

Does addressing prejudice and discrimination through Holocaust education produce better citizens?

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Previous research on teaching the Holocaust, primarily case studies in either the primary or the secondary sectors, suggests that Holocaust education can contribute to pupils' citizenship values in a positive way. Yet, in common with other initiatives, this evidence focuses exclusively on the short term impact of Holocaust education. Our ongoing longitudinal research is concerned with both the immediate and longer term effects of Holocaust education on pupils' values and attitudes. Initially focused on primary pupils aged 11–12 years, it has followed them into the first year of secondary to examine whether the general improvements in attitudes found in the first stage of the research has been maintained. Further, we are able to compare their attitudes with pupils in their year who did not study the Holocaust in their primary schools. This article draws conclusions from this study.

Holocaust education and citizens of Europe

In the twenty-first century, the Holocaust continues to evoke the ultimate in barbarism and inhumanity. The commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz in 2005, saw a plethora of activities around that event in the UK and, seemingly paradoxically, an increase in anti-Semitism. The reasons for this and for continued racism world-wide are complex but include aspects of xenophobia and hostility towards other groups like Refugees and Gypsy Travellers, led by governments and establishment politicians; conflicts in the Middle East and the importance of scapegoating politics by various politicians.

These lessons are especially relevant because of the increase in attacks on Jewish communities and the rise of the far right in Europe. The report carried out on behalf of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (Bergmann & Wetzels, 2003) indicated an increase of anti-Semitic activities since 2000, with a peak in early spring 2002 in the (then) 15 member states. It also noted that all the governments and leading statesmen condemned anti-Semitic incidents and attitudes

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and many leaders of religious communities and political parties were cooperating in the fight against anti-Semitism. Yet, in April 2002 alone there were attacks on: three synagogues in France, one synagogue in Belgium, and one synagogue in London, a school bus transporting Jewish children and a Jewish school in France were set on fire (www.adl.org). In July 2004 there was a vicious Paris train attack on a woman, presumed to be Jewish because she lived in an area of Paris where there were a lot of Jewish residents (*Evening News*, 2004a). The success of Jean-Marie Le Pen in France in gaining six million votes in the presidential elections in May 2002, together with the prominent position of ultra-rightists in Belgium, Denmark and Italy, the achievements of Jörg Haider in Austria and the success of the Pym Fortyn list in coming second in the May 2002 Netherlands general election suggest that there may be a change in the European political consensus.

After gaining three council seats in Burnley in the UK 2004 local elections, the British National Party fielded over 100 candidates in the May 2005 general election; although achieving over 200,000 votes, they failed to make an electoral breakthrough, due in part to the peculiarities of the Westminster 'first past the post' electoral system. This indicates that the UK is also affected by this political change, albeit to a lesser extent. The 2004 Community Security Trust report indicated a general upward trend in anti-Semitic incidents in the UK with 532 incidents occurring in 2004 (the largest categories being abusive behaviour, threats and assaults) compared with 310 in 2001 and 236 in 1998 (Community Security Trust, 2005). Fiona Macaulay, public affairs director of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, commented on the changing nature of such attacks in that 'before, people handed out anti-Semitic literature, but now they're doing more physical damage' (*The Guardian*, 2002).

The Scottish press has warned against the rise in anti-Semitism in Scotland and reported that 'Scottish Jews were being targeted because of the escalating tension in the Middle East' (*The Herald*, 2004). Incidents such as the firebombing of the Pakistan Association Mosque, Edinburgh in 2001, the petrol bombing of the Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation Synagogue in 2002, the stabbing of Iranian refugee Masood Gomroki in 2002 and the painting of swastikas in Edinburgh in April 2004 (*Evening News*, 2004b) show that extreme forms of racism persist in the newly devolved Scotland. Statistics showing more than 260 people in Scotland have been charged for crimes aggravated by religious hatred, within a 10 month period, highlight the extent of religious bigotry in Scotland (MacLeod, 2004). The abduction, torture and murder of Glasgow schoolboy Kriss Donald in March 2004 was proven to be linked to racism between Scottish White and Asian youths. Further, a report commissioned by Glasgow City Council (*The Herald*, 2004) suggested a worrying increase in reported racist incidents in schools both verbal and physical; even more worryingly, the most prevalent age group of the perpetrators was 9–12. In addition, there is evidence that even in a primary school with a strong track record of effective 'antiracist policies, strategies and practice', racism is experienced by pupils from an ethnic minority (Woolfson *et al.*, 2004, p. 16).

The aim of Holocaust education is not to eradicate anti-Semitism and the many other forms of racism as there may still be individuals with racist attitudes (Allport,

1954) but to ‘inoculate the generality of the population against racist and anti-Semitic propaganda and thereby restrict its appeal to a disaffected and politically insignificant rump’ (Short & Reed, 2004, pp. 6–7). This contributes to preventing the domination of racist attitudes in Europe.

However, it must be noted that there is some debate as to the effectiveness of the memory of the Holocaust as a tool in combating modern day racism and anti-Semitism. Peter Novick (1999) and Norman Finkelstein (2003), whilst by no means agreeing completely with each other, have serious reservations as to how the Holocaust is used in education and indeed in wider society. Novick asserts that by stressing the uniqueness of the Holocaust, some commentators (he cites Elie Wiesel) have led to the situation whereby ‘compared to the Holocaust, anything else looked not so bad. The comparison, by raising the threshold of outrage, could easily desensitise’ (Novick, 1999, p. 255).

