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# Leadership and curriculum: embedding teaching and learning about the Holocaust in schools in Scotland

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## ABSTRACT

Unlike in England, where the Holocaust has been a compulsory part of the history curriculum for Key Stage 3 since 1991, the Holocaust is not mandatory in the Scottish curriculum. Therefore, Teaching and Learning about the Holocaust (TLH) in Scotland relies on the commitment of individual teachers and/or schools. Factors that impact TLH in Scotland are the Citizenship and Equalities priorities within its flexible curriculum that encourages Interdisciplinary Learning (IDL), annual commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day, and teacher and pupil participation (since 2007) in the *Lessons from Auschwitz Project* (LFA). This paper identifies approaches to embedding TLH in mainstream secondary schools in Scotland accredited by the Vision School Scotland (VSS) programme and presents evidence drawn from online application documentation from successful schools in this programme which were analysed using thematic analysis. Findings were that leadership from staff and pupils is significant to its delivery and that while Nazi antisemitism is included in TLH programmes, contemporary antisemitism is largely not taught or discussed at a class or school level. This has practical implications for schools aiming to develop 'best practices' in delivering TLH.

## ARTICLE HISTORY

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Leadership; Curriculum; Holocaust education; global citizenship

## Introduction

This article aims to identify approaches to embedding Teaching and Learning about the Holocaust (TLH) in secondary schools through an analysis of documentation provided by schools. Firstly, we investigate the nature of the support for TLH from schools' Senior Management Teams (SMT); secondly, we investigate TLH in the school curriculum, and thirdly we explore the contribution of TLH to promoting and teaching citizenship. The data provides insights into the ways TLH is embedded in schools, identifies features of good practice in TLH, and raises questions about antisemitism education in schools' citizenship programmes and challenges of delivering to multi-cultural learners.

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There is a lack of information as to the implementation and nature of good practice in school-based Holocaust education, especially within the Scottish context, and this research attempts to tentatively address this. Furthermore, there has been little research which focuses on the role of leadership and how it impacts the delivery and planning of TLH. This article seeks to address this gap.

## **The Scottish context**

Scotland is a multicultural country with a population of almost 5.5 million, a school population of approximately 705,000 pupils and its own education system (Scottish Government 2021). Data from the 2022 census show that 3.9% of the Scottish population identified as Asian, Asian Scottish, or Asian British, with 72,871 people identifying as Pakistani. The most common white minority groups are Polish (90,736) and Irish (56,877); and the Jewish population is less than 6,000 (Scotland's Census 2024). The one Jewish primary school in Scotland includes lessons on Jewish faith, history, and culture in its curriculum which are evidenced by this school's successful initial application and subsequent renewal application to the Vision Schools Scotland Programme. There are no Jewish secondary schools. Whilst research has shown that there is often concern amongst teachers about how to deliver TLH to certain pupil groups such as primary pupils (Cowan and Jones 2021) and Muslim pupils (A. Pettigrew 2020; Short 2013), there is evidence that if an apt pedagogy is used, which includes involving students in their experiences of bullying and racism and also highlights lessons from also about the Holocaust, these concerns can be addressed.

## **The Holocaust in the Scottish curriculum**

Unlike in England, where since 1991 the Holocaust has been a compulsory part of the history curriculum for Key Stage 3 in English secondary schools for pupils aged between 11 and 14 years, the Holocaust is not mandatory in the Scottish 3–18 curriculum, Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). This explains why TLH is neither included in pre-service teacher training or teacher education programmes nor a requirement of teachers' Continued Professional Development (CPD). This means that TLH in secondary schools in Scotland relies on Head Teachers (HT) or Directors of Education who are committed to TLH in their schools (Cowan and Maitles 2010, 2015) and to teachers of history and other subject areas who choose to teach it. However, the Scottish Government has demonstrated support for TLH. For example, it has subsidised senior students on the 'Lessons from Auschwitz' (LFA) Project since 2007, funded VSS since 2020, as well as other Holocaust-related projects such as the exhibition 'Gathering the Voices' (Cowan and Maitles 2010, 2015).

In Scotland, Responsible Citizenship is one of the four capacities central to CfE. Within this, Global Citizenship is an entitlement for all learners and whilst

not a discreet subject it permeates across the Scottish curriculum. Sustained development of school-based Holocaust education in Scotland is largely due to the annual commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day, the participation of pupils from Scotland, since 2007 in the LFA; CfE with its flexibility, driving Citizenship and Equalities agendas, and encouragement of Interdisciplinary Learning (IDL) (Cowan and Maitles 2010, 2015).

