



CONTINUING A TRADITION OF RESEARCH  
ON THE FOUNDATIONS OF DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION:  
THE NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
AND EVALUATION PROJECT

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## OVERVIEW

Facing History and Ourselves is an international educational organization that provides educators, students, and the community at large with an evidence-based interdisciplinary model of civic education that integrates a rigorous investigation of history with critical questions about ethics and democratic civic engagement. Facing History has nine offices in North America, an international hub in London, and a network of 29,000 trained educators who reach nearly 1.9 million students each year. Through major public events such as a traveling multimedia exhibition, speaker series, and academic conferences in partnership with major universities, Facing History convenes members of the broader community and reaches audiences beyond the classroom. Facing History's website ([www.facinghistory.org](http://www.facinghistory.org)) and online resources attract more than 700,000 visits from 215 countries and territories annually.

For more than three decades, Facing History has led dynamic interchanges among scholars and Facing History staff, focusing on theory, research, and practice related to the profound role that education can and must play in preparing young people to engage thoughtfully and actively in democratic societies. This paper highlights some of the nearly 100 studies that have been conducted on the program, as a context for presenting the latest and most comprehensive evaluation of the program's effectiveness: the Facing History and Ourselves National Professional Development and Evaluation Project (NPDEP). The NPDEP provides evidence, using the most rigorous evaluation methods, that Facing History promotes teacher self-efficacy, professional satisfaction and growth, and student academic and civic learning. This is the foundational publication providing details of the research.<sup>1</sup> A shorter summary is also available.<sup>2</sup> Additional publications focusing on the measures, design, and findings will follow.<sup>3</sup>

**This study provides evidence, using the most rigorous evaluation methods, that Facing History promotes teacher self-efficacy, professional satisfaction and growth, and student academic and civic learning.**

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<sup>1</sup> The author is very grateful to the following people for their contributions to the development of this document: Betty Bardige, Marty Sleeper, Margot Strom, Anna Romer, Terry Tollefson, Marc Skvirsky, Melinda Fine, Ethan Lowenstein, Robert Selman and Abbey Mann.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.facinghistory.org/eval/npdep>

<sup>3</sup> The first of these is: Selman, R.L., & Barr, D. J. (2009) Can adolescents learn to create ethical relationships for themselves in the future by reflecting on ethical violations faced by others in the past? In M. Martens et al. (Eds.), *Interpersonal Understanding in Historical Context*, (pp. 19-41). Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since its founding in 1976, Facing History and Ourselves has recognized that teacher effectiveness is at the heart of educational success for students. A core component of Facing History’s educational model, therefore, involves providing professional development seminars, workshops, coaching, and print and online resources for teachers, helping them to promote their students’ academic engagement and achievement, while also fostering students’ growth as thoughtful participants in society.

To provide high-quality, timely, and relevant professional development services and resources for teachers, Facing History equally emphasizes the professional development of its own staff and board through interchanges with scholars and participation in research. Throughout the organization’s history, Facing History’s evaluation staff and independent researchers have carried out nearly 100 studies that have yielded a large body of knowledge about the model’s effectiveness, as well as knowledge about teacher and adolescent development more generally. Independent experts and review panels have repeatedly validated the program’s effectiveness, based on the findings of evaluation studies. Facing History was selected for membership in the U.S. Department of Education’s National Diffusion Network (NDN) from 1980–1996 as “an exemplary program worthy of national dissemination” (Lieberman, 1993a). Since that time, research on Facing History’s model has been reviewed and provided the basis for external validation as a promising approach under the U.S. Department of Education’s Safe, Disciplined, and Drug-Free Schools initiative (D.O.E., 2001), and as a best practice in the fields of civic education (Fine, 2004), character education (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005), and Holocaust education (Berman, 2006).

In 2005, Facing History launched an ambitious research project to further its longstanding involvement in research, theory, and practice related to the foundations of educating for democracy: the National Professional Development and Evaluation Project (NPDEP). In this paper, we describe the multifaceted NPDEP, focusing on its core outcome study—a randomized controlled experiment (hereafter referred to as the “experimental study”)—that investigates the causal impacts of a Facing History and Ourselves professional development intervention on high school teachers’ sense of professional efficacy, satisfaction, and growth of their students’ engagement and learning.<sup>4</sup> An independent research agency, Abt Associates, Inc., carried out the experimental study to ensure the objectivity of the data collection and analysis. Further, independent university-based researchers, Robert Selman, Melinda Fine, and Ethan Lowenstein, served as co-investigators to further ensure the objectivity and validity of the research.

The experimental study involves 134 teachers, and 1,371 of their students in 76 schools across the United States. High schools that had no previous exposure to Facing History and Ourselves and were located within one hour of travel time to one of Facing History’s regional offices, and teachers who had never had Facing History professional development nor had taught the program were eligible to participate in the study. Sixty-six percent of these schools were “low-performing” using U.S. Department of Education criteria for math and literacy test scores. Other components of the NPDEP project experimental study include exploratory research and capacity-building activities for the organization.

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<sup>5</sup>The focus of this paper is on the hypothesis-testing component of the experimental study. The exploratory aspects of the experimental research, and other aspects of the NPDEP that were not within the experimental design, will be presented in more detail in future papers.

## FINDINGS

The initial results<sup>5</sup> of the NPDEP research on teachers demonstrate that Facing History's educational model is scalable beyond teachers and schools who actively seek to implement its curricula or methodology. The professional development intervention had a statistically significant and educationally meaningful impact on all aspects of teacher self-efficacy that were measured, as well as on teacher satisfaction and professional growth<sup>6</sup> (Boulay, McCormick, & Kliorys, 2009). Facing History teachers felt more capable than did control group teachers of creating classroom environments and implementing teaching practices to promote students' historical understanding, civic learning, ethical awareness, and character development.

In addition, Facing History teachers were more energized and motivated by their professional development experiences than were teachers in the control group and felt a greater sense of accomplishment, engagement, and growth as teachers.<sup>7</sup> No differences were found between Facing History and control teachers in the degree of their emotional exhaustion or depersonalization (disengagement from their work). These findings were sustained longitudinally over two years. Further, the study was replicated (the same outcomes were found) with a second cohort of teachers after their first year of using Facing History resources.

With regard to the student research, Facing History students scored higher than control students, on average, for 100% of the academic and civic outcomes measured and demonstrated statistically significant differences on certain scales within each of these categories.<sup>8</sup> Specifically, in the area of historical understanding, Facing History had a statistically significant impact on students' overall historical understanding. The scores of three sub-scales are used to calculate the overall historical understanding score: skills for interpreting evidence; skills for analyzing what leads people to make ethical choices and skills for thinking critically about cause and effect.

In the area of civic learning, Facing History had a statistically significant impact on five civic learning outcomes within three domains: tolerance, efficacy, and opportunities for civic learning. Specifically, positive impacts on civic learning were found for the following variables: civic efficacy, valuing the protection of the civil liberties of people with different political views, awareness of the dangers of prejudice and discrimination, and positive perceptions of their history or English class as offering opportunities to engage with civic matters and as having a safe, inclusive, and respectful climate. These academic and civic findings were replicated in a second year with a new group of students, showing that program effects are sustained in schools over time.<sup>9</sup>

No statistically significant differences between Facing History and control students were found on measures of students' attitudes about ethnic/racial groups, beliefs about the importance of deliberating with others in class about controversial public issues, actual engagement in deliberation of such issues, social awareness, or the parts of the ethical awareness and decision-making measure that have been analyzed thus far.