Nonetheless, it is not given that the Holocaust has to be treated in this way. Central to its learning is how modern day issues and events are developed in the context of genocide and atrocity. Finkelstein agrees with much of Novick’s thesis but is more positive about what can be learned from the Holocaust. He claims that ‘the Nazi Holocaust can also sensitise us to these injustices’ while we can learn from the Holocaust if it is a ‘rational subject of inquiry’ (Finkelstein, 2003, p. 150). He also argues that the Nazi Holocaust ‘discredited the scientific racism’ (Finkelstein, 2003, p. 148) that was a pervasive feature of western life before World War II and that bigotry has a new meaning after Auschwitz.

Novick additionally claims that the Holocaust has become ‘institutionalized’ and is used for present day political and social ends. He is particularly scathing of the US government which he claims uses the Holocaust as a word to criticize the policies of governments it disapproves of, yet ignores similar atrocities of regimes that are friendly to the US. For example, while President Clinton recalled the lack of help given to innocent people during the Holocaust at the dedication of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington (1993), the US government did not intervene to stop the killings in Rwanda the following year as their (i.e. the US) ‘national security wasn’t directly threatened’ (Novick, 1999, p. 250).

The Holocaust in the Scottish curriculum

It is important not to overstate the level of anti-Semitism and one must recognize that education on its own cannot be a panacea for racism in general and anti-Semitism in particular although there has been some evidence that learning about the Holocaust can have a positive impact on the outlook of young people (Carrington & Short, 1997; Brown & Davies, 1998; Maitles & Cowan, 1999). While the Holocaust has been taught in Scottish primary and secondary schools for many years (Maitles & Cowan, 1999, 2004; Cowan & Maitles, 2000), the introduction of Holocaust Memorial Day in 2001 has made its teaching more mainstream and easier. This is because that the announcement of the UK Holocaust Memorial Day the Scottish Executive was accompanied by the commissioning of

curricular materials for teaching Holocaust history to primary pupils aged 10–11 years, (LTS, 2000) which were later distributed to every primary school in Scotland for preparation for the first commemorative event. The Home Office and the Scottish Executive also distributed a resource to every Scottish secondary school (DfEE, 2000). Both resources make links with contemporary manifestation of racism, prejudice and discrimination.

These initiatives show the commitment of the Scottish Executive to promoting the educational objective of Holocaust Memorial Day, to ‘educate subsequent generations about the Holocaust and the continued relevance of the lessons that are learnt from it’ (Home Office, 1999) and to encouraging Holocaust education in schools. The Scottish Executive have continued to fund Holocaust curricular material (LTS, 2002a; Morley & Nunn, 2005).

However, we must remain aware that while education policy might stress positive issues such as understanding, empathy and tolerance, there can be a countervailing impact of other policy areas, such as economic policy, housing policy and scaremongering (for example about numbers of refugees). This can lead to opposite effects than the education policy agenda.

The content of the curricular resources mentioned earlier share a strong focus on the areas of knowledge and understanding relevant to the development of active and responsible citizenship. Currently a national priority, ‘Values and Citizenship’ involves teaching pupils ‘duties and responsibilities of citizenship in democratic society’ and ‘respect for self and one another’ (Standards in Scotland’s Schools Act, 2000). Further, the Education for Citizenship proposals (LTS, 2000b) implemented from August 2003, has added impetus to the development of teaching about the Holocaust in schools. As in England and Wales, the proposal is for education for citizenship to be an entitlement for all pupils at all stages. However, in Scotland, due to the cross-curricular scope of 5–14 and the existence of Modern Studies in the secondaries and the development of Social Subjects in Environmental Studies in the primaries, citizenship is not a separate subject but is taught in a cross-curricular approach. Despite some fears that the responsibility of all can become the responsibility of none, the suggestion is that all subjects will have an input into education for citizenship.

While the Holocaust is only mentioned as an example of the kinds of teaching content that could be employed, the desire to develop positive attitudes towards other cultures and ethnic groups, means that an analysis of the worst genocide in history can be an important part of a child’s development. Teaching about the Holocaust provides a suitable context for attainment in many key areas which are specified in proposals for Education for Citizenship in Scotland, e.g. human rights, the need for mutual respect, tolerance and understanding of a diverse and multicultural Scotland (LTS, 2002b).

School based Holocaust education

In responding to pedagogical issues such as Piaget’s theories of children’s intellectual and moral development that suggest that children are unable to abstract and

satisfactorily understand this kind of topic, Short (in Short & Reed, 2004) cites a number of Piaget's critics who have influenced teachers to raise their expectations of children's abilities. The contribution of Holocaust education to citizenship in the primary school includes developing pupils' understanding of justice, stereotyping and discrimination (Short & Carrington, 1991; Maitles & Cowan, 1999) and provides opportunities for developing positive values of empathy, awareness of anti-racism, and an understanding that the individual can make a difference. A contrasting viewpoint is conveyed by Totten (1999) on the grounds that the Holocaust is inappropriate and too complex for this age group to study, and by Kochan (1989) who objects to its teaching to the 'immature and unsophisticated' claiming that such teaching can have deleterious consequences for pupils. The former viewpoint is challenged by Cowan and Maitles's case study of an educational authority's response to Holocaust Memorial Day in which Holocaust teaching was the norm for the upper primary classes, i.e. 10–12 years and where a variety of appropriate curricular teaching materials and staff development were provided by the local authority (Cowan & Maitles, 2002). The latter viewpoint is challenged by this paper together with its phase 1 study that suggested that teaching the Holocaust has a positive short-term impact on pupils' values and attitudes (Maitles & Cowan, 2004). In this article, which presents some of the findings from three surveys, it is suggested that evidence exists to dispute such theoretical claims and support the teaching of the Holocaust to upper primary pupils.

