bored or looking for someone to talk to. Working with audiovisual media also means having to overcome the traditional one-to-one talking-head interview and open up for other approaches.

For example:

#### 1. Observation

We now have the chance not only to interview but also to include more cinematographic practices. The camera eye helps us to observe certain situations or moments, such as commemoration rituals. In the case of events involving genocide survivors, it was and is irritating that politicians and celebrities push themselves to the fore. The camera means we do not have to interfere, just observe. It shows how important moments, such as commemoration days, and important spaces, such as the sites of former mass violence, can be documented. An observing camera may also trigger activities that would not happen if the camera were not present.

#### 2. Interaction

As previously in oral history, audiovisual history can bring people together

to discuss their experiences or observe when witnesses get into controversial conversations with other people about what they experienced.

### 3. Enactment

If witnesses agree, it is useful to enact certain situations that may surprise them into moving beyond their usual narrative or help them retell their recollections in different ways. A different setting may reshape the interaction. Telling your life story to a trained oral historian-academic may be different from recounting your recollections to a group of pupils with a different set of questions. There are many other forms of enactment: we can use music, films, paintings, role play etc.

### 4. The power of objects

Some objects are symbols for profound stories and experiences. In oral history we used photo albums to trigger memories. Using photo albums for audiovisual history provides a richness, and previously unseen private film footage is a new source we should use. Artefacts such as toys may help witnesses to reconnect with their past.

### 5. Audiovisual history can adopt from oral history the way to raise questions, for example how to approach each new topic with open questions that allow the respondents to focus on particular aspects their own way.

Interviews for exhibitions and other projects are often set up so that you don't see or hear the interviewer. You have to explain to interviewees that they may be interrupted if they start to answer before the interviewer has finished asking the question, because we do not want the interviewer's voice on the film. It is essential to find strategies to include all the information in the responses. I often suggest to interviewees that they start their reply with a variation of my question. So if I say: "Could you please tell me about your school experiences?" they start with: "My school experiences ...". Filming in such a way that the interviewers are not seen or heard means they have to use silent body language for interaction. A facial expression can signal that clarification is needed. Furrowed brows can indicate scepticism. Smiling, nodding, shaking your head, looking down, crossing your arms, or a search-

ing look are some of many ways to send out signals without using a single word or sound. It is immediately apparent when interviewees get bored. There are many ways to retain their attention. A provocative question would be one way, but there perhaps we tread the thin line between respect and disrespect, which we should avoid. Sometimes we may raise sensitive questions. For example: I interviewed a camp survivor who had been accused of faking a story in previous testimony she had given and “exaggerating” how long she had been imprisoned in Auschwitz. When the truth emerged, she was no longer invited regularly to schools and memorial celebrations as a highly regarded survivor. Like others, I interviewed her about her camp experiences, but I also asked about her experience of losing her reputation as a reliable witness. It is easy to judge other people. I think it is important to allow people space to give clarification in their own words. In this case, it was obvious that the length of time was irrelevant compared with the horror and trauma she had experienced. Many camp survivors say minutes seemed to be like hours, days like weeks. <sup>18</sup> As with oral history, we sometimes trigger emotional responses by simple questions such as: “How did you feel?” There is no rule about when a question like this is appropriate. For filming, such questions are important because we want to share experiences and understand how they affected or influenced someone. As everybody is different, each interviewer should find his or her own way to address former emotions without becoming voyeuristic.

### Learn to See

Learning to see was enriching for oral historians, too, as the world is full of references to the past. Using audiovisual media may open up our approach to memory spaces. What we can see representing the past can be related to what it means to individuals. There are many exciting ways to rediscover our varied past. For example, I took Leo Glueckselig (1914–2003), a Holocaust survivor who had escaped from Nazi-Austria to the US, back to his former neighbourhood in Vienna and asked him to tell me whatever came into his mind. Walking round, he unfolded his memories of buildings and places

in expressive, vivid storytelling. He was able to shape his recollections in a way that made me as a listener feel I'd gone back into past times and spaces. The architectural relics of the past sometimes fuelled his recollections. He showed me the back yard where his first love had rented an apartment. The walls had not been renovated since the war and they were still full of bullet holes. Another example: rooms are full of signs of time, sometimes expressed by the designs of everyday items. Book shelves may give insights into reading habits, attitudes or political and religious orientations. Learning to see also means allowing time for this process of observing, and creating an awareness of how important the interior of rooms may be. With their camera team, oral historians as experts should take charge of what is shown, and how. Interviews often take place in people's homes and living rooms. As soon as we include visual information, we should make considered decisions about how to position that person within their room. The visual information should be related to the person we see in a way that does not jar. This sounds easy but may not be, as some rooms are overloaded and therefore it is difficult to focus on the interviewee. We should also take care that interviewees are comfortable in seating that does not make noises whenever they move. Interviewees may embody their time by using fashions, hairstyles or words and phrases no longer used. In 1992, I worked with a colleague, Helga Embacher, on a documentary film released in 1993 about writers living in exile in New York. One of them was the poet Mimi Grossberg (1905–1997) who lived in Washington Heights. Her German was the educated German of the 1930s and even her dresses seemed old fashioned. Everything referred back to the era in Vienna before the Nazis took over. As a milliner, she had dozens of beautiful old hats in her apartment. Embacher used the hats as an opportunity to talk to Mimi Grossberg about her training in Vienna, which had helped her find work after she escaped to New York. New York in the 1990s was a city in transition. Modern districts like Midtown Manhattan contrasted with those such as Washington Heights, which looked like film sets for 1930s movies. We tried to refer to this by asking Mimi Grossberg about the meaning of the word "Heimat" – surrounded by Midtown's skyscraper scenery. The

complex interaction between spoken words, and signifiers of time and space is something we can use.

### “Casting”

But there is also the question: how does one actually find interviewees for audiovisual history? The answer is simple: by “casting” them. As oral historians, we “cast” all the time, whenever we decide who we do or do not want to interview. But interviewing on film for use in audiovisual projects further narrows the range of choices. For film, it is even more important that both interviewer and interviewee are fully interested. The more famous a person is the more difficult this can be. As an aside, it is astounding that audiovisual media somehow has an independent dimension in which some people’s facial expressions, gestures and voice appear more attractive on film than they are in everyday life. It also can be the other way round. Which is why it makes sense to carry out screen tests before one decides to work with a person extensively. There are also various ethical aspects to this casting, as we have to inform the interviewees in detail about our plans and should brief them about the way we work, for example that we need plenty of time to prepare the camera, light and sound, and that sometimes we have to remove objects from the setting that would confuse the visual information. The interviewee must always agree to any planned staging or other intervention. Release forms have always made clear that witnesses are responsible for whatever they tell us and how they behave in front of camera. Of course, it seems easier to interview someone you like. Few interviewers want an unappealing interviewee. But we should be aware of our power to exclude or include sources and stories. Sometimes it is important to confront yourself with your own prejudices. Although this is challenging and sometimes stressful, I like to work with people who have more than just a sympathetic charisma and to give them the opportunity to express opinions or positions different from mine. As with oral history, audiovisual recording offers the chance to clarify different positions in conflict phases. Nevertheless, there are limits, and I wouldn’t work with people who are arrogant, racist or sexist. Like in film, we

cast because we want to inspire a future audience with identification, confrontation, irritation, information or amazement and a desire to know more. All this affects the decisions about who we want to work with.

Language – Text – Context – Voice – Body.

One Interview, Different Approaches

Take one interview as a source and consider how different it is whether you listen to it, read it, or watch and listen to it. It is the case that we as listeners will often visualise someone if we can only hear their voice, but not see them. We assign them a gender role and age, and often form an image of them as tall or small, skinny or stout, friendly or blunt. This effect diminishes if all we have is a transcript of the interview, as we are not swayed by the voice, vocal range, sounds or rhythm. As historians we generally use clips of interviews for analytical texts and embed personal quotations to other sources for context. Reading passages from interviews seems to create the most distance. This is why oral historians encourage those who quote from transcripts to listen to the voice, too, to get an alternative and wider understanding of what that person wanted to express. Seeing a person influences viewers through the whole range of non-vocal expressions related to body language, clothes or setting. Compared with transcripts or audio formats, there is a stronger tension between the content of testimonies and the classification of the interviewees based on emotional ranking by viewers. Within moments someone is liked or disliked, seems interesting or not. If someone dislikes or likes a person it is difficult to listen carefully and non-judgmentally. For academic purposes therefore, it is advised first to read a transcript, then to listen to the interview and finally to watch it.

Problems & Benefits: The Need for Theoretical and Methodological Debate

The theoretical and methodological debate about audiovisual history is still underdeveloped and there is little training for it in lectures at university level. Using audiovisual media requires opening interdisciplinary approaches

and cooperating with communication studies and other academic disciplines. 19 Nevertheless, there is a backlog in demand for skills training at all levels, from conducting the interviews for audiovisual media, and handling cameras and sound, to editing, analysis and presentation. The complexity necessitates a time-consuming process of training, ongoing experience and feedback. In Europe there is little understanding about this, so we often face rather dilettante “learning by doing”. First, there is the challenge of dealing with trauma and taboos. There is simply no excuse when interviewers make a traumatic experience worse because they lack proper training. Interviewing survivors of concentration or extermination camps I expected to hear traumatic experiences. But often traumatic experiences pop up unexpectedly in interviews. We may not know if someone has experienced something traumatic. As a rule, if it does we tell the interviewee that it is not necessary to go into detail. Sometimes we cannot stop the narration of the traumatic experience. In those moments, we are responsible that the interviewees get the chance to finish what they want to say. Taking responsibility also means distancing ourselves, in the sense that interviewers should not follow emotionally into the traumatic situation. Nevertheless, we are emotionally affected. Sometimes the interviewees want to stop the interview, and we have to accept that. However, it is important to lead the interviewee back into the present time and his or her everyday life before we leave. Therefore, as a rule, we never have another appointment we must rush off to after an interview – to allow as much time as needed. It is also important to reassure the interviewee that it was appropriate to share the traumatic experience. As interviewers we also have to be careful of ourselves, as there is the danger of secondary traumatisation (see Rickard 1998).

Secondly, historians don’t need to know all the technical details of filming, but it is good to know basics. I therefore try to work with a professional camera crew for technically high standards. It also allows the interviewer to focus on the dialogue and interaction. After the interview, it may be beneficial for the team to share the experiences. Working with audiovisual media has advantages, and can be enlightening and enriching, thrilling and challenging.

It is a lifelong learning about history, the meaning of memory, experiences, emotions, resilience and so on. Above all, it offers exciting insights into many lives.

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Sylvia Degen

## TRANSLATING AUDIOVISUAL SURVIVOR TESTIMONIES FOR EDUCATION: FROM LOST IN TRANSLATION TO GAINED IN TRANSLATION

### Introduction

The call for participation in the 2017 workshop “Localisation of videotaped testimonies of victims of National Socialism in educational programmes” states: “The key objective is the joint development of quality concepts (what is ‘good practice?’)”. I was excited to contribute something to that objective from a translation perspective. I had numerous constructive and interesting conversations with my colleagues at the workshop, although I was the only translator and translation scholar there. The other occupational groups represented could be loosely categorized together under the broad label Holocaust Studies. While that collegial exchange was very positive, it confirmed an impression that I had always read about, namely that although Translation Studies scholars working on the topic of “translation and the Holocaust” engage themselves in Holocaust Studies debates, that engagement is usually one-sided. In Holocaust Studies or Holocaust Education, the issue of translation is widely ignored. If it is discussed, then it is in an exclusively theoretical manner, removed from translation practice. In this regard, the translation scholar Peter Davies claims that Holocaust Studies scholars have failed to develop a descriptive methodology for the analysis of Holocaust testimony translation practices – they have instead based their critique on ideas stemming from a purely theoretical discussion of those testimonies, “for example, theories of secondary witnessing, textual trauma or generic innovation – that assume the uniqueness of these texts and make proscriptive, critical judgements about translations.” (2014a: 204) Davies calls instead for a descriptive exploration of translation practices:

“A key task of translation scholarship is to make this activity [of translators] visible, to understand the conditions under which translators have worked, and to uncover the traces of translation in the texts that we rely on and in the systems of knowledge through which we interpret the Holocaust. [...] the Holocaust is literally inconceivable without translation and translators; but this understanding is not useful unless the processes of (re-)creation and mediation involved are also reflected on in ways that acknowledge the specificity of translation as an activity.” (2014b: 168)

This approach also seems to be useful in our common search for “good practices”: This article focusses on the practical processes at work in the translation of survivors’ audiovisual testimonies for educational purposes. The organisation of translation processes and the translators’ working conditions are critical to the result – and thus to how the “legacy of the survivors” is transmitted and experienced. Each particular translation process is generally determined by the contracting institutions – some of which were represented at the workshop. This is a point of intersection that is more than just an abstract meeting between the fields of Translation Studies and Holocaust Studies; here it is possible for us to meet in person as the representatives of those fields in order to develop good practices. Before introducing some possible solutions, however, it is first necessary to briefly outline some of the problems in the field of translation: This section will discuss the results of an investigation into the practical context of audiovisual testimony translation (Degen 2017). The research framework consists of three well-known Berlin institutions in the field of Holocaust Education: 1. *Witnesses of the Shoah. The Visual History Archive in School Education* multimedia archive; 2. *Forced Labor 1939–1945. Memory and History* online archive; 3. *Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe* video archive. |<sup>1</sup> All of them are or were involved with translating audiovisual Holocaust testimony for education. In summer 2014, I conducted 24 qualitative interviews. Instead of only focussing on translators, I also talked to translation coordinators, project directors, e-learning experts, and administrative coordinators responsible for budget management and third-party funds. Furthermore, I analysed translation

briefs, service contracts, and other translation guidelines, comparing them to legal regulations (e. g. copyright laws or usage rights), industry standards, and DIN/EU norms. Although there is much to discuss from these findings, I will only focus on one point for the purpose at hand, namely the development of good practices. <sup>12</sup> It is a point that became a central theme in the study and, in my opinion, it is one of the main reasons for planning errors when it comes to translation for the archives: namely, the fundamental misconception of translation.

### Lost in Translation: Is Translation just an Outsourced Side Job?

During the study, it became clear that the participants' behaviour was strongly determined by their ideas about translation. That was the case on the structural level – from the criteria for awarding the contract, to the payment, to the work environment – as well as on the operational level – from the translators' applied translation strategy to the fact that archive employees rarely made use of the translators' expertise, most likely due to the fact that they were unaware of said expertise. I was surprised when I discovered how many non-professionals were translating for the archives. Not even half of the interviewed translators were state-approved or had a degree in translation. Only 15% were working exclusively as translators. What the people had in common who were translating for the archives was not that they were professional translators, it was that they were academics (albeit in very different phases of their career). Why is that? The obvious response is that the contract providers did not specifically look to hire professional translators. The institutions' representatives provided a variety of answers as to why that was the case, which were primarily financial or in some way practical (such as a rare language combination or time pressure). According to my research, another explanation is that they have a narrow idea of the scope of work conducted by professional translators. That would also explain the observation that although the archive representatives expressed high quality expectations, that did not lead to awarding contracts to professional translators, as one would expect in any other professional field. On the contrary, contracts

were not often awarded based on a person's translation competence. It was reported that the archives asked translators about their fee, but not about their expertise: In other words, they asked nothing about the very thing that professional translators have to offer the archives.

Terms like "translation competence" or "professional translation expertise" are widely discussed within the translatorial field. While laypeople usually imagine translation solely as a kind of language competence, possibly combined with knowledge of the subject matter, translation competence actually goes far beyond those components. The Translation Studies scholar Anthony Pym defines it as a "multicomponent competence, involving sets of skills that are linguistic, cultural, technological and professional". (2003: 481) Such skills include:

"world and field knowledge, translation theories and methods, [...] skills in the analysis of the client's brief and the source text, translation strategies, TT [target text] presentation (including layout), documentation, terminology, and knowledge of the translators' professional practice." (Ibid.: 486)

That last skill includes knowledge of professional norms and standards, the legal framework (e. g. usage rights, copyrights, or tax policies) as well as the ability to provide advice and support to customers or colleagues unfamiliar with translation processes (e. g. in an interdisciplinary team, working on the same project). According to this definition, translation is much more than just reproducing a text in a different language. Considering the educational context at hand, it should be noted that the question "how do we get the message across?" is also central when it comes to translation. And from a professional point of view, a satisfactory answer to that question does not depend exclusively on the (translated) text, but rather on extratextual factors such as the target group, communication goal, or transmission medium, which determine the appropriate translation strategy. If translators are not incorporated into the project planning process from the beginning, then they at least need to be well informed of the above factors in order to deliver optimum

results. That also applies to the archives discussed here. However, the idea that incorporating professional translators into an interdisciplinary team within the archive could have a positive effect on both the translation process and the quality of the translation was simply not understood. Instead, the archives only focussed on language competence and knowledge of the subject matter when recruiting translators. A particularly remarkable point here is that my study supports the observation that, in doing so, they repeatedly separated form (language) and content – and the translator’s skill set was reduced to the former. Therefore, based on that misperception, the translator’s main task is thought to be simply finding target language equivalencies for linguistic signs – something reminiscent of translation exercises during language class. This understanding of translation explains why so many scholars in the researched field (who were not professional translators) were translating: as academics, they have an understanding of a foreign language and – based on this language-fixated understanding of translation – the almost automatic next step is to presume they can also translate that language. In line with the limited idea of the scope of work conducted by professional translators, these “content experts” even seem almost overqualified in comparison: they are not only skilled in foreign languages, they also contribute contextual knowledge – something perceived as an added bonus. And as far as those who “only” translate are concerned, less is expected from them apparently. It is not surprising that many of the interviewed non-professional translators had almost no concept of translation competence either – they come out of the same academic environment as their contract providers, namely the field of Holocaust Studies, mentioned at the beginning of this article. They are unaware of professional practices and do not follow discussions in the field of Translation Studies. A similar, language-fixated understanding of translation was predominant in those cases as well. It became clear that the contract providers – as well as many non-professional translators – had no awareness of professional translation expertise and thus no awareness of the lack thereof and the contribution it could make towards the successful transmission of crucial historical documentation.

The particular notion of translation observed in this study is very problematic: In the archives, it led to project planning errors and additional work. Furthermore, misunderstanding translators as mere language service providers is a precondition for the decision to outsource: While most of the other professions involved in the preparation of the audiovisual testimonies were part of a team based within the respective institutions, translation was usually an outsourced task. And for that reason, the translators' expertise was not being used effectively. The following quote from a translator, who also worked on the indexing and bibliographical registering of the translated testimonies, shows how presumed "cost savings" in early project stages – made by working with non-professionals – led to additional work later on:

"Everything comes together during the indexing process. All of the mistakes, from the interview methodology to the transcription to the translation, they all accumulate and come up at the end. In addition to the work that you have to do. They just didn't think about that part. [...] That was a catastrophe. It was so badly paid, that you were really exploiting yourself in the end, if you did it right. If you actually worked out what you were getting paid per hour, it would have been 50 cents. [...] And that's just drudgery, the effort put into it has no relation to anything anymore. And then you tend to be sloppy about it all. And that is very critical, because it is really special material we are dealing with here. You should really confront it thoughtfully and with a clear head and not that way. [...] That isn't right." (Interview U\_ZA\_5, 37:50)

In that project, the poor quality of the interview transcripts led to a significant amount of additional work in the following stages – and probably to a loss in quality as well.

The non-professional translators primarily pursued a translation strategy directed at producing the most precise, "authentic" reproduction of the original possible. Just as in the case of their contract providers, their understanding of translation was much narrower than that of the professional translators; they felt much less responsible for the transmission of the translated content than the professional translators and repeatedly looked to

the pedagogical staff to fulfil that function. Given that we are talking about Holocaust testimonies, the professional translators also considered it their responsibility to provide the most precise possible transmission of the text. In addition to that, however, they expressed that their goal was to generate a target-group-oriented transmission of the content – in view of the intention to use the translation in education. They thus had a broader understanding of the translator’s scope of duties. Since they had also chosen a source text oriented translation strategy, like their non-professional colleagues, they had to go beyond the text level when considering how to successfully transmit that information. Those considerations included, for example, the form and the medium of presentation (key term: archive’s learning platform design) or questions such as how to address translation for educational activities (key term: media competence). Since there had clearly been no plan to include the translators in any exchange about those considerations, there was no space for the systematic implementation of ideas that could have been developed together. For this reason, short supplemental remarks remained the only option for the translators to help with content that was otherwise difficult to understand. Many professional translators used that option to provide additional information so that the recipients of the target text would fully understand it (numbering among them colleagues without knowledge of the source language, including educational staff). One translator made the following comment in that regard:

“I explained all of the many names that came up. Then they disappeared. I noticed that they were not in the transcripts, the ones that you can read afterwards. I would have considered that [information] important. [...] And for terms too, ones that had an entirely different meaning back then. Some explanatory section would have been important, in particular for education. I had the opportunity to make remarks, I made ample use of that opportunity without knowing what would happen with them. And then I was disappointed when I saw that nothing happened with them. Because something was indeed lost in the process.” (Interview U\_ZA\_1, 40:00)

These remarks were brought up by the translators frequently. Many of them were equally disappointed when they realized that their remarks had “disappeared” or been changed. The above quote is interesting in a few ways. First, it demonstrates that the translator’s responsibilities had not been clearly defined and communication was inadequate, which is characteristic of outsourcing. Second, it exemplifies how a professional translator understands the job: She considered it her responsibility to conduct intensive research in order to fulfil the translation’s intended function (education). Third, it provides a good example of a targeted translation strategy: by including external remarks, the translator intended to impart important information to the recipients of the translation without interfering too much with the testimony itself – one possible solution to the problem of authenticity, which is central when it comes to survivors’ testimonies. It is important to emphasise here the critical effect of the understanding of translation in this example, and the consequences of the archive’s miscomprehension of translation. For the professional translators, intensive research and supplementary explanations were a self-evident component of their translation work to make the testimony understandable to young recipients. Obviously, the archive administration did not even consider the remarks option: Of course, the remarks did not just “disappear” – they were not seen as an integral part of the translation and hence were not used. When I asked one of the project directors about it, the answer was that they simply had not expected any remarks for the recipients (just technical remarks for the editors) and were not prepared for them – to his great regret. At that point, the development of the online presence was already completed and the archive did not see any way to adequately integrate the remarks. Consequently, a lot of important information was lost in translation.

I would like to conclude this section with a positive example. I have discussed the fact that translation competence did not play much of a role in who the archives chose for the contract. There was one exception to that rule however. One of the translation and editing coordinators spoke out emphatically for the hiring of professional translators. The appropriate qualifications or

**membership in professional organisations were proof of skill to her. While others pointed to financial constraints, she successfully advocated for more funding from the funding institutions:**

“And of course: too expensive, everything is much too expensive. I had to start working on convincing them, I wrote reports, performed some small studies demonstrating why it can’t be translated with Google. Because that was another suggestion, that maybe it could just all be done automatically. Everything had to be proven again. For us translators, we don’t need proof, it is clear to us why that doesn’t work, [...] but for people on the outside, everything had to be proven. Or why it doesn’t work for students to do it. I had to present that in writing, and figure out how long it would take: 40 years with students and 4.5 years with professional translators, if you want to achieve a certain level of quality. We also had to battle with arguments like, ‘oh, quality isn’t so important, the main thing is that we have 400 completely accessible interviews online.’ And that was unimaginable to us, because what does that mean ‘quality isn’t important’, in that case, you can just forget the whole thing.” (Interview L\_ZA\_1, 00:21:13)

**That example illustrates the recommendations for future best practices highlighted in the final section of this paper:**

Gained in Translation:

Professional Translators Should Be Part of the Team

According to my research, working in a team and promoting collective knowledge production, starting in the concept phase, would provide a good framework for the direct and sustainable resolution of organisational issues and translation problems.

– Budget-planning

The finding that representatives from financing institutions or contract providers have very little understanding of professional translation is in and of itself neither surprising nor problematic. However, when that is also the case for those working in the archives who are responsible for procuring transla-

tions and managing translation projects, that does indeed become problematic. Without an expert understanding of translation, project organisation suffers and it is impossible to convincingly argue for appropriate funding. The above example is a clear example of how consequential a professional understanding of translation can be. This particular coordinator had worked as a professional translator herself and on the basis of her own professional experience, she knew exactly what was necessary for the translation task at hand – and she mobilised additional funds in order to reach those goals. In this example, expertise had been used effectively indeed.

– Establishment of professional standards and quality criteria

Right from the beginning, professional standards and quality criteria for translation and transcription should be clearly defined – and for that you need professional translators on the team. Next, translators must be sought out who fulfil the developed requirements. The central criterium here is a professional understanding of oneself as a translator, including the corresponding familiarity with occupational norms and standards. The same is true to a lesser extent for transcription: If the quality of the interview transcripts mentioned in the “50 cents example” above had been of a professional standard, the additional work in the later stages could have been avoided.

– Development of clear translation guidelines

The choice of translation strategy should not be arbitrary, it should be thoughtful and consistent. It is therefore necessary to develop a clear translation brief at the beginning. The clearer the guidelines, the better the translation quality. Furthermore, the guidelines are part of the translation contract and thus legally binding, so professional knowledge of copyright laws, usage rights, and professional norms is essential.

– Team Consultation

Many on the team are laypeople in terms of translation. Even though they are involved in the process of preparing the translations, they usually have no

relevant experience with how translation processes work. That is why it is so important to have a professional translation perspective to benefit from the invaluable advice it can provide to the team. What is necessary is team collaboration, a shared understanding of the applied translation strategy as well as an understanding by each team member (editors, e-learning experts, or IT staff) of how to implement that strategy in their own area of responsibility. Without that, the work process suffers, and as demonstrated above, so can the quality of the translation. If the project management and project team members (such as the IT experts) had been aware of everything translators are capable of offering towards a successful educational transmission, they would have been able to factor that into their webpage design in advance. They would have been able to understand the role of the translator as cultural communicator, and that her work does not stop at the word alone. Unfortunately, that lack of understanding led to vital information being lost in translation. This leads us to another important point, the famous synergistic effects: collaboration between translators and IT experts could solve a major translation problem concerning survivors' testimonies: the "authenticity" claim on the one hand and the requirements of modern educational material on the other. By using digital media effectively, the testimony could be translated as accurately as possible, and difficult passages could be contextualised by providing crucial information that would otherwise be lost to the recipient. One possible solution would be to insert pop-ups or different "layers" of the translation rising up in the background: and in that way, something could be gained in translation.

– Translation quality management/standardisation of processes

The three investigated archives were in some ways pioneers in their field and there was a lot of improvisation and "learning by doing". Most of the editors I spoke to worked extremely hard and showed a great deal of personal commitment. However, the translation quality management was poor: Proof reading was often impossible because there was not enough staff for the vast amount of text (one interviewee said that she had one hour to read 100 pages) or the

source language was not spoken. The translators complained that their questions went unanswered and that they were not asked to collaborate during the final stages, meaning that they had no input regarding the finalisation of the translation and its acceptance, no ability to verify any changes. That suggests that the contract providers' quality standards could not possibly have been fulfilled. There are ways that quality management could be improved for these kinds of projects, such as those discussed above.

### Conclusion

This study has demonstrated numerous problems and missed opportunities arising from the fact that the translation process is woefully misunderstood. That leads to the devaluation of a translator's work and skill set, which leads to the translator not being incorporated into the team or consulted for their professional expertise. As a result, the success of the translation is seriously undermined. The way that the translator's remarks were handled is just one example that makes that clear. And it is especially unfortunate if the final version of a translation reproduces the spoken word as "authentically" as possible, while failing to actually communicate the substance. That kind of approach makes it impossible to succeed in the effort to pass survivors' memories down to future generations. In order to ensure good practices when using testimonies in education, we need to rethink this situation. For translators to effectively facilitate the transmission of the spoken word, it is necessary to open up a discussion about translation and its possibilities. We need consultation, communication, and collaboration on an equal basis. Translation provides an important contribution to Holocaust education. The translation of audiovisual survivor testimonies should be treated with professionalism, and not as a side-job often left to non-professionals: For although the youth are hearing the survivors' voices, it is the translators- words that they are understanding.

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## INTERVIEWS

Interview Translator U\_ZA\_5

Interview Translator U\_ZA\_1

Interview Translation Coordinator L\_ZA\_1

- 1 The people in these institutions work incredibly hard to share these testimonies with the world, and I respect that work very much. This paper is a critique of the process, not of the individuals involved in that process. I see this paper as an awareness raising effort aimed at helping those very individuals reach their high quality expectations.
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Éva Kovács

## TESTIMONIES IN THE DIGITAL AGE – NEW CHALLENGES IN RESEARCH, ACADEMIA AND ARCHIVES

During the past seven decades, tens of thousands of Shoah survivors have told their personal experiences within the framework of various research projects. From the early post-war voices of David Boder (1949; 1950), the central historical commissions in the American and British zones as well as Poland (see Jockusch 2012), the questionnaires and interviews of the *World Jewish Congress* in Romania (Gidó and Sólyom 2010) and the Hungarian *National Committee for Attending Deportees (Deportáltakat Gondozó Országos Bizottság DEGOB)* (Horváth 1998), through Annie Lauran's pioneer but largely forgotten reports in 1974, to the monumental holdings of the *Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies*, the *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Jeff and Toby Herr Oral History Archive*, the *Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive* and the archive *Forced Labor 1939–1945. Memory and History* at the *Freie Universität Berlin*, large collections of testimonies and personal documents have come into being. Many of the survivors who gave interviews between 1945 and 1947 reappeared three or four decades later in the new interview projects. They retold their stories; in other words, they were able to take part in discussions about their testimonies and try to articulate their opinion and criticism (Matthäus 2009). In the past decade, most have passed away. The memory communities of the catastrophe will soon cease to exist, turning the living testimonies into historical materials of the archives. Nowadays, this represents the most important milestone in the remembrance of the Holocaust. The other fundamental change has been brought about by the digital revolution and especially the public accessibility of the World Wide Web in the early 1990s. On the path to the digital age, the archives recognised

the new challenges early on, and from the 1990s onwards they started to digitise their collections. Today, almost all prominent testimony archives offer online access. The new technologies caused a revolutionary change in the perceptions of time and space. “The place-specific learning that historical research in a pre-digital world required is no longer baked into the process” (Putnam 2016: 377). Increasing reach and speed by multiple orders of magnitude has many advantages and disadvantages. The research conditions can be more egalitarian, open or cost-effective with digitised sources than they were for classical historical research in the archives. Many scholars who cannot travel widely or spend months in different research sites can now conduct comparative or transnational studies with the help of online access. However, digitisation projects were initially mainly in English followed by other Western languages, and digitised testimonies in other languages have not reached the same level of transnational visibility and recognition. Therefore, international collections in English or with English search engines may be overrepresented, not only in comparative but also in micro studies or in national historiography written by Western scholars.

### 1. The Archival “Turn”

The new concepts of archiving have challenged everyone involved with the “labour” of testimony: the interviewers, the interviewees, the institutions and the public. In principle, as Aleida Assmann said:

“an archive is not a museum; it is not designed for public access and popular presentations [...] There is, of course, some order and arrangement in the digital archive, too, but it is one that ensures only the retrieval of information, not an intellectually or emotionally effective display. The archive, in other words, is not a form of presentation but of preservation; it collects and stores information, it does not arrange, exhibit, process, or interpret it.” (2006: 270)

In an ideal-typical sense, this is true, however analysing the mission statements and institutional development of the audiovisual archives of the Shoah, the forms of preservation and presentation, the goals of commemoration

and psychological healing, the ways of retrieving information for decent historical research, or the displays of emotion in mass education and artistic projects, that is, the use of testimonies in archives and museums, these institutions appear wildly mixed. Moreover, testimony archives differ from regular archives in that they have a special “collect-yourself” character. Stephen Naron cites Richard Brown and Beth Davis-Brown (1998: 22): “Archives are the manufacturers of memory and not merely the guardians of it.” Naron points out that testimony-archives usually do not inherit and collect materials produced by other institutions or people, but they have “the unusual distinction of being an archive that produces itself” (see Stephen Naron’s article in this volume, p.43). So, researchers should, in principle, plan and design the whole workflow at the very beginning of their testimony project and make decisions as to which interview method and what technology to use for which target groups in conducting interviews, and how these will then be archived when the interview phase of the project has been finished – not to mention that not only the recording and archiving technologies can undergo revolutionary changes over time but also basic scientific concepts of testimony. No wonder that, simultaneously with the establishment of digital oral history archives, a new wave appeared on the horizon of Holocaust research, and testimonies have become frequent sources of mainstream historical investigations. The landscape has changed and massive efforts have been undertaken to integrate memories of the Holocaust in history writing, not just out of respect for the survivors but also because there are historical events for which oral testimonies and written personal memories are our only sources.

## 2. New Risks Using Testimonies in History Writing:

### Fragmentation and Decontextualisation of the Collection

Historians, psychologists, sociologists, activists, etc. all have their own goals and motives to collect and record testimonies *en masse*. These motives can include, as Boaz Cohen (2006: 141) writes: a) commemoration, b) telling the Jewish story of the catastrophe, c) bringing war criminals to justice,

d) confronting painful questions and e) fighting political battles, which may all automatically determine (“frame”) the whole process of recording and collecting. A testimony functions as a social construction, in which individuals are always entangled in their stories. As Paul Ricoeur points out in his magnificent book on time and narrative:

“We can see how the story of a life comes to be constituted through a series of rectifications applied to previous narratives, just as the history of a people, or a collectivity, or an institution proceeds from the series of corrections that new historians bring to their predecessors’ descriptions and explanations, and, step by step, to the legends that preceded this genuinely historiographical work. As has been said, history always proceeds from history.” (1984: 246)

For oral historians and interviewers, it is evident that conducting even an ordinary life history interview without mentioning any traumatic event is not simply a speech act but a “labor” (Shenker 2015), a “making” (Greenspan 2014) on both sides, which has an unusually direct emotional impact and is always mediated by frame conditions (Laub 2009). In the strict scientific analysis of a biographical account, scholars implicitly confront the complexity of the material and the frames of the interview, for example the interview situation, the movements in time and place, the changes of topics and styles, the dynamics of story-telling and, last but not least, the limits of self-representations, which also determine the limits of giving a meaning to the story. It is not possible here to expansively discuss the huge problems of transmissions from voice to transcript and from transcript to translation (Matthäus 2009). As Sylvia Degen writes:

“for the professional translators, intensive research and supplementary explanations were a self-evident component of their translation work to make the testimony understandable to young recipients.” (see Sylvia Degen’s article in this volume, p. 70)

Both the intended function, for example, education or exhibition, and – particularly in the case of the Holocaust – the sensitive question of authenticity

make translation a substantial stage of preparing, conducting and editing personal accounts. However, authenticity is also a construction. From the scientific point of view, a testimony is always a real-time performance that is highly influenced by the expectations of both interviewee and interviewer, therefore it needs special methodological tools for converting it into history writing, museum representation or educational material. Listening to someone's trauma used to belong to the realm of psychotherapy. The use of personal documents and accounts in psychology has had its own tradition since Sigmund Freud, Gordon Allport and others. Historians often illustrate their "objective" narrative with "subjective" fragments from ego documents. However, in studying memoirs, diaries, autobiographies etc., refined methodological reflection has become more common within literary criticism, intellectual history and anthropology, but has been rather neglected in history writing. A number of historians are still learning how to deal with these types of often painful and very complicated stories. All these conditions pose a giant risk for the integrity of both the collections and the individual interviews. Lack of information about the original goals and motives of collecting and recording testimonies can result in misinterpretation of the personal story or simplification of its inner dynamics. Testimonies from witnesses and survivors can lose their complexity and plausibility in short educational or museum film clips, or by being reduced to an illustration of a historical event in the chronological or topical order of the exhibition or curriculum. Or, conversely, by focusing only on the frightening episodes, the excerpt from a testimony can increase blasphemous or voyeuristic attitudes in visitors' subconscious. In the following chapters, I will describe some impressive new techniques for using personal accounts. As we will see, a wide variety of techniques is employed, which range from intuitive and phenomenological approaches, through qualitative ones to computational, quantitative methods.

### 3. New Techniques of Using Testimonies in Holocaust Studies

#### 3.1 Intuitive Methods

In his book *Remembering Survival. Inside a Nazi Slave-Labor Camp*, Christopher

Browning (2011) uses hundreds of ego documents. The book discusses the history of the Starachowice camp in Polish territory, where between 1942 and 1944 thousands of Jews were forced to work. “My methodology”, he writes in the introduction, “is to accumulate a sufficient critical mass of testimonies that *can be tested against another*” (Ibid.: 10). Although the method of “testing” each testimony against another made Browning’s research programme a bit puzzling (who decides which testimony is the most relevant? from which perspective?), his precise analysis of each case, his empathetic voice and his self-criticism probing and sometimes also reaching the limits of historical reconstruction of a “fact” convinced his readers of the virtue of this kind of history writing. He was not frightened to say that his writing was often based on fragmentary evidence and remained speculative. He also emphasised some of the pitfalls, such as the emergence of “repressed”, “secret”, “communal” and “public” memories, which are hard to reconnect to the experienced past. Besides reconstructing the factual micro-history of everyday life in the Starachowice camp, Browning systematically discusses the above mentioned meta-levels of social memory. Case by case, he shows how different survivor groups had first invented and then sustained their own common version of remembering an event; how public – mediatised – memory restructured and visualised this event, converting an inner picture of personal memory into a common picture of remembrance; how repressed memory sometimes broke out in the interview and, last but not least, how secret topics were told years later. Browning also uses his earlier knowledge of postwar trials to illuminate the dynamics of social memory and the victims’ continuous struggle to have their credibility recognised. In the end, the book traces the universe of the “camp culture”, the wide spectrum of the struggle for survival, and touches on painful questions such as the resistance, the *amidah*. As he concludes: “words such as ingenuity, resourcefulness, adaptability, perseverance and endurance [are] the most appropriate and accurate” (Ibid.: 297) for describing resistance in the camp. The genre of Browning’s book is a kind of *re-enactment* of history: his agents struggled for survival between 1942 and 1944 and they are still struggling for recognition of their testimonies. Borrowing the vocabulary

of literature studies, one can read the new historiography of the Holocaust invented by Browning as a *docudrama* script.

### 3.2 Qualitative Methodological Approaches

It is common in psychological and sociological research into the testimonies of Holocaust survivors and other oral or biographical interviews that in the case of large testimony collections specific analytical methods need to be used. One of the most frequent techniques is to implement *socio- or psycholinguistic applications* in both manual and software-based procedures of qualitative data analysis. Just as the research aims differ fundamentally from those of historians, so these methods have their limits in history writing. The advantage of qualitative data analysis is that it deals with the testimonies as complete visual, oral or written bodies, thus making it difficult for the researchers to “cherry-pick” from the personal accounts and cite them capriciously without any methodological consequences. An increase in the capacities of digital archives, enabling users to do sequential or thematic searches among and within the interviews, has created a serious risk that illustrative excerpts taken out of their original context will provide documentary evidence for a particular historical argument. However, sequential analysis or thematic comparison can also underpin high-quality historical research. Anthropologists have invented two fruitful methods for constructing theory through data analysis. *Grounded theory* begins by collecting qualitative data. These are analysed until the ideas embodied in the text become explicit. These ideas are coded and the codes of similar contents are grouped in concepts and categories. These categories may become the basis for a new theory. Another ethnographic method also seems useful for historians working with a large quantity of testimonies: the *extended case method* asks for “generalisable” findings. <sup>11</sup> Researchers analyse a particular social situation in relation to the broader social forces shaping it. They seek “further elaboration of the basic study of case material because they deal with a sequence of events sometimes over quite a long period, where the same actors are involved in a series of situations” and “the extended case study analysts have to trace how

events chain on to one another and how, therefore, events are necessarily linked to one another through time” (Small 2009: 22). Similar methodology was used in a research project on Hungarian-Jewish slave labourers in Vienna (Frojimovics/ Kovács 2015; see also Kinga Frojimovics’ article in this volume).

Historians dealing with the testimonies of Shoah survivors have hardly ever applied these methods. Unfortunately, most historians have no intellectual links with sociologists and do not feel the need to check their results against a larger body of qualitative studies asking similar questions. For many, however, this may become a critical issue. The discussion of the emerging new topics of Holocaust studies, for example, everyday life in the camp or in the ghetto, children’s testimonies, the social history of forced labour under the Nazi regime, spatial experiences, the meanings given to particular places, informal networks among the deportees, survival and resistance, experiencing violence, etc., for which testimonies may be the only source, need high research standards.

### 3.3 The Statistical Representation of Suffering

Let me offer just two examples of this aspect, both found in articles on the Hungarian Holocaust: one from social-psychology, the other one from history writing. A group of American psychologists described how elderly survivors living in Hungary evaluate their lives in the context of the multiple socio-political upheavals they had experienced during the past seven decades. They interviewed 104 people in Hungary and compared their findings with earlier studies of 166 survivors who had emigrated to the United States and 184 survivors who had emigrated to Israel after the Second World War. Altogether, they analysed 454 interviews. After reconstructing complex demographics – survivors’ social and family life, their psychological well-being outcomes, etc. – they concluded:

“findings support expectations about more negative psychological well-being outcomes among survivors living in Hungary, a country where they were victimized during the Holo-

caust and where they subsequently experienced serial political trauma. [...] The structural barriers to coming to terms with legacies of the Holocaust were far less evident among survivors who had a chance to build new lives in the US or in Israel.” (Kahana et al. 2015: 320)

One might ask whether it is worthwhile conducting such a giant interview project and complicated socio-psychological analysis to come to this trivial conclusion.

My second example is a work on the protocols of the Hungarian DEGOB (National Committee for Attending Deportees, *Deportáltakat Gondozó Országos Bizottság*).<sup>12</sup> These documents from more than 5,000 survivors in Budapest are one of the largest collections of early testimonies worldwide. A promising young historian, Ferenc Laczó (2016: 100), raised the following questions in his article: How did Hungarian Jewish survivors categorise, represent and assess the concentration camps? How did they retrospectively describe the condition they were in while there? and How did they narrate the liberation of the camp? He also asked how the two crucial specifics of the Shoah – the death camp and the gas chamber – were articulated. Without clarifying his methods, he said he had conducted qualitative analysis.

Since the film *Schindler's List* (1993), social scientists, philosophers, educators, filmmakers and museum experts have been heavily discussing whether the direct representation of the gas chamber violates the ban on images (*Bilderverbot*). Behind this question lies a complex philosophical debate that I cannot adjudicate here. Imagined witnessing represents a crucial moment in understanding history, whether in a book or an exhibition – and it cannot be avoided either in academia or education. However, it is still doubtful if a statistical analysis of testimonies referring to experiences of the gas chamber can help readers understand the extermination of the Hungarian Jews. Laczó starts his analysis with the following statement:

“despite all the substantial complications related to leaving one’s testimony of the gas chambers, altogether over two hundred interview transcripts include explicit references to this most notorious Nazi means of annihilating European Jewry and contain concurrent

descriptions of them. On the other hand, in light of the fact that more than half of the 3,666 DEGOB records relate, among others, personal experiences in Auschwitz-Birkenau, this does not appear like an exceedingly large number.” (Ibid.: 126)

**However, at the end of the chapter he concludes:**

“The DEGOB interview collection shows that a substantial number of Hungarian Jewish witnesses were able and willing to articulate crucial details of their horrific knowledge shortly after their liberation.” (Ibid.: 133)

Unfortunately, these results are also mostly insignificant, as statistical verification cannot estimate the suffering of the victims. Is being statistically representative a relevant criterion in assessing the memory of the gas chamber? I am afraid the answer is, no, it is not. Can we learn something about the gas chambers from the testimonies? I am sure, yes, we can.

### 3.4 Excursion: Probing the Limits of Representation with the Help of Testimonies

Let me illustrate this dilemma with the role and meaning of the testimonies in the film *Son of Saul* (2015) by the Hungarian film director László Nemes Jeles. In this film, personal accounts found a new voice in the age of “post-testimony”. Nemes Jeles credits as his sources *Des voix sous la cendre: Manuscrits des Sonderkommandos d’Auschwitz-Birkenau* (2005), and the memoir by Miklós Nyiszli, *I Was Doctor Mengele’s Assistant* (2001), but his inspiration might well also have come from memoirs and personal accounts ranging from those by Primo Levi (1991; 2015) and Imre Kertész (2006), through the interviews in Claude Lanzman’s *Shoah* (1985), up to the very controversial “Sonderkommando” photographs.<sup>13</sup> As the French philosopher Georges Didi-Huberman (2015: 6) wrote in his 25-page open letter to Nemes Jeles, in the montage of the testimonies a *conte documentaire* (documentary tale) comes into existence, “a monster. A necessary, coherent, beneficial, innocent monster”. Nemes Jeles and his colleagues had not

only read and visualised or imagined the testimonies but also listened to them; more precisely, they staged what they had read and imagined about the infernal noise of screaming, crying, howling, slamming and squeaking that the witnesses had heard in Auschwitz-Birkenau and later very often mentioned in their testimonies. Yet, the personal accounts of suffering from these sounds did not represent an important historical source. Nemes Jeles returned to this sensory evidence of the Holocaust. In the first minutes of the film, the viewers hear the slamming of doors, the sifting through possessions, the grim cacophony of a death camp, which makes it impossible for them to get involved emotionally in the series of events they are watching. “When the film begins, Saul has already died as a subject, an independently thinking and feeling self: there is no one to identify with.” (Ban 2016) We are after a cold shock – under the weight of apathy. All our higher emotions and ethical dispositions were destroyed. The film creates a monstrous distance from the well-known Holocaust iconography of the movies and, after a while, opens a space for radically new ethical-emotional attitudes. In this empty space, the dead subject of Saul is recovering his soul. At the moment when Saul witnesses the murder of a boy who had survived the gas, he makes a commitment that he will give the boy a proper Jewish burial. The film shows how he tries to pursue this goal with passion. After 70 years, in Saul’s long and tragic road of performing his mission, the testimonies of the Shoah survivors spring again into existence.

#### 4. Conclusion

One might suspect that I hesitate to quantify qualitative sources in such a sensitive research topic as the history of the Holocaust. Even if I did, that could not slow down the new tendency of quantification in history writing, although I hope quantification will have its own limits. Here, I have described the very first approaches in this field and suggested some methods that may help raise more exact questions that historians want to answer, and help decide on the advantages and disadvantages of gathering data from the testimonies. The digitisation of testimony collections, the public accessibility of

archives, the globalisation of Holocaust studies and new curriculum developments in schools, universities and museums will fundamentally challenge the old techniques of history writing and strengthen the need for methodological reflections in the years to come.

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- 1 The Ludwig-Maximilians-University in Munich recently launched a new education project, *Near but Far – Holocaust Education Revisited*, relying on reflective grounded theory as a method, however they do not analyse testimonies. See: [http://www.en.holocaust.didaktik.germanistik.uni-muenchen.de/about\\_us/methodology/index.html](http://www.en.holocaust.didaktik.germanistik.uni-muenchen.de/about_us/methodology/index.html), accessed 2 June 2017.
- 2 Between summer 1945 and spring 1946, a number of returning deportees gave personal accounts of their suffering to the DEGOB. The protocols were facilitated by a questionnaire and a topical interview. These were not always identical and the answers also differed according to the interviewers. As the website of the DEGOB protocols emphasises, “although the material of the DEGOB protocols forms a unique historical database, the information that can be garnered from them must naturally be treated in accordance with the appropriate source criticism. We are talking about several thousand oral history documents, so the general rules relating to the examination of personal recollections must be applied to the DEGOB protocols as well.” The editors listed a huge amount of frequently contradictory facts in the protocols adding the

following: “These considerations serve to warn potential researchers and readers that ‘hard’ facts offered by the survivors (dates, numbers, names) must be treated at arm’s length and, where possible, cross-referenced with other sources”, see <http://degob.org/index.php?showarticle=201>, accessed 12 September 2017.

- 3 On the “Sonderkommando” photographs see for example [http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/education/newsletter/29/photographs\\_sonderkommando.asp](http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/education/newsletter/29/photographs_sonderkommando.asp), accessed 7 October 2017.



■ TESTIMONIES IN MUSEUMS  
AND MEMORIAL SITES



Kinga Frojimovics, Éva Kovács

## TRACING JEWISH FORCED LABOUR IN THE KAISERSTADT – A TAINTED TOUR OF VIENNA | 1

Tourist Sites and the Memory of the Holocaust

“Willkommen in Wien! In Wien ist alles etwas gemütlicher!” (Welcome to Vienna. Everything is a bit more comfortable in Vienna) are typical Viennese slogans. Vienna is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Europe, and over the last two decades commemorating the Holocaust has also become a tourist attraction, albeit after much social and political struggle. The most notable sight is the Holocaust monument, *Mahnmal für die 65,000 ermordeten österreichischen Juden und Jüdinnen der Shoah*, in the Judenplatz. The monument, initiated by Simon Wiesenthal, was unveiled in the year 2000. So nowadays there are visible traces of the Holocaust in Vienna, although fewer than in Berlin, Budapest or Warsaw. However, there are not many reminders of a later chapter of the Holocaust, in 1944–45, after most Viennese Jews had been deported – the arrival of Hungarian Jewish forced labourers. They far outnumbered the about 6,000 Viennese Jews who mostly lived in mixed marriages and were still in the city. The Hungarian forced labourers were highly visible all over Vienna, with their yellow stars and often wooden clogs. They were in the factories, on public transport and on the streets clearing rubble, which was needed almost everywhere. Only a few plaques at Haidequerstrasse, Lobgrundstrasse, Tempelgasse/Ferdinandstrasse, Bischoffgasse, Malzgasse and Hackengasse commemorate the Holocaust, even though the *Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies* (VWI) has already identified more than a hundred sites. | 2 The publication *Topographie der Shoah* employs the hermeneutics of urban historiography and makes visible the sites where Jews were persecuted between 1938 and 1945 and the sites of destroyed “Jewish” Vienna (Hecht et al. 2015). It presents the city as an entity that is “contaminated” by its past. | 3 This article offers an

unconventional tour of Vienna. We will see the same places that appear on every tourist itinerary, but looked at from the point of view of the Hungarian Jewish forced labourers. We will demonstrate that we are not exaggerating or trivialising the memories of the survivors, because they themselves usually look at Vienna as visitors when reporting their memories.

