

THE BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF GENOCIDE EDUCATION

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"We learn about the Holocaust and other genocides so that we can be more human, more gentle, more caring, more compassionate, valuing every person as being of infinite worth, so precious that we know that such atrocities will never happen again, and that the world will be a more humane place that is hostile to such horrendous occurrences. We will remember them so that we are not doomed to repeat them."

- **Archbishop Emeritus Desmond M. Tutu.**

*"And the spirits of all the dead, tonight,
Through my own eyes and soul,
Are awaiting the dawning of the light,
So that, to humanize the cruelty
Of our inhuman lives,
Perhaps from above a drop of light
May fall upon the murdered and the murderer alike."*

- **Siamanto (1878-1915) executed along with several hundred Armenian intellectuals on the eve of April 24, 1915**

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Introduction

Genocide education has been evolving for the past several decades. It was commonly referred to as Holocaust education, as it primarily concentrated on the Jewish Holocaust. However, with the Armenian Genocide entering our collective consciousness and the shock of contemporary genocides such as those occurring in Cambodia, Serbia, Rwanda, and Darfur, educators have acknowledged the importance of comparative approaches when teaching about genocide and the importance of teaching from a variety of case studies all of which carry unique qualities. Thus, genocide education has now become an umbrella term that refers to the use of historical and contemporary cases of genocide to teach about social justice and human rights. The potential and urgency of genocide education has long been underestimated as it has faced many challenges to date. For instance the resistance displayed by certain communities who deny a particular genocide and prefer the issue remain silent. It was not until the 1970's that Holocaust curricula started to develop in North America, and today we see educational institutions at all levels adopting courses fully dedicated to the topic of genocide (Fallace, 2008, p. 25, 26).

The goal of genocide education is not solely to educate students about historical factual accounts of genocide, but also, I will argue, it helps to pave the road to one of the most effective avenues to anti-racist education. Genocide is a consequence of deep rooted societal discrimination and the result of a series of human rights violations that render a people vulnerable to further exploitation. Racism and its dangers are therefore displayed in their most visible and terrible form in genocide, making it a unique opportunity to teach and learn about these complex events. A combination of geopolitical circumstances and manipulation of human behaviour often lead to active or indirect participation in genocide and similar crimes associated

with violations of human rights. Thus, genocide and human rights education creates an invaluable opportunity to explore the various choices available to all those effected by genocide and the decisions that could have a positive impact on society even in most difficult of times. How we make deep connections between individuals, the decisions we make and the social conditions we live in are embodied in genocide education. Genocide education also opens possibilities for empathetic forms of education to shift the barriers between societies where the concept of the “other” is frequently raised and reinforced in harmful and destructive ways.

I am passionate about this topic for several reasons. I am the grandchild of survivors of the Armenian Genocide and have been directly affected by the consequences of not only the physical acts of genocide but also the legacy the genocide continues to leave behind through its last stage, denial. The legacies of the Armenian Genocide continue to have a tremendous impact on generations subsequent to those who physically experienced it. The very fact that genocide transcends time and space of the event and continues to affect people a century later has encouraged me to further research the opportunities genocide education creates. I believe this will assist in preventing future cases, and will afford the coming generations the opportunity to learn from the past and make decisions practicing inclusion and diversity.

According to Gregory Stanton (1996), denial is the last of the eight stages of genocide.¹ In denial, those who commit the crimes reject the reports as propaganda. Their successors tend to dismiss the evidence as “alleged” and “unconfirmed,” often claiming that legitimate sources are unofficial and illegitimate. Deniers attempt to distance the events from the legal definition of genocide by trivializing the fate, numbers and the conditions under which the victims perished (Stanton, 1996). Extensive efforts are made to rewrite history in such a way that

¹ Stanton presented as the first Working Paper (GS 01) of the Yale Program in Genocide Studies in 1998

it attempts to criminalize victims and blame them for the hardships they faced, while trying to erase evidence of intent to commit genocide and any documentation associated with the crime. The stage of denial remains one of the most significant barriers to implementing genocide education and this is an important concern in my research.

This research project explores the benefits of genocide education and the challenges teachers face while advocating for its implementation. I will provide an exploration of the history and development of genocide curricula which will help in contextualizing the work. This will be followed by an examination of the Toronto District School Board's efforts to develop and implement the very first Canadian senior level course dedicated to genocide education. The research will conclude with suggestions and an analysis of the benefits and challenges of genocide education.

I will first engage with the way in which Holocaust education developed in the United States, which was a catalyst for the implementation of genocide education curricula throughout the country. This will lead to a discussion of how the U.S. experience opened doors to the implementation of genocide education in Canada, the most significant example being the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) genocide curriculum. The trials and tribulations of the TDSB and its eventual success in implementing the genocide curriculum will be examined in detail.

I- Brief history of Genocide Education

Thomas Fallace discusses the history of Holocaust education in his book, *The Emergence of Holocaust Education in American Schools* (2008) where he outlines many of the challenges the Toronto District School Board Grade 11 genocide curriculum has faced and traces its journey into the classroom. According to Fallace (2008), interest in genocide education in North America started with the growing awareness about the Jewish Holocaust in the 1970's. Up until then, the Jewish Holocaust had not fully entered into North American public consciousness since scholarship surrounding the issue remained largely confined to Jewish circles (Fallace, 2008, p. 13). Public commemorations started as early as 1942, particularly in New York which was considered the epicentre of Jewish culture. "In December 1942, five thousand Jewish workers in New York City stopped work for ten minutes in mourning for and protest over the Nazi slaughter of Jews. Two years later, over thirty thousand Jews memorialized the first anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising on the steps of New York City Hall, an occasion that featured speeches by Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia and prominent Jewish leaders" (Fallace, 2008, p.14). This started to raise greater awareness about the Jewish Holocaust and Nazi brutality among North Americans. This continued throughout the 60's and 70's. By the 1960's Jewish groups continued to express concern about the underrepresentation of the Jewish Holocaust in American textbooks and classrooms, seeing this as a threat to the lessons society should be learning from in order to prevent future cases of similar crimes (Fallace, 2008, p. 15).

Fallace (2008) identifies Elie Wiesel, author and survivor of the Jewish Holocaust, as one of the main advocates for greater awareness about the events his own family fell victim to. Most significant was Wiesel's article, "Telling the War," published in November of 1972 in the *New*

York Times. In this article, Wiesel stated that the topic of the Jewish Holocaust was no longer taboo, especially as the new generation of Jews, separated from the generation who survived, have now become cause for greater interest in this history. “Wiesel’s article, more than any other document, marked the beginning of the movement toward Holocaust education in American public schools. Holocaust educators would cite this article as a rationale for introducing the topic to their students”(Fallace, 2008, pp. 26-27). Another contributing factor to the growing interest in Holocaust education was the “Holocaust” television mini-series in the late 1970’s (Totten, 2004, p. 262).

Although the legal definition of genocide was established in 1948 with Convention of the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the term genocide surfaced internationally as many political leaders began using the term to define recent instances of violence. As a result of the growing public interest in the term genocide, the Jewish Holocaust drew more attention. Educators saw the Jewish Holocaust as the perfect avenue to teach about current events locally and abroad and thus a unit on the Holocaust started to seem more and more appropriate (Fallace, 2008, pp. 30-31).

In 1973, the Commission on Jewish Studies in Public Schools of the American Association for Jewish Education published the curriculum *The Holocaust: A Case Study of Genocide*. This was developed by Albert Post who presented the Holocaust as the most extreme case of genocide in history. He stressed that other cases must be considered and taught as genocide as well, the Armenian Genocide for instance, which he thought was most similar to the Holocaust in nature. Therefore his curriculum used the Holocaust as its foundation and progressed into the universality of genocide. His approach would later be criticized as more

Jewish Holocaust scholars insisted on the complete uniqueness of the Holocaust as an event unprecedented in history. The curriculum was seen to be delivered “through traditional pedagogy” since it concentrated more on facts and chronology and lacked the components of moral theories, notions of identity and character development that comprise the progressive nature of the genocide education curriculum today (Fallace, 2008, pp. 32-33). Nonetheless, this curriculum gave rise to a movement to incorporate Holocaust education in the New York City Board of Education while the city of Philadelphia had developed its own curriculum on the Holocaust and had implemented it by 1975.

