

## Voices from the Archive

*A glimpse into the life of Holocaust survivor*

GYÖRGY KUN

## From Viral Video to Ethical Editing

*What students need to know about working with testimony*

HOLLY WILLIS

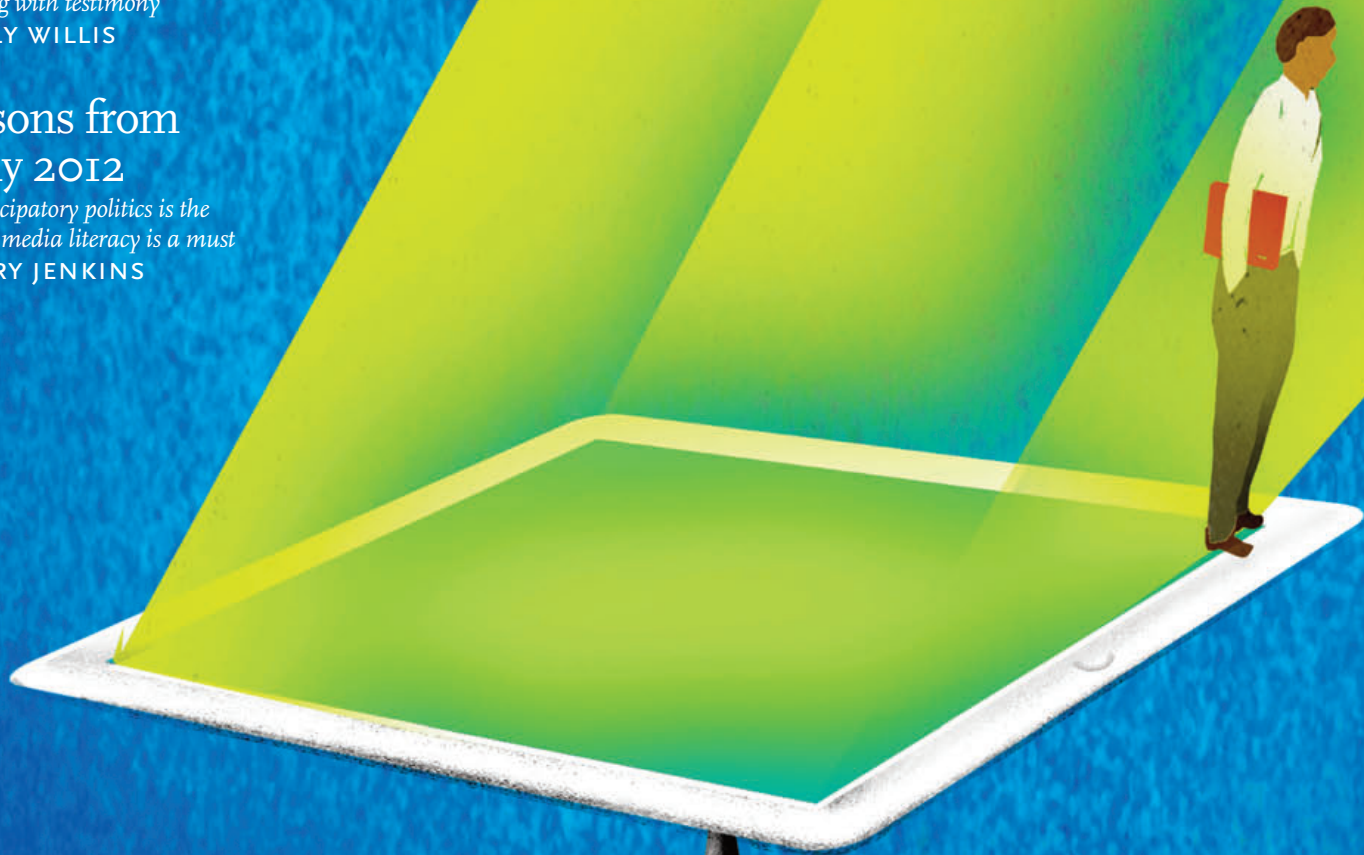
## Lessons from Kony 2012

*If participatory politics is the future, media literacy is a must*

HENRY JENKINS

# PastForward

Summer 2013



# Testimony in Education

*Approaching the Tipping Point*

A conversation with  
U.S. Secretary of Education  
Arne Duncan

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“Technology has already transformed how the world does business; it’s transformed how everyone interacts socially; it has literally led to democratic revolutions. Technology has yet to change education, but I think we are approaching the tipping point.”

—Arne Duncan, U.S. Secretary of Education, page 20

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*By Henry Jenkins*

*PastForward* brings together many voices around issues related to the educational and scholarly use of genocide eyewitness testimony. Whether survivors or their descendants, teachers or students, scholars, historians, or filmmakers, the variety of their experiences and opinions is a sample of the lively milieu of critical thought and discourse emerging around the USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive.

page 6 *Andrea Szőnyi, senior international training consultant*



**Mariana Aguilar** is a third grade teacher at View Park Elementary Accelerated Charter School, in Los Angeles, Calif., and a Teach for America Los Angeles Corps Member. She is a graduate student at Loyola Marymount University, pursuing a master's in urban education. Aguilar graduated from USC with a major in social science with an emphasis in psychology. She won the 2011 Viewer's Choice Award for the USC Shoah Foundation's Student Voices Film contest.

**Kay Andrews** is a lecturer at the Institute of Education's Centre for Holocaust Education, University of London. She began her career as a secondary school teacher before joining the Holocaust Educational Trust in 1999, where she later became head of education. Her current work at the IOE focuses on teacher education programs and creating innovative ways



of accessing Holocaust-related materials. Andrews has been a member of the U.K. delegation to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (formerly ITF) since 2005 and is currently chair of the Communications Working Group. She has spoken at conferences around the world on issues relating to Holocaust education.



**Michelle Sadrena Clark** is a teacher at High Tech High North County in San Marcos, Calif. She earned her master's in Pacific International Affairs at the Graduate School of International Relations and Pacific Studies, University of California, San Diego. Clark received her undergraduate degree at the University of California, Irvine. Currently she is pursuing a degree in dance at Palomar College. With a dual passion

# Contributors

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for education and dance, Clark embraces an energetic teaching style that truly motivates students to learn. She is a graduate of the USC Shoah Foundation's 2011 Master Teacher Workshop.



**Peter D. Cook** spent five years as a U.S. Marine, after finishing high school—serving at U.S. Embassies in Ecuador, Spain, and Haiti. He studied at American University, in Washington, D.C., after which he became a teacher—and worked in the Czech Republic and in Japan—as well as stints on the East and West coasts in America. Cook has a master's in organizational management, and is working on his PhD in urban leadership at Claremont Graduate University. Cook is a USC Shoah Foundation 2011 Master Teacher Workshop graduate. He currently teaches at Camino Nuevo Charter Academy, Los Angeles, Calif.



**Werner Dreier** is the founding director of *\_erinnern.at\_*, an institution for teacher training and development of learning material on behalf of the Austrian Ministry of Education. Dreier is a past chair and current member of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's Education Working Group.



**David C. Dwyer** is the first holder of the Katzman-Ernst Chair for Educational Entrepreneurship, Technology, and Innovation at USC's Rossier School of Education. Through that role he founded USC Hybrid High School, a transformational urban charter school. Dwyer was a Distinguished Scientist at Apple Inc., where he led the Apple Classroom of Tomorrow (ACOT) research program. He also served at Apple as director of Education Technologies, was chief academic officer at Apex Learning, founded two startup education companies in Silicon Valley, and, in his formative years, was a recognized middle- and high school science teacher.



**Brandon Haas** is a high school teacher in Tampa, Fla. At Freedom High School, Haas teaches Holocaust studies and assists the school district of Hillsborough County's Secondary Social Studies in matters pertaining to Holocaust curriculum and teacher training. He is also pursuing a doctoral degree in curriculum and instruction from the University of South Florida, through which he investigates Holocaust education and pedagogy. Haas is a graduate of the USC Shoah Foundation's 2011 Master Teacher Workshop.

**Alice Herscovitch** is the executive director of the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre. She has been a member of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's Education Working Group since 2005 and became its chair in 2013.



**Henry Jenkins** is the Provost's Professor of Communication, Journalism, Cinematic Arts, and Education at the University of Southern California. He arrived at USC in fall 2009 after spending the past decade as the



director of the MIT Comparative Media Studies Program and the Peter de Florez Professor of Humanities. He is the author and/or editor of 15 books on various aspects of media and popular culture, including *Spreadable Media: Creating Value and Meaning in a Networked Culture* (2013, with Sam Ford and Joshua Green) and *Reading in a Participatory Culture: Remixing Moby-Dick for the Literature Classroom* (2013, with Wyn Kelley, Katie Clinton, Jenna McWilliams, Ricardo Pitts-Wiley, and Erin Reilly). He has written for *Technology Review*, *Computer Games, Salon*, and *The Huffington Post*.



**DJ Johnson** is a documentary filmmaker, media artist, and educator. He serves as assistant professor of cinema practice in the Institute for Multimedia Literacy (IML) at the USC School of Cinematic Arts. In his work as the former video documentarian for the IML, Johnson developed innovative techniques to document multimedia pedagogy and scholarship. With expertise in digital storytelling, documentary production, and new media, Johnson has developed and taught courses for educational programs internationally.



**Evan Marwell** is the CEO and co-founder of EducationSuperHighway. Over the last 25 years, he has been an entrepreneur, starting companies in the telecommunications, software, hedge fund and consumer retailing industries. He has served on the board of several for-profit and nonprofit organizations. Marwell was most recently the chairman of the Golden Gate Chapter of the Young Presidents' Organization and is currently the president of the Board of Trustees at the Katherine Delmar Burke School in San Francisco. He has now turned his entrepreneurial energies toward improving education.

# Contributors



**Stephanie McClay** is the founding principal of USC Hybrid High School. She has more than 20 years of experience in public education as a teacher, instructional technology specialist, and principal. Dr. McClay completed her EdD in Educational Leadership at California State University, Northridge. Her dissertation research focused on identifying the characteristics of effective alternative schools that serve high-needs student populations.

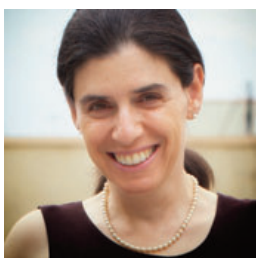


**Karen Polak** works for the International Department of the Anne Frank House as a senior staff member. She was International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's Education Working Group chair in 2004-2005 and has been the chair of the Working Group on the Genocide of the Roma since 2006.

**Kim Simon** is the managing director of the USC Shoah Foundation. With responsibility for oversight of the Institute's day-to-day operations, she directs the development and implementation of all core mission activities including the education program, research agenda, documentation activity, public outreach, and administration. Simon coordinated the Institute's effort to collect interviews with



Holocaust survivors and witnesses around the world. She subsequently established the office of global partnerships, creating and developing its international program agenda, and overseeing its work in 17 countries.



**Elisabeth Stock** is CEO and co-founder of CFY, a national nonprofit that helps students, teachers, and parents use digital learning to improve educational outcomes. A recognized leader in her field, she is a Pahara-Aspen Education Fellow and a lifelong Ashoka fellow. Stock has given briefings at the White House, the U.S. Department of Education, and the FCC, and has served as an adviser to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the NYC

Department of Education. Prior to CFY, she served as a White House Fellow in the Office of the Vice President. She holds four degrees from MIT.



**Kori Street** is the USC Shoah Foundation's director of education. She came to the Institute in 2011 from Mount Royal University, where she was an associate professor and served as chair of entrepreneurship, nonprofit studies, international business and aviation in the Bissett School of Business. After completing a master's in the History of Education and Gender/Feminism at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto, Dr. Street received her PhD in history from the University of Victoria in 2001. Dr. Street's current work is focused on the preservation and educational use of Holocaust survivor testimonies.

**Andrea Szőnyi** is senior international training consultant and regional representative in Hungary for the USC Shoah Foundation. She is also the director of Zachor Foundation for Social Remembrance, a nonprofit educational institution working in Holocaust and human rights education in Hungary. Szőnyi graduated from Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, with degrees in English and Russian languages and literature. She also received a degree in cultural management. Szőnyi worked for years as a high school teacher. She is the author of several edu-

cational materials and the editor of publications and has also published several translations. She is a Holocaust Education Fellow of the Imperial War Museum in London.

**Holly Willis** is a faculty member in the School of Cinematic Arts at the University of Southern California, where she also serves as director of Academic Programs for the Institute for Multimedia Literacy and Director of the Media Arts + Practice PhD program. As part of her work Willis teaches, organizes workshops, and oversees academic programs designed to introduce new media literacy



skills across USC's campus and curriculum. She is the editor of *The New Ecology of Things* (Art Center College of Design, 2007) and the author of *New Digital Cinema: Reinventing the Moving Image* (Wallflower Press, 2005).

## Editorial Team

Stephen D. Smith  
Kim Simon  
Anne Marie Stein  
Kori Street  
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## Design

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# Testimony & the 21ST Century Student

By Stephen D. Smith

Informal participation in the digital milieu isn't enough to give students the skills they need to thrive.

**Technology and Education.** Digital technology is estimated by some experts to be 400 times faster today than it was when USC Shoah Foundation – The Institute for Visual History and Education began collecting testimony from Holocaust witnesses. That same period of 20 years has brought dramatic changes to the education landscape as well, and it has fundamentally changed the way testimony is used for learning. Early on, it was primarily through educational DVDs that included short segments of testimony that were used to supplement a Holocaust curriculum. But now, instead of only supporting traditional textbooks or being used to round out other multimedia content, testimony is at the very heart of the learning process. This issue of *PastForward* demonstrates just how far testimony-based education has come since the beginning.

With the advent of the digital classroom comes the need to develop content ideal for students who learn in ways that are very different from how every previous generation learned. Young people sift vast amounts of data every day, and many of them are more comfortable than their parents and teachers when it comes to using technology. But informal participation in the digital milieu isn't enough to give students the skills they need to thrive. That's why at the Institute, we are committed to designing resources that use testimony for digital literacy, as well as character development.

Our flagship resource for students and teachers is IWitness ([iwitness.usc.edu](http://iwitness.usc.edu)), a website that lets students use genocide witness testimony for individual- and group projects. They learn to search testimony, extract short clips, and produce video essays to present to teachers and peers. IWitness has a growing library of activities that teachers can use in class or assign for homework; they can also design their own lessons and activities and share them with other educators around the world. But the ultimate purpose of IWitness, as with all testimony-based education, is to motivate young people to have a positive impact on others; that's why Steven Spielberg has invited students to participate in the IWitness Video Challenge. Inspired by the message of *Schindler's List*—that one person can make a difference—the contest challenges students to create a short video essay that interweaves their own footage with survivor testimony to chronicle something positive they do in their community. Look for more on the IWitness Video Challenge throughout the coming year.