### Arrival

At the end of June 1944, about 15,000 Jews were brought to Strasshof near Vienna from four Hungarian ghettos: 564 from the Baja ghetto, 6,641 from the Debrecen ghetto, 5,239 from the Szeged ghetto, and 2,567 from the Szolnok ghetto. <sup>14</sup> In the Strasshof camp, a “slave market” was opened to meet the demands of Austrian entrepreneurs who urgently needed manpower in their factories and farms. Deported families – mainly mothers, children and grandparents – were forced to work in Vienna and in Lower Austria on farms, in trade, and in particular in the war industry, for example, in construction companies, bread factories, oil refineries etc. Most of them had previously lived in small towns and villages in eastern Hungary. For them, even the four Hungarian towns where they had been held were big cities. Vienna was not only huge, but the deportees had often heard about its famous sites. Éva Eisler, who was deported to Strasshof when she was 15 years old, remembered her arrival the following way:

“While we were travelling it got dark. It became night and we had no idea where we were taken. Suddenly we saw, as a miraculous sign, the Prater’s big wheel. We were relieved: they are taking us to Vienna or to its neighbourhood.” <sup>15</sup>

### Tours of Vienna

#### 1. Prater

The Prater provided a good landmark for the Hungarians, who sometimes had to get around the city alone, to orientate themselves. Chava Unger (born Éva Ruttkai in Budapest, 1931), who was raised in the Jewish orphanage of Szeged, remembered <sup>16</sup> how when she was 13, in 1944, she and other girls from

her orphanage were taken to a paint factory in Floridsdorf (21. Christian-Bucher-Gasse 35, W. Megerle Lackfabrikanten und Rivalinwerke). Children had to work in the factory, rolling paint barrels and carrying heavy bags. Éva's job was to carry the paint samples to the factory laboratory, where they were compared with the desired colour. One day during the winter of 1944–45, the Jews working at the factory were taken to be disinfected somewhere in the city. There was an air raid during the disinfection process and the Jews ran out of the building and threw themselves on the snowy ground. Éva somehow got lost and found herself alone, surrounded by bomb craters. However, when she looked up, she saw the big wheel of the Prater overhead. She lay there for a long time, because air raid went on till dawn. Éva then made her way back to the factory on foot and by tram, where people helped her to find Floridsdorf. The others were already back. The big wheel of the Prater had once again served as some kind of a sign, a known point to orientate by in the narrative of a survivor recounting one of her most frightening experiences as a scared and isolated teenager. Another testimony also involves the Prater, in an unexpected way. Jardena Katzin (born Teréz Leipnicker in Békéscsaba, 1937) was deported to near Vienna with her parents and brother, and 20 other relatives. At first, the family was engaged in agricultural work in Franzensdorf. From there, in September 1944, they were taken to Vienna to the Kissler & Hermann wood processing plant (10. Davidgasse 95). Shortly before the city was liberated, Kissler, the head of the factory, took all the children to the Prater and on the big wheel. 17

## 2. Schönbrunn 18

Hungarian Jewish forced labourers also worked in Schönbrunn, the summer residence of the Habsburgs. During the summer of 1944, there was a Wohnlager (12. Bischoffgasse 10) in a school near the palace housing 585 Hungarian Jewish slave workers, including many families with small children. The adults were either taken by construction companies to work on bomb-damaged buildings or to the Siemens factory (21. Siemensstrasse 92). Between 10 and 12 children – all of them aged under 12 – were regularly

taken to Schönbrunn to do gardening. They were often given sandwiches by local mothers who taking their own young children to the park. Jeshajahu (Ernő) Wiesner, who was born in 1933 in Debrecen, usually worked with the adults. Sometimes, however, he was taken gardening with the children's group. In his testimony, he not only remembers the sandwiches, but also that they sometimes even played a little with the Viennese children in the palace park. The mothers frequently asked the young forced labourers why they were not in school. | 9

### 3. The City Centre

In most cases, Hungarian Jewish forced labourers in Vienna worked under Austrian foremen. Haja Genzel Rubinstein, who was born in 1927 in Makó, was deported from Szeged. | 10 She was housed with her family in a school at No. 32 Schrankenberggasse in the 10th district and transported on an open lorry to the Wienerwald every day to cut down trees. One day, the driver, a native Viennese, took the group to the city centre and showed them the major sites: the Opera building, the Hofburg, etc. He also showed them Mayerling in the Wienerwald, where Archduke Rudolf had committed suicide in 1889. Thanks to a driver proud of his city, Jews who had been deported from Hungary and forced to do hard physical labour, were able to become tourists for a while on their way to "work".

### 4. Zentralfriedhof (Vienna Central Cemetery)

Jewish Hungarian forced labourers, mainly children, also worked in the Vienna Central Cemetery between 1944 and 1945. About 40 children would be taken to the cemetery by tram – on a separate tramcar – every day from their camp in a school at No. 11 Hackengasse in the 15th district. In the cemetery, they had to cut back bushes, collect fallen horse chestnuts and leaves, and look after the graves. There was a crematorium there where bodies were burned all day long. The children saw this very closely. One of them, Simcha Schiffmann, who was born in 1932 in Debrecen, reported in his 2005 interview in Israel that the nightmarish picture of the burning bodies (raising

themselves, almost sitting up with the heat) is still etched in his mind and he cannot get rid of it. |<sup>11</sup>

### Getting around Vienna

In the winter of 1944, the Nazi authorities brought most of the forced agricultural workers into the capital. Some were taken to a camp at Schloss Laxenburg, where they were housed in the servants' quarters. From there, they were assigned to various factories and workshops.

Jichak (Miklós) Grün, who was born in 1934 in Debrecen, was taken to Laxenburg with his family. The adults worked in the factories, but he was usually left in the camp during the day. He remembered his life in Laxenburg as follows:

"I remember that both my mother and my brother were bringing food home from work. Nevertheless there was no food in the camp itself. We were eating sugar-beet and things that we found and stole from the neighbouring fields. We were living on these. In Laxenburg I was sent to the baker to work as a child servant. I couldn't speak German. But I managed to steal something each day. I hid the bread rolls, which I took home, in the leg of my trousers. This did not last long because the kneading bowls were running out. And I did not understand when the baker told me to bring some more kneading bowls. He became nervous, beat me very hard and never wanted to see me again. Thus the bread roll-acquisition came to an end too." |<sup>12</sup>

Haja Genzel Rubinstein chopped wood and carried heavy logs in the Wienerwald. |<sup>13</sup> Hikers often passed them. Some women secretly pushed bread and cold meat into their hands, but this was stopped after some of the Jews started to ask for food take back to their children in the camp. Then the guards forbade them to approach the hikers. Mirjam Herstik, who was born in 1935 in Kiskunhalas, talked about the same thing, but from the point of view of a child who remained in the camp at No. 32 Schrankenberggasse in the 10<sup>th</sup> district all day, waiting for her mother and sisters to come back from their work in the Wienerwald:

“The only thing we were asking from them was whether they brought any food with them. My mother had a real talent for acquiring food. They were in the woods where hikers were passing by. They were having picnics. My mother was not embarrassed to approach them in German and beg for some food. There were good people among them who took something out of their baskets: a bread roll, a piece of cookie. My mother always brought something. Always. And we knew it, so this was our first question. We were already waiting for them to come and bring something. Because we were very hungry, very hungry. We were little children who were hungry and had nothing to do.” 114

### Relations between Hungarian Jews and the Viennese

It is interesting how the mental image of Vienna that the Jews in the Hungarian provinces had had based on cultural-historical influences mixed with their imagination and/or real travel experiences became juxtaposed with the image of Vienna that emerged from their experiences as deported forced labour. As seen from the above quotations, their enforced presence in Vienna triggered earlier images, pieces of memories and knowledge. Obviously, later information about the city may get mixed up in the testimonies given much later in life, but their basic attitude towards Vienna is shaped by their experiences there, coloured by their previous knowledge and expectations of the city. All this does not mean that the Hungarian Jews developed deep contacts with the Viennese. On the contrary! Our research with Éva Kovács indicates that contacts between them remained limited and accidental during the time – less than a year – when the Hungarian Jewish forced labourers were visible in the city. In addition to the language problems and physical segregation, the main reasons were social status, and to an extent the internal hierarchies within the forced labour communities themselves. The Hungarian Jewish forced labourers looked like strangers and beggars to the Viennese. Research shows the Viennese people were more compassionate and generous towards the Hungarian Jews than they had been earlier towards the native Jews of Vienna. As Michaela Raggam-Blesch stated:

“There are striking differences in the recollections of Viennese and Hungarian Jews, particularly regarding contact with the Viennese civilian population. While acts of kindness or support are central in the autobiographic texts of Hungarian Jews, they are mentioned to a much lesser degree in those of Viennese survivors and are usually presented as an exception in an environment that had suddenly turned hostile to them. The traumatic experiences following the Anschluss to Nazi Germany in March 1938 and the humiliation and the sudden loss of rights that followed were too deep-rooted. Overnight, neighbours and friends had turned against them, and denunciation was a constant threat.” (2015: 22)

Some Viennese people did indeed extend some help to the Jews from Hungary, but not merely out of helpfulness and generosity to Jews. Firstly, they thought that the presence of the Jews from Hungary was only temporary, unlike that of the Viennese Jews; and secondly, the Hungarians, unlike the Viennese Jews, did not threaten the social positions of the native Viennese people: the forced labourers were very clearly in an inferior position.

István Gábor Benedek describes another way the forced labourers were helped. He was seven years old when he was taken with his mother and older brother in the summer of 1944 to a village near Vienna called Gerasdorf to do agricultural work. <sup>15</sup> The deported families were transported to different places each day to do whatever needed. One day his mother and his brother, Pál, were taken to work at a baker’s. When his mother was sent back to help clean the house, she gave the baker’s wife some good advice about cleaning rugs, and the woman began to be interested in the identity of this other woman who had been sent to work for her. It emerged then that Mrs Benedek was the wife of the chief accountant of a big flour mill in Hungary, and her husband had frequent business dealings with the Anker Company in Vienna. The woman verified the information at Anker, and then began to help the Benedek family regularly. She invited them to her house and gave them food, and gave good shoes to the mother, and a warm winter coat and toys to István. These gifts helped the Benedeks survive. The fact that they were not starving and had good shoes and warm clothes was extremely important

when the family was deported to Bergen-Belsen from Vienna in the winter of 1944. These stories further support our interpretation that the local people did not see the Hungarian Jewish forced labourers as equals. Mrs Benedek's pre-war social status together with the business connections – which fundamentally changed the relationship between the two women – came to light only by chance. We know precious little about contacts between the Jews who remained in Vienna and the Jews who were deported to Vienna. Based on the sources, we think that besides hospital staff and a few social workers who worked for the remaining Jewish community of Vienna, the Hungarian Jewish forced labourers did not meet local Jews. This seems logical, as the approximately 6,000 remaining Viennese Jews could only move around to a very limited extent. The fact that most of the Hungarian Jewish forced labourers arrived with their families (usually without the men of military age) and the families often also knew one another, created an inner society with a structured division of labour, and a limited but real sense of communal and religious life. There were family members, usually the elderly, who stayed in the camps and tried to care for the children and even organise educational activities for them. Based on the post-war testimonies analysed so far, we can state that the forced labourers tried to reproduce their earlier communal life as far as it was possible in the camps. As to religious life, we can see in the testimonies that rabbis, cantors, and/or elderly men took responsibility to perpetuate religious life among the deportees. These inner structures reduced the deportees' need for regular outside contacts.

### Conclusion: The Cultural Image of Vienna among Hungarian Jewish Forced Labourers

As a consequence of the lack of real contact between the forced labourers and the people of Vienna, paradoxically, Vienna remained the city of their earlier tourist and imagined experiences to the Hungarian Jewish forced labourers, the unreal city of cultural and historical dreams. Many of them kept projecting this positive cultural image and generalised their positive experiences, even the very small ones, accordingly. Rivka Weisz, who was born as Herstik

in 1934 and grew up in Kiskunhalas, described the Wienerwald to the interviewer of her 2008 testimony in Israel with the following enthusiastic words: “Wienerwald. You know, the forest of Vienna. Johann Strauss, the waltzes, music. Beautiful, beautiful forest.”<sup>16</sup> The projection of the mythical, ideal, cultural image of Vienna over the real Vienna of the 1940s is mainly responsible for the fact that many survivors talk enthusiastically about the residents of Vienna, even though the real help provided by locals reality cannot be compared with their sufferings. The survivors very rarely remember actual dialogues or real contacts with Viennese people. Very tellingly, we have not yet found in the testimonies any story about escape or offers of shelter if anyone did escape. On the contrary, Éva Eisler, for example, said escape was impossible because the lack of potential shelters. She called attention to this, even though her story includes an important instance of receiving help – food – from Viennese people:

“In mid-January there were significant snowfalls and the whole team was assigned to shovel snow at the Danube Bank. We got shovels and we had to shovel the snow to the Danube. The city’s street-sweepers oversaw us and demanded fast work so they did not have to work. At this time my cousin and I managed to escape and we were hiding under the stairway of a bombed house, because we were freezing. After a while one of the residents came home. S/he got in the elevator and came back to us with milk and bread with butter. S/he gave us food and drink and told us to put the milk bottles to the elevator. Her/his activity was lifesaving for us since we were cold and soaking wet. Outside there was minus 15 degrees and the cold wind was blowing.”<sup>17</sup>

So Eisler, who was still wearing summer clothing (in which she had arrived from her home town) and wooden clogs, was clearing snow instead of the Viennese street sweepers guarding them. She was lucky enough to find shelter for a while and received unexpected help from a Viennese resident. Her conclusion, however, was: “We had some opportunities to escape, but there was nowhere to go. It was better to go back to the camp and stay together with the family.”

## Afterword

We have recently noticed that the classical *Bécs* guidebook to Vienna, which was the most widely used guidebook during the Socialist regime in Hungary, was written by a former forced labourer, Mária Ember, then a teenager, who had been deported from Hungary to Strasshof. She published it in 1978, four years after publication of her Holocaust memoir-novel, *Hajtűkanyar*. In Ember's memoir Vienna plays a crucial part, both as the real city and as an idea. However, her Vienna guidebook contains no reference to the Holocaust or the Jews deported there from Hungary as forced labour. She wrote one of the best Holocaust memoir-novels about the Jews of Hungary in which Vienna features prominently but she wrote a guidebook to Vienna in which the Holocaust is absent and Vienna's context is its glorious past and high culture. The guidebook's Vienna is the Vienna of Strauss, the waltz, the Prater, Schönbrunn and Sachertorte and not the Vienna she experienced as a forced labourer.

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- 1 This article is based on a paper, presented together on the conference of the Humboldt University, entitled "Urban Heritage and Urban Images: Imagineering Urban Heritage", Berlin, October 2015.
- 2 On the project see: <http://ungarische-zwangsarbeit-in-wien.at/>, accessed 3 November 2017. We mainly used testimonies from the following collections: late testimonies from the *Visual History Archives*, and *Yad Vashem Archives*; and early testimonies from the *National Committee for Attending Deportees (DEGOB – Deportáltakat Gondozó Országos Bizottság)* collection of the Hungarian Jewish Archives. Short video clips of the VHA testimonies can be viewed on our webpage, together with brief summaries from the mostly Hebrew Yad Vashem testimonies. The DEGOB testimonies are available online, see: <http://degob.hu>, accessed 3 November 2017.

- 3 Quoting Martin Pollack: “This term is unscientific. I coined it myself. For me a tainted landscape is one that appears to be unremarkable from the outside but conceals something within. To put it plainly: If I start digging, something will be revealed. Something has been covered over and become part of the landscape. I find it hard to imagine untainted landscape today. That is not always pleasant. Wherever I go and stand, I often say to myself: Hopefully this landscape conceals nothing bad.” (“Dieser Begriff ist unwissenschaftlich. Ich habe ihn selber erfunden. Eine kontaminierte Landschaft ist für mich eine Landschaft, die nach außen hin nichts Auffälliges aufweist, die aber etwas verbirgt. Plakativ gesprochen: Wenn ich beginne zu graben, kommt etwas zum Vorschein. Etwas wurde zugedeckt, das zu einem Teil der Landschaft wurde. Heute kann ich Landschaft kaum mehr unkontaminiert denken. Das ist nicht immer angenehm. Wo ich gehe und stehe, überlege ich oft: Hoffentlich verbirgt diese Landschaft nichts Schlimmes.”) Martin Pollack: “Wo ich gehe und stehe”. Interview Mia Eidlhuber, *Der Standard*, 22. Februar 2014. <http://derstandard.at/1392685903291/Martin-Pollack-Wo-ich-gehe-und-stehe>, accessed 3 November 2017.
- 4 The data concerning the number of the deportees are provided by Edith Csillag, who was a deportee herself. She was deported from Mezőtúr to the Szolnok ghetto and from the ghetto to Strasshof. Thanks to her knowledge of German, she was assigned to office work in the camp. See her testimony in the Hungarian Jewish Archives (Budapest): DEGOB protocols, No. 3628 ).
- 5 A1517, Moreshet Archives, Givat Haviva, Israel.
- 6 O3/7418, Yad Vashem Archives, Jerusalem, Israel.
- 7 O3/12982, Yad Vashem Archives, Jerusalem, Israel.
- 8 The Schönbrunn Palace and its gardens have been part of the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage since 1996, and the place is the most visited tourist attraction in Austria.
- 9 O3/12564, Yad Vashem Archives, Jerusalem, Israel. On the topic see more: Testimonies of Eli Rosen, O3/7638, Yad Vashem Archives, Jerusalem, Israel.
- 10 O3/11538, Yad Vashem Archives, Jerusalem, Israel.
- 11 O3/5311, Yad Vashem Archives, Jerusalem, Israel.
- 12 O3/12953, Yad Vashem Archives, Jerusalem, Israel.
- 13 O3/11538, Yad Vashem Archives, Jerusalem, Israel.
- 14 O3/12457, Yad Vashem Archives, Jerusalem, Israel.
- 15 VHA/49300, USC Shoah Foundation Institute. On the camp in Gerasdorf see: Frojmovics, K., Kovács, É., Lappin-Eppel, E., Scheider, O. (2016). Das Lager für ungarisch-jüdische Zwangsarbeiterinnen und Zwangsarbeiter in Gerasdorf 1944 In Vojta, A., Mandl L. (Eds.), *Das „Judenlager“ Gerasdorf: Dokumentation eines Lagers, in dem Jüdinnen und Juden aus Ungarn .1944 zur Zwangsarbeit eingesetzt waren* Stadtgemeinde Gerasdorf bei Wien: Atlas Druck, pp. 19-53, see <http://www.gerasdorf-wien.gv.at/system/web/GetDocument.ashx?fileid=1253374>, accessed 9 November 2017.
- 16 O3/12974, Yad Vashem Archives, Jerusalem, Israel
- 17 A1517, Moreshet Archives, Givat Haviva, Israel

Annemiek Gringold

## VOICES IN THE MUSEUM. VIDEOTAPED TESTIMONIES AS OBJECTS OF CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL HERITAGE IN THE JEWISH CULTURAL QUARTER AMSTERDAM

“It became the Jewish theatre, ‘de Joodsche Schouwburg’. With the understanding that only Jewish artists were performing on stage, only Jewish artists in the orchestra, only Jewish costume designers, choreographers, [...] and for only Jewish audiences, because we had IDs, which we had to show [...] Then from one night to the next, I came to rehearsal with seven other people, this theatre was turned into a deportation centre for Jews. The night before, there was one Nazi backstage. He looked at everything. He didn’t touch anything. He was very quiet. He tiptoed. He bowed and he said ‘Entschuldigen Sie bitte. Ich hoffe dass ich Sie nicht gestört habe.’ (‘Excuse me I hope I did not disturb you.’) And I was flabbergasted and I said, ‘No, not at all.’ Nobody knew why. Why was he here? What did he do? [...] The next day he was back, he told us, the seven who had been there, we were seven of us, we had to stay and this was a deportation centre now for Jews. And if we didn’t like it, we could volunteer and be on the first transport tonight. And then they came, our audiences, by the hundreds, by the hundreds, by the hundreds, and we had each a duty to perform which was impossible to perform. We didn’t have blankets, we didn’t have water, we didn’t have milk. We had nothing, it is a theatre! We were not prepared for it. [...] ‘Where are they are going to send us? And why? Can you help us? Can you get us out?’ They gave us candle sticks, they gave us blankets, they gave us books, they dragged half their households behind them. And we couldn’t do anything. And at night trucks came, and off they went.” (Testimony Grohs-Martin 1995)

**In less than five minutes, the dancer and singer Silvia Grohs-Martin (born in Vienna in 1918) depicts the transformation of the *Hollandsche Schouwburg* in**

Amsterdam from a thriving Jewish theatre under occupation to an assembly point for Jews awaiting deportation. It was at this “Umschlagplatz” (collection point, a place where Jews were forced to go prior to deportation), as the occupiers called it, that more than 46,000 Jews – men, women and children – started their journey to the Nazi extermination camps in occupied Poland. After a brief period being held as prisoners in the theatre building most were herded into waiting trucks or trams and transported to trains to take them to the transit camps of either Westerbork or Vught, both in the Netherlands. From there, they went on to an almost certain death. Grohs-Martin’s interview describes the annexation of the building. We see her as an elderly lady, fluent in English but with an obvious Austrian accent, and as an actress. She uses the tone of her voice, a glance of her eye to underline the dramatic event she was part of. No description by a historian, curator or educator equals Grohs-Martin’s recollections of this watershed event in the history of the Hollandsche Schouwburg. Her narrative highlights the “choice-less choice” (Langer 1982: 72) the artists faced when confronted with their new job, the large number of people crowded into a building not suitable for its new purpose, the anxiety felt by so many and the deportation of the innocent. But it doesn’t include the date, 20 July 1942, or the name of the Nazi officer inspecting the building, SS-Hauptsturmführer Ferdinand aus der Fünften. He and his superior, Willy Lages, were responsible for the deportation of Jews from Amsterdam. These facts we gather from other sources. The fragment of Grohs-Martin’s testimony was used in a video installation at the Hollandsche Schouwburg describing its wartime history. This paper describes the video testimony collection of the Jewish Cultural Quarter (JCQ – *Joods Cultureel Kwartier*) group, of which the Hollandsche Schouwburg is a part, its use, and how and why certain fragments are included in the exhibitions.

### The Jewish Cultural Quarter and its Collections

The Jewish Cultural Quarter in Amsterdam (JCQ) is about people, both the people whose history and culture it depicts in its exhibitions and the visitors who come to these exhibitions. Jewish history in the Netherlands covers

more than 400 years. With its four historic locations – the *Jewish Historical Museum* (JHM), the *Portuguese Synagogue*, the *Hollandsche Schouwburg* and the *National Holocaust Museum* (under development, but opened in 2016) – the JCQ focus covers this entire period with exhibitions on art, religion, identity, Jewish history and the Holocaust. The JCQ’s collection features some 200,000 items, such as ceremonial objects, works of art, applied arts, and a vast collection of historical documents, photos and audio-visual materials including the video testimony collection, which is in the Jewish Historical Museum’s archives. As the mission of the JCQ is to further knowledge about Jewish history and culture in general, the museum collections focus wider than just Holocaust history and memory. In the video testimony collection, however, the Holocaust is heavily represented. The video testimony collection includes material from various sources. The first is the *2,000 Witnesses* collection, accessible at the JHM and the *Hollandsche Schouwburg*, which is part of the larger *Visual History Archive of the USC Shoah Foundation* (VHA). Half of the 2,000 testimonies were recorded in the Netherlands and the other half includes testimonies of survivors from the Netherlands recorded in other parts of the world. Grohs-Martin’s was recorded in the United States. These testimonies are all related to the Holocaust, depicting the lives of survivors before, during and after the persecution. A few non-Jewish rescuers are included in the *2,000 Witnesses* collection, and a testimony from a Jehovah’s Witness. This collection is accessible by key words through a local search engine, and offers a detailed description of each segment in the interview. The JHM also holds about 650 testimonies recorded for specific exhibitions or related to a specific theme or research topic. These include testimonies about religious ceremonies used in the permanent exhibition on religion and testimonies with a specific focus, such as Jewish members of various resistance groups during the Holocaust. The witnesses, Jews and non-Jews, all have links with Jewish history, but there are no testimonies (yet) from perpetrators or collaborators during the Holocaust. A few of the 650 testimonies are only available in audio form. Furthermore, the museum has a collection of documentaries made by external professionals, sometimes together with

unedited video material recorded for the documentary, including many Holocaust-related interviews. Since the opening of the National Holocaust Museum (NHM) in 2016, staff have hosted live interviews with survivors on a regular basis. These interviews and the interaction with the audiences is recorded and added to the collection. The JHM also experiments with recording memories, stories and anecdotes of museum visitors during specially organised events. During an exhibition on Jews in the former Dutch Indies together with the Riboet theatre group, a storytelling booth was set up for visitors to share their memories. These recordings are not included in the museum's collection. It is obvious that the JCQ acknowledges the importance and relevance of videotaped testimonies in its collections. They are treated just like other items in the archive collection, except that they are not made available through the internet. Video testimonies offer their own specific value to the collection. First, testimonies contain knowledge and information that is otherwise not recorded. Witnesses, if interviewed well, tell personal experiences, individual recollections, which may shed light on bigger historic events. They include not only the witness's words but also the setting of the interview and the body language, which might not otherwise be recorded. Testimonies also add an additional layer to history: recorded retrospectively, they show the ongoing effects of historical events long after they occurred. The witness leaves "the book of history open", so to speak. In addition, testifying is important for many Holocaust survivors. Having survived against all odds, some have committed their lives to not forgetting and to passing on the legacy. There may also be a need to create a personal monument: with their survival and their testimony, they erect a monument for the perished. Finally, they confirm through their existence and survival that National Socialism failed to kill them and failed to erase the memory of their lives, just as it also failed to destroy all the traces of its crimes.

### Videotaped Testimonies as Sources in the Museum

The JCQ does not aim to merely acquire videotaped testimonies as collection holdings but also to make them available in a museum setting for our

visitors. Videotaped testimonies are available through various activities around the JCQ, including education. Informative segments of testimonies about the Hollandsche Schouwburg, for example, have been published on a DVD and some selected clips serve as preparatory lessons for school groups. An important testimony in the educational DVD is the contribution of Lydia van Nobelen-Riezouw (born 1923). During the deportation phase of the Hollandsche Schouwburg's history, she was living next door. As a non-Jew, she became a bystander and reflects during her testimony on her own role. In July 1942, she witnessed a friend being held at the Hollandsche Schouwburg and decided to take some photos. Van Nobelen-Riezouw frankly reveals that after several months she had become accustomed to the deportation site next door, and she became indifferent.

"You just saw these trucks standing there and the people getting in. Sometimes they were pushed in and others pulled them in. That is what you saw. I got used to it. It became very normal, seeing the truck was like seeing a tram passing it is like, 'Hey, there goes tram 7'." (Interview van Nobelen-Riezouw 1992)

Another important use of the testimonies is research, and the content of testimonies is made accessible through publications. Testimonies proved to be a major source of information for the reconstruction of the history of the JCQ's Hollandsche Schouwburg. The records are fragmented, scattered over many different archives. Silvia Grohs-Martin's memories on the crucial moments when the Hollandsche Schouwburg was turned into an "Umschlagplatz" are not documented in any other collection. It is one of the many memories included in the concise biography of the building that was published in 2013 (Van Vree et al). Confirmation of the accuracy of her testimony came from circumstantial documents such as transport lists, minutes of a meeting of the board of the Portuguese Synagogue, postal documents and the theatre's programme.

A third important activity is the use of testimonies during public events and interactive activities with the audiences. As coordinator and initiator of the

Open Jewish Homes commemorations, the JCQ offers testimonies at some of the hundreds of sites where these events took place. And finally, the JCQ includes testimonies in museum exhibitions and other displays.

### Testimonies in Exhibitions

The first question that needs to be answered about the possible use of a video testimony in an exhibition is its aim. Is it to provide factual information, or to add a personal layer? Does it need additional clarification? Is its purpose to document the diversity of Jewish life? There are numerous reasons why video testimonies are included in museum exhibitions, and often it is for a combination of reasons. At the JHM, the interview with Marlene Sanders (born 1948) in the permanent exhibition on Jewish religion is a good example of how a personal recount not only clarifies the use of an object but also adds a personal interpretation. Her testimony is offered next to the historic *mikveh*, a ritual bath, at the museum. Sanders not only explains the religious practices, how the bath takes place and what prayers are said, she also adds her personal perception of the tradition, allowing visitors to relate to it.

“The union you are going to have with your husband may be blessed, and that He may be present, it is the most holy moment. You are in fact pulling down a living soul, and in that way life conquers death.” (Interview M. Sanders 2004)

In the JHM’s permanent exhibition on Jewish history during the 20th century, Johan Sanders (born 1931) recounts his memories of his childhood city Enschede, in the east of the Netherlands, prior to the Second World War. Sanders provides general historical facts, especially about the textile industry in Enschede and the role of local Jewish entrepreneurs. Within his testimony, Sanders himself is hardly visible. Original film footage of the city before the war is edited on to his narrative. His testimony functions as a voice-over. The clip does not provide personal details and experiences. As this exhibition includes a large section on the Holocaust, Sanders also explains about the fate of the Jewish community in Enschede during the Holocaust

and his own survival in hiding (Testimony J. Sanders 2007). His testimony is shown beside a large piece of yellow fabric with stars printed on it. This fabric was manufactured in one of Enschede's confiscated Jewish textile factories in 1942. In just one working shift, all the yellow stars were printed to brand the Jews in the Netherlands from 3 May 1942 onwards. It is a good example of how testimony and artefacts complement each other. In the same exhibition, the testimony of Leny Boeken-Velleman (born 1922) is included beside an artefact used for disinfecting repatriated Jews after the liberation. This Amsterdam-born Holocaust survivor describes some of her humiliating experiences arriving back to the Netherlands as the only surviving member of her family. She describes the great difficulty she encountered trying to recover some of her personal belongings that had been stolen by her former neighbours. Her restrained emotions when showing these items on camera and her confirmation that they are very precious evoke empathy and at the same time are an accusation towards the immediate post-war Dutch society and its inability to acknowledge Jewish suffering during the Holocaust (Interview Boeken-Velleman 2007).

Visitors at the JHM watch these segments of testimonies on small video screens, presenting them almost as individual encounters. In most cases, the visitor can sit while watching. The film offers close-ups, allowing the viewer to see the facial expressions of the witness. The testimonies are in Dutch subtitled in English. The testimonies are positioned among many artefacts on display. At the Hollandsche Schouwburg, an audio-visual installation provides a major source of information about the wartime history of the site. The installation is projected onto a large screen for many visitors to sit and watch, with an additional small screen for individual use. The educational DVD mentioned earlier is available on this small screen. There are no other artefacts on display in this space. The building itself, as the authentic site of the deportations, functions as a museum object. All spoken texts here are subtitled in English, or in Dutch if recorded in a different language. Witnesses are introduced by their name and year of birth, and the year of the recording is shown. Groh-Martin's testimony is part of this big screen installation.

She is one of more than 10 witnesses in a 30-minute presentation. Most clips originate from the 2,000 Witnesses VHA-collection and some of the footage is visibly dated. With regards to the physical description of the Hollandsche Schouwburg during the deportation period, multiple voices offer understanding over changes in the situation. During 16 months of deportations, adaptations were made to the building. Theatre seating was removed, registration of new arrivals took place at various locations, and the storage of luggage was organised in various ways. We can reconstruct these changes from the testimonies. Apart from changes and adaptations, the testimonies give insight into how daily routines were organised. The arrival at the Hollandsche Schouwburg is described by several witnesses. Abraham Caransa (born 1927) offers some clear memories:

“Behind the entrance we were registered. We didn’t have to hand in our house keys since our home was still inhabited [...] those who left their home with all their family members had to hand in their keys [...] We were registered and entered the auditorium.” (Testimony 1995) | 1

Caransa is one of the few witnesses to have described the handing in of house keys as a procedure to enable the looting of the homes of deportees later. His information is confirmed by the existence of several so-called key lists drafted in the Hollandsche Schouwburg. Corroborating personal recollections with other historic resources has proved necessary, as some testimonies include inaccuracies. Though other people’s testimonies may also function as confirmation. Catharina Polak-Soep (born 1923) provides insight into a ruse at the theatre:

“They put us downstairs, together with the people that were supposed to be sent to Westerbork, and upstairs there were the people that were supposed to go to Vught [...] When a train was planned for Westerbork they put us up on the balconies and then when Vught had to go, they put us down with the people for Westerbork. That is how we stayed there, incarcerated, for five weeks. Eventually they got us out.” (Testimony 1995)

Her memories were confirmed by similar recollections from other former prisoners.

The Hollandsche Schouwburg became the place where Dutch collaborators handed over Jews they had hunted down. A financial bounty was paid to them for each Jew brought into captivity. Hundreds of these receipts were preserved and archived in special judicial files after the war. They were used as evidence in post-war criminal trials against these collaborators, but access to them is limited and they are not allowed to be shown in public. The testimony of Simon Peereboom (born 1923) in which he names his Dutch countrymen and openly accuses them of aiding the deportation of himself and his wife is an important statement in the installation. It adds a piece of confronting information and shows Peereboom's personal need to record this evil. When he does not immediately recollect both names, he makes an effort and finally succeeds in naming them both (Testimony Peereboom 1995). Due to privacy laws, there is no other way beside oral history of displaying this type of information in a museum exhibition.

### What is not Shown in the Exhibition

In the case of Peereboom, Polak-Soep's testimony or Boeken-Velleman's recollections about her repatriation, the clips only reflect a small portion of what these survivors actually recount in their testimonies. Peereboom and Boeken-Velleman survived Auschwitz. Polak-Soep returned from Bergen-Belsen and they, like others, describe in detail about these haunting experiences. It is often these experiences that influenced their post-war lives most. However, the JCQ staff decided to show only the segments needed for the exhibition's narrative and leave out these traumatic experiences. The naming and remembering of lost family members is also not shown in the exhibition setting, although this is often an important reason why witnesses recorded their life story in the first place. The witnesses trust the museum with all their traumatic experiences, their intimate recollections, and the museum staff disregard most of it in the exhibition. The exhibition curator

often reduces a life story to one or two segments with a specific content. Every time, this poses an ethical dilemma on how to use the legacy of survivors. In the audio-visual installation as well as on the DVD, viewers are invited to visit the museum resource centre and hear the full testimony.

In the exhibition *Tangible Memories from the Jewish Monument* at the National Holocaust Museum, the selected fragments from testimonies take this further. The modest exhibition depicting the brief lives of Jewish children who perished during the Holocaust, includes an artefact and a photo with segments from testimonies. The exhibition serves both as an informative and as a commemorative exhibition, in combination with a digital platform <sup>12</sup> commemorating the 104,000 Jews from the Netherlands who were murdered. The testimonies used do not share survivors' memories of the persecution but talk about the children who were killed. They are delivered by surviving siblings. These brothers and sisters were all invited at some point to share their personal testimony during a public event at the museum and relate to the display about their sibling in the exhibition. By organising these life testimonies, the museum acknowledges the importance of presenting survivors of the Holocaust not merely as witnesses of that period but as complete personalities and contemporaries of our audiences. Videotaped testimonies do not just make the JCK's exhibitions more attractive. In museums for and about people, the lively voices add explanations or experiences to artefacts, religious traditions and historic events that are valuable and appreciated. They often bridge the distance between the visitor and the unknown. They provide unique information and insight for the broader public and for researchers. As such, they are carriers of cultural and historical heritage and belong in a museum collection.

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- 1 Dutch: "Bij binnenkomst werden we geregistreerd. Wij moesten onze huissleutels niet afgeven want ons huis was nog bewoond. Zij die hun huis met het hele gezin hadden verlaten moesten hun sleutels afgeven. We werden geregistreerd en gingen de zaal in".

- 2 See [www.joodsmonument.nl](http://www.joodsmonument.nl), accessed 19 September 2017.

Michal Sadan, Madene Shachar

## EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES BASED ON CHILD SURVIVOR VIDEO TESTIMONIES AT YAD LAYELED CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL MUSEUM/ GHETTO FIGHTERS' HOUSE ISRAEL

*Yad LaYeled Children's Memorial Museum*, established in 1995, is a Holocaust educational-memorial museum geared to the education of children aged between 10 and 14. The museum is on the *Ghetto Fighters' Kibbutz* in Israel, along with the first Holocaust museum, the *Ghetto Fighters' House*, established in 1949. Yad LaYeled is dedicated to creating a collective memory of the Holocaust through its exhibitions, architecture and educational programmes, transmitting the legacy of the Holocaust to the young through a meaningful experience at the museum. Its design, exhibitions and educational goals are based on a number of core principles:

1. The Holocaust is presented through the stories of Jewish children who lived during that period, rather than highlighting the traumatic experience of death.
2. The museum presents these stories through authentic materials, such as diaries, testimonies, artefacts and photographs, that are age appropriate and emphasise the lives of Jewish children during the Holocaust. Authenticity is key to preventing a nostalgic, superficial or stereotypical understanding of the Holocaust (Totten 2001).
3. As young children cannot grasp historical complexities, exhibitions include immersive representations – simulacrum installations<sup>1</sup>. This creates a more experiential visit, sparking the imagination and the curiosity of the young visitor. The simulacrum installations, along with diverse testimonies of child survivors work together to construct a general

narrative with a clear beginning (life before the war), middle (life during the war) and end (after the war). Yad LaYeled's educational philosophy focuses on the young learner and his/her needs and abilities. The museum's pedagogic method is based on a constructivist educational theory and performative strategies (Brooks, M.G./ Brooks, J.G. 1993; Brooks, J.G./ Brooks M.G. 1999; Hein 2006; Messham-Muir 2004). According to George Hein (2006), the constructivist museum and its exhibitions are structured to give school-age visitors a more personal meaning-making learning experience.

Yad LaYeled uses exhibitions and educational activities to help young visitors build personal knowledge and meanings, and draw their own conclusions. The core exhibition is designed to allow students to reach their own interpretation rather than having things explained by a guide. The students are given a question and then explore in small groups, looking for answers. In order to engage young visitors on both an affective and a cognitive level, many museum educators focus on the emotional to provide a meaningful experience. The impact these moving experiences can have on young visitors in Holocaust museums needs to be taken into consideration. Therefore, the main challenge for Yad LaYeled and Holocaust educators in general is to create programmes that encourage young visitors to empathise – but not at the expense of authenticity and a nuanced and complex understanding of historical events (Salmons 2001).

In sum, Yad LaYeled provides a venue where elementary and middle school students can explore the subject of the Holocaust in an age appropriate manner, and foster empathy and expand their knowledge about the world of Jewish children who lived during the Holocaust. The goal is to expose young visitors to the complexity of the Holocaust through the life stories of these children, and to encourage them to ask relevant and moral questions, and be motivated to learn more, both in the classroom and independently.

## The Integration of Video Testimonies of Holocaust Survivors in Yad LaYeled's Exhibitions

Video testimonies of Holocaust child survivors are an integral part of the museum's permanent and rotating exhibitions, because we believe that first-hand accounts contribute to the collective memory of the Holocaust. The testimonies of grown-up child survivors present both personal and subjective stories of their experiences during the Holocaust. The personal testimony of adult survivors is one of the ways for young visitors to construct their own interpretation and meaning. Watching first-hand testimonies also contributes to the construction and preservation of the collective memory of the Holocaust (Assmann 2006; Suleiman 2002). The museum has two permanent exhibitions that include video testimony of child survivors. In the core exhibition, *The Jewish Child during the Holocaust*, the visitor walks along a path with 3D immersive simulacrum installations, authentic life-size photographs and artefacts from the world of children. Multi-media installations are an integral part of the exhibition. They include audio and video testimonies and fragments of original documentary film. The video testimonies in the core exhibition are all from grown-up child survivors. Using authentic testimony from an adult is a reminder that the story being told is a memory of the past. The first-hand accounts give agency to the survivor's story in his/her own words, which become empowering texts for young visitors. As the focus of the core exhibition is on life, the encounter with the personal testimony of one child, learning about his/her personal world, family, hobbies, and the ways he/she adopted in order to cope, invites the young visitors to expand their knowledge about the world of the children who lived during the Holocaust. Each video testimony reveals the story of one child and his/her specific situation. They are strategically located in six themed alcoves and help create the historical narrative of the exhibition (outbreak of war and becoming a refugee, life in the ghetto, going into hiding, life in camps and arrival in Israel). The testimonies illuminate different aspects of each survivor's personal experiences as a child during the Holocaust, such as living under a false identity, going to an underground

school in the ghetto or hiding in the barn of a Christian family. Placing the testimonies in a thematic simulacrum like a hiding place gives young visitors an opportunity to connect more intimately to the story visually and physically, as well as emotionally and cognitively, without trying to immerse them in a simulated experience. The second permanent exhibition deals with Janusz Korczak. Using five installations in a theatre-in-the-round in the centre of the museum, the designers present Korczak's legacy, evoking universal moral, educational and philosophical questions in an ongoing dialogue. *Unlike the testimonies in The Jewish Child during the Holocaust*, young actors playing the survivors as children are used in the film to present their story as if they are being interviewed in the orphanage.

Yad LaYeled also has gallery space for temporary exhibitions. Video testimonies are incorporated into these exhibitions in a more conventional manner using plasma screens on the walls, and various workshop activities have been developed based on the content of the exhibitions and the testimonies. The temporary exhibition *Here Began My Childhood* deals with the life of Jewish orphans after liberation and their preparation to "make Aliyah" (Hebrew for Jewish immigration to Israel). The video testimonies include child survivors and adult survivors who cared for Jewish orphans after the war. The temporary exhibition *My Home There* includes art works from the archives of the Ghetto Fighters' House. The exhibition deals with the concepts "home" and "family" before, during and after the war through the medium of art. Video testimonies of the child Holocaust survivors who became the artists whose work is displayed in the exhibition are screened in a workshop activity. These testimonies are currently not on display in the exhibition. It is planned to integrate them through an augmented reality application on an iPad or smartphone. *Paul Kor – Memories and Artworks* is a monographic exhibition in our art workshop about a multi-talented Holocaust child survivor who became a famous Israeli graphic designer and author of children's books. His testimony being used in a workshop for school students.

### What We Have Learned about Child Survivor Video Testimony

Although child survivor testimonies were always an integral part of Yad LaYeled, 10 years ago we decided to re-evaluate the testimonies in the core exhibition. We made a number of changes, including introducing new testimonies, examining each testimony's placement in the exhibition and searching for ways to add additional testimonies in a confined space. One of the first things we did was to take out testimonies from survivors who had passed away. When the museum first opened, young visitors were encouraged to write to the survivors, which became difficult as survivors died or became unable to respond to letters. Therefore, we looked for child survivors who were willing to be interviewed and filmed, keeping in line with the core themes and the installations in which we would be screening these testimonies. We also looked at where testimonies were being screened and relocated some. Some testimonies were also edited and shortened from eight or nine minutes to five or six, because we noticed that children rarely sat for more than five minutes. We also wanted to have more than one testimony in each installation, and shorter clips would allow visitors to explore more testimonies in the time. One of the major changes was the re-evaluation of how survivors were interviewed. We replaced the studio-based blue background with a more natural setting. One of our staff interviews survivors and edits the testimony. All the new testimonies in the core exhibition were recorded at the survivor's home – with the understanding that this provided a human connection for visitors. New technology has allowed us to add additional testimonies in screening areas. This compensates for the limitations of the museum space and the installations created to house the original testimonies. We have tripled the number of testimonies in the core exhibition, with two or three in each installation (instead of one), and five in the Eternal Flame Hall, which is the last section of the exhibition. Altogether, 18 testimonies are screened throughout the main exhibition. Adding the ability to control each viewing was another important change. Visitors can now press a button to restart a testimony from the beginning, and choose which clip they want to see, and whether with Hebrew or English subtitles.

## Educational Programmes Based on Child Survivor Testimony

Our vision is for child survivor testimonies to be part of a holistic educational programme at Yad LaYeled. <sup>12</sup> Even so, watching a clip is not enough to create meaningful and deep insights about the lives of Jewish children during the Holocaust or evoke relevant moral questions. Incorporating child survivor testimony into a workshop or a play are two ways the museum can expand young visitors' knowledge and develop empathy.

### Workshop activities

The goal of all the workshops in Yad LaYeled, which include art, music, creative writing and drama, is to give the young visitor an opportunity to process and express his/her feelings in an engaging and thought-provoking manner as part of the museum learning experience (Weiser 2001). The museum's educational staff have developed a number of activities that focus on child survivor testimonies. These allow children to learn more about a specific child survivor by introducing a more tangible and experiential interaction with their story.

### Plays

Yad LaYeled has written, produced and directed a number of plays and monologues. Many are based on survivor testimonies from our core exhibition, *The Jewish Child during the Holocaust*. Educational programmes incorporating theatre have become an integral part of the learning process in Yad LaYeled and have significantly contributed to our pedagogical approach of building a meaningful learning experience about the Holocaust. When preparing a play, we once again rely on the authentic story, based on the survivor's testimony, as well as pictures, artefacts, autobiographies and memoirs. These theatre-based activities allow the museum to broaden the context of the testimony and help young visitors make connections, explore concepts and express their feelings. Research has shown that integrating theatre into the museum's educational programme can enhance the learning experience, and contribute to empathetic understanding of the dilemmas and difficult

situations presented in the museum space. Plays bring an experience-based approach to learning, including dialogue and imagination (Hughes 1998; Bridal 2004). One example is *Dance of Joy and Sorrow*, which has been presented for more than 10 years at Yad LaYeled. The play is based on a book by Lea Fried (2015), a child survivor who lived in a monastery for three years during the war. Her testimony is presented in a section of the main exhibition, The Jewish Child during the Holocaust, dealing with children in hiding. The play presents details referred to in the video testimony, but also adds new information from the book, filling in knowledge gaps and evoking further insights about Lea's life. During the performance, an actress plays Lea as an adult (as she appears in her testimony) and as a young girl, allowing the audience to see her experience through a child's eye. Afterwards, there is a discussion about Lea's personal story, the difficulties she faced and how she dealt with them. The play and the discussion contribute to a more empathetic and complex understanding of Lea's experiences as a child in hiding, such as being separated from her parents, learning to pretend that she is Christian and dealing with the cruel treatment of the Mother Superior at the monastery. Both the workshop activities and the plays based on child survivor testimonies enrich the museum experience. They are part of a multi-disciplinary pedagogy that presents the story of the Jewish children during the Holocaust through different media, but is always anchored on the authentic video testimony of the child survivor.

### Assessment Model for Integrating Video Testimonies in Yad LaYeled's Museum Space

After re-evaluating the integration of child survivor testimony in the core exhibition, we decided to do a meta-analysis of our educational activities, such as workshops. The educational staff wanted to see if criteria could be identified for interviewing a child survivor, integrating a testimony into the museum space and using testimony as part of a workshop or theatrical activity. We also wanted to evaluate present educational activities in search of the criteria for best practices. In 2016, the educational staff developed a

triangular model (see Appendix 1) with a dynamic and fluid interaction between three vertices: core principles (details in Appendix 2), child testimony and learning activity. Each of the three vertices can serve as a starting point for developing a holistic museum learning experience. This model also leads to the evaluation process the educational staff at Yad LaYeled created. Using evaluation tools helps us continuously examine the role of child survivor testimonies in the museum space and educational programmes, and develop activities that integrate survivors' personal experiences beyond the exhibition space. The dynamic interaction between the three vertices of the triangle will be more effective if we can find a profound common denominator between the core principle, the testimony and the learning activity. To discover this common denominator, we defined four dimensions and criteria for evaluating the video testimony:

- content
- media structure and design
- incorporation in the museum space that makes it accessible to the audience and the broader connection of the testimony
- relevance to the lives of young visitors

Each dimension includes various criteria that indicate different aspects of that dimension (see Appendix 2). Lea Fried's testimony is a good example of how a common denominator can be found. The *content* of Lea's testimony deals with her life in a monastery and living under a false identity. The *structure and design* of the thematic installation, a church, in which the testimony is presented, puts Lea's story in context. The *broader connection* to Lea's story is available through the play, *The Dance of Joy and Sorrow*, in which more details of Lea's life before, during and after living in the monastery are revealed. Finally, the focus of Lea's story – her identity – is a *subject relevant* to young visitors and can be a catalyst for a deeper discussion on what one's identity is and what can happen if someone is denied the right to those characteristics vital to their identity. The common denominator is identity. The post-play discussion revolves around identity during the Holocaust – when many children had to hide their Jewish identity or take on a

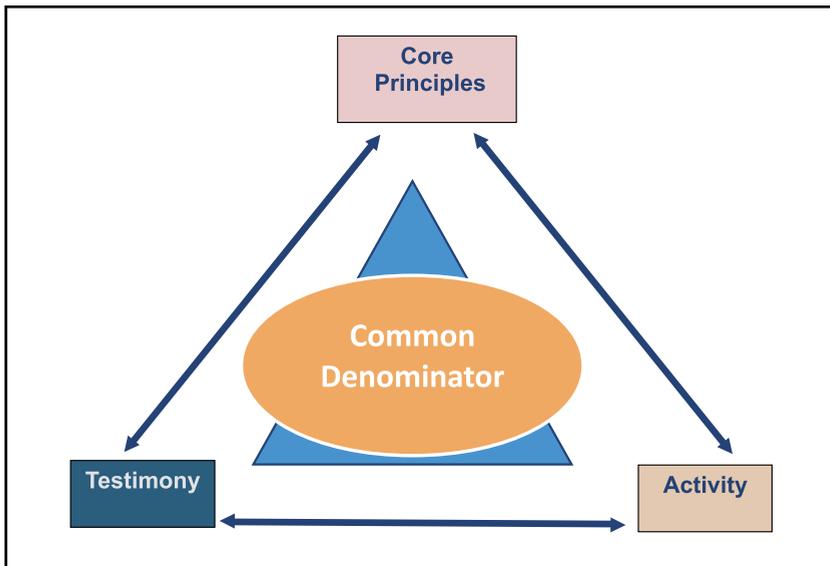
false identity – as well as how we perceive identity today. Defining a common denominator through an evaluation process based on assessment indicators helps the museum choose and integrate video testimony in exhibitions and educational programmes. Finding this common denominator is an important part of the process of developing the rationale and goals of our educational programmes. We can also evaluate whether specific common denominators are relevant to our young visitors and revise any of the vertices in the triangular model. The optimal choice of testimonies helps provide young visitors an opportunity to experience a more profound understanding of Jewish children's lives during the Holocaust and how this can be relevant to their lives today.