IDL is a key feature of the Scottish curriculum (Scottish Government 2008). It is viewed as a way to develop skills and creativity (Harvie 2020), and provides additional outcomes from study subject's individually (Robson 2012). IDL involves linking learning from a range of disciplines, and a 'grounding in two or more disciplines in order to draw upon them to address the interdisciplinary task' (Harvie 2020, 58). Writing in the primary teaching context, Cooper (2015) argues that teaching history involves aspects that can include, for example, art, literature, and music and so benefits from including a selection of curriculum areas. In the secondary teaching context, IDL refers to different departments within the school, working on a joint project (Harvie 2020).

'Embedding' the Holocaust occurs when the Holocaust is a permanent component of a school's curriculum and is taught to all pupils at some stage of their secondary education. One model of embedding is incorporating TLH through the history curriculum within the humanities department (subjects concerned with learning about human culture). This model is demonstrated by schools in England that, in accordance with the National Curriculum's requirement, teach the Holocaust in History to all Key Stage 2 pupils (13–14-year-olds). An alternative model incorporates TLH in several curricular areas, including history, providing accessibility to all pupils. Both models are evident in the evidence presented in this article.

### **Vision Schools Scotland (VSS)**

The establishment in 2017 of VSS, a programme whose aims are to identify and reward schools that embed TLH in the curriculum, provides a network for teachers to share best practice and promote continuous professional development (CPD) for teachers to build confidence and knowledge in TLH (UWS 2023).

This programme has grown from three schools in 2017 to a network of around 110 schools. The VSS Programme requires schools to appoint a lead teacher in TLH, evidence of support from the school's SMT to TLH and the school's sustainability in TLH over a minimum of two years. Schools are awarded VSS status for three years, after which they are required to complete renewal documentation.

## TLH and citizenship education

In the U.K., there have been consistent findings that there are gaps in both pupil (S. J. Foster et al. 2016) and teacher knowledge (A. M. Pettigrew, Salmons, and Foster 2009), although this has seen improvement in recent years with the advent of better resources and specialist CPD (Hale et al. 2023). These findings of the gaps in knowledge justify Dwork's (2018) assertion that if 'the point of studying the past is to help us understand the present, pupils' knowledge of the Holocaust is insufficient to help them negotiate the world in which they live' (p393). This has important implications for Holocaust education, which Cowan and Maitles (2017) define as comprising historical learning *about* the Holocaust as well as contemporary learning *from* the Holocaust; pupils' study of the latter will be severely restricted without accurate core historical knowledge of the Holocaust.

Debates over the contribution of TLH to Citizenship Education (CE) focus on the value of the opportunities that TLH brings to CE and, the tensions between these opportunities and universalising the Holocaust. Research that supports the positive contribution of TLH to CE focuses mainly on pupil awareness and knowledge of citizenship, such as predispositions to stereotyping, genocide, and antisemitism (Brown and Davies 1998; Carrington and Short 1997; Cowan 2013; Cowan and Maitles 2007; Russell 2006; Short and Reed 2017). Further research findings demonstrate that learning about the Holocaust has a positive effect on the values and citizenship of young people (Carrington and Short 1997; Cowan and Maitles 2005, 2007, 2017; Davies 2012; Jikeli 2010; Maitles and Cowan 2012; Schweber 2003; Short 2003; Stevick and Gross 2014).

Yet this contribution does not include a change of behaviour, which is a key component of CE (Kratsborn, Jacott, and Öcel 2008; Mihr 2015). Teaching the Holocaust through a social, moral, and civic and ethical lens can marginalise the historical narrative of the Holocaust and lead to oversimplification and misunderstanding of the Holocaust (Kinloch 1998; Salmons 2003, 2010). However, A. Pettigrew (2018) points out that cross-curricular teaching takes place in history as well as in a range of subject areas, and such teaching does not necessarily lead to distortion of the past. This may be a consequence of bad pedagogy or poor teacher knowledge. Chapman (2020) argues that the Holocaust is not an appropriate topic to learn lessons from due to what he describes as 'category errors' for example, assuming the future will be the same as the past and that we can therefore learn from the past. However, Chapman concedes to Short (2005) who maintains that if taught correctly, TLH can have value in a citizenship agenda, for example, highlighting the potential dangers of scapegoating and the international dimension to preventing genocide and the requirement for bodies such as the UN. Cowan and Maitles (2017) claim that the HE/CE relationship should be reciprocal with TLH

being a central feature of Citizenship Education and challenges the view that these are competing approaches. Therefore, while this debate continues, the research would suggest that it is about *how* TLH is taught that is the key issue.

We would argue that there are no ‘no go’ areas for Holocaust Education. It has relevance in schools and classrooms irrespective of the cultural or religious make up (Gryglewski 2010; Nates 2010; Short 2008, 2012). This is irrespective of the political situation at any one time. The Holocaust has universalist lessons for all students (indeed all people) and the ideas embedded in learning particularly *from* the Holocaust cut across all boundaries and are relevant to all cultures and identities. Indeed, we would claim that this kind of learning can lead to intercultural and transcultural competence (Hajisoteriou and Angelides 2017; Lau 2015; Mezirow 2000; Mirza 2011; Piipponen and Karlsson 2019; Rapanta, Vrikki, and Evagorou 2021).