According to Fallace, the most significant strides that gave solid results took place in Vineland, New Jersey. Richard F. Flaim and Edwin Reynolds, colleagues at Vineland High School, decided to develop a Holocaust curriculum meant for state-wide use. Their curriculum received support from the Jewish Anti-Defamation League in 1978 followed by an endorsement by New Jersey governor Thomas Kean in 1982, who established the Advisory Council on Holocaust Education, which disseminated Holocaust education resources across the state. “In 1994 the state of New Jersey passed a law mandating Holocaust education for every school in the state. By 2007 several U.S states had imitated New Jersey, passing legislation specifying or mandating Holocaust education, and many more states had developed curricula for voluntary use” (Fallace, 2008, p. 3).

These efforts were by no means without opposition. Fallace (2008) points to “The New York Times Debate” in 1977 as a turning point in our understanding of Holocaust Education. An article by Ari Goldman appeared in the *New York Times* in 1977 which heavily criticized the study of the Holocaust and was a response to Albert Post’s curriculum and New York City Board

of Education's recommendation to make the study of the Holocaust mandatory in all its schools. The article featured comments by several individuals and organizations who opposed this curriculum and the city's recommendation. George Pape, president of the German-American Committee of Greater New York, claimed that there was no proof the Holocaust really took place and that the curriculum would target innocent German Americans. Dr. M.T. Mehdi, the president of an Arab-American organization, outrageously claimed that the curriculum was Zionist propaganda, which was going to be spread at the city's expense (Fallace, 2008, p. 36). This sparked a debate that resulted in several letters to the editor some in support while others criticized Pape's position and identified it as Holocaust denial.

Yehuda Bauer, an Israeli historian, used the opportunity created by the "New York Times Debate" of 1977 to share his opinions on why Holocaust education must be a priority. While stressing that the curriculum could serve as a means of preventing future genocides, Bauer also suggested that the uniqueness of the Holocaust made it a significant topic of study in teaching a wide range of lessons. He supported his argument by stating, "Jews could not escape- no apostasy, no identification with Nazism, no change in domicile within Nazi Europe helped at all. All persons were under a sentence of death who had committed the crime of having had Jewish grandparents" (Fallace, 2008, p. 38).

The "New York Times Debate" of 1977 was undoubtedly a significant point in the evolution of genocide education. Here we saw the first instances of opposition to mandating genocide curricula which take several forms especially in multicultural societies as those in North America. One form is "denialist" accusations, meant to trivialize the realities of the genocide by questioning historical facts, usually with unfounded accusations. An example of this

would be Dr. M.T. Mehdi discrediting the Holocaust as “Zionist propaganda” Another is meant to misinform the public and side track the issue by making inaccurate and unfounded assumptions regarding the consequences of such a decision. An example of this would be George Pape’s assumption that innocent German-Americans would be targeted by the curriculum and thus discriminated against. The latter misleads many non-partisan spectators believe that presenting such curricula would disrupt the peace amongst ethnic groups and inciting further hatred. This might lead segments of the public to disregard the fact that the intentions of genocide education are far from these assumptions, and in fact are intended to dispel feelings of resentment, hatred and discrimination that may exist between ethnic groups who were formerly identified as victim and perpetrator. These forms of opposition will resurface as our understanding of genocide education expands to include other genocidal events.

The Holocaust was without a doubt unique, but also unique were genocides previous to or subsequent to it. All cases of genocide have lessons to teach us, and it is important to be conscious of this reality. The growing number of genocides in the contemporary world have led the transition from Holocaust education to Genocide education. In her article, “Teaching Genocide in United States Secondary Education,” Sara Cohen (2010) refers to the outrage people have displayed to the continuing genocide in Darfur as catalyst to the Holocaust to Genocide education transition. This increased consciousness and outrage is a result of student and teacher led organizations mobilized to spread greater awareness and activism. These events created the demand by teachers and students to learn about this crime and the lessons that transpire from them.

Facing History and Ourselves became the authority in genocide education. With the increase in demand came the need to provide lessons in the classrooms that are meaningfully transmitted over and above the teaching of mere facts. Facing History thus developed resources and materials and organized teacher workshops meant to equip teachers to provide genocide education to their students at diverse levels.

For over three decades, Facing History and Ourselves has been providing a model of educational intervention and professional development that helps teachers and their students make the essential connections between history and the moral choices they confront in their own lives. Through in-depth study of cases of mass atrocity and genocide, Facing History engage teachers and students in a critical exploration of the steps that led to full scale violence and destruction, as well as strategies for prevention and positive participation to sustain democracy. (Cohen, 2010, p. 2)

According to Samuel Totten (2004), the Education Department at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum states that as of 2003, California, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey and New York, have mandated the teaching of the Holocaust in their schools. Connecticut, Georgia, Indiana, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee and Washington have either recommended or encouraged their public schools to teach the subject.

II- Introduction to the TDSB Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity

I am an educator in the social sciences and humanities at the secondary level. I have been involved in genocide education for five years and have been teaching the Toronto District School Board's (TDSB) *Grade 11 Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity* course since its implementation in 2008. I have worked with students most of whom are descendents of genocide survivors, and their reactions to this curriculum have been extremely positive. The curriculum itself is the most recent genocide education curriculum developed in North America, inspired by earlier curricula in the United States.

The representatives of the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) along with teachers, parents, students and the community at large displayed interest in allowing opportunities for the students in this city to learn about the problem of genocide and the lessons it has to offer. The proposal presented by the TDSB to the Ontario Ministry of Education goes into more detail on why it decided to pursue genocide education. The rationale discusses how “democracy, justice, and the rule of law must be understood, claimed, and defended by each generation of citizens if we are to confront this demonstration of human evil. We believe that a full-credit course will engage students and allow them to study genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity in a systematic and thoughtful way” (Toronto District School Board (TDSB), 2008a, p. 1).

On July 13, 2005, the Toronto District School Board put forward a motion that became the spark leading to the development of the Grade 11 Genocide and Crimes Against humanity course. The motion put forth “That previously written documents on the Holocaust and its contemporary implications be revised to reflect the current high school program and recent global events such as Rwanda.” This was followed by a December 14, 2005 Board decision to

integrate the Armenian Genocide into high school level history curriculum and a March 2006 report on the Armenian Genocide. (TDSB, 2008b, pp. 1-2)

Individual lessons and even units on genocide have been taught in the City of Toronto for a long time and according to TDSB's report to the Ministry of Education, some alternative schools had already developed full credit courses on the topic. The TDSB report on the course describes this in more detail.

In the 1980s, a few teachers at alternative schools within the public system were able to design full-credit interdisciplinary courses on the Holocaust. In the early 1980s, three units of study were drafted by the Greater Toronto Area legacy Boards of Education including: *The Holocaust: A series of readings and practical strategies written for students studying History at the Basic Level* by Eleanor Gower for the Toronto Board of Education; *The Holocaust and Its Contemporary Implications: An interdisciplinary curriculum prepared by Barbara Walther and Frank Bialystok* for the Toronto Board of Education; *The Holocaust: a senior division English curriculum prepared by Alan Bardikoff, Roberta Charlesworth, Jack Gillett, Jane Griesdorf and Carl Hogg* for the North York Board of Education (TDSB, 2008a, p. 1).

In addition to this, Facing History and Ourselves started operations in Toronto as early as 1982 establishing a long running relationship with Toronto teachers through professional development. These professional development programs, coupled with those offered by certain other organizations laid out a strong foundation for the much more recent healthy implementation of this multidisciplinary course on genocide.