I hope you enjoy the opportunity in these pages to learn from some of the minds behind our educational platforms and teachers who use testimony from day to day. Their insights remind us of the extraordinary power of testimony to instruct and inspire every generation. ■



## Voices from the Archive

Nearly 52,000 Holocaust survivors and other witnesses gave their testimonies to the Institute, from 57 countries and in 33 languages. The Visual History Archive is filled with more than 100,000 hours of unique life stories. It would take more than 12 years to watch every person's testimony, and it would be impossible to share all their stories in *PastForward*. Here is a glimpse from the Visual History Archive into the life of survivor György Kun.

# György Kun

Born January 23, 1932, Vállaj, Hungary

Interviewed 1999, Budapest, Hungary

*Translated and edited by Andrea Szőnyi*

**WORKING IN HOLOCAUST EDUCATION** is no dream job, especially in Hungary.

“How did you end up doing this job?”

“What’s your motivation?”

I’m used to hearing these kinds of questions. The truth is, there were even times in the past when I asked them of myself. But after what happened last year, questions like these don’t trouble me as much as they used to. It’s not so much that I found the answer; it’s more like the answer found me. This isn’t a story I can tell by myself, because it was someone else’s story before it became mine. It began in January 1932, in village on the Hungarian countryside called Vállaj, when a farm manager named Márton Kuhn and his wife, Piroska, had their first child. They named him György (Gyuri). Eleven months later, his brother, István (Pista), was born.

Gyuri and Pista were very close; they spent most of their time together while their father managed the farm and their mother ran the house. Many years later, when Gyuri gave his testimony to the USC Shoah Foundation, he reminisced about his early childhood: running in from the garden when his mother’s homemade donuts were ready; going to elementary school in the village, then Jewish school in neighboring Székesfehérvár; playing outside with Pista.

It was “the good life,” Gyuri said.

More than 560,000 Hungarian Jews were murdered during World War II, most of them at Auschwitz. What ended in genocide began with antisemitic legislation that violated even the most basic rights, including the right to an education. When Gyuri was denied entry into the secondary grammar school, his parents managed to enroll him in a local high school instead. But in Hungary, lawmakers weren’t the only ones whose hatred of Jews had become overt; other schoolchildren tried to attack him on his way home.

Gyuri was a fast runner, and he always got away from the bullies who waited for him after school. But there was nowhere to run when his family was evicted from their farm in 1944; they were sent to a nearby ghetto, then to a brick factory in Székesfehérvár. “My parents couldn’t imagine where we would end up, so my mother kept repeating that we should always stay together,” Gyuri recalled. “No matter what, the family must not be torn apart.”

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Brick factories like the one in Székesfehérvár were the last stop for many Hungarian Jews before deportation, and in May, Gyuri and his family were loaded onto a train. “Being a child, I was unable to comprehend what was going on,” he said.

But nobody could have imagined where that train was headed.

The first thing Gyuri remembered seeing at Auschwitz was a Nazi soldier. They had dogs, and their prisoners were people of all ages in striped uniforms. The new arrivals were lined up for inspection. “Mom was holding our hands,” Gyuri remembered. “Dad was walking next to us. Then he was separated from us.”

Márton Kuhn would eventually end up at Dachau. Gyuri, Pista, and their mother, Piroska were brought face to face with Josef Mengele, the SS officer and physician notorious for conducting human experiments at Auschwitz and deciding who would live and who would die. Mengele looked at the boys. “He asked my mother one word,” Gyuri recalled: “‘*Zwillinge* [Twins]?’ My mother did not speak German. However, she instinctively replied, ‘Ja.’”

Gyuri and Pista were not only close in age; they closely resembled one another and, as was customary at that time, they were even dressed alike. Their mother’s one-word answer to Mengele’s fateful question “meant life for us,” Gyuri said, for the boys were immediately separated for experimentation. Their mother, however, was sent in a different direction.

“My last memory of my mother is that she is holding my hand and we are separated. We were simply torn apart: we, one way and she, the other. I had that picture with me a long



time, and I know my brother did, too.”

Piroska Kuhn perished at Auschwitz. Gyuri and Pista were taken to the twin camp, but Mengele’s mistake was almost immediately discovered. When they were being registered, each boy gave his true date of birth; the adult inmates in charge of registration stared at them in “total bewilderment.” One of them was a 28-year-old man named Ernő Spiegel.

If any inmate in the twin camp was the leader, it was Ernő Spiegel. Sometimes referred to as the “twin capo”, sometimes as the “twin’s father,” he was trusted by Mengele and respected by the other inmates. Gyuri and Pista’s first encounter with Spiegel would not be their last; instead of reporting them, he falsified Pista’s registration so that his birthday matched Gyuri’s. “Then the numbers were tattooed on our arms,” Gyuri said. “I became A-14321 and my brother, A-14322.”

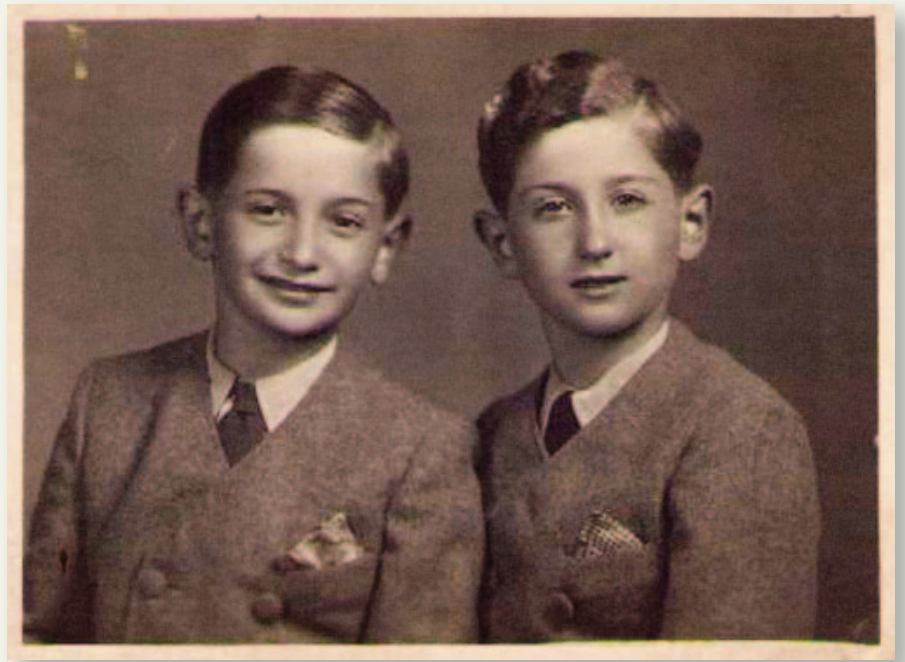
The boys survived Auschwitz and were reunited with their father. In 1956, during the revolution, Pista left Hungary for the United States and settled in Oklahoma City, where he studied to be an architect. In 1962 at the age of 30, while working at a hospital to finance his university studies, Pista became ill and died.

Gyuri remained in Hungary after the war. After marrying in 1960, he and his wife, Ágnes, had a baby girl. They settled in Budapest, where Gyuri and Ágnes still live to this day. He has posttraumatic stress disorder, and he believes that what he experienced as a child—what history calls the Holocaust—had an effect on more than his health.

“Very often, I underrate myself,” he says. “There is a certain repression, almost fear, in me that I believe comes from there.”

Throughout his life, Gyuri has reminisced about Ernő Spiegel: how he risked his life more than once to save others; how he led the twins homeward when Auschwitz was liberated; how he appointed older boys to get the younger boys home when it was time to part ways; how he helped the boys hope “that maybe, one day, life would be joyful again.”

Gyuri’s testimony is one of thousands that people can watch at Central European University (CEU), in Budapest, where the Visual History Archive has been available to the public since 2009. Last spring, a colleague at CEU forwarded an email sent on behalf of a doctoral student at Royal Holloway, University of London. It was an email about a research question. The question was simple enough, and my colleague had already answered it, so why forward the message? I read further.



Gyuri (left) and Pista were mistaken for twins by Josef Mengele.

The doctoral student was conducting research on a Hungarian Jew from Munkachevo, who supervised male twins at Auschwitz. I read the name of the Jew, Ernő Spiegel and sent a reply to the translator, who had written on behalf of the doctoral student, and in her subsequent email, she asked if I had information about any inmates in the camp besides Ernő Spiegel—specifically, Gyuri Kun and his brother. I told the translator that Gyuri Kun is my father. When the doctoral student, Yoav Heller, learned this, the next email came directly from him. He said he’d had my father’s story translated into English; he knew the tiniest details of what had happened to him and his brother at Auschwitz. Heller continued, saying that he organizes an annual summer trip to Poland for 120 young Israelis, who all learn about Ernő Spiegel and those he helped saved, including my father.

Nine days after our email exchange, Heller came to my father’s house in Budapest. The two of them sat down together, and I translated.

“I want to tell you that I have been searching for you for two years,” Heller told my father. “I am now utterly honored and moved to be sitting here and meeting you in person.”

I don’t think I’ve ever seen anyone speak to another person with such genuine respect.

Their subsequent conversation confirmed that Ernő Spiegel had indeed rescued two boys in May 1944. In fact, he recalled the incident in his own testimony, which I later found in the book *Children of the Flames: Dr. Josef Mengele and the Untold*

*Story of the Twins of Auschwitz*, by Lucette Matalon Lagnado and Sheila Cohn Dekel. “One day, I was filling out forms for a new pair of twins and noticed the date of birth one child had given me was different from the birth date of his sibling,” Spiegel recalled. “It was obvious they were not really twins. But I knew that if anyone learned this, the boys would immediately be put to death. And so I decided to take a chance, and put down false information. I ‘made’ them twins. I knew if Mengele learned of what I had done, he would kill both me and the children on the spot.”

This was the same incident my father had described in his testimony; in that moment, Spiegel had saved my father’s life.

I could be teaching English, or running a school, or doing any number of things to make a difference instead of working in Holocaust education. But now I understand that nothing happens by accident; our lives are interwoven within a mosaic-like, larger context. My father’s story is part of Ernő Spiegel’s story; their stories are part of their children’s: Judith and Israel Spiegel’s, and part of mine. There’s more to be found in this larger story than mere poetry; for me, there is also purpose.

I owe something to Ernő Spiegel. I owe him my father’s life, my own life, and the lives of my children. I owe him our future, and I am fortunate enough to be in a position to pay some of this debt by being an educator who uses the “voices in the archive”—voices like my father’s—to do so. ■

# Encouraging Opting In Rather Than Out

By David C. Dwyer

An education innovation designed to stem the tide of students failing to finish

David C. Dwyer is founder of USC Hybrid High School, a transformational urban charter school. For a full biography, see page 3.

ONE MILLION three-hundred-thousand U.S. students choose to drop out of high school annually.<sup>i</sup> In our own USC backyard, 46 percent of high school-aged students drop out. These kinds of statistics account for the fact that in high school

graduation rates, the United States places twentieth in a list of 28 developed nations around the world—that's eighth from the bottom.<sup>ii</sup>

The statistics have a human story as well. The decision to drop out has devastating consequences on students' lives after they leave school. They earn far less than their graduating counterparts and are far more likely to live in poverty and depend upon welfare. High school dropouts live nine fewer years than high school graduates. Their rate of incarceration and recidivism is six times greater than high-school graduates and 65 times greater than high school graduates who go on to complete four-year college programs.<sup>iii</sup> The cost of the dropout problem to American society is startling, too—an estimated \$3 trillion over the next decade.<sup>iv</sup>

Research points to a litany of causes, including student behaviors such as poor attendance, failed core courses, disruptive activity, drug use, and incarceration. The likelihood of dropping out is exacerbated by family attributes such as poverty, single parenthood, English as a second language, and the absence of an academically successful role model in the family.<sup>v</sup> In Rumberger and Lim's comprehensive review, however, another statistic stands out: 32 percent of U.S. dropouts leave school to care for ailing relatives or for younger siblings, and/or they must work to help support their families. Research finds that the *institution of schooling* contributes as much to dropout rates as do personal characteristics.<sup>vi</sup>

It was in this context two years ago when we began planning Hybrid High, and we asked ourselves: Could we attack the dropout problem by deconstructing the traditional school and offering a significant alternative? What would it take to create in USC's neighborhood a high school that graduates 100 percent of its high-need students who would be socially and academically prepared for success in college and career?

USC Hybrid High School (HHS) opened its doors on September 4, 2012, as an independent charter high school, authorized by the Los Angeles Unified School District. We called it "Hybrid" because it was a mix of parts: It would

feature academic and social-emotional goals, digital and hands-on curriculums, and on-site and online assistance for students. It is organized to ensure that a diverse range of students is actively and productively engaged. Our approach might strike some as counterintuitive, but we are leveraging technology to enhance not only our students' academic knowledge but also the human side of the equation—their life skills and the real-world applicability of their high school education. The goal is to make sure that every individual who walks through the doors in grade nine walks out of the school, successful, with a high school diploma. The key to ensuring that success is a unique model that will provide them a better opportunity to graduate successfully than they would have had in a traditional high school.

## Key Elements of the USC Hybrid High Model

**Connectedness.** A foundational aspect of our model is a pervasive belief that social-emotional learning must go hand in hand with academic growth. To be successful, students must feel safe, respected, and connected to the school and its environment. Technology is part of what connects them, but we've also developed a human connection—permanent advisory groups. Students are assigned to a group of about 25 with a permanent faculty adviser. These advisory groups continue to meet every day, and they will remain together for all four years of each student's high school life. Advisory groups focus on interpersonal and life skills, college knowledge, and means for resolving conflicts and other problems.

**Personalization.** Students are slotted into courses where they can experience both success and challenge. Each student, then, has a *personalized learning plan* that evolves weekly as course data and teacher observations accrue and validate or challenge the benchmark results. We have chosen to begin with the Apex Learning curriculum and will add to it as needs arise.

A key advantage of this digital curriculum is that performance and persistence data are constantly generated in the background, as students work through lessons and units.

**Real-World Application.** In addition to the implementation of the digital courses, the critically important hands-on and inquiry-based side of our instructional plan will engage our students in challenging, interdisciplinary projects with the goals of deepening understanding and learning to apply skills like research and analysis, critical dialogue, argument, persuasion, and collaboration. These projects will also provide the opportunity for the development of techni-



*“We are leveraging technology to enhance not only our students’ academic knowledge but also the human side of the equation,” writes USC Hybrid High founder David C. Dwyer, pictured here with a student using IWitness.*

out the integral use of information technologies to: 1) engage its technology-oriented students with highly interactive curriculum; 2) capture and share student achievement and performance data in real time; 3) provide 21st-century tools for inquiry projects; 4) provide access to virtual-expert resources; and 5) increase the school’s overall efficiency and cost effectiveness.

