

***ECHOES AND REFLECTIONS* EVALUATION**

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Abstract

This report presents results of The National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing's (CRESST) pilot evaluation of the *Echoes and Reflections* Program. The *Echoes and Reflections* Program, a partnership among the Anti-Defamation League, USC Shoah Foundation, and Yad Vashem, will provide training material and professional development to middle school and high school teachers in the United States. The present report focuses on program implementation, incorporating quantitative and qualitative data. Overall, the results of the evaluation suggest that the *Echoes and Reflections* Program experience has been a positive one for its participants, in particular, participating teachers. Teachers provided positive feedback about the curriculum and its impact on their students. More importantly, all teachers interviewed reported utilizing components of the curriculum, if not the entire curriculum, and were eager to continue to integrate *Echoes and Reflections* content into their instruction on the Holocaust and beyond.

Methodology

Participants were recruited and self-selected for participation in the *Echoes and Reflections* Program based on their interest in the Holocaust. Thus, the evaluation sample is a convenience sample, with the limitation that participants are volunteers and may have different characteristics, experience, and expertise than other middle school or high school teachers in the nation.

Participants

Over 300 participants – e.g. teachers, professors, pre-service teachers, school administrators, counselors, and staff, etc. – responded to an online survey conducted by the USC Shoah Foundation in Spring 2013. The survey included about 50 questions and was designed by the *Echoes and Reflections* Program partners. Additionally, a small sample of 10 teachers also provided evaluation data (as described below).

Instruments & Procedures

The data collection process included both quantitative and qualitative measures directed at addressing the key evaluation questions described above. Quantitative data included participant surveys, and qualitative measures included teacher interviews.

Results

Respondents were asked to address how frequently they used or planned to use the *Echoes and Reflections* resources, which materials/resources they used or planned on using more frequently than others (in addition to resources they were currently using the classroom), as well as what influenced their decision-making.

Table 1 *Echoes and Reflections* Resources – Likely or Very Likely to Use Ratings

Resources	Student/Preservice Teachers	Classroom Teachers
Video Testimonies / DVD	97%	91%
Photos and Maps	98%	93%
Transparency Masters	70%	58%
Student Handouts	91%	90%
Classroom Lesson/s	89%	89%
IWitness Activities	93%	84%
Website - EchoesandReflections.org	81%	83%

Table 2 *Echoes and Reflections* Resources – Usefulness Ratings, Classroom Teachers only

Resources	Useful	Very Useful	Useful or Very Useful	Did Not Use
Video Testimonies / DVD	8%	81%	89%	6%
Photos and Maps	16%	72%	88%	7%
Transparency Masters	18%	36%	54%	24%
Student Handouts	16%	71%	87%	5%
IWitness Activities	18%	56%	74%	18%
Website - EchoesandReflections.org	20%	59%	79%	13%

Implementation

As previously mentioned, most respondents had attended at least one *Echoes and Reflections* training session (90%) or received similar training about the Holocaust from another organization (87%), almost three-quarters regularly teach about the Holocaust in their classrooms (77%), and 70% have more than 10 years working experience in education. It is not surprising that while some teachers adopted *Echoes and Reflections* as their primary vehicle for delivering instruction on the Holocaust, others reported utilizing *Echoes and Reflections* as a supplemental resource, cherry-picking the relevant pieces.

Over three-quarters (79%) of classroom teachers agreed that *Echoes and Reflections* lessons were classroom ready. Teachers interviewed described regularly integrating *Echoes and Reflections* material across the curriculum, that “what is nice about the program and the resources is that [we’re] able to weave into the curriculum what [we] have to cover, the important lessons of the Holocaust, the testimonies, the survivors, and the rescuers.” For example, one teacher described utilizing the Holocaust as the backdrop for events that occurred in Rwanda, Nanking, and Yugoslavia after the Cold War.

Of respondents reporting that *Echoes and Reflections* was “somewhat” classroom ready, 93% described that they had used pieces of *Echoes and Reflections* selectively, modifying lessons or choosing topics to integrate with their pre-existing lesson plans. One teacher described first prepping his students with background on WWI, “so that they understand the economic situation, why people were desperate for a scapegoat, what/why they were so willing to accept what somebody told them that promised that life is going to be better, it’s not your fault; helping them to grasp that.” Several teachers highlighted during their interview that since they have had and used *Echoes and Reflections* as a resource, they appreciated being able to pick and choose from the various components to add to their “repertoire” – they “don’t use all 10 lessons step by step but [they] pull things from almost every lesson area.” Table 3 below exhibits variations on how teachers implemented *Echoes and Reflections* in their classrooms and adapted the program to address the needs of their students.