Taken together, the teacher and student findings paint a fuller picture of the impact of Facing History, an educational model that is centered on promoting high-quality teaching and integrating

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<sup>5</sup> We will continually update this paper as additional results become available.

<sup>6</sup> P values for group differences on all efficacy outcomes range from .0004 to .0047. The effect sizes range from .49-.85. The p value for the satisfaction with professional development, expertise, and engagement variable is .0001, and the effect size is 1.00. The p value for the personal accomplishment variable (one aspect of teacher satisfaction) is .0011, and the effect size is .49.

<sup>7</sup> The research team assumes that most of the control group teachers received some type of non-Facing History professional development during the first year of the study.

<sup>8</sup> p<.05

<sup>9</sup> The student research in the second year did use an experimental design.

academic and civic aims. The study found that Facing History teachers not only felt a greater sense of efficacy in promoting student academic and civic learning than control teachers but were also effective in practice as demonstrated by the student outcomes in theoretically aligned areas.

Specifically, the alignment of teacher and student outcomes suggests that Facing History prepares teachers to address the following critical needs in education:

1. Creating safer and more engaging learning environments
2. Promoting respect for the rights of others whose views differ from one's own
3. Fostering awareness of the power and danger of prejudice and discrimination
4. Promoting critical thinking about history and contemporary events
5. Increasing students' belief that they make a difference in society

These initial findings of the NPDEP provide the kind of empirical evidence that policymakers, grant-making foundations, school administrators, and scholars are hungry for as they seek to identify, and invest in, "what works."

A consensus is building among scholars, practitioners, policymakers, and funders committed to education reform that teacher effectiveness is crucial to educational success for students: a core operating principle of Facing History and Ourselves since its inception in 1976. Both the United States government's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act for education reform and the Gates Foundation's educational platform emphasize promoting teacher effectiveness because, as Bill Gates noted at the November 2008 Forum on Education, "A growing body of evidence tells us that teacher effectiveness is the single most important factor in student achievement" (Gates, 2008). Previous research has demonstrated that teachers' sense of professional efficacy is a critical aspect of their effectiveness and is associated with student achievement (Ashton, 1984; Woolfolk, Hoy, & Tschannen-Moran, 1998; Hoy & Davis, 2006) and teacher retention (Yost, 2006). The NPDEP experimental study provides additional evidence, suggesting a robust connection between teacher self-efficacy and academic and civic outcomes for students.

While stakeholders are looking for evidence from experimental studies of educational strategies that aim to impact teacher effectiveness, such studies are relatively scarce. The NPDEP, therefore, makes a significant contribution by providing a rigorous study of a program's effectiveness in enhancing teachers' capacities to promote student achievement and students' capacities to participate in society as thoughtful, caring, and active citizens.

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## THE FACING HISTORY AND OURSELVES APPROACH

Facing History's educational model is based on a sequence of study that moves from individual identity to responsible civic participation, using historical and literary documents, and the stories of individuals and groups, to help young people discover the capacity of ordinary people to influence extraordinary events. Facing History's content and teaching strategies help students link the lessons of history to the everyday issues they face in their own lives. By using these methods to study the actions and decisions of individuals and groups during specific periods in history, students realize that their choices do matter and that they can be agents of positive change (see Sleeper & Strom, 2006, and Tollefson, Barr, & Strom, 2004, for a more thorough description of Facing History and Ourselves).

Facing History seminars and workshops introduce educators to Facing History's pedagogy and the themes of Facing History's resources. Facing History's core resource book, *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior* (1994), examines the consequences of hatred by exploring the events that led to the Holocaust. Facing History is continually developing new resource books to address a range of historical moments and movements, as well as case studies that illustrate how citizens can choose to make a positive difference in society.

Facing History believes that, at its best, civic education involves an ongoing constructive tension that honors dualities in the learning process: engaging students' minds and their hearts, integrating the exploration of history and ethics, and seeing both teachers and students as learners. Margot Stern Strom, the founder and Executive Director of Facing History, underscores the importance of the moral and civic ends of its model of historical investigation:

We must help students . . . confront not only their own potential for passivity and complicity, but also their courage and resilience. And we must teach them to value their rights as citizens and take responsibility for their actions (Strom, 1994, p. xiv).

Facing History believes the adult development of educators to be the key lever of educational change. To prepare students for thoughtful participation in a democracy, teachers must be capable of engaging students in a learning process that reflects core aspects of civil society. Teachers are supported by Facing History to create classroom settings characterized by respectful relationships and where students deliberate on complex and challenging subject matter. In these classrooms, sufficient trust develops among students, and between teachers and their students, so that students can listen to one another, consider one another's perspectives, connect personally with the content, take intellectual risks, and learn to form judgments based on a critical analysis of evidence.

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## **A TRADITION OF RESEARCH ON THE FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATING FOR DEMOCRACY**

A hallmark of Facing History's educational model involves creating a dynamic interchange among theory, research, and practice. The organization has inspired, participated in, and led more than 100 practice-based research studies, generating valuable knowledge for scholars and practitioners, as well as new tools for assessment, research, and theory building.<sup>10</sup> Facing History regularly brings together educators and academic scholars with expertise in relevant fields to foster a lively and productive interchange that enriches both practice and scholarship.

Facing History and Ourselves' content and methodology is anchored in prominent theories of adolescent development, teacher professional development, and rigorous research by scholars and curriculum experts (Strom, 1980; Strom, Sleeper, & Johnson, 1992). For example, the program's practices and content are informed by theory and research in the areas of moral development (Kohlberg, 1976; Gilligan, 1977, 1982), social and ethical development (Selman, 1980, 2003), social psychology (Staub, 2003), civic learning (Kahne & Westheimer, 2003; Haste, 2005), historical understanding (Seixas, 1996), intergroup relations (Hawley & Jackson, 1995; Stephan & Vogt, 2004), and teacher development (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005.)

Facing History has led and inspired research for evaluation and theory-building purposes. The organization supports an evaluation staff that conducts evaluation studies and works with external researchers to conduct applied and basic research studies focusing on a wide range of topics related to how teachers and their students develop their capacities to understand and connect history to their current social, moral, and civic concerns and commitments (Lieberman, 1981, 1991; Bardige, 1983; Brabeck, Kenny, Stryker, Tollefson, & Stern Strom, 1994; Fine, 1995; Barr et al., 1998; Schultz, Barr, & Selman, 2001; Lowenstein, 2003). Many of these studies have provided formative information for program refinement, while others have yielded extensive evidence of the program's impact on teachers, students, and schools.

With respect to teachers, researchers have investigated the influence of the program's professional development activities on teachers' pedagogical and content knowledge, (e.g., Lowenstein, 2003) and their goals and commitments as teachers. Evaluations have demonstrated the program's effectiveness in promoting the growth of key dimensions of teacher effectiveness in integrating an in-depth study of history and ethics for adolescent students. Teachers who participate in Facing History seminars report increased confidence, knowledge, and skills necessary for teaching about complex issues raised by the history of the steps leading to the Holocaust and other examples of genocide, as well as exploring the connections of the history to complex ethical questions students face (Barr, 2003). High percentages of teachers indicate that the professional development process revitalizes their interest in teaching (Barr & Frey, 2004; Romer, 2006a; Romer & Mann, 2008) and causes them to rethink their methods; they are more likely to utilize questioning, classroom discussion, and content that relates to important issues of citizenship and individual responsibility today (Lieberman, 1991, 1993b). Further, teachers report that Facing History professional development and classroom implementation reaffirm their aspirations as teachers and sense of satisfaction in their role. In longitudinal studies, teachers have consistently reported that these impacts are sustained, even up to five years after participation in a seminar (Barr, 2002a; Tollefson, 1999; Barr, 2002b; Barr, 2001; Barr & Frey, 2004).