### School leadership

Research has shown that another important aspect of successful delivery of any curriculum is the leadership within a school. Mulford’s (2008) in-depth review of leadership challenges, highlights how good leadership in a school context creates an active learning environment. It advocates for team leadership, networks, and communities of professional learners rather than hierarchy and sole leadership. This argument is put forward in the context of the changing global and intercultural environment that schools find themselves in. McLeskey and Waldron’s (2015) study on inclusivity for children with Additional Support Needs (ASN) in U.S.A. schools argues that core solo-leadership from HT is critical to success with this. However, they highlight that the relationship between HT and other teachers was built on trust and often shared decision-making. Further benefits of increased teacher leadership are increased authenticity in teacher learning activities (Margolis and Doring 2013) and furthering collaboration among teachers (Muijs and Harris 2003). These benefits increase the pedagogical quality within the school.

In the Scottish context, Forde et al. (2021) focuses on the importance of the role of middle-level leadership (Faculty Heads and Principal Teachers) in secondary schools, which they believe have been overlooked. They argue that middle-leadership can have impact on classroom practice directly through teaching but also through the opportunity to influence and steer higher-level decisions and therefore have a dual role. This research demonstrates that whilst there are differing viewpoints on what good and successful leadership looks like, there is unanimity in that good leadership in some form is essential for a successful learning environment.

## Methodology

### *Research design and methods*

This paper presents data drawn from two sources. Firstly, online application documentation from schools with VSS status. This included plans of programmes of work, lesson sequences, PowerPoints of lessons, emails, samples of pupil work, and photographs, and VSS written evaluation of the applications. The second source was from online internal evaluations of the VSS programme which yielded rich data on leadership and the curriculum and conveyed the teachers' voices. As the data were self-selecting, it meant there was heterogeneity in the volume and quality of information provided by the schools.

The sample was selected in terms of best-fit for meeting the project aims and objectives, which in turn helps the researcher to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon under investigation and used purposive sampling (Clark and Creswell 2008; Creswell and Plano Clark 2011; Merriam 2009; Robson and McCartan 2016).

Ethical approval was granted by the University of the West of Scotland ethics committee, and informed consent was provided by each school involved.<sup>1</sup> The sample comprised 16 Scottish secondary schools covering a wide geographical area, and the schools in this sample are co-educational comprehensive schools; 13 are non-denominational and 3 are denominational. In Scotland, non-denominational schools provide religious observance in accordance with the Christian heritage of Scotland, and denominational schools are faith-based schools. The denominational schools in this sample are Roman Catholic schools. Three schools are from areas of multiple deprivation, as indicated by the Scottish Government's categorisation. The predominant number of schools in this cohort is culturally diverse. The research took place from 2018 to 2021. This coincided with the global pandemic of COVID and as such includes the data from schools when their delivery was online due to national school closures.

### *Data analysis*

The data was analysed using reflexive thematic analysis developed by Braun and Clarke (2022) a subset of the broader category of thematic analysis that develops themes across the data through coding of relevant data extracts. The analysis followed the six-step approach (Braun and Clarke 2022) using NVivo software.

### *Limitations*

The main limitation of this research was the self-selecting nature of the data. Robson and McCartan (2016) point to general disadvantages occurring in all

research of this type: the data retrieved depends to a wide extent on the personal features of the respondents such as their own experiences, motivation, and personality. Furthermore, information gained from questionnaire-based surveys may not necessarily be accurate as people are more likely to hide their weaknesses (Robson and McCartan 2016). As Xin (2009) and Thomas (2021) point out that there can be a lack of generality and reliability of results and bias due to, in this case, the school and participants overemphasising 'best practice' as the application forms were designed to gain accreditation. Caution should therefore be taken in making any generalisations.

## Findings and discussion

### *Thematic analysis theme overview*

A central theme 'TLH embedded in the curriculum' encapsulated how the teaching was not an 'add on' but instead integral to the school. Examples of this included innovative practice, staff, and pupil leadership. A sub-theme 'Investment of teaching time' demonstrated the requirement that time was a prerequisite of success in TLH delivery. This also included time dedicated to CPD and lesson planning as well as involvement of the SMT. These themes form the basis for the following discussion.