In order to facilitate and coordinate the preparation of the course, a steering committee was formed by high school and university educators and representatives of several community organizations. Among these organizations and institutions was UNICEF, Canadian Centre for Genocide and Human Rights Education, Toronto Holocaust Education Centre, York University, Facing History and Ourselves Canada, Canadian Society for Yad Vashem and OISE/University of Toronto (TDSB, 2008a, p. 4).

This steering committee met over a six month period and conducted extensive research to formulate the overall direction of the course. As the writing was completed, the steering committee advertised the course to schools in the TDSB in August 2007, and 11 schools signed on to provide the course for the 2008-2009 academic year (TDSB, 2008a, p. 2). Many letters of support and opposition were submitted to the Board, which decided to hold a public meeting where certain groups could share their thoughts through deputations. This took place on January 16, 2008 and will be discussed in more detail in the “challenges” section of my research.

Under Board Procedure 532, a Genocide Curriculum Review Committee (GCRC) was formed in February 2008 by the TDSB, which was made up of academics and Board staff to review deputations and written submissions (TDSB, 2008b, p. 1). The members of the GCRC were Melanie Parrack, Chair, Executive Superintendent, Student Success, TDSB; Karen Grose, Superintendent of Program, TDSB; Patricia Hayes, Manager, Human Rights TDSB; Professor Howard Adelman, Professor Emeritus, Philosophy, York University; Professor Doris Bergen, Faculty of History, University of Toronto and Professor Darryl Robinson, Faculty of Law, University of Toronto (TDSB, 2008d, p. 2).

The GCRC met on March 3, 2008 and April 9, 2008 and published their report on April 29, 2008. Despite the difficulties caused by certain individuals representing the Turkish community who attempted to sabotage the course, the GCRC supported the course with minor changes. The report was followed by the final decision made by the Director of Education, Gerry Connelly on May 8, 2008, which was supported by the Program and School Services Special Meeting on June 2, 2008 and unanimously passed at the Program Committee's meeting on June 12, 2008.

III- The Curriculum: A Personal Reflection and Analysis

The Grade 11 Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity course is composed of six units; Introduction to Human Rights and Behaviour, the Armenian Genocide, the Holocaust, Judgment and Responsibility, the Rwandan Genocide, and Reflection and Social Action. It is an interdisciplinary course that combines insights, methods of inquiry, concepts and themes from various social science disciplines such as history, psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science and geography. The course allows students to explore themes and concepts important to understanding the crime of genocide and its root causes through case studies and social science theories.

The first unit titled Introduction to Human Right and Behaviour, lays a strong foundation for the difficult information and discussions embedded in subsequent units and case studies. It is a series of lessons directed toward the exploration of the foundations of genocide where the following questions are engaged: Why do values and morals differ between individuals? What is identity and how is it formed? What external factors shape our identities? How are divisions created in society? An important and overarching concept called “The Universe of Obligation”, coined by sociologist Helen Fein, is raised in this unit; this refers to factors that contribute to individual or state responses to world events based on proximity, or state interests. “Fein defines this important concept as the circle of individuals and groups toward whom obligations are owed, to whom rules apply, and whose injuries call for [amends]" (Strom, 1994, p. 56). Individuals display a sense of more obligation toward individuals and events that have more personal meaning or interest as opposed to those further in distance and personal connection.

A detailed discussion also takes place involving concepts such as bias, stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination, which is furthered by analyzing Gordon Allport's Scale of Prejudice and Discrimination (TDSB, 2008e, pg. 50). The students have the opportunity to examine Allport's research on prejudice and discrimination where he identifies the components of prejudice (prejudice, stereotype and discrimination) and the types of oppression in society (individual, institutionalized oppression and cultural) After learning about these components, the students examine Allport's "Scale of Prejudice and Discrimination", where Allport ultimately describes how prejudice can escalate to full out genocide and extermination; this is another overarching concept in the course. He identifies stages starting from what he calls Antilocution, which includes hate speech and commentary disregarded as jokes. This is followed by avoidance, where members of a majority group actively avoid members of marginalized groups. This stage then transitions into acts of discrimination where members of the marginalized group are denied social services and are treated as second class citizens. Institutionalized discrimination renders the marginalized group as vulnerable and exposes them to physical attack followed by extermination.

Three important social science experiments are also used to describe an important component of genocide, mass participation in execution. Yale University psychologist Stanley Milgram's electric shock experiment (1961) and Solomon Asch's conformity experiment (1950) examine the relationship between individual choice, conformity, responsibility and authority. Sociologist Jane Elliot's research uses students to show how discriminatory behaviour could very easily surface in a society when certain conditions are set in motion (TDSB, 2008e, pg. 71).

In a highly controversial experiment, Milgram appeared to conclude that despite individual moral beliefs, mass participation in genocide is a reality mainly due to human tendency to follow orders. His study involved three individuals, a researcher (Milgram), the teacher (the subject) and the learner (an actor). Milgram would instruct the subject to ask the learner questions. Each incorrect response would have to be followed by a shock administered by the subject which progressively becomes higher in voltage. The learner, who is acting his part, is hidden from the subject's view. Milgram wanted to see how many subjects would administer a deadly level of voltage in obedience to the researcher's demands. 65 percent of subject administered a deadly 450 volt shock. Asch's conformity experiment involved a subject and five to seven other actors. They were shown three lines and would take turns identifying the longest line in each set. The actors would provide a series of incorrect responses to gage whether the subject would conform. 75 percent of subjects conformed at least once. These two experiments provide the students of the genocide course with insight on how easily individuals could participate in acts by conforming to the majority or even by being obedient to an authorities figure they have learned to trust.

Students also have the opportunity to learn about sociologist Jane Elliot's research, best demonstrated through her 1968 study with her students that was publicized widely through the documentary called *Eye of the Storm* (TDSB, 2008e, pg. 73). Elliot divides her students based on eye colour and treats each group differently over the course of a week. Her objective was to display how society treats those who are visibly different especially when one is treated as privileged over the other. In turns, one group would not be allowed to drink water from the fountain, would not be allowed to play on the playground, would be demoralized in class and

made to wear collars identifying them as inferior to others while the other group would enjoy certain privileges. The children very quickly started to treat each other as Allport describes in his stages. Therefore students are asked to relate the children's behaviour with the stages outlined in his theory.

Unit one ends with an examination of genocide scholar Gregory Stanton's Eight Stages of Genocide, a third overarching concept in the course. Here the students acquire a tool that helps them breakdown a particular genocide into stages. These stages are not necessarily concurrent and each is accompanied by a set of actions that could prevent further escalation. The stages are Classification, Symbolization, Dehumanization, Organization, Polarization, Preparation, Extermination and Denial. Through these eight stages, Stanton describes how societies can easily go down the slippery slope toward genocide if they do not remedy the divisions in society as opposed to fostering them. The division of society between "us" versus "them" and the application of symbols and names to differentiate is followed by active and organized discrimination, physical destruction and denial of the crimes.

By the end of this unit students would have successfully learned a set of concepts vital to understanding the case studies to follow. Among these concepts are racism, discrimination, prejudice, labeling and stereotype (discussed through Allport and Stanton); obedience, authority, and conformity (discussed through Milgram and Asch). The concepts of resistance, bystander, upstander, rescuer, perpetrator, and victim are emphasized throughout the unit through various scenarios where students are encouraged to identify roles taken on by individuals during conflict. These roles show students the various choices individuals have when faced with conflict and what positive or negative influence each could have. Barbara Coloroso (2007) describes these

roles effectively in her book *Extraordinary Evil: A Brief History of Genocide*. The perpetrator is the person or group who plans and takes an active part in the violence. The bystander observes but does not act while the upstander observes and provides positive participation. A resister and rescuer attempts to help the victims through various active means.