Table 3 Classroom implementation – integration strategies

Use	Approach
Primary Holocaust resource	I actually used every lesson at some point...I started with the first one as defining anti-Semitism and kind of progressing working our way through it, but predominantly what I would use are the primary source documents, so the letters and the photographs and the propaganda artwork.
Supplemental Holocaust resource	I kind of cherry-picked things out of this and that. I have my own stuff...took everything that I already had and then used the Echoes & Reflections stuff to really hold up where I had holes or where I saw that the Echoes & Reflections materials was stronger than what I had, I pulled out what I had and put that instead.

Part of broader curriculum	Since I teach in a Catholic school, when we look at -- for example, anti-Semitism -- we look at anti-Judaism as well -- historic anti-Judaism within the church. So I fit them in both in my religion and my history curriculum -- church history.
Integrate with existing activities	I would integrate some of the survivor testimonies, and then I supplemented it. We have a Holocaust survivor that lives in Scottsdale, in town, and he was able to come and speak to our kids. And so his story was different. I was able to contrast his story -- he was treated as a favored Jew amongst the Nazis, because he spoke German.
Launch discussions about other historical events	I use the Holocaust as the backdrop for things like Rwanda and Nanking in China and Yugoslavia after the Cold War. So we had talked about those things and in relation to, especially U.S. responsibilities to interact in a crisis...I give them the venue to voice their concerns and try to talk about what it was and what our foreign policy aims are and we just talk about it. I tell them that there's a lot of times I'll ask you a question, and I don't even know the answer to it. We're just there to hammer out what our opinion about it is and go from there.
Connect to class project	We talk about the Holocaust -- we threaded that throughout the school year, because we were doing the book-sharing projects*. Of course, we started that back in September/October, and whenever it was appropriate we'd bring in some of the resources, we'd bring in some of the video. So we studied about the Holocaust all year long.
Teach a life lesson	It's respect for life and respect for people and a lot of the basic principles that we are about; plus its history, plus it's real, and I noticed that when they go to the Museum of Tolerance, and they're blessed to meet someone in person, they're a lot more focused because they've had that introduction and these are stories about people. Also with Facing History, the upstander concept, we really like that. We want our kids to be upstanders in the world. So it really is a profound piece of my curriculum.