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<sup>10</sup> For a more detailed summary of past research in the context of Facing History and Ourselves, please see Evaluation Research Summary, Facing History and Ourselves Evaluation Department, <http://www.facinghistory.org/about/evaluation>.



With respect to student learning and growth in the context of, and/or as a result of, participation in Facing History, scholars have explored such topics and outcomes as students' factual knowledge and understanding of history (Lieberman, 1981; Glynn, 1982); reflective thinking and pro-social awareness (Bardige, 1983); moral and psychosocial development (Lieberman, 1981; Brabeck et al., 1994; Barr et al., 1998; Schultz et al., 2001; Schultz & Barr, 2002; Feigenberg, Steel King, Selman, & Barr, 2005); empathy and psychological adjustment (Brabeck et al., 1994); violence (Ward, 1988, Schultz et al., 2001); civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions (Fine, 1991; Schulz & Barr, 2002; ); intergroup relations (Schultz & Barr, 2002); and academic engagement and motivation (Alford & Romer, 2007; Romer, Barr & Gaber, 2009). Finally, some studies have focused on the classroom learning environment (Romer & Barr, 2009; Romer, 2007a).

A 2008 review of evaluation studies over the last three decades revealed consistent evidence of program effectiveness for students in each of four domains: 1) academic engagement and motivation; 2) historical knowledge and understanding; 3) social and moral development and ethical awareness; and 4) civic knowledge, skills, and values, including intergroup relations.

Within the area of academic engagement, for example, a 2005 study of 9th and 10th graders in Facing History and comparison classes in a large public school in Florida found that Facing History students were more likely to report that their classes motivated them to learn (Stecker & Meehan, 2005). Many other studies (without comparison groups) that ask students to compare Facing History with other humanities classes they have experienced support the conclusion that Facing History's professional support for educators, including its methods, content, and resources, helps teachers to engage their students' interest and to motivate students to learn (e.g., Sescher & Barr, 2005; Romer, 2009a). Students consistently report that Facing History engages them in personally meaningful ways, often in ways that they had never experienced before and that surprises them.

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A number of studies have documented Facing History's impact on students' historical knowledge and understanding. In one external study, for example, Facing History was compared to three other approaches to teaching about the Holocaust. Facing History students were found to have gained the deepest historical knowledge (Glynn, 1982). Many other studies have shown that teachers are impressed with how Facing History helps their students to learn content and to think more critically about history and its connections to themselves and to current social and political issues (Barr, 2003; Romer, 2007b; Romer & Mann, 2009; Romer, 2009b).

Other studies have established evidence of the program's effectiveness in promoting psychosocial growth and civic learning. A landmark study funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York employed a rigorous, quasi-experimental design comparing a group of Facing History students in New England to a group of non-Facing History students (Schultz et al., 2001). The findings indicated positive effects of Facing History on students' psychosocial growth, including interpersonal understanding and skills, and reduced racist attitudes. Further, Facing History students reported decreases in fighting behavior. Aspects of the study were replicated in Tennessee with the same findings (Schultz & Barr, 2002).

Many evaluations have focused on the impact of Facing History on students' civic learning. In 2007, Facing History conducted two studies on the impact of the model using its newest content, *Choices in Little Rock*, on civic agency, identity, and engagement among urban middle school students. In both studies, students agreed most strongly with the following three of the nine statements about their learning that they were asked to evaluate: *Choices in Little Rock* increased my capacity to . . . 1) stand

up for what I believe, even when others disagree; 2) think critically about issues of racism and prejudice; 3) get along well with different types of people (Alford & Romer, 2007; Romer, Barr, & Gaber, 2009).

Beyond impacts on individual teachers and students, research has also shown broader setting-level effects, including outcomes related to the classroom learning environment and school-level changes when Facing History is implemented as a model of school reform. With respect to the classroom learning environment, teachers point to the importance of using Facing History methods and content to create a democratic ethos in the classroom where students' voices, deliberation on controversial issues, and the formation of perspective are valued. Teachers speak about creating a safe atmosphere that also challenges students to reflect on their assumptions and be open to new ideas. As one urban teacher put it:

I'm going to ask them what they think, and I'm going to ask them to voice their opinion, and I'm going to ask that we create a comfortable classroom culture where you are encouraged to say your opinion, and no one's going to tell you that you're wrong. And somebody might not agree with you, but that's ok . . . the only way to be successful with the Facing History curriculum is if you have that culture. (quoted in Romer, 2009a)

A 2006 study of Facing History's impact on a school-wide turnaround effort at a Chicago middle school, for example, found that Facing History increased teacher retention, helped increase teachers' confidence about their positive impact on students, and helped the school recruit qualified teachers, while also increasing opportunities for student engagement and learning and enhancing the academic rigor of the curriculum. The school experienced significant increases in student math and reading scores during the first two years of its partnership with Facing History (Romer, 2007a).

Independent experts have validated the program's effectiveness based on their review of evaluation studies. Facing History was initially developed with federal funds designed to improve secondary education through the teaching of history and ethics (ESEA Title IV, Part C, from 1977 to 1981). Under the NDN program, federal money helped to support the dissemination of Facing History in more than 40 states. In 2001, the U.S. Department of Education's Independent Expert Panel on Safe, Disciplined, and Drug-Free Schools reviewed evaluation findings and designated Facing History as a "Promising Program" (D.O.E., 2001). In 2004, an expert in civic education reviewed Facing History's program and evaluation research and concluded that the program provides quality civic education practices in keeping with field principles articulated in the Carnegie Corporation of New York's *Civic Mission of Schools* report. Facing History's professional development approach was also found to address a key need in the civic education field, that is, preparing teachers to effectively foster civic learning in students (Fine, 2004). In 2005, scholars at the Center for Character and Citizenship conducted a national review of character education programs and their evidence base. They identified Facing History as a scientifically supported character education program (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). Finally, in 2006, based on a review of existing programs and their research evidence, Facing History was identified as a best practice in Holocaust Education by the Berman Center for Research and Evaluation in Jewish Education (Berman, 2006).

## LAUNCHING THE NEXT GENERATION OF FACING HISTORY EVALUATION RESEARCH

In 2004, Facing History reviewed previous research on the program as the basis for a long-term research agenda. In addition, Facing History reviewed the current landscape of education policy and research. Though much was already known about the effectiveness of the program, evaluation methodology and standards of evidence for program effectiveness were evolving. Policymakers, foundations, and scholars were calling for studies that would provide evidence of causal relationships between educational interventions and outcomes for students. In addition, developing scholarship in the fields in which the program was grounded raised new questions about program processes and outcomes, opening new opportunities for research that could further advance each field's knowledge base. Further, over time the organization's theory of change had been continually refined, as it sought to maintain an alignment among its practices and resources and accumulating research evidence.