## Conclusion

Holocaust educators in the 21st century have come to realise that museums are not just spaces for creating collective and personal memories but also educational institutions. The challenge is being able to develop exhibitions and educational activities that evoke affective and cognitive experiences, while trying not to be spectacular, traumatic or trivial. Video testimonies of child survivors play a valuable role in Yad LaYeled's educational programme, giving our young visitors a personal and human connection to the history of the Holocaust. These stories bring a message of survival and the building of a new life after the war. They also facilitate young visitors' empathetic attitude to the story of Jewish children during the Holocaust. Therefore, an assessment-based method for choosing the most appropriate video testimony is an essential tool for creating a meaningful visiting experience. Lea Fried's story demonstrates how the educational staff at Yad LaYeled can develop an educational programme to enhance and broaden a child survivor's testimony. With a holistic and constructivist pedagogical approach that focuses on our young visitors and their learning experience, Yad LaYeled is looking for new ways to make child survivor video testimony accessible and engaging, as well as meaningful and relevant to their personal and collective memory of the Holocaust. As we face a future without survivors who can give live testimony,

it is imperative that Holocaust educators in general – and those who work at Holocaust museums in particular – continue to incorporate videotaped survivor testimony in their educational programmes. This may include using interactive technology that allows us to add more information about the survivors alongside the testimony. Replacing the conventional worksheet with a tablet may also be a way to connect young visitors to survivor testimonies through a medium that is more familiar to them.

Appendix 1  
Circular Triangular Model  
For Integrating Child Survivor Testimony In Educational Programmes at Yad LaYeled



© Yad LaYeled Children's Memorial Museum

Appendix 2  
Criteria for Incorporating Child Survivor Video Testimony in Yad LaYeled Museum

Dimension	Criteria	Core Principles
<b>Content</b>	Video testimony of Holocaust survivors is a <b>central component</b> of the <b>core exhibition</b> and in the development of <b>educational programmes</b> based on the personal story of a survivor	The testimonies will be a source for the legacy of the Holocaust for future generations
<b>Content</b>	Focus is on <b>one survivor's personal story of coping, survival and rescue</b>	<p><b>Personal, subjective expression</b> in which the experiences of <b>survivors who were children during the Holocaust</b> can most memorably be communicated</p> <p>Emphasis is placed on the lives of children and their active place as <b>subject and not object</b></p> <p>Video testimonies are not only testimonies of the collective Holocaust, they present a <b>particular, individual and unique story</b></p> <p>Video testimony gives the survivor a right to their own <b>individual memories</b>, including the years before the Holocaust as well as those following it</p> <p>The focus is on the life of one survivor and <b>multiple stories</b> to show the complexity of Jewish children's lives during the Holocaust</p>
<b>Content</b>	<b>An adult</b> (authentic/actor) who is a Holocaust survivor tells the story of his/her <b>childhood</b>	<p>The testimony transmits a <b>message of survival and a continuation of life</b></p> <p>A direct <b>multi-generational connection</b> with survivors who live among us, but not for much longer</p> <p>Augments the main narrative and <b>humanises the victim/survivor</b></p> <p>Transition of memory through the <b>personal memory</b> of the survivor – how was the Holocaust experienced, how is it remembered and how is it passed on?</p>
<b>Content</b>	<p>The story does <b>not have traumatic</b> detail</p> <p>The story stimulates <b>empathy</b> but does not exaggerate feelings or lead to suggestion or overidentification</p>	The survivor's story should <b>not be presented in a sensational or traumatic manner, nor should it be trivialised</b>

Dimension	Criteria	Core Principles
Content	The testimony provides an opportunity to transfer the story from the past to the <b>relevant experiences</b> of the target audience – to the present existential questions	The best way to make the story <b>relevant</b> to today’s children is to offer testimonies involving <b>situations</b> with which they are familiar (separation, isolation, rejection, loss of family or someone dear to them)
Content	<b>Few reminders</b> of historical dates and events	The young visitor cannot process complex <b>historical facts</b>
Content	The testimony raises <b>questions</b> but does not always provide clear <b>answers</b>	The partial testimony <b>encourages</b> visitors to <b>wonder</b> “what happened next?” based on various associations: age of child, gender, country, period of time, etc
Content	The testimony has <b>explicit</b> content but also hints of <b>implied</b> content that add knowledge about the time and raise questions	It is important to present the young visitor with <b>rich and multi-layered story</b> content
Content	The testimony is in <b>Hebrew</b> reflecting a <b>Zionist theme</b> : the survivor emigrates to Israel and makes his/her home there	There is a <b>Zionist narrative</b> that connects the young visitor to the history of the Jewish people in the Diaspora and Israel
Content	The content of the testimony <b>encourages</b> the young viewer’s <b>imagination</b> : a combination of <b>ambiguity</b> and <b>certainty</b> , movement between historical facts and imagination	Imagination allows <b>transference of memory</b> , a connection to the past and to commemoration in an era in which there are progressively fewer survivors
Content	The testimonies are from a <b>wide range of survivors</b> , who represent different age groups, countries and life experiences during the Holocaust	The <b>diversity of testimonies</b> is appropriate for a <b>wide range of audiences</b> and reflects the complexity of the Holocaust
Media – structure and design	The survivor is taped and presented at <b>eye level</b>	The eye contact <b>humanises the history of the Holocaust</b> with emphasis on the <b>personal story</b>
Media – structure and design	The survivor is <b>centre frame</b> and does not change his/her position	Video offers the opportunity to <b>archive survivor testimony</b>
Media – structure and design	The survivor is shown in his <b>home</b>	
Media – structure and design	<b>Subtitles</b> in Hebrew and in English	There are <b>multiple ways to connect to the testimony</b> – audio, visual or a combination of both Accessibility for local and foreign visitors
Media – structure and design	Use of <b>supporting information</b> from pictures or artefacts	Video provides ways to <b>augment</b> a survivor’s testimony

Dimension	Criteria	Core Principles
<b>Media – structure and design</b>	A videotaped testimony mediates between <b>direct memory and representative memory</b>	Video testimony <b>documents the historical</b> event through a subjective and particular witness
<b>Media – structure and design</b>	<b>The nature of the video</b> testimony influences the transference of a message and a story	Video testimonies record a <b>direct encounter</b> The audio-visual recording presents how the survivor felt and what he has experienced in his/her own words and from his/her perspective, presenting an <b>affective and imaginative engagement</b> with the viewers
<b>Incorporating testimonies in the museum space and making them accessible to the targeted audience</b>	The testimony is integrated in a way that makes a connection between the particular content and the broader content of the exhibition to which it is connected, broadening the range of meanings the young visitor can construct	The museum experience is <b>multi-sensory</b> and composed of <b>different components</b> that together construct the <b>master narrative</b> Incorporating the testimonies in different spaces throughout the museum allows <b>flexibility and a balance</b> between the museum space, the master narrative and the specific testimony
<b>Incorporating testimonies in the museum space and making them accessible to the targeted audience</b>	The video testimonies are connected to the <b>audio testimonies</b> that are in the same area of the exhibition	Testimonies are one component in a <b>multimedia environment</b>
<b>Incorporating testimonies in the museum space and making them accessible to the targeted audience</b>	There is an <b>interrelationship</b> between the video testimonies and the museum space in which they are screened (open/closed/design of the seating area)	The <b>“as if” environment</b> in which the testimony is presented allows a more <b>tactile space</b> , which serves as a medium between the visitor and the personal story
<b>Incorporating testimonies in the museum space and making them accessible to the targeted audience</b>	There are <b>various sitting/standing</b> designs in the areas in which testimonies are screened	The <b>enclosure</b> of the testimony provides a more <b>intimate and person-to-person</b> connection between visitor and survivor
<b>Incorporating testimonies in the museum space and making them accessible to the targeted audience</b>	Is the young visitor <b>passive</b> when watching the testimony or does he/she have the option to be <b>interactive</b> – applications, barcode, game – allowing involvement in the development of the story?	The use of <b>technological aids</b> and teleprocessing can bring young visitors closer to the subject of the Holocaust, enrich the visitor experience and encourage meaningful learning

Dimension	Criteria	Core Principles
<b>Incorporating testimonies in the museum space and making them accessible to the targeted audience</b>	Choosing the <b>environment</b> in which the testimony is screened and <b>the way</b> in which testimonies are presented to the <b>young visitors</b>	The environment in which the testimony is screened should provide an opportunity to construct <b>broad and complex connections</b> The testimonies should be integrated into the museum space in a way that allows the young visitor to experience the exhibition and the testimonies <b>independently with an investigative orientation</b>
<b>Incorporating testimonies in the museum space and making them accessible to the targeted audience</b>	The testimony relates to the young visitor's <b>prior knowledge</b> that can influence the way in which he/she interprets the testimony	Israeli school children who visit the museum are <b>exposed to the Holocaust</b> in various and unfiltered ways (as grandchildren of survivors, via school programmes/ceremonies, via a survivor testimony at school, via the media) Child survivor testimonies should be incorporated into <b>pre- and post-activities</b>
<b>Incorporating testimonies in the museum space and making them accessible to the targeted audience</b>	The media allows multiple testimonies in multiple spaces	Presenting the <b>complexity of the Holocaust</b> through multiple testimonies of child survivors at different ages and from different countries should <b>prevent simplification</b> of the Holocaust
<b>The broader connection of the testimony and its relevance to the lives of young visitors</b>	The ways in which the testimony <b>reflects and connects</b> to the <b>museum's message, master narrative, pedagogy</b>	Testimonies must be created and presented in a way that is <b>age appropriate</b> for young visitors and reflects the <b>pedagogical concept</b> of the museum: Holocaust remembrance and understanding the complexity of the event, universal themes, and the <b>relevance to children's lives today</b>
<b>The broader connection of the testimony and its relevance to the lives of young visitors</b>	The reference to subjects that emerge from the testimony can be expanded via <b>various media</b> (via a workshop, play, another exhibition)	The encounter with the story of one child, learning about his/her personal world, family, hobbies, and the ways he/she had to cope, invites the young visitors to <b>expand their knowledge</b> about the world of children who lived during the Holocaust through <b>different educational activities</b>
<b>The broader connection of the testimony and its relevance to the lives of young visitors</b>	The survivor's testimony and <b>unique life experience</b> present an opportunity to <b>broaden the story beyond the Holocaust</b> (an artist, actor, author, doctor, etc)	The video testimony <b>expands knowledge</b> about the survivor and gives their personal experiences a sense of agency through seeing their life before, during and after the Holocaust
<b>The broader connection of the testimony and its relevance to the lives of young visitors</b>	The testimony is presented in a way that stimulates <b>curiosity</b> and <b>further investigation</b>	The museum visit is one of many building blocks in <b>constructing knowledge</b> about the Holocaust and not just a one-off experience

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- 1 On creating the visitor experience in the museum, see Hansen-Glucklich, J. (2014). *Holocaust Memory Reframed: Museums and the Challenges of Representation*. New Brunswick-London: Rutgers University Press; The concept “simulacrum” comes from the Latin word *simulare*: image, imagination, something that replaces reality with its representation. The term was defined by Jean Baudrillard. Simulacra are copies of things that no longer have or never had an original. The focus is more on the functional aspect of the representation than on the objective commitment to reality. The fictional becomes the real and the reality is replaced by signs of itself, see Baudrillard, J. (1994). *Simulacra and Simulation*, translated by S.F. Glaser. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- 2 Ghetto Fighters’ House Archives, History of the Ghetto Fighters’ House, Yad LaYeled, Box #241.

Anika Reichwald

## THE SEARCH FOR AN APPROPRIATE APPROACH. VIDEO TESTIMONIES AND THEIR USE IN THE JEWISH MUSEUM HOHENEMS

Videotaped testimonies of victims of the National Socialistic regime are nowadays an essential parts of collections in museums, memorial sites as well as education centres. Their purpose is diverse: although often used in temporary exhibitions and as a crucial part of educational programmes in institutions with a focus on Jewish history and the Holocaust, video testimonies are not always displayed as primary objects in permanent exhibitions in Jewish museums in Europe, for example such as the *Jewish Museum London* (United Kingdom), the *Auschwitz Jewish Centre* (Poland), the *Vilna Gaon State Jewish Museum* (Lithuania), the *Jewish Museum and Tolerance Centre in Moscow* (Russia) and the *Jewish Museum Hohenems* (Austria).<sup>1</sup> Indeed, many permanent exhibitions make relatively little use of video interviews. Although the Holocaust is a well presented topic, sometimes even the main topic in certain sections or in whole museums, videotaped testimonies do not seem to be regarded as appropriate or suitable “primary objects”.

This paper aims to highlight the approach taken by European Jewish museums to the question of how, to what end and in which context video footage or videotaped testimonies can be used, presented and displayed. It questions the purpose of Jewish museums in Europe and the purpose of displaying video testimonies of Holocaust survivors in permanent exhibitions. It also outlines the technical and content advantages and disadvantages of video interviews in permanent exhibitions. Reference to the permanent exhibition in the *Jewish Museum Hohenems* is meant to exemplify general ideas and thoughts on this topic and emphasise the arguments. Finally, this paper discusses

further use of video testimonies within the context of the museum's role in Hohenems, for example for educational purposes.

### European Jewish Museums and the Display of Video Testimonies

The observation that videotaped testimonies of Holocaust survivors are rarely used in permanent exhibitions in Jewish museums throughout Europe leads to the thesis that these videos might not be suitable for this kind of museum or this kind of exhibition. The following provides an insight by explaining the purpose of survivor interviews as a historical source within a Jewish museum, and arguing for the need for a specific function, location and technical setting of videos in permanent exhibitions.

Jewish museums differ from institutions such as commemorative sites or Holocaust museums not only in their general principle but also in their function. Jewish museums are *neither* Holocaust museums *nor* memorials. They do not *solely* focus on the history of the Jewish people during the Nazi regime or the history of the Holocaust. Jewish museums instead display the history of the Jews in a certain country, region or even town – usually starting with the earliest appearance of Jewish life in that specific location. More general cultural movements or developments, such as the Jewish Enlightenment, assimilation, immigration, etc., are simultaneously shown within their specific social, cultural and political context. Moreover, Jewish history chronicles a religious as well as a social and cultural minority, so the purpose of Jewish museums is to inform about different periods of Jewish life and religion in their historical contexts. Different museums have different approaches; some focus on ancient history as well as the history of the Jews in their specific context, other museums focus on more recent Jewish history – starting with the Middle Ages and early modern times. Furthermore, Jewish museums in Europe, unlike those in the United Kingdom or the United States, are mostly funded by the state, not by the Jewish communities. The agenda and therefore also the purpose is different: state-funded Jewish museums do not necessarily represent a specific Jewish community but rather Jewish history, Jewish life and culture in various forms.

The Jewish Museum Hohenems in Austria was founded in 1990 after more than a decade of local discussions on public uses for the Villa Heimann Rosenthal, the home of Clara Heimann-Rosenthal, who was deported and murdered in Theresienstadt in 1942. The *Association of the Friends of the Jewish Museum Hohenems* was established in 1986 and evolved to support the museum financially as well as creatively and practically. In 1987, two years after the municipality bought the villa, a thinktank was set up to discuss the possibility of creating a Jewish museum in Hohenems. The original idea had been to make everyday Jewish life and culture familiar and accessible again particularly to the non-Jewish population of an area where a Jewish community had once flourished for more than 300 years but where there was no Jewish life left. However, the focus shifted and the Jewish Museum Hohenems today mainly records the historical Jewish community in Hohenems, its diaspora and its various contributions to the history of Vorarlberg and Western Austria and surrounding regions from southern Germany to northern Italy, from Liechtenstein to Switzerland. The museum focuses on contemporary questions of Jewish life and culture in Europe, questions of living together and of migration, but it also deals with the end of the community in Hohenems, the regional Nazi history, antisemitism and the Holocaust. Its permanent exhibition documents the history of the Jewish community in Hohenems, which had existed for over three centuries until it was destroyed in 1941. The exhibition tells of new beginnings after 1945 and the life of the descendants of Jewish families from the region, as well as their connection to the town and the museum today. Along with these fragmented lines of regional and global history, the museum is devoted to the people, their experiences and their histories, and furthermore, it sustains a close relationship with the descendants of Hohenems' Jewish families around the world. | 2

In museums, history is mainly told through objects, artefacts, documents, photographs and art. Interpreting displayed objects, framing them within a certain narrative, i.e. by exhibition texts, arranges the objects into a representative whole – in line with the setting of the museum's purpose. Looking at the status of objects, it is quite evident that audio material such as interviews

and recordings has mostly been used to convey the characteristics of a certain period or event, or tell the background story of a particular object with the help of exhibition audio guides. Videos and recordings become secondary objects. In the Jewish Museum in Hohenems, for example, audio guides and video installations in German, English and French make the exhibition accessible to an international audience. They put individual experiences in the context of European networks, at the crossroads of Austria, Switzerland, Germany, and Liechtenstein. <sup>13</sup> However, the reason for using additional video and audio testimonies is related to the perspective they represent. Testimonies in general, audio and video, are insights into individual, and therefore subjective, perspectives of events, which become witnesses' personal stories of life experiences. <sup>14</sup> Testimonies in museums are shown in an individual, subjective context. However, using videotaped testimonies of victims of National Socialism seems even more difficult in Jewish museums, as one of their basic principles is not to guide visitors by morality and triggered emotions but to offer an objective, cognitive and informative approach to Jewish history. Nevertheless, in the last decade more and more museums have decided to integrate individual life stories in their exhibitions. Yet, although objects now tell the visitor about their personal context (their owner, former function, cultural setting, etc.), there are few videotaped testimonies in permanent exhibitions. Another reason why Jewish museums, even when they collect video testimonies of Holocaust survivors, do not display those videos in their permanent exhibitions is the actual perception of videos, their image and their effect – especially as permanent exhibits: videos are equivalent objects within museums' collections. They can be seen as art, read as historical sources, looked at like photographs and presented like artefacts. In the Jewish Museum Hohenems the curators decided to display objects with various narratives: as examples of the Jewish history of Hohenems, the general Jewish cultural cycle as well as personal stories. Yet, one main question about using videos as primary objects – with the same status as artefacts, photographs or documents – is their presentation: how and to what purpose can or should videos be presented?

A museum always offers various levels of perception, for example listening, watching, and space. The visitor decides which displayed objects he or she wants to look at or how to approach the various text levels of information (such as object texts, introductions and section texts, etc.) and whether to use an audio guide. All of these levels of perception can be combined in the museum space – except when it comes to videos. Videotaped testimonies with sound and subtitles demand the visitor's entire attention: watching, listening, and even reading the subtitles, which implies that many levels of perception must be focused on this one object. Consequently, it seems almost impossible to display videos on the same level (namely the primary showcases) with primary objects of other kinds. Placing video footage with audio tone in a showcase with other objects reverses the function of each of these objects. There is also a fine line between an intense experience and being overpowered by the moral authority of videotaped testimonies. Additionally, video footage may distract visitors from displayed objects, documents or photographs; while the urge to look around and observe those objects might also take away the needed attention for the video testimonies.

Looking at examples of Jewish museums, it becomes clear that video testimonies are used as single objects, but they are displayed separately. The setting for showing one or several videos or video testimonies is crucial for the appeal to, perception and patience of, and effect on the visitors. Most of the previously mentioned Jewish museums show video testimonies in a separate section, not in combination with other primary objects in showcases or enriched with texts. Often they use a comfortable setting, with benches or chairs, reduced light, headphones or open sound to create a more relaxing atmosphere. Here, visitors can enter and decide to stay or move on without the distraction of other objects. In two European Jewish museums video testimonies are not displayed separately, but they are still not on a same level of perception as other primary objects. In the *Auschwitz Jewish Centre* video testimonies frame their displayed objects, as the collection faces the fact that only a few objects were found to document and display the Jewish history in Oświęcim. In the *Jewish Museum* in London, only one video testimony is

displayed at the end of the Holocaust section. The concept in this section is the survival story of one specific person – shown in photographs, artefacts and documents – who tells his “story of survival” in the displayed interview. In both cases, the integration of the video testimonies is rather successful – in the sense that a large number of visitors take the time to take in the information in the shown video material. But as combining video installations and objects in a single spatial setting seems only to work well in a few cases, such as London and Oświęcim, it is necessary to have a closer look at the specific circumstances in each case. Spatial conditions, the size of the collections, accessible objects, conditions and quantity of video material, technical equipment, etc., give us a better understanding of why and how video installations have been used and why they may or may not be getting the visitors’ attention and time.

#### Video Testimonies in the Permanent Exhibition

In the Jewish Museum Hohenems, the curators Hanno Loewy and Hannes Sulzenbacher first faced the issue of if and how video testimonies of survivors and their stories of escape over the Rhine could be integrated in 2006–07, when the permanent exhibit was renewed. The videotaped interviews shown in the Jewish Museum Hohenems today are commissioned pieces, recorded, subtitled and edited by the museum for the new permanent exhibition. Those video testimonies are shown on the second floor of the main building, the Villa Heimann-Rosenthal, where Jewish life in Hohenems in the 20th century is displayed: the period of National Socialism in Austria on the left side and Jewish life in Hohenems after 1945 on the right. Video installations for both sections are set in separate, slightly darker rooms. The entrance to each room is embedded in a topic-related area of the permanent exhibition. The video footage on the right side of the museum shows testimonies of descendants of Jews from Hohenems, which are mostly not related to the period of National Socialism. They talk about their family history, the importance of Hohenems in their lives, reunions with other family members at the museum, etc. On the left side, the video installations are embedded in a section

dealing with the annexation of Austria by the Nazis in 1938 and the consequences for Austrian Jews. This section includes individual escape stories and stories of deported members of the Jewish community. Various kinds of documents, art, pictures, etc. are displayed in order to narrate these topics. The video installation offers three different perspectives on the escapes to Switzerland: testimonies of refugees and their escape stories; secondly, testimonies of locals who helped people fleeing across the border to Switzerland; and thirdly, testimonies of Swiss officials who were working on the border between 1938 and 1945. Both video sections are constructed identically: each room has two screens with two chairs in front of the screen and two sets of headphones. The visitors – if there is more than one in front of one screen – have to communicate and come to an agreement about which of the testimonies they want to watch. A console in between the chairs offers a choice of languages; and the option to switch between topic-related sections, or between different interviews or interview sections of the same interviewee. The installations demand attention as well as a certain level of communication from the visitors, an aspect that has been accepted well so far. In sum, the feedback has been quite satisfying. Visitors spend a large amount of their time in these video sections, watching the testimonies carefully and they are often surprised about the “different stories” and perspectives. Sometimes the displayed history – together with the testimonies – seems to offer new approaches to otherwise generally “known” historical facts and events.

#### Further Use of Videotaped Testimonies

In most Jewish museums and museums in general, video footage is often used as additional material for education programmes, such as lectures, workshops, etc. In fact, many Jewish museums have a collection of videotaped testimonies within their larger collections. As well as the above-mentioned video testimonies produced for its permanent exhibition, in 2007 the Jewish Museum Hohenems received more than 20 video interviews with survivors of the Nazi regime recorded in the mid-1990s in German, English, Hebrew, French and Spanish by the *USC Shoah Foundation* | 5. In February 2017 another

six video testimonies, in English and Hebrew, recorded by *Yad Vashem* between 1995 and 2014, were added to the museum's video collection.

All the interviewees from both sets of testimonies have one thing in common: they passed through Vorarlberg, in western Austria, at some point on their journey. Either they were on their way to Switzerland and trying to escape the NS-regime in Austria or they had survived the camps and were there as Displaced Persons until they emigrated to the USA, Israel or elsewhere in the late 1940 or early 1950s. Some of them had managed to survive under false, non-Jewish identities, mostly Polish, as "foreign" workers, in larger companies or in the mountains.

For more than a decade the educational staff of the Jewish Museum Hohenems has gathered ideas about how to use the video material; the museum recently decided to pursue three concepts on how to display the videos:

- firstly, a temporary exhibition in autumn 2018 focusing solely on videotaped testimonies;
- secondly, making video interviews accessible through different media terminals within the museum site to supplement the material already on display in the permanent exhibition;
- and thirdly, creating educational material specifically for workshops, seminars, etc., within the museum's educational programme.

#### 1. *The eye of the needle* – concept for a temporary exhibition

Temporary exhibitions have a different approach to the challenges of displaying videotaped testimonies. The shorter duration and the freedom to experiment with material and technology depending on the specific narratives seem to make video installations more suitable for temporary exhibitions than for permanent ones.

Working with the video footage, the Jewish Museum Hohenems came up with several creative approaches, one being a temporary exhibition focusing specifically on the video testimonies given to the museum by the Shoah Foundation and Yad Vashem. It also further developed using video testimonies of victims of National Socialism as the main topic framing objects,

with as little additional biographical information or historical explanation as possible. This exhibition aims to emphasise the variety of ways people in the Vorarlberg region used to survive. As all the interviewees were in Vorarlberg at some point of their life, the region is regarded as “the eye of the needle”. Beside focusing on escape stories and survival in the camps, this exhibition will show stories about false identities, “foreign” workers and other ways of hiding during the Nazi period.

It will also emphasise the issue of “making” in the process of videoing: the construction of what is displayed, and how editing influences the function and purpose of video material, as well as the interview itself, i.e. the different agendas of interviewer and interviewee, the setting, the purpose of a series of interviews. The exhibition, planned for autumn 2018, will both look at the “making of videos” and scrutinise the consequent “making” of oral history, which includes the question of the dynamics and even “making” of memories. The museum’s approach is to respect the memory of the witnesses, but to challenge the concept of memory and “memorisation” of history in general – showing videotaped interviews of Holocaust survivors but also showing possible “disruptions” between memory and factual history within these testimonies. It attempts to tread the thin line, neither overpowering nor overwhelming visitors with the emotional depth or morality of the interviews. Visitors will instead be encouraged to be alert and attentive, as the aim is to make the examination of the videotaped testimonies into an interesting but educating experience.

## 2. Videos and visitor terminals

In addition to the permanent exhibition, two educational programmes – one about the escape to Switzerland between 1938 and 1945 and one about Jewish life in Vorarlberg after 1945 – will be enriched with video footage. To date, two terminals, one in the media room of the museum’s main building, another in the museum’s library, encourage visitors to engage more deeply with topics and stories displayed in the permanent exhibition. Several more interviews with survivors who did or did not escape to Switzerland between 1939 and

1945 can be watched, as well as several movies showing the development of the Jewish museum and the Jewish quarter since the 1990s. Videos of the reunions of descendants of Jews from Hohenems – which take place roughly every decade and represent the core outcome of the genealogical and archival work – give visitors the chance to explore a different side of the museum. Various videos and therefore various perspectives on a certain topic, such as escape, are uploaded on these terminal platforms, as well as an access forum for the museum's genealogy database and other collective archival databases.

The display of video interviews supplementing the material used in the permanent exhibition will be used to present longer excerpts of the individual stories, so offering more information on topics already addressed in the permanent exhibition. Future additional material will include interviews made by the museum or other institutions such as the USC Shoah Foundation and Yad Vashem, or short movies, etc. The footage will be cut into 10 maximum 20-minute sections. Additional text will describe the biographical background of the interviewee as well as the context of the excerpt – both in English and German with subtitles. And again, the terminals offer the option to select material from the above-mentioned categories in different languages and length.

### 3. Educational material

Additional interviews with survivors talking about their escape to Switzerland will also be used for educational purposes. This seems to be a common and over-all connecting function of video testimonies (or whole testimony collection) in Jewish museums.

The educational team at the Jewish Museum Hohenems focuses on providing schools, and other institutions that visit the museum in groups, with material in preparation for and post-processing of their museum visit. This includes text documents, photographs and maps, as well as carefully chosen and arranged video footage – if copyright allows reproduction. However, in a digital world, the idea is to avoid printed material as well as to choose a more

compact and more easily accessible output.

Group programmes will not be the only ones to benefit from the use of testimony footage; other types of educational events can also benefit from specifically edited material. In spring 2017 an event on the topic of “escape” included focus on three different escape stories narrated in interviews. The purpose was to show the variety of escape experiences. Participants were also guided through the museum and the Jewish quarter, where they learned about the history of Jews in Vorarlberg and how their lives changed after 1938. A subsequent guided tour was called “Refugee Trails”. On this tour the participants could visit specific spots along the Rhine river, where hundreds of Jewish refugees had escaped to Switzerland.

Workshops with different topics also call for different footage to underline the arguments. The variety of footage in the collection of the Jewish Museum Hohenems provides freedom to choose and create not only different types of stories but also different types of educational material. Instead of being focused on showing 10–15 minute interviews, educators can choose from a larger pool of material. The idea is to create different sets of educational materials, including videotaped interviews and audio sequences, as well as pictures and quotes from these interviews, which can be put together and shown in new combinations. The context of the various educational programmes leads the arrangement of the educational materials.

## Conclusion

The use of video interviews, especially in the context of Jewish museums, is a challenge. Although it often does not seem suitable for the narrative of a permanent exhibition or seems rather experimental in the context of temporary exhibitions, difficult circumstances, i.e. a rare collection of non-digital objects, can encourage new approaches in the use of video installations – contextually as well as technologically. Generally, Jewish museums will have to rethink their content as well as their educational approaches towards the display of videotaped interviews of survivors, not only to change how testimonies are handled in permanent exhibitions but also to highlight the

**potential of videotaped testimonies, especially when primary witnesses of the Holocaust are almost gone.**

- 1 Information gathered in a topic-related group discussion with curators from various European Jewish Museums in the context of the Advanced Curatorial Education Programme, Izmir 2017, organised by the Association of European Jewish Museums.
- 2 <http://www.jm-hohenems.at/en/about/the-museum> accessed 14 March 2017.
- 3 *Ibid.*
- 4 Taubitz, Jan. (2016). *Holocaust Oral History und das lange Ende der Zeitzeugenschaft*. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag. p. 29–36. Taubitz differs explicitly between the event and the memory of it; and shows in his study the challenges in dealing with witness interviews, especially in relation to the question of memories as historical sources.
- 5 Full Name: USC Shoah Foundation. The Institute for Visual History and Education



## ■ TESTIMONIES IN EDUCATION

EXPLORING THE USES  
OF VIDEO TESTIMONIES



Susan Hogervorst

## DISTANCED BY THE SCREEN. STUDENT HISTORY TEACHERS AND VIDEO ARCHIVES OF SECOND WORLD WAR INTERVIEWS IN THE NETHERLANDS

Introduction: Pedagogisation of Memory

Since the 1980s, an inevitable but clear problem has loomed surrounding the “cultural memory” (see Erll/Nünning 2010: 1–18) of the Second World War: the disappearance of the (ageing) witnesses. Many oral history collections have been created throughout the western world, and ten thousands of witness accounts have been preserved as audio and video recordings. Parallel to this quest to preserve individual war memories, there has also been an increasing effort to transmit these memories for “storage” in the minds of future generations. I have referred to this process as the “pedagogisation of memory” (Hogervorst 2010) – the transmission of memories about the Second World War and accompanying moral values on to younger generations as a crucial way of preserving and giving meaning to the past and, therewith, in creating and sustaining identities. The digital revolution has intensively influenced these practices of collecting and transmitting witness memories. Many interview collections can now be accessed, searched, and compared online, across institutional and national borders. In this article, I discuss the use of such an online interview portal created in the Netherlands. As I will argue, the use of this portal and teacher beliefs about the educational value of such portals indicate both continuity and change with regard to the transmission of witness memories. I start with an overview of current educational practices in the Netherlands concerning traditional and online witness testimonies about the Second World War, introduce my research project on the use of video testimonies, and then present the main findings.

## The Second World War and the Use of Witnesses in Dutch History Education

Contemporary history has been part of the Dutch curriculum since 1968, with the Second World War and the Holocaust as set topics. This was the result of major educational reform, but especially due to fundamental changes in the cultural memory of the Second World War. Until then, the national narrative in the Netherlands recounted the bravery and fortitude of the majority in a country under siege. The Holocaust played a minor role and Jews were not recognised as a specific group of victims, neither by the Dutch government nor by former resistance organisations (Berkel 2017). Since the 1960s, the image of collective heroism has gradually been replaced by another narrative: that of the Dutch as “guilty bystanders” of the Holocaust. As in other countries, the victims of the war became key figures in the memory culture. Because of traditionally limited government interference in education in the Netherlands, there are no directives on how to teach specific historical topics. As part of the 1968 educational reform, and especially following revision of the history curriculum in 2007, critical thinking skills have become an important part of history education. Nonetheless, oral history is rather uncommon in Dutch history education, including history teacher education. It is thus mainly because of the interest, initiative and networking of individual teachers that Dutch pupils might encounter oral testimonies. One of the few institutionalised practices regarding oral history in Dutch education is the *Landelijk Steunpunt Gast sprekers (LSG)*, a government-supported organisation that coordinates and promotes witness visits to primary and secondary education. Launched in 1999, LSG has seen an ever-increasing demand for witness lectures, rising to 1,125 in 2010 and 1,816 in 2016. Most of these lectures were given at secondary schools (47%), but nearly as many took place in primary schools (44%). LSG currently offers 223 guest speakers. Of these, 85 were children during the war (born between 1930 and 1940), 34 (19%) were born before 1930 and are now 86 years or older, and 50 were born during or shortly after the war. Most (110) are Jewish, who either survived in hiding (79) or in concentration and extermination camps (31).

LSG has recently started to work with second-generation guest speakers, including children of collaborationist parents (8).<sup>11</sup> The LSG puts great effort into training the guest speakers, and monitoring and evaluating their presentations. However, the educational goals, results and opportunities of using witness guest lectures should be subjected to more thorough investigation. Two general observations can be made at this stage: the fact that students are impressed and ask questions – which is strongly encouraged – seems to indicate the success of these lessons. Furthermore, it seems that the witness talks generally function as “extracurricular” illustration of the usual textbook-based lessons about the war.

### From Witnesses to Video Testimonies

In 2007, the Dutch government launched a four-year support programme to collect and preserve the heritage and memories of the Second World War. Supported initiatives included several oral history projects, which were made accessible in 2013 through an online portal, *Getuigenverhalen.nl*.<sup>12</sup> It provides access to about 500 video interviews in Dutch, tagged by themes, such as daily life, persecution, resistance, or war in the Dutch East Indies. Most of these interviews are searchable at fragment level through indexed key words in the transcripts and videos. The portal is hosted by the *NIOD Instituut voor Oorlogs-, Holocaust- en Genocidestudies (Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies)*. So far, no educational programmes have been developed around this collection, although this might change in the near future. However, in 2015 NIOD started a small teacher training initiative, in which secondary school history teachers are introduced to *IWitness*, the online educational platform of the *USC Shoah Foundation* in Los Angeles.<sup>13</sup> *IWitness* gives access to a selection (1,500 interviews in various languages, including 14 in Dutch) of the Shoah interview collection in an open but supervised community of teachers and students. These video interviews can be searched as well, using English search terms. In 2015, the Dutch organisation for the commemoration of the Second World War, the *Nationaal Comité 4 and 5 Mei*, explored the use of “filmed interviews” in formal education, based on

expert interviews and a questionnaire. 14 More than half of the 210 respondents said they used filmed interviews in their lessons. Responses suggested that documentaries and television series were also considered to be “filmed interviews”; 45% said they would use filmed interviews if there were no longer any living witnesses (and of these, 66% worked in primary education and 28% in secondary education); 27% would invite a second generation witness or an expert, or tell witness stories themselves, or visit a museum or former camp, or a combination of these. So there seems to be a willingness among teachers to use video testimonies, although this is not seen as the only option. The relatively large number of teachers saying they used video testimony might be due to the fact that those surveyed were teachers from the organisation’s network, who therefore had an interest in the Second World War and knowledge of relevant teaching materials. My inquiries among Dutch secondary school history teachers during several workshops on video testimonies that I conducted or attended at various institutions showed three things: they were mostly unfamiliar with online video archives, they were positive when told such collections exist, and it was quite unlikely that they would use online video interview collections in their teaching in the near future. They were more inclined to continue their usual ways of teaching about the Second World War, such as taking their students to memorial sites, showing (fragments of) films such as *Shoah* by Claude Lanzmann or *Schindler’s List* by Steven Spielberg, and/or inviting witnesses in their classroom – “as long as they are still out there”. There seems to be a transition phase in which museums and archives have anticipated the absence of the witnesses, but the intended users are mainly continuing their existing practices of teaching with live testimonies.

### Online Interview Collection as Barometer of Contemporary Cultural Memory

In my research project, I am studying the use of video testimonies in classrooms, museums, and online, in order to better understand the changes and continuities in contemporary cultural memory and underlying assumptions

about the role and value of witnesses and their testimonies. I use the online interview collection *Getuigenverhalen.nl* as a means of inquiry, analysing the site's content, its use and its users through internet statistics, an online questionnaire and a focus group interview with (student) history teachers, as well as observing interaction with the website as users select interview fragments they would use in a lesson about the Second World War. The project is part of a broader research programme about war heritage in popular culture at Erasmus University Rotterdam, to which I contribute on behalf of the Open University of the Netherlands. | 5

The internet statistics and the questionnaire generally match my findings among history teachers: there seems to be an interest in such collections, but also a lack of familiarity with how to use them. Only a few respondents identify themselves as a teacher or a student, and relatively many users (not only teachers and students) do not find what they were looking for. The search function is often not used, and the most watched interviews are the ones highlighted on the homepage. This indicates that users might need clearer instructions about how to search the collection, and how to interpret the results. Internet statistics also show that when key words are entered users will stay on a particular page (interview) five times longer than during an average site visit without a site search, which is usually under three minutes.

A focus group interview with student history teachers offered an opportunity to get a more in-depth view on the use of the portal, and – to a scholar of cultural memory more importantly – on users' selection criteria for relevant material from the abundant reservoir of witness testimonies available. In the final part of this article below, I will describe the setup of these interviews and reflect on the first findings.

### Testimony as Illustration of Textbook History?

I conducted a focus group interview with 14 students of the international course on Holocaust education at the history teacher-training department of the *Hogeschool Arnhem Nijmegen* in the Netherlands. Nine of the participants came from the Netherlands, the others were from Austria (two),

Belgium (two), and Ireland (one). Participants, male and female, all in their early twenties, were asked to explore an interview collection through an online portal. They were divided into four subgroups. Subgroups A and B, both consisting of Dutch-speaking students, were asked to work with the Dutch web portal *Getuigenverhalen.nl*. The international students in subgroups C and D were asked to use *IWitness*. All were told to select two interview fragments they considered suitable for a lesson about the Second World War, and to formulate two learning objectives for this lesson. Subgroups A and C chose fragments from an interview I had selected for them. This was an interview with a Jewish man talking about his experiences in hiding as a child. Subgroups B and D had to choose an interview themselves, and select two fragments. In this way, I could not only assess the selection process of the interview fragments, but also the participants' use of the specific website and its search tools. I asked subgroups B and D to spend a maximum of 45 minutes searching for a suitable interview, and both succeeded. The plenary discussion after completion of this assignment focused on the participants' assessment of the content and educational value of the fragments they had found. During the discussion, three criteria emerged as having been important in selecting the fragments: they needed to be "about children" or things "pupils could relate to"; they needed to have a high density of topics and places known from the school curriculum, or that addressed "real war history", as one participant put it; and lastly, they needed to contain stories that "pupils would remember" or that would "make an impact". Thus, good witness stories needed to be familiar (children's perspective, textbook history) and extraordinary at the same time. | 6

The same double educational function ascribed to witnesses could be seen in the reactions in the second discussion topic: Why use testimonies? Participants felt testimonies added a "human dimension" to "the facts", by which they meant emotions, but also anecdotes or specific individual situations that affected the experience of historical events. "Otherwise you might as well read a book" or "tell it yourself", they agreed. So, according to these students, adding the kind of insider information that a textbook cannot of-

fer can make the past more interesting and more understandable. However, they indicated that these personal accounts needed to stay fairly close to the textbook narrative. “Then you know what they say really happened,” one participant said, and others agreed. Participants appeared to consider that witness testimonies did not just illustrate textbook history; in their view, the textbook and the witnesses mutually confirmed historical reality.

### Distanced by the Screen

In this way, the exploratory focus group interview indicated both continuity and change regarding the (intended) use of video testimonies compared with live guest lectures. Video interviews were also regarded as illustrations of textbook history/the regular curriculum. However, the video screen separating the witness from the students allowed them to take a more critical stance towards the witness as a historical source. This indicates an important difference between live and video testimonies: it is doubtful to what extent such epistemological questions regarding subjectivity and reliability would come up during a live guest lecture by a witness. This observation corresponds with the outcome of a large intervention study recently conducted in Germany under Christiane Bertram’s guidance, about learning results from history lessons based on testimonies in different formats: printed, video, and live. The students who had attended the live witness lecture scored lower in tests of historical thinking than those who had watched the same testimony on video or read it in print (Bertram et al. 2017). In my view, the focus group discussion also highlighted the students’ unfamiliarity with historical sources other than texts. The epistemological questions regarding historical sources, and their relation to “real war history”, should be asked when using any source, of course, including history textbooks, upon which the students seemed to rely quite strongly. Depending on context, learning objectives and educational level, this could be a great advantage of working with video testimonies, whether or not combined with live guest speakers. Teachers should perhaps evaluate witness guest lectures together with their students, which would be a suitable occasion to add critiquing sources to the

discussion. We do not know to what extent this is being done. The marginal role of oral history in Dutch history education suggests teachers may lack awareness of the opportunities such evaluations could offer (apart from time considerations).

Another difference between live and video testimonies concerns diversity and student-guided learning. Participants did not address this in the group discussion. In traditional witness lessons only one person is invited into a classroom, after which lessons continue as usual. With video testimony, students have a whole reservoir of different people available, with different experiences and possibly varying perspectives on what they lived through. Interview portals thus offer the opportunity to not only illustrate or confirm knowledge obtained from history textbooks but also to supplement or challenge existing ideas. Video interview portals also permit a more student-guided approach, rather than a traditional teacher- or witness-guided history lesson. The fact that these advantages of video testimony collections did not come up in the discussion might point to the participants' lack of familiarity with such collections.

Further investigation is needed, but this might be a first step towards a more reflexive, comparative way of engaging with testimonies in history education in the Netherlands, as a valuable means both to learn about the past and to evaluate how historical knowledge comes about. This would not only be important for enhancing students' critical thinking skills, it would also do more justice to witness testimonies as historical sources with their own value.

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- 1 Landelijk Steunpunt Gast sprekers (2017) *Oorlogsverhalen in de klas. Resultaten van een online enquête over ervaringen en wensen van docenten met betrekking tot gast sprekers*.
- 2 See [www.Getuigenverhalen.nl](http://www.Getuigenverhalen.nl), accessed 10 November 2017.
- 3 <http://www.niod.nl/nl/iwitness-project>, accessed 2 August 2017.
- 4 Nationaal Comité 4 en 5 mei (2015). *Ooggetuigen in de klas. Onderzoek naar gebruik van gefilmde interviews met ooggetuigen van WOII in de klas*.
- 5 The project is called Live/life stories. The use of video testimonies in education, museums and online is part of WAR! Popular Culture and European Heritage of Major Armed Conflicts at Erasmus University Rotterdam: <https://www.eshcc.eur.nl/english/rei/>, accessed 2 August 2017.
- 6 Focus group interview, Hogeschool Arnhem Nijmegen, Nijmegen, 31 May 2016.

Irmgard Bibermann

## THE INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH PROJECT *SHOAH IN DAILY SCHOOL LIFE* <sup>1</sup> HOW DO PUPILS USE VIDEOTAPED EYEWITNESS INTERVIEWS WITH SURVIVORS IN A TABLET APPLICATION?

### The Need for Empirical Teaching Research

More than seventy years after the liberation of the concentration camps, time is running out for sharing the experiences of people who can provide first-hand testimony of the policies of persecution, forced migration and extermination practised by the National Socialists. Many institutions that have worked during the last few decades to preserve the memories of survivors for future generations in the form of video interviews, like the *USC Shoah Foundation*, are therefore focussing more and more on the aspects of communication (Simon et al. 2013: 241–246). The extent to which memories of the Holocaust remain an element of a reflexive, living culture of remembrance depends in part on the availability and use of learning platforms that make use of videotaped interviews for teaching purposes. In Austria, for example, a growing number of video interviews have been prepared for the classroom. However, the question of the right teaching setting for work with videotaped eyewitness videos to ensure that learners obtain maximum benefit for the development of historical competencies has been the subject of theoretical reflection (Barricelli/Lücke 2013; Bothe/Lücke 2013) but of little empirical research. For that reason, *\_erinnern.at\_* has organised the international research project *Shoah in daily school life* in cooperation with the Free University Berlin, the University of Teacher Education Lucerne and Innsbruck University. <sup>2</sup> A pilot study was made

to research learning in regular history classes using video interviews with survivors in a tablet-based learning environment. The main objective was to discover how pupils use videotaped eyewitness interviews in tablet-based history classes and what historical narratives of their own they generate through working with the interviews. The main results from this pilot study are presented below. <sup>13</sup>

### Main Project Data: The Study Design

The centrepiece of the project is the 90-minute lesson unit *Encounter with eyewitnesses of the Shoah*, which was released for use on tablets. The 30-minute interviews and the three questionnaires were also included in the application. In addition to the lesson unit, the pilot study also included five data capture phases:

1. To capture the pupils' initial profiles, they were asked to fill in a questionnaire a week before the lesson was held. The questionnaire related to
  - their knowledge of, experience with and interest in the Holocaust (as the subject of the planned lesson unit),
  - their experience with eyewitnesses (information source for the planned lesson unit)
  - and their experience with tablets (work and communications tool).
  - The personal data captured included gender, age, mother tongue, nationality and country of birth (of the pupils and their parents).
2. A video recording was made of the lesson in order to document interaction between the pupils and between them and the teacher, especially in the plenary phases at the beginning and end of the double lesson.
3. Tracking software was installed on the tablet with the lesson unit in the form of an application <sup>14</sup> so that a record could be made of the user behaviour of the pupils working with the app.
4. At the end of the lesson, the pupils were asked to fill in another questionnaire relating to
  - their assessment of the learning process and outcome
  - and questions concerning their experiences in the class and as learners.

5. Finally, two weeks after the lesson, the pupils were asked to fill in a third questionnaire. It contained the same questions as the first plus three open questions on their learning experiences and findings from the double history lesson.

The lesson unit app on the tablet served as a tool for empirical study of the pupils' learning processes. The tablet was a work tool, information carrier and research tool all at the same time. The interviews, which last up to two and half hours in the originals, were shortened to 30 minutes for teaching in the framework of the *Witnesses of the Shoah* project <sup>15</sup>. The choice of interviews for the lesson unit was based on thematic considerations plus the desire to have both male and female interviewees. The pupils were invited to choose between three interviews, which cover the aspects "flight", "survival" and "resistance" and thus shed light on the Holocaust from different angles. The pilot study was performed from the end of February to the end of March 2015 with one class each in Berlin (D) and Innsbruck (A) and two classes in Zofingen (CH). A total of 74 pupils were involved. Their average age was 17.

### The Pupils' Texts <sup>16</sup>: What Do They Tell Us about Their History Learning Processes?

The last few years have seen a transformation in the standards of Holocaust education. Didactic research has contributed to greater professionalism among teachers and generated new findings with regard to teaching and learning. In the history curricula, emphasis is now placed on competence-oriented teaching to enable pupils to acquire new knowledge and skills and to find their own paths to developing opinions and attitudes with a personal focus (Barricelli et al. 2012). For most history education experts, promoting and developing narrative competence is central to history education. <sup>17</sup> Peter Gautschi has developed a competence model that relates very closely to practical history teaching and learning in schools. He divides narrative competence into four areas. According to this model, good history teaching should empower pupils to

- access a historical record: put questions and test suppositions against historical sources and records,
- develop a historical record: use historical sources and records to analyse, verify and present topics,
- interpret history: analyse, interpret, deduce, structure, present and arrive at historical judgements, and
- derive orientation from the experience of time: develop opinions and attitudes as orientation in practical life today; make value judgements (Gautschi 2015: 48–53).

In the lesson unit *Encounter with eyewitnesses of the Shoah*, pupils were given opportunities through a variety of assignments to practise competencies that are important for learning history and to produce their own narratives, for example when explaining their choice of interview, formulating their expectations of the interview selected, explaining their choice of quotation from the eyewitness testimony, describing their own responses (thoughts, impressions, feelings) and writing a summary of the interview. The texts written by the pupils during the lesson are designed to reveal the extent to which they understand historical narratives and are able to respond with narratives of their own. On the basis of the above competence model, the texts of those pupils in the pilot study were assessed who chose the interview with Eugen Herman-Friede | 8 on the subject of resistance. | 9

The following table gives an overview of the methods and assignments for the double history class and the related development of competencies:

TEACHING PHASE	TIME	METHODS/ASSIGNMENTS	COMPETENCIES
Introduction	5 minutes	Four corners method	Perception and orientation competence
Part I: Orientation with the assignment	15 minutes	Choice of interview – Selection on the basis of the photo, short biography and video clip – Explanation of reasons for choice – Formulation of expectations	Perception, deduction and orientation competence
Part II: Work on the assignment for the eyewitness interview selected	55 minutes	Work on the interview – Note taking (thoughts, feelings, impressions) – Choice of quotations – Explanation of reasons for choice – Writing the summary	Perception, deduction, interpretation and orientation competence
Close	15 minutes	Evaluation of the assignment in the plenary Four corners method	Interpretation and orientation competence

When choosing an eyewitness testimony, the pupils demonstrated perception competence through their questions and suppositions on the video clip and short biography. They also demonstrated deduction competence after examining the source materials by making a decision and providing specific reasons for their choice.

The fact that Eugen Herman-Friede had a non-Jewish stepfather was noted by the pupils as a specific biographic situation. The change of school required by the National Socialists also aroused the pupils' interest and influenced their decision.

"I thought his story was the most interesting because he had a Jewish mother but not a Jewish father. His father (or stepfather) was not a Jew but he was still very interested in the rites. I found his story the most exciting, also because he had to switch schools." (berlin7) | 10

The reasons given by the pupils show that the testimony generated questions to which they expected answers and more detailed information from their subsequent work on the interview. The questions formulated by one Swiss pupil show that she sees the eyewitness as a person who is looking back at childhood experiences from the perspective of his life today.

"I would like to know how he felt about his childhood and how he coped with it. And on the other hand I would like to see how he survived and what he thinks about those times today." (CH4B06)

The pupils approached the testimony of the interviewee by selecting a quotation they considered important and giving their reasons. They demonstrated interpretation and orientation competence by explaining the quotation and the conclusions they would draw for their own behaviour and for their response to the history of the Nazi period in their own lives. One Berlin pupil chose Eugen Herman-Friede's remark that everyone who wanted to know did know about the Nazis' criminal treatment of the Jews. She interpreted that sentence as a call not to "go through life with your eyes closed". And she says that those people who did so had no right to plead ignorance as an excuse.