#### **Lessons to Date**

As I write this, we are not yet three months into the first year of implementing what we see as a long-term and, hopefully, replicable vision. These weeks have been filled with excitement and great promise but also, to no one’s surprise, some reality checks. For example, for adolescents we should have made developing a physical education program a higher priority. We are also adjusting to the challenges and opportunities of an open learning space. We had set our students on a path that began in a traditional, familiar, and highly structured mode and, then, week by week increased their degrees of freedom so that they could work toward

### **IWitness at Hybrid High**

*By Stephanie McClay, Principal, USC Hybrid High School*

If you dropped in to visit us at Hybrid High, you would find students connected to one another and to and through technology. Each student enjoys his or her own MacBook Air laptop and iPod touch. They use these tools to complete assignments, check their progress, access virtual resources. In short, they are finding innovative and engaging ways to address the digital divide that exists in American schools. You will also see students using IWitness.

IWitness is a platform that complements the innovative approach which defines the key elements of the model at Hybrid High: It supports social-emotional learning, as well as the cognitive learning, connecting students to the past in a way that is relevant to their lives; it works well with the digital, personalized learning plans, and project-based work; it has real-world applicability through the challenging, interdisciplinary activities; and it is technological. IWitness aligns well with our commitment to project-based learning and engaging students in authentic learning experiences.

Before we accepted the first students, Hybrid High staff worked with USC Shoah Foundation educators to develop a video-editing activity that would form a key part of their grade ten curriculum. In addition, students in grade nine will take on the IWitness Video Challenge ([iwitness.usc.edu](http://iwitness.usc.edu)) this spring. We want students to be empowered to tell their own stories and advocate for change in their own lives and in their communities. IWitness is an excellent vehicle for moving our students along that path.

Partnerships between schools such as Hybrid High and the USC Shoah Foundation can contribute to students overcoming technological barriers and developing the skills, knowledge, and capacity to succeed in the 21st century. ■

cal and digital skills in all project phases. As students mature and increasingly demonstrate self-discipline and reliability, community-based project opportunities and internships will be added to the instructional mix.

**Access.** Access is the fourth important element in our design, and it is in the mix for two good reasons: 1) remember the fact that one-third of dropouts leave school because of schedule conflicts; and 2) our students will need as much time as they are willing to work with us to build from their academic past—whatever it is—toward high school graduation and success in college and the workplace.

**Technology.** Fifth and final in our list of what makes USC Hybrid High School different is the fact that students find themselves immediately engaged with mobile, laptop, and desktop technologies. Simply, USC Hybrid High School as a vision and as a reality could not exist with-

defining their daily routines and learning plans. Eight weeks in, we have realized that some students would clearly need more time to adjust.

In conclusion, we are learning every day as we wrestle with deeply rooted norms about schooling, as well as deal with the environmental issues our students bring with them. Some challenges will be more easily addressed than others. We see great promise in the many ways we are employing technology to motivate, reinforce, and support both students and teachers. But the work of schools is hard, requiring inordinate dedication, energy, and creativity from the staff—and, of course, the students. ■

*Excerpted from "Toward a 21st-Century High School: An Iterative Quest," Spring 2013 in Educational Technology: The Magazine for Managers of Change in Education. March-April issue 2013, Volume 53, Number 2.*

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# Unexpected Teachers

By Mariana Aguilar

Sometimes the most important learning happens outside of the classroom

*Mariana Aguilar is a third grade teacher at View Park Elementary Accelerated Charter School, in Los Angeles. For a full biography, see page 2.*

STUDENTS START COLLEGE with many expectations, but learning from Holocaust survivors was never one of mine. It happened during my junior year at USC, in a class offered by the Institute of Multimedia Literacy, when the professor assigned a project unlike anything I had ever done before. Each student had to produce a short film based on testimony from the USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive and enter it in something called the Student Voices Short Film Competition.

Not only had I never watched survivor testimony before, but I wasn't a filmmaker or even a film student! I was majoring in psychology. But I did have some background in multimedia, and it was enough to make me aware of visual medium's power to move people.

The idea behind the contest was to encourage dialogue about genocide and human rights, and I decided that my film would explore persecution in contemporary times. Then my professor encouraged me to be more specific.

My first encounter with racism happened in college, when someone who I thought was a friend spoke derogatorily about my Mexican ancestry. It was hurtful and humiliating, and with no way to share what I was feeling with others, I was left with a sense of isolation that made it even more difficult to heal.

That semester, I watched more than 40 hours of testimony. As I saw the survivors share emotions similar to what I felt—amplified times a million—I realized that I wasn't the only one who, at some point, had been made to feel shame simply for being born into certain group. Hearing survivors' voices, seeing their faces, and connecting with them on an emotional level was empowering. I felt like I could say something, too; I could use my film as a way to say, "Listen up! Prejudice? Bigotry? Hatred? They still exist."

*During her undergraduate studies at USC, Mariana Aguilar learned about the Institute's Holocaust survivor testimonies by participating in the Student Voices Film contest and went on to complete an internship at the Institute.*



I entered my film in the contest. It was called “Beanstar,” and it won the Viewers’ Choice Award, which was totally unexpected. But it was nothing compared to the surprising effect of watching Holocaust survivor testimony; the truth is, it changed my life. It restored my confidence as a Mexican American, it helped me heal from the hurtful incident I had experienced, and most importantly, it renewed my sense of responsibility to teach respect and empathy to others.

I’m in graduate school now, but I’m also in my first of two years teaching as a member of Teach For America. My students are in third grade, and while it might not be easy to broach difficult subjects such as racism with young children, helping them think critically about stereotypes is one of the most important things I can do. For better or for worse, we all have the power to change someone’s life; I learned this from the Holocaust survivors, who changed mine. ■

To watch the short film, called “Beanstar,” which Mariana entered into the Student Voices Film contest, visit: <http://sfj.usc.edu/studentvoices/2011/>



**Getting traction** Peter Cook uses testimony to teach high school economics and government.

## Going Beyond Gold

By Peter D. Cook

There’s more at stake in education than standardized test scores

*Peter D. Cook is a teacher at Camino Nuevo Charter Academy, Los Angeles, Calif. For a full biography, see page 3.*

they test, it doesn’t prepare students for the difficult moral decisions they’ll face.

One of the things I learned as a Marine Corps sergeant is that if you want to get any traction in teaching, you’ve got to get the learning environment right. You’ve got to put culture before content, and you have to recognize that to be educated is to be able to tell a story.

Imagine you’re a student studying cost-benefit analysis in my economics class. Instead of taking notes while I lecture, you’re watching a Holocaust survivor explain what it was like at Auschwitz to stand in line for food, deciding whether to wait for a chance at the front, where Dr. Mengele makes his selections, or go hungry another day to avoid his attention. Presented this way, the concept of cost-benefit analysis moves into a deeply philosophical space, where students begin to wrestle with issues of economics and morality. The same approach works in my government class, where the testimonies make

**“If you want to get any traction in teaching, you’ve got to get the learning environment right. You’ve got to put culture before content, and you have to recognize that to be educated is to be able to tell a story.”**

it possible for veterans who liberated camps to help students understand why they swore an oath to defend and uphold not only the U.S. Constitution but also the freedoms it asserts for all humanity. Their stories give the Constitution the significance it deserves as a living document that has as much bearing on our lives today as it did when it was ratified.

I believe that schools and teachers can go beyond gold if, rather than accept accolades for student-achievement on multiple-choice tests, we focus instead on character education. Culture has to come before content, but it can also be built through content, by following the lead of the finest educators out there: survivors and eyewitnesses whose knowledge and insights are ours to learn from. ■

## Survivor Testimony and Bandwidth: What Happens When Students Press Play?

By Kim Simon

Among a number of challenges for those providing new media learning tools and sites, is the ability to stream and play video seamlessly. When the video plays, no one notices. When the video does not work, it frustrates educators, students, and educational-content providers; this frustration becomes all the more understandable with the increasing ubiquity of instant video outside the formal school environment. Traffic Shaping is the practice of regulating network data transfer to ensure a certain level of quality of service or performance. Lack of availability, poor quality, disruption, reduction, and limitation of service are difficult downsides of lack of access to broadband, and pose a challenge for providers of sites and resources that are

rich with video content. For example, IWitness video is served at approximately 480 Kbps, which is approximately the equivalent of a video one might capture on their smartphone. This is the bare minimum to allow 20 students in one classroom to use multiple videos simultaneously. For students using IWitness to achieve the learning outcomes successfully—outcomes that include digital, media, and information literacy capacity and disciplinary content—the audio-visual content needs to be accessible and stable. In short, it needs to play.

In the following article, Evan Marwell, CEO and co-founder of EducationSuperHighway, addresses the scope of this problem in the United States and gives insight to the current

# Need for Speed

By Evan Marwell

Is your school fast enough for digital learning?  
Removing roadblocks to high-speed Internet

*Evan Marwell is the CEO and co-founder of EducationSuperHighway, a nonprofit focused on removing the roadblocks to high-speed Internet for students and teachers. For a full biography, see page 3.*

**DIGITAL LEARNING IS** transforming education, and online video is at the center of this transformation. Video from organizations like the USC Shoah Foundation, Discovery Education and Khan Academy can give every student access to the curriculum they need, regardless of whether their school offers a particular course. It also al-

lows our best teachers to instruct millions of students, not just the 30 to 60 who attend their class.

Teachers and students are already using video in their classrooms to enhance and personalize the learning experience. Unfortunately, their ability to do so is often constrained by a lack of sufficient internet access. A typical video stream requires 1 to 1.5 Mbps of bandwidth. When being used to personalize the learning experience, this implies that a typical classroom requires 45Mbps, and a “digital learning school” will require more than 100Mbps. In contrast, a typical K-12 school has only 10Mbps

According to the nonprofit EducationSuperHighway, 80 percent of American schools are not ready for digital learning—an issue even more prevalent in low-income and rural schools. To fix this, we need to upgrade the internet infrastructure of America’s schools so that each has 100Mbps of internet access and modern Wi-Fi networks.

EducationSuperHighway has identified four “gaps” that need to be addressed in order to upgrade the internet access of America’s K-12 schools for digital learning: an information gap, an expertise gap, a procurement gap, and a policy gap.

The first issue is that we don’t know what the internet infrastructure is at every school in America. Consequently, educators don’t know that digital learning is possible and policymakers don’t know if schools are ready for the next-generation assessments, which are set to launch in 2014-2015. To address this gap, EducationSuperHighway has launched the National School Speed Test in conjunction with the Federal Communications Commission, the U.S. Department of Education, and more than 50 national, state, and local organizations. The goal is to get 1 million educators and students to take one minute to test the speed of their school’s internet access. The results will help superintendents and policymakers to identify which schools need to be upgraded.

The second issue is that networking requires highly specialized expertise, and few schools have the resources for a dedicated network technician. The typical school tech-support person is overwhelmed simply trying to support the computers, iPads, and other devices on the school network. To fill this gap, EducationSuperHighway is creating the Education Geek Squad, which will help schools design, implement, and monitor state-of-the-art networks.

The third issue that we must address is lowering the cost of internet access for schools. Today, despite being one of the largest cus-

barriers that need to be removed in order to be more successful with bringing digital media into every classroom.

We anticipate and work toward a future when teachers and students have regular and consistent access to broadband at a high enough level to allow such ease of use. When technical concerns such as broadband access are no longer significant hurdles, students everywhere can continue to participate directly in their own learning in active, collaborative, and relevant ways, and educators will be able to continue to focus on the innovation, creativity, and learning outcomes of their students. ■

tomers for Internet access in the country (spending nearly \$1.5 billion collectively), the typical school pays four times more than it should for its internet access. This is because our schools buy as 14,000 independent districts, which means they are not taking advantage of the benefits of volume purchasing. To address this, EducationSuperHighway is creating a Broadband Buying Consortia that will enable a schools to pool their purchasing and encourage greater numbers of vendors to bid for a school's business. In some states, this approach has led to a 90 percent drop in the price of internet access—a result EducationSuperHighway hopes to replicate across the nation.

The final issue centers on reforming the



**“A typical video stream requires 1 to 1.5 Mbps of bandwidth. When being used to personalize the learning experience, this implies that a typical classroom requires 45Mbps, and a ‘digital learning school’ will require more than 100Mbps. In contrast, a typical K-12 school has only 10Mbps.”**

FCC’s E-Rate program, which was responsible for ensuring that every school was connected to the internet. Now, the program needs to ensure that every school is ready for digital learning. To do that, EducationSuperHighway is working with the FCC to find ways to maximize the effects of the \$2 to \$3 billion per year that E-Rate provides to schools and libraries.

The good news is that all of what EducationSuperHighway is proposing has been done before. States have created central networking groups to support the internet infrastructure in their K-12 schools. Districts have formed regional buying consortia to lower the cost of internet access, and the FCC has introduced reforms that have begun to address the capac-

ity issues which hold back digital learning. Combine this with the fact that no new technology is needed to solve this problem and EducationSuperHighway believes it can upgrade U.S. schools for digital learning before the end of the decade. ■

*To find out more, visit [www.educationsuperhighway.org](http://www.educationsuperhighway.org). To test your school's internet access, visit [www.schoolspeedtest.org](http://www.schoolspeedtest.org).*

# “A Damned Good Cry”

By Kay Andrews

How testimony is bringing the authentic survivor voice to Holocaust education in the United Kingdom



Holocaust survivor Leon Greenman

FOR MANY OF US working in the area of Holocaust education around the globe, one question has been raised repeatedly over the past years: How do we ensure that the survivor voice continues to be heard when individuals are no longer able to tell their stories? Here in the United Kingdom, there are a number of survivor speakers, but with more than 3,400 secondary schools (ages 11 to 18) in England alone, the actual number of students who will hear a survivor first-hand is limited. Thus, it is imperative to find innovative ways to bring survivor voices into the classroom. At the Institute of Education’s Centre for Holocaust Educa-

tion, we have created programs for teachers that aim to address this and other issues. Our teaching and learning materials have the survivor voice at their core, and can serve as a model for others who want to educate about the Holocaust.

In England, teaching about the Holocaust has been a mandatory part of the history curriculum since 1991, and usually occurs in year nine, when students turn 14. The Holocaust is also often covered in other subject areas, such as religious education and English. Despite the mandatory nature of Holocaust education in the history curriculum, teachers are provided with no official guidance on what to include, how long to spend, or how to approach teaching the Holocaust. Moreover, the U.K. has a free market for school textbooks, with no standardization or governmental approval; as a result, teachers are free to choose any teaching materials they wish.

The lack of clarity and structure regarding Holocaust education is reflected in findings described in the Centre for Holocaust Education’s report, “Teaching about the Holocaust in English Secondary Schools” (2009). Its large-scale survey revealed a commitment from teachers to address this important subject but suggested they had many questions about how to cover the Holocaust effectively, with limited time and resources. Our research also revealed wider challenges for Holocaust educators: namely, the choice of resources used in classrooms. Seventy-six percent of teachers used feature film in their classroom, while only 25 percent used what might be seen as more authentic historical sources, such as inviting a survivor to speak at their school. This raises a wide-ranging pedagogical issue: With limited classroom time to spend teaching and learning about the magnitude and breadth of the Holocaust, how do we ensure that the authentic survivor voice is present, over and above the use of feature film? After all, feature film might provide good entertainment with neatly defined events and characters, but does it portray the reality and nuance of a personal experience?