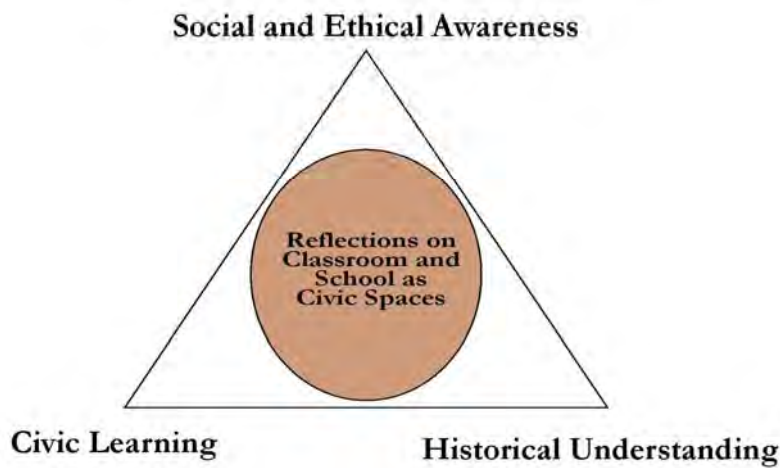
In that context, Facing History embraced the opportunity to ask new research questions to fill gaps in knowledge that would be of interest to a range of stakeholders. The next generation of research would be designed to maintain the organization at the forefront of approaches, with a rigorous evidence base, and to advance the organization's commitment to initiating dynamic conversations among theory, research, and practice that feed staff development and contribute new scholarship to relevant fields.

The evolution of new evaluation methodologies and conceptualizations of teacher and student growth also brought significant research opportunities. The program's theory of change, for example, had always assumed that the key lever of change for student learning and development is teacher development and effectiveness. Until 2004, however, research in the context of Facing History had focused on teacher and student outcomes *independently* of one another. Although more than 30 years of practical experience had demonstrated, theory had postulated, and other studies had shown strong links between teacher practices and growth and student outcomes, Facing History research had not yet provided clear empirical evidence of these connections.

Similarly, while the program's theory of change posits that in-depth implementation of the program's content and methods result in student outcomes within the domains of civic learning, social and ethical awareness, and historical understanding, these three domains had not been systematically examined within a single study (see Figure 1). Further, knowledge within each of the relevant fields of scholarship has generally remained isolated within each discipline. Therefore, while previous research on Facing History's model suggested that adolescents, in fact, are motivated by Facing History's interdisciplinary, integrative approach to make connections across these domains, little was known about 1) how effective teachers are at integrating each of these components in their practice or 2) the processes involved, both interpersonally and intra-psychically, as adolescents integrate their learning and growth in each domain. The next generation of research would need to be comprehensive enough to mirror the complexity of the Facing History model in order to yield knowledge about the model itself, rather than only its constituent parts (Barr, 2007).

Furthermore, the long-term research agenda would entail focusing on filling gaps in knowledge within each outcome domain. A review of the field of civic learning revealed, for example, that certain knowledge, skills, and dispositions central to the program's theory of change, and meaningful within the field of civic learning, had not received sufficient attention in previous research (Fine, 2004). Facing History sponsored a year-long seminar on civic learning, involving experts in the field, in order to further refine its long-term research agenda.

FIGURE 1  
**STUDENT OUTCOME DOMAINS**



Similarly, within the social and ethical domain, previous studies had a demonstrated impact on students' social awareness and skills, core aspects of social development, but had not explored how students apply such competencies to reflect on ethical decisions they might face in their schools.

Within the domain of historical knowledge and understanding, studies had demonstrated increases in Facing History students' factual knowledge and understanding of concepts relevant to the particular content of the model (Glynn, 1982; Barr, 2003; Alford & Romer, 2007). However, advances in the field of historical understanding had yielded conceptualizations of core competencies in historical understanding that had not yet been systematically tested in empirical research on the program. These include the capacity to recognize plausible explanations for historical questions by analyzing agency, evidence, and causation in the past.

A similar review of current scholarship—specifically conceptualizations of components of teacher effectiveness in the humanities, strategies for promoting effectiveness, and the alignment of these conceptualizations with Facing History's theory of change—was needed in order to design new research that would document program outcomes meaningful to the larger academic, practitioner, and policy communities.

## THE NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION PROJECT

The Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation has provided support for educational initiatives, including Facing History, for many years. In 2005, Facing History was in conversation with the foundation around Facing History's strategic plan, including its long-term research agenda, to address the evolving landscape of evaluation and Facing History's priorities. The conversation was informed by the review of past research, current standards of evidence in evaluation, and an independent analysis of the key issues of concern to educational administrators that they believe educational reforms should address, including increasing the quality of instruction and teacher retention (The Parthenon Group, 2003).

The Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation invited Facing History to submit a proposal for research that would significantly bolster the body of evaluation evidence for Facing History's model, make a significant contribution to knowledge about effective civic education practices, and provide key capacity-building benefits for the organization. The foundation's priorities aligned with Facing History's interest in conducting the next generation of rigorous research that would meet the highest standards of evidence and would document long-term effects of the program. Dennis Barr, Director of Evaluation, with input from Facing History management,<sup>11</sup> crafted a proposal that presented a long-term research agenda for the foundation to review. The foundation generously provided five years of support for the project.

The project, which came to be called the National Professional Development and Evaluation Project, has three major phases:

- I. Planning, research design, and recruitment of independent researchers to work with Facing History staff;
- II. Implementation of outcome research, including experimental and exploratory research with longitudinal components; and
- III. Continuing longitudinal research, secondary data analysis, and dissemination of findings, implications for theory and practice, and continuing questions.

In the first phase, Facing History formed the infrastructure for the project and identified the particular methods and measures that would be used. Facing History had to grapple with a wide range of questions before launching a study. What design would satisfy the highest standards of evaluation evidence? How could longitudinal research be integrated within such a design? If an experimental design were chosen, how could schools and teachers be randomly assigned to intervention and control groups without dramatically altering Facing History's traditional professional development and support model? How could a single study best integrate research on both teacher and student outcomes? How large a scope should the project have, in terms of the samples of schools, teachers, and students, in order to identify meaningful effects of the program and position the research to follow teachers and students longitudinally? Would Facing History have the capacity to work with that number of newly recruited educators on top of its previous commitments? And what outcome variables in each of the discrete fields would be most important to examine, both to advance Facing History's understanding of its impact and to strengthen knowledge in these fields (Selman et al., 2007b)?

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<sup>11</sup> Facing History management team participating in the research: Terry Tollefson, Marc Skvirsky, Marty Sleeper, and Margot Strom. Facing History program staff who managed the recruitment of schools and teachers for the study included Dan Alba, Fran Colletti, Dunreith Kelly Lowenstein, Peter Nelson, Bonnie Oberman, Molly Schen, Ted Scott, Rachel Shankman, Fran Sterling, Mark Swaim-Fox, Corey Todaro, and Jack Weinstein. Facing History evaluation team members participating in the research: Abbey Mann and Anna Romer.

Given Facing History’s multifaceted and complex model, what “treatment” would be defined as the model for the research to test? Facing History has a variety of approaches, including working with individual teachers, whole departments of educators, and whole schools and districts, as well as online and face-to-face methods of providing professional development and resources. Which of these approaches should be the focus of the research? Further, Facing History uses a number of different historical case studies. What content should the teachers receive? Teachers usually adapt Facing History to their educational context and use as much of the content and methods as they can or are allowed to within that context. What would we define as the minimum “dosage” of the program from which we would expect teachers to be able to have an impact on students in measurable ways?