### *Pupil leadership*

A key finding of this study was the ownership that pupils took when learning about the Holocaust. Pupils were active participants and not passive learners, with Table 1 showing the range of pupil leadership activities in schools. Of the 16 schools, 14 had frequently or regularly participated in the LFA. This four-stage project involves a day visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau for two senior pupils, and sometimes their teacher. This finding ties in strongly with recent research which examined Israeli youth's first journey to Poland in the 1960's and how the teacher accompanying them supported both them and their learning and subsequent dissemination on their return home (Geva 2023). It demonstrates both the critical role the teacher took but also the personal growth that the youths took during the journey

Findings identified several approaches that these schools adopted to select suitable pupils for this Project. Approaches included pupils: writing a statement as to why they should be considered for this Project; outlining on paper their perceived benefit(s) of this experience and expressing their thoughts on why they thought that it was important to know about the Holocaust; and being interviewed in front of a small teacher panel. The two schools that had not participated in this project had independently organised and funded pupil visits to Holocaust sites of interest, such as Krakow and Auschwitz-Birkenau, and

**Table 1.** Pupil leadership.

| Type of Pupil Activity                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Presentations in the school and wider community, such as museums and the Scottish Parliament. Youth Champions/Holocaust Ambassadors, for example. ambassadors were trained as guides for the Anne Frank exhibition. |
| Planned TLH activities, for example, suggesting and organising for a Holocaust survivor visit. Creating videos with Holocaust survivors which were shown across the authority.                                      |
| Visits to Auschwitz; Israel; Washington and addressed the Houses of Parliament – spoken to the Prime Minister and First Minister.                                                                                   |

Berlin and Sachsenhausen. Like their LFA peers, these pupils presented to the wider community on their return. Three schools focused on the Rwandan genocide; one invited a speaker from the Rwandan community to the school; one involved a school pupil who was the child of Rwandan refugees who had settled in Scotland, talking about their experience; and the other had on one occasion taken a small group of pupils on a ten-day visit to Rwanda. Furthermore, one school integrated TLH into its Leadership programme for S2 pupils. This programme comprised 20 lessons that taught lessons on discrimination, prejudice, and sectarianism and four lessons on genocide before its eight lessons on the Holocaust. These findings demonstrate the importance of pupil involvement as a critical way of embedding TLH within the curriculum.

**Staff leadership**

Staff leadership was found to be of key importance in embedding TLH within the curriculum, especially when lead teachers taught in different disciplines and this meant that there was regular interdisciplinary learning (IDL) in TLH. Four schools had two lead teachers in TLH, allowing sustainability in TLH when a lead teacher leaves the school or is on long-term maternity/paternity leave. It also allows teachers to share their ideas, experiences, and resources and strengthens requests they make to their SMT for support. This supports previous studies, which demonstrated the importance of shared decision-making (McLeskey and Waldron 2015) and the key role of middle leadership (Forde et al. 2021).

The following teacher quote indicates that leadership in TLH led to personal and professional development:

I was able to share my passion for this area of History by developing a unit to teach, I was able to work with a colleague from another department which allowed me insight into her teaching and learning strategies. It also allowed me to lead a school initiative which, although was hard work, was extremely rewarding. (School 1, History LT)

Table 2 shows that the majority of Lead Teachers in TLH were History teachers. Many history teachers also teach Modern Studies, a multidisciplinary curricular area combining history, politics, economics, and citizenship (Scottish Qualifications Authority 2023). In one school, the lead teacher was the HT; other promoted posts held by lead teachers were deputy HT and faculty head.

**Table 2.** Lead teachers in TLH.

| Position of Lead Teacher | Number |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Head Teacher             | 1      |
| History Teacher          | 16     |
| Other Promoted Post      | 2      |
| RMPS Teacher             | 1      |

Lead teachers from two schools had formed Holocaust Education Groups (HEG) that comprised a group of teachers from different subject areas. The purpose of this Group is to promote and develop IDL or ‘learning across the curriculum’ in TLH. Group activities included collating examples of TLH lessons across the curriculum and discussing ways of improving this delivery by making connections between a selection of disciplines. Data from an HEG agenda demonstrate that planning activities for the following year was an item for discussion.

There are debates about the definitions of and differences between cross-curricular learning and IDL (Harvie 2020; Humes 2013; Klein 1990). In particular, IDL should raise the integration of multiple perspectives about the Holocaust (Sinnema and Aitken 2013), as opposed to a simple consideration of various subject areas. Research in the primary teaching context (Duffy and Cowan 2018; Maitles and Cowan 1999; Schweber 2003) has suggested that teachers incorporate art, history, citizenship, English, and Religious, Moral, and Philosophical Studies (RMPS) and other areas into TLH, thus ensuring that there can be learning both *about* and *from* the Holocaust. Duffy and Cowan (2018) claim that planning for IDL contributes to coherence and ‘provides meaningful and relevant contexts for developing subject-specific skills and concepts’ (p58). The above HEGs are clearly working to achieve an effective IDL pupil experience. Harvie (2020) emphasises that planning for IDL is time-consuming as teachers need to decide whether a content-centred or pupil-centred approach is the most appropriate. This has further implications for SMT support in TLH. Further, one lead teacher led an in-house CPD session on ‘Holocaust Across the Curriculum’ for teaching colleagues. This demonstrates that expertise/knowledge gained from the LT’s participation in CPD is shared widely across the school, requiring the support of the SMT.