Previous research in secondary schools (Carrington & Short, 1997; Brown & Davies, 1998; Short *et al.*, 1998; Davies, 2000; Hector, 2000; Totten, 2000; Ben-Peretz, 2003; Schweber, 2003) provides evidence that Holocaust education can make a significant contribution to citizenship in developing pupils' awareness of human rights issues and genocides, the concepts of stereotyping and scapegoating, and general political literacy, such as the exercise of power in local, national and global contexts. Landau (1989) asserts that Holocaust teaching 'perhaps more effectively than any other subject, has the power to sensitise them [pupils] to the dangers of indifference, intolerance, racism and the dehumanisation of others'.

Short asserts that one of the lessons that the Holocaust teaches pupils is that pupil attitudes are, 'to some extent, culturally determined' and its teaching should encourage pupils to examine whether any harmful stereotypes may emanate from an aspect of their culture (2003a). This is supported by Lord Lamont's claim that devolution has led to 'a marked rise in anti-English racism' (Allardyce, 2005). While his solution is anti-racism legislation that protects English people that are racially abused in Scotland, it must be noted that there is no evidence of this. If however, there is any substance in this, the contribution of Holocaust education can be relevant.

Holocaust education is part of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 3 (S1/2 Scottish equivalent age group) but, as it has been pointed out earlier (Maitles & Cowan, 1999), although there are plenty of opportunities in the curriculum for teaching about the Holocaust, too often 'Holocaust teaching in Scotland depends on individual school policy, and/or interested teachers' who integrate it into modes of the curriculum. Although the Holocaust is not included specifically in the Scottish

curriculum, the '5–14 National Guidelines', there is plenty of scope within this curriculum for teaching it. Traditional curricular areas are Religious and Moral Education, Environmental Studies and Personal and Social Development.

Hence, as a result of curricular developments, governmental and local authority support and research into its teaching, Scottish teachers of the upper primary and lower secondary stages now have more opportunities to teach the Holocaust and greater accessibility to Holocaust teaching resources than before. Finally, there is an additional 20% flexibility time that allows schools to enhance the time for a curricular area where they consider the minimum time insufficient and where school and the local authority have development priorities. This remains unchanged in the revised 'Structure and Balance of the Curriculum' document (SEED, 2000).

Research methodology

To investigate the value of Holocaust education, the authors devised a longitudinal strategy which examines whether there are 'immediate' and 'lasting' effects on the attitudes and dispositions of pupils that result from its teaching; further, the values of this cohort will be compared to their peers who did not have the opportunity to study the Holocaust in primary school. This will provide empirical evidence of the contribution of Holocaust education in developing attitudes relating to citizenship.

Thus, the attitudes of Primary 7 (P7) pupils (aged 11–12 years: equivalent to half-way through Key Stage 2) from two primary schools were examined, before and after they studied the Holocaust (Maitles & Cowan, 2004). Eighty-seven pupils participated in the first survey; 99 in the second. This differential can be explained by survey 1 being distributed to P7 pupils who had studied the Holocaust the previous year in a composite class. On the school's request and in the interests of inclusion, all P7's were included in this activity. However, their responses were withdrawn from the first part of the research as they indicated a greater perceived understanding of the issues than their peers and would have seriously weakened this research study. Their inclusion in the second part of this research can be justified in that this activity was designed for pupils to complete after their learning of the Holocaust and that the comparative aspect of the next stage of this research would be less valid if these pupils were not included alongside their peers who had studied the Holocaust.

We further had the funding from the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED) to follow this group of pupils, into the secondary school, where we were able to 'test' their attitudes and opinions compared to both their previous responses and to their Secondary 1 (aged 12–13 years: Key Stage 3 equivalent) peer group from primaries where the Holocaust was not studied. This involved a total of 238 pupils. This stage of the longitudinal study has the potential of suggesting whether there is a lasting impact of this type of learning. In the words of Magnuson *et al.* (1991), 'the development of individuals cannot be adequately and effectively investigated without using a longitudinal strategy'.

Yet there are problems with this cohort study, as outlined by (amongst many others) Mason and Bramble (1978), Cohen and Manion (1989) Gall *et al.* (1996), Ruddock and McIntyre (1998), Gay and Airasian (2000). Chief amongst these for

this study are firstly, the subjects can 'learn' about the test and, even although anonymous, might give what they perceive as the politically correct answer; and secondly, the class teacher can have an influence which can lead to distortions. Further, changing issues and external factors can have a major influence on longitudinal studies. While it is not feasible to isolate any one factor that can influence young people's values and attitudes (for example, Holocaust education), it must be pointed out that these would affect both the core group and the others.