The first unit also examines the relationship between human rights and national sovereignty. Students learn about the human rights they share with everyone on the globe as outlined in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. These human rights are often denied to people in certain countries in the world and also to those rendered state-less and this often escalates into conflict. The students learn about the different forms these conflicts can take and the differences between them such as, genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, genocide and ethnic cleansing. By understanding the components of each definition, the students are better prepared to identify world events by their proper definition while witnessing the difficulty in doing so. In addition, students are exposed to the difficulties in responding to international crises due to a country's right to national sovereignty. This allows the students to have a better idea of why nations who want to help other are incapable of doing so due to international law. On the other hand, students also become aware of the excuses used by nations when faced with the obligation to respond to cases of genocide

The following three units are the three case studies of the Armenian, Rwandan and Jewish experiences. Although their unique characteristics and histories are presented their common fundamental components are outlined as well. These components are mainly the characteristics and causes of genocide outlined in Unit one. This form of comparative genocide studies is vital in our understanding of singular cases. This comparative study allows

professionals to compile a body of knowledge of common patterns and differences, which aide in identifying the root causes of genocide early in hopes to prevent further progression. The indifference by the international community and the lack of action by them have tragically caused genocide to become a reoccurring event, especially in the twentieth century.

Units two, three and five explore the cases of the Armenian Genocide, the Holocaust and the Rwandan Genocide. The study of all three has brought many important lessons to light. The Armenian experience was the catalyst to Raphael Lemkin's coining of the legal term genocide which did not exist until the United Nations Genocide Convention in 1948. It was also the first case of a systematic state sponsored attempt to completely annihilate a people from their historic homeland. Moreover, the Turkish government's denial that accompanied the genocide, and intensified as the new Republic of Turkey was established, became a precursor to the Jewish Holocaust. After all, "nothing emboldens a criminal so much as the knowledge he can get away with a crime. That was the message the failure to prosecute for the Armenian massacre gave to the Nazis" (Matas, 1989, pp. 86, 104). Hitler's speech given to his Chief Commanders and Commanding Generals on the eve of the invasion of Poland on August 22, 1939, was the embodiment of this quote, "Who after all is today speaking of the destruction of the Armenians?" (Bardakjian, 1985, pp. 25-29).

While the Armenian and Jewish experiences gives students insight on these early cases and teaches lessons the international community should learn from, the cases of Rwanda and Darfur aim to show students how the act of genocide is not fixed to the past, rather it remains a reoccurring crime that continues to build on past experiences and is adapted to the current technological, political and economic conditions in the world.

Through the Rwandan Genocide case study, the students learn about the troubling legacies left behind from colonial times. In addition to this, the students have an opportunity to learn about the power of media and the effects of their negative use. During the Rwandan Genocide, the radio was used to spread propaganda and hate to the population at large, and also as a guide for where and how to kill the Tutsi population.

The history of the Rwandan Genocide also provides students with the opportunity to assess the importance of judgment and reconciliation after genocide. The students examine the various legal actions taken against perpetrators of the Rwandan Genocide and the difficult work being done to heal and reconcile post-genocide Rwandan society. After examining various examples, the students are asked to use different media to produce material that promotes justice and reconciliation among the population, post-genocide.

In unit four, Judgment and Responsibility, students learn about the difficulties faced by Raphael Lemkin as he worked to define genocide and make it an international crime through the United Nations. Moreover, his pursuit to educate world leaders on the then new term of genocide and the necessity of incorporating the law against it under international law, show students the thorny process to influence international politics and secure world responsibility to prevent conflict.

The discussion of the repeated failure to end, prevent, and adequately punish the perpetrators of genocides can create an atmosphere of helplessness and hopelessness. This is always accompanied by discussions on how citizens, institutions, and governments could effect change, which leads students to the last unit titles Reflection and Social Action. Here students investigate different organizations through which citizens have the opportunity to effect change.

The students are engaged with the course material and encouraged to practice critical thinking through three reflective journals every unit. These reflective journals prompt the students to think deeper and go well beyond the surface using the concepts and theories in the course as described in the course profile, “In the journal entries, students should reflect on themes or topics examined in each unit. They should make connections between the unit content and current ideas and events. Students should also be reflecting on their own learning (What has influenced my thinking in this unit? Have my attitudes changed? Do I approach complicated issues differently? What questions do I have?)” (TDSB, 2008e, p. 42)

The course profile is heavily inspired by the resources developed by Facing History and Ourselves. The organization describes itself as “an international education organization whose mission is to engage students of diverse backgrounds in an examination of racism, prejudice, and antisemitism in order to promote the development of a more humane and informed citizenry” (Facing History). Facing History trains teachers through seminars and workshop and develops curricula, lesson plans and DVDs. Facing History’s Pedagogical Triangle outlines three components, Intellectual Rigor, Ethical Reflection and Emotional Engagements all of which come together to produce Civic Engagements. This triangle alone describes the framework upon which the Grade 11 Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity course has been developed. Facing History strives to challenge students intellectually by using content and methodology that induce conflict and continually complicate students’ simple answers to complex problems. Ethical reflection is used as a way to encourage students to think about ethical questions involved in the history along with choices made by individuals. Students learn that choices and actions matter and that young people can, and should, be agents of change. Through emotional engagement,

Facing History also encourages students to hear testimony from survivors in order to learn that history is made up of real individuals (Facing History).

IV- Challenges Faced by the TDSB

Challenges always accompany any new endeavor and the TDSB's initiative to implement the genocide curriculum was no exception. As mentioned in the previous section, there were two challenges that were prevalent throughout the implementation of the genocide education curriculum. The first was the Ukrainian and other communities' concerns over the exclusion of the Holodomor and other genocides and atrocities. The second was the Turkish community's demands that the Armenian Genocide component be removed from the curriculum.

Many atrocities, crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocides plague our history pages. When educators decide to teach about genocide within the confines of a secondary level credit course, which ones do we choose to include as case studies? Although the curriculum had chosen the Armenian, Jewish and Rwandan experiences as the three case studies it also allocates room for the study of other experiences. At the June 12, 2008 Program Committee meeting a discussion did take place and an amendment was made to the Director of Education's final decision that although the case studies will not be expanded, opportunities do exist for other incidents to be discussed and researched as the teacher sees fit. In a Questions and Answers published by the TDSB, the response to this issue is the following,

This course investigates examples of genocide in the twentieth and twenty first centuries, including the Holocaust, Armenia, and Rwanda. Students will be expected to study other examples of genocide and crimes against humanity. The course is 110 hours and not every tragedy can be honoured in its entirety. There is no intent to undermine the suffering of any one group by studying 3 case studies. (TDSB, 2008b, p. 2)

At the June 12 meeting, TDSB Trustee Mari Rutka also expressed her intention to present a motion to commemorate the Holodomor in Toronto public school every fourth Friday in November. This was passed unanimously in September 2008 and the development of a teaching kit for social science teachers on the Holodomor was initiated. "Teaching the Holodomor in Ukraine in Grade 12 History and Politics" was published by the TDSB in 2010. This was a positive move on behalf of the TDSB that equipped their teachers with the resources required to be able to confidently and effectively teach about important events of this sort.

The second challenge was ironically a component of the cycle of genocide covered in the course, a case of genocide denial. Shortly after the announcement regarding the course and its specificities, the Council of Turkish Canadians (CTC) presented itself as the representative of the Turkish community in the city and raised concern over the inclusion of the Armenian Genocide in the curriculum.

Despite the fact that there are a growing number of Turkish intellectuals in and out of Turkey who have questioned the Turkish Government's position on the Armenian Genocide, albeit amidst protest and death threats, the CTC aggressively denies and actively works against any effort to acknowledge, commemorate, recognize and teach the Armenian Genocide in Canada. Their website (www.turkishcanadians.com) houses genocide denial material ranging from archived petitions to position papers all in line with the Turkish Government's views.