**Senior management team**

The data demonstrated three types of support exercised by SMTs that contributed to embedding TLH in schools: visual presence, funding authorisation, and general management and administration with the latter two making the most significant contribution. So, whilst head teachers and the senior management team supported the embedding of TLH, this support was largely in the enabling of the identified lead teachers to take leadership on the planning and delivery of

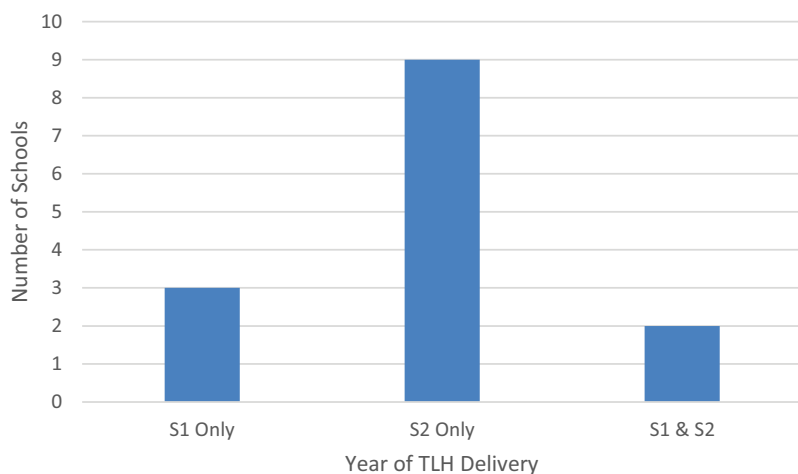
the learning. This support varied in schools from a minimum of two to over ten years. Examples of support are detailed in [Table 3](#). This demonstrates the broad range of activities at different levels within the school that the SMT were actively influencing. In the case of visual presence, where a member of the SMT takes the role of 'lead teacher', this, often by default means they have visual presence due to their role, for example, in the coordination and running of events.

### ***The curriculum***

In the Scottish Curriculum, teaching is split into two phases of learning. Broad General Education (BGE) which begins in early learning, from 3 years old, through to the end of S3, around 14–15 years old. Senior Phase then covers S4–6 (15/16–18 year olds) (Education Scotland 2023). This project focuses on the final stages of the BGE phase with pupils from S1–S3, aged between eleven and fifteen. As demonstrated in [Figure 1](#), there was variation in as to which year group TLH is first taught. Beyond S2 TLH was taught only to those taking specific subjects such as history or RMPS. Whilst there is no set curriculum for teaching TLH. The [Appendix](#) provides an example of a lesson programme from of the schools illustrating the content and duration of the type of content they cover.

**Table 3.** Support from the senior management team.

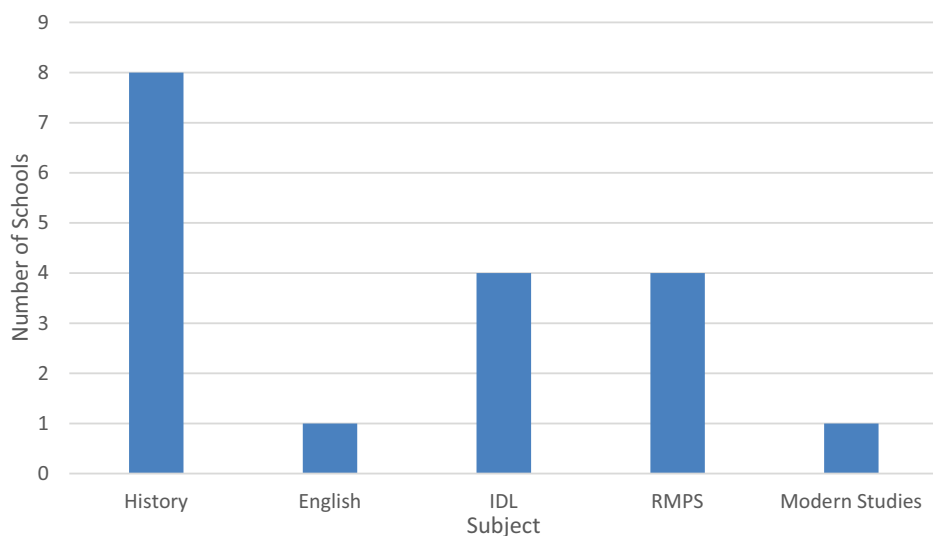
| Type of Support                                                               | Examples                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Visual Presence                                                               | Attendance and participation of the Deputy Head Teacher at one school's first IDL event in TLH for all S2 pupils.<br>Head Teacher's participation on the pupil visit to Krakow.<br>Head Teacher led assembly where they shared their experiences of visiting Auschwitz and Birkenau.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Funding Authorisation                                                         | Making school funding available for TLH activities, such as inviting Holocaust survivor speakers to the school.<br>Overcoming financial barriers for pupils who had applied for the LFA project.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| General Management and Administration:<br>Strategic level and Wider Community | Including TLH on agendas at SMT and departmental meetings.<br>Continued Professional Development (CPD) through attendance at the LFA project and other learning opportunities; TLH resources and books for the school library.<br>Integrating TLH into Department/Faculty and School Improvement Plans.<br>Communicating school and community activities in TLH and Holocaust Remembrance to parents.                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| General Management and Administration:<br>Timetabling and Resourcing          | Exempting teachers involved in TLH from covering staff absences within the school, enabling the continuation of their planning/teaching commitments in TLH.<br>Approving significant changes to the regular teaching timetable to enable year groups' participation in IDL learning activities in TLH.<br>The HT giving colleagues from a range of departments permission to participate in the above IDL activities.<br>SMT giving time for IDL Holocaust team research, development and delivery involving team teaching which in one school involved staff from Music, English History RMPS and Art and Design. |