Facing History formed a Steering Committee and consulted with field experts regarding evaluation methodology and measurement<sup>12</sup> to address these questions and make some choices. Facing History’s Director of Evaluation would serve as the lead investigator, responsible for spearheading the research and coordinating and integrating the contributions of participating researchers. Facing History established a three-component research team comprised of its own evaluation staff and researchers from a research agency and several universities. After a careful review, Facing History selected Abt Associates, Inc., a renowned international research organization, to participate in the design of the research and to be fully responsible for the data collection and analysis. This would ensure the objectivity of the research.

To ensure the relevance, value, and validity of the research for Facing History, and the fields in which the program and research are grounded, Facing History contracted with university-based researchers Robert Selman, Melinda Fine, and Ethan Lowenstein to serve as co-investigators. The co-investigators would participate with Dennis Barr and Abt Associates, Inc., in designing the study, provide leadership in identifying and/or developing appropriate measurement strategies,<sup>13</sup> and work together to theoretically align the teacher and student measures. The lead and co-investigators spearheaded measurement working groups focused on the assessment of teacher growth,<sup>14</sup> civic learning,<sup>15</sup> social and ethical awareness,<sup>16</sup> and historical understanding.<sup>17</sup> Figure 2 provides a view of the innovative partnership model involving the three entities: Facing History, the research agency, and the university-based scholars, with Facing History at the center, directing the overall project and coordinating and integrating the work of its partners.

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<sup>12</sup> The Steering Committee included Dennis Barr, Facing History Director of Evaluation; Robert Selman, Harvard Graduate School of Education; and Terry Tollefson, Facing History Director of Administration. Consultations were held with: Larry Aber, William Beardslee, Joshua Brown, Chris Dede, Constance Flanagan, Carol Gilligan, Helen Haste, Stephanie Jones, Joe McDonald, Roger Weissberg, and John Willett.

<sup>13</sup> Each of these researchers had experience conducting research on the program that would inform the new strategies for measurement in the NPDEP.

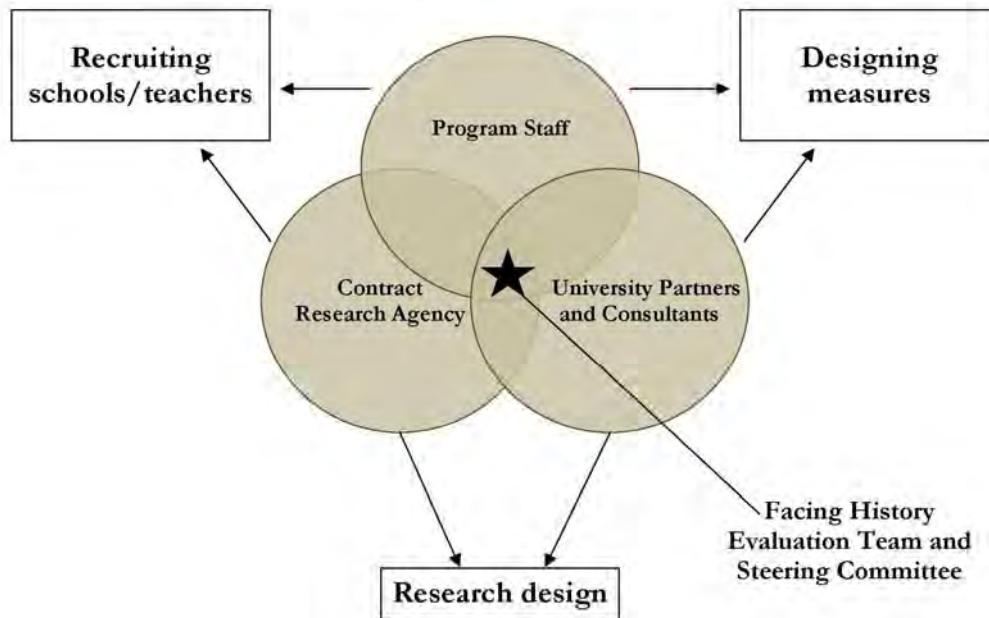
<sup>14</sup> Ethan Lowenstein, Eastern Michigan University

<sup>15</sup> Melinda Fine, Fine Consulting and New York University, and Angela Bermudez, formerly a graduate student research assistant on the project at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and currently a faculty member at Northeastern University

<sup>16</sup> Robert Selman and Dennis Barr

<sup>17</sup> Dennis Barr invited Alan Stoskopf, formerly a Facing History staff member and currently a faculty member at Northeastern University, and Angela Bermudez to provide leadership in developing an historical understanding assessment tool.

FIGURE 2  
**EVALUATION PARTNERSHIP MODEL FOR  
 EVALUATION DESIGN AND RECRUITMENT OF SUBJECTS**



### **UNDERTAKING A RANDOMIZED CONTROL EXPERIMENT**

Randomized controlled experiments offer the benefit of establishing causal links between an intervention and its outcomes. Policymakers, foundations, school administrators, and scholars are calling for this kind of evidence, without which, many argue, we cannot really know “what works.” These kinds of studies, however, can be very difficult to implement. Further, few educational interventions have been shown to “work” using these methods.

**Further, few educational interventions have been shown to “work” using these methods.**

One set of challenges that such studies present relates to the *recruitment of subjects*. Experimental studies generally require large samples, large enough to give the study the statistical “power” needed to detect program effects. In this study, schools needed to be willing to be randomly assigned to treatment and control groups, which meant the principals would need to recruit or assign teachers to participate in Facing History’s professional development, while also being willing to wait for their teachers to receive it if their school were assigned to the control group. Would we be able to recruit enough schools and teachers to participate in the project under these conditions?

Facing History was willing to withhold its intervention from schools for a year, but it was neither practical nor reasonable to withhold it for longer than that. For many possible personal and professional reasons, teachers might not be able to wait longer than a year to participate. From an ethical and strategic point of view, it would not make sense to spark principals’ and teachers’ interest in Facing History and then withhold the program from some of them for several years. Therefore, the research teams decided the control group would receive the treatment after one year. This



decision posed a challenge for the research. Facing History assumes that teachers need time, often years, to develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence necessary to implement the program deeply and well. In the first year of using Facing History, for example, teachers must deal for the first time with such issues as balance (fitting the new methods and content into an already busy and demanding set of curricular requirements, standards, and testing), pacing (i.e., how to cover all aspects of the scope and sequence within the time they have allotted), and comfort/confidence (i.e., using new content and methods that are likely to engage students personally and emotionally). Therefore, we could not be certain that first-year Facing History teachers would implement the high quality, in-depth courses that would be necessary to impact students in ways that our measures would be sensitive enough to capture.

Further, the research design would require recruiting teachers who had never been exposed to Facing History professional development and resources, who were not seeking such exposure, and who teach in schools that had not already been exposed to Facing History (i.e., none of the other teachers had participated in a Facing History professional development workshop or seminar or taught Facing History). It was necessary to recruit teachers and schools that had not been exposed to Facing History to rule out the possibility that such previous exposure would have already affected teachers and students, thus making it impossible to infer whether the intervention being studied within the experimental study was responsible for such outcomes or not.