In response to our research findings, we have implemented a national, continuing professional-development program (CPD) for teachers. More than 800 have already participated in this program; it features testimony as a key element—including the testimony of Leon Greenman, which is preserved in the Institute’s Visual History Archive.

Leon, who was British-born, married a Dutch woman in 1935 and remained in the Netherlands; in his testimony, he recalls meeting his wife for the first time and their subsequent marriage. We chose this recollection, captured on video, to be the first testimony segment teachers see in our program, because our research revealed that of 35 potential topics, Jewish life before the Second World War ranked 31st and was among the least likely topics to be covered. Our “Jewish life before the war” session encourages teachers to see Jewish people as subjects rather than objects, of the later regime. After watching Leon’s light-hearted story of meeting and marrying his wife, many teachers have commented on how it changed their perception of those who became victims of a genocidal regime.

In addition to our emphasis on the prewar narrative for Holocaust education, we have developed classroom materials that address survivors’ postwar experiences. In fact, the final training session of our program for teachers is devoted to this theme, which we explore through Leon’s testimony and through that of another U.K. survivor, Anna Bergman. Far too often in school textbooks, liberation and life after the Holocaust are represented through Allied propaganda images, with little reflection on the day-by-day process survivors endured. Our final session, called “Liberation and Home,” deals with the desolation and loss so many faced as they tried to find family after the war. Teachers hear how Anna lost hope when she returned to Prague, while Leon recalls grappling with life in his father’s house many months after liberation from Buchenwald; faced with photographs of his wife, Else, and son, Barney, who were murdered at Auschwitz-Birkenau, Leon “had a damn good cry” before leaving the house to look for other survivors. As a way to ensure that historical inquiry goes further than a single account, Leon’s testimony is given additional context through documents, photographs, and news reports

*Kay Andrews is a lecturer at the Institute of Education’s Centre for Holocaust Education, University of London. For a full biography, see page 2.*



relating to the events that he experienced personally in the year after he was liberated.

The reaction of teachers and young people to the testimony we use in our programs has been impressive. Many suggest that they feel they have come to know the individuals whom they have “met” during a number of sessions. Others have commented on how such an approach allows them to build over time a deeper historical understanding of the Holocaust. Added to this, teachers and students have wanted to watch entire testimonies to further understand each survivor’s personal experience.

Instruction and learning about the Holocaust can be a daunting task for teachers, especially when many have had no formal Holocaust education. Our program provides classroom materials that demonstrate the breadth of history while keeping the personal survivor voice at its core. Such an approach engages young people with an individual’s life and places their story in the wider context of the complex events of the Holocaust. ■

*Leon Greenman and Anna Bergman’s testimonies can be viewed online at: [vhaonline.usc.edu](http://vhaonline.usc.edu)*



## Wash, Rinse, *Don't* Repeat

*By Michelle Sadrena Clark*

How do you engage students when their favorite subject can be themselves?

*Michelle Sadrena Clark is a teacher at High Tech High North County in San Marcos, Calif. For a full biography, see page 2*

“WE LEARNED ABOUT that last year” is something you never want to hear your students say, but mine did. What concerned me most was that they were talking about the Holocaust, as if it were just another history topic to cover once and then check

off the list. How could I encourage my students to take an interest in the Holocaust? How could I help them to understand its implications for all of us, and draw from it lessons that would have a positive effect on their character?

Testimony is unique because it gives students a chance to “meet” a survivor who otherwise couldn’t be there. I remember meeting Renée Firestone after I watched her testimony; when we finally stood face to face, it was as if I were seeing a friend. I wanted the IWitness activity I had built, titled *Wash, Rinse, Don't Repeat*, to give my students that same connection with survivors, and through it, a sense of how the past is connected to the present, and how each of us is making history, every day, whether through action or inaction. Through the study of history, we see so many tragedies that we end up repeating, even though we’re supposed to learn from our mistakes. So the purpose, apart from teaching history, was to encourage my students to speak out about current civil and human rights issues.

In high school, most students’ favorite subject is themselves, and the topics they find most engaging are often those that hit closest to home. *Wash, Rinse, Don't Repeat* is flexible enough that students can focus on topics of their choice, and the experiences of Holocaust survivors are diverse enough that there are always potential points of connection. Some students were interested in women’s rights, others on religious persecution; our school is close to the border with Mexico, so family separation through deportation and racial profiling received a lot of interest in my class. One of my student’s project focused on children who had been left without parents and who had eventually been adopted; for her this was personal, because she also had been adopted. Her connection to these survivors who were adopted was very different from

that of a student who wasn't adopted. It was very personal and relevant.

Much of the learning at our school emphasizes social justice, and some students chose to focus on human trafficking and forced labor. In every case, there are Holocaust survivors whose testimonies can inspire deeper thinking and discussion about these issues. It is one thing to get students to transform thinking, it is another to get those students to actually transform their actions. With testimony I believe consequences are much more personal and emotional, and it inspires thought and action among my students.

I'm already designing another classroom activity in IWitness, called Hope and Humanity. Through it, I want to encourage my students to consider the positive choices people made during the Holocaust, often in spite of risk to themselves. In the introduction to the activity, I use the analogy of how telling someone "don't think about an elephant" makes it hard not to think about an elephant. In other words, if we only pay attention to negative behaviors—what people did wrong—we won't learn positive, alternative behaviors. I hope that if we also give mind to people who modeled positive behavior, students will be inspired to act in the same way. ■

To view examples of student works created in IWitness visit <http://iwitness.usc.edu/SFI/Share/>

## Standing at the Intersection

By Kori Street

Considerations when using testimony in education

*Kori Street is director of education for the USC Shoah Foundation. Her current work focuses on the preservation and educational use of survivor testimonies. For a full biography, see page 4.*

**IN THE WAKE** Of recent recognition of USC Shoah Foundation's educational website IWitness, a colleague pointed out to me that none of the organizations had recognized our work in teaching the Holocaust, and wondered if I was concerned. These welcome achievements high-

lighted the work that the Institute's education team is doing in terms of digital, media, and information literacy, and, of course, providing compelling content, but did not speak to the specific expertise in teaching about the Holocaust. My answer to my colleague was that although I was not concerned, I did respect the impetus that had prompted the question. While our educational focus is on the effective and appropriate use of testimony in the digital classroom, we are working with the testimonies of survivors and witnesses of the Holocaust. That places us in the field of Holocaust education. At the same time, the nature of audio-visual testimony requires that our online education programs address the 21st-century skills students need to learn. Working with testimony effectively in the



Kori Street, the Institute's director of education

classroom requires that we live at the intersection of critical literacies and the historical content we provide. It also requires that we occupy that space with integrity and great care.

There is debate—and perhaps no small amount of anxiety—about the nature of Holocaust education and remembrance in schools. The Holocaust education community, of which we are a part, is faced with the loss of the living memory of the witnesses, who have contributed so fully to the classroom experience, and the attendant questions about how to best address that loss. At the same time, teachers around the world are faced with competing and increasing demands on their time and focus. In her article in this issue of *Past-Forward* on page 14, Kay Andrews refers to a study published by the Holocaust Education Centre at the Institute of Education, University of London, which suggested that even with all of our efforts, almost 75 percent of teachers and students learn what they know about the Holocaust from cultural sources—feature films, novels. Teachers indicated that they did not feel they had the specific knowledge, nor did they have the time to address the topic well enough or know how to assess the wide variety of resources available to them.

Two broad approaches frame methods in Holocaust education. The first, studying the Holocaust as unique history, treats the Holocaust as a historical subject, and is understood for its uniqueness as a historical moment in its historical context. The other focuses on studying the Holocaust, and other genocides, as universal explorations of human behavior.

Alvin Rosenfeld makes a case for continuing the “unique” treatment of the Holocaust when he says, “The historical character of the crimes that we have come to call the Holocaust is open to alteration under the pressures of a broad range of cultural forces, including political expediency, commercial gain, and popular tastes and preferences.”

He is concerned that despite great fascination for the crimes of the Holocaust, they are subject to unconscious denial. Rosenfeld’s thesis is that our prime obligation is to remember—a remembrance carefully enumerated and understood with historical integrity. Understanding the Holocaust as a historical event—not for shedding light on the present—is key to properly remembering it, and to do otherwise leads to what he identifies as diminishment or unconscious denial.

But educationalists have conducted a wide range of research that supports the positive contribution of Holocaust education to devel-

oping students’ understanding of aspects of citizenship in honing their awareness of human rights issues and genocides, the concepts of stereotyping, scapegoating, and general political literacy, such as the exercise of power in local, national, and global contexts. Scholars in this field would say that building specific historical knowledge is part of a process in which students then go on to make cognitive links to the challenges and implications the events present. The importance of knowledge cannot be underestimated but as one side of responsible citizenship. Developing critical thought,

**“Working with testimony effectively requires that we live at the intersection of critical literacies—including digital and media literacy, and historical content—including history, the Holocaust, and other genocides. It also requires that we occupy that space with integrity and great care.”**

respectful attitudes, and thoughtful actions is an outcome of that acquired knowledge.

Driven by the testimonies’ visual nature, the Institute’s work reflects an acknowledgment of both of these perspectives. In order to work with audio-visual testimony effectively and ethically, it is imperative that one understands the content’s historical context and specific detail. What that means in terms of the current collection is that users must understand the historical context of the Holocaust and the 20th century. As the Visual History Archive grows and includes testimony from other genocides, those historical moments will require their own, unique historical understanding. At the same time, students and teachers who engage with the many sources of media in their daily lives will construct their understanding based on their existing beliefs, worldview, and knowledge structures. They will draw conclusions based on what they view and what they deem is relevant to them. Our research has indicated that when students watch testimony, there is a strong link between knowledge and empathy, critical thinking, and responsible civic engagement, between respect and inspiration. They immediately connect with and hear relevance in the voices to which they are listening.

Today’s students are mobile and connected—to one another and to their technology. Whether for social, recreational, or educational purposes, they are deeply engaged with visual and digital media. Even those who do not have regular access to digital media need the skills and resources to stay competitive. To reach them where they are and to have meaning in their world, we develop teaching and learning applications that capitalize on their mobility, creativity, and connectedness.

Today’s 21st-century students must be literate in digital, visual, and media literacies. These are new layers, which build upon and are just as important to students today as are traditional subjects such as reading, writing, and numerical literacy. It is not enough to teach them to search; students must know how to understand the value of what they find, whether in digital, visual, or textual form. They also need to understand the meaning of what they have found in the context of the world around them, and then have the ability to act based on that comprehension.

Educators are looking for ways to engage students at this intersection of literacies and skills in ways that are relevant, sustained, and transformative. In many ways, it is this search that provides an audience for sites such as PowerMyLearning. It is in the present that we make sense of the past. Engaging the testimonies within the context of the present means living at the intersection of multiple literacies, historical specificity, personal empathy, and our wired, complex world. If we can live and learn in that intersection, we will have the ability to bind our communities together. Young people do respond in a very personal way to the compelling stories among the voices in the Visual History Archive. As they listen to those voices—one at a time—they are connected to the past, engaged in their present, and as a result, contribute to making a better future for all of us. ■

#### **Recognition for IWitness**

*Accreditation from the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) aligns IWitness with National Education Technology Standards. Teachers, a site that reviews educational websites, recommended IWitness. The American Association of School Librarians recognized IWitness as one of the leading sites for teaching and learning.*

*For further reading: P. Cowan and H. Maitles (Eds), Teaching Controversial Issues in the Classroom Key Issues and Debates Continuum. Kahn, M. (2010); Alvin H. Rosenfeld, The End of the Holocaust. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. (2011); PowerMyLearning: <http://www.powermylearning.com>*

# From Viral Video to Ethical Editing

What students need to know about working with testimony

By Holly Willis

**T**HREE YEARS AGO, the Institute for Multimedia Literacy, a research unit within the University of Southern California's School of Cinematic Arts that is designed to study new forms of literacy in a digital culture, embarked on a collaboration with USC Shoah Foundation—The Institute for Visual History and Education. The goal of the collaboration was to develop best practices for teaching students how to work with clips of testimony from the Institute's Visual History Archive. As the Institute continued to expand its outreach to high school students, undergraduates, and graduate students, and as students began to watch, edit, combine, and reconfigure these clips, what did they need to know?

Our attention to this topic stemmed from the simple fact that our students come to us now with a tremendous amount of experience viewing, sharing, creating, and uploading online video. Indeed, the ability to take images, manipulate them, and recirculate them is shared by anyone with access to a computer and the Inter-

net. However, much of the material that our students engage with in this context is viral video, which tends to spark laughter or shock more often than contemplation; it moves quickly from source to source as short-lived memes, and it may be valued more for its spreadability than for its intellectual complexity. The result is a kind of "video vernacular" and a correspondingly cavalier attitude toward visual material viewed online.

This attitude isn't appropriate when students are invited to engage with sensitive materials. As students began to work with clips of testimony, we needed a method that teachers could adopt and which would inspire careful attention to notions of truth, care, and respect. We knew that this attention could only come through the development of an understanding specifically of editing and what it means to excerpt a clip, place it in juxtaposition with another clip, and even to compile a sequence of excerpted clips that, in their placement, create meaning. With this in mind, together we developed the notion of ethical editing: the act of selecting, combining, and

presenting clips of testimony in a manner that honors and respects the truth, considers interviewees' possible vulnerability, and acknowledges the viewers' trust.

We reasoned that if students could apply this definition to their work with clips of testimony, not only would their own thinking about the material grow more nuanced, but it would also result in more careful video projects. To help students consider the ethics of editing in more detail, we also introduced basic concepts from documentary filmmaking.

First, documentary films endeavor to represent the truth. They make a "truth claim." Viewers accept this claim as a kind of contractual obligation on the part of the filmmaker, and the filmmaker in turn struggles constantly with a commitment to convey the truth. This applies to working with clips of testimony and creating sequences that use this material.

Second, documentary filmmakers must establish a *point of view* toward the material presented. There are many ways to frame



documentary material: Do you simply present a series of clips, without any overt perspective, and leave interpretation to your viewers? Or do you make your perspective clear, either through text or voice-over, so that your viewers will make no mistake with regard to your intentions? Do you use music to help produce an interpretation, or suggest your own perspective? What about slow fades, or a zoom to highlight a particular aspect of a shot? Each of these activities contributes to the creation of point of view.

Third, documentary filmmakers establish a particular stance, or attitude, toward their material. This is far more subtle than point of view, and reflects the maker's opinions, emotions, and ideological positioning. For this concept, we invited students to consider their own stance, and to think about how they feel about the material they are presenting, not simply what they think. Clips of testimony can incite an array of complex and often conflicting emotions, which in turn will affect a student's stance, and the decisions regarding what is presented and how.

“As students began to work with clips of testimony, we needed a method that teachers could adopt and which would inspire careful attention to notions of truth, care, and respect. With this in mind, together we developed the notion of ethical editing.”

These require some reflection.