The surveys were given to the pupils in November 2003, March 2004 and December 2004 which is, in longitudinal terms, a brief timescale and should alleviate some of the worries of longitudinal research, albeit yield a less long-term result. Distribution of surveys before Holocaust Memorial Day 2005 meant that the impact of the media leading up to this commemorative day could not influence the findings of this study. There were ethical issues in that we were dealing with sensitive issues with 10–12 year olds as the subjects. We obtained local authority, school, parental and pupil permission before moving to the surveys. The administering of these by the research assistant resulted in the class teachers having little opportunities to influence their pupils. Both primary Head Teachers gave feedback to the content of the draft survey, contributing to its final form, ensuring pupils' understanding of the questions. The survey had two parts: the first allowed the pupils to evaluate whether they thought that their understanding of some general concepts had improved; the second part focused on values and attitudes. The research assistant and class teachers provided assistance to the few individuals who required additional support and reported that pupils gave careful consideration to the completion of surveys.

We would have liked to have been able to track individual pupils who gave particular answers to particular questions. However, we felt that would identify individuals in a situation where we had promised the schools, the local authority, the parents and the pupils, anonymity. Particularly, we were worried that if pupils were able to be identified, they might be more likely to give us answers they thought we wanted rather than their own opinions.

In order to avoid aspects of familiarity, to move beyond the multicultural areas most often used in the studies on this area and to explore issues such as attitudes towards Gypsy Travellers,¹ we chose a small rural local authority some 30 miles from Glasgow. The sample was chosen, in collaboration with the local authority, who identified two primary schools in the area that regularly teach the Holocaust topic in P7. Teachers were given a free choice in the way they taught the Holocaust as researchers wanted the teachers to teach the Holocaust as they would usually and did not wish to impose anything on teachers. A further advantage was that all these pupils went to the same local secondary and this has avoided a significant sample drop-out. Both these primaries are non-denominational, have mixed socio-economic catchment areas and are predominantly White. One primary is a one streamed school (School A); the other is a larger school that contained pupils from three classes (School B).

Interviews were conducted after the completed second survey had been analysed, with the class teacher from School A and the P7 class teacher who had coordinated the Holocaust teaching in School B. Both teachers had taught the Holocaust several times before, but School B had additional teachers without such experience. Teacher feedback showed that the two schools had used different teaching approaches and materials. School A had integrated the Holocaust into a topic on World War II; School B had taught the Holocaust as a separate topic. Time spent on the topic varied from 2 hours a week for 5 weeks (School A) to 4 hours a week for 3 weeks (School B). School A's core approach was using the *Story of Anne Frank* (Dring, 1992) and involved a lot of individual pupil research. School B was unable to teach the Holocaust 'as normal' as it had a composite situation where a group of pupils had learned about the Holocaust the previous year. Therefore, it was unable to teach 'as normal' and used a new core resource, 'Daniel's Story' (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 1993), which involved a lot of class discussion.

We summarized the results of the first stage of our findings (Maitles & Cowan, 2004) as:

It is important not to take too much from the first stage of this study. There is evidence that pupils' knowledge and values/attitudes improved (excepting pupils' attitudes towards English people) after their learning about the Holocaust. At the very least, numbers of pupils who put 'don't know' for survey 1 came off the fence in survey 2 and came down in favour of tolerance and understanding. Yet, surprisingly few (only 28.3% overall) knew (or thought they knew) what anti-Semitism was. Analysis of the ways in which teachers in our schools put the Holocaust in the citizenship context is likely to contribute to an understanding of this. For example, did teachers teach the Holocaust as a specific topic linked to genocide or as an example of racism per se? In terms of our general aims, the first stage suggests that there are some significant immediate benefits of learning the Holocaust; the longer lasting effects are yet to be ascertained and will be done so following our third survey.

It is to this final point that we now turn. We obtained findings based on many more questions than we report in this paper. Our principal interest at this stage of the study was to find out if the general improvements in knowledge and positive values and attitudes of the pupils after their learning about the Holocaust were maintained in the first year of secondary education; and, secondly, whether these pupils' understanding of the Holocaust and positive attitudes in aspects of citizenship, were similar or different to their peers who did not have an opportunity to study the Holocaust in their primary school.

Findings and discussion

In terms of their own self understanding, Figure 1 shows that the core sample (those pupils who learned about the Holocaust in primary) maintained their perception of their knowledge of the Holocaust and it was substantially higher than the others (their peers from primary schools that did not teach about the Holocaust). Interestingly, the fact that 61.9% of 'others' knew about the Holocaust shows that there are opportunities either through media or other lessons, or Holocaust