One such petition is titled "Content Change for TDSB's Grade 11 Course "Genocide: Historical and Contemporary Implications"" published by Lale Eskicoglu on November 23, 2007. The petition claims that the course would expose Turkish-Canadian students to more racism and discrimination, without presenting any documented incidents or facts. They outlined

multiculturalism as pretext to exclude the Armenian Genocide from the course since it is not fair and just to all nationalities. The petition also includes a mention of two instances of terrorist act against Turkish government officials in the country claiming these are examples of racism that could be supported by the course. It concludes by stating that many “respected historians” dispute the Armenian Genocide and cites the supposed lack of consensus in reference to the history as grounds to disqualify the Armenian Genocide from being included in this course (Eskicioglu, 2007).

The TDSB provided an opportunity for individuals to present deputations to the Program and School Services Committee on January 16, 2008. Individuals were given the opportunity to raise their concerns about the course or express their support. Deputations were made in support of the course by Leo Adler, a Toronto Criminal Lawyer, Professor Frank Chalk, Director of the Montreal Institute of Genocide Studies at Concordia University, Jim Karygiannis, M.P. for Scarborough-Agincourt and David Warner, former Ontario Speaker of the Assembly. Two individuals presented deputations against the course, Lale Eskicioglu, representing the Council of Turkish Canadians and Prof. Ozay Mehmet, Turkish-Canadian professor at Carlton University. A review of the deputations provides insight on the barriers genocide denial poses.

Lale Eskicioglu’s oral deputation was a replica of the contents of the aforementioned petition, which she had also authored. She started off by targeting Barbara Coloroso’s (2007) book *Extraordinary Evil: A Brief History of Genocide*, which was included in the curriculum as a resource. Eskicioglu claimed the course was used as a basis for the genocide curriculum and discredited Coloroso’s work since she is not a historian. She claimed the history of the Armenian Genocide is “disputed” and that the works of certain historians who held the view supported by

the Turkish government were not consulted, mainly that of Justin McCarthy and Guenter Lewy. In fact these books by McCarthy and Lewy, known genocide deniers, were handed out to those present. She concluded by claiming that the decision for the course is one sided and “the claims of an Armenian Genocide are being used to justify racism, hatred and prejudice our children are experiencing” (Aynedjian, 2008).

The second speaker, Prof. Ozay Mehmet, demanded the TDSB to re-examine the curriculum “and remove all Armenian references in this course” for the following four reasons: “The Armenian component, text references and bibliographic sources is one sided ethnically biased, and reflecting only Armenian input and promotes ethnic hate”; the use of the term Armenian Genocide in the course amounts to accepting forged documents as valid; the Armenian part of the course will expose Turkish children to harassment and bullying in our schools; finally, the Canadian government’s position on this matter is unclear (Aynedjian, 2008).

While the above noted speakers opposing the course were of Turkish origin, all the deputations supporting the course were of a variety of backgrounds displaying the diverse support the inclusion of the Armenian Genocide module had received. The deputations in support of the course refuted many of the concerns raised by the CTC. They stressed that the course in no way targets the Turkish citizens of today as being the perpetrators of genocide, rather the Young Turk party of 1915. Professor Frank Chalk stressed that the scholarly consensus internationally supports the fact that the Armenian case is rightfully classified as genocide under the U.N. definition. He also suggested that the CTC would be applauded as honest and courageous if they finally confronted the history of the Armenian Genocide rather than

supporting the Turkish government's policy of denial. It was also stressed that the Canadian government is clear on the issue of the Armenian Genocide and it is an officially recognized fact.

A letter supporting the TDSB course written by the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) on January 24, 2008 describes the CTC's attempts to jeopardize the course effectively. A portion of the letter reads as follows;

The purpose of those who seek to exclude the Armenian Genocide from the curriculum is to aid the Turkish government's 90-year campaign to deny the historical facts. The politics are transparent: Turkey's denial is the product of its government and a few scholars who work with it to absolve Turkey of responsibility for the planned extermination of the Armenians--an agenda pushed by every Turkish ruling party since the time of the Genocide in 1915. In contrast to Turkey's nationalist denial, the intellectual discourse on the Armenian Genocide is the result of mainstream international scholarship over many decades. We write to urge you not to acquiesce to Turkish pressure. (IAGS, 2008, p. 1.

The TDSB stood their ground and did not cave into the aggressive denial campaign led by the CTC. The GCRC's report on April 29, 2008 highlighted the main issues presented in the deputations along with responses. The GCRC went to great lengths to clarify the concerns the CTC had raised including the issues of racism, bullying, discrimination and hate. The GCRC made clear that the process of implementing the course and the decision making process was in fact equitable and fair and in line with TDSB and Ministry of Education guidelines, contrary to what the CTC had claimed. The CTC had also claimed the Armenian community was included in the decision making process while the Turkish community was left out. The steering committee

nor the GCRC included a single Armenian community member. This was also refuted in the report that included the names of those selected to be a part of the GCRC, all of whom were academics selected from Ontario universities with backgrounds in the appropriate fields of study and were not Armenian. The report disqualified the CTC's request to remove the Armenian Genocide module by stating "Given that the vast majority of scholars who have studied the case (particularly those who specialize in the study of genocide) concur that what occurred was genocide, the module should be taught as case of genocide" (TDSB, 2008d, p. 7). Barbara Coloroso's book however, was removed from the required reading list and placed on the resource list for its significant contribution to the field of social psychology of genocide. "A concern was raised regarding the appropriateness of Barbara Coloroso's book, *Extraordinary Evil: A Brief History of Genocide*. The Committee felt that this book was not a good example of rigorous historical scholarship. It might be considered for inclusion among readings on the social psychology of genocide because of her thesis that genocide is the extreme extension of bullying" (TDSB, 2008d, p. 7).

Gerry Connelly, the Director of Education, published her decision on May 8, 2008 by accepting all of the recommendations made by the review committee which were;

1. That a course on Genocide be taught by the TDSB at the Grade 11 level;
2. That the module on Armenia be included in the course and should be taught as a case of genocide, but note taken that some respected scholars disagree;
3. That students be taught the importance of establishing intent when characterizing a crime against humanity as a genocide;
4. That the number of actual case studies not be expanded at this time;

5. That a teacher course review committee be set up in the third year with a view to examining the curriculum content and the course description;
6. That Barbara Coloroso's book, *Extraordinary Evil: A Brief History of Genocide*, be removed from the resource list (however placed on the teacher's resource list);
7. That the resources be reviewed by a committee of academic experts as determined by Program staff and in alignment with Board procedure with a view to deleting some items and adding others;
8. That the bibliography be organized by topic as well as by nature of the work (i.e. memoirs, encyclopedia, social psychology, theoretical works) and that the resource list be grouped into items recommended for use by teachers and items recommended for use by students;
9. That the Ministry of Education be requested to immediately change the title of course CHG38M to "Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity. (TDSB, 2008c, p. 1)

Although the CTC appealed the decision which was presented at the TDSB Program Committee meeting on June 2, 2008, the Director of Education Gerry Connelly did not alter the decision, which was confirmed at the June 12, 2008 Program Committee meeting.

It was apparent from the beginning that those pressing against the inclusion of the Armenian Genocide were driven not by a genuine concern for discrimination and bullying nor by the illogical connections they were attempting to draw between the course and terrorism in the online petition authored by Lale Eskicioglu on behalf of the Council of Turkish Canadians.² It was first and foremost a defense rooted in the Turkish Government's denial of the Armenian Genocide.