**Figure 1.** School year for TLH delivery.

The data showed that whilst each school had their own approach to delivering TLH there were commonalities in the subjects in which it was delivered as shown in [Figure 2](#) (note that totals equal more than 16 as some schools delivered across more than one subject). History was the most popular subject for delivery, which corresponds with findings from S. J. Foster et al. (2016), which found that whilst TLH was delivered across a variety of subjects, it was most often taught within history.

Of these eight schools, two schools first delivered TLH to S1 pupils in History and three schools to S2 pupils in history, which then built on learning for pupils who chose history or modern studies in S3 and/or S5/S6. Three schools



**Figure 2.** Curricular area for TLH delivery.

delivered key concepts such as racism, Judaism, human rights in S1 and built on this learning in the TLH History programme in S2. Three schools delivered TLH to S2 pupils in English or RMPS and this laid the foundations of learning for pupils who choose history or modern studies in S3 and/or S5. Finally, four schools took an IDL approach to TLH. Two of these schools applied the IDL approach to accompany commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day in addition to its S2 history programme (included in the number that delivered TLH in History), and two schools applied the IDL approach to introduce pupils to TLH.

This demonstrated coherence and progression of TLH as well as its embedding in the curriculum: It is worth noting that 'all' pupils included pupils with Additional Support Needs. In one school, this involved the signing of a Holocaust survivor talk for pupils with hearing impairments. Embedding TLH was further demonstrated by every school in the sample annually commemorating Holocaust Memorial Day in their schools, with several participating in commemorative events at authority and/or national (Scotland) levels. Two additional whole-school approaches during the week of Holocaust Memorial Day were identified: one school began each morning with a lesson starter that focused on recent genocides; the other school discussed an aspect of the Holocaust during Personal Support Time before the first timetabled day's lesson.

### ***Holocaust teaching***

Eleven schools submitted Curriculum Planners, Lesson PowerPoints, and/or course outlines that provided insight into the time allocated to Holocaust teaching in History, Modern Studies, or RME programmes. There was variation in how schools specified teaching times, which ranged from five lessons to 20 lessons 50 min to 1 hr in duration. The schools that identified their teaching in weeks stated that their Holocaust teaching covered 12 and 15 weeks. These programmes included lessons on topics such as the Jewish Way of Life, Human Rights, Discrimination, Antisemitism, and Genocide. One programme included lessons which focused on *Heroes of the Holocaust*, that is, people who helped/saved people in the Holocaust. This integration of TLH into the formal CfE demonstrates a high level of commitment. Whilst in England, it is statutory to teach about the Holocaust, no guidance is set on how many hours should be dedicated to this (Department for Education 2013). Research has demonstrated a wide variation in hours dedicated to teaching the Holocaust in English schools, ranging from one to 130 depending on the subject and year group (S. Foster 2013; Hale et al. 2023). For example, mean levels within history across all respondents were 13.5 hours (Hale et al. 2023) and the mode was 10 hours, comparable with findings from our research. Table 4 provides examples of good practice demonstrated by the schools.