As participants in a visual culture, we approach the act of editing with a great deal of skill already, even if we have never once made an editorial decision. We know almost intuitively how to combine images to tell a story, and how to use basic editing techniques—such as dissolves, fades, and fast cutting—to convey meaning using our culture's visual vernacular. However, we believe that is important to take the opportunity presented by the special circumstances of clips of testimony in the Visual History Archive to slow down, to analyze, to question, and possibly to invent a new visual language appropriate to the kinds of meaning-making particular to the testimonials. With this in mind, we con-

cluded our various working sessions with teachers by pointing to a key challenge: How can we mobilize the excitement and enthusiasm of our students as they engage with video in an entirely new context to imagine a visual language specific and appropriate to their projects? With this in mind, we look forward to the emergence of a new genre of video essay built on clips of testimony and informed by ethical editing. ■

*Holly Willis is director of Academic Programs for the Institute for Multimedia Literacy and director of the Media Arts + Practice PhD program in the School of Cinematic Arts at the USC. For a full biography, see page 4.*



**Game changer** U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan photographed in his office by Michael Bonfigli



*Approaching the Tipping Point:*

# Technology in Education

A conversation with U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan

*Stephen Smith: There is a lot of focus on deficiencies in the education system. What good news is there that people might not know about?*

*Arne Duncan:* There is actually an extraordinary amount of progress and momentum in spite of all the challenges we face; I am actually very optimistic about where we are going. In the past three or four years, educators' jobs have been preserved, we have seen 46 states raise their internationally benchmarked standards, which no one thought was possible, and we have seen many states step up with creative responses to No Child Left Behind. One of the things I am most proud of is the increase in Pell Grant recipients: young people who are going to college and using our grants to help pay for it. Many are first-generation collegegoers. We've gone from 6,000,000 Pell recipients in 2008 to almost 10,000,000, so more than a 50 percent increase. There is clearly still a heck of a lot of work ahead of us, but there is so much to be proud of and thankful for, and to give us reason to be very hopeful about our ability take education in the United States to a different level.

*Smith: We are in the midst of a rapid transition from print, paper, and pencil to computers, tablets, and digital content. What changes must occur to ensure that teachers keep pace with that integration of technology today?*



*Duncan greets students. "The more we engage our students' hearts and minds when we're teaching, the more it will resonate, the more it will stick, and the more they will think."*

**Duncan:** Well, obviously it is so critically important that our teachers lead this movement rather than be followers. I think technology has the ability to be an absolute game changer to increase equity—to help kids who historically haven't had as much opportunity to increase excellence—and to have kids be able to work in a personalized learning environment. In terms of teacher training and support and professional development, technology brings a wealth of resources, not just from across the country but across the globe, which could not have existed five or 10 years ago. So in terms of empowering teachers, in terms of engaging students and parents, I am so hopeful about what technology can do. Part of my frustration is that changes in education have always come so slowly. Technology has already transformed how the world does business; it has transformed how everyone interacts socially; it has literally led to democratic revolutions. Technology has yet to change education, but I think we are approaching the tipping point.

**Smith:** *Your national education technology plan recommends preparing students to be ethical participants in a globally networked society. Can you describe what your vision is for that and what it would look like?*

**Duncan:** What we want to do is not just physically but virtually connect young people to their

peers across the globe. I think in an increasingly interconnected world—a “flatter world,” where the economies of so many countries are interrelated—students are more comfortable and confident working with peers from not just their district, state, or country but from around the globe. This ability to interact globally puts them in position to be much more successful as they mature and grow older. Now fostering these connections in a way that makes sense is clearly important. But I think the chance for this exposure, which didn't exist a few years ago, is amazing. Just one personal example: Last year in my daughter's class—she's in a local public elementary school—they were Skyping with children from Mali. When I was in school that would have been inconceivable. And it's the kind of experience my daughter will never forget; it broadens her horizons in significant ways. What an amazing opportunity for her and her classmates, and for the students in Mali. We want to create more of those opportunities, and not only for high school students or college students. What are we doing for 6- and 7- and 8- and 9-year-olds to provide those kinds of opportunities? Let's bring that opportunity to younger children as well.

**Smith:** *The USC Shoah Foundation has a free website called IWitness, which lets students and teachers work with video from Holocaust and*

*genocide survivor interviews. Do you think it is important to learn from survivors and from these painful chapters in history?*

**Duncan:** I can't overstate the importance. If we paper over or sugarcoat horrific times in our history, I think we do our children a great disservice. Having those honest, difficult, and painful conversations; having our children grapple with ethical issues and choices; allowing them to confront history in a very real way is one of the most important gifts that we can give to them.

The more we engage our students' hearts and minds when we're teaching, the more it will resonate, the more it will stick, and the more they will think. The goal of education is not to get children to regurgitate facts; I think that misconception is a huge part of the problem. If the goal is to train them to think critically, to ask hard questions and grapple with very difficult issues, then I think we will empower them to be very successful.

**Smith:** *You have been a real advocate for textbook publishers to go digital. What are the benefits, and is there a sufficient demand for them to make that transition?*

**Duncan:** I think it's come too slowly, but the demand is picking up rapidly now. The idea of our 8- and 9-year-olds walking around with 30-, 40-, and 50-pound backpacks is ludicrous. It's ridiculous that they have to do that. But if children



“Technology has already transformed how the world does business; it’s transformed how everyone interacts socially; it has literally led to democratic revolutions. Technology has yet to change education, but I think we are approaching the tipping point.”

have access to a device that puts information at their fingertips—exponentially more information than I had in my school library while growing up, and information that is updated on a continuous basis instead of every couple years, when a new textbook is published—why would we not want that for all our children? And why wouldn’t we want that with particular focus in disadvantaged communities, where often they have the oldest materials, the oldest textbooks, the least-current and relevant information? So we are doing everything we can to expedite the transition from print to digital. From an international benchmarking position, I keep asking our educators, “Do we as the United States want to be a leader in this area, or a “lagger?”

**Smith:** *Is there anything parents, teachers, and school administrators can do at the local level to close the digital divide for disadvantaged communities?*

**Duncan:** They can be advocates. It’s a more difficult conversation in these tough economic times, and I understand that, but I think we in education are uniquely bad at making necessary changes. We’re great at starting new programs, but we’re not good at changing course. Then you see a district in North Carolina, called Morrisville, which is not an affluent district by any stretch, but they simply stopped purchasing textbooks and put all of that money into technology.

Already they are seeing some remarkable gains in learning, increases in graduation rates, and reductions in dropout rates. It proves that even in tough economic times, we have the resources. We spend billions of dollars each year on textbooks, literally billions. If we deploy those dollars in a different way, we can work through the transition from print to digital very quickly.

**Smith:** *Many schools and communities don’t have the internet capacity needed for audio-visual resources like ours. How is this problem being addressed?*

**Duncan:** Making sure schools have enough broadband is a huge part of our equality agenda. So we’re working with the Federal Communications Commission, the Department of Agriculture—which has some important resources—and across the federal government to close the opportunity gap between schools that have sufficient broadband and those that don’t.

**Smith:** *Many of our readers are Holocaust survivors, who have shared their stories in classrooms for many years. What would you say to them, as we approach a point in our lives when students will no longer be able to learn directly from the survivor generation?*

**Duncan:** I would say thank you from the bottom of my heart. Their willingness to bear witness about that horrific time in their lives—to

revisit that time on a regular basis for the benefit of younger generations—must be anything but easy. But what an impact they have. They are opening our children’s eyes and giving them knowledge that is critically important. I want to thank the survivors for their willingness and courage to give so much of themselves to our children.

**Smith:** *Arne, you have been an educator all your life in different ways. What gives you the greatest satisfaction as a teacher?*

**Duncan:** I am always an optimist, because I just know how much our children want to learn. And one of the joys of my job is getting to travel the country and go to schools, whether in urban areas or rural areas, in suburbs or remote, Native American reservations or villages in Alaska; everywhere I go, I am always struck by how much children want to learn, want to grow, and want to be challenged. And I think that the challenge for adults is to make sure that we continue to raise the bar and have the highest expectations. I talk to thousands of kids; rarely do I hear students say that they are working too hard. More often, they want us to challenge them more, and it’s incumbent upon us as educators and parents and leaders to listen to what our children are saying. ■

# Lessons from Kony 2012

If participatory politics is the future, media literacy is a must

By Henry Jenkins

**I**N SPRING 2012, Invisible Children (IC), a San Diego–based human rights organization, released *Kony 2012*, a 30-minute video about child soldiering in Uganda. During its two-month campaign IC anticipated that the video might reach half a million viewers; instead, it reached more than 70 million within four days and more than 100 million in its first week. The video’s rapid circulation was heavily fueled by high school and college students, as well as church groups. By comparison, America’s highest-rated television shows reach 40 to 45 million per week, and *The Hunger Games*, the top Hollywood blockbuster that week, drew 15 to 20 million viewers. Inspired by the video’s own celebration of the power of social media to change the world, IC’s young supporters had demonstrated the capacity of grassroots networks to shift the national agenda.

But *Kony 2012* drew sharp criticism from many established human rights groups and Africa experts, who questioned everything from IC’s finances to its “white man’s burden” rhetoric, and especially for being out of sync with current Ugandan realities. Amid this fallout, a personal tragedy incapacitated one of IC’s leaders, leaving many young IC supporters unprepared to defend their position in the face of such

intense scrutiny. IC’s approach demonstrated enormous “spreadability” (the capacity to spread its messages) but limited “drillability” (the ability to “drill” deep into the issues). The media literacy movement in the United States has long been divided between those who want to foster critical-thinking skills (including a greater skepticism toward mass media content) and those who want to help young people acquire the capacity to produce their own media. The *Kony 2012* aftermath demonstrates the importance of combining the two, particularly in the context of students’ ability to participate politically.

By the time they exit high school, young people’s political identities are surprisingly fixed. Those whose parents are politically involved, whose civics teachers bring current events into the classroom, who are encouraged to volunteer, and who participate in extracurricular activities are much more likely to engage in future political and civic activities than those who lack these experiences. The practices of participatory politics create new gateways into political involvement. The *Kony 2012* case is one of many recent examples of grassroots movements (from Occupy Wall Street and the DREAMer movement in the United States to the Arab Spring movements) that have embraced what

we are calling “participatory politics.” In a white paper for the MacArthur Youth and Participatory Politics research network, political scientists Cathy J. Cohen and Joseph Kahne (2012) define participatory politics as “interactive, peer-based acts through which individuals and groups seek to exert both voice and influence on issues of public concern.” Participatory politics welcomes diverse involvement, enables greater creativity and voice in expressing one’s views, and provides a gateway toward more traditional political activities, such as voting or petitioning. Citing data from a survey of more than 4,000 respondents ages 15 to 25, they found that those who engaged in participatory politics (roughly 40 to 45 percent across all racial categories) were almost twice as likely to vote as those who did not.

In some cases, a student’s first political exposure might come from a video (such as *Kony 2012*) forwarded to them by friends or classmates. According to the MacArthur survey, 58 percent of American youth forward links or share information through social networks at least once a week. A recent study released by Georgetown University suggests that people who have forwarded socially meaningful messages are significantly more likely to take the





Students stick a poster to a pole during “Cover the Night,” part of the Kony 2012 campaign by the group Invisible Children, to raise awareness about child soldiering in Uganda.

While organizations like IC maintain sharp focus on a single issue, others, such as the HPA, see themselves as helping to connect young activists with nonprofit organizations that address diverse causes and concerns. Either way, these groups are actively recruiting and training young activists, helping them master basic practices that can support a lifetime of social change. Some of these practices reflect the values of a more participatory culture, such as helping young people construct and share their own personal narratives in ways that dramatize

next steps, such as contributing time and money; such acts help grassroots organizations expand their “latent capacity,” identifying casual supporters they can mobilize when they need to amplify their voice.

For others, their interest might be piqued by an imaginative deployment of references from popular culture that help them connect issues to things they already care about. For example, the Harry Potter Alliance (HPA) has linked its campaigns around human rights, equal marriage, fair trade, disaster relief, and body image to metaphors drawn from J.K. Rowling’s best-selling fantasy franchise, asking young people to help form “Dumbledore’s Army for the Real World.” Do such activities represent the intrusion of entertainment into politics? Perhaps, but they also represent the hijacking of Hollywood’s publicity machine for political ends, potentially reaching people who have already shut out more conventional rhetoric. Often, traditional politics is conducted in a wonkish, insular language that only makes sense if you know what’s being discussed; by contrast, the Nerdfighters, a YouTube community organized around a young adult author and his musician brother (Hank and John Green), encourages its followers to identify innovative ways to “decrease world suck.”

Sociologist Robert Putnam has described the role bowling leagues and other social clubs played in encouraging civic participation for the World War II generation; people gathered for fun and fellowship but forged stronger social ties and fostered deeper community involvement. For today’s youth, volunteering for a traditional organization can feel like a compulsory résumé builder. But groups like IC and the HPA work hard to intensify friendships, inspire creative expression, and combine hard work with serious play. Often, such groups combine strong, charismatic leaders with decentralized, networked structures: Local chapters set their own terms of participation. While some, like the IC, maintain strong, centralized media-production capacities, others encourage young people to create and circulate their own media, including blogs, podcasts, and videos, reframing their core message for their peers. Consider the case of “pepper spray cop,” a University of California, Davis campus policeman who deployed offensive chemicals to disperse a group of Occupy supporters. During one weekend, hundreds of Photoshop manipulations began to circulate online, many remixing the news photograph with classic paintings, photographs, or film stills, transforming a local incident into an Occupy icon.

larger concerns. For example, young DREAMers often create videos where they “come out” as undocumented, putting a face on America’s struggles with immigration policy. Some of the practices are much more traditional (knocking on doors, manning phone banks), but these groups also create contexts in which these activities become more personally meaningful.

By the time IC released *Kony 2012*, it had produced and circulated 10 previous films; it had formed local clubs through high schools, colleges, and churches; it had recruited and trained thousands of young activists through internship programs, summer camps, and conventions; and it had demonstrated the capacity to mobilize those supporters through local gatherings and demonstrations across the country. Like the other groups we study, IC saw recruitment and civic education as the organization’s core mission. *Kony 2012* did not “go viral,” rather, IC had developed strategies of grassroots circulation that succeeded in reaching diverse participants.

Journalist Malcolm Gladwell says that so-called “Twitter revolutions” build on weak social ties and do not motivate participants to put their lives on the line. Make no mistake: What we are describing here is not a Twitter revolution.

These groups conduct their activities across diverse media platforms, including face-to-face conversation, but they also use social media to coordinate action across a more dispersed network. In the case of the DREAMers, there is a strong commitment to take material risks, with young activists facing deportation for sharing their immigration status, and some marching into immigration offices and web-casting acts of civil disobedience. That said, part of the appeal of these groups is that they create a form of politics that works more through consensus than conflict; this more sociable style of civic participation can be enormously appealing to a generation often sickened by today's harsh partisanship. Yet, for this very reason, IC's young supporters seemed remarkably unprepared for the criticism that *Kony 2012* drew from so many quarters. Members of traditional, party-based and advocacy groups prepare themselves to confront oppositional perspectives. But when the core leadership turned inward to deal with a personal tragedy, IC's young supporters were left to track down information and construct arguments against the mounting attacks. In some cases, they rose to the occasion, demonstrating a great capacity to seek and deploy information quickly. But in others, they lacked the critical skills needed to address skeptical classmates or family members. This crisis is consistent with a core finding of the MacArthur survey: 84 percent of young people interviewed said that they would "benefit from learning more about how to tell if news and information you find online is trustworthy."