² <http://www.gopetition.com/petition/15422.html>

A close look into the contents of the course would immediately dispel the fears of discrimination and racism the CTC had. The course provides a throughout unit, exploring morals, values, prejudice, stereotyping, discrimination and similar themes that lay the groundwork to the case studies that follow. The curriculum does not allow for any form of discriminatory sentiments or animosity to form between ethnic groups. It is clear in the course that genocidares of Nazi Germany and the Ottoman Empire in no way represent the German or Turkish student/people of today, rather the curriculum supports a movement to collectively acknowledge the wrongs of the past and build a positive future. The TDSB in fact addressed the concept of multiculturalism in its more appropriate context, stating that the very notion supports the need for such a course. “Given the specific multi-cultural and multi-ethnic diversity within Toronto, we feel it is essential that students born within and outside Canada have the opportunity to explore in depth the causes and consequences of genocide and the lived realities of the aggressors, targets, bystanders, and resisters to these horrific acts of violence. A study of these experiences will help foster a sense of empathy for the targets of these violent acts and hopefully encourage students to understand the connections they have to their fellow human beings” (TDSB, 2008a, p. 2).

As we observed in the discussion of the New York Times debate above, German interest groups had presented many concerns that were similar to the Turkish concerns over this course. If we as a society had not disregarded the German concerns as attempts at denying genocide and had entertained them we might have never achieved nor witnessed the successes of genocide education today. As Germany worked to come to terms with the Holocaust and used its lessons to promote positive change, it led to an inspirational and exemplary social transformation from a

nation that perpetrates genocide to an agent of change towards a pluralist society. Unfortunately this form of acceptance of guilt and social transformation did not occur in Turkey where its leaders insisted on denying the history and forcing a fabricated history onto its people. The CTC's defense is ultimately the product of the systematic denial of the Armenian Genocide. Here, organizations such as the CTC and the "respected" historians mentioned in their petition become agents of perpetuating the cycle of genocide as opposed to becoming agents of positive social transformation. Their denial and insistence that any mention of the Armenian Genocide is a universal attack on Turks has kept generations of members of the Turkish community in the dark, thus leading to the outrageous behaviour experienced by the TDSB when trying to implement curricula that is beneficial and healthy for society.

The International Association of Genocide Scholars in a January 24, 2008 support letter to the TDSB addresses this issue of "universal attack" on Turks by stating;

The assertion that teaching the truth about the Armenian past will be demeaning to Turkish students or Turkish people in general denigrates the intelligence of Canadians of Turkish descent and strikes us as disingenuous. Education in a democracy is built on historical critique and critical evaluation. When the history of U.S. slavery, British colonialism, German genocide of Jews and Roma, Mussolini's fascism, Stalin's purges, or Mao's human rights crimes, is taught, the descendents of the perpetrators' nationalities (Americans, British, Germans, Italians, Russians, or Chinese) are not demeaned or persecuted by anyone. On the contrary, they emerge from learning those histories better educated, with a stronger sense of how important critical analysis of the past is; and they achieve an ethical capacity crucial to good education. In dealing with the truth about

their nations' histories, they develop the moral honesty crucial to the progress of human rights in a democracy. The study of genocide is not designed to impose collective guilt. It is meant to seek to understand a common human problem. Turks as a people did not commit the Armenian genocide, any more than Canadians or Americans in general committed genocide against native American populations. But some of our ancestors did commit these crimes, and it is our present responsibility to study and acknowledge them in order to prevent genocides in the future. (IAGS, 2008, p. 2)

The government of Turkey has manipulated its institutions to ensure that a revised and exclusionary version of history is taught and accepted, one that misrepresents the fate of the Armenians in the First World War. In addition, laws such as article 301 of the Turkish penal code forbid any mention of the Armenian Genocide and threaten all those who dare speak against the government line, with imprisonment and fines. In fact, in the August 28, 2008 issue of Embassy Magazine, journalist Michelle Collins reported that, "In a letter to Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty and the province's Ministry of Education, the Turkish Embassy has voiced strong objections to a Toronto District School Board decision to teach students that the killing of 1.5 million Armenians in 1915 was genocide." This is a prime example of how the Turkish government not only denies its own citizens the right to learn the truth but also attempts to meddle in the affairs of foreign countries who grant their students the right to learn from the past. This also displays direct Turkish government support and involvement in the process to lobby against the inclusion of the Armenian Genocide module in the curriculum.

V- The Challenges Caused by Genocide Denial

In *Remembrance and Denial: The Case of the Armenian Genocide*, scholar Richard Hovanissian (1999) describes genocide denial as such

“It has been said that denial is the final phase of genocide. Following the physical destruction of a people and their material culture, memory is all that is left and is targeted as the last victim. Complete annihilation of a people requires the banishment of recollection and the suffocation of remembrance. Falsification, deception and half-truths reduce what was to what may have been or perhaps what was not at all... By altering or erasing the past, a present is produced and a future is projected without concern about historical integrity. The process of annihilation is thus advanced and completed by denial.” (Hovanissian, 1999, pg 202)

This characterizes the CTC’s intentions effectively, which is a part of a larger denial apparatus belonging to the Turkish government. The policies set forth by the Turkish government have had a tremendous effect on how the Armenians are viewed by those raised and educated in Turkey. The establishment of a legal framework restricting certain thoughts and encouraging others, the vilifying of the Armenian population and denial has led to viewing Armenians as the “other” and behaviour towards them has been fashioned accordingly. The aforementioned Article 301 of the Turkish penal code, which criminalizes anyone who dares to mention the Armenian Genocide has already been the cause for assassination of the Turkish-Armenian journalist, Hrant Dink, in January 2007, by an ultra nationalist Turkish citizen in Istanbul, who unfortunately had the support of the public. The law made Dink a criminal in the eyes of the public and thus, a target for hatred and death.

Denial is an attack on memories belonging to survivors and their descendents of the suffering they or their ancestors were forced to experience. As Stanton is quoted in David Holthouse's article "State of Denial; Turkey Spends Millions to Cover up the Armenian Genocide" (2008), "It is a continuing attempt to destroy the victim group psychologically and culturally, to deny its members even the memory of the murders of their relatives. That is what the Turkish government today is doing to Armenians around the world." (Holthouse 2008) In other words, it is an attack on the collective memory of a people and their right to commemorate. Those who deny history such as the Armenian Genocide or the Holocaust are killers of truth. "They are attempting to write a final chapter to the original genocide- now by "mass murder" of the recorded memories of human history. If being alive as human beings means some basic sense of knowing the record of history, the "killing" of objective history is also the killing of human consciousness and evolution" (Charney, 1992, p. 301). This is exactly the reason why we value the stories told by those who survive mass atrocities such as the Holocaust given that a great deal of education is centred on the sharing of testimonies. If that very memory were to be denied, and the suffering trivialized, this would leave society with lessons unlearned.

In his article, David Holthouse (2008) also discusses the "respected" historians the CTC mentioned in their petition and depositions. Holthouse, as have other academics in the field of genocide studies, reveals how the Turkish government funds historians to deny the Armenian Genocide abroad. This includes the likes of Lewy and McCarthy, whose works were mentioned and distributed by Eskgioglu and CTC. In reference to Lewy, Holthouse mentions how he "...is one of the most active members of a network of American scholars, influence peddlers and website operators, financed by hundreds of thousands of dollars each year from the government

of Turkey, who promote the denial of the Armenian genocide — a network so influential that it was able last fall to defy both historical truth and enormous political pressure to convince America's lawmakers and even its president to reverse long-held policy positions” (Holthouse, 2008). One such method of funding is through academic institutes such as the Institute of Turkish Studies, as described by Roger Smith, Eric Markusen and Robert Jay Lifton in their article “Professional Ethics and the Denial of the Armenian Genocide” (1999). The Institute of Turkish Studies was established in 1982 with a three million dollar grant from the Turkish Government, which went on to reward historians who supported the Turkish government’s position of denial. “Three years later, in 1985, Turkey bought full-page advertisements in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *The Washington Times* to publish a letter questioning the Armenian genocide that was signed by 69 American scholars. All 69 had received funding that year from the Institute for Turkish Studies or another of Turkey's surrogates like the Ankara Chamber of Commerce, a quasi-governmental agency in Turkey's capital city” (Holthouse, 2008).