**Eugen Herman-Friede:** "Everybody who wanted to know knew something."

**Reason for choice:** "This quotation stuck in my mind as I consider it a very important remark because you cannot go through life with your eyes closed and afterwards say, 'I didn't know anything about it,' because that is not how things were." (berlin7)

In the last assignment, the pupils were told to write a brief summary of the video interview. The results vary considerably with regard to length and

style and also their narrative character. Most of the pupils concentrated on the story of the narrative at the micro level. Some of them produced their own narratives and demonstrated their narrative competence, as in the case of one of the Innsbruck pupils. He links the micro and macro levels in his summary and connects the Nazi period with the present. He stresses the bravery of the people who hid Eugen Herman-Friede and also mentions the eyewitness' educational visits to schools. His narrative satisfies a number of criteria that are seen as parameters of narrative competence (Pandel 2010: 128–129). His summary is well linked and has a coherent structure, in which the facts are interconnected and not merely listed. He clearly identifies the actors and adds meta-narrative elements which are not present in the narrative of the eyewitness.

“Eugen Herman-Friede was taken out of school and subjected to many restrictions just because he is a Jew. He was concealed by several families, who took him in and kept him in spite of the danger they were putting themselves in. He was finally arrested by the Gestapo but liberated following the invasion by the Red Army. Now he calls on schools and, through his book and discussions with the pupils, tries to help them understand the past.” (ibk1)

Questionnaires 1 and 3:

What Can We Say about the Pupils' Learning Gains?

It was interesting and at the same time slightly disconcerting to compare the results of questionnaires 1 and 3, in which the pupils answered questions one week before and then one or two weeks after the lesson on their knowledge, their attitudes to and interest in the Holocaust, their experience of and attitudes towards eyewitnesses and their familiarity with the tablet as a work tool. The question sets were identical in the two questionnaires so as to detect any changes in the pupils' levels of knowledge and attitudes. A comparison on this before-and-after basis revealed very little difference. The highest approval rate was recorded for the statement that, after everything that happened in the Holocaust, we must support the rights of minorities in all parts of the world and also for the statement that the Holocaust is one of the most

gripping topics in the history of mankind. Another striking result concerned the pupils' experience with eyewitnesses in the classroom: In all three countries the pupils said in questionnaire 1 that they had little or no experience of eyewitnesses in the classroom. The result was radically different when the pupils were asked the same question in questionnaire 3. In that case the pupils did confirm a gain in experience following their work with the eyewitness interviews in the lesson unit. The pupils showed a positive attitude to the tablet as a work device. They said learning with the tablet was fun and varied and conducive to a good atmosphere for work because it created more quiet and encouraged concentration and permitted autonomous learning. There were differences, however, between the answers given by girls and those given by boys, with the former adopting a more sceptical and critical attitude.

#### Questionnaire 2:

##### Is it a Good History Lesson from the Pupils' Point of View?

The following seven closed-ended statements were used for pupils to evaluate the learning process using a four-point scale:

- In the history lesson I was so fascinated that I worked very hard.
- In the history lesson I really wanted to understand.
- In the history lesson I was able to follow all the time.
- In the history lesson I made sure I really understood everything.
- In the history lesson I concentrated hard so as to remember the most important things.
- In the history lesson I wondered what I had to do and how I should proceed.
- In the history lesson I immediately understood what I had to do or answer.

The following four closed-ended questions – to be answered on a six-point scale – were used to evaluate the learning outcome:

- Did you (on the whole) learn a lot or only little in the lesson?
- Did you (on the whole) understand the subject or not?
- Are you (on the whole) satisfied or dissatisfied with the learning outcome?
- Did you (on the whole) find the lesson interesting or boring?

For questionnaire 2, use was made of item setting as already tested in the framework of the study on “Good history teaching” (Gautschi 2009: 149–165). Evaluation was performed with the help of a statistical analysis, in which it was found that a lesson can be considered “good” from the pupils’ point of view if the average for “process” is equal to or greater than 3 and for “outcome” it is equal to or greater than 4. For the lesson unit in the pilot study *Encounter with eyewitnesses of the Shoah*, the averages for all three countries came to 3.43 for the learning process and 4.98 for the learning outcome. In comparison with other lessons evaluated in other studies, these figures are high (Gautschi 2015: 159–160). The pupils accordingly consider the unit to have been a good history lesson and have the impression that they learned a lot. That applies to all the classes in all the countries. It should be pointed out that the teachers did not play a very important part in the lesson. For most of the double lesson, the pupils worked alone and independently using their tablets. The double history lesson developed for this project would appear to offer a teaching structure in which the “What” and the “How?”, i.e. the pedagogical offering, can lead to effective use on the part of the learners independent of the teacher.

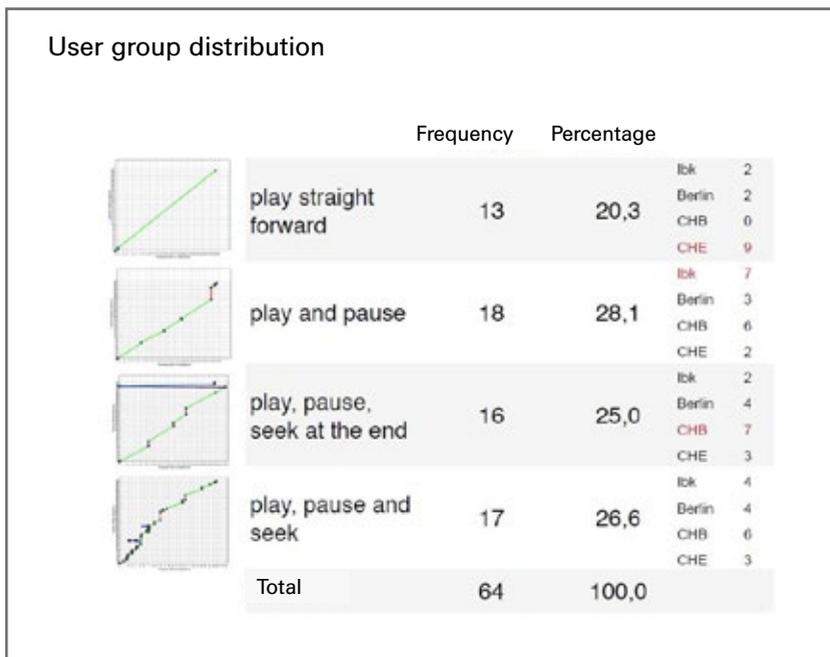
#### Evaluation of the Tracking Software:

##### How Do the Pupils Use the App on Their Tablets?

Evaluation of the tracking data provided interesting insights into the learning processes of the individual pupils. The tablet app was programmed to show with the help of log files how the pupils proceeded. The following data were captured: commands for play and pause, search commands, duration of play in minutes, duration of pauses and total duration of the session in minutes. Guido Kempfer evaluated the user data provided by the log files and identified six basic patterns of use (Bibermann; Kempfer et al. 2016: 42–46):

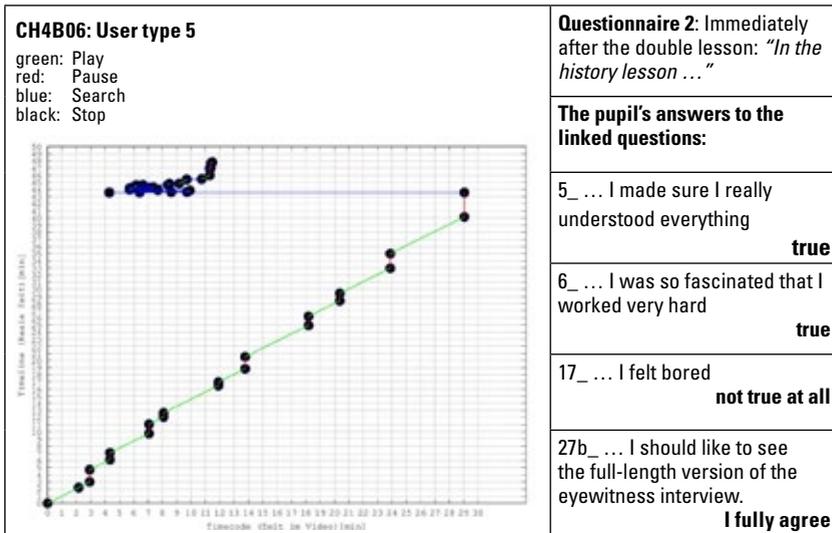
1. Pupils watch the video continuously without any major pauses.
2. Pupils watch the video continuously and at the end return to certain points and places.
3. Pupils alternate between Play and Search.

4. Pupils alternate between Play, Pause and Search.
5. Pupils alternate between Play and Pause and mainly choose Search at the end.
6. Pupils watch the video with pauses but without searching.



The tracking data were also linked with other data sources so as to provide a more differentiated picture of user behaviour, e.g. some of the answers that pupils gave at the end of the lesson in questionnaire 2. Two items were used in which the pupils evaluate their own learning process, one item in which they describe their emotions after working on the video interview and another item in which they express their attitude to eyewitness interviews. It was found that pupils whose user graphs indicated a high level of activity while working with the app were more positive in their evaluation of the learning

process, felt least bored and were most interested in seeing the full-length version of the video interviews. Example: The user graph indicates that the Swiss pupil belongs to user group 5. She switches between “Play” and “Pause” and mainly goes to “Search” at the end. The evaluation results show that this user type responds to the questions used for data linkage with the highest level of approval.



### Findings and Open Questions

The results of the pilot study suggest that videotaped eyewitness interviews can be used for competence oriented history teaching. From evaluation of the data it is clear that, in the framework of the lesson, many pupils were able to make use of competencies that are relevant for learning history. The pupils were able to indicate what they had learned from the eyewitness testimony on the Holocaust. Through the details of the narrative they came to an understanding of the magnitude and impact of National Socialist policies of persecution: from the loss of identity to the loss of life. From the pupils’ point

of view, the double history lesson *Encounter with eyewitnesses of the Shoah* was a good lesson. The pupils also see the Holocaust as an important subject for history classes. Videotaped eyewitness interviews are a medium in which pupils show great interest. With regard to the design, it can be said that pupils will pay attention to “talking heads” in a 30-minute interview format. Learning with tablets is something the pupils like, among other things because they permit autonomous learning. The learning setting – one tablet with earphones per pupil – enables them to take their own paths to learning and to work in depth on aspects of the topic they have chosen themselves. The pupils make highly individual use of the offering in the lesson unit with regard to the “What?” and the “How?”. There are some questions, however, that cannot be clarified with the data collected: Does the way in which the video interview is used relate to the pupils’ interest in the subject or the learning arrangement or their motivation level? Or is it the formal design of the video interviews, the structure of the assignments or the pupil’s learner type that influence user behaviour? In the follow-up project, the data are to be studied with greater precision since not all paths to learning proved equally successful. It is also unclear why so little change was detected in the pupils with regard to their knowledge and attitudes. In the follow-up study more differentiated question sets are to be developed to clarify this point. Nor can an unequivocal answer be given to the question of the role of the teacher in this teaching setting. The thesis so often postulated in the literature of the importance of the teacher for good history lessons was not confirmed in the learning environment created for the research project. This double history lesson would appear to offer a teaching structure in which the “What” and the “How?”, i.e. the pedagogical offering, can lead to effective use on the part of the learner independent of the teacher. Through reflection on their experiences and findings one week after the lesson, the pupils provide information on their personal learning gains. This is clear, for example, from the remark made by an Innsbruck pupil to the effect that the eyewitness interviews enabled him to see “how hard things were for a Jew in those days” (ibk17) and in the words of a Swiss pupil, who said that the eyewitness interview

had revealed to him “how good we have it today” (CH4E). The results of the pilot study show that videotaped eyewitness interviews provided for pupils on tablets as learning tools represent a highly promising solution for modern teaching on the subject of the Holocaust.

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## QUOTED QUESTIONNAIRES

The data from the questionnaires and the texts the pupils wrote while working on the tablet app have been stored in a database and are also available in hardcopy.

Questionnaire 1: on the pupils’ personal data and previous knowledge and attitudes towards the Holocaust, eyewitnesses and tablets

Questionnaire 2: pupils’ evaluation of the learning process and outcome of the lesson

**Questionnaire 3: on the pupils' knowledge and attitudes towards the Holocaust, eyewitnesses and tablets; open questions on the learning experience and findings from the double history lesson**

- 1 For the title of the project and lesson unit, the term "Shoah" is used but in the pupil questionnaires we speak of the "Holocaust" since we assume that pupils are more familiar with that word.
- 2 The institutes involved are the Friedrich Meinecke Institute and the Center for Digital Systems (CeDIS) at the Free University of Berlin, the Centre for History Teaching & Learning and Memory Cultures (ZGE) at the University of Teacher Education Lucerne and the Institute of Contemporary History at Innsbruck University.
- 3 For a more detailed presentation of the results of the pilot study see Bibernmann, I., Dreier, W., Ecker, M., Gautschi, P., Kempfer, G., Körte-Braun, B., Lücke, M. (2016): *Vermittlung der Shoah im schulischen Alltag in einer Tablet unterstützten Lernumgebung. Schlussbericht zur Pilotstudie*. Bregenz: [\\_erinnern.at\\_](http://www.ERINNERN.AT)
- 4 The pupils in Innsbruck were informed by the project leader that their user behaviour (stop, play, pause and search commands) would be recorded on the tablet for research purposes.
- 5 [www.zeugendershoah.de](http://www.zeugendershoah.de), accessed 26 April 2017.
- 6 These texts were written on tablets during work on assignments relating to the eyewitness interview.
- 7 For the various competence models, see Gautschi 2015: pp. 54–66.
- 8 The pupils who worked on Eugen Herman Friede were selected for the assessment of the pupils' texts because that interview was chosen in all countries and classes and by both boys and girls of the same age group.
- 9 The interviews used in the pilot study are to be found on the DVD *Witnesses of the Shoah* <http://www.bpb.de/shop/multimedia/dvd-cd/141267/zeugen-der-shoah-fliehen-ueberleben-widerstehen-weiterleben>, accessed 8 November 2017.
- 10 An individual code was assigned to each tablet and pupil to ensure that the pupils used the same tablet for all data capture phases. The Berlin codes are berlin1 to berlin20, the Innsbruck codes ibk1 to ibk21, the codes for form 4E in Zofingen are CH4E01 to CH4E19 and for form 4B in Zofingen CH4B01 to CH4B14. This system ensures reliable linkage of the data captured.

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## TATTERED DOLLS AND TEDDY BEARS TELL TALES OF HOPE AND PERSEVERANCE: DEVELOPING A PEDAGOGIC PARADIGM FOR TEACHERS' USE OF HOLOCAUST TESTIMONY TO ENGAGE YOUNG STUDENTS IN EXPLORING SOCIAL INJUSTICES

### Holocaust Education and US State Mandates

Prominent national education organizations in the United States, such as the *National Association for the Education of Young Children*, the *Southern Poverty Law Center Teaching Tolerance*, *Anti-Defamation League*, and *Reconceptualizing Early Childhood Education*,<sup>1</sup> have made specific recommendations highlighting the need for substantive early learning experiences that explore prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination to combat systemic patterns of injustice. Several US states have legislated requirements for teaching about the Holocaust in the public school curriculum. Currently eight states (California, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, and Rhode Island) mandate instruction on the Holocaust, and 12 additional states (Alabama, Connecticut, Georgia, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Washington, and West Virginia) recommend teaching the Holocaust but lack funding to enforce and support implementation.<sup>2</sup>

Despite these mandates and several attempts to pass national legislation for Holocaust educational requirements in all elementary and secondary schools, adherence to these initiatives has been inconsistent. Nationally, there is widespread recognition that teachers need access to appropriate

curriculum resources, instructional guidelines and training to increase their knowledge of the Holocaust, and enhance the educational experience. Several organizations have undertaken this work, but the focus has mainly been on implementation in the middle grades and high school classrooms. An especially contentious issue involves the five states (Florida, New Jersey, Illinois, California, and New York) where the Holocaust education mandate applies to kindergarten through grade 12. Contradictory guidelines have often confused teachers and raised concerns about the developmental appropriateness of instruction for young children.

### In Search of Developmentally Appropriate Practice

When it comes to museums and memorials, there has been discussion and debate about the age appropriateness of Holocaust education. For example, the *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum* has recommended that instruction in the early years explore the dangers of prejudice and bias rather than the complex history of the Holocaust.<sup>13</sup> Although *Yad Vashem* also considers age a critical factor in selecting Holocaust content, it suggests introducing the Holocaust to young children through the personal stories of witnesses and survivors.<sup>14</sup> Presenting the Holocaust to children through the individual narratives of people focuses on the descriptions of daily life during the Holocaust from the perspective of a child experiencing the changing reality. This gradual exposure may create a positive learning environment that introduces a complex experience in a way that is accessible to children.

Though the museums offer resources, many teachers are still left with the challenge of teaching a complicated subject without expertise. Several Holocaust educational organizations have risen to meet this demand, but they design most of their learning materials for older students, hindering their outreach to early childhood and elementary classrooms. Provided that teachers have the right tools and resources and use developmentally appropriate language and activities, teaching about the Holocaust can be rich and engaging for children, laying the groundwork for more sophisticated understanding when students move into the middle and secondary years.

### Exploring the Use of Video Testimonies in the Elementary Grades

Many elementary educators who wish to teach the Holocaust feel deterred from doing so for several reasons. First, they lack the confidence to develop a Holocaust unit, as they feel they do not have sufficient knowledge of the subject matter to teach it successfully. Second, the complexity of the subject seems overwhelming. Third, and perhaps most important, they worry whether they can present such an emotionally charged subject in a way that does justice to the topic while observing the sensitivities that must be considered in planning a lesson for young children. The focus of our research is on how the personal stories of Holocaust survivors captured in video testimony may assist effective implementation of Holocaust education in early learning and elementary school contexts. We have examined pedagogical paradigms for Holocaust education in the early years and considered the complexities involved in selecting digital testimony from Holocaust survivors for use in early childhood and elementary settings. The intended outcome of this work is to identify strategies to build connections to children's lives today and establish a foundation for a spiraling curriculum, in which young children become familiar with the personal stories of individuals in the Holocaust and get acquainted with the historical terms and context.

This project builds upon our earlier pilot research in US public elementary schools, which explored how Holocaust survivors' digital testimonies may promote participatory and student-driven learning. The research showed not only that testimonies are relevant for elementary learners but also that the impact on students was significant in many areas, including gains in understanding of prejudice and stereotypes, the role of personal responsibility, of being active citizens and standing up for others, and the value of personal stories in history. The students enjoyed hearing authentic stories and discovering diverse views on topics and issues being studied. They were also highly attentive in class discussions. However, the activity relied strongly on the novelty of the medium, which no doubt contributed to student excitement, but also had a tendency to decontextualize representation of the historical events. Students sought out additional information on their own. We noted

that the desired outcomes were achieved due to the involvement of a highly skilled teacher; however, isolating the pedagogy for diffusion throughout other educational contexts was critical if we hoped to promote the use of digital testimony as an instructional approach in the early childhood and elementary grades for fostering critical historical thinking and critical thinking about contemporary social justice issues. The specialized skills of a veteran teacher showcased the importance of planning and implementation when using oral histories and personal narratives. With a focus on critical inquiry, the teacher facilitated young learners to step into someone else's shoes for a moment and make personal connections between history and their own lives. These intergenerational contacts also featured the continuity of human life. Educators must engage their students in the methods of the historian to make learning more meaningful through processes of inquiry, asking questions, collecting and examining evidence, and reaching conclusions. Planning with scaffolded instruction, inclusion of supplementary readings and resources, and expansion of use of the technological artifacts may further enhance the guided exploration of students in the elementary grades.

### The Pedagogic Frame of Social Justice through Critical Literacy

Biases begin to develop in children at a young age. Decades of research indicate that even if adults do not openly discuss intolerant beliefs, children still notice differences and prejudice. If educators choose not to teach or talk about diversity and discrimination, children's notions will go unchecked and likely become further entrenched in their minds. In fact, current research suggests that children as young as three years old, when exposed to prejudice and racism, tend to embrace and accept it even though they might not understand the feelings. So while some educators want to delay introducing Holocaust resources to young learners until they are "old enough" to consider this topic, children are already developing values and beliefs about the world around them.

The good news is that young children often care passionately about justice and injustice, although they may use words like "fairness" and "unfairness".

Moreover, young children are frequently concerned not only with perceived injustice to themselves but also with inequity to others. Bias can be unlearned or reversed if children are exposed to diversity in a positive way. Harnessing young children's desire for fairness and using it as an opening to discuss bias and discrimination is not a hard leap, but it is one that needs to be made explicitly and with instruction.

Educators need to carefully reflect on their own attitudes and behaviors as part of developing competencies in addressing challenging topics with young children. Among the barriers for adults are their own prejudices about people, limited knowledge of history, and beliefs about children's capacity to deal with complicated and persistent problems. However, by remaining open and establishing a foundation on which children can discuss and inquire about difficult issues, educators foster openness in children to confront prejudice and discrimination.

Early childhood and elementary educators believe in a basic principle that if we treat young children as if they are strong, intelligent and kind, they are more likely to thrive and succeed. The foundation for later and increasingly mature understanding is constructed in the early years (Berson et al. 2009: 31; Vasquez 2017: 2). We continually revisit topics because concept formation is never complete. This incompleteness leads children to continually want to learn more, in an attempt to expand their understanding.

In order to have a lasting effect, Holocaust education needs to fit within a social justice curriculum model that addresses themes involving diversity, equity, solidarity, advocacy, dignity, anti-discrimination and activism as counter-narratives to discrimination, conflict, and violence. Through these inquiry-based lessons students develop their social justice vocabulary, a sense of personal identity, and skills in problem identification and decision-making. For young children this involves lessons about responsibility, learning to be honest but respectful to others.

In particular, social and historical narratives offer valuable resources that may help young learners make sense of the world we live in today as they engage with the complex topics of equity and oppression. The benefits of

using testimony in the early childhood and elementary instruction include:

- Development of language, oral language comprehension, critical thinking, problem solving, expression, and listening skills
- Stimulation of students' interest in the world around them, encouraging them to pay attention to what they see and hear
- Active engagement in media literacy
- Fostering open intergenerational communication

Critical literacy plays an important part in teaching children about being reflective, moral, and active citizens in an interconnected global world. Helping students become critically aware requires teachers to integrate discussion of complex and challenging topics into instruction. The use of multiple texts is a common entry to critical literacy (Berson et al. 2017). In testimonies from survivors, students encounter the stories of those who resisted injustice. Developing critical literacy is a long-term process that begins in the early grades and continues through college. Downplaying or ignoring challenging topics in the curriculum may be common, but it is unwise, even with young learners.

### Teaching Young Children Using Testimony

Early childhood and elementary educators frequently read stories to children to provide them with opportunities to enhance their communication skills, social literacy, and community engagement. Storytelling also supports young children's learning and development. Testimonies offer a form of oral history that allows children to make more direct connections between the information they are hearing and the experience of the narrator. Oral histories provide children with an opportunity to match facial, vocal, and physical expressions. This kind of listening and communication creates a level of empathy and unity around the topic.

The use of testimony in teaching about the Holocaust has long been a practice, relying on resources such as memoirs, diaries, and audio recordings. First-person accounts provide a window into the experience of those who lived the historical events in the pages of textbooks. Using oral history allows

students to become the principal investigator, extracting meaningful information that will prove relevant to their lives (Haas et al. 2015: 108).

Use of video testimony in early childhood and elementary classrooms aligns with a humanistic approach that explores the Holocaust through personal stories. In the early grades these stories sensitize children to bias, diversity, discrimination, and social justice. Although adults often avoid these complex topics with children, research affirms that first-hand accounts provide invaluable evidence for historical inquiry (Waring/Torrez 2010: 304) by offering unique insight to an event or memory through the perspective of an individual.

Introducing video testimony in the early years may take many forms. A diverse complement of strategies offers teachers the flexibility to optimize learning for young students. Research-based teaching strategies involve scaffolded instruction, activation of prior knowledge, engaging students in making predictions, teacher modeling, “think-alouds”, guided questioning to foster application of concepts and analysis, and summarization of information acquired for comparison and contrasting with other data sources (Berson/Berson 2014: 51). The introduction of video testimony should also reflect the qualities of powerful and purposeful teaching and learning that are meaningful, integrative, challenging, value-based, and active (Berson et al. 2009: 31).

Preschool and primary-age students often have difficulty understanding that their lives today are different from those of people long ago (Morgan/Rasinki 2012: 590). It can be challenging for students to understand concepts of historical time, and young learners tend to analyze information from the vantage point of their own personal experience and time frame. The past is an abstraction, and as events and people from long ago feel far removed from children’s current lives, making meaning from primary sources is a challenging task for young learners.

In the early years, the focus is on establishing a foundation for historical inquiry through scaffolded analysis of video testimonies. Young learners have limited prior knowledge of historical events, people, and time periods, so

the introduction to testimonies provides a context to help them construct a foundation for exploring events and people's experiences. In other words, the lessons are distinct from a study of the history of the Holocaust and instead highlight lessons that can be learned from people's experiences. The digital testimonies provide a human link between students today and older generations. Focused analysis may be guided by a scaffolded process that helps children to listen carefully, ask questions, and identify topics for further investigation. 16

However, not all testimonies are well suited to young learners. For testimonies to be meaningful, students must make personal connections before they can develop any historical understanding. To foster connections to self, students' prior experiences and learning need to be activated with relevant content that relates to their current lives. Analysis of the testimonies must focus on familiar representational and ideational structures, including events, objects and participants. Comparing their own lives to those of children long ago, observing changes in their communities, and listening to oral histories that feature familiar objects, images, sounds (i.e., toys, experiences in school, etc.), young learners may begin to understand the representation of distinct time periods and cultural traditions.

Connecting young learners to the past is always a challenging endeavor. Making linkages to the Holocaust adds multiple layers of complexity. Using Holocaust testimony that is carefully selected and developmentally appropriate is essential in working with primary grade learners. The selection of testimonies should highlight stories of human courage and the struggle for dignity. Stories in which the protagonist survived or testimonies featuring acts of human kindness demonstrate the existence of positive human values amid atrocities.

We describe a few examples to help illustrate the use of Holocaust testimony in teaching young children as well as pedagogic applications. The first example draws from the *Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies* at Yale University and uses the digital testimony of survivor Rachel G. She describes being forced to wear a star and as a result being ostracized from play by other

children. <sup>17</sup> By addressing the familiar content of playing with friends and exclusion in peer groups, her story has the potential to resonate with young children today. Focusing on the childhood act of play, young learners can easily make a cognitive connection to the event even though it took place long ago. Before presenting the Rachel G.'s testimony, we would read the Dr. Seuss children's story *The Sneetches* (1961). The story tells the tale of two groups of fictitious creatures, star-belly and plain-belly sneetches. They look the same with the exception of the star on the bellies of one of the groups. Both Rachel's story and *The Sneetches* look at the discrimination that exists between two groups and its effects. Although Rachel's edited testimony is 21 minutes long, we would only use the first 40 seconds:

"I was born in Brussels, Belgium, January 8 1934, and I had a very happy childhood until the Nazis came in. Everyone was wearing a star. Everybody was looking at us, of course. And when I wanted to have a good time and play with the other kids I would take off the star, and my mother would yell and scream, and she would say, 'You cannot do this. You cannot do this. You are a Jewish little girl and you must wear the star, that's what they want, that's what they want.' I remember just she telling me that, and I said, 'But the kids don't want to play with me if I wear this.'" (Interview Rachel G. 2009: TC 0:12–0:55)

After the children have listened to the story and the testimony, we would engage them in a discussion about the central messages of discrimination, guiding them in identifying examples of how social exclusion affected Rachel and the Sneetches. Through Rachel's story of long ago, children can understand that even though life changes, people continue to share some of the same emotions and feelings. Developing empathy and considering the unfairness of treatment may help young learners develop a sense of agency that they can learn from the past to inform their behaviors in the present.

Coupling testimonies with children's literature also highlights the subjects of struggle, survival, and revival. There are numerous stories of dolls and teddy bears that inspired hope and perseverance in the face of adversity during the Holocaust. *Three Dolls* <sup>18</sup> by Irit Abramski (2007) tells the personal

stories of Claudine and her doll, Colette, in France; Eva and her doll, Gerta, in Hungary; and Zofia and her doll, Zuzhia, in Poland. Their personal accounts present the Holocaust through the eyes of three young Jewish girls – whose dolls became their treasured companions in the face of constant danger. Over time, their dolls became more than mere toys, for the dolls helped these children cope with their ever-changing reality during the war.

We have paired *Three Dolls* with the testimony of Inge Auerbacher, who shares how she protected her doll and how the doll served as a source of comfort for her.

“My name is Inge Auerbacher, and I’m a child survivor of the Holocaust. I went into Terezín at age 7. I wanted to hold on to something from home. I mean, they took away everything when we arrived in the camp. The most important thing was to keep something from home, when things were still good, and that was my doll. She meant everything to me.” (Testimony Auerbacher 2014: TC 0:00–0:28)

Similarly, *Otto* by Tomi Ungerer (2010) is a powerful autobiography of a bear that survives the Holocaust. Paired with Sophie Turner-Zaretsky’s testimony about her teddy bear, the two resources highlight children’s treasured possessions as symbols of adversity and resilience. Sophie was hidden by a Christian family, and the teddy bear became her closest friend, her confidante and source of comfort.

“This teddy bear came with me to England. And the teddy bear ended up having ... my aunt made him a little coat. She sewed it by hand from some other piece of clothing that was being discarded. And my great-aunt, with whom we lived, used to crochet and she did a little cap. I don’t think she did it for the bear, she must have been testing some yarn or something, but anyway, it fit just on his head, so he had a hat and a coat. And he looked a little bedraggled and a little, you know, like a refugee. This is why we, we named him ‘Refugee’ because he looked a little down-and-out. Just like the rest of us.” (Testimony Turner-Zaretsky 2003: TC 0:00–0:40)

## Conclusion

Teaching young children about the Holocaust through testimony means much more than detailing specific historical events. It is important not only to learn about the history of the Holocaust but also to address the broader lessons and questions it raises. Instruction of this compelling topic in American schools today plays a critical role in facilitating students' "investigation of human behavior"; fostering "an understanding of the ramifications of prejudice, racism, and stereotyping"; and examining what it "means to be a responsible and respectful person, for the purposes of encouraging tolerance of diversity in a pluralistic society and for nurturing and protecting democratic values and institutions" (Florida Department of Education 2017). Even young children may expand their thinking skills by grappling with these social justice issues. However, educators need guidance on how to help young children explore injustice within a historical and contemporary context. This article provides a starting point for exploring digital testimony as intriguing remnants of history that can support young students' active learning and intellectual curiosity. When early childhood educators introduce young children to oral narratives of survivors, they open the door to rich archives and high quality resources that may stimulate historical inquiry and critical thinking, as well as provide a foundation for more in-depth Holocaust education as learners get older. However, teachers must be intentional and purposeful in the selection of resources and pair them with other informational texts to build upon students' background knowledge and foster excitement for learning about the past. Meaningful integration of digital testimonies into teaching and learning in the early childhood and elementary classrooms may promote students' multi-literacies as they explore informational texts, but successful implementation with young learners requires research-informed and developmentally appropriate strategies.

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1 See <http://www.naeyc.org/anti-bias-education>, <http://www.tolerance.org>, <https://www.adl.org/education-and-resources>, and <http://www.receiveinternational.org>, all accessed 7 September 2017.

2 Legislative mandates in the United States are detailed in the recent proposed version of the Simon Wiesenthal Holocaust Education Assistance Act available at <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/1474>, accessed 7 September 2017.

- 3 See <https://www.ushmm.org/educators/teaching-about-the-holocaust/age-appropriateness>, accessed 7 September 2017.
- 4 See [http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/education/learning\\_environments/testimony.asp](http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/education/learning_environments/testimony.asp), 7 September 2017.
- 5 Burnett, James H.: Racism learned, <https://www.bostonglobe.com/business/2012/06/09/harvard-researcher-says-children-learn-racism-quickly/gWuN1ZG3M4oWihER2kAfdK/story.html>, accessed 7 September 2017.
- 6 Example analysis tools are available from the Library of Congress at [http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Analyzing\\_Oral\\_Histories.pdf](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/resources/Analyzing_Oral_Histories.pdf) and the National Archives at [https://www.archives.gov/files/education/lessons/worksheets/video\\_analysis\\_worksheet\\_novice.pdf](https://www.archives.gov/files/education/lessons/worksheets/video_analysis_worksheet_novice.pdf).
- 7 It is stated at the beginning of the video: “The following is not intended for children under the age of twelve (...) and should be viewed with teacher support and supervision.” For the reasons given in this article we are in favor of showing the testimony’s excerpt with supervision also to young children.
- 8 *Three Dolls* is available from <http://secure.yadvashem.org/store/product.asp?productid=363>.

Maria Ecker-Angerer

## “WHAT EXACTLY MAKES A GOOD INTERVIEW?” EDUCATIONAL WORK WITH VIDEOTAPED TESTIMONIES AT [\\_ERINNERN.AT\\_](http://_erinnern.at_)

Los Angeles, September 2005. We, that is Markus Barnay, Albert Lichtblau and myself, spent a week selecting interviews for [\\_erinnern.at\\_](http://_erinnern.at_) |1 from the over 52,000 videos to be found in the inventory of the *Shoah Foundation* |2. At that time, working with eyewitness testimonies was still a relatively young branch of Holocaust education. And for [\\_erinnern.at\\_](http://_erinnern.at_), it was early years as far as the development of teaching materials was concerned. The project for which we travelled to L.A. was in fact the organisation’s first. We were looking for what we considered good interviews with links with Austria, from which excerpts were to be edited for teaching purposes. In the course of a very intensive week, our discussions continually returned to one and the same question: What constitutes a good interview in this context?

A lot has happened since then. The Shoah Foundation interviews have long been made accessible at a variety of locations, including the Universities of Vienna und Salzburg. With its pioneering projects on the use of eyewitness testimonies, the Shoah Foundation regularly provides fresh stimulus in what has become a mature and highly multifaceted field. [\\_erinnern.at\\_](http://_erinnern.at_) has also come of age and now has a well established place in the Austrian educational scene – with a significant contribution made in that context by the teaching materials developed on eyewitness testimonies. 2008 saw the publication of the DVD *The Legacy* for teachers and learners – with interviews that had been selected in the course of our research in L.A. and augmented with extensive learning modules. That was followed in 2011 by the DVD and online platform *New Home Israel*, which was based on thirteen interviews conducted by [\\_erinnern.at\\_](http://_erinnern.at_) with former Austrians living in Israel. Currently

(spring 2017) two further products are being developed which are again centred on eyewitness testimonies. <sup>13</sup> The question of the “good” interview is a leitmotif of these projects.

I should like to approach the question as an educationist via an indirect path. Reflection on what constitutes a good interview is closely connected with the objectives pursued with eyewitness testimonies. These objectives can be derived from the didactic principles that guide *\_erinnern.at\_* when preparing such testimonies for use. In the following, some of those principles are first explained and illustrated with the help of examples from the teaching materials produced before the question of the “good” interview is finally addressed.

Let me preface the discussion by saying that, in the normal case, a project is begun by defining the topics to be covered in the interviews. At this level, the question of what constitutes a good interview is easily answered; the requirement is simply to find testimonies that address the topics selected. But then the question of the “good” interview has to be answered at the next level. And in that case the answer calls for fuller treatment.

### 1. Active Involvement versus Passive Consumption

The teaching materials discussed here centre on videotaped testimonies given by eyewitnesses, by people who suffered persecution under the Nazis. Like an evening spent in front of the television, however, films, documentaries and also eyewitness testimonies are always a temptation – to adopt the attitude of a passive consumer. No wonder, then, that they are popular with teachers and learners alike. The learning modules that accompany the interview excerpts, on the other hand, deliver ideas for responding to what has been shown and thus stimulate a more active response on the part of the viewer. The activities involved promote a greater degree of involvement without running the risk of emotional overload. The results of a current research project, for example, show that augmented, i.e. more active involvement with the eyewitness videos helps viewers achieve a better understanding, while intense reactions like anger or shock decrease in the course of interaction (Bibermann et al. 2016: 43).

Although no systematic evaluation has as yet been made of the teaching materials developed by *\_erinnern.at\_* for use with the eyewitness testimonies, it can be concluded from feedback to date that teachers like to show the interviews but make only little use of the supporting modules. With regard to the DVD *The Legacy*, the gist of the feedback is that the input provided is attractive but too extensive or unstructured and therefore requires excessive preparation time on the part of the teachers. But even a greatly reduced input with a focus on just the essential aspects, as in the case of *New Home Israel*, seems to have little impact on the user response. So are we left with passive consumption in spite of all the stimulus delivered? In this context, a new approach has been adopted for *Escaping the Holocaust*, a learning app that is now being developed, which guides the viewer's involvement through a 90-minute unit culminating in a finished product (album, email) so that viewing and doing are closely interlinked. Experience with this app following its launch in the spring of 2018 will show whether the strategy has been successful.

## 2. Tuning in to the Source

“Talking heads won't hold viewers' attention.” That comment is often made and heard with regard to responses to eyewitness testimonies (Shenker 2015: 39), but it is not confirmed by the experience of *\_erinnern.at\_*. Pupils are definitely willing and able to concentrate on interviews as long as thirty minutes. They do better, however, when they have been given an opportunity to prepare by tuning into the source. All the modules in *The Legacy* begin for that reason with a section entitled *Meeting the eyewitnesses*, with exercises designed to prepare users for the interviews:

“The following exercises show you how you can respond to the eyewitness testimonies as a specific type of source. You will hear someone relating their experiences during the period of National Socialism. In the subsequent assignments you will be able to practise something that sounds easy but in fact requires great concentration: careful listening and looking in order to understand what is being said and how.”

Here is an example of how pupils are helped to tune in to a long sequence: They first hear a one-minute excerpt with just the audio track, concentrate on it and then make a note of their impressions. Then they are shown the video of the same one-minute excerpt with the audio track switched off and again are invited to make a note of their impressions. This exercise serves to sharpen users' perceptions, to help them register not just the content of the narrative but also the style, including facial expression and gesture, and nuances and tone of voice. In the process they will perhaps become motivated to work on longer testimonies – even though the pace may be diametrically opposed to their normal reception habits.

### 3. Expressing Reactions

The eyewitness testimonies can trigger a variety of reactions and a wide range of emotions. Many viewers are impressed, moved or saddened. Some feel personal dismay. For others, they are a source of hope, for example when Gertraud Fletzberger<sup>14</sup>, who had to flee to Sweden as a child, serves as a positive source of identification for refugee children in the classroom today. Others react with anger, like when Jehudith Hübner, a former Austrian living in Israel, who speaks about the murder of her parents and little sister and concludes with a vehement “I shall *never* forget what the Austrians did [...], *never* will I forget!” (Film “Verhältnis zu Österreich”, approx. TC 4:50). That upsets many pupils, who feel personally targeted as Austrians. Sometimes young people are irritated, bored or simply indifferent – but are not prepared to admit it. Eyewitness testimonies relating to National Socialism and the Holocaust come with a powerful moral charge, and for that reason pupils often feel under pressure to react “properly”, to empathise with the eyewitness. Or, as one pupil put it by way of apology in the follow-up session: “I feel bad about it because I don’t feel bad about it.” The important thing is that pupils, whether they feel moved or indifferent, should have an opportunity to react to what they have seen and define their positions, to express their opinions and emotions. All the teaching materials developed at [erinnern.at](http://erinnern.at) contain an invitation to do just that. “What was my most

powerful feeling, my strongest reaction to what I saw and heard?” That is what it says in all the modules of the DVD *The Legacy*. In the *New Home Israel* project, the assignment is slightly more nuanced and has proven successful with the sequence with Jehudith Hübner:

“Watch the video again. This time concentrate on the reactions and feelings it releases in you. Choose a reaction or feeling that you would like to tell the others about and write down a word for it on a slip of paper.

Then all the slips will be laid out or posted in the classroom so that everyone can study them. Have a class discussion on the following:

- Do you have any questions with regard to any of the reactions?
- Has anything else struck you?
- Are any of the feelings or reactions particularly frequent?
- What could the reasons be for that?”

Formulating one’s own reactions to the video can be the point of departure for further work on various aspects and for clarification of any problems. Considering, recognising and formulating one’s own reactions is also a form of training for empathic listening, because people who are able to recognise and formulate their own feelings can usually do so with others’, too (Keysers 2014; Wiseman 1996).

#### 4. Taking Responsibility for One’s Own Learning Process

One of the teaching principles defined on the website at [www.erinnern.at](http://www.erinnern.at) is formulated as follows: “As thinking and acting individuals who independently acquire historical awareness, learners must be taken seriously. Only then will they be able to further develop their sense of values.”<sup>15</sup> Taking learners seriously is also about trusting in their ability to assume responsibility for the learning process themselves. The learning modules are accordingly designed to consistently give pupils a choice of the interview or sequence they want to work on further, where they want to go into greater depth. Opening up scope for autonomous action for learners is particularly important in the case of

a subject that is so highly charged at the moral level and thus so constricting. A good way to begin a session with eyewitness testimonies is to lay out childhood photographs of the eyewitnesses in the room. The pupils select a photograph that appeals to them and then put questions to the person in the photograph and explain why they have chosen that particular photograph. After that, either they watch the eyewitness's video portrait 16 individually, which serves as a point of departure for more detailed involvement with the topics raised, or the class as a group chooses the interview they wish to work on together. From experience to date, it is clear that the freedom to choose and formulate one's own questions and thus discover one's own interests greatly increases pupils' willingness to commit themselves to work on the testimonies. In most cases, discussion of the selected photographs reveals links with the pupils' own lives: A family photograph becomes a reminder for a pupil of grandma's family album, which they would leaf through together. Or pupils ask themselves about the hopes and dreams the girl in the photograph – who is the same age as they are – may have had and see just how much they resemble their own. That creates links between the past and the pupils' lives in the present.

##### 5. Presenting the Source (as) Faithfully (as Possible)

After the research trip to Los Angeles, there were differences of opinion within the project group on the extent to which the selected interview sequences required editing. Some members of the group felt that we should also include longer sequences,

“preferably uncut and unedited, complete with the interviewer's questions, the silences [...] That gives the pupils a much better insight into the idiosyncrasies and complexity of the source [...] and pupils also realise that these testimonies [...] are not always gripping, well structured and well narrated episodes.” (email Maria Ecker to Werner Dreier, September 2005)

Other members of the group were concerned that such an approach could deter the pupils because it is so far removed from their reception habits and

they might not be able to follow such a narrative. We finally opted for a trial to test pupils' reactions to one of the sequences of the type discussed: Richard Schoen, born of a Jewish family living near Vienna, talks about the murder of his brother during the November pogrom. He speaks slowly, hesitantly and often struggles to find words as if he were talking about it for the first time. As he speaks, he is fully immersed in the events of that night. The interviewer's questions and interruptions can also be heard. Richard Schoen's testimony is not stringent, not "documentary style". And yet (or perhaps because of that) it was found in the test phase – and has since been confirmed in many teacher training sessions and workshops at school – that the pupils were moved and responded strongly to this sequence in particular. In the meantime it has become a kind of key sequence that stands for the strategy of *including* interview sequences which remain close to the source and have not been cut to produce a smoother and shorter narrative. The example of the Richard Schoen sequence also reveals the potential of testimonies in which a narrative mode develops that Lawrence Langer calls *deep memory* (1991: 1–38). Unlike *common memory*, which refers to a controlled, chronological style of narrative, moments of deep memory are characterised by a more "authentic", less structured, more immediate style of remembering and narration, one that has a more direct impact on the audience (Shenker 2015: 5). The two narrative modes can also overlap, with a seamless transition between the two. A current project, for example, includes an interview with Gertraud Fletzberger, who was forced to flee to Sweden as a child with her sister and brother in 1938. Their mother followed about a year later. The narrative, which has been told many times and is otherwise logically presented and chronologically structured, has just one break in it: at the point where the mother rejoins her children in Sweden and Gertraud's sister refuses to go to her mother.

"And that was so terrible for my mother. She has never forgotten that. That gave her such pain; it was unforgettable. I mean, I only mention that here. When my sister – 70 I think she was, yes, when she was 75 or 70, at all events it was a big party. My brother was there from Sweden and so on and it was a big party, and her foster brother was also there. [...]

And her foster brother, as is usual in Sweden, gave a speech on my sister's birthday and among other things he said how happy his family had been when the little girl came and how nice that was and how much . . . And my mother jumped up from her seat and ran out of the room, and I ran after her because I could imagine what the problem was. She was crying like a baby [her voice breaks]. Just because of those words. That, that's how awful it was for her." (Interview with Gertraud Fletzberger 2014)

At that point Gertraud Fletzberger goes back in her narrative to the time they were in Sweden and continues in the chronological order from where it broke off. Her mother's anguish is communicated in her words, facial expression and tone of voice. The pupils become witnesses to a very private moment, which gives them the uncomfortable feeling of intruding in a situation that is too personal. At the same time, these discontinuous narratives – discontinuous at the level of content or voice – are a valuable learning tool because of the deep insights they offer into the (often quite disparate) ways in which eyewitnesses remember events in their lives and how they narrate them. In edited and polished sequences, such insights may be lost or at least blurred.

## 6. Analysing with Empathy

What may seem at first sight to be opposite poles – sober analysis and emotional empathy – can in fact coexist. That is demonstrated by Katarina Bader in her book *Jureks Erben* (Jurek's Legacy 2010), in which she reflects on her relationship with a survivor of Auschwitz with a combination of empathy and analysis. In her book, the author seeks answers to the question why Jurek always tells the same stories and why he tells them in the way he does. A current project at [\\_erinnern.at\\_](http://_erinnern.at_) contains an interview with Bader in which she speaks about the how and why of narratives: Stories that are often told are ground down, become smooth and rounded; survivors protect themselves (and their audience) by adopting a humorous style or formulating a positive outcome. Bader's book provides a framework for suggestions for learning that also help pupils adopt a reflective approach and a critical eye for the source so that they can develop an awareness of what is narrated and why and

how, and what the factors are that influence a narrative or interview. Such a deconstructive analytical approach can also offer protection. The exercises provide space for withdrawal where the narrative threatens to become emotionally overwhelming. It was one of the declared goals of *\_erinnern.at\_* from the start to include proposals for deconstruction with all teaching materials. But it is essential that analysis of the source should not detract from the message, from the fact that human beings are speaking about their lives and from the powerful emotional quality of their accounts. Or, as Katarina Bader (2017) puts it in the interview:

“I consider it very important that we always see the achievement [of narration] even when taking it all apart. [...] For me, the two belong together: analysing the narrative and admitting the emotions at the same time.” 17

### So what Makes a Good Interview?

To what extent are these principles useful with regard to our original question? What really constitutes a good interview for educational work with eyewitness testimonies? No single answer will be valid in every case; it will depend very much on the teaching goals pursued with the individual project. The more clearly they are formulated, the easier it will be to identify those interviews or interview sequences that serve the teaching goals best. In the educational context, the point made so neatly by a participant in a World Café workshop applies: “(Even) a bad interview can be a good interview for education.”

On the other hand, the above principles promoted by *\_erinnern.at\_* do permit a number of specific answers to be developed, four of which are presented in the following.

First: If pupils are to become involved on an autonomous basis, formulating their questions and interests independently and assuming responsibility for their own learning process, the first requirement is a varied range of narrators and sequences for them to choose from.

Second: If learners are to adopt an active response to what they see and hear

from the eyewitnesses, if they are to develop opinions and hold positions of their own, it clearly makes sense to include sequences that are controversial and disturbing. They are catalysts with the power to provoke pupils into formulating an opinion and becoming more deeply involved with what they have seen.

Third: If pupils are to employ a deconstructive approach to eyewitness testimonies, a good sequence is one that offers as faithful a view of the source as possible such as unedited excerpts that also include the interviewer. Another useful strategy is to employ sequences from several interviews with one and the same person that were held in different years so as to show how narratives change over time, how they are smoothed through repetition and how they are influenced by the audience in the individual case.

Fourth: If the goal of a project is to promote the ability to listen and empathise, use must be made of sequences that encourage concentrated listening and looking, for example sequences in which immediate and “authentic” memories and narratives (deep memory) are displayed. Also, involvement with a testimony takes time. That is an argument for the use of longer sequences and against the fragmentation of eyewitness testimony – even if that runs counter to young people’s reception habits.

Linz, May 2017: The Education Working Group is discussing the criteria to be applied in the project to the selection of interview sequences. That leads once again to questions relating to goals and good interviews just as it did twelve years before. Have the answers changed in the meantime? Yes, insofar as they are now more well-founded – with the benefit of years of discussion and reflection, a process that will continue to receive fresh stimulus through the continuous exchange of experience with teachers, learners and colleagues.

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  - 3 1) Interviews conducted by [\\_erinnern.at\\_](http://www.erinnern.at) with the “last” Austrian eyewitnesses, a learning website on the model of *New Home Israel*, [www.neue-heimat-israel.at](http://www.neue-heimat-israel.at). 2) A learning app called *Escaping the Holocaust*, a joint project of the University of Applied Sciences in Lucerne, the Vorarlberg University of Applied Sciences and [\\_erinnern.at\\_](http://www.erinnern.at). The interviews are taken from various collections.
  - 4 Interview conducted by [\\_erinnern.at\\_](http://www.erinnern.at) (interviewer Georg Traska) with Gertraud Fletzberger, October 2014.
  - 5 [www.erinnern.at](http://www.erinnern.at), accessed 11 May 2017.
  - 6 A video portrait is a short documentary on an eyewitness lasting between about seven and ten minutes. See the video portrait of Jehudith Hübner at: <http://www.neue-heimat-israel.at/home/jehudith-huebner>.
  - 7 Interview conducted by [\\_erinnern.at\\_](http://www.erinnern.at) (interviewer Albert Lichtblau) with Katarina Bader, March 2017, Salzburg. This and the interview with Gertraud Fletzberger are expected to become available at [www.erinnern.at](http://www.erinnern.at) in spring 2018.