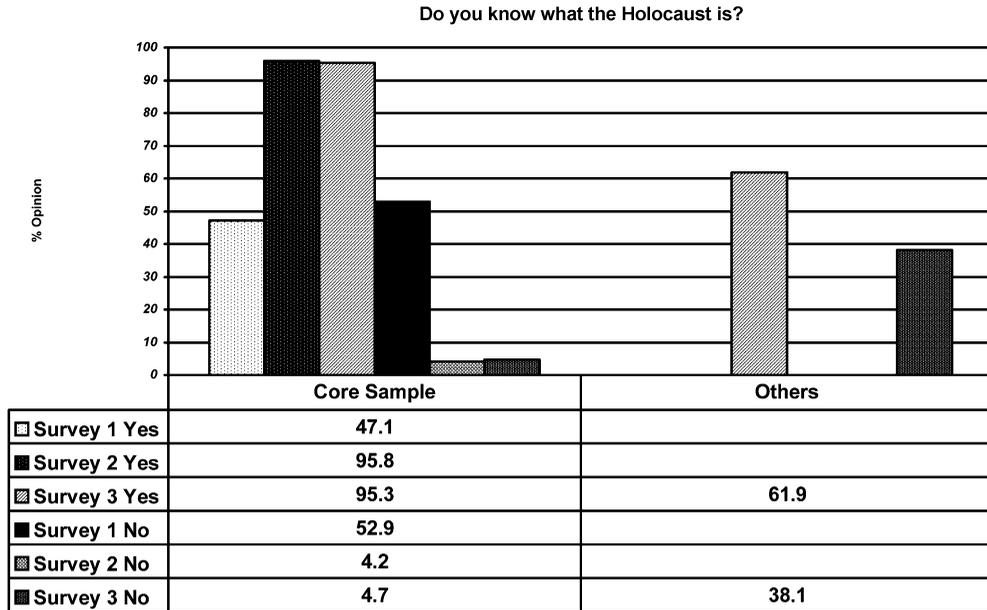


Figure 1. Pupils' perceived knowledge of the Holocaust

Memorial Day activities, or parental comment for young people to find out about it; but the fact that nearly 40% did not recognize the term or know anything about it, means that Holocaust education clearly has a major role to play.

A similar trend can be found in terms of perceived understanding of anti-Semitism (Figure 2). Only 3.5% of 'others' could define it, whereas the core sample stayed at

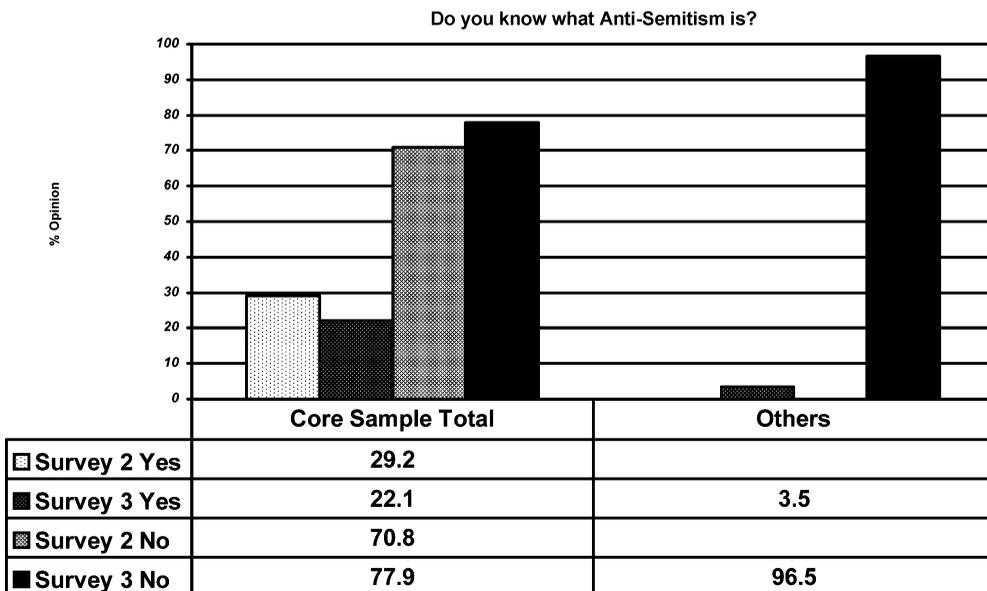


Figure 2. Pupils' perceived knowledge of anti-Semitism

approximately 22%. Yet, although the core sample had a stronger understanding of it, perhaps the most significant factor is that there is such low awareness of the term anti-Semitism. Data from teacher interviews showed that the teacher in School A developed lessons on the Holocaust without mentioning ‘anti-Semitism’ *per se*; and talked about racism towards Jews. Similarly, Short’s study of secondary students showed that their teachers were not including the critical role of anti-Semitism in their teaching of the origins of the Holocaust (Leicester *et al.*, 1999, chapter 1). While the teachers claimed that pupils understood what anti-Semitism was, despite not knowing the term, it is perhaps incumbent upon teachers to mention the terminology more clearly so that pupils who come up against a media headline relating to anti-Semitism will know what it is about and relate it to their learning.

The values of the core group, welcomingly, more or less maintained over the piece in relation to minorities not having to suffer racial abuse. For example, Figure 3 shows that in no category were the pupils less positive than they had been at the start of the process and only in one area (attitudes towards Black people) was there any reduction from the post-Holocaust questionnaire/survey; and, it was very slight.

However, lest we become too complacent, there was a far less positive response to the statement about there being too many of a category of people in Scotland. As Figure 4 shows, in every category, pupils’ attitudes became less tolerant; indeed, they not only fell below their post-Holocaust opinions, but a much larger number claimed they were unsure. For example, towards Jews 88.5% either agreed or disagreed in survey 2, thus 11.5% were unsure; in survey 3, 73.3% agreed or disagreed, thus