We would not consider someone literate if they could read but could not write; the core goals of the media literacy movement should be helping young people to acquire the skills and competencies they need to meaningfully and critically participate in their culture. Participatory politics represents a powerful model for how civic groups might empower young people to deploy skills they have developed as fans and gamers to make a difference in the world. But to be truly effective, those production capacities must be coupled with core training in how to assess credibility, how to weigh arguments, and how to rebut criticisms of your position. Teachers, librarians, and other educators have a core role to play in helping students foster these critical literacy skills. ■

*Henry Jenkins is the Provost's Professor of Communication, Journalism, Cinematic Arts, and Education at the University of Southern California. For a full biography, see page 3.*

# PowerMyLearning

*By Elisabeth Stock*

An opportunity to close the achievement gap may be just a few clicks away

*Elisabeth Stock is CEO and co-founder of Computers for Youth (CFY), a national non-profit that helps students, teachers, and parents use digital learning to improve educational outcomes. For a full biography, see page 4.*

AMERICAN EDUCATION is at a moment in history when technology offers a spectacular opportunity to do something new and different. It also has the potential to address gaps—perceived and real—in student achievement and success. I'm sure you've heard something like this before—but I suggest that the technology has finally arrived.

Any teacher or parent can, with the proverbial "click of a mouse," go online to find a resource that can help his or her children learn just about any topic, and learn it in a way that addresses their individual learning needs. Students on their own can find online activities that can help them catch up if they're falling behind in school or push ahead if school is just not challenging enough.

So what's holding back a tidal wave of learning and achievement, particularly in underserved communities? Three things: (1) tools to make it easier for students, teachers, and parents to find the right online activities and use them effectively; (2) training to ensure that all the key players in the learning process—students, teachers, and parents—are armed with the skills they need to use digital learning to raise achievement; and (3) access to technology and broadband at home. Tools, training, and access are the ingredients that enable teachers to improve their instructional practices in the classroom and extend student learning beyond the classroom walls. These are the ingredients that help students to become more engaged and self-directed in their learning. These are also the ingredients that draw parents in to the learning process and enable them to better support their child's education.

One of the challenges of the Internet is assessing the dizzying array of choices available for everything, from shopping and news to learning. This is a challenge that can create a barrier to its use. On Computers for Youth's (CFY) PowerMyLearning.com site, students, teachers, and parents can easily find and use thousands of carefully vetted digital learning activities from across the web. These activities are organized by grade, subject, and learning standard. A playlist feature—just like on iTunes—enables teachers to put these activities into a learning sequence in order to differentiate learning for students within their class.

We are already seeing the effect on student learning. At one of our partner schools in an underserved neighborhood in New York City, Ms. Wright, a teacher, worked with several struggling students but had not previously used technology in a significant way. She introduced PowerMyLearning to some of her students in a benign way, not as an assignment or assessment, but just a different approach for her kids to try on their own. What she saw was remark-



*Middle school teacher uses PowerMyLearning to engage and energize his students in the classroom.*

able—students who had previously withdrawn from studies were suddenly re-energized by the range of fun and engaging educational activities they could access and explore on their own. The enthusiasm extended to the home, where students continued to use the activities on their own, since they had the requisite online access. Parents were also drawn into the digital learning world and felt better able to support their children, having received training on the digital resources available.

In a September 2012 *New York Times* article, columnist David Bornstein highlighted the success the school was having, particularly among struggling students. The school saw the percentage of last year's sixth graders with learning disabilities who met or exceeded standards in math increase by 36 percent. The per-

**“We are at the beginning of what can be a real transformation in teaching and learning. The quantity and quality of digital learning activities is growing...and today's teachers, students, and parents are more eager to embrace digital learning than ever before.”**

centage of students who had been below standard decreased from 23 to zero. Additionally, Bornstein found that teachers in the school were having a much easier time differentiating instruction by practicing what educators call “blended learning.” He also found that the students were taking far more ownership of their own learning in response to the differentiated instruction in the classroom and the widespread access to PowerMyLearning outside the classroom, including in their homes.

What's so exciting is that we are really just at the beginning of what can be a real transforma-

tion in teaching and learning. The quantity and quality of digital learning activities is growing, opportunities for broadband access are becoming more prevalent even in underserved communities, and today's teachers, students, and parents are more eager to embrace digital learning than ever before. If we focus on providing the right tools, training and access, this transformation could propel educational achievement across the United States and across all income levels. A new and real opportunity to close what has been a daunting achievement gap may be just a few clicks away. ■

# The View from Inside the Classroom

By *Brandon Haas*

A USC Shoah Foundation Master Teacher puts IWitness to the test

*Brandon Haas is a high school teacher in Tampa, Florida. He is pursuing a doctoral degree in curriculum and instruction from the University of South Fla. For a full biography, see page 3.*

**YOUNG PEOPLE AVERAGE** 7 hours and 38 minutes consuming media on a daily basis, and during that time they are consuming a total of 10 hours and 45 minutes' worth of content by using multiple types of media simultaneously.<sup>1</sup> In order to foster 21st-century skills in students, teachers must find new ways to engage them in

our global and digital world. The second generation of the World Wide Web, commonly referred to as Web 2.0, focuses on the ability to leverage online technologies for active participation, collaboration, and sharing. Web 2.0 technologies provide students in today's classrooms with unprecedented opportunities to develop these skills and be connected. IWitness, the USC Shoah Foundation's educational website, represents one of these opportunities.

The USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive contains in digital form almost 52,000 audio-visual testimonies from survivors and other witnesses of the Holocaust. IWitness, which has been in development for three years and is now in Beta, makes almost 1,300 of those testimonies available in an interactive environment geared to middle- and high schools students. Given the archive's visual nature, it was perhaps inevitable that the Institute would find an avenue with which to utilize Web 2.0 technology, as it has done with IWitness. The combination of the accessibility of visual history, multimedia activities, and the ability to focus on a specific discipline, such as the Holocaust, places IWitness at the intersection of Web 2.0 and Holocaust education; it can be seen as an evolutionary step forward.

Over the past few years, I have had opportunities to work with IWitness in different capacities, including as a practicing secondary teacher and as a participant in the Master Teacher Program, which provides in-depth training on the use of the Visual History Archive. I have also had the opportunity as a doctoral student of education at the University of South Florida to analyze various cutting-edge technological tools designed for classroom use and teacher education. IWitness was one of them.

Led by Dr. Michael Berson, the course Technological Innovations in Social Science Education engages in an examination of and dialogue about the changing technological environment and how those changes influence social science education. Analyzing IWitness revealed that the platform, which is designed for student-centered learning and founded on constructivist principles, pro-

vides an exceptional opportunity for students to connect with Holocaust survivor testimony and construct their own knowledge, in a mediated environment. This application of learning theory demonstrates that interactive activities in which learners play active roles can motivate and engage students more effectively than passive learning activities. At a time when it's becoming increasingly difficult for teachers to arrange classroom visits with Holocaust survivors, students can log into IWitness and interact with a set of testimonies and video clips that can be localized for their interests and assignments. Over the course of our semester, my cohort of doctoral students analyzed IWitness for various factors, such as usability, potential as a new technology in the classroom, and barriers to instruction.

In the climate of teaching 21st-century skills, it is imperative that students have the opportunity to utilize constructivist approaches to learning through the use of various resources, both primary and secondary; IWitness provides a learning environment to accomplish this goal. Technology for the sake of using technology is not an effective strategy in the secondary classroom. Students are not interested in simply reading or looking at pictures on a computer. There is educational value in having students engage more actively with technology than the more passive strategies of the past. Using Web 2.0 tools is a highly effective strategy, especially when used from a constructivist perspective. Allowing students to make sense of the information and to participate and develop their own learning is a necessary outcome in 21st-century learning.

As a whole, we found that IWitness had a very intuitive user interface. Searching was straightforward, as was saving clips. The integration of secondary resources, such as the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's Encyclopedia and Yad Vashem's Holocaust Resource Center, as well as links to outside resources, was recognized as an exceptional element. This provides students with a clear avenue to other highly credible sources from which to build their knowledge. At that time, there was a different video editor in the platform, which was difficult to manage. A new-and-improved video-editor tool has since been implemented in response to early-user feedback.

IWitness has endless potential for use in the secondary classroom, but there are some possible barriers to widespread integration. Through the use of IWitness, students begin to learn and apply the principles of digital citizenship. Because much of our interaction now

occurs in digital space, it is vital that students gain an understanding of ethical and moral digital practices. Students must take care to preserve the integrity of the original testimony, which engages them on a level beyond simply consuming material.

Students also become versed in digital literacy through the use of IWitness. When preparing to author a video essay, students must gather resources specific to their topic and assignment, while taking care to respect the original message, meaning and intent. Through the process of searching and watching testimony, and combing through photographs and other documents, students and teachers are engaging in quintessential aspects of 21st-century skills. Herein lies the unrealized potential of technology in the classroom. In an age of education reform, activists are searching for lessons that invoke these types of skills and exercises for students. IWitness provides an endless potential for creating the student-centered classroom sought by legislators and school administration, with the added benefit that students enjoy and thrive in the process.

The main barrier for IWitness is equal access, also known as the digital divide. In short, the digital divide is the notion that higher socioeconomic schools have better access to technology, in either number of computers or network speed. Early studies into equitable access have shown that students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds have much less access to computers and the Internet than high socioeconomic

**IWitness provides an endless potential for creating the student-centered classroom sought by legislators and school administration with the added benefit that students enjoy and thrive in the process.**

students<sup>ii</sup> and schools, and that the ability level of usage varies with students in lower socioeconomic environments using technology for less rigorous activities.<sup>iii</sup> Here, the problem is compounded in that it is possibly the students who lack access to the technology who would benefit the most from the testimonies in IWitness. If a student is struggling due to a poor home life,

lack of food, or even the uncertainty of where they will sleep each night, then what better role models in overcoming worse scenarios than these? Survivor stories await discovery in IWitness. These testimonies are a treasure trove of inspiration, and the limited access for some is a major setback in the full realization of the goals of IWitness.

While there are obstacles to using IWitness in the classroom, the potential benefits appear to outweigh the potential frustrations. As we move further into the digital age, IWitness will continue to play a vital role in the classroom. Its constructivist framework and user-friendly design make IWitness an excellent cross-disciplinary resource for classroom use. In my capacity as an educator, I look forward to the opportunity to use IWitness in the classroom. ■

<sup>i</sup> Rideout, V., Foehr, U., & Roberts, D. (2010). *Generation M2: Media in the lives of 8- to 18-year-olds*. Kaiser Family Foundation. Retrieved from, <http://www.kff.org/entmedia/8010.cfm>.

<sup>ii</sup> Warschauer, M., & Matuchniak, T. (2010). *New technology and digital worlds: Analyzing evidence of equity in access, use, and outcomes*. *Review of Research in Education*, 34(1), 179–225.

<sup>iii</sup> Attewell, P. (2001). *Comment: The first and second digital divides*. *Sociology of Education*, 74(3), 252–259.

**Master Teacher** Brandon Haas received professional development training at the Institute. Now the Institute benefits from his expertise.



## The Challenge of Embracing Change: A Tribute to Chesley Beaver

By Kim Simon

We are living during a time of transition, a period between generations, when many Holocaust survivors—our friends and loved ones—are passing on. Death after survival has become an unfortunate and regular presence. Yet as an organization, the Institute is animated by hopefulness, by glimpses of inspiration, and by dedicated people who are driven to affirm life in every day's effort.

Among the most spirited of those people was Chesley Beaver, a friend and colleague who served as our evaluation consultant, helping us measure the change our work

creates in the world. After his sudden death last year, we were and continue to be challenged by his absence.

It was our fortune to work with Chesley almost continuously for three years, beginning in 2009 to evaluate the Institute's first prototype of IWitness. Throughout our collaboration, I marveled at his ability to draw people toward him—individuals and groups of all ages, backgrounds, and interests. I remember how easily he related to students, scholars, educators, and supporters. People offered feedback and gave their time even when there was

# IWitness Evaluation Report

By Chesley Beaver

The adoption of a social science approach reflects the Institute's commitment to academic rigor and continued collaborations with scholars

FOR THE INSTITUTE, evaluation is an evidence-based activity directed at collecting, analyzing, and communicating information on the workings and effectiveness of IWitness as an educational product. Throughout the testing process, USC Institutional Review Board provided the third-party oversight necessary for academic integration.

### Watching Testimony

System analytics, built into the IWitness application, track the amount of testimony watched by users, as well as the sources, i.e., individual survivors or witnesses. On average, each student tester watched roughly 90 minutes of testimony from four or more survivors/witnesses. In total, the 75 student testers used IWitness to watch more than 102 hours of video testimony from 345 different survivors or witnesses—representing more than one-third of all the survivors/witnesses included in IWitness at the time of testing.<sup>i</sup> On average, each time a student played a portion of video testimony they viewed approximately six minutes and 11 seconds.<sup>ii</sup>

The depth (amount) and breadth of testimony (number of different survivors/witnesses) watched by students during the classroom tests were significantly higher than anticipated. Personal Strength to Survive, an activity on the topics of cultural and spiritual resistance, was consistently used in all classroom tests and system analytics reveal a less than 30 percent overlap in the survivors/witnesses accessed by students. This suggests that students engaged with the activity and “resistance-related” search topics in unique and individual ways. This user-driven approach to searching testimonies has consistently been noted by students as one of the features they like most when using IWitness.

### Emotional and Cognitive Factors

Further insights on testimony come from two unaided broad questions asked of students: “What will you remember most about IWitness?” and “What did you like most about IWitness?” Students overwhelmingly identify video testimony as the most memorable aspect of their experience on IWitness.

Analysis of students' comments reveals the emotional and personal connections expressed in response to watching testimony. Students continually described the experience of watching video testimony by using words and phrases like “personal,” “feel their emotion,” “feel like I know the Holocaust survivor,” and “people I met.” As one student noted when testing the IWitness prototype in April 2010, “... it goes past the computer screen and feels like she [survivor] is actually telling her story directly to me.”

Videos/testimonies were also what students liked most about IWitness. The combination of these two elements—testimonies being the most memorable and well-liked aspect of IWitness—lays the foundation for significant cognitive gains in the educational use of video testimony.

The potential cognitive gains from using video testimony in the classroom are significant, and merit further investigation and validation with a larger student population. Pretest and posttest measures of students' perceived cognition, combined with comments from open-ended/unaided questions, show that IWitness enabled a deeper and multifaceted understanding of the Holocaust. Noteworthy are the ways in which students recognized the integrity and validity of primary sources, as well as the understanding that comes from multiple per-



little time to give, all because of Chesley's singular magnetism. He was passionately and intensely interested in people and ideas and even more so in how ideas could be applied.