The design would require that we recruit teachers who were not already seeking Facing History to answer questions related to the scalability of the program. More evidence was needed regarding the impact of the program on a general population of teachers who know very little about it to begin with and may not be highly motivated at the outset to engage with it. The preponderance of research on the program has demonstrated its effectiveness for teachers who self-select to participate. These teachers, however, may be different from a wider population of teachers; at the very least they are motivated to learn about and participate in this educational approach. To include teachers in the study who had self-selected to participate in the program might limit the relevance of the results for those administrators who must decide whether Facing History would be effective for a whole school, district, or region rather than just individual, self-selected teachers.

Although it would be ideal for the reasons just described to recruit teachers who were not already seeking Facing History, doing so is significantly more challenging. Could we find sufficient numbers of schools and teachers in the regions where Facing History has offices that had not already been exposed to the program and were willing to participate? Would the teachers whom we would recruit have sufficient motivation to learn the content and methods of the program and implement it fully? The research team decided that the benefits of what could be learned from this kind of sample outweighed the challenges that would have to be faced.<sup>18</sup>

Another set of challenges had to do with *defining the “intervention”* and the *focal outcomes* for the research. Facing History provides a set of guiding principles, methods, and content but is not highly prescriptive. Rather, teachers select teaching materials from a range of possibilities and cover the scope and sequence of the program with varying degrees of depth, with different emphases, and over varying amounts of time. Often, programs that undergo experimental evaluation are more prescriptive and structured than Facing History, with a program expert using a specific set of lessons to teach a discrete skill or piece of knowledge directly to students. It is considerably more challenging to design an outcome study, much less one with an experimental design, to test the effectiveness of a

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<sup>18</sup> Facing History program staff in all eight of its regional offices—New England, New York, Memphis/Nashville, Cleveland, Chicago, Denver, San Francisco Bay Area, and Los Angeles—helped Abt Associates, Inc., to recruit schools for the study. As the program staff are experts in describing what Facing History entails, and the researchers are expert in explaining the research, their combined efforts were needed.



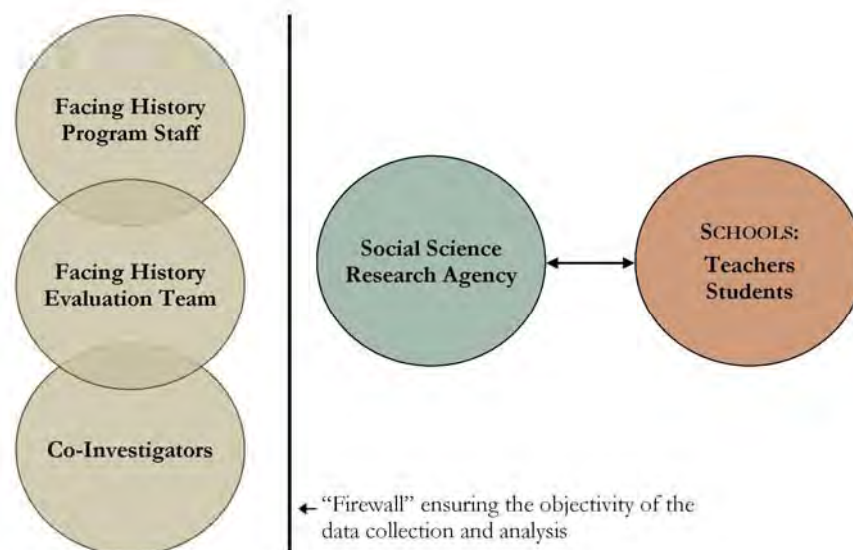
method and content that are flexibly used by teachers. Similarly, it is considerably easier to measure whether students can demonstrate a discrete skill or learn a piece of factual knowledge than it is to assess whether students develop awareness, critical thinking, and dispositions within the three domains of focus in this study—civic learning, social and ethical awareness, and historical understanding. This would be especially challenging, as we will see, in those areas where no measures yet existed to capture key outcomes of interest.

Finally, experimental studies of interventions in the real world of schools, rather than in more controlled conditions, are messy, and the stakes for the program’s developers are high. Many studies of this type have revealed no effects of interventions, and there was a real possibility that this research would be no different. It is not surprising, therefore, that few educational programs have taken the plunge to participate in large-scale, randomized controlled experiments. However, recognizing the dearth and importance of this type of evidence of effectiveness for policymakers, scholars, practitioners, and funders, and the fact that Facing History had already demonstrated its impact using other methods, Facing History committed to carrying out a comprehensive experimental study with longitudinal components.

### IMPLEMENTING THE OUTCOME RESEARCH

During the implementation of the experimental outcome research between 2007 and 2009, Abt Associates, Inc., conducted the data collection and data analysis, maintaining strict independence from Facing History and the university-based researchers (see Figure 3). This ensured the objectivity of the research. Abt Associates, Inc., handled all communication with schools and subjects and followed strict guidelines for research with human subjects, including obtaining appropriate informed consent for participation in the research from districts, principals, teachers, parents, and students. Student and teacher surveys were returned by teachers directly to Abt Associates, Inc., and were unavailable to Facing History and university-based researchers until Abt Associates, Inc., completed the analysis of all rating questions and finished their reports on the findings.

FIGURE 3  
**RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP MODEL FOR  
 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS**

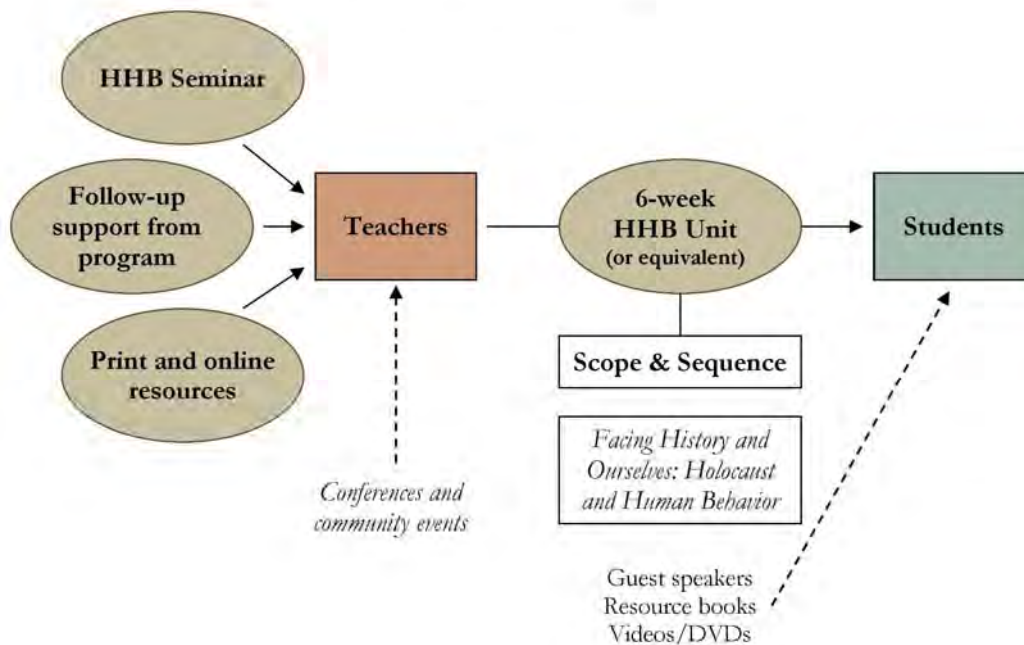


## RESEARCH DESIGN

The core of the NPDEP is a randomized controlled trial to confirm hypotheses about Facing History's impact on both teachers and students. The theory of change guiding this research, without listing specific outcomes targeted for teachers and students, is depicted in Figure 4.