James Griffiths, Louise Stafford

## CONTEXT IS KEY. A STUDY OF PRIMARY-AGE CHILDREN'S LEARNING WITH TESTIMONIES OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

In 1995, *The National Holocaust Centre and Museum* (hereafter the Centre) opened in the UK. It is the only centre dedicated to Holocaust remembrance and education in the UK. It plays a unique role as a memorial, a museum, and a place of testimony and of learning. Every year more than 20,000 school-age pupils engage with and learn about the Holocaust. At the heart of the learning programmes lie the testimonies of the survivors who speak at the Centre on a daily basis. There are wide ranging debates within academia as to what constitutes “testimony”. For the purposes of this research testimony is defined as first-hand accounts shared by survivors of Nazi persecution and the Holocaust. This narrow definition has been adopted as survivors and their first-hand accounts are central to the learning programmes delivered at the Centre. The findings that form the basis of this paper were shaped by previous research commissioned by the Centre between 2012 and 2015. This examined the extent to which engagement with the Centre’s learning programme influenced the attitudes and behaviours of 750 primary-age children towards people perceived to be different due to disability, gender, race or religion. The research found that engagement with the Centre’s learning programme positively influenced children’s attitudes and provided opportunities for learning about the Holocaust (Sorton 2015). This programme comprised four key interventions: educator-facilitated activities, a visit to the exhibition *The Journey*, opportunity to listen to the live testimony of a survivor and use of video testimony (VT).

However, the research did not provide any indication as to which, if any, of the interventions within the programme had the biggest impact on the children's learning and their resultant positive change in attitudes. This paper shares the findings from the latest research undertaken by the Centre, which sought to understand more fully the value to be placed on videotaped testimony, as opposed to the other educational interventions, in helping primary school children learn about "difference" while also developing their knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust. In learning about difference, pupils were asked to consider their attitudes and behaviour towards others they might perceive as different. As the pupils studied were of primary school age, their learning and understanding of the Holocaust focuses on events in 1938 and the Kindertransport scheme, as opposed to events that started in mid-1941 and which form the accepted definition of the Holocaust.

As part of this wider consideration the research set out to:

1. evaluate the comparative impact of each of the programme's interventions – namely educator-facilitated activities, the use of the exhibition *The Journey*, the sharing in person of a testimony by a survivor, and the use of video testimony – had on helping pupils to learn about difference and the Holocaust;
2. determine to what extent the use of videotaped testimonies is foundational, or critical, to the effectiveness of the programme;
3. examine which aspects of best practice in the use of videotaped testimonies is most effective in learning programmes aiming to influence the attitudes and behaviours of primary-age children towards people of difference and their learning about the Holocaust.

### Constructing Pupils' Learning

In learning about difference, pupils were asked to consider their attitudes and behaviour towards others whose identities might lead pupils to perceive them as "different". This challenge is a central element of the learning programmes of the Centre, and is cited by many survivors as an aspect of their

decision to speak about their experiences. For example, Robert Norton states:

I also talk to schoolchildren about my life. I hope that my experiences will help them understand the importance of being tolerant of other people and their differences. (cited in Whitworth 2009: 145)

To enable consideration of attitudes towards the social identity of others, pupils completed a series of educator-facilitated activities in a pre-visit workshop that encourages them to consider issues of identity and belonging. Based on George Hein's theory of *Constructivist Learning* (1991), the activities provide pupils with the opportunity to learn about aspects of their own identity and their place within their own community. Each pupil was given the opportunity to construct their own knowledge and make meaning from it. The knowledge developed during the pre-visit workshop provided the pupils with a frame of reference when they visited the exhibition, *The Journey*. This allowed them to begin to make meaning from the story of Leo Stein – a 10-year-old German Jewish boy living in Berlin and facing persecution during the Nazi regime. His isolation and persecution, founded on rejection because of his Jewish identity, was contextualised by prior learning about the complexity, importance and inherent individuality of identity. It could be argued that the constructivist principles of learning in a museum, referred to by Hein, have been borne out when the pupils say that, after hearing live testimony, the role of the educator was pivotal in learning about difference. After examining the importance of identity, pupils learn from the narrative of Leo. It enables them to reflect more fully on the impact of Leo's rejection because of his identity. Pupils were also able to develop greater clarity about the links to their own identities and communities, and how they interact within them.

### The Learning Programme *Our Lonely Journey*

The learning programme consisted of three elements that took place over three weeks. During the first week, pupils participated in a five-hour

workshop at their school, consisting of a series of educator-facilitated activities that provided them with the opportunity to consider issues of identity and belonging. During the second week, pupils made a four-hour visit to the Centre, including a two-hour educator-led programme through the exhibition, *The Journey*, and the opportunity to listen to the testimony of a survivor of the Holocaust and ask her or him questions. The exhibition explores issues of identity, belonging and loss. During the final week of the programme, the pupils took part in a five-hour workshop in their school again, looking at the experiences of Jewish Kindertransportees coming to the UK in 1938–39. Before the learning programme was delivered, it was analysed to ensure inclusion of the four interventions:

- educator-facilitated activities, for example, “What would you do if ...?”
- the exhibition *The Journey*
- videotaped survivor testimonies
- live survivor testimony

The activities undertaken by the pupils during the learning programme were mapped against the four interventions to provide the following coverage:

**Table 1:** % of activities to support learning about difference

Intervention	% of activities
Educator-facilitated activities	37.5
<i>The Journey</i> exhibition	31.3
Videotaped survivor testimonies	25
Live survivor testimony	6.2

**Table 2:** % of activities to support learning about the Holocaust

Intervention	% of activities
Educator-facilitated activities	16.7
<i>The Journey</i> exhibition	41.7
Videotaped survivor testimonies	33.3
Live survivor testimony	8.3

## Methods

The research was carried out with 41 Year 5 pupils (aged 9 to 10) from one UK primary school over three weeks in November 2016. The study followed a mixed methods approach. Each student was given a “reflections journal” and at the end of each element of the programme (pre-visit, visit and post-visit) was asked to reflect on the activities, and to rank in order of importance the three activities that had helped them to learn the most about difference and the Holocaust. They were also given the opportunity to explain in writing why they had picked their first choice activity. To avoid bias, the pupils were not aware that the activities had been mapped against the four interventions. In addition, six focus groups of three pupils each were held after each element of the programme had been completed. Focus group interviews [n=2] were also held to provide pupils with the opportunity to reflect on what they had learned and talk about the activities they had found most effective in helping them to learn. Pupils were also asked to explain if they felt the video testimonies of survivors had been beneficial to how much they had learned, and to consider how using videotaped testimonies could be improved to better support learning.

## Methodology

The decision to adopt a combined qualitative/quantitative approach was influenced by the works of Leonard Schatzman and Anselm Strauss, who advocate “methodological pragmatism” (Wellington 2000: 23). Furthermore, Claudia Mincemoyer and Joan Thomson (1998: 2) view “qualitative data [as providing] depth and detail”. Additionally, to increase the credibility of our findings, the combined approach allowed for a greater number of methods to be used to collect and ultimately triangulate the data. Louis Cohen et al. (2007: 341) claim that journals have “limited flexibility of response”. However, this limitation was overcome by providing open-ended comment sections throughout the journal, which enabled pupils to enrich the research data. The focus group interviews provided an opportunity to explore in further detail the data gathered from the journals. In particular, issues were raised

regarding the importance of listening to a Holocaust survivor in person. The interviews provided the opportunity to delve deeper, to understand why listening to a speaker in person as opposed to watching a videotaped testimony helped pupils learn more about difference and the Holocaust.

The full programme contained 16 activities that supported learning about difference and 12 that supported learning about the Holocaust. The data was analysed against the two learning outcomes – learning about difference and learning about the Holocaust. For each learning outcome the pupils' first choice activity scored three, the second scored two and the third one point. The overall score of each activity was then transferred to the intervention it had been mapped against when the programme was analysed. The total score of each of the four interventions was then divided by the number of activities that had been mapped against that intervention, to create an overall score for each. This overall score permitted the interventions to be ranked according to the value the pupils put on them.

## Findings

When learning about difference, pupils overwhelmingly highlighted the opportunity to listen to a Holocaust survivor give their testimony in person. The role of the educator was ranked below this, followed by the immersive experience gained from exhibition, and finally the experience of engaging with videotaped testimonies. When learning about the Holocaust, pupils once again referred overwhelmingly to the opportunity to listen to a Holocaust survivor speaking in person. However, in contrast to learning about difference, the pupils ranked videotaped testimonies as the second most important intervention helping them to learn about the Holocaust, followed by the exhibition and then the educator-facilitated activities. In reflecting on the importance of listening to a survivor give their testimony in person, pupils referred to their unique role in sharing their experiences during the Holocaust. One pupil stated: "He told us what his life was like during Second World War and there are not many people who lived through it. He was picked on because he was Jewish and not many of us are Jewish".

This reflects the perspective of some Holocaust survivors that, despite the need for other sources, theirs is a unique role as witnesses to the events of the Holocaust. As Waxman states: “it is clear that survivors such as Wiesel and Bitton-Jackson feel a proximity to the events of the Holocaust that clearly demarcates them from the historians who were not.” (cited in Stone 2004: 499) The findings from the pupil evaluations were surprising in two respects. Teachers often say how effective the exhibition *The Journey* is as an engaging resource. It was, therefore, interesting that pupils ranked the educator’s role above it in helping them to learn about difference. Similarly, it was interesting that pupils ranked video testimony above the exhibition in supporting their learning about the Holocaust.

### Contextualising Survivors’ Videotaped Testimony

For both the live and the videotaped testimony, pupils continually referred to the role of the survivors as having been present during and surviving the persecution of the Holocaust. Their comments commonly reflected the understanding that “he/she was there”. In reflecting on the effectiveness of videotaped testimonies in supporting their learning, pupils’ empathetic responses suggested the affectiveness of testimony. Although their comments reflected that they were aware of the limitations of those testimonies, for example, the inability to ask questions, they still remarked on the impact of the testimonies being shared; one pupil stated that “from their stories, I learnt how sad things can be”. Caroline Wake, in examining the role of viewers of videotaped testimonies, raises the possibility of the role of “tertiary witnesses”. Wake suggests that the “theory of hypermediate tertiary witnessing considers the possibility that spectators do not experience spatiotemporal copresence, because they remain conscious of the medium, but nevertheless experience emotional copresence.” (2013: 129) It might be asked whether pupils felt videotaped testimony was important for learning about the Holocaust simply because of the affective power of the excerpts. However, this is not supported by the lower placement of video testimony in developing understanding of difference. Instead, it could be argued that pupils’ understanding of the

videotaped testimonies in describing the experiences of children who left on the Kindertransport, as part of the post-visit workshop, has been contextualised from the narrative of Leo. This has implications for the use of video testimony excerpts within learning programmes. It suggests that for their significance to be understood, excerpts need to be contextualised before being shared. In this case, the contextualisation occurred through a strong preceding narrative, which enabled younger children to reflect on the significance of what was being lost through the experiences they were hearing about. It could be questioned whether perhaps pupils placed more importance on video testimony as this had been further contextualised by listening to a survivor sharing their testimony in person. By witnessing the impact of the events of the Holocaust on an individual physically present, pupils may have been able to appreciate more fully the excerpts of testimony later shared in VT.

## Conclusion

The research findings presented in this paper overwhelmingly highlight the importance placed by pupils on listening to the testimony of a survivor in person and the ability to engage with their story. Physical presence creates a bond between two individuals and clearly elevates this experience when affording value to learning interventions. The centrality of the importance of testimony shared by “someone who was there” raises questions concerning best practice in relation to video testimonies – as survivors become less able to speak and the role of video testimony becomes increasingly critical. Pupils were questioned as to their reflections on best practice in using VT. Their responses were in relation to asking questions about the survivor’s testimony and enhancing the tangibility of the experience of listening to the testimony. Both of these aspects make clear that pupils were seeking in some way to make a connection with the survivor who was not physically present. It can be questioned whether this was of more importance to this cohort as they had listened to a survivor in person or whether some aspect or ability to connect is of central importance for testimony to continue to have impact when survivors can no longer speak in person.

However, of greater interest is the value pupils place on video testimony and their reflections on how video testimony can be used within future educational programmes. Although pupils ranked VT second in importance among the four interventions for learning about the Holocaust, their reflections on its importance focused heavily on one aspect: empathetic rather than knowledge-based learning. Pupils shared few specific details of individual testimonies – their understanding focused on conceptual and empathetic reflections. As the initial contextualisation did not focus on pre-war Jewish life, or further historical context, perhaps a more specific and comprehensive chronological and knowledge-based contextualisation is needed to further develop historical learning. It may also be interesting to consider further the use of other sources in conjunction with video testimonies. To what extent is it the role of testimony to enlarge knowledge of particular key events, or does its educational value lie elsewhere? If the role of video testimony is to enable pupils to gain a better understanding of the impact of the Holocaust on individuals, it is evident that pupils identified its significance in this respect. If, however, the role of video testimony should also incorporate the developing of knowledge and understanding of key historical events within the Holocaust, the effectiveness of video testimonies in enabling this was not borne out in the pupils' evaluation.

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## ■ TESTIMONIES IN EDUCATION

MULTIFARIOUS PRACTICES IN  
EDUCATION WITH VIDEO  
TESTIMONIES



Arlene Sher

## COMBATting AFROPHOBIA AND TEACHING ABOUT MORAL CHOICES. USING TESTIMONIES IN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST AND GENOCIDE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

There are three South African centres that teach about the Holocaust: the *Johannesburg Holocaust & Genocide Centre (JHGC)* and the two Holocaust centres in Cape Town and Durban together form the *South African Holocaust & Genocide Foundation (SAHGF)*. However, the JHGC also uses testimonies to teach about the genocide in Rwanda, an integral part of the mission and vision of the centre.

The SAHGF is dedicated to creating a more caring and just society in which human rights and diversity are respected and valued.

Its mission is:

- To serve as a memorial to the six million Jews who were killed in the Holocaust and all victims of Nazi Germany.
- To raise awareness of genocide, with particular reference to Rwanda.
- To teach about the consequences of prejudice, racism, antisemitism, xenophobia and homophobia, and the dangers of indifference, apathy and silence. |<sup>1</sup>

In 2007 the study of Nazi Germany and the Holocaust was included in the new national social sciences and history curriculum for Grade 9 and 11 in South Africa (15 and 17 years old), the only African country at that time that included it. |<sup>2</sup> The director of the JHGC, Tali Nates, explains:

“The national Department of Education decided to implement a curriculum that emphasises the theme of human rights based on the constitution and bill of rights of South Africa. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) directly influenced these documents. One of the aims of this curriculum is that students will learn about values, equality, human dignity and social justice and act in the interests of a society based on respect for democracy.” (2010: 17–26)

The JHGC has a permanent exhibition that includes the Holocaust and the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, which targeted the Tutsi. In addition, our core exhibition also includes other genocides in the 20th century, starting in 1904 with the Herero and Nama genocide in Namibia and the 1915 Armenian genocide. The fundamental work of the centre is in the field of memory, education and lessons for humanity.

Displayed prominently at the entrance of the landmark building of the JHGC are the words of the writer and Auschwitz survivor Primo Levi: “It happened, therefore it can happen again: this is the core of what we have to say” (1986). In order to ensure that genocide does not happen again we have a challenge to educate students and the public at large and equip them with content and lessons to ensure that indeed this “does not happen again”. In so doing, we have an additional challenge of teaching about the Holocaust and the Rwandan genocide to young students who live in a new democracy, in a country still struggling to come to terms with the legacy of apartheid. South Africa is dealing with a legacy of trauma, division, racism and past and present abuse of human rights.

### Why Educate about the Holocaust and Rwandan Genocide with testimonies?

In April 1994 South Africa held its first democratic elections. While the local population was consumed with the electoral process, scant attention was being paid to the Rwandan genocide unfolding on the same continent, only a few thousand kilometers away. The transition to democracy in South Africa was hailed by all as a remarkable success. The country was regarded

internationally as a beacon of hope and a model of reconciliation to all nations. However, the years of brutal discrimination, violence, racism and human rights abuse have left their mark on South African society. Despite the success of the first multiracial elections in 1994, the reality for many South Africans remains one of poverty and an inability to transcend many of the unfavourable legacies of the apartheid era. With racial tensions simmering below the surface, the avenues for the necessary dialogue to confront our past and redress the pain and suffering are often challenging and difficult. The legacy of apartheid has left many scars and wounds that are still fresh and painful. Instead of confronting these atrocities head on, it is often easier to look at human rights issues in a more unobtrusive and discreet manner. By learning about the history of the Holocaust as well as the genocide in Rwanda, opportunities are created to examine human rights violations. These two histories are removed in time and place from our own country's history. Educators and students are less invested in these case studies, as opposed to their often emotionally charged attitudes towards the current South African state of affairs. Learning about your own belief systems, values and attitudes from case studies that have parallels to your own country's difficult past can be less threatening and intimidating. In so doing, opportunities are created to examine personal biases and prejudices that may otherwise remain inaccessible. Because of South Africa's past apartheid experiences, racism usually has the connotation of a white on black form of bias and discrimination. It is often an eye-opener to our students to discover that during the Holocaust whites murdered whites and in Rwanda Blacks killed Blacks. In South Africa, story telling has been used in an effective manner for generations by the local population – a cultural tool that has passed on folklore, traditions, customs, morals and values for centuries. Initially, most of the population was illiterate so the history of the indigenous people was transmitted orally. This oral tradition forms a rich part of our South African heritage. This heritage resonates with the JHGC education programmes that work with orally transmitted and videotaped testimonies.

**Approaches and Challenges when Educating Using Testimonies and Film**

When looking at the case studies of the Holocaust and the genocide in Rwanda, it is often difficult to comprehend that the huge numbers of victims were not simply anonymous statistics. In discussing the incomprehensible murder of the six million Jews and approximately one million Tutsi and politically moderate Hutu during the two genocides we often lose sight of the individual stories. Using film of survivors' testimonies is extremely helpful in sensitising students to the fact that these nameless victims were more than just statistics: they were precious to their families and friends. What was life like for these victims? Did they come from close-knit families? Were they rich or poor, educated or illiterate, religious or non-believers? Hearing accounts of the life that existed prior to the genocides often allows students to reflect on what was lost and all the potential these individuals had and the contribution they might have made in their communities and the wider world. Those film testimonies personalise the stories. Students have the opportunity to attach a name, a life story to the genocide, thus enabling them to make a personal connection in a sympathetic and empathetic manner to the history. Learning about the ghettos, students can reflect on the difficult circumstances of children who survived but had to grow up overnight and in so doing, lost their childhood. For example, the Holocaust survivor Irene Klass recounts how she attended clandestine school classes in the Warsaw ghetto:

"My mother managed to arrange with a teacher in the ghetto for me to have lessons. There were about five or six children in the group [...] and we used to go every morning to a certain flat and be taught the basics. We were told, if there is a knock on the door, or if we heard somebody coming, we must quickly hide the books and put them under the bed, because Jewish children are not allowed to learn." (Testimony Klass 2009)

Students reflect on the value of education in the most difficult circumstances. The heartfelt testimony of Pinchas Gutter, about his experiences in the Warsaw ghetto and the Majdanek concentration camp, reinforces this notion and his recollections always provoke a deep discussion.

"The adults were very very depressed [...] my mother became depressed as soon as the Germans came [...] She became more depressed as time went along and her depression never left her. I don't remember my mother smiling in the whole time from the beginning of the war to the end in Majdanek." (Testimony Gutter 1999)

Very few Holocaust survivors and rescuers settled in South Africa compared with other countries. For many years survivors and rescuers used to go into classrooms and share their testimonies with students and teachers. However, many of them have passed on and the remaining survivors are aging. Many are no longer physically or emotionally able to relate their stories. To overcome this, the SAHGF has produced a special documentary entitled *Testimony*, which is used solely for education purposes. In it, five Holocaust survivors who lived in Cape Town talk about what happened to them. Hearing these first-hand experiences from survivors has proven to be very effective in learning about the Holocaust. This film forms part of a resource pack provided to educators who go through the SAHGF training. To support the national curriculum, the SAHGF provides Holocaust training for educators countrywide. To date, more than 6,000 teachers have been trained nationally and they have all received education materials including an educators' resource manual, student workbooks and a DVD. The DVD includes a historical documentary on the Holocaust as well as the film, *Testimony* and makes it possible for students in remote areas to hear personal accounts of survivors' experiences.

### The Interviews

The JHGC has also produced 22 additional films for use in our permanent exhibition space and educational activities. In both the exhibition section about the Holocaust and the section about the genocide in Rwanda the films are displayed in an intimate manner on smaller screens and with local sound – drawing visitors closer, to stand or sit and listen to the voices and stories. Most of these films consist of testimonies from survivors, bystanders and perpetrators. These films are being very effectively used in our diverse

education programmes. Many incorporate personal testimonies from the various role players in the Holocaust and the Rwanda genocide. More than 30 testimonies were filmed in South Africa and Rwanda from as early as 1999 until 2014 for use in Africa's first Holocaust centre, the *Cape Town Holocaust Centre (CTHC)*, which opened in 1999. The production team included filmmakers from South Africa and the United States. The interviewers were CTHC and SAHGF staff members. At the moment, the films are only available at the JHGC, but there are plans to make them available on the internet in the future. The use of personal testimonies as a teaching methodology has had an enormous impact on participants in our programmes and remarks on the effectiveness of using film testimonies are often noted in our post-course evaluation and feedback sessions. One student said:

"Hearing the testimonies of the survivors was very emotional. When I heard about a bystander, it really opened my eyes on how many of us are being bystanders now; particularly with the Syrian refugee crisis. It inspired me to want to become more aware and be an upstander." (JHGC evaluation forms from students from various schools)

We offer many different programmes at the JHGC, ranging from specific programmes on the Holocaust and genocide in Rwanda to more general ones around human rights issues. This paper will look at two specific case studies, teaching about combatting Afrophobia and teaching about moral choices, where we have used testimonies in our teaching.

### Teaching about Combatting Afrophobia

In recent years there has been a wave of xenophobic attacks against foreigners in South Africa, which has often resulted in people being displaced, violent destruction of property and even fatalities. Perhaps xenophobia is too general a term and the attacks would be better described as afrophobia, as the discrimination displayed has not been against European foreigners but rather groups from the African diaspora. Afrophobia is a term used to refer to a range of negative attitudes and feelings towards Black people or people of

African descent around the world. Definitions refer to “irrational fear, with the implication of antipathy, contempt and aversion”(RED Network 2017). Broadly speaking the causes of Afrophobia are thought to be the idea of South African superiority, the concept of an elite citizenship, a nationalism that excludes outsiders, and the powerful competition for jobs, housing and access to basic commodities.

We at the JHGC have developed a programme aimed at high school students, which creates an awareness of the issues associated with xenophobia and how to combat it successfully. Our entry point in the programme is through the testimony of one of the Holocaust survivors who lived in Johannesburg, Gita Zallman Rossi. Gita tells of leaving her parents in Germany and travelling with her little brother, Hans, on the Kindertransport to England. She heard from her parents for the last time when they were deported to Theresienstadt. Only after the war did she receive the devastating news that her parents were murdered in Auschwitz. Her testimony is used as a trigger to discuss what it means to be a refugee and all the hardships entailed in fleeing a country in the search of a safer future. Her testimony allows students to reflect on the fear, the uncertainty and the difficulty in adjusting to a new life in a foreign country. Gita recounts the story of how a church minister gave her a doll upon her arrival in London. This random act of kindness left a lasting impression on her and this example is used to begin a discussion, where students think about the difficulties encountered by refugees; the difficulty in having to leave all their possessions behind; and allow them to contemplate the pain and suffering of refugees who are separated from their loved ones. Gita’s testimony opens the door to students confronting their own attitudes towards “foreigners” in a non-threatening manner. This introspection encourages a shift from bias towards the “other” and a more inclusive acceptance of those who have been forced to leave their countries of origin. During this programme students are enabled to confront the current wave of afrophobia being experienced in South Africa and to consider the crisis faced by refugees on a global scale. Through the use of poetry, interactive group exercises, puzzles and drama activities we aim to shift students’ thinking

from suspicion of the “other” to become more inclusive, accepting people for differences and encouraging diversity. We conclude our programme with an exercise around *Ubuntu* – an African word meaning “humanity to others”. It also means “I am what I am because of who we all are”.

### Teaching about Moral Choices

One of our most popular programmes that also facilitates critical thinking examines a range of moral choices made by ordinary people during the Holocaust or during the Rwandan genocide. We look at the choices made by various role players – perpetrators, bystanders, collaborators or “upstanders” – someone brave enough to stand up against injustices. When looking at the role of the upstander, we teach about people who rescued Jews as well as those who resisted the Nazi regime. Through stories of individuals, communities and governments, we teach about moral choices and their consequences. Recounting survivors’ stories of life before the Holocaust and of life before the Rwandan genocide is extremely important. These testimonies show how these survivors lived ordinary lives before they were targeted and victimised. The testimonies we use in both case studies illustrate the day-to-day living of the survivors, recounting their experiences of family life, their schooling, leisure activities and vacations, as well as their hopes and dreams for the future. Hearing these personal accounts, students are given a glimpse into the survivors’ lives and become aware of the helplessness felt by these victims and the brutal atrocities they encountered. Students are also able to hear accounts of Holocaust survivors’ experiences of being targeted because of National Socialist antisemitic ideology and terror, as well as the harrowing stories of experiences in the ghettos, deportation, life in the camps, the “death marches”, liberation and having to rebuild their lives. When reflecting on what liberation meant to survivors the poignant words quoted below of Henia Bryer (1999), a survivor of Radom ghetto, Majdanek, Płaszów, Auschwitz-Birkenau and Bergen-Belsen, have an enormous effect on our students:

“Obviously I was happy that this horrible war was behind us, but then the realisation dawned on you, where are you now? You’ve lost everything [...] I didn’t know if any of my family members had survived there. I am in Bergen-Belsen, sick, weak, alone and sort of ‘why me? What am I going to do now?’”

In teaching about the Rwandan genocide, we use film testimony from four Hutu perpetrators, voices seldom heard. These testimonies are extremely powerful in illustrating how individuals can become swept up in a culture of hatred and bigotry – in which neighbours turn on neighbours, friends and family turn on each other. The students begin to reflect on the testimonies of these perpetrators and see them not as monsters but rather as ordinary people who made choices. They can reflect on what happens when people “cross a line”, what enables them to behave in an immoral and unethical way. After viewing these testimonies, students are encouraged to review the crimes perpetrated, as well as to critically examine the remorse or lack of remorse shown by the perpetrators. The students are encouraged to engage in group discussions and to examine how much responsibility a perpetrator takes for the crimes he committed. Debates are held about the justice of the punishment meted out to the perpetrator. An example of a perpetrator’s testimony used for this purpose is that of Gregoire (2009) 13, currently serving a life sentence in Kigali Central Prison, Rwanda:

“Maybe some people blame it on the government, but the government is not in our hearts. I was one of the lower level government officials in the capital Kigali. I brainwashed people to kill the Tutsi during the genocide in 1994. I presume that among the 12,000 Tutsi in my district 8,000 were killed [...] If I’d wanted to stop it then nothing would have happened. I did everything knowingly, so I should accept my punishment.”

When teaching about moral choices, we make use of film testimonies of witnesses to the atrocities of the Einsatzgruppen (Nazi mobile killing units). These harrowing accounts and the obvious pain of the witnesses years after the events, often being told for the first time, are extremely powerful in

teaching about bystander behaviour. More than seventy years after the event, the trauma, guilt and helplessness these bystanders feel about the choices they made is apparent. Students learn that in making the choice to be a bystander, they always aid the perpetrator and enable him or her to continue to target the victims. In teaching about the moral choices made by people during this period, we also teach about the limited choices available to victims and we refer to these choices as “choiceless choices” (Langer 1982: 72). The testimonies of survivors certainly illustrate the precarious situations they found themselves in and how often they were restricted and frustrated by their helplessness and inability to escape the crimes being carried out.

The programmes at our centre encourage students to reference specific circumstances when they have enacted certain choices in their own lives. Through group discussions they reflect on times when they have chosen to be a bystander or an upstander at a particular moment. We emphasise that all choices have consequences. The understanding that we can all move from being passive bystanders to being able to make a difference in our schools, families, personal lives and communities, can be profoundly impactful. We encourage the learners to have the courage to move from bystander behaviour to becoming accountable members of society, young citizens who take an active stand when confronted with injustices. In so doing, we aim to create a more caring and just society in which human rights and diversity are respected and valued throughout South Africa.

In the words of one of one of the patrons of the SAHGF, Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu:

“We learn about the Holocaust so that we can become more human, more gentle, more caring, more compassionate, valuing every person as being of infinite worth, so precious that we know such atrocities will never happen again and the world will be a more humane place.” (2004: 64)

In extending the learning of the Holocaust to the Rwanda genocide of 1994

and by creating a platform to have a dialogue about South Africa's difficult past and current challenges, it is our belief that we can develop critical thinking among our students to ensure that indeed, as Archbishop Tutu concludes, "such atrocities will never happen again and the world will be a more humane place" (Ibid.).

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- 1 To read more about the SAHGF, see <http://www.holocaust.org.za>, accessed 17 September 2017.
- 2 see [www.education.gov.za](http://www.education.gov.za). For further detail see Department of Basic Education (2011). National Curriculum Statement: [http://www.sahistory.org.za/sites/default/files/file%20uploads%20caps\\_gr\\_7-9.pdf](http://www.sahistory.org.za/sites/default/files/file%20uploads%20caps_gr_7-9.pdf) for Grade 9 and [http://www.sahistory.org.za/sites/default/files/file%20uploads%20caps\\_fet.pdf](http://www.sahistory.org.za/sites/default/files/file%20uploads%20caps_fet.pdf) for Grade 11, accessed 9 October 2017.
- 3 Surname is withheld for privacy reasons. JHGC made films specially for the permanent exhibition.

Dorothee Wein

## VOICES OF SURVIVORS AT SITES OF PERPETRATORS. EDUCATIONAL APPROACHES TO VIDEO TESTIMONIES AT THE TOPOGRAPHY OF TERROR DOCUMENTATION CENTER

The former headquarters of the Gestapo, the SS High Command and the Reich Security Main Office is now one of the most frequented places of remembrance relating to the history of National Socialism in Berlin. The exhibition at the documentation centre is focussed on the site of the perpetrators and the central institutions of the SS and the police in the “Third Reich” and the crimes they committed throughout Europe. The perspective of the victims is accordingly largely absent from the exhibition. As a corrective, the documentation center organises temporary exhibitions <sup>1</sup> and, as part of its educational programme, a series of seminars entitled *Voices of Survivors at Sites of Perpetrators*, which picks up on the contents and photographs shown in the permanent exhibition and contrasts them with the video testimonies of survivors.

The goal of the interactive media seminars is historical learning based on a critical approach to sources, in which young people – in line with Saul Friedländer’s “integrated historiography” (2007) – recognise the differences in the perspectives of perpetrators, victims and bystanders and interrelate them. The offering is targeted at groups, mostly youth groups and schools classes with pupils (age: 14 and older). It lasts about five hours and includes parts of the permanent exhibition. The seminars were developed and tested in the framework of a cooperative project by the *Center for Digital Systems* at the Freie Universität Berlin and can be booked free of charge in the framework of the documentation center’s educational programme. <sup>2</sup>

The seminars are designed to connect the visit to a “perpetrator site” for the youngsters with a historical learning process based on the memories of survivors of Nazi persecution and to relate it to their own present-day lives. The topics dealt with involve different periods in the history of National Socialism and shed light on various phases of persecution. A further component of the programme is a specific contrast between the documents of perpetrators and victims. Following an explanation of the overarching framework, this paper presents the individual seminars and shows which different approaches to learning with video testimonies at a perpetrator site can be implemented.

### Voices of Survivors

The seminars are based on life story interviews taken from two oral history collections: the *Visual History Archive of the USC Shoah Foundation*, whose extensive collection comprises interviews on a multitude of specific events, and the online archive *Forced Labor 1939–1945. Memory and History*.

In all the seminars, thematic learning is combined with a biographical approach. A **video film** helps to introduce the pupils to usually four different eyewitnesses. The video focuses on the survivors’ origins and their childhood and youth and often ends with the onset of persecution. Thus information is provided on various aspects of the time leading up to the actual subject of the seminar whilst the participants get to know the diverse biographical origins of the survivors and their memories of a phase of life that offers the adolescents their own starting points. In most cases the initial response within the group takes the form of a lively discussion as the pupils communicate their various impressions and reflect on the testimony. As a second step, the introductory video offers them a basis for the subsequent choice in the working groups of the narrative they wish to focus on.

### At the Site of the Perpetrators

A short tour of the exhibition is provided to illustrate the framework and historical context of the seminars. Following an introduction to the sites,

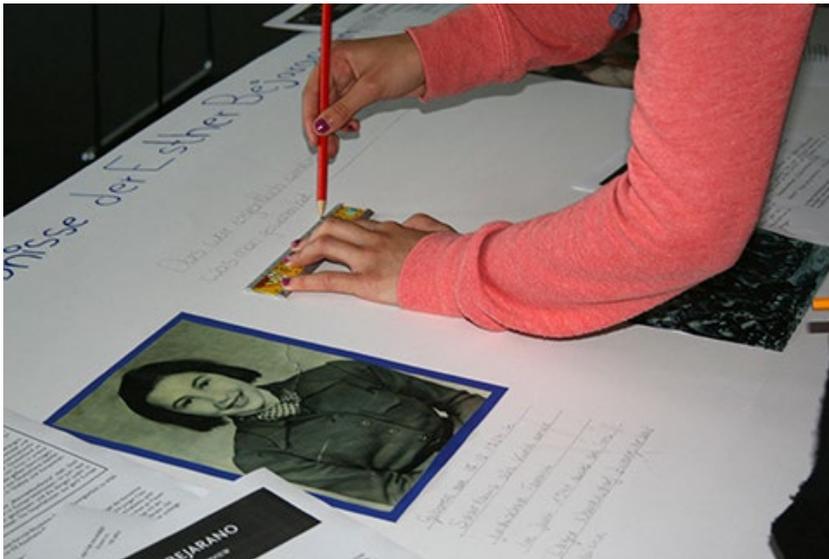
namely the Gestapo headquarters and the Reich Security Main Office in Wilhelmstrasse and Prinz-Albrecht-Strasse, the pupils have an opportunity to take a more detailed look at certain sections of the exhibition with the support of questions designed to guide their enquiry. That helps them establish a common basis of knowledge on central aspects of a perpetrator-centred narrative of National Socialism and make their own observations, which they will be able to develop further in the course of their visit.

Beyond this common framework, the five seminars differ with regard to the sources used and the specific objectives and integrated visitor activities. To a certain extent they can be considered representative of different focusses in the use of video testimonies for educational purposes. The following approaches are covered:

- a) biographical learning and the personal approach,
- b) focus on local history,
- c) analysis of the interconnection between memory, interpretation and reflection,
- d) comparison between video interview sources and other media such as photography,
- e) video interviews as a source of information on the actors' choices and their freedom of action in a decisive historical situation, and finally
- f) comparison between different contexts and meanings of bearing witness.

*The Story after Survival: Women from Ravensbrück Concentration Camp*  
 In its choice of sources, the seminar about women in Ravensbrück is relatively low key and particularly suitable for secondary school classes. The focus is on **biographical learning and the personal approach** to the video testimonies of four survivors. As they were sent to Ravensbrück at different times and had to wear different insignia, the video provides information on key aspects of the history of Ravensbrück concentration camp and National Socialist ideology. As a point of departure, pupils are asked the deliberately generalising question whether women were perpetrators or victims under

the National Socialists. They are then encouraged to study photographs in the exhibition and in their subsequent discussion on the testimony of the persecuted women to consider whether the women would have seen themselves as victims. The debate can also touch on the question of the current use of “victim” as a pejorative term among young people in Germany today.



Creating a Poster about Women from Ravensbrück Concentration Camp; CeDiS, FU Berlin 2015

### Deported from Berlin. Jewish Survivors Tell their Story

The second seminar addresses the significance of deportation from Berlin in the history of the persecution of the Jews in Germany. In Berlin, deportation to the ghettos and concentration and death camps in Eastern Europe began in 1941. The victims were sent to Litzmannstadt (Łódź), Minsk, Riga, Kowno, Warsaw and Auschwitz. The last wave of deportations took place in the

framework of the so-called “Factory Campaign” in February 1943. Only very few Jews were able to go into hiding and survive in Berlin until the end of the war. On the basis of video interviews with Berlin Jews, the young people learn about their biographies and are confronted with fundamental questions such as the deported Jews’ knowledge, premonitions and fears concerning their destinations and the decisions the narrators made on the basis of their extremely limited freedom of action. In this case the seminar combines two approaches: The **focus on the local history of Berlin** is linked to the question of people’s knowledge, playing an important role in all four narratives. Narrations around the question what somebody knew at a certain time allow for a closer study of the **interconnection between memory, interpretation and reflection**. In a last step the young people are encouraged to adopt a completely different perspective and ask themselves what they (want to) know about cases of persecution today and what conclusions they draw for themselves.

#### The Warsaw Ghetto. Contrary Perspectives

The approach in the third seminar, which is based on the history of the Warsaw ghetto, has a focus on the **comparison between video interviews and photography as sources** and is designed to promote critical media literacy in the participants. For many years photography was a defining medium in the public perception of Nazi crimes. Images like the piles of corpses photographed in Bergen-Belsen were untypical of the method of extermination employed by the National Socialists and yet influenced the idea people made of it worldwide (Brink 1998). The point of departure in this seminar is the iconic photograph of the boy with the raised hands, being deported from the Warsaw ghetto (Hamann 2011). The pupils see the photograph in the exhibition, where it includes a reference to the perpetrator Josef Blösche, who is also to be seen in the photograph. In the course of the seminar, various photographs from the Warsaw ghetto are shown and questions asked about the conditions under which they were taken. Similar motifs are also to be found in the video interviews with the four survivors,

but their narratives form a counterpoint to the photographs: Key questions, which are prominent in the video testimonies, play no role at all in the photographs: the causes of hunger, the murders, the course of events and their consequences up to the present day.



Watching Interviews – Jewish Self-Help in the Warsaw Ghetto; CeDiS, FU Berlin 2016

### Memories of an early Pogrom in the Provinces

The goal of the fourth seminar is to discover how the ethnically defined perpetrator society was able to develop in a rural environment and how the perpetrators, the victims and the other local residents behaved during the pogrom. Here **video interviews – along with other types of sources – serve as a source of information on the actors’ freedom of action and decision-making in the context of antisemitic violence.** This seminar deserves a

slightly more detailed presentation for a better understanding of an approach that is both multi-perspective and action-oriented.

On 25 March 1933, in broad daylight, men of the SA and police rounded up all the male Jews in Creglingen in Swabia and tortured them in the town hall. Two of the Jews died from their injuries shortly after (Naser 1999).

The seminar begins with a video interview, in which Margot Lemle, the daughter of one of the two murdered men, describes her childhood and life in Creglingen (as not free of controversial situations but as a kind of multicultural coexistence). In the second video she begins her narrative with the following words:

“Very soon, on a Saturday, on 25 March 1933, a lorry arrived carrying SA men, ‘political Nazis’. They carried out a pogrom in Creglingen so terrible that it hardly bears telling. I’ll keep it short, so that it’s easier for you to bear.”<sup>13</sup>

The video thus begins with a personal note, which is a strong pointer to the importance of the audience for the narrative.

As that was one of the first pogroms under the National Socialists, the police conducted enquiries, but they were soon abandoned. What remains are the statements made to the police closely after the events by perpetrators, victims and eyewitnesses. After the war, the case came to court at the initiative of a number of Jews who had emigrated from Creglingen, and questions were again put to perpetrators and witnesses. In addition, a record exists of the written testimony made by Margot Lemle in 1943 and two video interviews from the middle of the 1990s with Margot Lemle and Erna Stein, whose father barely survived the beatings.<sup>14</sup>

The sources accordingly differ considerably with regard to the context in which they were created, their perspectives and the time lapse since the events. They show the differences in the accounts of those early antisemitic acts of violence, bearing in mind that the perpetrators were also questioned by the police. One of the leaders of the pogrom, for example, confesses openly to a hatred of Jews. That calls for a careful introduction to the sources

so that pupils understand their contexts and moreover their ideological implications. In this respect, reflection on the form of the statements made often provides a good point of departure. One striking aspect is the standard pattern of the statements taken from witnesses in 1933, in which no blame is attached to the local head of the NSDAP. The young people are encouraged to choose and study a number of documents, also with regard to the different recipients of the various sources. A common thread in the multi-perspective sources, especially with regard to the non-Jewish population of Creglingen, is the question of the response of the individual citizens, which includes accounts of approval and tumultuous support on the one hand and the case of a shopkeeper who stepped in to rescue a Jewish acquaintance on the other. In a jigsaw teaching strategy <sup>15</sup>, pupils work on the principle of the division of labour to reconstruct and discuss the diverse attitudes and behaviour of nine different actors. The exercise requires the pupils to decide whether to attach most weight to the memory of the victims, the problems confronting the eyewitnesses or the question of perpetration. Regardless of their choice, many groups also focus on the aspect of the aftereffects and the extent to which this early pogrom impacted the subsequent lives of the persecuted individuals. The video interviews help them recognise to what extent even the early history of National Socialism impinges on the present.

#### Witnesses in the 1963–1965 Auschwitz Trial in Frankfurt/Main

This last seminar is aiming on a **comparison between different contexts and meanings of bearing testimony**. The central question is: What were the survivors able to bear witness to in court what were they expected to say and what was the significance of their appearances for their life stories? As the main sources, this seminar is based on the court testimonies of four witnesses, which are available as audio files <sup>16</sup>, and the videotaped memories of the same individuals forty years later taken from the archives of *Forced Labor 1939–1945* and *the USC Shoah Foundation* <sup>17</sup>.

In the exhibition, the pupils are introduced to the history of the concentration camps and the question of prosecution of the perpetrators after 1945.

The focus here is on the perpetrators in the post-war period, the failure to face up to the past, the trials and the acquittals.

By way of biographical background, the **introductory video** in this case focusses on the memories of a Polish intellectual, who had to stop studying law when the Germans marched into Austria, and a Polish-Jewish artist, who suffered as an illegitimate child from discord in the home. The pupils choose one of the four witnesses and form groups to listen to their testimony at the Auschwitz trial in the form of 15-minute tape recordings. In this phase of the project, most of the young people demonstrated a surprising level of concentration in working with the audio format without any visuals: All they have is quite literally the *voices* of the victim, although they also hear the judge, the interpreter and in some cases the accused perpetrators. The pupils can study how the testimonies of the witnesses are influenced by the situation in court and by a mode of questioning which, in accordance with German criminal law, was directed only at the question of whether the accused had personally committed the crime. <sup>18</sup> The survivors are clearly at pains to satisfy the juridical demands made of their testimonies with detailed and differentiated accounts. But they also go beyond the limits of procedural law when they speak of the murders of friends and relatives or of other crimes committed and of other perpetrators, who are not on trial. The confrontation of perspectives is tangible in the recordings of the trials: Perpetrators take the floor; they intervene and place themselves on a level with the court by asking witnesses further questions or sharing the judge's scepticism with regard to a statement made by a witness.

The interviews filmed decades later offer valuable insights into the ways the witness coped with the trial and the importance they attached to it in retrospect: In one video interview, Anna P. describes her fears and the nightmares she suffered after meeting the accused Perry Broad in the corridor of the court. For Stan Kaminski, his court testimony became a "very important element" in his life: "It was a turning point." He calls his appearance in court a second liberation <sup>19</sup> and describes how he subsequently moved from Poland to Frankfurt in West-Germany. To that extent, the ways in which the

witnesses came to terms with their experiences in court in later life reflect the diversity of the survivors' active responses.

In a two-day project, the young people produce a short radio documentary complete with introduction, transitions and their choice of excerpts from the recordings. The wide range of sources is the key to a manifold experience of learning through research with regard to the dimensions of testimony: the juridical dimension involving the pursuit of justice and a commitment to the murdered victims, the historiographic dimension of the documentation of crime, and the personal dimension of a life-story narrative, in which – in addition to the lingering impacts of the events – meaning-building interpretation plays an important role.



Anna Palarczyk, Witness in the Auschwitz Trial, Interview Archive Forced Labor 1939-1945

## Conclusion

Treatment of the holocaust as a largely accomplished, anonymous annihilation project will continue to present difficulties, not only in the field of history education. The perpetrators' documents and photographs provide information on the ideology and system developed by the National Socialists and on their crimes. In the educational context, they can and are meant to encourage reflection on the aftereffects of ideological patterns (Messerschmidt 2016). The video interviews with survivors cannot and are not meant to represent the murdered millions but, from highly subjective perspectives, they focus on the crimes of the National Socialists and their impacts. For that reason, the question of testimony with its diverse dimensions, contents and formats has proven particularly useful in work with voices of survivors at sites of perpetrators.

In her widely acclaimed article, Annette Wieviorka sees a connection between the role of the witness in the Eichmann trial and in the present, in which the eyewitness has become a medially determining factor because "at the global level, individual narratives and opinions often replace analysis" (Wieviorka 2000: 157). That can be seen as a challenge to develop educational methods in which work with interviews does not rely on "playing with emotions" but where the same importance is attached to video interviews as to other sources.

In all the seminars in the *Voices of Survivors* series, young people have shown a particularly positive response to the personal style of the introductions based on videotaped interviews relating to childhood, youth and origins. Good results have also been achieved with different types of documents on focussed events with a strong local element, which offer scope for independent interpretations. What is important is to give young people enough guidance and time to hear, contextualise and interpret the sources. The various levels of analysis discussed above overlap in the video interviews, and it takes time to process such a wealth of content. That is an argument for working with the medium of the video interview in the framework of a setting that offers a few hours for research-based learning.

Strictly speaking, it is not possible to consistently reduce the five seminars in the series to just one level of treatment. The video testimonies open doors to the past but that is not all: They also raise questions of the aftermath in the narrators' lives and the processes they adopted for the construction of meaning. Through the visible image of the narrators with their facial expressions and gestures and the feelings they reveal, the video testimonies have an emotional impact on the audience, but they also offer scope for analysis with regard to the type of source and the retrospective character of the narrative and its implications. Above all, they offer such a wealth of content that insights are triggered into countless historical constellations and modern attitudes are challenged.

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- 1 As illustrated by the first temporary and travelling exhibition organised in 2010: “The Face of the Ghetto. Pictures taken by Jewish photographers in the Litzmannstadt ghetto”.
- 2 In addition to Tanja Seider, Katharina Obens and Dorothee Wein, Tobias Ebbrecht-Hartmann, Deborah Hartmann, Tanja Kinzel, Bernd Körte-Braun, Claudia Krieg and Verena Nägel also contributed to the design and implementation. To book a seminar, go to <http://www.topographie.de/?id=275#1234>, accessed 10 April 2017.
- 3 Margot Lemle, Interview 35895. Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation. (Portuguese original; translated and subtitled in German for the seminars).
- 4 In addition to Margot Lemle, see also Erna Stein, Interview 9326, Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation.
- 5 For information on the jigsaw teaching technique, go to <https://www.jigsaw.org/>
- 6 In the meantime, the *Fritz Bauer Institute* has kindly made the recordings of the trial available online at <http://www.auschwitz-prozess.de>, accessed 30 July 2017.
- 7 From the interview archive *Forced Labor 1939–1945*, [www.zwangsarbeit-archiv.de](http://www.zwangsarbeit-archiv.de) (13.05.2017): Yehuda B., Interview 27.09.2005, za 398; Anna P., za 401, Interview 08.07.2005; Imre G., za 402, Interviews 24.09.2005. Dagi Knellessen conducted the interviews in the “Zeugen im Auschwitz-Prozess” collection for the Fritz Bauer Institute (Knellessen 2008). From the *Visual History Archive* of the USC Shoah Foundation: Stan Kaminski, Interview 16420.
- 8 The role of witnesses in civil criminal law with the onus to prove that the accused personally committed the crime differs from their role in the Eichmann trial held three years previously (Wieviorka 2000).
- 9 “I have felt that I am without hate, without a desire for revenge, nothing.” Stan Kaminski, Interview 16420, Visual History Archive. USC Shoah Foundation.

Tony Cole, Darius Jackson

## “I WONDER WHERE I WILL BE TOMORROW”. USING FILMED TESTIMONY TO DEVELOP HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE HOLOCAUST WITH BRITISH PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN AND STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN)

### Introduction

The *Centre for Holocaust Education at University College London (UCL)* is a research led organisation jointly funded by the Department for Education and the Pears Foundation. It was established in 2008 with three primary goals: to conduct research into Holocaust education, to create a programme of research informed Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for teachers in English state education, and to contribute to the field of Holocaust education both nationally and internationally. The research that provides the basis for the CPD is *Teaching about the Holocaust in English Secondary Schools* (Pettigrew et al. 2009) and *What do students know and understand about the Holocaust?* (Foster et al. 2015)

This research led approach is unusual in Holocaust education. David Cesarani highlighted the research done by the UCL *Centre for Holocaust Education* as providing an “important but all too rare evidence based approach to Holocaust education” (2016: xxv).

In addition to this, the centre runs a beacon school project where selected schools work as dynamic hubs co-ordinating a network of local schools, helping them to develop confidence, proficiency and excellence in Holocaust

teaching and learning. This case study is a project that grew out of the beacon school relationship between Children’s Support Service (CSS) South Quadrant, Basildon Beacon School, and the UCL *Centre for Holocaust Education*.

### “Cold Spots”

The Department for Education has used the term “cold spot” as a metaphor for an area where its policies are not having as much impact as it would wish (Her Majesty’s Government 2015: 45). We have used this metaphor not only to refer to the geographical distribution of Holocaust education but also when considering different sectors of education.

Two of these “cold spots” are of particular interest to us. Some 28.5% of the secondary students surveyed in *What do students know and understand about the Holocaust?* (Foster et al. 2016: 77) said they first encountered the Holocaust in primary school even though the Holocaust does not appear in the primary phases of the national curriculum in England. Though we can postulate that this involves reading about Anne Frank or a novel set during the Second World War there is a clear need for research to clarify what is being taught about the Holocaust in primary schools and how to support teachers’ needs.

The second “cold spot” is the provision of Holocaust education material designed for secondary school students with special educational needs and disability (SEND); the government defines a child with SEND as having “a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her” (Department for Education 2015: 15). There is little research into Holocaust education within SEND, and as yet there appears to be little emphasis on creating quality Holocaust education material designed for those pupils. Our scheme has been designed with both these “cold spots” in mind.

### Macro and Micro Agendas

Schools in England are accountable to government for including a range of directed national agendas in their curriculum; we refer to these as the

“macro agendas”. These agendas are expected to be delivered across the whole curriculum rather than as discrete subjects. This is reinforced as some of the agendas overlap. These agendas have also been mediated by subject disciplines and there have been wide ranging discussions about how different subjects should respond to these.