While teaching about denial in the Grade 11 Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity course at the A.R.S. Armenian Private School, I shared a poem written by Canadian-Armenian author and academic Alan Whitehorn with the class. The poem titled, “How Do We Remember the Dead?” deals with the denial of the Armenian Genocide. I asked the students to reflect and record their thoughts on the poem. The responses I received were expressive of the extent to which the crime of genocide had affected their lives through its denial. I saw the student responses as calls to the government of Turkey to break the cycle of genocide and by doing so end its assault on the conscience of the Turkish people and on the memory of the Armenians who

were victimized in 1915 and also set subsequent generations free from being victims in the present.

There is a parallel between the open wounds caused by physical violence during the genocide, most survivors recall, and the wound caused by denial as students have on occasion expressed in discussions. These are wounds inflicted in different ways, leaving different marks but caused by the same crime. Therefore the Armenian Genocide is an event, the physical and mental consequences of which are felt by a whole nation. Moreover, its denial has had a profound effect on the identities of Armenian communities in the Diaspora.

This concept of three generations of victims and survivors is commonly shared by many members of the Armenian community and a concept worth examining. There is an absence of research on the effects of the denial of the Armenian Genocide on generations subsequent to those who survived. This is an important issue that will bring to light the harmful consequences of denial that is often sanctioned under the guise of freedom of speech.

As mentioned in the introduction, denial is the last of Stanton's (1996) Eight Stages of Genocide. This stage remains one of the most significant barriers to implementing genocide education as we have seen through the TDSB case study. The TDSB was not the first or only target of genocide denial. What we saw in the TDSB case study has been a common occurrence throughout North America. An earlier episode of denial is discussed by Roger Smith (1992) in his article published in *The Armenian Genocide: History, Politics, Ethics*, a collection of essays compiled by Richard Hovannisian. Smith mentions how, amongst many other means of denying, the Turkish government had also targeted secondary schools in the United States as it grew

fearful that the Armenian Genocide would be discussed in classrooms. “Recently, a letter from the Turkish embassy in Washington was sent to secondary schools throughout the United States to dissuade them from using histories that mention the Armenian Genocide. Stronger efforts still have been made to prevent any discussion of the 1915 genocide being formally included in the social studies curriculum as part of Holocaust/genocide studies” (Hovannisian, 1992, p. 9).

In “Government Speech, Free Speech, and Education: The Constitutional Challenge to the Massachusetts Genocide Education Guide” Mark Fleming (2010), discusses difficulties faced by the state of Massachusetts in implementing genocide education. In 1999, a guide for teaching genocide and human rights, including the Armenian Genocide, was issued by the Massachusetts Board of Education. In October 2005, a group of Turkish Americans, led by the Assembly of Turkish-American Associations (ATAA) filed a lawsuit against the Board of Education claiming that the guide violated the First Amendment because it cited the Armenian case as genocide. This was a failed attempt to jeopardize the teaching of the Armenian Genocide.

Despite the fact that organizations such as the Council of Turkish Canadians and the Assembly of Turkish-American Associations oppose the Armenian Genocide abroad, a growing number of Turkish intellectuals in Turkey and the Diaspora have started to demand Turkish recognition of the Armenian Genocide. Amongst these intellectuals are Taner Akcam, Fatma Muge Gocek, Halil Berkday, Cengiz Aktar and Baskin Oran. In December 2008 thousands of Turks signed a petition apologizing for the Armenian Genocide and calling on the Turkish government to acknowledge the history. The authors of the petition were threatened to be tried under Article 301. In April 2010, on the 95th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, an unprecedented number of Turkish intellectuals signed a petition part of which read “We call

upon all peoples of Turkey who share this heartfelt pain to commemorate and pay tribute to the victims of 1915. In black, in silence. With candles and flowers” (Asbarez Staff, 2010). A group of intellectuals also held a vigil at the prison where hundreds of Armenian intellectuals were detained prior to being executed on April 24, 1915. The number of this group reached 500 in the 2011 vigil, despite government intimidation and the imposing fear of imprisonment and threats. This was however met with thousands of protesters chanting death threats and discriminatory slogans such as “Death to the Armenian Diaspora” (Mouradian, 2010). Unfortunately, the actions displayed by the CTC and its members during the TDSB process align them with the latter.

The Turkish government’s unwillingness to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide and disallowing any mention of it under laws restricting freedom of speech have prevented Turkish society from having an opportunity to take responsibility. By maintaining the taboo on the Armenian Genocide, the Turkish government has glorified the lives of the perpetrators of genocide while maintaining silence on the history of those who should have become the heroes of Turkish society, those who saved Armenian lives in 1915. Imagine a Germany where Schindler’s story was silenced by the state and Hitler’s was praised. The power of education, genocide education specifically, resonates clearly here. Genocide denial presents itself as a great obstacle to this important form of education, a roadblock above and beyond the borders of perpetrator governments as we have seen in the case of the Turkish government.

The continued struggle by academics, professionals, and the descendents of the victims and survivors of the Armenian Genocide, serve to uphold rights of past and thus future persons.

Annette Baier (1980) describes the need for society to recognize the rights of past persons and also our obligation to safeguard the rights of those who will come after us. “The reasons for recognizing obligations to future persons are closely connected with reasons for recognizing the rights of past persons...” (Baier, 1980, p. 171). This is even more of a reason to help end the cycle of genocide, especially since every new generation will be born into the stage of denial. It is our obligation to address past injustices and uphold the rights of the victims by holding the perpetrator state or their successor state accountable. It is only through this that we can hope to help future generations of both parties be increasingly free from the consequences of genocide. The potential victims of denial will now be born with their rights acknowledged and protected, and those who would potentially see themselves as party to the perpetrators will be free from carrying the burden of guilt for the injustices committed by persons in the past, long before their time.

It is imperative to uphold the truth in order to protect the rights of past and future persons. Truth counters denial, thus taming the effects a past genocide has on persons today and in the future. The upholding of truth and freeing society of the constraints of denial creates new opportunities to educate, learn and commemorate the past and shape collective memory. The freedom to educate can promote the notion of universal moral obligations amongst peoples, communities and governments. These are all imperative processes on the path to healing a country’s society that has been recreated in their respective post-genocide periods, and are required steps that help ensure we effectively prevent future cases of genocide.

As mentioned, denial is a common issue that continues to affect victim groups of all genocides, thus the need to educate about the effects of genocide denial is a necessity. A letter supporting the TDSB course written by Rwandan Genocide survivor Leo Kabalisa in January 22, 2008, identifies how denial continues to affect all victims of genocide irrespective of time and place and becomes a barrier to educating and preventing. A part of the letter reads;

Your program (the TDSB course) is being implemented at the right time because we are facing the phase of denial of the genocides. Ninety-two years after the Armenian genocide, instead of learning from the past, the current leadership of Turkey is spending time and energy to deny the sad history of their past. In the case of the genocide of Tutsis, conferences and forums of discussion have been organized throughout Europe by Hutu extremists and their supporters to revise and deny the history of the genocide of the Tutsis. For the Holocaust, we all remember last year's conference in Teheran in which the reality of the Holocaust was questioned by scholars invited by the president of Iran... Those who complain about the teaching of genocide too often are simply genocide deniers. Do not yield to their attempts to influence valid curriculum.(Kabalisa, 2008, p. 1)

VI- The Benefits of Genocide Education, Suggestions and Conclusions

The journey to genocide education has been rough and continues to be difficult, but has spread due to perseverance. Genocide education has been identified as an effective medium to teach children various lessons while raising awareness about the complex and overwhelmingly multidimensional crime of genocide, the effects of which remain with the descendents of survivors for generations to come. There is urgency for this form of education as we grow more conscious of genocide in this age of information where we have had unprecedented access to the imagery and details of genocidal acts across the globe.