FIGURE 4  
**FACING HISTORY NPDEP THEORY OF CHANGE**

(Boulay et al., 2009)



As mentioned previously, the experimental design involved the random assignment of schools, and therefore teachers and students, to treatment and control groups. This design allowed us to identify causal connections between the Facing History intervention and teacher and student outcomes.

The research team also carried out exploratory research that can provide additional information about program outcomes and generate new hypotheses for further research. Some of the exploratory research was carried out within the experimental design, and some was not. The exploratory research is focusing on 1) analyzing civic learning outcomes from scales that were included in the overall civic learning instrument but that were not included, a priori, in the hypothesis testing; 2) comparing the impact of Facing History on students when they are taught by teachers teaching it for the first versus the second time; and 3) analyses of variation in Facing History's impact when it is implemented in different settings (types of schools, region of the country) by different groups of teachers (subject taught, years of experience) and with different students (gender, grade level).

Longitudinal research tracking the program's impact on students will take place in Phase III of the project. The team will track long-term outcomes for students who participated in a full Facing

History unit that was taught by the first cohort of teachers in their second year of using the program. In addition, Phase III involves analyzing additional data that was gathered during the first two years of the research, including teachers' and students' written responses to open-ended survey questions, and conducting additional analyses such as the relationship among the various teacher and implementation variables, among the various student outcomes and implementation variables, and between teacher and student outcomes.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The experimental study was designed to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What is the impact of participation in Facing History and Ourselves Holocaust and Human Behavior professional development and follow-up services on high school teachers' sense of professional efficacy and satisfaction with teaching as a profession, compared to a group of control teachers who did not participate in the professional development? What is the impact of Facing History professional development on teachers two years after participating in the initial seminar?
  
- 2) What is the impact of exposure to the Facing History and Ourselves Holocaust and Human Behavior program on 9th and 10th grade students' a) civic learning, b) social and moral development, and c) historical understanding, compared to a group of control students who did not participate in the program?

### SAMPLE

This study involved recruiting schools in which neither the school nor its teachers had any previous exposure to Facing History and were not already seeking Facing History professional development. The sample included 134 teachers and 1,371 9th and 10th grade students in 76 schools.<sup>19, 20</sup> (For more details, see the Appendix at the end of this document.)

Teachers were offered free professional development seminar class sets of *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior* resource books and follow-up coaching and mentoring, as is typically offered by Facing History. In some regions, teachers were also offered a stipend to participate in the seminar, and all teachers were offered stipends for completing surveys. In exchange, the teachers would agree to attend the seminar and to implement a Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior unit covering the entire scope and sequence over the equivalent of a six-week period. Memos of understanding were signed by principals and teachers. For a school to be eligible for the study, at least one 9th or 10th grade teacher would need to participate.

Schools were randomly assigned to treatment and control groups. The treatment group teachers participated in a Facing History seminar during the summer of 2007 and then implemented Facing History in their teaching. They received follow-up services during the 2007–2008 school year. The control group waited until the summer of 2008 to participate in a seminar and the 2008–2009 school year to implement Facing History. Teachers completed baseline surveys in the spring of 2007. The measurement of student and teacher outcomes took place in the springs of 2008 and 2009. Figure 5 depicts the study's data collection schedule.

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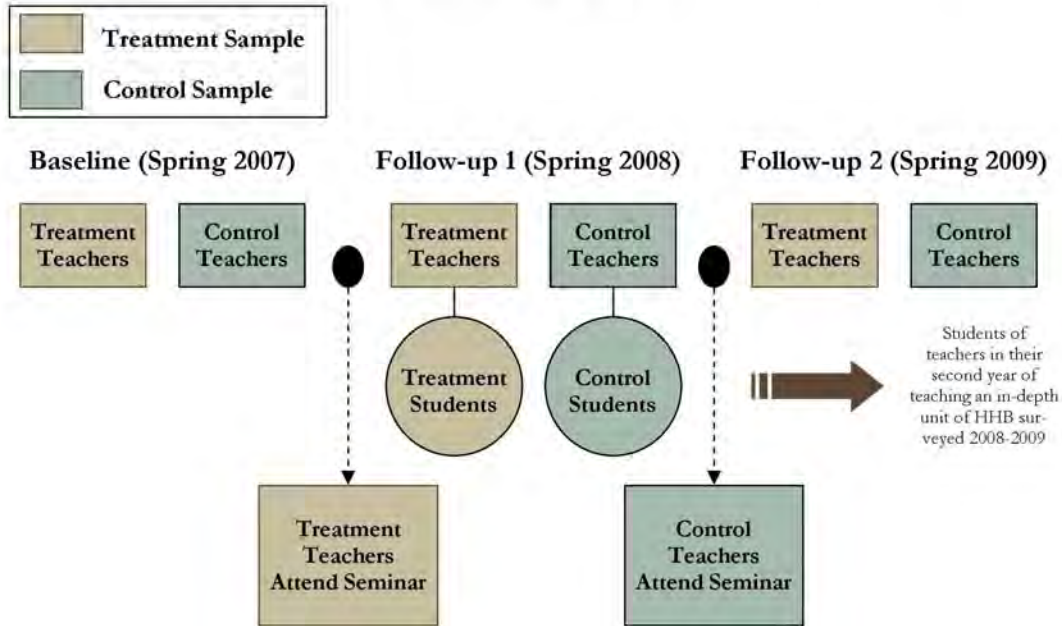
<sup>19</sup> In order to make it feasible to follow students longitudinally within their schools, the research focused on 9th and 10th graders rather than students closer to graduation.

<sup>20</sup> These numbers varied somewhat from the first year of the study (2007–2008) to the second year (2008–2009). In addition, there was some attrition and replacement of teachers in the sample during the study. More complete descriptions of the sample will be published in a subsequent article.

FIGURE 5

## NPDEP Design and Data Collection Overview: 2007-2009

(Boulay et al., 2009)



### MEASURES

Facing History formed four measurement working groups, each of which reviewed current field concepts and measurement tools in each of the key domains and the alignment of these concepts and measures with Facing History's theory of change. Then, the working groups selected measures for the study or developed them when no appropriate measures existed. The four measurement working groups focused on 1) teacher professional development and satisfaction, 2) student historical understanding, 3) student social and ethical awareness, and 4) student civic learning.

These measurement working groups were comprised of scholars who were selected because of their familiarity with Facing History's educational model and for their knowledge of educational theory and research that aligned with Facing History's goals.<sup>21</sup> As mentioned, the lead and co-investigators were responsible for the work of these measurement groups and for the theoretical linkages across teacher and student measures.