The macro agendas are:

- Citizenship – must be at the heart of good education, provides the knowledge, skills and understanding to prepare students to play a full and active part in society.
- Social, moral, spiritual and cultural education (SMSC) – is emphasised in school inspections. There are a wide range of issues in this agenda, including students’ ability to reflect on their cultural influences, experiences and belief systems, to be confident discussing moral issues, and to respect diverse views while accepting a respect for the law.
- British values – schools should promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- Global learning – sets out to develop a richer, more interesting curriculum using real world contexts to engage students. It should help pupils make sense of the world in which they live and understand their role within a global society. Explicit in the pedagogy of global learning is a cooperative learning approach.
- Diversity – the *Equality Act 2010* states that all schools in England, Wales and Scotland must demonstrate that they are working towards good relations between people and groups of all kinds. Schools should do this by helping their students develop an understanding of a range of religions or cultures. This theme should be inherent within all the agendas described above.

It should be noted in England, Holocaust education is not an expectation within the school accountability process. However the current History National Curriculum for 11– to 14 year-olds does make teaching “the Holocaust”

mandatory under the theme of “Challenges for Britain, Europe and the wider world 1901 to the present day” (Department for Education 2013). It is no more prescriptive than this.

Schools also need to address their own local “micro” agendas, the most important being to meet the educational needs of their students. Over the last three decades this has been expressed in terms of differentiation. This is often assumed to mean changing the materials used in teaching, either asking more complex questions for “gifted and talented” students or, sadly all too often, asking easier questions or using easier sources for students who struggle to keep up. However, we argue that all students have the right to access complex issues. This scheme enables students to successfully develop an understanding of a range of issues in completely different ways and with complexity, commensurate with their needs.

### Creating the Resource

If our scheme is to appeal to teachers and schools there is a clear need to address the micro and macro agendas outlined above. However, other factors influenced its construction. The first was an absolute commitment to Miriam Kleinman and her family to respect her personal history. She fled to the United Kingdom from antisemitic persecution in Nazi-occupied Belgium. Her family were real people, in a real situation, faced with life changing choices. Consequently, building an accurate body of knowledge about her family and their life in Belgium was central to our planning.

A second factor was a commitment to having the students work as historians, to experience the complexity of the material and the inconsistencies we faced as we researched Miriam’s life; put simply, the students will be “doing real history”. They will learn to develop hypotheses, test them against the evidence and then amend or reject them accordingly. The scheme’s pedagogy must not instil an ethos whereby students are frightened of “getting it wrong”. For example, instructions encourage students to place materials “where you think they should go” rather than “in the right order”.

Students are encouraged to explore other areas of the story that intrigue them.

Enabling the students to explore different aspects of the story realises our idea that “we don’t want to know what they cannot do, we want to know what they can do” and coincides with ideas related to divergent assessment practices. By engaging in their own research, the students develop the skills and concepts used by historians. They learn to analyse sources and develop an understanding of aspects of life in pre-war Belgium.

### The Scheme

The scheme is made up of several phases that build the students’ knowledge and deepen their experience of working at “real history”. Learners are provided with a framework that enables them to develop and construct their own narrative.

Initial stimulus material: as an introduction, students are given a photograph of Miriam’s shawl from when she was a baby. This artefact generates a student-led analysis based on what they can see and “what does it mean?” They repeat the activity with a photograph of her as a baby being held by her mother but with a British soldier in the background. Then students view the first video clip, in which Miriam introduces herself as the baby in the photographs. She asks the students if they would like to hear her story.

The second phase focuses on the family. Here, students construct a family tree with overlapping information including family photographs and documents. Information is released to the students in stages requiring them to keep reassessing their ideas and accept that constructing a historical narrative is often done using fragmented information.

For the next phase of the scheme students are asked: “How do you think Miriam’s parents, Moritz and Rachel, travelled between Ostend and Folkestone?” Students hypothesise how such a journey might have been made in May 1940 and then search online to assess their ideas. They are provided with additional documents to assist in this process.

Students are now shown the second part of the video testimony in which Miriam recounts her story. They compile new information, evaluate and amend their construction, and identify any anomalies between their

narrative and Miriam's testimony. They may also consider their initial questions. They are able to see which of these can now be answered and whether new questions arise.

When constructing the narrative, students will have collected a lot of information about Miriam's family and the economic and political situation in Europe during the interwar years. What they have not done is to confront the question of why the family left Belgium in such a hurry in May 1940. Miriam answers this in the third film clip, where she simply comments that it was "because we were Jewish". This is the critical point where the students realise that this single issue was forcing Miriam's family to flee.

The scheme finishes with the students collectively developing an interactive timeline of the events. They follow whatever theme appeals to them and are encouraged to be as creative as they can. This activity allows all students to contribute in a way that is commensurate with their needs, interests and most importantly enables them to reflect on what they have learned.

### How we Used Video Testimony

The report by the Prime Minister's Holocaust Commission, *Britain's Promise to Remember*, highlighted the need for an "urgent programme to record and preserve the testimony of British Holocaust survivors and liberators" (2015: 15). Within 12 months a second report on Holocaust education was published, this time by the House of Commons Education Select Committee (2016). Curating survivor testimony was central to the vision of Holocaust education in both reports. This approach is not without its critics. Cesarani, in his book *Final Solution*, is severely critical of the way that testimony is used. He says:

"The use of survivor testimony regularly trumps the dissemination of scholarship. Survivors may only be able to illuminate a tiny corner of the sprawling historical tragedy from their own experience, but they were there so their every word is highly charged". (2016: xxvi)

He is further concerned about the use of testimony given that it is now

reliant upon childhood memories. Similarly, Darius Jackson argues that it is a mistake to engage in “the curating of memory rather than using the memories to change the accepted historical narratives” (2016: 81).

With this in mind, Miriam’s testimony was filmed by a team from UCL. The video was about 30 minutes long. The first three clips were specifically designed for the scheme, however, Miriam’s testimony was not edited or scripted. The rest of the footage has been archived for future publication.

Following Cesarani’s lead, instead of treating Miriam’s testimony as something to be preserved or taken at face value, the scheme uses it in three different ways:

First, to trigger students’ curiosity; a short film introducing her is shown, which concludes with her asking “do you want to know my story?” This whets the students’ appetite for the scheme as they see a real person, rather than a statistic or a historic figure.

Second, as an evaluation tool. Having constructed their narrative, students watch a further clip of the testimony, in which Miriam outlines her story. This enables students to assess for themselves the accuracy of their construction.

Finally, we use the testimony for a dialogue about its veracity. This is a sensitive issue. Unlike in a court, where challenging witness accounts is an essential part of the legal process, here we have an elderly lady who has volunteered her account. This presents an ethical dilemma. In his biography of Marianne Ellenbogen née Strauss, *The Past in Hiding* (2000), Mark Roseman found that discrepancies between documentary evidence and oral testimony occur when the documents were written with a partial understanding of the events they purport to describe or where there has been reinterpretation by later observers. The third discrepancy is where the memory is incorrect or has changed over time. Roseman outlines a number of discrepancies between the oral account and other sources. However, as they do not undermine the fundamentals of the oral account, he goes so far as to describe the discrepancies as trivial. He is explicit that the documents should not be looked upon as reassuringly accurate and the oral accounts as in some way flawed. Roseman concludes that where there are other sources it is not disrespectful to

the survivors to compare accounts, as there is no “wish to or an expectation of challenging the fundamental veracity of their testimony. On the contrary, it helps to illuminate the very process of memory” (2016: 332).

Alice M. Hoffman and Howard S. Hoffman consider the veracity of oral history in their paper *Reliability and validity on oral history: the case for memory*. The study concludes that, within oral history, memories “cannot be disturbed or dislodged” and that it “was virtually impossible to change, to enhance, or to stimulate new memories by any method” (1994: 124). They further conclude that: “We think, therefore, that we have a subset of memory [...] called autobiographical memory, which is so permanent and so largely immutable that it is best described as archival” (Ibid.). They define archival memory as “recollections that are rehearsed, readily available for recall, and selected for preservation over the lifetime of an individual. They are memories which have been selected much as one makes a scrapbook of photographs, pasting in some and discarding others” and that archival memories are “likely to be unique happenings” (Ibid.).

An example of these tensions came up in our research and its inclusion in the scheme enables students to explore this issue. Early in our research, Miriam had said that her family had arrived in England aboard a cattle boat that had docked in Greenwich. Greenwich is on the south bank of the River Thames, downstream from the Tower of London and not a major docklands. However, in neighbouring Deptford there was a wharf that had been used for landing livestock. This formed the basis of our initial research.

We were unable to find a record of any ship docking in Greenwich carrying Belgian refugees in May 1940. This didn’t lead us to doubt her testimony, but it did highlight the difficulties in using oral history. We knew Miriam and her family had fled Belgium and settled in the UK, so they had to have travelled here at some point. To ensure our narrative was accurate we now had to look beyond Miriam’s testimony for information and evidence.

Our next step was to meet Miriam, to explain that it was proving difficult to substantiate aspects of her testimony. She provided us with lots of documents she had subsequently located. It was one of these, her father’s Belgian

identity card, which provided the answer. Clearly stamped on this card was an entry visa for Folkestone dated 18 May 1940, the day after the British Consul had given him a visa in Ostend. Folkestone is a coastal port in southern Kent with a long history of cross channel trade and it would be a more logical destination for ships leaving Ostend. Armed with this new piece of information, we were able to ascertain that Miriam and her family had travelled to the UK aboard the *SS Ville de Liège*, a Belgian ship that had left Ostend with a cargo of Belgian state archives and 207 refugees. The docks had been attacked by the Luftwaffe while it was loading and to avoid being sunk the ship had sailed before all the archives were loaded, which meant there was room for the refugees, including Miriam and her family. They disembarked at Folkestone the following day.

It is clear that Miriam's memories are unique, but as she was only 10 months old in May 1940, they are clearly not her own. Her archival memories must have been formulated by the archival memories of third parties, specifically members of her family who travelled with her.

Further evidence of this came when we gave a talk on the scheme to Miriam's surviving family and friends. This gathering included descendants of other family members who had been on the *SS Ville de Liège*. A number of contradictory archival memories were presented in the discussions about their ancestors' flight from Belgium.

With Miriam's permission, we kept her earlier account of arriving in Greenwich in the video testimony to enable students to gain first-hand experience of the discrepancies within oral history.

### Piloting and Evaluation

The scheme has been piloted with cohorts representative of both the "cold spots" identified above. These were carried out in south-east Essex, UK. In each case, the schools were supported with CPD resources, "in running" visits and a final evaluation visit from Tony Cole.

The observations and evaluation identified the following common strands:

- The scheme had enthused and motivated students. In every case, the

school reported how successfully the scheme had engaged all students but most noticeably those who normally experienced difficulties accessing the curriculum and those described as “hard to reach”. From this, micro agendas were being achieved.

- In all cases students had developed a personal concern for Miriam’s family. The use of video testimony helped to develop a concern for people students had never met. This was emphasised in teachers’ feedback. One teacher said her students had “really connected with the human element” throughout the whole scheme.
- The scheme encouraged independent learning and students commented on how they had enjoyed the challenges this presented. One student said: “It was hard, but not so hard it put you off. It was like a puzzle.”
- Colleagues said how well the scheme addressed macro agendas.
- All schools reported how effective the use of video testimony had been as an assessment tool as it had allowed students to assess their own work.
- In all cases, students were confidently using the language and methodology of a historian.

Using the evaluation, amendments were made to the scheme and the accompanying CPD. For a cohort of “hard to reach” students who had struggled when asked to “place photographs in the right order” a change in the wording to “place them where you think they should be” had an immediate positive impact and the students willingly engaged.

## Conclusion

Early indicators suggest that the “I wonder where I will be tomorrow” scheme has met the key principles and agendas identified by the authors. Key to this has been the unique use of video testimony.

The scheme has used video testimony to humanise a complex narrative, which in itself became a motivation for its target users. It has enabled students to take ownership of “real people” making “real choices” in the context of “real events”.

Video testimony has not been used as a didactic pedagogical tool, indeed

quite the opposite. It has been used to enable students to assess the historical narrative that they themselves have constructed. At the same time, it has highlighted to those students some of the real issues faced by historians when dealing with oral history.

In the words of a year 6 student: “Doing the research was really interesting and it made us all think. We had to think about what was true and what wasn’t.”

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Birte Hewera

SURVIVORS AS SUBJECTS OF  
DOCUMENTATION.  
THE *WITNESSES AND EDUCATION*  
FILM SERIES BY YAD VASHEM AND THE  
HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM

Dialogue and Medium

The “end of testimony” has been a subject of discussion for decades now, as has the appropriate response. The debate often focusses on the question of a substitute, as it were, for encounter with contemporary witnesses in the educational context, which in turn leads to the subject of digital formats. In fact, the concept of the contemporary witnesses is itself problematical as, historically speaking, it is completely decontextualised: The term defines neither *what* has been witnessed (the Shoah, the Second World War, dictatorship in the GDR) nor *by whom*. In Germany, television formats that make use of eye-witnesses to authenticate historical events encourage this moral and factual levelling (see Keilbach 2003: 287–306). The apparent objectivity of such media productions creates a “juxtaposition of consensually possible positions” and thus neutralises the contradictions (Ibid.: 288). In order to avoid such levelling, the term “contemporary witnesses” is avoided in the following and “survivor” or “Shoah witness” used instead. Apart from that, the attempt to employ digital testimonies as compensation for the “end of testimony” is a product of faulty reasoning. Digital formats such as interviews with Shoah witnesses – the most prominent are doubtless the collections of the *Fortunoff Archives* and the *USC Shoah Foundation* – or biographical documentary films like the *Yad Vashem* films discussed below are artefacts sui generis. The idea of using them as a substitute for personal contact and talks with Shoah

witnesses fails to take account of the realities of the medium – as it is not simply an additional factor but a part of the artefact. The related fact that working with digital formats is not the same as participating in a dialogue. It is about watching and listening to a recording of a dialogue or an encounter without being able to ask questions or contribute remarks. The latest formats like the hologram developed by the USC Shoah Foundation <sup>11</sup> reinforce the tendency to veil this distinction insofar as they simulate a dialogue where algorithms are in fact at work. It is questionable whether such an approach is compatible with the competent use of digital formats. It would seem to be more profitable to treat digital testimony as a format *sui generis* and to consider what potential it has for educational work and how that potential can be developed.

### Digital Testimonies

Like other forms of testimony (memoirs, autobiographies, reports), audiovisual testimonies differ from other historical sources in that they incorporate the aspect of personal experience. It is the subjectivity of the experience that confers authority on the testimony, because in most cases the goal is not the formulation or confirmation of an “objective” truth but its subjective appropriation and processing. For their part, audiovisual and literary testimonies differ in terms of their specific mediality and production context: Whereas authors of autobiographies in which they write about their sufferings during the Shoah normally do so over a longer period of time, and read and re-read what they have written, making corrections and changes and possibly choosing to rewrite it completely, the witnesses in audiovisual formats face an interviewer and supply immediate answers. That gives audiovisual testimony a situative and interactive character; it is a snapshot in time produced jointly by at least two persons acting together. This does not mean that audiovisual testimony is automatically more immediate or authentic than written testimony, all the more so as some witnesses are not standing in front of the camera for the first time. There are simply other factors that play a role. Not only the questions and the behaviour of the interviewer form part of the result; the setting chosen for the interview and the possible presence of other

persons, etc. also have an influence on the final product. Through their specific mediality, audiovisual testimonies also differ from personal talks with Shoah witnesses; the medium blends with the content and becomes inseparable from it. In many ways, the difference between audiovisual testimonies and personal talks with Shoah witnesses is comparable with that between cultural and communicative memory (Barricelli 2012: 45).

### Subjectivity

Treating subjectivity as the decisive characteristic of Shoah testimonies in general and audiovisual testimonies in particular raises the critical question of the effect of the subjectivity of the testimony on its truth, precision and credibility. It is well known that witnesses' memories incorporate items which derive from subsequently acquired knowledge, from reading or hearsay and become a part of the testimony (Hartman 2007: 141). While some historians criticise such inaccuracies of memory, especially so many years after the event, others see a danger in the tendency of the audience to idealise or over-identify with the witness. Such problems raise the question of the specific value of audiovisual testimonies, a question that is dealt with below. What is also clear is that the apodictic contrast between subjective testimonies and those historical sources that are considered objective, such as official documents and official photographs, is misleading. Shoah testimonies are not primarily aimed at historical accuracy in the reconstruction of historical events or confirmation of traditional sources. The documents of the perpetrators remain essential for reconstruction of the processes, institutions, actors and methods involved. But equally, one has to be aware that such sources are perpetrator sources. The euphemistic terms employed for the organised mass murder alone – "Evakuierung" ('evacuation'), "Sonderbehandlung" ('special treatment'), "Endlösung" ('final solution') – reflect the attitude of the perpetrators and show that the perpetrator sources are anything but objective. They were created as instruments of domestic propaganda, of concealment from the outside world or simply to humiliate the victims. Geoffrey H. Hartman rightly says that all these sources reveal is "the picture of a self-

documenting machine” (Ibid.: 134). And yet these sources still seem to dominate public perceptions of the history of the Holocaust; even today, they are used in German school books without any further discussion of their origins (see Liepach 2016). In this context, survivors’ testimonies provide a corrective, an alternative version to the “official” narrative. The witnesses speak for themselves and provide information on the reflection of history in the individual, on the individual view of history, on the processing of past experiences in the present. In Hartman’s words: “They [testimonies of survivors, B.H.] can be a source for historical information or confirmation, yet their real strength lies in recording the psychological and emotional milieu of the struggle for survival, not only then but also now” (Hartman 2007: 142). Instead of seeing Shoah testimonies as a secondary source of confirmation of the traditional sources, it must be understood that what we can learn from such testimonies is something completely different, for example “what it was like to exist under conditions in which moral choice was systematically disabled by the persecutors and heroism was rarely possible” (Ibid.: 134).

To that extent the subjective character, which here at least is also revealed openly, is a specific asset of the source. Overcoming the expectation that Shoah witnesses should be historians facilitates the realisation that these witnesses and their testimonies have other qualities. One might even go so far as to say: That is when the apparently objective view of the Shoah can appear questionable. The writer Jean Améry, who was tortured by the Gestapo and then deported via Breendonk to Auschwitz, wrote a number of autobiographical essays about his sufferings in the 1960s. They are the narratives of a witness who was a victim and for that reason alone he chooses not to claim anything like objectivity. On the contrary, his response to the idea that he could produce an objective report on what happened to him is as follows:

“The atrocity as an event has no objective character. Mass murder, torture, injury of every kind are objectively nothing but chains of physical events, describable in the formalised language of the natural sciences. They are facts within a physical system, not deeds within a moral system.” (Améry 2009: 70)

Améry thus wants to confront society and the perpetrators who are still alive with the deeds and their moral implications that go way beyond the “facts within a physical system”. Apart from that, however subjective survivors’ experiences may be, they are also underpinned by a collective fate, so that such accounts of crime transcend the subjective level, too. This relates perhaps to the fact that some survivors of the Shoah do not feel that they are speaking primarily for themselves but rather for those who can no longer bear witness because they were murdered or fell silent for ever. Similarly, for the witnesses who speak in his film *Shoah*, Claude Lanzmann does not use the word “survivors” but

“revenants, who returned after hovering almost in the beyond above the floor of the crematorium. These people never say ‘I’, they do not tell their own stories; they say ‘we’ because they are also speaking for the dead.” (Nicodemus 2001)

So what exactly is it that these witnesses relate that goes beyond a report on “chains of physical events”?

### Witnesses and Education

*Witnesses and Education* is a joint project of the *International School for Holocaust Studies* (ISHS), *Yad Vashem* and the *Multimedia Center of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem*. It comprises a series of – so far – fourteen testimonial films made with Shoah witnesses since 2007. The films tell the life stories of Jews who were persecuted in the Shoah and now live in Israel. In the films, the protagonists are accompanied on a journey that takes them to the places of their childhood and to the scenes of the crimes, where they speak about their experiences and sufferings. Insofar, these films differ from the format of video interviews. The testimonial film format allows the protagonists to show us the locations that were crucial to their lives. By going back there, embodied experience is revealed and we are given insight into the protagonists’ world, which helps us to relate to them in an empathic way. Letting them show us the places where they grew up, we furthermore understand

the richness of Jewish life in Europe before the persecution as well as the dimension of loss. The witnesses are speaking about a deceased world. On the other hand, we learn about continuation and persecution of Jews when we follow the protagonists to Israel, where they chose to relocate.

### Educational Guidelines

The films have been created by the Educational Unit at Yad Vashem with the aim of making the life stories of the survivors available for educational work. For that reason they are also based on the main principles of education developed at Yad Vashem: The films strengthen the Jewish perspective of the Shoah, for example, by relying on the persecuted Jews' own perceptions instead of talking *about* them or even presenting them in propaganda films and photographs and thus through the eyes of the perpetrators. The way in which the witnesses present and interpret the historical events is their choice; they are the subjects, not the objects of documentation. It is their voices that we hear and their faces that we see. Nor is their narrative limited to the period of National Socialism. That is the main focus, but space is also devoted to life before persecution and its continuation afterwards. As a result, the survivors are not reduced to their status as victims at the hands of the perpetrators but are seen as complex, self-determined individuals. <sup>12</sup> The protagonists' narratives are set in various regions of Europe, and even within one and the same film, their life stories take them to various places, either through flight, deportation or expulsion, or on the basis of a conscious decision to make Aliyah (Hebrew for Jewish immigration to Israel). The descriptions of the life stories of different families also offer an insight into the diversity of Jewish life in Europe prior to 1933. The key elements in all the films in the series take the form of decisions, dilemmas and turning points. The testimonies of survivors are the only way to present such moments, because their relevance goes far beyond the purely external and quantifiable facts and figures. The survivors' testimonies also show just how much their freedom of action had already shrunk as a result of the measures taken by the perpetrators. But equally, they could not choose not to act; they had to take decisions under conditions that

Lawrence Langer refers to as “choiceless choice” (1982: 72). Much depended on the arbitrary decisions of the perpetrators, the actions of other actors and also on chance, while they themselves had little ability to influence their fates and yet still tried desperately to save their families and themselves. The history of the Shoah is therefore above all a history of human actions: All the protagonists, with their decisions and deeds, had a direct or indirect influence on the course of events, although the conditions under which they did so could not have been more different – depending on which side of the events they stood.

A sequence from the testimony of Malka Rosenthal (2009), who was born in Stanisławów <sup>13</sup> in 1934, illustrates this constellation: She speaks about how she escaped from the Stanisławów ghetto with the help of her Polish nanny and hid, together with her mother, in the house of her mother’s former professor in Lviv. After a few months, however, Malka and her mother had to find a new hiding place because their presence had been noticed and it was becoming too dangerous there. In order to hide in a small village, they took a very great risk and boarded a train to Otynia in the hope that no-one would recognise them. But the worst came to the worst: A fellow passenger suddenly shouted, “A Jewess and her Jewish brat!” (TC 19:15). and a tumult ensued; all the people in the compartment turned violent towards mother and daughter and some of them wanted to activate the emergency brake and call the Gestapo. But at that moment, Malka continues, a Ukrainian appeared on the scene, warned the others of the possible consequences of pulling the emergency brake and said that he was getting off at the next stop and could take the two with him and hand them over to the Gestapo there. When the train stopped, he brutally pushed mother and daughter off the train and got off himself. But then, when the train had set off again, he revealed his identity as a friend of the family and helped them reach the hiding place where Malka’s father had already found refuge (TC 16:43–24:17). The sequence illustrates collaboration and resistance, help and betrayal in the Shoah. While people who were not involved in any way chose betrayal and wanted to hand mother and daughter over to the German authorities, which

would probably have been tantamount to a death sentence, a man decided to resort to deception to help them, thus placing his own life at considerable risk. The sequence raises a number of questions, which are worthy of discussion in an educational context. <sup>14</sup> One could start by *describing* which actors took which decisions and measures. The next step would be to *analyse* the background to the decisions and actions taken, taking care to distinguish between the context in which Malka and her mother acted as persecuted Jews and the context that framed the actions and decisions of non-Jewish Polish and Ukrainian civilians. Various questions could be addressed with regard to Malka and her mother: Did they have any other options? What was the risk they took by choosing to take the train? What were the possible consequences? What could the alternatives have been? Questions could also be asked with regard to the other passengers: Did they know what betrayal to the Gestapo would mean for Malka and her mother? What benefits could such a betrayal have for them? What was the ideological background to their actions? What alternatives did they have? And finally there is the helper: What personal risk did he take? Was he aware of the possible consequences of his actions? In answering the questions, the goal must be historical accuracy; private speculation is not enough. Historical evidence is available, for example, on the punishments imposed for helping Jews in occupied Poland. There is also evidence for antisemitic attitudes in Polish and Ukrainian society. The objective is not to explain the psychology underlying the decision of one person to act differently from the others. We know from Malka's testimony that the man did what he did and we can try to analyse the background factors and the potential and actual consequences of his actions. We can also *compare* his actions with those of other actors, which varied between passivity and collaboration or help. Finally, by comparing actions that took place in a similar frame of action, we can *evaluate* these actions and decisions.

In many cases, however, it was not only the actions of other actors that could decide between life and death; chance and unforeseen turns in the chain of events could also play a major role. The film *From Where Shall My Help Come?* (2011) tells the life story of the two sisters Fanny and Betty Ichenhäuser, who

were born in Frankfurt am Main in 1919 and 1923 and fled to the Netherlands following the Nazi rise to power. Their lives took completely different turns following the German occupation of Holland, when they decided to separate. Together with her husband, the elder sister Fanny found refuge and concealment with a Dutch family on a farm, while her newborn son was concealed by various persons all the way up to the end of the war. We learn en passant that such helpers did not always act on the basis of a mature plan with a firm theoretical foundation but simply considered it the natural thing to do, as in the case of the Dutch family that hid Fanny and her husband (TC 54:47). Her younger sister Betty, on the other hand, decided to remain with her mother as it would have been too dangerous if the mother had gone into hiding with them. <sup>15</sup> While the elder sister and her husband survived in their hiding place, having spent years living in a desperately confined space and constant fear of discovery (which almost happened a few times), the younger sister and her mother were taken from their house during the night in September 1943 and held in Westerbork before they were deported to Bergen-Belsen in January 1944 where they lived in mortal danger every minute of the day. The decisions taken by the two sisters changed the courses of their lives in ways they could never have anticipated. Their biographies, too, show the extent to which the persecuted Jews' scope for action had been limited by the perpetrators and how they therefore found themselves in terrible dilemmas: Fanny, for example, had to part from her little baby so as to improve the chances of survival for all concerned, and Betty had to choose between saving herself and helping her mother. Such films are suitable for use in an educational context, first of all to create empathy with the protagonists and counteract both (over-)identification with the victims and unfeeling criticism as reflected in ignorant questions such as why the victims did not "simply" flee or put up some resistance. Users come to see the protagonists as complex, autonomous individuals, who were affected in different ways by the historical events of the Shoah and also had a life before and after persecution. Analysis of actions and decisions in their specific context also facilitates a more differentiated assessment in place of prejudiced generalisations. The history of the Shoah is

seen as a history of human actions and decisions, thus disproving the fallacy of the lack of choice in a dictatorship. The process also raises questions that are relevant for life today and makes it possible to find common ground with the present, without trivialising the Shoah.

### The Dimension of Loss

It is finally worth considering the question whether this series of films is suitable for educational work in different national and cultural contexts. Most of the films do have subtitles in various languages. The protagonists are all people who settled in Israel after the Shoah and were living there when the films were made. At the end of the films, the continuity of Jewish life in Israel is emphasised by showing or at least mentioning the survivors' families, their children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren etc. The film with the Ichenhäuser sisters might illustrate this. At the end they are to be seen sitting on a terrace with panoramic views in Jerusalem. One by one, the various members of their families appear and the audience learns that the sisters have a total of four children, fourteen grandchildren and thirty-two great-grandchildren. Two of Fanny's grandchildren, Aharon and Yonatan Razel, provide the music for part of the film. The final shot is of the two sisters sitting in a big family circle comprising all age groups (TC 57:23–57:41). The question is whether this ending, with its focus on survival and continuity, runs the risk of glossing over the deaths of millions? Does it veil the fact that most of the victims of the Shoah were not given an opportunity for a new start in life? Is it simply a happy end? Of course, a narrative that ends in complete destruction would be difficult to use in an educational context, but a considered response to these questions must be negative for other reasons, too. Without exception, all the testimonies in the films are narratives of loss and annihilation. The protagonists speak of the destruction of their families, their homes and of the permanent trauma that represents. Avraham Aviel who was born in what was then Poland and lost his mother and brothers in the Shoah, remembers his father's words: "My son, I am an old man, but you will survive, you will have a family and forget everything." (2010: TC 38:01) Avraham's reply

denies the reality of the “good fortune” of survival: “I have a wonderful family. But I cannot forget.” (TC 38:42). It was not until the Germans had finally been defeated that he became aware of the extent of the catastrophe: He returned to his former home country, only to find it no longer existed: “There was no-one there; no-one had survived.” (TC 47:36) In no way, then, are these films stories with a happy end; they are biographic narratives delivered by people who took the conscious decision after the Shoah to build a future in the Jewish state of Israel. The fact that survival, which was the prerequisite for any such future, was the exception and not the rule is something that these films make us painfully aware of.

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- 1 See <http://sfi.usc.edu/collections/holocaust/ndt>, accessed 30 July 2017.
- 2 The witnesses speak of the violence and humiliation they suffered, but they are presented not as passive victims but as active narrators, see Ebbrecht-Hartmann, T., unpublished manuscript.
- 3 The city now lies in the Ukraine and is called Ivano-Frankivsk.
- 4 Tobias Ebbrecht-Hartmann has written a paper with proposals for the use of these films in the classroom, unpublished manuscript.
- 5 “My mother could not remain silent. She could not be quiet. It just wasn’t in her nature,” said Betty. (Ibid: TC 36:34).

Carson Phillips

## “THE LIMITS OF MY LANGUAGE ARE THE LIMITS OF MY WORLD”: USING RECORDED TESTIMONIES OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS WITH ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

“The limits of my language are the limits of my world.” *Ludwig Wittgenstein*

One need only look around the city of Toronto, Canada, to see its diversity represented through a staggering array of cultural festivals, literary and culinary forums, and of course through the visual imagery of its citizenry. A population of approximately 2.8 million lives and thrives within the city’s boundaries, surging to 5.5 million in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Toronto’s diverse population can be seen as a microcosm of the country’s immigration patterns. However, it is the active use of languages other than English or French, Canada’s two official languages, that is perhaps one of the most dominant indicators of diversity. The 2011 Canadian census identified more than 140 languages and dialects that are actively spoken by families and communities living in the metropolitan Toronto area. The top five mother-tongue languages, other than English and French, are directly related to traditional and emerging immigration patterns. These include Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin), Italian, Punjabi, Tagalog/Filipino, and Portuguese. Such richness in linguistic and cultural diversity also means that many newcomers | 1 to Canada may not have a Western orientation to history, and herein lies the challenge for meaningful Holocaust education.

The educational program I detail in this article was created in response to numerous requests from teachers for Holocaust education designed specifically for adult English Language Learners (ELL) and newcomers to Canada. The impetus for the development was Canada’s year chairing the *International*

*Holocaust Remembrance Alliance* (IHRA). In consultation with representatives from the former government department *Citizenship and Immigration Canada* (CIC), a series of educational workshops was proposed in which newcomers would be introduced to the subject of the Holocaust in a manner that met their learning needs and through the lenses of citizenship and integration. It was imperative that these learning programs incorporated English language acquisition methodology, as well as introducing the history of the Holocaust. The workshops were implemented at *Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada* (LINC) schools across the GTA and reached more than 500 learners during the first year.

### Concept Development

The educational philosophy underpinning this program was that newcomers can learn about the Holocaust through the immigration experiences of Holocaust survivors who settled in Canada. Learning about the personal experiences of some of the 40,000 Jewish Displaced Persons who rebuilt their lives in Canada could prove to be a transformational learning experience for newcomers. Even though their own journey of emigration to Canada was vastly different from that of the Holocaust survivors, the shared experiences of learning a new language, adapting to new customs, building a new life in a country with different traditions and laws, and integrating into a new civil society established an empathetic learning environment.

Indeed, the Holocaust became a paradigm through which newcomers learn about Canadian society during and after the Second World War, as well as how Canada responded to the Jewish refugee crisis. The recorded testimonies of Holocaust survivors provided adult English Language Learners with powerful examples of individuals who lost nearly everything yet were determined to rebuild their lives and integrate into Canadian society. For some newcomers, I hoped that the Holocaust might also serve as a prism through which they could address their own personal and regional histories. In particular, those who fled violence and civil strife in their home country and arrived to build a new life in Canada might find encouragement and even resiliency in

listening to the recorded testimonies of Holocaust survivors. Through vivid descriptions of Toronto in the late 1940s and 1950s the recorded testimonies elucidate how Holocaust survivors overcame the systemic antisemitism that permeated much of Canadian society at that time. As Aleida Assman writes:

“The Holocaust has not become a single universally shared memory, but it has become a paradigm or template through which other genocides and historical traumas are very often perceived and presented. The Holocaust has not thereby replaced other traumatic memories around the globe, but has provided a language for their articulation.” (2007:14)

The post war Canadian society that Holocaust survivors encountered was very often homogenous, Protestant and of Anglo-Saxon derivation. It took several decades for it to transform into the diverse mosaic that newcomers encounter today.

### The Methodology

For English Language Learners, the study of the Holocaust means acquiring new vocabulary, discovering unfamiliar historical places and events, and learning about the Jewish people, not only as victims of state-sponsored genocide but also as a living people. Many newcomers are unaware of the rich cultural traditions, religious practices and diversity of Canadian Jewry. By working with the recorded testimonies of Holocaust survivors, newcomers would learn not only about the arrival of the Displaced Persons, but also the Jewish community that pre-dated the postwar arrival of Jewish Displaced Persons. The recorded testimonies addressed the Jewish community as active, contributing members of Canadian civil society with deep roots in Canada.

Emily Amie Witty, an expert in ELL practices, shared her expertise to develop this program and helped me to transfer this information into teacher- and classroom-friendly formats. Her advice in establishing learning targets, developing vocabulary sheets and glossaries, and creating learning activities enabled a nuanced pedagogical approach that ensured the Holocaust was addressed in a meaningful manner for ELLs.

Additionally, this program used the concepts of historical thinking, a pedagogical method that encourages learners to think critically about complex historical events. While the introductory workshops acquainted learners with the foundational elements of Holocaust history, intermediate and advanced workshops dealt with topics such as Canada's refusal to accept Jewish refugees in the lead up to the Second World War, and how a catalyst for changing Canada's restrictive immigration policy slowly emerged after the war. In many sessions, primary source archival documents were analysed as a means to understanding the attitudes and prejudices that permeated Canadian civil society and what led to them changing. In other workshops, the students learnt about memorial culture in Canada and how national dates of remembrance may be commemorated at their children's schools. Throughout all levels of the workshops, the recorded testimony of Holocaust survivors was the common thread that linked all components together. It provided an important humanizing aspect to learning, not only about the dark periods of history but also in demonstrating the consequences that decisions can have on individuals and families.

### Theory and Praxis

This program used the teaching guidelines recommended by the IHRA <sup>12</sup> as well as language acquisition strategies. In pre-visit discussions with the regular LINC teachers, it soon became apparent that many adult learners were unfamiliar with European history and geography, and even less so with Judaism. Although vocabulary sheets and glossaries were provided in advance of the workshops to allow the regular LINC teachers to introduce and review them with their students, some students could not conceptualise what the Holocaust was, its magnitude, or how it forever altered Jewish life in Europe. The learners lacked the necessary vocabulary and conceptual understanding of the Holocaust in their mother tongue to be able to understand the Holocaust and how in its aftermath many of the surviving European Jews dispersed to North America, Australia, England, and British Mandate Palestine.

To ameliorate this, newcomer groups unfamiliar with European history were encouraged to acquire a foundation in their native language, using resources such as the UNESCO Guide *Why Teach About the Holocaust?* (2013). Students with well-developed skills in their first language have been shown to acquire an additional language more easily and that in turn, has a positive impact on academic achievement (Genesee 2006). As the guide is open-source and available in the six official UNESCO languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish), it quickly became an essential component of the pre-program materials. So essential was this guide to establishing a conceptual framework in a newcomer's mother tongue, that when it was discovered that the resource was not available in the native language of one of the largest newcomer groups in Toronto, we arranged for its translation into Punjabi. The experience of working with this publication confirmed that when adult learners have a conceptual understanding in their mother language, it becomes much easier for them to acquire the necessary vocabulary to discuss the topic in English.

Throughout the workshops, the recorded testimonies of Holocaust survivors are used by accessing the *USC Shoah Foundation's IWitness* <sup>13</sup> platform. At the introductory level, the program facilitator pre-selects several recorded testimonies representing a variety of survivor experiences on arrival in Canada. The focus is always on the latter sections of the recording: describing their arrival in Canada and beginning the process of integration. Learners are advised to pay close attention to the descriptions of what Canada was like in the late 1940s and 1950s, what challenges the Holocaust survivor faced immediately upon arrival, and what steps they took to rebuild their lives in Toronto. Depending on the language level of the class <sup>14</sup>, the recordings may need to be reviewed more than once. When members of the group are confident that they have understood the testimony excerpt, the content is reviewed orally, and reinforced through a writing activity. This allows the instructor to check the understanding of the excerpt through aural comprehension, discussion, and written ability tests.

Learners are often asked to write down a quote or expression that the survivor used in the recorded testimony and that resonated with them. Depending on the level of the group, learners may write down words, feelings or descriptors that they associate with the quote, or they may be asked to write a short reflection piece on how they interpret the survivor's words. In the intermediate and advanced levels, learners may be asked to complete sentence frames on a chart or on paper to demonstrate that they understand the topic and are able to write about it with confidence. As examples, learners might complete a sentence frame such as "During the 1930s many Canadians believed that Jews were....." or "Canada changed its immigration policies and now....." Similarly, sentence frames could be chosen from the recorded testimonies of Holocaust survivors to check for aural and written comprehension.

#### Recorded Testimony of Max Eisen



Max Eisen. Image taken from the interview of Max Eisen provided by the USC Shoah Foundation - The Institute for Visual History and Education

For learners at the introductory level, I frequently use the recorded testimony of Max Eisen, a Jewish-Hungarian Holocaust survivor on *IWitness*. His speaking style is clear and concise, and students have always commented that he is easy to understand. By listening to his recorded testimony, learners discover some of the challenges that Holocaust survivors like Max encountered when they arrived in Canada. Although Max spoke Hungarian, Czech and German, he could not speak English when he arrived. Some Canadians found his Hungarian name Tibor unusual, so he changed to Max. He was aided by a social service agency, which arranged for him to take night classes to learn English, found living accommodation for him, and even helped him get his first winter coat in preparation for life in Canada (1995 Clip #201;03:21:58). Many ELLs in Canada have had similar experiences and Max's introduction to life in Canada is one with which they can empathise. When students are comfortable with the arrival in Canada part of Max's narrative, they go on to discover why he had to leave Europe, how the Holocaust affected his family, and what his life was like before the Holocaust. Through the combination of recorded testimony and learning activities, students engage with a layered approach to understanding how the Holocaust affected one individual and his family, and can go deeper into the testimony as they acquire knowledge and confidence.

#### Recorded Testimony of Anita Ekstein

In her recorded testimony focusing on her arrival in Canada in 1949, the Jewish-Polish Holocaust survivor Anita Ekstein describes enrolling in school and not being able to speak any English. After a caring teacher provided her with one-on-one instruction, Anita acquired fluency in English. In this latter portion of her testimony she also describes one of her proudest moments; when she graduated from York University in Toronto with a BA degree in 1985, at the same time that her son graduated with his master's degree in business. (1996 Clip #122; 02:02:41)

For newcomers, Anita's testimony is a powerful example that an individual can be resilient, and can acquire a new language and build a new life in the



Anita Ekstein. Image taken from the interview of Anita Ekstein provided by the USC Shoah Foundation - The Institute for Visual History and Education

aftermath of tragedy. I use this testimony with introductory level workshops and students always comment that they are inspired by her dedication and perseverance.

#### Recorded Testimony of Vera Schiff

The third testimony used in this program is that of Vera Schiff, a Jewish-Czech Holocaust survivor. Her narrative differs from the previous two as Vera was at a different point in her life; she was already married with a family when she emigrated to Canada in 1961. In fact, the move to Canada represented the second attempt at building a new life, as Vera had initially emigrated to Israel in 1949. When she arrived in Toronto, Vera was fluent in Czech, German and Hebrew; none of which were particularly useful for facilitating integration into Toronto society of the 1960s.

Additionally, the professional qualifications that she and her husband possessed were not recognised by the nursing and pharmacological associations in Canada. As well as needing to acquire English language skills, Vera and her husband needed to find jobs to support their young family and attend educational programs to attain professional accreditation in Canada. These are experiences that resonate with many adult ELLs in Toronto.



Vera Schiff. Image taken from the interview of Vera Schiff provided by the USC Shoah Foundation - The Institute for Visual History and Education, Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Centre Collection

Newcomers frequently comment on the ease with which Vera introduces acronyms into her speaking style. This is common among Torontonians, who refer to many institutions and service providers by their acronyms. The Toronto Transit Commission is often referred to as the TTC, the Toronto General Hospital as the TGH and the Royal Ontario Museum as the ROM,

to give just a few examples. Indeed, Vera peppers her recorded testimony (Clip #139; Time Code 02:19:54) with acronyms including: U of T (University of Toronto), TIMT (Toronto Institute of Medical Technology), and TGH. The proficiency with which she has acquired this particular linguistic feature stands out to many newcomers. It is frequently cited as a positive example that with practise, adult learners of English can adopt regional linguistic vocabulary and forms.

These are just three examples of testimony excerpts used at the introductory level to demonstrate that whether they came to Canada as Displaced Persons, refugees or migrants, newcomers can acquire the English language skills necessary to integrate and to live productive lives.

#### Advanced Learners: Using Recorded Testimony with Archival Documents

I do not want to give the impression that the recorded testimonies I use address only the positive aspects of building a life in Canada. Frequently, individual testimonies can reveal the myriad of challenges Holocaust survivors faced in Canada. When working with ELLs at the advanced level, I encourage them to explore some of the testimonies available through the USC Shoah Foundation's IWitness platform and use the keyword search feature to explore aspects of the testimony that resonate with them. Initially, the focus is on the latter stages of the testimony, in which the Holocaust survivor describes their arrival and new beginning in Canada. Some describe changing their name to sound more English and less "foreign", others describe an unpleasant encounter when they were called "Greenies" or "Greeners" – a mildly pejorative slang term derived from the word "greenhorn", meaning a person who is not experienced or accustomed to local traditions and behaviour. Still others comment on not getting hired for a particular job because of the employer's antisemitism, and some testimonies describe aspects of Canadian society in the 1940s and 1950s that openly discriminated against its Jewish citizens. Through a gradual, layered approach, learners discover the often complex set of circumstances the Holocaust survivors encountered, how they dealt with it, and how they integrated.

When students in advanced workshops have encountered such details in a recorded testimony, I find it useful to introduce archival photographs that back up the description of Toronto during the postwar era, and get them to grapple with how Toronto transformed into the diverse city it is today. The first image (below) demonstrates the widespread Anglo-centric milieu of Toronto described not infrequently in some of the recorded testimonies. The dry-cleaning tag dated 1938, a piece of ephemera meant to be thrown away, now offers testimony to a Toronto of long ago. The tag includes the line: “We Are Not Jewish”. One imagines that the proprietor of the *French Dry Cleaners* must have been frustrated with constant questioning of his ethnicity in the predominantly English Toronto of the period. He must have felt compelled to dispel any hint that he was Jewish by denying it clearly and succinctly on the coupon.



French Cleaners, 1938. Blankenstein Family Heritage Centre, fonds 17, series 5-3, file 65.  
Credit: Ontario Jewish Archives

A second document, an archival photograph from 1940, shows a sign below a larger roadside sign for cabin rentals that reads “Gentiles Only”. It would be difficult to find a more blatant example of systemic antisemitism than this. Such attitudes survived into the 1950s. The transformation of Toronto into a diverse cultural hub did not happen overnight, and when systemic anti-semitism is clearly evidenced, it can take a long time to diminish. However, today such documents provide us with important insights into the attitude of an era, and can be used in conjunction with the recorded testimonies to demonstrate the continuing struggle for acceptance and equality that many of the Jewish displaced persons endured.



"Gentiles only" sign at forest Hill Lodge at Burleigh Falls, 18 January 1940. Blankenstein Family Heritage Centre, fonds 17, series 5-3, file 64, item 1.  
Credit: Ontario Jewish Archives

## Conclusion

The recorded testimonies of Holocaust survivors provide educators with a rich and powerful resource for teaching the Holocaust to English Language Learners. Through online materials such as the USC Shoah Foundation's iWitness platform, students can be guided through the process of acquiring and comprehending new vocabulary, and hearing the poignant narratives of Holocaust survivors starting life over in a new country. For more advanced learners, the testimonies offer a vista into the complexities of life in 1940s–1950s Canada, as well as powerful firsthand accounts of how individuals were affected by discriminatory attitudes and customs, while demonstrating how much Canadian civil society has changed.

Beyond these fundamental, educational elements, the recorded testimonies of Holocaust survivors are frequently the first time many ELLs and newcomers directly encounter the Holocaust as a historical event, and Judaism as a living religion. I occasionally encounter an instructor who is reticent to raise the topic of the Holocaust with their students for fear of encountering antisemitism. To those educators I say two things: first, that the power of the recorded testimony to touch hearts and minds in creating an empathic learning environment is almost unparalleled. Next, I share a powerful memory of the first session with newcomers that I conducted in Toronto. At the end of the class I was thanked profusely by a woman who told me that in her home country she could not learn about the Holocaust or about Judaism as it was a forbidden topic. The recorded testimonies had opened up a new world of learning for her and confirmed for me that some risks in education are worth taking.

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- 1 The term “newcomer” is used in the Canadian vernacular to refer to individuals who have recently arrived in Canada and are either on the road to citizenship or have completed the immigration process and have Canadian citizenship. It is considered somewhat old-fashioned and slightly pejorative to use terms such “immigrant”, “foreign-worker” or “migrant” in Canadian parlance. The term “newcomer” is used consistently on government, business and social service websites as well as print materials across Canada.
- 2 see <https://holocaustremembrance.com/resources/teaching-guidelines>, accessed 19 September 2017.
- 3 see <https://sfi.usc.edu/iwatch>, accessed 19 September 2017.
- 4 For English instruction for newcomers, Canada uses the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) system whereby students progress from an introductory level 1 through to the advanced level 12. These correspond to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) used in many countries. The program described in this article was used with students at the B1 or Benchmark Five and higher.

Andrea Szónyi, Kori Street

## VIDEOTAPED TESTIMONIES OF VICTIMS OF NATIONAL SOCIALISM IN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS: THE EXAMPLE OF USC SHOAH FOUNDATION'S ONLINE PLATFORM IWITNESS

### Education and Evaluation Methodology

This paper explores how testimony-based education is delivered across several geographical locations through *IWitness*, the *USC Shoah Foundation – The Institute for Visual History and Education* (referred to as the Institute) educational platform. Evaluating *IWitness* programs in order to check that they reach their objectives is a major part of our educational work. This paper references the most recent evaluation of *IWitness* to demonstrate the potential of testimony-based education. It also explores the opportunities of *IWalks* – a geographic learning experience that blends testimony with an interrogation of historical spaces in contemporary time. The Institute is guided by the *Theory of Change*, which says that if individuals such as students and teachers engage with testimony they will experience attitudinal and behavioral changes that will make them more likely to contribute to civil society. |1 The Institute defines contributing to civil society at minimum as making responsible choices – refusing to tolerate racist ideas or prejudicial treatment, and countering attitudes and acts of hatred. In order to effect this change, the Institute develops educational programs based on a methodology designed specifically to leverage the unique power of audiovisual testimony. The educational methodology developed combines four core elements: testimony, localization, outcomes, and critical and constructivist theory – and together they harness the universal tool of stories through the testimonies in the *Visual History Archive (VHA)* to engage students in powerful learning experiences. With these

testimonies at the center of our methodology, all content and programming is made relevant and accessible to broad and highly diverse audiences of educators, students and decision-makers. The education programs of the Institute contribute to Holocaust education and genocide studies, as well as other fields ranging from ethics and psychology to law and linguistics. We show that – combined with the tools of critical and constructivist theory, specific and assessable learning outcomes, and localization of materials to meet the needs of specific disciplines or geographies – audiovisual testimony is a robust tool for achieving deep learning and development. Because the testimonies are life histories and the design of IWitness is flexible, educators can build customized teaching activities using testimony for historical specificity, while also exploring universal themes in the human experience such as identity, courage and resilience. The evaluation of the educational programs tests the Theory of Change and is firmly grounded in education and social science research. Our work follows a framework for designing, implementing, and analyzing studies that is modeled on the *Scientific Method* (see Krathwohl 1993). Through a continually reflective process, the findings from one evaluation study are used to inform the development of the next study. This approach not only helps to develop an evolving understanding of the areas under consideration but also serves as a way to “retest” and refine our hypotheses. This reflective process increases the reliability of our work, and helps inform program revisions and ensures consistently high quality programs. The evaluation program follows a systematic process that emphasizes consistency, duplication, and saturation. Careful attention is given to following good research practices at each step of the process to ensure reliability, validity, and usefulness of the research (Bryman 2015; Cohen et al., 2013; Creswell 2013; Creswell/Clark 2011; Neuman 2005). This focus on methodological rigor helps to ensure confidence in the evaluations’ conclusions (Braverman/Arnold 2008). Furthermore, our evaluations follow a mixed methods approach – using both quantitative and qualitative methods – to capture the full breadth and depth of the subjects being studied (Creswell/Clark 2011; Denzin/ Lincoln 2011; Johnson et al. 2007; Merriam 1998, Strauss/Corbin 1990).

## Defining IWitness and Types of Testimony-Based Learning within IWitness

Today's young learners are highly mobile and connected with each other through the many forms of technology available to them, and they have easy access to a rapidly expanding range of visual and digital media. In this context, the Institute strives to create attitudinal and positive behavioral change in students worldwide. And by creating content that integrates the testimony of survivors and witnesses to genocide in the VHA with today's new media literacy demands of our participatory culture, the Institute is in a position to realize its Theory of Change.