**Table 4.** Examples of good practice.

| Examples of Good Practice                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Incorporated Assessment into TLH. For example, a middle and/or end of programme assessment.                                                      |
| Delivered Holocaust programme between November and February to coincide with Holocaust Memorial Day.                                             |
| Commenced TLH with definitions of antisemitism and the Holocaust, and consolidation of pupils' previous learning to ensure shared understanding. |
| Taught the Final Solution to pupils from S2 onwards.                                                                                             |
| Planned accompanying homework activities                                                                                                         |
| Integrated personal stories and witness testimonies into Holocaust programme.                                                                    |
| Established Holocaust Education Groups that enabled teachers of different curricular areas to discuss IDL, progression and development of TLH.   |

### ***Citizenship – lessons from the Holocaust***

Evidence provided by schools that demonstrate their encouragement of citizenship through issues raised by TLH was not as rigorous in comparison to the evidence they provided on learning *about* the Holocaust. Findings were that 12 (75%) schools fully met the criteria related to learning *'about* the Holocaust' compared to 8 (50%) schools that fully met the criteria related to learning *'from* the Holocaust'. The remaining schools partially met this criterion, which has CPD implications. Evidence comprised lessons and activities on contemporary issues that were linked to the Holocaust, and examples of pupils exercising active citizenship.

Table 5 shows the range of citizenship lessons and the number of schools that delivered these lessons after learning *about* the Holocaust. Several schools engaged with more than one citizenship topic. The teaching about the Holocaust in the schools was focussed on the genocide of the Jews and the Roma due to the specifics of how the Holocaust is defined (Holocaust Education Trust [n.d.](#)). However, some schools included other persecuted groups including homosexuals, black people, and to a lesser extent people with disabilities. Furthermore, what was evidenced strongly was the strong linkages that were made to these and groups suffering from discrimination in a contemporary context. To put into context one teacher stated:

**Table 5.** Citizenship education (N.B. Topic names were determined by the schools in the study).

| Topic                     | Number of Schools |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Bullying                  | 4                 |
| Contemporary Antisemitism | 2                 |
| Equality (LGBT and BLM)   | 3                 |
| Genocide                  | 8                 |
| Human Rights              | 5                 |
| Islamophobia              | 2                 |
| Prejudice                 | 4                 |
| Racism and Discrimination | 7                 |
| Refugees                  | 4                 |

We want our young people to have respect and tolerance for the sanctity of human life and human beings – HE is an integral part of this aim – linking antisemitism in the past to existing prejudices today

Lessons on *genocide* and *racism and discrimination* were the most frequently taught topic within different contexts being used, for example, studying Rwanda, Syria, and Ukraine to develop their understanding of genocide. One possible justification for their higher frequency is their direct links to Holocaust Memorial Day. This supports previous research which found a positive contribution of TLH to CE (Brown and Davies 1998; Carrington and Short 1997; Cowan 2013; Cowan and Maitles 2007; Russell 2006; Short and Reed 2017). Two schools additionally indicated that TLH reinforced their schools' values which included Respect, Compassion, and Integrity. Of the two schools that included contemporary antisemitism, one integrated this into classroom teaching; one was a follow-up research homework task that required pupils to research current examples of antisemitism.

From these lessons on learning *about* the Holocaust, this led to 'active citizenship' with pupils putting their learning into action. One component of the LFA Project requires pupils to organise an activity to share learning (Cowan and Maitles 2011). This included pupils sharing their knowledge in a wider variety of settings. For example, one school worked collaboratively with a prison for young offenders which included pupils visiting the prison and sharing their learning experiences. Another example of active citizenship was the creation of a Foreign Affairs Committee comprising pupils from S2 to S6 who also completed several Holocaust educational tasks. These examples suggest that TLH can lead to innovative and meaningful citizenship activities. However, as citizenship lends itself to two strands of evidence, this has impacted the depth of evidence given by the schools.

### ***Areas for future research***

Whilst this study has drawn findings on leadership in the delivery of TLH, it provides little information on the contribution of teacher knowledge and CPD to TLH. Therefore, we recommend that this is an area for further research. This study used material from school applications between 2018 and 2021. Since then, there have been changes in citizenship contexts, including a greater priority in learning for sustainability in the Scottish curriculum as well as a significant rise in antisemitism and islamophobia. Future research would seek to build on this study to develop a richer understanding of the current challenges surrounding the delivery of TLH.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, our current piece of research demonstrated that there was an established thread of leadership throughout the school, from the SMT, middle management, teaching staff, and pupils, resulting in an embedding of TLH in the curriculum. This builds on research on leadership within TLH delivery, which had previously been identified as an under-researched area. Whilst history was still the most popular subject for delivery, there was some evidence of an IDL approach to TLH in some of the schools. However, there was less detail provided within the applications on how TLH was being delivered through IDL compared with applications based within History.

There is an important distinction to make in teaching *about* the Holocaust and learning *from* the Holocaust. The citizenship that comes from teaching the Holocaust has two aspects. Firstly, the topics that come from teaching about, for example, learning about refugees or genocide. The second strand is 'active citizenship' where this knowledge is put into action by the pupils, for example, through standing as a youth champion, thus the learning *from*. Given the current Israel–Hamas war and the recent rise in antisemitism, this research is a timely reminder of the importance of a whole school approach and clear leadership when delivering TLH within the curriculum.