In *Teaching About Genocide: Issues, Approaches, and Resources*, Samuel Totten (2004) explores the role of forming rationales for teaching about genocide and presents a short list of several excerpts that are quite revealing. Teachers' rationales included the need to teach and learn the who, what, when, how, and most important the why of genocide. Above and beyond this however is the need to examine prejudice, stereotyping, racism, discrimination, and how these can lead up to genocide. Teachers also saw genocide education as an opportunity to address "character education," a medium to make students more sensitive to ethnic and religious hatred. In addition, it was seen as an effective way to illustrate the effects of peer pressure, individual responsibility, and decision making and eventually encourage civic responsibility (Totten, 2004).

With adequate teacher education and development, genocide education can serve its purposes and be more than a history lesson meeting the rationales of the teachers listed by Totten (2004). The TDSB locally developed Grade 11 Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity course has the objectives listed above embedded in its curriculum as have many such courses across North America. This allows teachers and students to engage in the issues, themes and concepts

that go above and beyond simple historical facts. In “Holocaust Education in Ontario Schools: an antidote to racism?”, Geoffrey Short (2000) presents a study conducted among Ontario teachers to determine the effectiveness of Holocaust education in promoting anti-racist goals. His findings show that there is no guarantee that Holocaust Education will lead to anti-racist education unless teachers truly grasp the purpose of genocide education and its goals. “There is obviously no guarantee that teachers committed to Holocaust education will fully exploit its anti-racist potential. To achieve this objective, the survey suggests, in the first instance, that teachers ought to be better informed of the possible implications of the Holocaust for anti-racist education” (Short, 2000, p. 303).

In a more recent study, “Does addressing prejudice and discrimination through Holocaust education produce better citizens?” (2007), Paula Cowan and Henry Maitles explore the effectiveness of Holocaust education with regard to character education. Here they conclude Holocaust education in fact does have a lasting impact on the development of students’ values. The authors write...

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. (Cowan and Maitles, 2007, p. 128)

As mentioned by Short (2000) and Cowan and Maitles (2007), teacher education and knowledge of the goals of genocide education is key to reach objectives. These issues are remedied through courses like the one TDSB has developed, since the curriculum has made the teaching of civic responsibility, citizenship, multicultural education, character education and anti-racist education objectives in the course. Moreover, teachers who are chosen to teach the course, are provided professional development opportunities through organizations who specialize in the field of genocide education such as Facing History.

Short (2000) also cites Holocaust denial as a barrier to the anti-racist element of genocide education. “Clearly, if the Holocaust is to function as an effective antidote to racism it is essential to counteract Holocaust denial” (Short, 2000, p. 302). In depth discussion of genocide denial and its adverse effects today is lacking in the TDSB course. Although denial is discussed through Gregory Stanton’s Eight Stage of Genocide, not enough time is dedicated to focusing on the harms perpetuated by the denial of genocide and the use of the freedom of speech guise. Genocide scholar Roger Smith (2010) discusses the conflict between outlawing genocide denial and promoting freedom of speech in his article, “Legislating Against Genocide Denial: Criminalizing Denial or Preventing Freedom of Speech.” Here Smith states the following, “...denial is dangerous, demeaning, corrupting, and hurtful. It must be dealt with. But how? Should it be through legislation or through education, scholarship, and advocacy? Which approach is most effective, which least restrictive of free expression? Which best shows respect for individuals?” (Smith, 2010 p. 137).

All victims to genocide and their descendents have also been victims of denial, irrespective of their time period. The discussion of genocide denial and examples through

various case studies will allow students to explore the ongoing debate between genocide denial and freedom of speech. Unfortunately, public denial of genocide has been masked by freedom of speech without taking into consideration the negative psychological and political ramifications of denial. Shedding light on this matter and allowing students to arrive at conclusions through complex and critical debate can be a rewarding experience.

When our students know how to identify genocide denial and the reasons why individuals or groups deny, we can more effectively discuss how denial should be dealt with. Identifying and classifying behaviour and information as denial is the very first step that ultimately is born through education. For instance, it is important to learn about the motivation behind the denial of the Armenian Genocide by the Turkish state, which could be contrasted with state recognition of the Jewish Holocaust by Germany. Why has Germany acknowledged its history and Turkey continues to deny? In the case of the Jewish Holocaust, it would be important to examine the motivation behind present day individual and group denial and its consequences. As for Rwanda and Darfur, both contemporary cases of genocide, denial of genocide became a barrier to preventing and ending the genocide as it unfolded before our eyes.

The absence of a significant section on denial could be remedied by allowing students to examine Gregory Stanton's "The 12 Ways to Deny a Genocide" (2005) which complements his previous work already present in the genocide curriculum. By using this framework, students would be prepared to embark on the difficult task to raise a red flag of caution when denial takes place.

One part of the course where denial is discussed vaguely is when students are asked to read two letters written to the TDSB in response to the course and compare and contrast the

contents and support the inclusion of the Armenian Genocide component in the course. One letter is from Armenian Genocide denier Guenter Lewy who provides reasons why the Armenian Genocide should not be included in the course and the other is a letter from the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) supporting the course and commending the TDSB.

Guenter Lewy specializes in contemporary American politics. He is unfamiliar with Turkish primary sources and also with both Ottoman and Turkish languages. By reading his letter and comparing the issues with the facts raised by the IAGS, the students are expected to experience patterns of denial and ways to critically examine text. This however requires a framework through which the student is able to achieve this. One that could have been included is Gregory Stanton's "12 Ways to Deny a Genocide".

Gregory Stanton's "12 Ways to Deny a Genocide" (2005) identifies the following 12 methods and reasons of genocide denial: Questioning and minimizing the statistics, attacking the motivation of the truth-tellers, claiming that the deaths were inadvertent, emphasizing the strangeness of the victims, rationalizing the deaths as the result of tribal conflicts, blaming "out of control" forces for committing the killings, deny to prevent the perpetrators from walking out of a peace process, justify denial in favour of current economic interests, claim that the victims are or were receiving good treatment, claim that the events do not fit the definition of genocide, blame the victims and claim that peace and reconciliation are more important than holding other accountable for genocide. (Stanton, 2005)

These twelve methods and reasons could be applied in all cases of genocide. Some of them address why and how the perpetrators of a particular genocide deny while others describe why and how third parties would want to deny a genocide. Some of these occur during a

genocide while others occur afterward. Several of the twelve ways to deny a genocide fit in with the denial practiced by the Council of Turkish Canadians during the TDSB process. Moreover, this document would be an extremely useful way to identify the patterns of denial in Lewy's letter as students compare it to the letter from the IAGS.

Another suggestion for enhancing the current genocide curriculum would be incorporating more opportunities for students to examine survivor accounts of genocide. The students learn to differentiate between primary, secondary and tertiary sources in the Armenian Genocide unit and read firsthand accounts throughout the units, however an expanded unit or section should include a guided examination of the survivor accounts. This includes a discussion of why and how these accounts have been recorded, why and how professionals use the material, and what they tell us about the history of genocide and its present day implications. Survivor accounts are windows to the human suffering during genocide that often gets lost in all the numbers and dates. Seeing and hearing survivors help students experience stories and the trauma associated with their experiences in an emotional setting providing for an experience much different than the political examination.

Having started as Holocaust education, genocide education has evolved into an even more dynamic and multidisciplinary curriculum with clear objectives. The much needed anti-racist, multicultural and citizenship education is delivered through genocide education as highlighted by Totten (2004) Cowan and Maitles (2007), and Short (2000). TDSB's course examined in detail in this research stands as a product of decades of research and implementation in the United States and as the only one of its kind in Canada. More teachers, students and teachers realize the importance of such a course as it is adopted by additional schools throughout

the TDSB and surrounding school boards every year. The challenges are many, but the initiative is virtuous and vital. Genocide education will serve as a catalyst to preventing future cases of this horrendous crime through awareness, information and empowerment. In addition, it has the potential to strengthen the morals and values of generations to come and provide them with a strong sense of what our collective human rights are and what the individual can do locally, nationally and internationally to defend them from being violated in any place or circumstance from our classrooms to United Nations General Assembly.

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