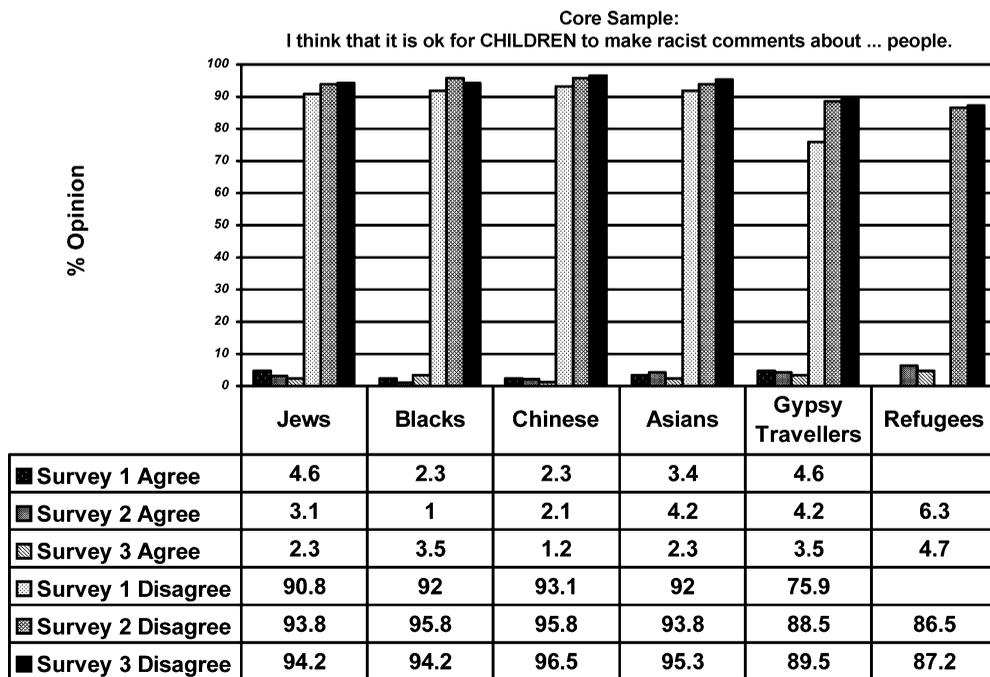


Figure 3. Attitudes to children making racist comments about ... people

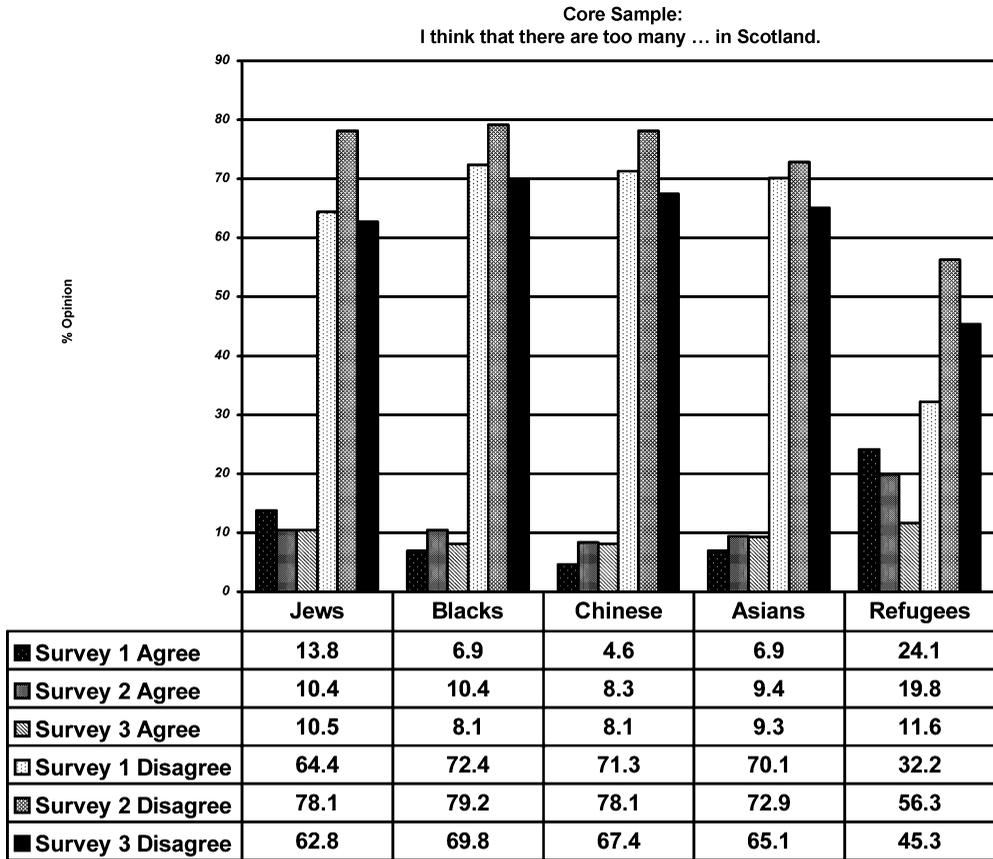


Figure 4. Attitudes to number of ... people in Scotland

26.7% were unsure. The ‘agree’ category remained stable at 10.4–10.5%, so we can surmise that many of those who disagreed moved to the unsure category. Interestingly, attitudes towards refugees held up better than the other variables, although this was the category which showed the most negative attitudes overall. The percentage ‘agreeing’ consistently decreased across the three surveys (24.1%, 19.8%, 11.6%) and the percentage ‘disagreeing’ increased by 13% from survey 1 to survey 3.

Given that more than 95% pupils now consider that they know what the Holocaust is (Figure 1), and that there are approximately only 5000 Jews in Scotland, pupils’ attitudes towards Jews is rather puzzling as pupils’ new knowledge has no long-term positive effect on their attitudes in this area. One possible explanation may lie in pupils’ understanding of anti-Semitism. Separating the data into the two schools may shed further light into this area as schools taught this differently. It may also be that anti-Semitism is perceived as something that happened in history and is not perceived by pupils to be relevant to contemporary Scottish society. It is also possible that pupils do not perceive Jews as victims in today’s society. It is unknown whether the contemporary nature of anti-Semitism was taught to pupils.