The scope and sequence of all testimony-based content and resources aligns to the following:

- It engages students in a problem of emerging relevance.
- It structures the learning experience around conceptual understanding.
- It values and builds on students' points of view and personal experience.
- It assesses learning in authentic ways and multiple format put testimony at the center of the learning engagement.

All content follows a general scope and sequence of the four Cs: consider, collect, construct and communicate. These reflect phases of learning that generally correspond to a taxonomy of exercises that reinforce students' cognitive skills – from simple to complex and concrete to abstract. As students move through the scope and sequence, they also reinforce multiple forms of literacy – from reading and writing to digital and information literacy skills. In addition, all the digital content includes student learning outcomes or aims that are mapped against the main student learning outcomes of all education programming. IWalks are a new testimony-based learning asset available through IWitness. Similar to other activities and lessons in IWitness, these are digitally-based learning modules. IWalks are based on connecting testimony with historical events and authentic sites/geographies by combining them to engage learners in an active, immersive experience. IWalks aim to promote historical knowledge, critical thinking, empathy and digital literacy skills through a guided learning experience. They are available online or on

the ground; that is to say, people can engage in an IWalk sitting at their computer or walking through the authentic site/geography with a handheld device to listen to the integrated testimonies. Early research suggests that like other activities in IWitness, IWalks resonate with learners and offer a new way to meet learning objectives.

### Demonstrated Impact: Recent Findings – After School Matters Program and Media Literacy

“The testimonies helped me as a person because it showed me that taking a stand for something you believe in will impact/change the way someone acts.” *A student’s reflection on using IWitness in the After School Matters program.*

In order to demonstrate the impact of testimony-based learning and IWitness, the Institute evaluated the use of an IWitness activity in a supplemental program put on by the US non-profit organization *After School Matters*. *After School Matters* works with students in Chicago to develop skills from art through to media literacy and leadership. Its *C.O.O.L. Communicators Program* focused on developing communication and leadership among high school students. Students in C.O.O.L participated in a special program: *Skittles, Deplorables, and All Lives Matter*. Through this program, the Institute evaluated a group of students aged 16 to 18, focusing on developing leadership and media literacy skills. The activity used a broad range of testimonies from survivors of and witnesses to National Socialism. As a central finding in this evaluation, the use of testimony in this activity was especially valuable to students because it made the abstract concepts of political rhetoric and hate speech more real and relevant to their own lives, and because they felt a personal connection to the testimonies that made the lesson more meaningful to them. After participating in the program, students recognized the value of testimony. And, through the use of testimony, they learned about media messaging in political discourse and the types and uses of rhetoric, as well as how to design their own social media campaign. As a result of

participating, students gained essential communication skills, critical thinking ability, and respect for themselves and others. They also developed historical understanding and made connections with current events that indicated a critical understanding. Ultimately, the program helped students become more informed consumers and creators of social media messages and inspired them to stand up for others and to be more active participants in their communities. These findings further support an emerging trend in IWitness evaluations that students' engagement with testimony helps them to become more responsible participants in civil society. The following comment from the student focus group helps to illustrate this point:

"I learned that we need to be mindful when presenting our ideas on social media and that we must support our opinions with facts to be taken seriously. I learned that to be worldly knowledgeable, we must learn from multiple sources and be well-informed, especially if we wish to speak of these matters and use our voice" (USC SF internal evaluation report – After School Matters 2017).

Students found that the testimony brought events of the past to life, helping them to connect the stories of survivors to their own lives in a meaningful way, as reflected in the following student's comment:

"I connected to one [of the testimonies] and it made me think of my role as a person and the responsibilities that I have to live up to" (Ibid.).

The evaluation showed that the Skittles, Deplorables, and All Lives Matter activity was especially effective in teaching students about rhetoric and media literacy and helping them to connect these topics to the lessons of leadership and responsible participation in society, the established learning outcomes of the program it was intended to complement. These topics were closely aligned with the broader After School Matters C.O.O.L. Communicators program. Even though students had other lessons that touched on these topics as part of the After School Matters program, the data

showed that students gained significant insights from this activity, above and beyond what they had learned previously in the C.O.O.L. program. The program taught students how to develop their own social media campaigns and inspired them to stand up for themselves and others. Following are key evaluation findings:

1. The use of testimony was compelling and meaningful to students' lives.
2. Students developed a detailed understanding of rhetoric, its uses in political discourse, and how to make informed judgements about media messaging in the future.
3. Students showed notable gains on several key student learning outcomes, including communication skills, critical thinking, self-respect and respect for others.
4. The After School Matters program empowered students to create effective, ethical social media campaigns and inspired them to find their voice.

Given the length of the paper, only the second of these findings will be explored here.

Understanding about Rhetoric, its Uses in Political Discourse, and how to Make Informed Judgments about Media Messaging in the Future

Evaluation results indicate that students learned about the different types of rhetoric, particularly propaganda and its use for political persuasion. More importantly, students gained a broader perspective on the existence of competing viewpoints and learned about the need to be well-informed and how to recognize bias in the media. Set within the context of current events and supported with relevant testimonies, students gained a deep understanding of the topics but also made connections to the material on a personal level. The quantitative data provides strong evidence that students learned about the key topics of the activity, including the different types of rhetoric and hate speech and how it can impact people. In the post-program survey, 88% of students agreed they understood how to identify different types of rhetoric and that they had learned about hate speech and its impact.

Figure 1 shows the before and after comparisons of students who strongly agree with these two statements, and the percentage point change. There were 27 respondents prior to the program and 17 respondents after the program.

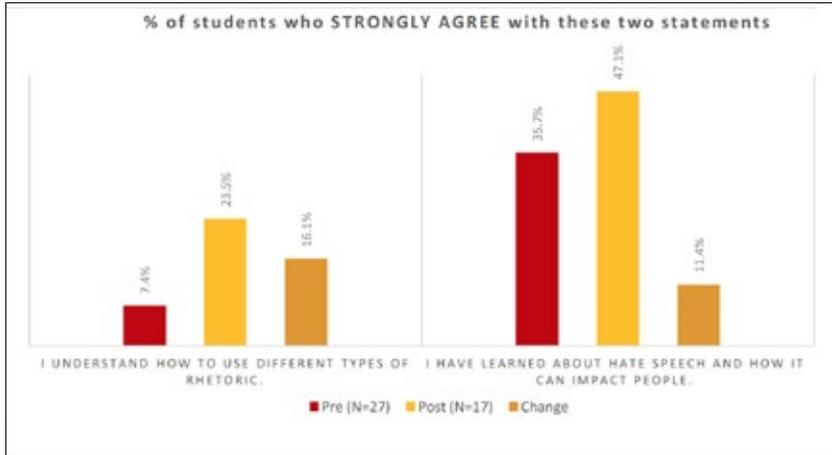


Figure 1: Student Survey Results: Pre/Post Comparisons of Level of Agreement

As shown in Figure 1, the greatest percentage change was in students who strongly agreed that they understand how to use different types of rhetoric, which trebled from 7.4% to 23.5% (up 217%). (Students completed the post-program survey at least a week after the initial engagement and completion rates were affected by normal absenteeism in the C.O.O.L. program, a non-compulsory after school program). Students also showed a greater understanding of the impacts that rhetoric and hate speech can have – in this case, that words can be used to harm people.

Figure 2 compares responses to the statement, “It is harmless for a person to use words to attack a person or group if there is no physical contact.” There were 28 respondents before and 17 respondents after the program.

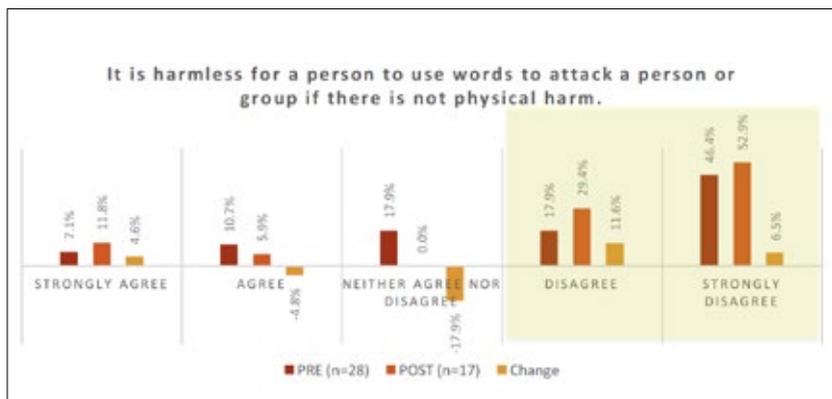


Figure 2: Student Survey Results: Pre/Post Comparisons of Level of Agreement

Figure 2 shows a general trend for students to be more likely to disagree with the statement in the post-program survey, and recognize that words can create actual harm to people or groups. In fact, the “disagrees” and “strongly disagrees” rose from 64% before to 82% after, an increase of 28%. This understanding that words can harm is essential to grasping a main point about political rhetoric and hate speech. The wealth of qualitative data from the surveys and focus groups further strengthens the assertions that students not only gained a depth of knowledge about the topics of rhetoric and hate speech, but also are deeply committed to using this knowledge to help them be more informed citizens in the future. When asked about the most important thing they had learned, many students mentioned the need to pay attention to the purposes and biases behind political messages and how the media can influence people.

**One student said:**

“There is always a purpose behind every article written or any recorded video and audio. This means that you have to think critically after getting information.” (Ibid.)

These sentiments are further supported in the focus group, where students elaborated on what they had learned about propaganda and political rhetoric, showing that they had gained a more nuanced understanding of these concepts. For example, one student commented:

“Propaganda is often associated with . . . , it has like a negative connotation to it and today we just learned the example of where it is not necessarily a bad thing . . . with the whole Obama poster and we can also bring about good.” (Ibid.)

Other students gave examples from the 2016 US presidential election campaigns, particularly Donald Trump’s use of the slogan *Make America Great Again* to persuade people to vote for him. The VHA testimonies helped students to better understand the real risks of political rhetoric. As one student said: “It made me more aware of the struggles of people [...] and how propaganda could ruin people’s lives.” The testimony of Esther Clifford (1996) who told of her experiences as a child seeing people read a propaganda-filled newspaper with distorted depictions of Jews was especially effective in telling this story of the harmful effects of rhetoric and how it may be taken at face value by many. An excerpt from the focus group explains this point in the students’ words:

**Female speaker:** “Listening to testimony really impacted me because I got a glimpse of how they felt and it wasn’t just . . . I didn’t have to put my opinion in by reading it. I actually heard how they felt and I actually got some background knowledge on their experience.”

**Female speaker:** “Yeah, these primary sources make it much more like real. It’s not just facts and statistics but now you have this person and a face to these problems.”

**Male speaker:** “Not only that, what she said, but also it shows the effects of hate speech,

like what happens and the effects it has by seeing what happens after the Holocaust and having testimony by people who went through that. It actually shows what can happen if you let these things just go by.” (Ibid.)

As this exchange suggests, the lessons about rhetoric and hate speech became more powerful when told through testimonies because they are authentic stories of lived experiences. Testimonies included those of Holocaust survivors Esther Clifford (1996) and Ruth Pearl (2014), and Paul Parks (1995), an African American who, as a former member of the US armed forces, participated in liberating Dachau. They were presented together with examples of political rhetoric relevant to students at the time of the activity, including the 2016 election cycle and the *Black Lives Matter* movement. <sup>12</sup> Students connected with the testimonies both logically and emotionally, identifying with the examples as observers of the public narratives unfolding at the time as well as on a personal level as individuals who had experienced similar things, such as discrimination, first-hand. A quote from the focus group provides a student’s perspective:

“And then with the testimonies that we watched [...] I can connect to it because with the man, he said how he had to fight and stuff, and that connected me back to how like Black Lives Matter and all lives matter, and you just have to fight. Well, with me being black and stuff, and how it’s like there’s so many killings, for innocent people that are being killed by police officers and by just other people; how you just have to fight every day to live and how it’s getting harder.”

Students related personally to the discussion about Black Lives Matter and All Lives Matter because they knew about the Black Lives Matter movement from the news and people around them, and because these students as a group could relate collectively – and many personally – to experiences of discrimination and racism. Thus, the activity helped students gain insights about rhetoric and its uses and connect it to their own lives, making it more engaging and meaningful to them.

### Moving Forward and Conclusion

The evaluation findings suggest that testimony-based education can have an impact on students' learning across cognitive and conative areas. While this case study refers to a particular group of students in a particular urban environment, the findings are consistent with the balance of evaluation on IWitness. The gains achieved in Chicago through testimony-based education are consistent with trends found in Australia, Italy and Rwanda, and in other locations within the US among students ranging in age from eight to 18. In the case of IWalks, an emerging content type on the IWitness platform that triangulates location, personal story and pedagogical context, the learning takes place by zooming in on specific locations through the testimonies. The visit to the place – whether physical or virtual – magnifies the personal experience and the relevance today. This new program was informed by the evaluations of IWitness and testimony-based learning generally, and applied specifically to a new format. Although IWalks have as yet not been fully evaluated for their impact on learning, the anecdotal evidence shares many features with studies of other IWitness activities. Results of the early evaluations of IWalks suggest that students have much the same experience as using IWitness:

1. The use of testimony in the geographical space was compelling and meaningful to students' lives; it connected them to the past.
2. Students developed a detailed understanding of the geographical space and historical events, as well as contemporary issues.
3. Students seem to demonstrate gains on several key learning outcomes, including communication skills, critical thinking, self-respect and respect for others.
4. Students are empowered to create connections between themselves and local history, and to see what happened in the past as relevant to their future.
5. Students are helped to find their voice.

There is every indication that inside and outside the classroom, engaging

students digitally with well-conceived, theoretically sound testimony-based education resources will result in cognitive and conative gains in students of all ages and across all disciplines. This is indicated in student feedback from the IWalk in Hungary:

“It was the first time I ever heard that there had been a synagogue in Aszód. I find it a problem that I knew nothing about the history of the Jews before.”

*And:* “I am still interested to learn about what Jewish traces there are in my home town. I want to know why people did not help the persecuted. I would like to know why people were so cruel.” (Internal evaluation report, Initial Investigation of IWalks in Hungary, USC Shoah Foundation, 2017)



Students Participating in Iwalk at Shoes Memorial, Budapest.  
Photo: Tamas Reichel

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## THE WEB APPLICATION *LEARNING WITH INTERVIEWS. FORCED LABOR 1939–1945 FOR GERMAN, CZECH AND RUSSIAN SCHOOLS. COMMON GROUND AND COUNTRY-SPECIFIC DIFFERENCES*

It has often been observed that the life-story narratives of witnesses of National Socialism – even in the form of videotaped interviews – enable pupils to develop a personal approach to history. But how must history teaching using such highly subjective sources be designed if it is to do justice to their special character as well as the needs of the educators and young people’s active sense of history? In the last few years work has been done at the *Freie Universität* Berlin, in close cooperation with partners in the Czech Republic and the Russian Federation |1, to develop digital educational platforms using the videotaped testimonies of former forced labourers taking due account of the specific educational context in the three countries.

In the following we first consider the common foundations of this platform, which is funded by the “*Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future*” (EVZ). The second part is devoted to the specific approaches adopted in Germany, the Czech Republic and the Russian Federation. Finally, by way of a conclusion, a summary is provided of a number of those principles which seem worthy of emulation.

### Point of Departure

During the Second World War, more than 25 million people were forced to perform slave labour for Nazi Germany |2. In those countries which are burdened with the heritage of that crime, the enormous number of victims has

met with decades of indifference – for reasons that differ from country to country. Stimulated by the symbolic compensation payments made to former – and now very old – forced and slave labourers <sup>13</sup> and the opening of archives in eastern Europe, several researchers have addressed the subject in the last 20 years. <sup>14</sup> In the schools, on the other hand, forced labour under the National Socialists and its victims have rarely been worth more than a marginal note in the history textbooks in almost all European countries. Oral history interviews with people who were subjected to various forms of forced labour in various locations therefore have a special role to play in education in those countries. The multi-perspective life-story narratives in the *Forced Labor 1939–1945* archive of interviews recorded in 26 countries and 27 languages in 2005–2006 by Alexander von Plato and his team <sup>15</sup> accordingly offer a highly suitable basis for developing educational materials that facilitate involvement with these diverse experiences and forms of remembrance. Digital history education with online support is still in knee-pants in the schools of all three countries. In this context, a well designed learning platform can become a useful resource as it provides simple access to the video interviews as sources and also provides relevant assignments and supplementary materials with an eye to contextualisation. In addition, it helps pupils to produce autonomous results and to do so in a form that is fit for presentation. For that purpose it is important that users should be able to access the platform and their results of the work not only at school, but from everywhere, when using their tablets or smart phones.

### Shared Strategies in Spite of Different Cultures of Remembrance

The development of and agreement on a common basis and the commitment of the main actors to the above interview project on forced labour under the National Socialists were of great importance. Since 2008, the Freie Universität Berlin has prepared the collection of just under 600 interviews for convenient and scientific use <sup>16</sup> and also developed the first DVD with educational materials <sup>17</sup>, while the Czech and Russian partners were directly involved in the interviews in their respective countries. At the preparatory

international meetings, all parties agreed to common standards for the format of the interviews and technical aspects. The interviews are based on the narrative technique, which leads to as open a narrative as possible, with the interviewer relegated to a supporting role, and include subsequent questions designed to go into greater depth on certain aspects. The fact that the interviews last an average of 3 hours 30 minutes indicates that the agreed method was successfully applied.

While the interview project can be considered a common European scientific exercise, European cultures of remembrance “remain very diverse” (Interview von Plato: Question 5, TC: 04:55–05:25) and forced labour is still a national issue (von Plato 2013: 36). To cope with this situation, it was decided to develop educational materials based on a common strategy which offer scope for diverse life stories and approaches and in some cases conflictive questions in the countries involved. With the online app, it was possible – in the spirit of international exchange – to develop a common format to do justice to the



International expert discussion in February 2016, FU Berlin, CeDiS

convictions shared by the partners on educational basics and didactic principles. In addition – and equally fundamental at least – it offers adequate scope for developing country-specific content, materials and questions.

### Learning with Interviews. Didactic Principles

From a didactic point of view, what is important with regard to the **biographical approach** is to understand that the various periods of the 20th century are not simply a string of isolated phases but that people literally lived through them. Moreover, it involves a “configuration of the narrator as a historically competent subject”, which means “recognition as an individual” (Barricelli/Lücke 2013: 56). Consequently, the format of the **interview film** was developed, which follows the life-story course of the narrative and is normally chronological. The project is not therefore based on thematic clips but on films that are between 25 and 30 minutes long and remain as close to the original source as possible. No use is made of any additional items, of photos or documents, nor of any music, and the cuts made are always recognisable as such. These interview films constitute the central element of the learning apps.

Another basic principle is **multi-perspectivity**: It was decided to select six or seven quite different narratives which complement and contrast with one another and above all constitute self-contained chapters of equal importance. Almost all the interviews are from the archive *Forced Labor 1939–1945* and were chosen on the basis of country-specific criteria. For the German learning platform there is only one German-language interview, while the Czech platform offers six Czech-language interview films. In all cases, however, people with very different backgrounds and experiences are included, and they are all strong narrators at the subjective level. By way of embedding the films, **contextualisation** is provided at several levels. The interviews are accompanied by a short biography with an interactive map showing the stations in the lives of the interviewees. The “background” section is also extremely important as it includes an introductory country-specific film explaining the extent of forced labour under the National Socialists as well as its subsequent history and reception.

The tools provided for use with all the chapters include a lexicon and a time line in support of autonomous learning and enquiry. For the various **assignments**, key documents related to forced labour under the National Socialists and its subsequent history are also integrated. The **critical approach to the sources** of the learning platform is reflected in the links provided to the *Forced Labor* archive, which means that users can always call up the unedited versions of the interviews. In the “further assignments”, for example, pupils are encouraged to compare the interview films with the original sources and assess the editing of the film, or do their own research into other people’s experiences of a certain place or topic, including the relationships between different groups of forced labourers. The **users** of the platform are not just an attentive audience in the survivors’ digitalised living rooms; they are encouraged to contribute their thoughts, feelings and questions and produce their own results through interaction with the interview film. For that purpose they are provided with a user-friendly environment in which they can work on modularised assignments on the pattern of “discover – develop (choice of assignments) – discuss”. There is a workspace in which they can create their own texts and combine them with images, documents and excerpts from the interview. At the end, pupils can summarise the combined results for the various chapters in the form of a portfolio, which can be presented in digital form, sent as a pdf document or printed. That enables pupils to offer their own analyses, thoughts and interpretations for discussion and also to save them. With regard to the **educators**, importance was attached to providing an effective introduction to the subject of forced labour under the National Socialists, with which many were not previously familiar. Didactic comments on all the assignments and specific educator functions are designed to facilitate preparation of the teaching. In addition, educators can formulate additional assignments for their pupils or adapt those provided to the needs of their groups. Given the breadth of the topics that the narratives touch upon, the online app can be used in various subjects in addition to history, like civics, literature, art, ethics and languages. The three-step process “discover – develop – discuss” is designed for a ninety-minute class,

a time line that permits viewing, interaction and subsequent discussion of an interview film and also represents a time frame that can most often be integrated within a standard school timetable in an international comparison. For project work, term papers and also university/teaching training seminars, the platform is suitable for in-depth and comparative working. The assignments for all variants of the learning app address the specific narrative formats and patterns of an interview and establish links with the present. On all platforms, questions of identity, external ascriptions and self definition are raised as are questions of the continued existence of antisemitism, racism and ethnic thinking. In summary, the interviews have been selected and the assignments designed to promote narrativity, media competence, source criticism, judgemental competence, reflection and action-oriented transfer. The shape this takes in the various countries is the subject of the following sections.

### The German Learning Platform

In Germany, the ideology of National Socialism was not only conceived but also implemented – with the merciless persecution of political opponents, the annihilation of the Jews, the war of extermination in the East and the deportation of millions of people for forced labour. These unparalleled crimes were committed with massive support at all levels of German society. Such facts create very specific conditions for learning about the history of National Socialism in German schools. For many years the schools' efforts were dominated by the documents and narratives of the perpetrators. Forced labour currently tends to play a minor role, although – in Germany especially – there are reasons enough not to neglect this criminal system and its social realities.

#### Choice of interviews

A main criterion in the choice of interviews was to include a representative of what in numerical terms were the largest groups of forced labourers, but also groups which had received particularly little attention. One interviewee is accordingly one of the 600,000 former members of the Italian military

internees who were classified as being ineligible under the compensation scheme for forced labour under the National Socialists. The other selection criteria included country of origin, type of work, gender, age, social background, post-war life, the question whether such aspects as freedom of action and profiteers were touched upon, and also the narrative style of the interview. The web application also includes the interview with Marie Jeník-ová 18, who had to perform forced labour for BMW, which establishes links with the “total deployment” of Czechs under the Nazis as well as with the Czech learning platform. The English-language interview with Anita Lasker-Wallfisch adds the situation of the persecuted Jews to the subjects covered by the learning app. As a result of the various countries of origin of the forced labourers in Germany, the German variant of the application features Polish (Helena Bohle-Szacki), Russian (Sinaida Baschlai), Italian (Claudio Sommaruga), French (Victor Laville), English and Czech interviews and just one in German – with the German Sinto Reinhard Florian. For that reason, every film comes with a voice-over, which pupils can switch off and on. That in turn opens up innovative opportunities for bilingual working, which are further supported with a running transcript plus German translation. During the editing, a prologue was added to each interview film, in which the interviewees reflect on the main aspects of their narratives. They touch on such topics as the motives and objectives of their narratives, the significance of the remoteness in time of the events described and the limits of narrative for the intended purpose. That delivers a strong signal with regard to the points to be considered when analysing the sources.

#### Main topics discussed

##### a) Guilt and debt

Over and above the general purpose of all the interviews, there are some topics which are specific to the German learning app, starting with the whole complex of the response to guilt and the financial obligations incurred through forced labour under the National Socialists. These subjects are raised frequently in the interviews, either in the form of interviewees’ experiences

of treatment by various Germans or their assessment of the German response after the war. The conclusion drawn by Sinaida Baschlai: “It is courageous to admit one’s guilt, even if it is not one’s own but that of one’s fathers and grandfathers.” (Interview film with Baschlai: TC 21:10–21:25) In view of the fact that today’s school classes consist only partly of descendants of the perpetrator society, such a quotation is well suited to add a new perspective to the debate and encourage pupils to form their own opinion. For many years, German society had little awareness of either guilt or the financial obligations arising out of forced labour under the National Socialists. It was not until the 1980s that survivors and various associations – with great commitment – placed their claims deriving from wages withheld and compromised health and company profits on the international agenda. As the post-war history of (non-)compensation for forced labour under the National Socialists is central to an understanding and assessment of the current situation, it is dealt with in the background film. Assignments are suggested in which pupils can formulate their opinions of “symbolic compensation” or the response of world-famous German companies. The filmed interviews also include key sentences on the subject, such as when Claudio Sommaruga says:

“What we want is recognition for the way we behaved. We are not interested in money. There can be no compensation for deportation; no amount of money in the world could compensate for deportation.” (Background film compensation: TC 16:47–17:02)

#### b) Links to local research and family histories

Forced labour was widespread and its traces are still to be found in the public space today – in the form of buildings constructed by forced and slave labourers, sometimes complete with their accommodation and workplaces. The Forced Labour online archive includes a map-based search of the locations of forced labour discussed in the interviews. The family histories of some pupils include narratives relating to forced labour from diverse perspectives, which can be included in the teaching and additionally investigated.

### c) Current topics for transfer

Some of the key assignments relate to the narratives of individual experiences of persecution and raise questions of universal relevance like the questions of one's own identity, which interviewees address. Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, for example, says:

"To be Jewish is to belong to a club from which you can't resign. 'Can't resign, I'm Jewish'. And there's nothing wrong with being Jewish. That is the whole thing. There's nothing wrong with you being German. In fact, that is the only thing in our lives that we have no input. Once you are born, then you have responsibility." (Interview film with Lasker-Wallfisch: TC: 26:36–26:58)

Other themes are also present, such as the experience of foreignness, of freedom/work/forced migration, and what resistance can really mean today. Finally, users are offered a discussion that relates to the dialogue character

German learning platform: <https://lernen-mit-interviews.de/>



railway, in the trades and, in a few cases, in agriculture and forestry. The forced labourers were long among the “forgotten victims” of National Socialism in the Czech Republic (and former Czechoslovakia), too. They were not accused of collaboration with the enemy and were rarely stigmatised but they had hardly any place in the official post-war culture of remembrance. The main role in the “master narrative” was played by the communist resistance fighters and partisans. The first published research on the subject of forced labour written by František Mainuš (1970; 1974) long remained the only such research in the country. In the schoolbooks the forced labourers attract no more than a marginal note, and their status as victims has always been questioned. With the passing of the last generation of eyewitnesses, the experiences of the former forced labourers can no longer be communicated directly, but records of their narratives in the form of video- and audiotaped interviews with the next generation offer opportunities for indirect encounter with the eyewitnesses via the digital platform.

#### Choice of interviews

The point of departure for the choice of interviews was the level of public awareness in the country as the product of the culture of remembrance described above. We did not wish to neglect the groups of victims that had received preference after 1945 but we also wanted to draw attention to other groups of forced labourers. Our goal is to expand the overall picture with regard to today’s Czech Republic especially but also in the European context. The results of our teaching training work confirm the assumption that educators are interested in a broad spectrum of experiences, as some of them choose to work on the Shoah while others select the Roma Genocide or forced civilian labour. That focus was influenced by the decision to discuss the European context in the background film. We chose seven eyewitnesses, including both former inmates of concentration camps and corrective labour camps and “civilians”, i.e. forced labourers deported to the German Reich. The eyewitnesses were persecuted as Jews, Roma, resistance fighters, political prisoners and members of the Bohemian and Moravian majority population,

who were classified as inferior under the racist Nazi ideology and used as a reservoir for forced labour. The life story of the German-Czech-Jewish family of Peter Demetz reflects the multi-ethnic character of pre-war Czechoslovakia. Six of the seven interviews are taken from the online archive *Forced Labor 1939–1945*, while the interview with the member of the resistance, Miloš Volf, was added from the archive of *Živá paměť*. A thirty-minute background film is designed to expand users' horizons with regard to the phenomenon and also the extent of forced labour in the European context. The fates of forced labourers from other countries are also presented and the question of compensation discussed. For further study of the problems, users are provided with three ten-minute thematic excerpts from interviews with forced labourers from the Soviet Union, Poland and France and also a 1943 propaganda newsreel from the Protectorate.

#### Main topics discussed

Between five and eight assignments are offered for each short film. The Czech web app is structured with three assignment levels: a) "History big and small" encourages pupils to connect the "big" political picture with the "small" personal histories. b) The "Life story" assignment promotes basic competencies like comprehension, retelling the story and reproduction. c) The assignments at the third level, "Food for thought", relate thematically to each interview film and promote advanced competencies. Like the interview films, the assignments are also devoted to the years before and after the Second World War. They include memories of pre-war Czechoslovakia, emigration following the 1948 communist putsch as well as the *Prague Spring* and its suppression in 1968. Apart from imparting historical knowledge, the assignments help pupils develop general analytical skills and competencies needed today. The focus is on the ability to distinguish between reality and propaganda, general questions of human rights and freedoms, decision-making processes and consequences, human behaviour under extreme conditions, solidarity, help and ethical behaviour.

## The Russian Learning Platform

During the Second World War, millions of Soviet citizens – both civilians and prisoners of war – were deported to the German Reich for forced labour. On their return to the Soviet Union after the war, they were denied recognition as victims of war and their fate was veiled in silence in Soviet society. In Russia today, there are several publications on the subject and numerous initiatives have been launched in this field (Земсков, В. 2016 ; Полян, П. 2002). These are purely regional initiatives, however, with limited public resonance, and there is hardly any information on the subject in schoolbooks at the high school level. The Russian-language version of the interview archive Forced Labor 1939–1945. Memory and History has been online since the end of 2014.<sup>10</sup> It is hoped that, as a result, the personal experiences of the former forced labourers will become established in public awareness and enter into collective memory in Russia. That is the reason why the Russian-language version of the learning platform was created as an educational tool for schools with the objective of strengthening the fragile chain of intergenerational communication of historical experience.

### Choice of interviews

The Russian learning platform includes six biographical films produced from interviews taken from the Forced Labor online archive. Three of the films are about the fates of Soviet citizens: the Jew I.I. Abkovich, a former prisoner at the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp who survived the Holocaust, the former “Eastern worker” (“Ostarbeiter”) O.I. Smirnova, who worked in industry and was an inmate of the Ravensbrück concentration camp, and the former Soviet prisoner of war M.P. Bochkarev, who was held in several concentration camps including Buchenwald. One of the films is about the fate of a German, Elisabeth Kunesch, who was first imprisoned for political reasons and subsequently held at Ravensbrück concentration camp and was excluded from the “Volksgemeinschaft” (the “Aryan” people’s community). The Polish political prisoner Anna Palarczyk was a barracks clerk (“Blockschreiberin”) at Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp who was called as a witness at

the Auschwitz trial in the 1960s. The fate of the French forced labourer Victor Laville illustrates the illegality of National Socialist policies on occupied soil in France. All these people, belonging to various groups of victims of war, were long ignored in Russian society and research. The choice of interviews was made on the basis of the need to show Russian pupils the sufferings of people of various nationalities. On the first page, the interviewees are presented in the chronological order of Nazi expansion. That makes it possible to focus not only on the character of the war on the Eastern front and the position of the Jews and Soviet people as “Untermenschen” (subhumans) in the National Socialists’ racial ideology but also on the anguish of those Germans, Poles and French who rejected National Socialism. To that extent, the learning platform helps overcome the national perspective by including the perspectives of persecuted individuals from other countries. At the same time, attention is drawn to the diversity of the forms of forced labour employed by the National Socialists in Germany and the occupied areas of Europe during the Second World War, which offered very different chances of survival for the victims – from the “extermination through labour” to which the Jew I.I. Abkovich was exposed and the slavery to which concentration camp prisoners were subjected to the systematic murder through deliberate starvation of a large proportion of the Soviet prisoners of war. The platform also makes it possible to compare the working and living conditions of forced labourers from East and West Europe. All these aspects can be studied at high school level with the help of the tasks provided with every film.

#### Main topics discussed

The assignments are divided into three sections. The first section is devoted to familiarisation with the biographical films. The questions in the second section help users understand the character of forced labour and the living and working conditions in captivity. There is a strong focus on the aspects of resistance and solidarity between the prisoners independent of nationality or citizenship. All six films also describe life after liberation and the end of the war. The questions on this period enable pupils to see the difficulties

encountered by the former forced labourers on their return to the USSR. In this context, great importance is attached to the question of the position of this group of victims of war in the collective memory of Russia or their home country. The last section serves to underscore the specificities of a biographical narrative interview. The pupils can compare the biographical short film with the complete interview so as to observe the principles of designing different narratives. The learning platform also includes a context film as a source of basic information on the problem of forced labour under the National Socialists and its position in the culture of remembrance in Russia and Europe. For the teaching materials, numerous sources have been made available to Russia's research and educational communities for the first time. Documents from the Nazi concentration camps and documents kept by former victims or the Soviet administration, for example, provide opportunities for multi-perspective involvement with history.

The screenshot shows a web page titled "Обучение на основе интервью" (Learning based on interviews). At the top right, it says "ПРОГРАММА 1939-1945 ВОСПОМИНАНИЯ И ИСТОРИЯ". Below this are two tabs: "Биографии" (Biographies) and "Исторический контекст" (Historical context). A row of six small portrait photos of elderly people is displayed. Below the photos, the name "Ольга Ипполитовна Смирнова" (Olga Ippolitovna Smirnova) is shown, with the subtitle "Вспоминает жизнь Рахенсбрана...". The main heading "Обучение на основе интервью" is followed by a paragraph: "Свыше 20 миллионов человек вынуждены были трудиться на жидеино-социалистическую Германию в годы Второй мировой войны. На данной учебной платформе представлены рассказы шести человек, переживших опыт принудительного труда и пребывания в нацистских лагерях. Этот опыт разделел их жизнь на «до» и «после». В тему принудительного труда входит также контекстный фильм." (More than 20 million people were forced to work for the Jewish-Socialist Germany during the Second World War. On this educational platform, the stories of six people who experienced the experience of forced labor and staying in Nazi camps are presented. This experience divided their life into "before" and "after". The theme of forced labor also includes a contextual film.) To the right of the text is a search form with fields for "Имя или электронный адрес" (Name or email address), "Пароль" (Password), and a checkbox "Показать пароль" (Show password). Below the form are two buttons: "Авторизоваться (в личный кабинет)" (Log in) and "Регистрация" (Registration).

Russian learning platform: <https://obuchenie-na-osnove-intervyu.org/>

## Conclusion

Remarkably enough, it has proved comparatively easy – following the interview collection phase – to achieve a consensus between the three countries on common didactic and digital formats for the conceptual framework of the videotaped life story interviews. As a result, a transnational accepted answer was found to a whole series of educational and didactic requirements for work with this special type of source. Thanks to this common basis, the video interview plays a central role for work with the sources. This role is determined by the specific format of the life story interview films and their presentation on the user interface or touchscreen. In addition, a multi-perspective approach was selected with the choice of six or seven interviews with forced labourers, whose experiences of persecution were very diverse and whose interviews reflect the different ways in which they sought to come to terms with those experiences. Another thing the learning platforms have in common is the emphasis placed on careful contextualisation at the biographical and historical levels. In the interest of the educators, importance was attached to intuitive working, a good introduction, didactic comments and aids to preparation as well as scope for adding their own questions for their respective learning groups. The learning platforms include assignments that promote narrativity, media competence, source criticism, judgemental competence, reflection and action-oriented transfer and offer ample opportunities for users to produce and present their own results. For this common structure, it was important to develop an application that provides full scope for the development of independent, country-specific contents, which remain changeable and in transformation – just like our own views of each and every single video interview.

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- 1 For the Czech platform: the non-profit association Živá paměť in Prague (Šárka Jarská); for the Russian platform: the Regional Center of Oral History in Voronezh at the Voronezh Institute of High Technologies (Natalia Timofeeva); for the German platform: the Center for Digital Systems (CeDiS) at the Freie Universität Berlin directed by Nicolas Apostolopoulos.
- 2 Only rough estimates of the figures are possible, especially with regard to forced labour in the occupied territories. The Nazi Forced Labour Documentation Centre in Berlin-Schöneeweide with Mark Spoerer assumes there were at least 26 million forced labourers (see Fröhlich et al. 2013: 28).
- 3 Following years of international negotiations, the EVZ Foundation was established in 2000 with contributions from the German federal authority and German companies. On application, the fund paid € 2,000–7,000 in symbolic compensation to former forced labourers.
- 4 In spite of numerous individual studies, Herbert 1991 and Spoerer 2001 are still standard reading.
- 5 See the interview archive Forced Labor 1939–1945. Memory and History: [www.zwangsarbeit-archiv.de](http://www.zwangsarbeit-archiv.de) (see Plato/Leh/Thonfeld 2008).
- 6 Almost all the interviews have been transcribed, translated into German and made user-friendly with the help of lists of contents, indices and short biographies. Registered users can access them in the online archive Forced Labor 1939–1945. The archive is in English, German and Russian.
- 7 The educational DVD *Forced Labor 1939–1945. Eyewitness Interviews for Teaching* has been available in German from the German Federal Agency for Civic Education since 2011.
- 8 The full length versions of all the interviews mentioned in the following are accessible for registered users at [www.zwangsarbeit-archiv.de](http://www.zwangsarbeit-archiv.de)
- 9 Chmela, L. 1946; Mainuš, F. 1970; Kárný, M. 1991. M. Spoerer/2001/put the number of Czech forced labourers at 355,000.
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Teon Djingo

## TRACING VIDEOTAPED TESTIMONIES OF VICTIMS OF NATIONAL SOCIALISM FOR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES. THE MACEDONIAN CASE

The Second World War and the Holocaust in Macedonia  
under Bulgarian Occupation

When discussing the deportation of the Jews from Macedonia, it is often first necessary to describe what happened on the Balkan Peninsula, more precisely in Macedonia, during the Second World War. After the German invasion in April 1941, Yugoslavia capitulated and was divided up. The Vardar part of Macedonia, previously part of the kingdom of Yugoslavia, was divided into a Bulgarian and an Italian occupied zone. The basis for Bulgaria's anti-Jewish measures is in the *Law for Protection of the Nation*, imposed by the ministry of internal affairs and public health on 23 January 1941 and ratified by the Bulgarian king, Boris III. It used the Nuremberg laws of 1935 as a template to preserve what newspapers in the early 1940s described as "the purity of the Bulgarian nation". Macedonians and other nationalities in Bulgarian-occupied Macedonia were immediately absorbed as Bulgarians, but Jews were denied citizenship. Between January 1941 and December 1942, 40 laws, regulations, instructions and decisions were introduced in Bulgaria and its occupied territories, targeting the Jewish population within the Bulgarian state borders and excluding them from economic and political life. Jews had to wear a six-pointed yellow star on their left sleeve, to distinguish them from other Bulgarian citizens. Decree Number 598, issued early in 1943, banned Jewish children from attending non-Jewish schools. In some ways, it paved the way for the deportation of the Jews, because it was followed by an

order from Alexander Belev <sup>11</sup>, the chief commissioner in the Commissariat for Jewish Affairs, for civil servants to make lists of all Jews living in Bulgarian territory. Those lists were the basis of the Belev-Dannecker <sup>12</sup> agreement signed on 22 February 1943, as a result of which the Bulgarian government handed over 20,000 Jews from Bulgaria, the Vardar part of Macedonia and Aegean Thrace to Germany for deportation. There had been about 8,000 Jews in Macedonia, within the kingdom of Yugoslavia, before the Second World War: 3,795 in Skopje, 3,351 in Bitola, and 551 in Shtip. On the night of 10 to 11 March 1943, Jews from those three cities were taken from their homes to the Monopol tobacco warehouse in Skopje. The state and local authorities had made extensive preparations. However, despite the above mentioned lists, containing the age, sex, profession and address of Jews living in Macedonia, the local authorities had to provide temporary accommodation for the period between the eviction of the Jewish population and their deportation. The whole process was carried out in a highly disciplined manner, without much resistance from the Jewish population or the local inhabitants. Two days after the arrests from Shtip, Bitola and Skopje, Belev issued Order Number 865, seizing and selling property owned by Jews said to have emigrated from Bulgaria, who were in fact about to be deported to the extermination camp Treblinka. On 22, 25 and 29 March 1943, 7,148 Jews from Macedonia were sent to Treblinka. None survived. According to the latest research, they were sent directly to the gas chambers on arrival. <sup>13</sup>

Teaching about the Holocaust with Videotaped Bystander Interviews  
Nowadays, the Jewish community in the Republic of Macedonia numbers nearly 200 members. Most are descendants of Jews who managed to escape into Italian-occupied territories. Tragically, the aim to annihilate the Jews in Macedonia had an almost 100 percent success rate for those implementing it. The Holocaust is taught in both junior and secondary education in Macedonia, presented during two history classes in the ninth (age 13–14 years) and third grades (age 16–17 years). In higher education, the Holocaust is taught within global and national or local topics dealing with the Second World

War. In 2016, my organisation, the *Institute of National History* in Skopje, introduced exploration of this issue in the postgraduate and doctoral studies at the *Saints Cyril and Methodius University* in Skopje; a first in the Macedonian education system. There is excellent cooperation between the Institute of National History, the *State Archive of the Republic of Macedonia* and the *Holocaust Memorial Center for the Jews of Macedonia*, based on personal acquaintance and the mutual desire to study the life of the Jews in Macedonia before March 1943. The role of the *Bureau for the Development of Education*, which is part of Macedonia's Ministry of Education and Science, and actively participates in teacher training seminars and the preparation of textbooks, curriculums and teaching aids, has to be emphasised.

Teaching and remembering the Holocaust through narratives seems indispensable to those working with this subject, particularly for the future generations. Without living Jewish witnesses of the Holocaust in Macedonia, memories had to be sought elsewhere, among elderly non-Jews. The project, entitled the *Oral history interviews of the Former Yugoslavia Witnesses Documentation Project in Macedonia*, is part of the *Oral history interviews of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM)'s Perpetrators, Collaborators, and Witnesses: The Jeff and Toby Herr Testimony Initiative*, a multi-year project to record the testimonies of non-Jewish witnesses to the Holocaust. The interviews were directed and supervised by Nathan Beyrak. The Macedonian part of the project was carried out between 2012 and 2014 in Bitola, Shtip and Skopje, where the Jewish population had lived until the Second World War. Thirty interviews were recorded and are available for educational and public use on the official web page of the USHMM. <sup>14</sup> Transcripts in Macedonian and English are being prepared and will in due course be available to the scientific community and all those dealing with this issue professionally. As the name of the project suggests, the focus was on Macedonian citizens of non-Jewish origin who were perpetrators, collaborators or witnesses of the multi-ethnic way of life in the Macedonian cities between the wars, and during the Second World War.

## About the Interviews

Every interview is founded on oral history methodology. At the beginning of the process, local researchers traced witnesses. Professional teams filmed the interviews, usually in the witness's home, but sometimes at locations where the events described took place. Each interview is valuable and represents a rare oral source for everything that happened in Macedonia before and during March 1943, as the deportation of the Jews to Treblinka and further processes for stealing and selling off Jewish property at public auctions took place. This highlighted a need for video materials to be used as teaching tools for students in schools and universities in Macedonia. The collection allows future generations to go back in time through the narratives of collaborators and witnesses of the events that occurred in Macedonia before, during and after the Second World War.

The interviews can be divided into three groups. The first comprises witnesses who saw events directly associated with the deportation of the Jews from Macedonia or what happened later, the confiscation of Jewish property and its sale at public auctions. The second group consists of people who were buyers at these auctions, and the third is composed of people who participated in the demolition of Jewish houses after the Jewish population of Macedonia had been deported.

Although the State Archive of the Republic of Macedonia and the Holocaust Memorial Center for the Jews of Macedonia possess an extraordinary archive of documents and photographs that deal with the life of Jews in Macedonia between the wars and up to their deportation, these 30 interviews represent a remarkable first-hand source of information.

## Examples

I would like to highlight three key interviews. Their significance is neither in their length nor the traumatic memories recounted. They stand out because of the events through which the speakers passed as witnesses and the personal perspective this offers to the public and future generations. The first interview was given by Milan Terzovski (2014), who was mistakenly taken

to the Monopol tobacco warehouse in Skopje as a teenager, and spent about 48 hours with the Jewish population from Macedonia. Although he was young at the time, he gave us excellent information about the conditions in which the Jews were being held inside the Monopol tobacco warehouse during those two days. The second remarkable interview is with Aleksandar Nikolovski (2014), who lived next door to the Monopol tobacco warehouse in Skopje and was a daily witness of things happening in the yard of the building where Jews were being detained. On one occasion, Alexander, then ten years old, was invited into the courtyard by the Bulgarian soldiers and forced to retrieve numerous gold items from a pool with a shovel. He had to put them in a bucket and hand them over to the Bulgarian officer. The third especially important testimony came from Dimitar Andonov (2014), who lived in the city of Shtip. Dimitar, who was still at school, was recruited by the local government to help demolish houses in the Jewish neighbourhood. His testimony allows us to compare the role of the military, the police and the administrative authorities and their abuse of the local population. It shatters the myth in Macedonian historiography that local people had no role in the deportation of the Macedonian Jews and the subsequent sale and liquidation of their property. This interview is a complete counter-narrative to the official history in Macedonia and efforts to exonerate the local population.

### Education with Interviews

The Holocaust Memorial Center for the Jews of Macedonia was opened in 2011 as a permanent and indelible symbol of the suffering of the Macedonian Jewish population. Its educational programmes often include seminars on Holocaust education for junior and secondary school teachers from Macedonia and the Balkan states. This “educating the educators”, as it is called, is extremely important because these seminars provide teachers with materials and the latest information regarding Holocaust education in global and regional context, and show them what sources might be useful in their school during the history education classes. The thirty interviews undoubtedly represent an important segment of this training. During the seminars, teachers

are presented with clips from the interviews and given the opportunity to explore how to use interviews in history classes. The starting point is almost always the local history, followed by a focus on more specific segments, such as living together, community relations, deportation, the looting of Jewish property, etc. Educating the educators is only one step, perhaps one of the most important, to build a bridge between the findings of university professors and children in schools.

Regarding the various forms of antisemitism, it is important to be able to detect the smallest sign of it right from the beginning – in the past, the present and the future. This is where the teachers' role is crucial because they are in touch with future generations and have to direct them on the right path. The Holocaust Memorial Center for the Jews of Macedonia organises educational seminars, alone or in collaboration with other organisations working on this issue, such as the *Centropa* 15 project in Austria and *Mémorial de la Shoah* in France. One of the best uses of interviews in history courses, interviews that were made using oral history methods and are part of this collection, was when in a high school in Skopje showed the testimony of a perpetrator involved in destroying houses in the Jewish neighbourhood, followed by an interview with a bystander. Comparing the two very different accounts gave the students a great opportunity to create their own unique picture of what had been going on 70 years ago.

As Eduardo Galeano put it so beautifully: “History never really says goodbye. History says ‘See you later’” (2013). Using the videotaped testimonies in our educational programmes we are constantly facing our joint past through a different, very approachable dimension.

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- 1 Alexander Belev (1900–1945) was a Bulgarian political figure and a lawyer known for his extreme antisemitism. He was one of the founders of “Ratnik”, a far-right Bulgarian fascist organisation. From 1942 to 1943, he was the chief commissioner of the Commissariat for Jewish Affairs, the state body that regulated public relations under the provisions of the Law for the Protection of the Nation. In 1945 he was sentenced to death and executed.
- 2 Between 1940 and 1942, Theodor Dannecker (1913–1945), SS Hauptsturmführer, was responsible for the deportation of 13,000 Jews from France to the Auschwitz extermination camp. As a man trusted by Adolf Eichmann, he was sent back to Berlin and became the highest German official in organising the Holocaust in the territories occupied by Bulgaria. After being arrested by US-American Forces in 1945, he committed suicide in Bad Tölz, Germany.
- 3 The scientists who deal with this issue, according to the documentation in their possession, are familiar with the events in the tobacco warehouse in Skopje and the route along which the trains with the Jews from Macedonia were deported. However, thanks to the memories of Chil Rajchman, which were first published in 2009 in French under the title *Je suis le dernier Juif. Treblinka (1942–1943)* and translated into Croatian in 2014, a clear picture began to appear. In Chapter 15, entitled Transports of the Bulgarian Jews, Rajchman remembers the arrival of the Jews from Macedonia and their last moments, see Rajchman, Chil (2014). *Ja sam posljednji Zidov*, Zagreb: Fraktura, pp.122–126.
- 4 See [www.ushmm.org](http://www.ushmm.org); <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn50874>, accessed 12 July 2017.
- 5 See [http://www.centropa.org/de/country\\_header/centropa-austria](http://www.centropa.org/de/country_header/centropa-austria), accessed 27 September 2017.

Iryna Kashtalian

## THE EDUCATIONAL USE OF VIDEOED MEMOIRS AND MATERIAL ON THE HISTORY OF THE MINSK GHETTO AND THE MALY TROSTENETS EXTERMINATION SITE

### The Historical Context

The consequences of the Second World War were catastrophic for Belarus. The Nazis and their collaborators burned 209 towns or regional centres and around 9,200 villages. In 628 of them, the inhabitants were burned alive together with the settlement. The loss of life was particularly heavy and substantially affected the make-up of the population (IBB Dortmund et al. 2016: 65). According to official data, over 2.2 million of the inhabitants were killed – almost every fourth person. Jews were especially hard hit: 810,000 or 82% of the 990,000 Jews in Belarus perished (Navitski 1998: 260).