## Notes

1. Approval ID 9186.
2. Leyson, L. (2013) *The Boy on the Wooden Box*, Simon and Schuster

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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## Appendix

There is no formal Holocaust education curriculum in Scotland. There is indeed no national curriculum, as in England. Nonetheless, many schools teach the Holocaust, often involving a number of departments. Here is one school's curriculum planner and narrative submitted as part of its application to the Vision Schools Scotland programme. Some words have minor changes to ensure continuity with the rest of the article.

### School X

*"Teaching and learning about the Holocaust is covered in the S3 history curriculum but is complimented through English and RMPS curricular inputs in S2 and National 5. All S2 English pupils are reading 'The Boy on the Wooden Box'<sup>2</sup> and the department is currently developing materials to go along with this. Some National 5 Pupils also study a poem about the Nuremberg Trials.*

*RMPS pupils focus on the theme of prejudice and focus on why it is important to learn about the Holocaust with specific examples of key people such as Jane Haining, Oscar Schindler and Anne Frank."*

#### Curriculum Planners

| TOPIC: The Holocaust                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Year group: S3 History                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
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| Experiences and Outcomes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Benchmarks                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Learning Intentions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Success Criteria                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <p>I can evaluate conflicting sources of evidence to sustain a line of argument. <b>SOC 4-03a</b></p> <p>I have developed a sense of my heritage and identity as a British, European or global citizen and can present arguments about the importance of respecting the heritage and identity of others. <b>SOC 4-02a</b></p> <p>By studying groups in past societies who experienced inequality, I can explain the reasons for the inequality and evaluate how groups or individuals addressed it. <b>SOC 4-04a</b></p> <p>I can describe the main features of conflicting world belief systems in the past and can present informed views on the consequences of such conflict for societies then and since. <b>SOC 4-04b</b></p> <p>I can make reasoned judgements about how the exercise of power affects the rights and responsibilities of citizens by comparing a more democratic and a less democratic society. <b>SOC 4-04c</b></p> <p>I can present supported conclusions about the social, political and economic impacts of a technological change in the past. <b>SOC 4-05a</b></p> <p>I have investigated a meeting of cultures in the past and can analyse the impact on the societies involved. <b>SOC 4-05c</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates the ability to provide a valid argument on a historical theme.</li> <li>• Provides at least two valid opinions to support the argument.</li> <li>• Provides at least three reasons with explanation of the importance of respecting the heritage and identity of others.</li> <li>• Draws at least three reasoned conclusions about the reasons for inequality.</li> <li>• Provides at least two arguments including both for and against as to how a group or individuals have addressed inequality.</li> <li>• Describes in detail at least two of the main features of historical conflicting world belief systems.</li> <li>• Presents their own views on the consequences of such conflict and can provide reasons for them.</li> <li>• Compares and contrasts the rights and responsibilities of</li> </ul> | <p>We are learning to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Understand</b> how and why Jews were historically discriminated against.</li> <li>• <b>Understand</b> the importance of the Treaty of Versailles in Germany's treatment of the Jews.</li> <li>• <b>Evaluate</b> Hitler's anti-Semitic policies and what impact they had.</li> <li>• <b>Understand</b> the use of Nazi Propaganda to further anti-Semitic views</li> <li>• <b>Analyse</b> the introduction and conditions within the ghettos</li> <li>• <b>Understand</b> what the Final Solution was.</li> <li>• <b>Investigate</b> the various concentration camps and conditions within them.</li> <li>• <b>Investigate</b> the idea of Holocaust denial and who was most responsible for the Holocaust.</li> <li>• <b>Understand</b> the importance of learning about the Holocaust.</li> </ul> | <p>I can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Discuss</b> and <b>Describe</b> why the Jews have been discriminated against throughout History.</li> <li>• <b>Evaluate</b> the importance of the Treaty of Versailles in Germany's history.</li> <li>• <b>Explain</b> at least 3 ways Hitler's anti-Semitic policies impacted the lives of Jewish people in Germany.</li> <li>• <b>Describe</b> how Hitler can to power and how he controlled Germany.</li> <li>• <b>Assess</b> various sources to find information on different ghettos and how they impacted Jewish and German lives.</li> <li>• <b>Describe</b> what the 'Final Solution' was and how it was to be carried out.</li> <li>• <b>Research</b> various different types of camps and assess the impact the conditions would have had on those who were there.</li> <li>• <b>Discuss</b> what Holocaust denial is and why it is apparent in society today.</li> <li>• <b>Explain</b> why learning about the Holocaust is still relevant today.</li> <li>• <b>Create</b> a project on the Holocaust to highlight my understanding and research skills.</li> </ul> |