Another explanation may be found in Short's implication (2003b) that successful Holocaust teaching is dependent on pupils' perceptions of Jews and Judaism and of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity. Data obtained from interviews showed that School A had introduced Judaism in P3 and studied another aspect of it in P7, albeit after their teaching of the Holocaust; School B had studied Judaism the previous year. This suggests that pupils' perceptions of the above will have started to have been formed but these were not examined in this research.

It is worth noting that the most positive change of attitudes i.e. towards refugees is a current issue that was likely to have been discussed in and outside the classroom. It is unlikely that the other groups of peoples would have aroused a similar interest.

The differences between the attitudes in Figures 3 and 4 perhaps relate to the perceived differences between prejudice and discrimination; the pupils perhaps feel that there are 'too many' minorities in Scotland but feel that there should not be any abuse towards them.

One of the most contentious areas from the first stage of the survey was the voting potential of the sample and, in particular, the attitude towards English people. While it is possible that pupils may have considered the Scottish Parliament as an institution for Scottish people, irrespective of their ethnicity we have previously concluded that (Cowan & Maitles, 2005):

The research uncovered some anti-English feeling—the only area that significantly declined in the course of the two questionnaires. This requires further investigation and has two significant implications for teachers. Firstly, it raises a serious question as to whether anti-English feeling is endemic in Scottish culture. When the class teachers were notified of these results they were concerned and committed to acting upon this including it in their education for citizenship programme. Secondly, if teaching the Holocaust and racism suggests that the only victims are persecuted peoples e.g. Jews, Gypsies, Tutsis, there can be a danger of ignoring prejudice against other people, e.g. English people, Italians.

The results comparing the three surveys (Figure 5) show that the improvements found after learning about the Holocaust have been generally maintained (e.g. voting attitudes re Catholics/Protestants) or continued to improve (e.g. voting attitudes re Woman/Man). Exceptions are attitudes (see Figure 3 earlier) to Black people; although the attitudes in this category were better in survey 3 than in survey 1, they had fallen back significantly from the position in survey 2. Interestingly, the attitudes towards English people improved most of all, although at 52.3% agreeing and 36% disagreeing, it was still significantly poorer than any other category.

Another factor to be examined is the attitudes of the core sample compared to the peer group in secondary. Figure 6 compares this in terms of the statement 'I think racism has nothing to do with me'. There is a significant difference between the core and the others group, with the core group having a smaller number agreeing with this statement and a larger number disagreeing with this statement. This suggests that the core group have a greater understanding of collective responsibility for racism than the 'others'.

Finally, comparing attitudes towards voting, Figure 7 suggests that in every category our core sample group are more tolerant and in every case bar the attitudes towards English it is highly significant. There are a far larger number of the others in the 'don't know' category.

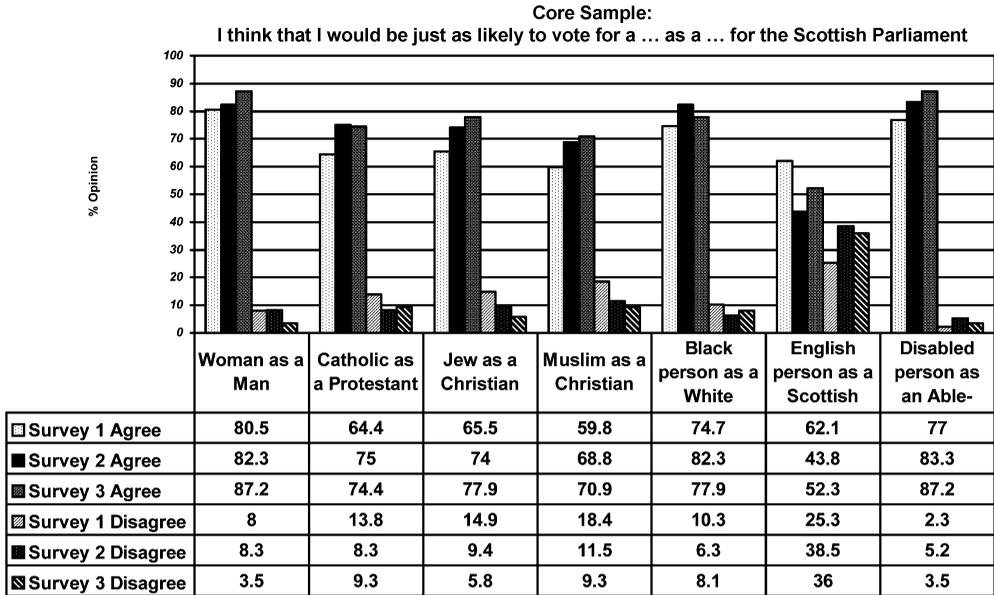


Figure 5. Voting attitudes

Conclusions

In common with much research examining values and opinions, the results are not particularly clear cut. In some areas, there does seem, in less than 1 year on, to be a welcome maintaining of the positive dispositions ascertained in the immediate