There were more than 110 areas during the war for the habitation and later extermination of Jews – ghettos. Around 100,000 Jews were interned in the Minsk ghetto, one of the largest in the Nazi-occupied Soviet Union, including deportees from Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Lithuania. For decades, no attention was paid to the history of the Minsk ghetto and the Maly Trostenets extermination camp <sup>1</sup> in either Germany or Belarus. It was the final destination not only for Soviet prisoners of war, resistance fighters and civilians, but also for tens of thousands of Jews from Minsk and adjacent small towns, as well as from places which were part of the Third Reich, for example Brünn, Cologne, Hamburg, Königsberg and Vienna. First reports about the crimes of the Nazis in the vicinity of the village of Maly Trostenets near Minsk appeared as early as 1943. In 1944, Soviet periodicals published a report of the Extraordinary State Commission of the USSR *On the*

*Ascertainment and Investigation of Atrocities of the German-Fascist Invaders in Minsk and Environs*. But the veil of silence regarding victims of the Holocaust, forced labourers and former prisoners of war, who did not fit into the conception of the victors, also applied to the history of Maly Trostenets. Not until 1965 was a compact set of documents published in the compendium *The Crimes of the German-Fascist Occupiers in Belarus, 1941–1944*. Maly Trostenets is mentioned as a place where 206,500 people were killed (IBB Dortmund et al. 2016: 31). And while the exact figures may be the subject of scholarly debate, this tragic locality will forever be engraved in European memorial culture as the place of a terrible tragedy.<sup>12</sup>

### Commemorative Policy and History Education Regarding the Victims of Nazism in Belarus

In Belarus, unfortunately, the tendency remains to officially cherish the memory of victories but to forget the prisoners of death camps, ghetto inhabitants or forced labourers. The first monuments erected in Belarus extolled the victors. Those who did not fight to the death but were deported to Germany as forced labourers and later returned to their homeland were often seen as Nazi collaborators. Some of them were punished or they were forced to conceal their experiences as forced labourers (Rebstock 2017; Zahra 2009). From the beginning, endeavours to study and popularise the events of the war were carried out by Party and Soviet-government bodies in Moscow. They aimed for a broad museification of the partisan struggle in Belarus. Commenting on present commemorative policy towards the war in Belarus, the independent expert Alexei Bratochkin considers that,

“commemoration of the Great Patriotic War, whose canon was formed in the late-Soviet era, has become the basis for the model of collective identity. [...] An open re-Sovietisation of memorial culture took place in the period from 1994 to 2003, utilising the Soviet historical narrative and model of commemoration.” (Bratochkin 2016: 6)

The events of the Holocaust and their treatment today remain a contradictory, problematic issue, which has been hushed up since Soviet times. The concealment of the facts about the mass extermination of the Jews manifested itself at commemorative places, where monuments referred to the murdered Jews simply as “civilians”, “Soviet citizens” or “victims of fascism”. The Communist Party and local authorities aimed to prevent the memorialisation of the victims of the tragedy which befell the *Jewish* people. Somewhat more attention began to be given to the topic after “conditional” recognition by the country’s top leadership – the President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko – who in 2008 visited the Yama, a memorial on the site of the former Minsk ghetto dedicated to 5,000 Jews who were murdered on 2 March 1942.<sup>13</sup> On 22 June 2015, Lukashenko unveiled the first part of the Maly Trostenets memorial complex, where he also spoke of the ghetto and referred to both places as killing sites during the war. And yet there is still no special mention of this in the new memorial, where specialists estimate that the majority of victims were Jews.

As long as historical memory in Belarus is treated primarily as a political issue, its preservation and educational activities based around it will face particular problems. Several of these can already be identified:

1. An orientation towards a “general history” compulsory for all, independent of different contexts and individual choices.

This becomes evident when we consider that there is only one authorised, official textbook for each school subject in the education system of Belarus. In terms of the preservation of memory, the result of this arrangement is that no emphasis is placed on the various participants’ individual and group problems or their complex history. Accordingly, oral history is more likely to be used in such circumstances for manipulation – to affirm the overall conception presented in the textbook as the only correct one.

Here, too, the human factor is significant. Much depends on the individual school teacher – whether he or she wants to present the topic of the war and show an alternative to the textbook information, and whether he or she has the time to prepare an “unofficial” lesson with the students in

order to take a critical look at the information presented. Most staff restrict themselves to inviting veterans to talk to the class or visiting the *Museum of the Great Patriotic War*, which goes to further cement the standing of “general history”. Active education, where students are involved in activities towards the creation of a product of their own, takes place considerably less often, although the curriculum does envisage students undertaking “research” and “project work”. These are often essays on the perception of the topic through the prism of family history.

2. Emphasis on heroisation and/or victimisation.

This problem flows from the premises set in the public remembrance discourse by official organisations, which are not yet prepared to adopt the European experience of critically interpreting the past.

3. Insufficient attention to the history of the Holocaust.

The Second World War is studied at school in Year 10 (11 years of formal education) in the subjects “World History” and “History of Belarus”. The respective textbooks touch on the Holocaust in just a few paragraphs. The terms “genocide” and “ghetto” are used, but the word “Holocaust” does not crop up even once. Despite the tremendous losses suffered by the Jewish population, the history of the Catastrophe in Belarus is dealt with only superficially in the elective course “The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet People” for students at tertiary level. According to Ales Smalyanchuk (2017) the tragedy of the Holocaust in Belarus continues to remain in the shadow of traditional Soviet myths about the Great Patriotic War.

The Historical Workshop and the Development of its Digital Archive Society can try to help resolve these problems by organising independent educational initiatives. One of these is the *Leonid Levin Historical Workshop*, a Belarusian-German project <sup>14</sup> (hereafter: the Workshop). This initiative provides a different perspective for examining the topic of the war by using the testimonies of eyewitnesses, including those conserved in video format. Recordings of such interviews are becoming particularly relevant now that very few witnesses are still alive.

The first initiatives to make the history of the Minsk ghetto and the Maly Trostenets extermination site visible for the public emerged in the 1990s. The cities of Bremen, Düsseldorf and Hamburg installed memorial stones at the former Jewish cemetery in Minsk to commemorate murdered fellow countrypeople. The Yama monument was reconstructed and a figural composition added by the architect Leonid Levin. The international education centres in Dortmund and Minsk, together with the *Union of Belarusian Jewish Organisations and Communities*, decided to establish the Historical Workshop. Since 2003, it has been a place of remembrance and study open to all who wish to learn about the history of the Minsk ghetto and the Holocaust. It allows all interested members of the public, witnesses and researchers from various countries to engage in dialogue, express their views on history from different perspectives, and fight against prejudice. The Workshop supports former victims of the Nazi occupation of Belarus, develops and implements educational programmes on history, and organises meetings with eyewitnesses for the young generation. It runs research programmes and projects to expand and deepen the knowledge of teachers, social workers and museum staff about the Holocaust and the culture of memory regarding the war. We, the Workshop's team, also work to intensify the discussion on the inclusion of more information about the Holocaust in secondary and tertiary learning. Publications containing the recollections of former captives of the Minsk ghetto, forced labourers, Righteous among the Nations, and prisoners of the Auschwitz death camp are a further educational resource for schools and universities. Since 2014, interviews with these eyewitnesses and other archive material on the history of the Nazi occupation have been collected and housed in the *Witness Archive of the Minsk Historical Workshop* 15.

The archive of the Workshop was created to document the life histories of Belarusian victims of Nazism in Russian and German, as well as to provide the public with information about the fate of Jews deported from the German Reich and murdered in the Minsk ghetto or Maly Trostenets. This material is being actively integrated into the learning process. The archive's target group consists of Belarusian secondary and tertiary students, school teachers

and university lecturers, visitors to the Workshop and, last but not least, the victims of Nazism themselves and their relatives who seek to preserve the memory of the dramatic wartime events for future generations.

Since the fate of many of the victims of Nazism is still unknown, the development of the digital archive's collections is carried out by the Workshop team on an ongoing basis as new personal and archive documents arrive, in cooperation with diverse educational institutions in Belarus and abroad. In future we plan to create an English version of the website. The archive contains 338 life histories in Russian and German, including 22 video and five audio interviews. The Righteous among the Nations collection is of particular interest for those who deal with video interviews.



Righteous among the Nations Viktor Chorny, Credit: Leonid Levin Historical Workshop Minsk

The main thrust of our work is to promote the utilisation of previously collected interviews. Although we continue to organise meetings with surviving witnesses, we also experiment with other applications of oral histories. Testimonies recorded in sound and image give us more opportunity to illustrate historical information (“giving history a face and a voice”), to make the reconstruction of events realistic and interesting for young people, to demonstrate different points of view and to maintain a bond between generations. The Workshop actively cooperates in these endeavours with the *Belarusian Oral History Archive (BAVG)*, a unique depository of the memoirs of witnesses about various events of the twentieth century, which contains over 1,100 interviews in more than fifty collections.<sup>16</sup> Around half of them are in video format. Since the war caused indelible trauma to most of the witnesses, it is present in practically all the recordings, and many contain information about the Holocaust in Belarus.

The primary aim of the Workshop is to further the use of memoirs of living survivors for educational purposes. We currently have three main avenues of activity:

1. An exhibition about Maly Trostenets
2. A competition for school students
3. Educational material on the history of the Minsk ghetto

### Memoirs as an Educational Resource at the Exhibition about Maly Trostenets

The *Maly Trostenets Extermination Camp. History and Remembrance* exhibition was prepared by historians from Austria, Belarus, the Czech Republic and Germany (IBB Dortmund et al. 2016). The exhibition honours the memory of the victims and shows the routes by which they were taken from Austria, Czechoslovakia and Germany to the killing site in Belarus. It is being hosted in various European cities.

The exhibition has a programme of complementary activities. The Workshop team’s regular sessions with secondary and tertiary students in Belarus involve methodological and didactic work focussing on a range of aspects,

including videoed memoirs about the events in Maly Trostenets that are presented at the exhibition and the Witnesses Archive of the Workshop that is accessible at the exhibition. It also organises meetings with witnesses, some of them from abroad. In this framework, we hold seminars for teachers on “Methods of working with students on the Great Patriotic War of the Belarusian People based on the exhibition”. The participants will later be able to work on similar topics using the methods they have learned.



Exhibition on Maly Trostenets, photo: Dirk Planert

## “The Victims of Nazism and Killing Sites in Belarus”: An Oral History Competition for Students

The Workshop’s archive still has an insufficient stock of oral accounts of surviving witnesses to the war like from old residents of Minsk who can still give informative interviews about the history of the Minsk ghetto and Maly Trostenets. The team has decided to turn to young people for assistance, wishing at the same time to instruct them in the methodology of oral history and the collection of interviews with surviving witnesses. It was therefore decided to organise a competition for secondary and tertiary students lasting until the end of 2017. The goal is to document the fates of previously unknown victims of the killing sites in Belarus, to enlarge the Workshop’s digital archive and to popularise this resource in the education sector in Belarus.

Participants in the competition prepare a biographical portrait of a little-known victim of the killing sites based on interviews with that person’s relatives, photographs from family archives and other documents. The entry is submitted in essay form together with a copy of a video interview and accompanying documentation.

Information about the victim’s life before the war, their life during the occupation, and the family’s ways of preserving the memory of the person are to be the key units of meaning in the biographical portraits. Participants can obtain informational support by consulting with the Workshop team and may also use its digital archive and library, where the best entries will later be included. Recording a video interview with a witness to the period of occupation of Belarus is central to preparing an entry for the competition. Our target group consists of witnesses or their close relatives who have information about particular victims of killing sites. Oral history is an indispensable method because of the dearth of written source material, and it allows us to understand how the events of the past were perceived by an ordinary person subject to them. By conversing with eyewitnesses, participants can learn about the witnesses’ paths in life, their horrendous experiences, as well as the individual and societal traumas caused by the deaths of friends and relatives.



Eyewitness Maya Krapina and students. Credit: Leonid Levin Historical Workshop Minsk

At the same time, we are aware that it is not enough to rely on recorded oral history interviews alone due to the difficulty of finding immediate witnesses. The organisers have therefore oriented students to also search for other sources of information, especially in the accessible oral-history archives with existing video interviews on the topic. One of the difficulties of holding the competition is to find well-considered ways to motivate both teachers, who are extremely busy with work-related responsibilities, including the “compulsory” state competitions, and students, who are often averse to taking initiative and showing independence in research work.

Therefore, in order to reach the largest possible audience on the one hand and achieve good results on the other, particular arrangements have been made:

1. The theme of the competition has been broadened to allow the collection of information about **any** of the killing sites in Belarus and their little-known victims. This motivates the participants through a connection to local history, potentially anywhere in Belarus, in contrast to the narrower topic of Maly Trostenets. The students are asked first of all to search for histories of people they may be able to find out about in their own families and social environment.
2. Special methodical material has been prepared, some of it available for download, with a detailed description of the stages involved in the process and with prompts of what to do if difficulties arise on this path. Particular emphasis is placed on the responsibility for making a quality recording of the interview and learning the particularities of talking with an eyewitness traumatised by the war.
3. Interactive seminars have been held for interested teachers and (individual) students with practical exercises to sensitise them for preparing a biographical portrait of a killing-site victim using various sources, above all oral history. They were familiarised with the methodology for presenting the victim's path in life, dividing it into the most important periods (for example: childhood, life before the war and survival during the war), focussing in particular on wartime events. Much attention was given to the opportunities of using videoed memoirs from the archive of the Workshop and its partner, the BAVG. For teachers, the seminars accentuated the didactic possibilities of using the competition entry as part of their educational activities.
4. The possibility of publication can provide a further stimulus for participants.

### Educational Material on the History of the Minsk Ghetto

As long as old residents of Minsk are alive, we need to try and preserve their narratives for the future. The competition for students is thematically broad and largely educational in orientation, so it cannot fully assist in *professionally* gathering sufficient material on topical issues for filling the

blanks in the history of the Holocaust in the Minsk area.

From its inception, the Workshop successfully cooperated with individual Minsk schools, which provided excerpts for publication from the memoirs of surviving witnesses to the war from their districts of the city; these were later put out as books of memoirs. Analysis shows that a considerable part of this information was collected in the form of memoirs prepared by the witnesses themselves, and the information from interviews was derived without using the proper methodology for conducting conversations with witnesses. This led us to the idea that it made sense to ask the respondents who had given information for our paper-based editions via the schools, if they are still of sound mind and adequate memory, for additional interviews for the Workshop's archive. These would be collected with an eye to quality, using a special thematic questionnaire on the history of the Holocaust in the Minsk area. The preliminary collection of information and the contacting of witnesses require a considerable amount of time. This has to do with the complexity of selecting information about people who were of conscious age during the events in question and are still able to speak for a videocamera. We therefore will use various avenues to search for witnesses through specialised organisations and announcements in the media.

In the course of one week in July 2017, a concerted drive was carried out with volunteers to collect such oral accounts in the form of a research field trip organised by the Workshop in partnership with the BAVG. 20 selected volunteers (historians, multipliers and students) took a short course in the basics of conducting an oral-history interview, with immersion in the history of the Holocaust in Belarus, the Minsk ghetto and the Maly Trostenets extermination site, and afterwards went out to talk with eyewitnesses. We gathered over forty video interviews – more than 120 hours of footage – with important witnesses for the Workshop's archive. Most of the survivors have Jewish roots and were born in the 1930s (the oldest in 1923).

Thematic transcription of the most important excerpts will now be carried out in order that they can be used for preparing a set of worksheets on the Holocaust, the Minsk ghetto and Maly Trostenets, with the goal of subsequently

applying them in school lessons. For this purpose, a group of didactic specialists from Belarus and Germany has been brought together to use the testimonies recorded during the field trip and create a quality educational product. When the set of worksheets is ready, we plan to test it in classrooms to popularise its use and help spread it to other schools. We also aim to organise a round table with curriculum designers in 2018 to actualise dialogue on the importance and necessity of making the history of the Holocaust more present in school lessons.

In future, this material will also be used in the educational activities of the Workshop to supplement the excursion to the exhibition devoted to the Minsk ghetto. We also plan to offer it to libraries and museums thematically linked to the Second World War. Interested members of the public will be able to download the material from the Workshop's website.

### Anticipated Difficulties

- The need to prepare material which corresponds to the specific official, ideological framework in order for the product to be authorised for use in schools. The solution may lie in meeting with active teachers and discussing what formulations and formats of material to choose so that it can be used in lessons without any problems.
- The difficulty of obtaining the Ministry of Education's approval for the material under consideration for use in schools. In Belarus there are no channels for independent initiatives to have a say in the development of the curriculum, since it is strictly controlled by the state. The production of true quality materials, their testing in real classroom conditions and cooperation with official institutions may be a solution. The Workshop has experience in promoting educational products. We cooperate towards this end with regional institutes for the development of education. This partnership will enable us to officially provide teachers with a set of materials to accompany out-of-class activities or thematic lessons. It is very important that, (a) the materials be of high quality and completely ready for use (not requiring additional financial outlay by the teacher); (b)

methods be used which are innovative in Belarus, e.g. oral history. These two criteria are taken into account by the Ministry of Education, as well as the institutes and organisations which cooperate with it.

- Low motivation on the part of teachers to use such material. This problem must be resolved by holding events to popularise the product, explaining how easy it is to integrate it into the education process.
- Whether or not to use the testimonies of people who were children at the time of the war. This will be decided collectively by the authors after analysing the structure and content of the material.



Blagovschina in 2014. Leonid Levin Historical Workshop Minsk

## Outlook

Consequently, although the Workshop is still at the initial stage of using videoed memoirs in educational work, its activities are channelled towards making it the mainspring for integrating interviews with victims of Nazism into the learning process in Belarus, and one of its prime objectives is to heighten the presence of information about the history of the Holocaust. Perhaps this will have a positive effect on changing the content of school textbooks.

Although the Workshop still mainly just collects video interviews with surviving witnesses, albeit using the latest recording techniques, its team is already working in parallel with multipliers to orient them towards the search for new perspectives on familiar topics, and to independently record quality conversations with eyewitnesses. Preparing specific products aimed at interpretation of the videoed memoirs for exhibitions and publications is a positive direction in the Workshop's activities. Motivating teachers and students, and having information about the history of the Holocaust included in school textbooks and other educational material, remain problems in Belarus, but these are in the stage of being resolved.

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Zahra, T. (2009). Lost Children. Displacement, Family, and Nation in Postwar Europe. In *The Journal of Modern History* 81 (1): European Childhood in the Twentieth Century, pp. 45–86.

- 1 Maly Trostenets was the largest killing site on the territory of Belarus and the occupied areas of the USSR. It was set up by the Sicherheitsdienst (SD) on the south-eastern outskirts of Minsk. The toponym “Trostenets” covers several sites: the Blagovschina locality – a place of extermination; the Shashkovka locality – a place where corpses were incinerated and large numbers of people were killed and the corpses burnt; and the labour camp itself. This range of localities impeded later definition of the place – extermination camp, extermination site or killing site? In any case, it served as a place of annihilation from 1942 to 1944.
- 2 Of these 206,500 people killed in Maly Trostenets, about 150,000 were Jews murdered in Blagovschina. In addition to Jews, other groups were also exterminated, including prisoners of war and members of the resistance. According to Christian Gerlach, the overall numbers were smaller: He estimates that 60,000 people were killed during the Nazi occupation near Trostenets. See Gerlach, C. (1999). *Kalkulierte Morde. Die deutsche Wirtschafts- und Vernichtungspolitik in Weißrußland 1941 bis 1944 (Calculated Murder. German Economic and Extermination Policy in Byelorussia from 1941 to 1944)*. Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, p.770.
- 3 An obelisk to commemorate the victims, with inscriptions in Russian and Yiddish, was inaugurated at the Yama in 1946 (IBB Dortmund et al. 2016: 209).
- 4 <http://gwminsk.com>, accessed 28 July 2017.
- 5 <http://zeitzeugenarchiv.gwminsk.com>, accessed 28 July 2017.
- 6 <http://nashapamiac.org>, accessed 28 July 2017.

Peter Gautschi

## VIDEOTAPED EYEWITNESS INTERVIEWS WITH VICTIMS OF NATIONAL SOCIALISM FOR USE IN SCHOOLS

### Introduction

Classroom and extracurricular holocaust education is today confronted by a number of major challenges.

Firstly, the surviving eyewitnesses are falling silent (Gross/Steivick 2015: 3–6). For many decades, their testimonies and accounts have provided young people with an emotional experience and an intellectual stimulus, with information and knowledge and a desire to learn more (Spiegel 2013: 111–113). With the passing of time, such opportunities for learning are becoming fewer.

Secondly, educators are being inundated by the sheer volume of new teaching materials on the subject of the Holocaust. New sources are being found and adapted for the classroom, and new media are being used to provide innovative educational materials (Apostolopoulos/Pagenstecher 2013: 15–18): Eyewitnesses now tell their stories in tablet apps or in the form of three-dimensional interactive projects, and virtual tours of the original sites of the Holocaust are now available.<sup>1</sup>

Thirdly, soaring expectations are being made of Holocaust education: Pupils are to be familiarised with the causes, course and consequences of the Holocaust. They are expected to be able to independently grasp the essentials from eyewitness interviews, do their own research, recognise the present-day relevance of historical events, develop appropriate attitudes and refine their competencies for historical literacy (Gautschi et al. 2013: 7–11).

There is ample evidence to suggest that these challenges can in fact be met: Firstly, young people today – more than 70 years after the Holocaust – are

showing a constant level of interest in this, the biggest crime against humanity. Their interest is supported by a global consensus on the need to keep alive the history and our memory of this event. In Europe especially, the Holocaust has become a common historical point of reference. As the terrible crimes committed affected the whole continent, the Holocaust has become a paradigmatic focus of remembrance and a central element of memory cultures (Rathenow/Wenzel/Weber 2013). This development has been supported by the work of transnational networks such as the *International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA)*, which was founded in 1998, the *Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme* (Fracapane/Hass 2014) and others.

A second reason for equanimity in the light of the challenges facing Holocaust education is doubtless the promising opportunities presented by modern digital media. Various empirical studies into the benefits of digital videos as a teaching aid show that digital media in an appropriate setting have positive effects on learning (Merkt/Schwan 2016: 99–101). Such media have developed by leaps and bounds in the last few years in terms of accessibility and interactivity. Learners today are competent users of digital media, and that has led to the development of new presentation strategies like the *Flipped Classroom*, in which pupils work independently with interactive learning programmes.

There is also a third cause for optimism: A large number of experienced educators have developed, tested, analysed and evaluated a wide range of learning scenarios (Eckmann/Dreier 2015: 197–199). Similarly, the workshop on *Localisation of videotaped testimonies of victims of National Socialism in educational programmes*, which was held in Vienna on 9–11 January 2017 and is the subject of a chapter in these conference proceedings, again demonstrated the variety and frequency of good practice in Holocaust education. The goal of this paper is to present a systematic overview of the use of videotaped eyewitness interviews with victims of National Socialism in the educational context on the basis of a five-stage analysis. First of all, the videotaped testimonies presented during the workshop are considered as a specific genre.

Then a theoretical model is introduced on the basis of the didactic triangle to describe and localise the educational materials presented. In a third step, we will look at how children, young people and adults learn about history with the help of eyewitness videos. In the fourth part, those aspects of the educational materials presented are identified that seem most promising. The objective is to define factors that have a positive influence on the use within the school system of videotaped eyewitness testimonies with victims of National Socialism.

In conclusion, the importance is stressed – especially in the context of video eyewitness interviews with victims of National Socialism – of maintaining a cycle of practice, theory and empiricism and of focussing on the students.

#### Typical Aspects of the Genre of Videotaped Eyewitness Interviews

Videotaped eyewitness interviews are a phenomenon of the second half of the 20th century and the 21st century. They have become particularly relevant for *teaching* history. Today these interviews are available on any historical subject, such as the economic recovery after the Second World War, the Cold War, decolonialisation, contemporary wars, migration and especially the Holocaust. They address various historical fundamentals like dominion, economy, culture, forms of social injustice, or self and other. Eyewitnesses in a wide range of situations and phases of life face the camera and answer questions or narrate their experiences. Many of them are in the third third of life when the video is made. As the learners are young people, there is accordingly an age gap that needs to be taken into account. In addition to the considerable differences between the various eyewitnesses and their narratives, there are also differences in the ways in which the videos are made, reflecting developments and diversity in the genre over the last few decades (Grassl 2007: 26–33). Until about 40 years ago, documentaries were nearly always made at the original locations. The sound was left unedited and the documentary film makers worked without special effects or filters and without any alienation effects in time and place. Documentaries were meant to be as factual possible and all forms of deliberate fictionality were

avoided. And yet, as these documentaries were rarely unedited chance recordings, the way they were cut and the use of intertitles or subtitles – for example to structure the account, announce a new topic or provide a translation or explanation – had a significant influence on the picture presented and its reception. In the last few years, more and more use has been made in documentary films of expressive and rhetorical techniques so as to underscore the message. That has led to the development of various hybrid forms<sup>12</sup> that are important for both television and cinema documentaries on historical subjects, which have also made their mark on the style of production of videotaped eyewitness interviews. Such hybrid formats have become popular with audiences and are now an established element of historical culture. The camera work, for example, varies considerably depending on the purpose of the eyewitness interviews and the genre. Whereas earlier interviews were filmed with a static camera or with two static cameras without zooming or panning, moving cameras are now common and intensive use is made of zoom and pan. A good example of the use of moving cameras can be seen in the *Witnesses and Education* series of films in the project run by the *International School for Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem* and the *Hebrew University*. Such camera work has a significant impact on the character of the eyewitness videos and naturally also influences the reception process. Some video interviews give the impression that the people talking were speaking freely, while in others an interviewer can be heard and sometimes seen. Some of the interviews presented during the workshop were filmed in the subjects' living rooms, while others were made outside or even at original historical locations. In some cases there are hardly any signs of editing, while in others the cuts are fast and frequent. In addition, some of the videos simply show "talking heads", i.e. head-and-shoulders shots of the interviewees, with exclusively intradiegetic sound, i.e. sound produced in the world filmed in the context of the interview, whereas others employ background music designed to reinforce the visual and spoken message and heighten the emotional response.<sup>13</sup> Eyewitness videos are often made with the intention of presenting an exceptional biography, a

unique account for future generations and a wider audience, and thus adding a valuable source to the universe of history. In other cases the intention is to complement or contrast with other sources: History is to be viewed from a different perspective with a focus on the narrative of those “at the bottom” or of those involved, the people who acted and suffered. Eyewitness interviews are also filmed to show “how things really were”. Often enough, however, the audience does not treat the testimonies in the way the producers intended: What was meant to be a source – as the product of interaction between the interviewer and interviewee and the camera crew and production team – is sometimes seen by pupils as a finished narrative. It is a central challenge of teaching and learning with the help of videotaped testimonies to identify and communicate the source element, i.e. to distinguish between the historical, factual level on the one hand and the creative narrative level on the other. Finally, the environment in which eyewitness interviews are embedded and located also influences their character. Here again, there is now considerable diversity: We are confronted with videotaped testimonies in the form of short videoclips, trailers and lead-ins, talking heads and documentary films, in hypertext environments, on DVDs, on websites, in online archives, on YouTube or integrated in specific tablet or web apps, in which the interviews have been edited for educational purposes, with assignments added in some cases.

### The Didactic Triangle – a Structural Model of Teaching

In the last few years, and also in this volume, Holocaust educators have employed a wide variety of the above types of videotaped eyewitness interviews with victims of National Socialism. In order to more precisely localise the phenomena involved, use is made of the didactic triangle with the seven aspects a-g (Gautschi 2015: 6). This structural model serves to describe the educational materials shown and documented. The equilateral form of the triangle has been chosen, with the videotaped eyewitness interviews placed at the centre of all this complex and multidimensional activity. The lower corner of the didactic triangle represents the teacher and the two upper

corners the subject and the students. This approach focusses on the fact that the teacher's task is to facilitate and support the students' encounter with the subjects involved.

- a) All teaching is about a certain subject, about an excerpt from culture or a reconstruction of culture (the victims of National Socialism in the examples to be discussed). This subject – represented at top left in the triangle – can be considered and analysed from various perspectives and with various goals. The “topic” derives from the perspective given, i.e. in the eyewitness videos and their contextualisation in the case of our examples.
- b) Teaching is an institutional activity. That defines the roles of the actors involved. The pupils, students or adults who are to learn from the eyewitness videos are represented at top right. The goal of all teaching is to achieve a change in the knowledge and understanding, ability and/or willingness of these learners.
- c) Learning is triggered and facilitated by the representatives of the informed members of a society, namely the teachers (at the bottom of the didactic triangle). They have three lines of influence; They communicate and interact with the learners and create a climate that is conducive to learning; they support the culture of teaching and learning and facilitate the learners' encounter with the subjects; and they define the “what?”, “how?” and “why?” of teaching and ensure that the subjects are significant for society and the individual. Depending on which of the teachers' lines of action seem to be dominant, they are either communicators, managers or coaches.
- d) Videotaped eyewitness interviews do not in themselves trigger learning processes, although that does occasionally happen. In the educational context, it is important to provide learners with assignments or defined goals so that they understand what exactly they should do with the videotaped eyewitness interviews in order to learn from them.
- e) The culture of teaching and learning defines the framework of the learners' encounter with the subject. The culture of teaching and learning is shaped by various aspects, especially the mode of teaching and the media

employed – in this case the videotaped eyewitness interviews with victims of National Socialism.

- f) Teaching can always be viewed from various perspectives. One option is to read and interpret teaching as a special form of communication. This interaction and communication within the teaching/learning group is also important when working with videotaped eyewitness interviews.
- g) The fact that the environment is a key factor in shaping education and teaching is self-evident, and it plays a major role in the use of video interviews. This factor is introduced into the teaching situation through the opinions and attitudes of the teacher and also of course through the media and materials provided.

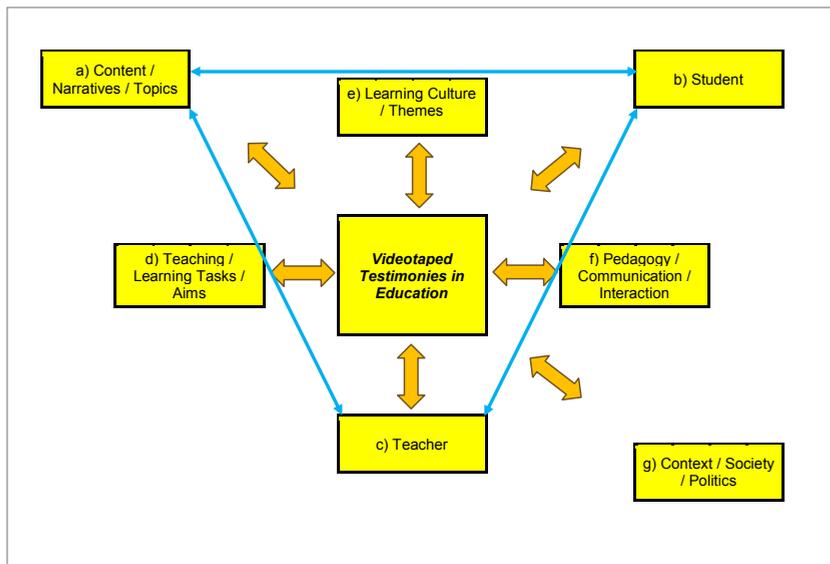


Figure 2: The didactic triangle – a structural model with seven aspects to describe educational materials based on videotaped testimonies

### A Model for Historical Learning to Assess Educational Potential

Children, young people and adults, who are confronted in an educational context with a videotaped eyewitness interview with victims of National Socialism should be able to learn from it. In this section, that learning process is explained on the basis of a model for historical learning. The model also serves to assess the educational potential of the example presented. For any educational context, it makes it possible to identify steps that could be effective in other situations in which historical learning is to be facilitated.

From a theoretical point of view, historical learning involves the four steps 1–4 (Gautschi 2011: 50).

1. Historical learning, as illustrated in Figure 2, can begin when the individual learner (right) focuses his/her attention on a certain eyewitness interview and, consciously or unconsciously, starts (step 1) to ask questions or formulate (pre)suppositions – or is asked to answer questions.
2. The learners then explore the eyewitness interview, identify events, names, places and phenomena and in so doing clarify the historical facts of the case. They develop (step 2) a “historical subject analysis”, which enables them to better understand the interview.
3. In the next step the learners interpret the eyewitness interview. They look for causes and effects, for what came before and what followed, and they establish links with other events in the universe of history (left). This contextualisation enables them (step 3) to make a “historical subject judgement”.
4. Then the learners establish a connection between the eyewitness interview and its historical significance on the one hand and a personal or social response on the other. They assess what they have classified on the basis of their individual questions and thus develop (step 4) a “historical value judgement” with regard to present or future, individual or societal situations and problems.

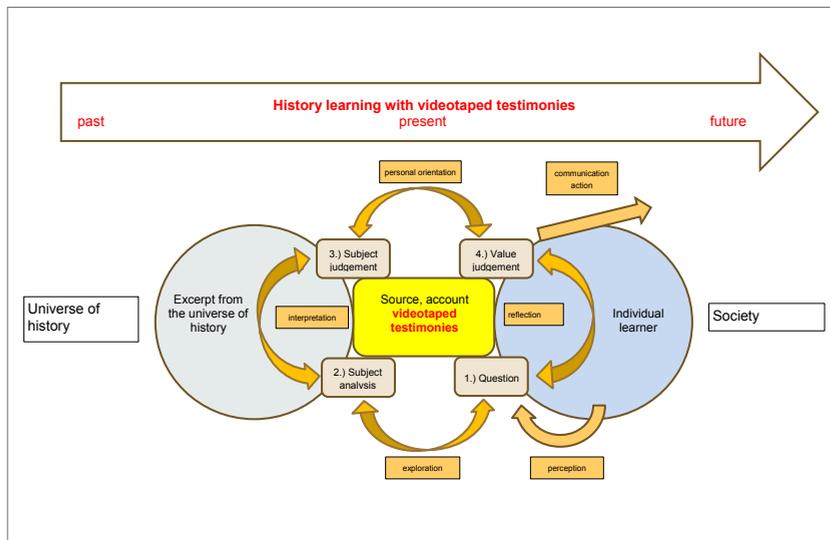


Figure 1: Historical learning – a process model in four steps for describing individuals’ encounters with the universe of history using videotaped testimonies

In this four-stage historical learning process, learners acquire knowledge and competence; they refine their historical consciousness and develop their own identity. That enables them to take decisions, communicate and take action. This historical learning process can take a number of different courses. In the case of films in general and eyewitness interview videos in particular, it is often the case that learners do not proceed via a subject analysis and subject judgement to arrive at a value judgement; their value judgement is created immediately on the basis on their first impressions or other psychological phenomena (Brauer/Lücke 2013: 18–22). For more thoughtful individuals especially, such spontaneous value judgements generate fresh questions, and that is when the learning process really begins. Or they try to work back from

their value judgements to subject judgements as a form of verification. In either case, historical learning always takes the form of “narratives” (Barricelli 2012: 255). Subject analyses, and especially subject judgements and value judgements, are narratives. With historical learning, it is only through narratives that, “in a certain way, meaning is developed through the experience of time” (Rüsen 2008: 62). Learners accordingly need narrative competence if they are to consciously perform and document historical learning and communicate results in order to keep the past alive in narrative or memory. For that reason, in the case of all historical learning processes involving eyewitness interviews, children, young people and adults must be empowered to narrate.

#### Promising Characteristics of the Educational Materials Presented

History education, which provides the perspective for this description and assessment of the educational materials presented, is generally seen as a design science (Simon 1996: 133), which develops, analyses and implements new knowledge in a circular process of research, theory and practice, with success measured in terms of implementation at the practical level. The following attempt to identify promising aspects (indicated in italics and underlined in the text) is admittedly made over a theoretical distance and with a restricted perspective. But it is model- and experience-based. The objective of the procedure chosen is to show where we can learn from one another. And the collected examples offer ample opportunities to do just that.

a) *Tony Cole and Darius Jackson: “I wonder where I will be tomorrow”. Using Filmed Testimony to Develop Historical Knowledge and Understanding of the Holocaust with British Primary School Children and Students with Special Educational Needs (SEN)*

Tony Cole and Darius Jackson employ interviews with Miriam Kleinmann, who lived with her family in Belgium before the Second World War and fled to Britain to avoid the German occupation and the risk of being murdered. With their paper, Cole and Jackson show how important it is to

present subjects in the educational context in such a way that they satisfy the demands of society (aspect g in the didactic triangle) and are suitable for learning processes (aspect e). Anyone wishing to facilitate historical learning is well advised to clarify the goals (aspect d) – getting primary school pupils to work like historians with complex materials – and to present the subjects (aspect a) on a targeted basis. Videotaped eyewitness interviews must have a special form if they are to serve educational purposes, and they are integrated in a learning progression. The authors explain this learning progression, which develops from the first encounter with photographs of Miriam Kleinmann to the creation of a timeline.

They provide an especially convincing account of how they employ eyewitness videos for diverse educational goals – for triggering awareness at the beginning (step 1 in the learning process model), for the verification of interpretations (step 2) or as a catalyst for a discussion on the reliability of eyewitness interviews (step 3) – and how they made additional materials in support of the videos. With “I wonder where I will be tomorrow”, the authors thus succeed in empowering primary school pupils and pupils with special educational needs for historical learning and *teaching them historical thinking within a complete learning process (steps 1 to 4)*.

b) *Birte Hewera: Survivors as Subjects of Documentation. The Witnesses and Education film series by Yad Vashem and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

In the case of the fourteen biographical documentaries filmed with witnesses of the Holocaust – a joint project launched in 2007 by Yad Vashem and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem – it was clear from the start that they would be used for teaching young Israelis. In the films, the eyewitnesses are accompanied on a journey from the places of their childhood to the sites of the Holocaust. That provides the setting for them to tell their stories and present a picture of the lives they lived before, during and after the Holocaust.

In an educational context, *dilemma situations* (aspect a in the didactic triangle) are particularly stimulating. They invite learners to form a value judgement and adopt a position (step 4 in the learning process model).

Such situations are especially suitable for targeted communication in the classroom (aspect f), which can serve to demonstrate that the history of the Holocaust is a product of the actions of humans. The scope for action is not always identical for all parties, but again and again human beings choose to act in one way and not in another – and in so doing contribute to murder or rescue of other human beings. The fact that all these biographical documentaries with eyewitnesses feature survivors of the Holocaust confers special educational value on them.

- c) *Carson Phillips: “The Limits of my Language are the Limits of my World”: Using Recorded Testimonies of Holocaust Survivors with English Language Learners*
- The videotaped eyewitness interviews with Holocaust survivors in the case of Canada as described by Carson Phillips serve a completely different purpose (aspect d in the didactic triangle). In this case the interviews are employed in the *Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada* programme (LINC) to help newly arrived adult immigrants learn the English language in the context of citizenry and integration. Logically, those videos have been chosen from the *USC Shoah Foundation’s IWitness* platform that tell students about the successful integration of people in Canada during and after the Second World War. At the same time, the students obviously learn a lot about the Holocaust and its historical context, which are of little significance in many of the new arrivals’ source countries. To that extent and as a side product, as it were, they develop subject analyses and make subject judgements (steps 2 and 3 in the learning process model). Such a goal naturally calls for specific learning processes, and the learners work on the videotaped testimonies in various modes – with teacher guidance, in groups and autonomously – and are invited to embark on a variety of activities designed to encourage them on their road to integration. This example illustrates very clearly how important it is to define *clear and transparent goals* (aspect d) when using eyewitness interviews. On this basis, appropriate subjects (aspect a) can then be selected and tailored learning processes (aspect e) designed so as to provide maximum benefits to learners.

d) *Kori Street and Andrea Szőnyi: Videotaped Testimonies of Victims of National Socialism in Educational Programs: The Example of USC Shoah Foundation's Online Platform IWitness*

Carson Phillips' teaching aids could only be developed because IWitness offers a learning platform with videotaped testimonies and additional materials relating to an extremely wide range of subjects (aspect a in the didactic triangle), with which the teachers (aspect c) can initiate various learning processes (aspect e). IWitness is a product of intensive work on such learning processes. With its teaching organisation model, it provides for a complete learning cycle that can guarantee excellent learning progress. The four steps in the IWitness learning process are Consider, Collect, Construct and Communicate. This cycle is based on a constructivist approach to learning, in which the students focus their attention on the topic (step 1 in the learning process model), collect and process materials (step 2), develop an interpretation from the collected materials (step 3) and finally *debate the interpretations and discuss value judgements in the group* (step 4). Learning is thus an active process.

The wide range of subjects covered by IWitness facilitates historical learning with reference to the Holocaust, but the testimonies and materials can be used for many other objectives (aspect d): IWitness also helps learners strengthen their personal identity and (civil) courage and develop perseverance and resilience.

e) *Dorothee Wein, Šárka Jarská and Natalia Timofeeva: The Web Application Learning with Interviews. Forced Labor 1939–1945 for German, Czech and Russian schools. Common Ground and Country-specific Differences*

Another learning platform is available in the form of the online apps *Learning with Interviews. Forced Labor 1939–1945*, which have been created for Czech, German and Russian schools. They give pupils the opportunity to address the fates of more than 25 million individuals, who were forced to work as slave labourers for Nazi Germany during the Second World War (aspect a in the didactic triangle). The learning platform offers access to video interviews and also, like IWitness, provides additional materials for

contextualisation, supporting learning tools and also various assignments (aspect d). A special feature of this learning platform is that it enables young people to produce their own results and prepare them for presentation. Thus a complete learning process is again supported as pupils are encouraged to formulate subject analyses, subject judgements and value judgements (steps 2–4 in the learning process model). This learning process is underpinned by a number of didactic principles: The biographical approach is used to lead into the subject; the many and diverse video interviews are the key to multiperspectivity; additional materials are available for contextualisation; the assignments facilitate competency-based learning. A particularly positive feature of the online apps is that young people have *a very extensive offering of video interviews and can make their individual selection on the basis of their own interests and locations*, so that they can work on the subjects in line with their specific aptitudes. The offering also shows the importance of linking macro- and micro-histories. It is only through the contextualisation of the biographic interviews at the historical level that an adequate understanding of the events can be achieved. Learning at school is always learning in the group. The subject analyses and subject and value judgements (steps 2–4) developed by the pupils through involvement with the learning platform should be subjected to communicative validation in the classroom and the group (aspect f). This is where the products of the pupils' learning processes are so useful. These documents are conducive to class discussions as long as the teachers are able to create a zone of trust between the learners and themselves and also within the learner group.

f) *Teon Djingo: Tracing Videotaped Testimonies of Victims of National Socialism in Educational Programmes. The Macedonian Case*

The subjects (aspect a in the didactic triangle) obviously shape the learning process (aspect e). Often enough, videotaped testimonies – as in the case of the online archive *Forced Labor 1939–1945* – are produced primarily for social or academic reasons or in the context of memory culture rather than for educational purposes. That is also true of Macedonia, where

it was decided to conduct interviews with eyewitnesses – eyewitnesses of the Second World War and especially of the crimes committed against Jews. As there were no more Jews still living who could bear witness to the deportation of the Jews to Treblinka in 1943, the researchers sought and found other individuals to give an account of those events. The result is 30 interviews, which are now available online. For use in an educational context, the researchers contacted the country's teachers (aspect c) and presented the new corpus of sources. An especially effective aspect of these teaching materials is the availability of different interviews relating to the same events, for example the destruction of a house as seen by a perpetrator and a bystander. When *learners are empowered to draw comparisons*, they are challenged to develop their own subject analyses, subject judgements and value judgements (steps 2–4 in the learning process model) – and possibly also motivated to search for additional sources and accounts (step 1). At all events they then recognise the scope of action available to individuals when wrong is done.

g) *Iryna Kashtalian: The Educational Use of Videotaped Memoirs and Material on the History of the Minsk Ghetto and the Maly Trostenets Extermination Site*

Not only in Macedonia but also in Belarus videotaped testimonies have been produced to remind people of events that have not found their way into communicative memory and have not so far been recorded in cultural memory. In her article, Iryna Kashtalian presents the independent educational project *Leonid Levin Historical Workshop*. The history workshop constitutes a bottom-up approach to developing a platform for intensive debate on such phenomena as the Nazi killing site in Maly Trostenets. Among other things, the new video interviews have been used to create an exhibition that is now touring various European cities. The purpose of that is to establish Maly Trostenets as a European memorial site. It should be mentioned that it was decided to include videos devoted to the testimonies of both victims and the Righteous among the Nations (aspect a in the didactic triangle) because of the positive effects to be expected in the educational context especially when *the teaching focuses on people with civil*

*courage, people who rescued others*. Kashtalian offers learners an especially attractive form of encounter with the subject (aspect e), namely a *competition* for pupils and students on the subject of “Victims of Nazi crime and the death camps in Belarus”. The purpose of the competition is to encourage participants to document and narrate the biographies of hitherto unknown victims of events in Belarus during the Second World War so that they can be added to the digital archive and made available for educational works. For the competition, participants have to produce a portrait of the individual concerned, making use of various materials and media. The final product has to take the form of an essay plus a video interview with supporting documentation to tell the story of the victim before the war and during the occupation and also the consequences of the occupation. The focus of the competition is on making video interviews with eyewitnesses. That naturally presupposes a certain level of knowledge and skills, and the workshop provides assistance in that regard. Participants can also enlist the help of an advisor to guarantee the quality of the videotaped testimonies. The best entries will be published, which makes the competition even more attractive. Special emphasis is placed on links with local history and the learner’s own family so as to establish the element of personal involvement that is so positive for historical learning. This example shows once again how important it is to offer learners cognitive stimulation for positive learning results. Of course, the learner’s independent role in producing a videotaped testimony is a special challenge, which doubtless delivers excellent results where the learning process is successful (steps 1–4 in the learning process model).

- h) *Maria Ecker-Angerer: “What exactly makes a good interview?” Educational Work with Videotaped Testimonies at \_erinnern.at\_*

Maria Ecker-Angerer has also developed her contribution with respect to the educational context. She asks what makes an eyewitness interview a good interview for educational purposes (aspect e in the didactic triangle) and discusses the question on the basis of a number of examples. Her work clearly demonstrates the interdependence of the various aspects in

the didactic triangle, including the fact that the subject (a) must fit the objectives (d), which in turn must be appropriate for the learners (b) and society (g). The ideas formulated by Ecker-Angerer point the way to successful historical learning (steps 1–4 in the learning process model):

- Learners are more perceptive when they are offered a choice, e.g. they can choose childhood photographs of the eyewitness, which they would like to work on and ask questions about.
- Exploration is a conscious process, which can be learned for example when the interview is played once without the picture and once without the sound. And learners need *clear instructions* with regard to what needs to be done when they are told to explore.
- Interpretation is about *active involvement, not passive consumption*. It is easier to assign phenomena to the universe of history when additional materials are offered in the interest of *contextualisation*: What came before and what came afterwards? Where are the causes, what are the effects?
- For personal orientation, one has to formulate one’s reaction to the experience. That is a first step in developing an opinion; it permits individuals to position themselves within the community and adopt a point of view. As a result, *the events are linked to the learner’s world in the present* and become personally relevant.

## Conclusion

With regard to videotaped eyewitness interviews with victims of National Socialism in educational materials for schools, there is now no shortage of good examples and substantial theories, and the subject is relatively well researched. On the other hand, communication between the three levels of practice, theory and empiricism is inadequate. Today, educational materials are still produced without a theoretical foundation and without reference to empirical findings, theoreticians often still fail to take note of the many good practice examples, and researchers still work on educational scenarios that are impracticable. “Empiricism needs theory in order to pro-

duce meaningful results; theory targets practice so as not to be condemned to barrenness; practice must be monitored by empiricism lest it lose its way in the dark.” This verdict formulated by Joachim Rohlfes (1996: 101) has not been adequately implemented in work with videotaped eyewitness interviews. For that reason the focus now must be on promoting the exchange of results and finding new strategies to establish cooperation in a spirit of partnership between the actors from the various levels – practice, theory and research – and with different backgrounds (history didactics, history sciences, educational science, media science). “Design experiments” (Burkhardt/Schoenfeld 2003: 4) can achieve that. They involve the development, testing and refinement of theory-based prototypes. The resulting teaching and learning environments are used and studied in a variety of classes. A design experiment would seem to be a suitable mode of interaction to guarantee a dialogue between research, theory and practice in the educational context, where highly complex design work is typically required (Schön 1987: 76–103). Finally, design experiments also offer a positive opportunity for learning in the field of teacher training (Gautschi 2016: 63). That promotes subject-specific didactic knowledge in students and teachers – knowledge which has been proven in terms of cognitive psychology to be a central component of professional teaching competence (Bromme 1992: 96–98). This form of knowledge is decisive for the way in which certain topics, contents or assignments are selected, presented and adapted to the learners with regard to their motivation and cognitive abilities (Shulman 2004: 300). Design experiments build a bridge between research and practice and promote progress at the level of practice combining methodological awareness, a theoretical basis and direct practical benefits. The result is doubtless a stronger focus on the learners (aspect b in the didactic triangle). They are the point of departure for all educational situations: What do they know and what can they achieve? What do they want and what do they think? In the design of the learning processes (aspect e), too, the learners must be the focus of attention: What do they do? What do they process and produce? What learning results do they generate? It is easier to answer that with clearly defined goals

for learners working with videotaped eyewitness interviews with victims of National Socialism. Clarity on this point is essential and the key to educational materials that effectively target the addressees. That is the key to success.

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- 1 On the subject of virtual tours, see the contribution by Kori Street and Andrea Szönyi, in which the iwalks are discussed. The Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, for example, offers a virtual tour, which provides an overview of the layout of the memorial site. <https://www.kz-gedenkstaette-dachau.de/rundgang.html>, accessed 29 September 2017.
- 2 For the hybrid forms dramadoc and docudrama, see Ebbrecht, T., Steinle, M. (2008). Dokudrama in Deutschland als *historisches Ereignisfernsehen – eine Annäherung aus pragmatischer Perspektive* In *MEDIENWissenschaft* (3), pp. 250–255.
- 3 On the question of how pupils respond to and learn from “talking heads”, see the contribution by Irmgard Bibermann in this volume.





## INDEX OF AUTHORS

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#### Volume 4 of the “Education with Testimonies” series

According to estimates, there are over 100,000 video testimonies with victims of National Socialism. Many of the interview archives are easily accessed, including some that are available in the Internet for free. While teachers are hesitant in making use of this treasure of source materials, learners are familiar with the figure of the eyewitness as communicated via film and television. But what can be taught with the help of what in cinematographic terms is often criticised as “talking heads”? What constitutes a good learning setting? And how do users interact with the – usually digitised – video testimonies and the collections that are often available online? In January 2017 experienced educators and researchers attended an international workshop on “Localisation of video testimonies with victims of National Socialism in educational programmes” and discussed the question of what is good practice in this specific form of educational work. This volume is the result of that process. It provides an insight into the conceptual and practical ideas on which the various programmes are based. The book also has a focus on video testimonies presented at historical exhibitions and includes contributions from many countries, such as Belarus, Canada, Israel, Macedonia, the Netherlands and South Africa.