In his evaluation reports, we did not just get mountains of data (which we did need, of course). Chesley made sure that there was always a practical application developed from the results. A terrific collaborator, he would usher us through the information and move us from passive reading to active understanding and application: to equip us with insight that would lead to improvements in our

methodology and the IWitness platform.

Evaluation allows us to ascertain the value of an activity. It compels us to determine its meaning. We have built a structure for evidence-based evaluation of the use of testimony in education. It is not enough to say that watching testimony has the potential to increase knowledge, change attitudes, and develop the capacity to engage in society responsibly. We need evidence. We have begun, therefore to define a model to measure attitudinal shifts, as well as lay the groundwork for long-term studies of the effect of testimony-based learning on

student attitudes. Measuring behavior and attitudes is difficult—a challenge for the entire emergent field of education evaluation—Chesley had the intellect, vision, and passion to partner with us to innovate and bring both practice and creativity to the challenge.

A beloved friend and colleague, Chesley's legacy and memory at the Institute are life-affirming: We will maintain and build upon what he helped us to begin—the inspiration, determination, and open-mindedness to search for the meaning and integrity of what we do. ■



**In the numbers** Chesley Beaver (right) with students at Alcoa High School, April 2011

spectives on the same topic. As a result, students who tested IWitness reported a 40 percent greater perceived knowledge about the Holocaust compared to the control group.

#### **Opinions, Attitudes, and Stated Behavior**

A series of questions in the pretest and posttest online surveys were designed to gauge students' opinions about the subject matter and attitudes

on the broader topics of racism, stereotyping, and social action. These questions were first used as part of the *Echoes and Reflections* curriculum studies.<sup>iii</sup> These findings should be used to provide directional insights and not statistical certainty. Greater statistical validity will be provided, as many of these questions will continue to be asked of students at various intervals following their engagement with IWitness.

Most notable from these findings is the increased interest students expressed in studying the Holocaust after using IWitness, and the increased perceived relevance the Holocaust has to their individual lives. Nine out of 10 students rated IWitness better than other websites used for school. Furthermore, 69 percent want to use IWitness outside the classroom for other school projects and/or personal research.

#### **Subject Matter Interest and Importance**

Overall, after students tested IWitness, they were twice as interested in studying about the Holocaust as students in the control group, who were not exposed to IWitness.<sup>iv</sup> Furthermore, the depth of interest is stronger with students who used IWitness—the number of students in the testing group who were “very interested” or “extremely interested” in studying the Holocaust was double that of their peers in the control group. Students also rated the perceived importance of the Holocaust.

While a majority of both groups found studying the Holocaust to be important, students testing IWitness reported stronger levels of agreement.

#### **Subject Matter Relevance**

Students who tested IWitness reported significant changes in how the Holocaust relates to their lives. For a quarter of students, their experience testing IWitness resulted in the highest

relevance rating possible—a 32 percent increase between pretest and posttest ratings for the same students. Furthermore, when compared to the control group, students who tested IWitness were twice as likely to “strongly agree” that the effects of the Holocaust are still being felt today.

### Social Action

Results from pretest and posttest student surveys show that students’ use of IWitness significantly increased two social-action measures—“speaking up” and “one person can make a difference.” After testing IWitness, three out of four students agreed that speaking up against stereotyping is important and that one person can make a difference. Most notable is the level of agreement expressed by students relative to these two social-action concepts. There was a 30 percent increase in the strongest level of agreement (“strongly agree”). Furthermore, students who used IWitness were 35 percent more likely to agree that, “It is important that everyone challenge racism.” Along with data on student interest and relevance, this finding indicates the potential IWitness has to engage students and connect them to the subject matter in a relevant and meaningful way.

### Stated Behavior

The last question for students testing IWitness was projective—asking students to think if this experience will influence how they perceive and treat others from different backgrounds. While the results require additional longitudinal measurements to distinguish intent from actual behavior, a vast majority stated that their behavior would change. Of note, the 19 percent of students who said “no” or “I’m not sure” also had the lowest ratings for subject matter interest, relevance, and importance. ■

<sup>i</sup> Approximately 1,015 full testimonies were contained in IWitness during the testing period, February to April 2011.

<sup>ii</sup> View time refers to session length. In other words, this is the amount of uninterrupted time a user watched testimony each time they clicked “play” within the IWitness application.

<sup>iii</sup> Echoes and Reflections is a multimedia curriculum on the Holocaust developed by the USC Shoah Foundation, Yad Vashem, and the Anti-Defamation League. Curriculum studies were conducted from 2007 to 2009 with 792 students. When interpreting these IWitness findings, it is important to consider that data were collected from 136 students, 75 student testers and 61 students in the control group.

<sup>iv</sup> Note that the control group was not exposed to IWitness but received the standard subject matter exposure (to the Holocaust) provided by each school’s existing curriculum.



## A Slowly Evolving Landscape

*Moderated by Kori Street*

International educators discuss testimony-based education: a conversation with Werner Dreier, Alice Herscovitch, and Karen Polak

*For full biographies on Werner Dreier, Alice Herscovitch, Karen Polak, and Kori Street, pages 3 & 4.*

INITIATED BY SWEDEN’S then–Prime Minister Göran Persson in 1998, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA)—formerly known as the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research—is an intergovernmental body whose purpose is to place political and social leaders’ support behind the need for Holocaust education, remembrance, and research both nationally and internationally. There are currently 31 member states. ([www.holocaustremembrance.com](http://www.holocaustremembrance.com))

The USC Shoah Foundation’s director of education, Kori Street, invited three leaders from the IHRA’s Education Working Group to comment on the changing landscape in the field with respect to the use of testimony. Their answers to the questions posed by our director of education suggest that there are as many questions as answers when it comes to utilizing testimony effectively in international programming. There is clearly a lack of agreement on the best practices, as well as a need for further exploration of how to use a currently underutilized resource in the field. Their thoughts contribute to an ongoing dialogue that the Institute has been engaged in for many years and indicate a need to continue our work integrating testimony into education.



monies available for classroom use. And few of them get to feel comfortable to work with testimony. It is (far) more demanding of a teacher to select appropriate testimony and to embed it in his/her lessons than it is to show a film.

Too often, using testimony is seen as edutainment (entertainment with an educational aspect) that will appeal to students—the idea being that students will only be interested if the story is exciting and visually compelling. Students are often underestimated. However, to choose age-appropriate and relevant testimony to use in class is not an easy matter, and a wider international exchange on successful approaches will be welcomed.

**Werner Dreier:** To the best of my knowledge the main challenge is to develop an integrative history of the Holocaust, which includes testimonies, diaries, letters, photos, etc. (personal, “subjective” sources) with academic research, thus bridging the dichotomy of personal recollection and history writing. All these aspects and

**Dreier:** The biggest challenge is that the Holocaust and the years of mass violence in Europe become a history that is often referred to but that is not really known.

Visual history testimony opens a window of interest that might lead to deeper learning processes—the opportunity. Survivors’ narratives open questions, instigate an interest, and might bring along critical appraisals of history.

**Herscovitch:** In terms of challenges, if we wish to record new testimonies, the time is now. There are questions to be answered regarding accessibility and use. The documentation and cataloging of recorded testimonies are challenges for most organizations. The development of appropriate tools from long testimonies, the extraction of themes, the link with contemporary messages are all challenges. The stated expectation often heard is that recorded testimony will replace survivor in-class or live testimony. They cannot be equated. It is up to educational institutions to use video testimony, as well as

**“The Holocaust and the years of mass violence in Europe become a history that is often referred to but that is not really known. Visual history testimony opens a window of interest that might lead to deeper learning processes—the opportunity. Survivors’ narratives open questions, instigate an interest, and might bring along critical appraisals of history.” —Werner Dreier**

**Kori Street:** How would you describe the current state of play in the field of Holocaust education (broadly defined) with respect to using testimony?

**Alice Herscovitch:** Despite efforts over the decades to record oral histories, they remain largely underutilized. However, the determination of survivors to tell their stories and to assure that they be used as tools to communicate the human consequences and to combat Holocaust denial has ensured the use of some of these oral histories in museums, exhibitions, and in pedagogical tools for teaching about the Holocaust. We are at the beginning of reflections on future use and access.

**Karen Polak:** Generally teachers are still too often using fictional films about the Holocaust during lesson time and not aware of the availability and possible impact of the use of testimonies. Teachers often feel that to invite an eyewitness into the classroom is “the real thing” and using video testimony is second best and therefore not considered, even when inviting someone in person is not viable.

It is still a small group of teachers that has the chance to go to seminars to get to know about DVDs and online resources that make testi-

sources must be dealt with in a critical way, allowing the learners to approach the subject with her/his own questions.

**Herscovitch:** Historians continue to debate the place of oral history and witness testimony as a valid component of history education. Discussions continue on memory versus fact, remembrance versus education. These interpretations of the construction of history are not either/or, and the strengths of each could and should be utilized.

We are far from having defined how these testimonies can best be used to achieve these goals, and full-length testimonies, with few exceptions, are not in themselves likely to appeal to broad audiences, nor are they pedagogical in nature. However, they offer enormous potential for education and remembrance work.

**Polak:** A very positive development of the last decade is that memorial sites now are including testimonies on a larger scale in their educational work—providing visiting school classes with testimony to work with before making their visit.

**Street:** What are the greatest opportunities and challenges facing the field today and in the immediate future, and how does visual history testimony affect them?

archival documents and artifacts to relate the human story of the Holocaust.

The links to other genocides and contemporary crimes against humanity, universal messages related to anti-racism and anti-discrimination or citizenship education, and comparative approaches remain challenging for educators. Centers need to find means to facilitate their work, based on training, support, and tools.

**Polak:** Survivors born after 1932, and certainly those born after 1942, will still be able to speak to audiences for another decade. Those who have no direct memories of the war years but who can speak clearly of the impact of the Holocaust on their lives should be encouraged to do so. Programs that facilitate the matching of schools/teachers to speakers should be supported, and professional assistance should be available.

Second-generation speakers should be part of professionally developed programs that give support and make clear what is and what is not educationally sound. Combining first-generation testimony with reflections of later generations on the testimony is an interesting new field to consider. A (grand) child reflecting on (parts) of the testimony of his/her (grand) parent can bring to life the relevance of “remem-

bering for the future.”

Making testimony available online (well structured, with advice on how to work with it educationally) is becoming more common and more easily applicable in the classroom. However, there is still a multitude of educational and practical challenges (schools with few facilities, the lack of availability of testimony online in some languages).

**Herscovitch:** There has been evolution, in a positive way, in the collection of video testimony, which has broadened knowledge about and understanding of the Holocaust. With time, hidden children and noncamp experiences have gained legitimacy. The actions of righteous individuals have also been documented, and country-specific history has been shared. This is due, in part to the passage of time, but also to the power of recording human voices and stories, which lends credibility to the scope of the Holocaust and

**“The world is small. Remarkable technological advances have created a potential that did not exist 10 years ago. The web and social media outlets offer great opportunities for reducing distance, both geographical and historical.” —Alice Herscovitch**

nonetheless breaks it down to its smallest but essential component, impact on human lives.

The emotional charge, the passion that can be inspired by oral history cannot be duplicated by any other means. The USC Shoah Foundation Collection and those of Holocaust institutions around the world offer an enormous wealth of human history, which is unprecedented. For students, understanding history from the perspective of those who lived through it is a unique experience. Oral-history collections offer a breadth of experiences, tell stories of life before the Holocaust, and promote understanding regarding the diversity of Jewish life and experience. They also underscore the importance of understanding antisemitism as a historical phenomenon, and help humanize, contemporize, and universalize understanding of the Holocaust.

The world is small. Remarkable technological advances have created a potential that did not exist 10 years ago. The web and social media outlets offer great opportunities for reducing distance, both geographical and historical. As an example, a school in Togo created a theatrical reading of letters written during the Holocaust from the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre’s collection, discovered on our website in the teachers section.

**Street:** *What questions are we not asking or answering about the changes in the educational en-*

*vironment? What questions do we need to think about when using testimony to address those changes (or not)?*

**Herscovitch:** We need to be clearer about what Holocaust education can and cannot do. We are not sufficiently responding to the rapid change in technology and expectations of students to learn through new media. Through efforts to assure that the historical method is respected, and that students gain an understanding of history, we sometimes fall short in the area of making links to the present, where relevant, and having students reflect on contemporary issues.

Additionally, although some would disagree, testimonies have an underutilized potential to inspire action. The current North American educational environment is focused on knowledge and reinvestment. We need to help educators better understand the links and distinctions to be made between Holocaust education, anti-

racist education, and human rights education.

**Dreier:** Testimonies need a historical context. For an educational environment this asks for integration of testimonies into “ordinary” teaching—to combine them with schoolbooks or other learning programs. This also leads to the issue of mainstreaming. Dealing with Holocaust and survivors’ testimonies should be part of regular teaching.

**Polak:** We need to address the relevance of learning about the past in relation to the present. We can contribute to this by making testimony available in which survivors themselves reflect on this topic. Their voices can be relevant and effective. We need to look for relevant links between the threat of human rights today and the history of the early years of persecution of Jews, Roma and other victim groups (1930s). In several European countries anti-Gypsyism is a very serious threat to the lives of Roma minorities, and their human rights are not being protected by the responsible governments. Other ills and tensions in society, such as antisemitism, a general atmosphere of increased intolerance, and anti-immigrant or anti-refugee attitudes all influence teaching about the Holocaust. We need to consider how we can contribute to the deeper understanding of human rights issues by letting students reflect on this after watching testimonies that speak to these questions.

**Dreier:** Diversity in school classes [also] needs to be acknowledged—pinpointing specific groups (for example, “Muslims”) is more a strategy of avoidance of the pertinent questions and of dealing with diversity than it is helpful.

**Street:** *What is the most important issue facing educators internationally? And how do you think we need to answer it?*

**Polak:** Teachers have often not been given the opportunity to develop the skills they need to introduce complex and sensitive topics into the classroom. Too often students are considered “a problem,” lacking in interest or respect for lessons on the Holocaust. The answer to the challenge of making the history of the Holocaust interesting and relevant to students worldwide lies in developing the intercultural skills of teachers and the notion of teaching through human rights, alongside a good understanding of the history of the Holocaust and how to use a variety of sources (including testimonies) and methods in their teaching. Teachers all over the world, with students from many different backgrounds, have engaged their students in meaningful studies of the Holocaust. We need to create a better method of sharing good practices, above all, with the teacher-training institutes.

**Herscovitch:** I am not certain that this is a question that is best answered on an international level. The Holocaust, as all other issues, is understood according to local and regional history and culture, contemporary issues and their interpretation, and national identity. Education is directly linked to these understandings. “Perpetrator” nations in themselves have adopted a wide variety of understandings of their roles and face varying challenges. Some former Soviet bloc countries are equating Jewish victims of the Holocaust with victims of totalitarian oppression, or in rare cases, assessing Jews as Soviet collaborators. “Bystander” nations reflect another broad range of understanding of their role and of Holocaust education (absent, state-mandated, voluntary). Teacher training on this subject is far from consistent, even within a given country.