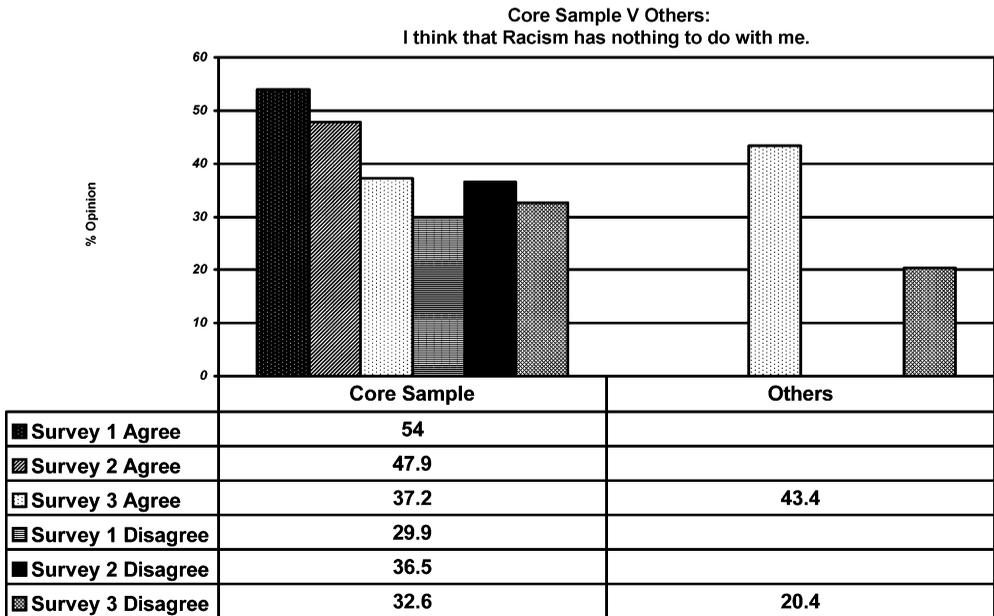


Figure 6. Comparison of core group and others—racism has nothing to do with me

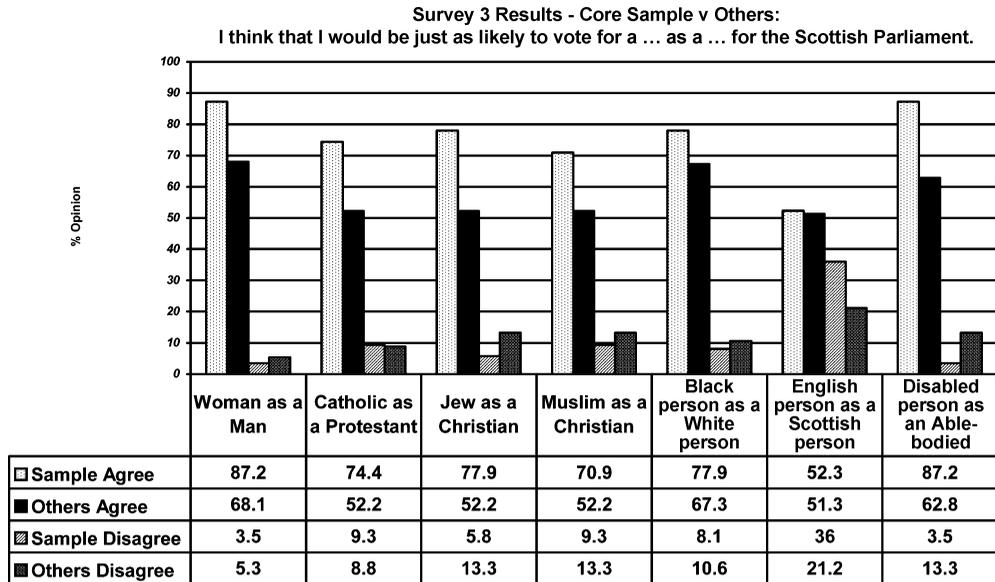


Figure 7. Comparison of core group and others—voting attitudes

aftermath of the lessons on the Holocaust. Yet, it remains uneven; much tolerance and sympathy towards minorities is still held by our core group, although they have ‘fallen back’ vis-à-vis their attitude towards numbers of minorities (perhaps reflective of a general intolerance in British society being fostered by mainstream politicians and the media). However, in most categories, the attitudes were still better than they had been before the lessons on the Holocaust. There is still a worrying hostility towards English people and it is something that needs to be watched and combated, although there is perhaps a need to understand that it is possible that the pupils have a quite sophisticated understanding of the differences between oppressed and oppressors and English people do not fit into the category of oppressed.

In terms of comparing our sample group with their peers, who had not had the opportunity to study the Holocaust, there is evidence, outlined earlier, that the core group had stronger positive values, were more tolerant and were more disposed to active citizenship by their understanding of individual responsibility towards racism.

While this does not shed light on the effectiveness of specific Holocaust teaching approaches, it suggests that learning about the Holocaust can have both an immediate and lasting impact on pupils’ values. Thus studying the Holocaust teaches citizenship targets that are central to the development of well-rounded young people. It is worth making the case to teachers that at some stage in their education (perhaps as young as is deemed feasible), pupils should have the opportunity to undertake structured learning experiences about the Holocaust, generalized to reflect the various forms that racism can take in society. This clearly has implications for both initial teacher education and continuing professional development.

Note

1. There are currently nine school aged Gypsy Travellers in the authority and an anticipated significant influx of Gypsy Travellers to the area in the near future.

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