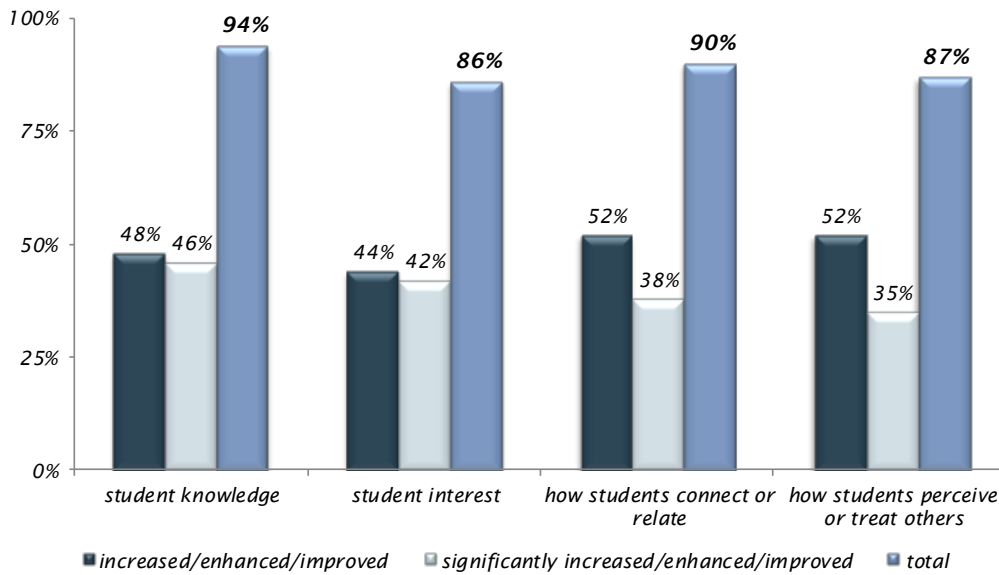
*reflective writing

Student impact

Teachers were asked to provide a general description of students they taught and informally assess the impact of *Echoes and Reflections* on their classrooms. 37% of survey respondents reported delivering *Echoes and Reflections* to less than 50 students per year; about half (48%) reported reaching about 100 to 200 students a year; 3% reported reaching more than 200 students a year. Almost a quarter (72%) recounted that their students spent more than a week during the school year studying the Holocaust. As mentioned previously, teachers surveyed predominantly taught students in grades 7 thru 12 in the subjects of English/Language Arts (42%) and/or History/Social Studies (49%); about two-thirds worked in the public school system. Likewise, half the teachers interviewed taught middle school students, about a third (30%) taught high school students; one teacher taught grades 7th thru 12th. The most common subject area (80%) taught by the 10 teachers was History/Social Studies. Six of the 10 teachers worked in public schools, while four reported working in private Catholic schools.

Teachers reported observing positive changes in students' attitudes towards *Echoes and Reflections* material, as well as their peers (see Figure 2 below).

Figure 2.Changes in Student Attitudes.



This was also the case for teachers interviewed. Teachers shared that students were particularly affected by the individual testimonies – “...they really liked the testimonies. I think they like seeing and hearing the people, and they also like hearing what happened to them after the war, which the biographic profiles really help with, but I would say first and foremost the testimonies....” Table 5 displays components of *Echoes and Reflections* that teachers found particularly effective with their student population and examples of classroom activities that elicited student understanding and empathy. Many teachers described being amazed by their students’ growth as they progressed through the *Echoes and Reflections* curriculum. One 8th grade teacher shared, “ I just find it expands their ability to listen and to really think and, doing it in the spring, there's so much experience that we have built up of trust and practice and learning the nuts and bolts that we're ready to do this. It's just the perfect time, and they also have an appreciation of their family, what it would mean to me to be somebody of that age....” Five of the 10 teachers interviewed brought in guest speakers, who were survivors of the Holocaust, emphasizing how much hearing from a victim truly impacted their students. Teachers also highlighted that *Echoes and Reflections* used “easy to understand language” which helped deepen students’ comprehension of the content; students were able to engage with the material collaboratively and independently.

Participant feedback

Table 6 below reflects the percent of respondents that agreed or *strongly* agreed with statements about *Echoes and Reflections*.

Table 6 Outcomes - Level of Agreement (N=306)

Statements	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
I believe Echoes and Reflections is the best program available for teaching about the Holocaust.	35%	41%	76%
Echoes and Reflections provides meaningful ways to learn about the Holocaust.	28%	71%	99%
Echoes and Reflections is relevant Holocaust education for 21st century classrooms.	29%	69%	98%
The Echoes and Reflections program is comprehensive.	32%	66%	98%
I think Echoes and Reflections is a convenient classroom resource for educators.	31%	66%	97%
Echoes and Reflections offers an integrated approach to teaching about the Holocaust.	34%	63%	97%
I feel a strong connection to the people I have met through Echoes and Reflections.	34%	41%	75%
I would recommend Echoes and Reflections to others.	19%	79%	98%
I prefer to use Echoes and Reflections over other Holocaust resources.	38%	41%	79%
The Echoes and Reflections training I received adequately prepared me to implement a classroom lesson on the	42%	51%	93%

Teacher interviews provided similar positive feedback. One teacher described *Echoes and Reflections* as content that “[helps] these kids expand their minds and their hearts and souls more so than they've got at this point, but not without rewarding them in it, which is what the curriculum allows, because you've crafted it so well.”

Teachers were also asked to provide suggestions for how *Echoes and Reflections* might be improved and/or additional elements to add in the future. As time constraint was a top issue for teachers, recommendations included putting together short reading passages for students, outlines for using *Echoes and Reflections* varied by length of time (weeks) allocated to the Holocaust, and a “Cliff’s notes” on key events/data points – “this is how much time I have, this is the big important stuff.” One teacher also asked for more clarification/information on the concentration camps, “different types of camps... more types of camps, who/what/when/where/why.” Teachers proposed that a set of guided questions would help those educators less familiar with the Holocaust, as well as some background historical information leading up to the where *Echoes and Reflections* begins. Teachers also suggested that *Echoes and Reflections* should extend the length of their trainings, due to the amount of material that needed to be covered. Teachers that had attended longer (or multiple) trainings felt they had a better grasp on the content and were able to incorporate it into their existing curriculum more easily.

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