If international reflection on the use of recorded testimony is to advance, there need to be discussion forums, conferences, and debate to advance on questions regarding what is available, how to make it available, pedagogical questions, and how it can be used in different country contexts. We should consider brief guidelines (international with country-specific adaptations) on the use of recorded testimony, just as many Holocaust centers have developed them on the use of survivor testimony in classrooms. ■

# Digital Arguments

By DJ Johnson

Multimedia authoring can empower young people to be global citizens who make a difference



DJ Johnson is a filmmaker, media artist and educator. For a full biography, see page 3.

AS I APPROACH the end of my third semester teaching with the USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, I continue to be in awe of the transformative effect of the testimonies on student development. In witnessing the testimonies and engaging them in the creation of scholarly multimedia projects, called *digital arguments* in the context of my course, students experience profound intellectual and personal growth. Multimedia authoring with the use of testimony is not without its challenges. But the rewards of this innovative practice are realized in the constitution of young people who are empowered global citizens equipped with the ability to communicate effectively through media in today's digital age.

Students must be trained to leverage the media and digital technologies that surround them in order to make informed statements, and to speak through the same visual language that expresses and shapes our cultural values, cross-national understanding, and barometers of what is just in the modern world. To that end, multimedia literacy requires more than an understanding of the influential power of media. It also necessitates an ability to author, to communicate using multiple semiotic registers—visual, aural, and textual—and to argue with critical intentionality.

The pedagogy of the course, “IML340: The Praxis of New Media—Digital Argument,” is anchored in the use of video archives as a primary tool of instruction and research, and as a foundational source for multimedia authoring. Each student develops a 10- to 15-minute video project over the semester, which considers a specific issue related to the course's subject matter. While these projects are closely aligned with documentary genres, they are termed *digital arguments* in order to underscore the emphasis on effective scholarly argumentation through images, sound and text.

From its inception, a fundamental goal of the course has been to engage an intellectual and affective understanding among students about how they are affected by world events that occur beyond their immediate social and cultural space. Whether it be the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, as investigated in earlier iterations of the course, or the devastating events of World War II and the Holocaust, students must comprehend that these crises are not simply phenomena that happen “over there,” to some unnamed or unknown, foreign other. In conducting research through the Visual History Archive, and by authoring *digital arguments* with the testimonies, students achieve an intimacy with the

survivors' living histories, which obliterates anonymity and detachment. In the editing process, for example, students listen to the testimonies repeatedly in order to discern the most relevant and powerful excerpt to use in the formation of their arguments.

As their projects develop, students enter into a dialogic relationship with the testimonies. This engagement facilitates their recognition of how they are positioned relative to the ideologies, actions, and inaction that allowed the Holocaust to take place. *What would I have done if faced with those circumstances?* This question becomes a common refrain in the course. *How do I understand my subjectivity as a consequence of socially constructed mechanisms of power, privilege, and difference?* This critical self-awareness is central to student learning throughout the semester. The journey that each student takes through the course is unique because they choose an area of inquiry that interests and resonates with them. They decide what broad questions to take up, before looking to the testimonies and other scholarly sources in order to focus their research and craft pointed, defensible arguments.

Given the scale of the Visual History Archive, it is important to create controlled pathways for students to gradually interact with the testimonies, lest they become overwhelmed. Listening to one testimony in its entirety becomes a point of departure for students to conceive of topics and events that intrigue them. From there, students research the Visual History Archive through keyword searches as they refine their areas of interest. Once students begin authoring their projects, I encourage them to strive for depth, not breadth. Clearly, there are instances in which a multitude of voices works better to prove a point than a few. But to achieve the course's goals, I find it more valuable to have a digital argument that explores the complexities and interrelationships among three primary testimonies used as evidence than many whose treatment is cursory, unsophisticated, and poorly contextualized.

I have witnessed many instances of transformative growth as my students learn the value of their own voice and how to deploy the communicative power of multimedia to express it. In learning through the Visual History Archive, many students have been empowered to speak out against the racism, sexism, homophobia, and violence that affect their lives. All of the *digital arguments* that have issued from the course stand as an intervention against ignorance, injustice, and indifference, as they harness the horrific realities of the past to shine light on the continued need for social change in our present. ■



**Carrying the legacy** Master Teachers Kelley Watson and Rob Hadley (top) produced the first multimedia classroom lesson based on testimony contributed to the Institute's Visual History Archive by survivors of the 1994 Rwandan Tutsi Genocide.

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency convened the first Rwandan Peace Education Program meeting in January, in Kigali, Rwanda. Participating organizations (bottom) included the USC Shoah Foundation, Radio La Benevolencija, the Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace, and Aegis Trust Rwanda.

### *Secondary Education*

#### **Teaching the 1994 Rwandan Tutsi Genocide**

Thanks to Rwandan survivors who gave testimony, teachers can guide their students through a study of the stages of genocide and its aftermath using a new lesson available on the Institute's website.

Authored by Rob Hadley and Kelly Watson, two graduates of the Institute's Master Teacher Program, "If You Survive, Be a Man: Teaching the 1994 Rwandan Tutsi Genocide" explores four aspects of genocide—warning signs, acts of violence, response, and legacy—from the perspectives of two survivors and a rescuer who remember the 100 days in 1994 when as many as 1 million Tutsis lost their lives.

The lesson is available at [sfi.usc.edu/education/ifyousurvive](http://sfi.usc.edu/education/ifyousurvive) ■



#### **A Conversation with Howard Gardner on Digital Learning and the Brain**

World-renowned intellectual Howard Gardner joined USC's Mary Helen Immordino-Yang to discuss the question of how our expanding digital world—full of information in the form of data—transforms today's students and their educational needs. The talk, moderated by USC Shoah Foundation on February 11, 2013, advanced the conversation about the appropriate and evolving set of tools students need in order to transform information into knowledge while emphasizing the moral dimensions of data usage.

Visit <http://sfi.usc.edu/gardner> for video and photos. ■



## *Remembering the Holocaust* **An Evening with Anne Frank's Stepsister, Eva Schloss**

The Institute and Chabad@USC hosted an evening with Eva Schloss, stepsister and childhood friend of Anne Frank's. Like her stepsister, Eva went into hiding in Holland and was betrayed, captured, and sent to the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp.

Speaking to a capacity crowd at the University of Southern California, Eva discussed the discovery of *The Diary of a Young Girl* and shared insights into her life and that of her stepsister, whose journal has become the most widely read book on the Holocaust.

Watch Eva's testimony via the Visual History Archive Online ([vhaonline.usc.edu](http://vhaonline.usc.edu)) or on the Institute's YouTube channel ([youtube.com/user/USCShoahFoundation](http://youtube.com/user/USCShoahFoundation)). ■

## **IWitness in Australia**

In partnership with Education Services Australia Limited (ESA), the Institute is exploring the possibility of integrating its IWitness website, currently in beta, with the new Australian national curriculum. The initiative began with summer workshops in Melbourne and Sydney, where teachers learned how to use the website's searchable testimony database, student activities, and video editor. Then, to help determine the feasibility of a national project, two schools from each city conducted classroom pilots of IWitness.

Planning for the next phase of the project will begin this spring.

Educators and students: Visit [iwitness.usc.edu/sfi](http://iwitness.usc.edu/sfi) to use IWitness beta. ■

## *Life after Genocide* **Institute Joins Peace-building Initiative in Rwanda**

With nearly 20 years of experience in historical documentation and education based on video testimony given by genocide survivors, the Institute has joined an international effort to establish the Rwandan Peace Education Program, an initiative that will use testimony from survivors of the 1994 Rwandan Tutsi Genocide for peace-building activities and to raise awareness of the pressures that move people to ethnocentric violence.

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency convened the first Rwandan Peace Education Program meeting in January, in Kigali, to articulate the vision, mission, goals, and projected outcomes. Participating organizations included the Institute, Radio La Benevolencija, the Institute of Research and Dialogue for Peace, and Aegis Trust Rwanda.

Visit [tinyurl.com/rpep2013](http://tinyurl.com/rpep2013) to learn more about the program. ■

## **Institute Hosts AHO**

More than 50 attendees from more than 30 Holocaust museums and centers in the United States and Canada convened in January at the University of Southern California campus in Los Angeles for the 2013 Winter Seminar of the Association of Holocaust Organizations (AHO). The three-day seminar focused on three central topics related to Holocaust survivor testimony: preservation, access, and education.

Many of the participating institutions have testimony collections, some of which predate the founding of the Institute. Having recently completed a major effort to digitally preserve all 51,696 testimonies in the Visual History Archive, the Institute was able to bring its experience to bear as a leader in the field.

Visit [tinyurl.com/aho2013](http://tinyurl.com/aho2013) to learn more. ■

## *Higher Education* **Survivor Testimony in USC Student Films**

For the third consecutive year, undergraduate and graduate students at the University of Southern California were invited to help shape the conversation about genocide and human rights by participating in the Student Voices Short Film competition.



Students were challenged to incorporate testimony into a short film on the theme—Ordinary People, Extraordinary Actions—for a chance to win cash prizes up to \$1,500, as well as a special screening of their film hosted by the USC School of Cinematic Arts on March 28, 2013. Pictured above is Cecilia De Jesus, winner of this year's contest.

This year's contest is part of a series of special activities commemorating the 20th anniversary of *Schindler's List* and the establishment of the USC Shoah Foundation.

Visit [sfi.usc.edu/studentvoices](http://sfi.usc.edu/studentvoices) to watch the top films. ■



**USC Shoah Foundation** honored supporter Robert A. Iger, chairman and CEO of The Walt Disney Company, at a gala in June 2012. (Top left) Holocaust survivor and educator Renée Firestone; Institute founder Steven Spielberg; Institute managing director Kim Simon; Dr. Shelley Halpain and husband USC Dornsife Dean Steve Kay. (Top center) Mary J. Blige. (Top right) USC President C.L. Max Nikias. (Center) Institute executive director Stephen D. Smith; Lee Liberman, member of the Institute's board of councilors; and Dr. Leslie Reti. (Right center) WWII liberators. (Bottom left) Jimmy Kimmel. (Bottom center) Honoree Robert A. Iger and Steven Spielberg. (Bottom right) Andy Intrater, a vice chair of the Institute's Next Generation Council; Karen Shapiro; Stephen D. Smith; and Mickey Shapiro, member of the Institute's board of councilors. Visit [sfi.usc.edu/album/afh2012](http://sfi.usc.edu/album/afh2012) to view a photo essay from the event.





# Robert A. Iger:

## An Ambassador for Humanity

*One of the Institute's oldest friends receives its highest honor*

ROBERT A. IGER, chairman and CEO of The Walt Disney Company, was the recipient of the Institute's Ambassador for Humanity Award. Steven Spielberg presented him with the award last June at the 2012 Ambassadors for Humanity Gala in Los Angeles.

Iger was honored for his philanthropic work and corporate citizenship, and for being one of the Institute's earliest supporters. JCPenney was Presenting Sponsor of the gala, which was hosted by Jimmy Kimmel, with a special musical performance by Mary J. Blige. The event took place on the 68th anniversary of the Allied invasion of Normandy (D-Day) and was attended by veterans who participated in the invasion and whose testimonies as liberators are preserved in the Institute's Visual History Archive.

"We are honored to recognize Bob as our Ambassador for Humanity," Stephen D. Smith, the Institute's executive director, said. "His support, and that of The Walt Disney Company, is a great boost to our efforts as we engage students emotionally and cognitively with the testimonies. The good news is that we are finding a shift in attitudes about how to treat others, which gives

us hope that the testimonies can have a transformative effect on perceptions and actions."

Spielberg said, "I really have to thank Bob, because in 1995, he came down to our trailers on the back lot of Universal, looked at our work, and said without a moment's hesitation, 'Count me in.' The race against time for these survivors...served as a profound example that anything can be accomplished when like-minded people do it together."

"Telling powerful stories with the help of innovative technology is a Spielberg trademark," Iger said. "And I think it's part of what makes the Institute such a unique, emerging force for good in the world. They're taking some of the most powerful stories and putting them into the hands of teachers and, hopefully, into the hearts of young people. We need this next generation—and the ones that follow—to understand what really happens when intolerance and hatred are allowed to take root in any culture."

Watch Robert Iger's speech at: <http://sfi.usc.edu/iger> ■

## IWitness Video Challenge

USC Shoah Foundation invites middle and high school students to take up the IWitness Video Challenge. IWitness.usc.edu brings the human stories of its Visual History Archive to teachers and their students via engaging multimedia-learning activities.

The contest challenges secondary school students to act on the legacy of *Schindler's List* and do something positive in their community. As part of the IWitness Video Challenge activity, students will be asked to develop a one- to four-minute video essay with an easy-to-

use video-editing tool on the IWitness website, allowing them to link their voices to those in IWitness who inspired them to make a positive impact.

Students have until October 31, 2013 to submit their video essays.

***To learn more visit [IWitness.usc.edu](http://IWitness.usc.edu).***



*Steven Spielberg, who founded the Institute nearly 20 years ago following his work on Schindler's List, announcing IWitness Video Challenge.*

## How you can make a difference

One person really can make a difference. If you would like to support the USC Shoah Foundation, here are some of the ways you can help.

**Planned Gifts:** Planned gifts include wills, charitable remainder trusts, charitable lead trusts, and annuities, and may help you reduce or avoid income, gift, and inheritance taxes.

**Cash Donations:** Gifts may be made by cash, check, or credit card.

**Pledges:** Make a gift that is paid over several years, on a payment schedule that is most convenient for you.

**Memorial or Tribute Gifts:** Honor special occasions such as birthdays, weddings, or births; memorialize a friend or family member; receive a tribute card from the Institute announcing the gift.

**In-Kind Gifts:** Donate goods or services that fulfill programmatic needs.

*For more information, contact:*

Nicole Watkins, Director of Donor Relations  
USC Shoah Foundation  
The Institute for Visual History and Education  
University of Southern California  
650 W. 35th Street, Suite 114  
Los Angeles, CA 90089-2571  
Phone: (213) 740-6001  
E-mail: [vhi-web@usc.edu](mailto:vhi-web@usc.edu)

*To donate online visit:*  
<https://sfi.usc.edu/donate>



## PastForward Summer 2013



### Save the Date!

October 3, 2013 — New York City  
**Ambassadors for Humanity Gala**  
to benefit USC Shoah Foundation

Honoring Artist & Humanitarian  
**George Clooney**  
With Host **Jon Stewart**  
Presenting Sponsor: **TNT**

For more information call the  
Gala Benefit Line: 818.777.7876

*USC Shoah Foundation is dedicated to making audio-visual testimonies with survivors and other witnesses of the Holocaust and other genocides a compelling voice for education and action.*

#### Stay in Touch

Begin receiving periodic updates and information alerting you to special events in your community, new programs, and the latest Institute news. Send an email to [vhi-news@dornsife.usc.edu](mailto:vhi-news@dornsife.usc.edu) with "pastforward" in the subject line and your name and address in the body.

Follow us online  
<http://sf.usc.edu>