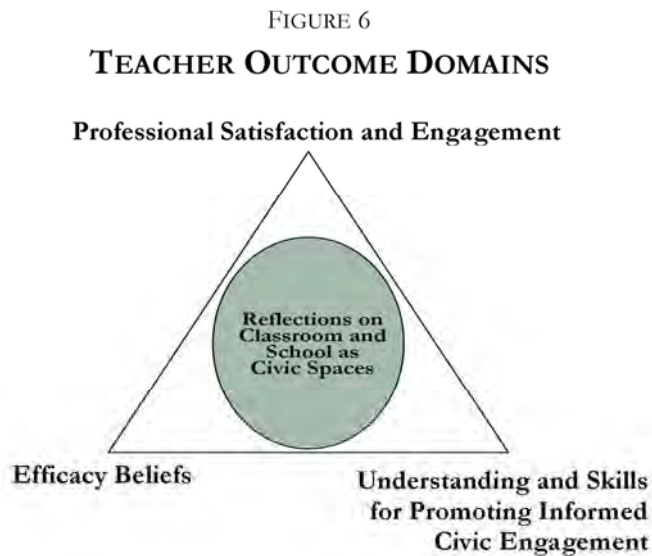
Each of these scholars had participated in Facing History sponsored theory–research–practice interchanges over the years. It was important to include such scholars to ensure that the measures would be valid for assessing teacher and student growth and learning for all the students, not just those participating in Facing History classes. It was essential that each measure would be a fair test of

<sup>21</sup> Working group members: 1) Teacher efficacy: Ethan Lowenstein, Dennis Barr, and Melinda Fine; 2) Teacher performance for promoting informed civic engagement: Ethan Lowenstein, Robert Selman, Dennis Barr, and Sigrun Adalbjarnardottir; 3) Student historical understanding: Alan Stoskopf, Angela Bermudez, Robert Selman, Ulrike Hartmann, and Dennis Barr; 4) Student civic learning: Melinda Fine, Angela Bermudez, Dennis Barr, Robert Selman, and Ethan Lowenstein; 5) Student social and ethical awareness: Robert Selman, Dennis Barr, and Luba Falk-Feigenberg. We are grateful to Facing History management and program staff, and students at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, who provided additional input for each of the measures.

the program and not biased in favor of Facing History teachers and students. This required focusing on measuring core competencies that are significant within each field and that are also anticipated outcomes of the Facing History model. The content of the measures, for example, could not be drawn from Facing History’s own resources nor could they use Facing History-specific vocabulary or methodology. Abt Associates, Inc., reviewed all measures selected or developed for the study by the measurement working groups to ensure that they would be unbiased and fair tests of the program, and only measures that were approved by Abt Associates, Inc., were used in the study.

### TEACHER MEASURES

The teacher measurement working group reviewed research related to teacher professional development in the humanities and searched for measures specifically related to promoting informed civic engagement. Further, the team reviewed Facing History’s conceptualizations of the program’s outcomes for teachers. Based on these reviews, the team decided to focus on 1) teacher self-efficacy, meaning their sense of their own knowledge and skills in a variety of key areas<sup>22</sup> (Lowenstein & Facing History and Ourselves, 2007); 2) satisfaction with teaching and, conversely, feelings of burnout (Maslach, Jackson, & Schwab, 1996); 3) professional engagement, expertise, and leadership (Lowenstein & Facing History and Ourselves, 2007); and 4) teacher performance of understanding and skills related to promoting students’ social awareness and civic learning using history (or what the working group came to call students’ “informed civic engagement”) (see Figure 6) (Barr, 2007; Lowenstein, Selman, Barr, Adalbjarnardottir, 2007a; Lowenstein, Selman, Barr, Adalbjarnardottir, & Facing History and Ourselves, 2007b).



**Teacher self-efficacy** Teacher self-efficacy is a critical component of teacher effectiveness in the classroom. Teacher efficacy is defined as, “A teacher’s judgment of his or her capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning.” (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk, & Hoy, in press). Efficacious teachers manifest higher professional commitment (Colardarci, 1992), are more likely to persist with struggling students (Gibson & Dembo, 1984), tend to experiment with methods of instruction, seek improved teaching methods, and experiment with instructional materials

<sup>22</sup> Component scales of *Teaching for Informed Civic Engagement Efficacy Belief Instrument* were developed by Ethan Lowenstein with assistance from Dennis Barr, Phredd Mathews Wall, Beth Boulay, Melinda Fine, Robert Selman, and Joshua Brown. Reliability, item range, and other statistical properties of the scales were calculated by Beth Boulay.

(Allinder, 1994; Guskey, 1988; Stein & Wang, 1988).)

Teacher efficacy beliefs are also powerfully related to student outcomes. While research on the connection between characteristics of teachers and the learning and behavior of students show few consistent relationships, "...a teachers' sense of efficacy is an exception to this general rule" (Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990). Teacher efficacy has been shown to be related to students' own sense of efficacy (Anderson, Greene, & Loewen, 1988) and motivation (Midgley, Feldlaufer, & Eccles, 1989), and, in turn, students' academic self-efficacy beliefs have been demonstrated to be positively related to academic performance and self-regulated learning (Hackett, 1995; Pajares, 1996; Schunk, 1991; Zimmerman, 1995). Students of efficacious teachers generally have outperformed students in other classes on standardized tests and other measures of achievement in rural, urban, majority black, and majority white schools (Watson, 1991; Moore & Esselman, 1992; Anderson et al., 1988). Given its relationship to both teacher effectiveness and student academic engagement and learning, the teacher measurement working group selected teacher self-efficacy as the key domain of study for the NPDEP.

The working group identified eight areas of teacher knowledge and skills that are relevant to Facing History and the field of teacher professional growth. The working group created survey items and scales for the seven areas where no such scales already existed (see Figure 6). The first three domains of self-efficacy include practices that are widely accepted as keys to teacher effectiveness in all disciplines and align well with Facing History's goals for teacher development (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Donovan, Bransford, & Pellegrino, 1999):

- Knowing students as individuals and learners and using that knowledge in teaching (learner-centered teaching)
- Creating safe, reflective, interactive, and engaging classroom learning environments (community-centered teaching)
- Teaching concepts, skills, and information with appropriate depth and rigor (knowledge-centered teaching)

In addition, four of the new self-efficacy scales created for the study address teacher knowledge and skills believed necessary to foster the specific student outcomes that comprise informed civic engagement as measured in the study:

- Promoting students' civic learning
- Fostering deliberation, meaning students' capacities to engage constructively in discussions involving controversial/difficult topics
- Promoting students' self and social awareness, ethical reflection, and tolerance
- Fostering students' historical understanding.

An eighth self-efficacy scale, efficacy in fostering students' *character growth*, was the only scale used in the NPDEP that had been employed in other studies (Milson, 2003).

**Satisfaction with teaching and professional growth** Second, the research explored the impact of Facing History on teacher satisfaction/burnout. Evaluations of Facing History have repeatedly demonstrated that seminars and follow-up work help teachers to feel revitalized and energized (Barr & Frey, 2004; Romer, 2008; Romer & Mann, 2008). Furthermore, teachers who are burned out are less likely to feel efficacious in their teaching (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). In addition, lower levels of burnout and higher levels of satisfaction with the teaching profession are key underpinnings of teacher retention (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Given the relevance of burnout/satisfaction to Facing History's past evaluation research, its theory of change, and its relationship to important policy concerns related to teacher effectiveness and retention, we decided to include this outcome in the NPDEP study. The research team selected a validated measure of teacher burnout/satisfaction, the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach, 1996), which has been used extensively in research on teachers (Byrne, 1989). The measure has three subscales: personal accomplishment, depersonalization, and



emotional exhaustion.

Third, the working group created a new scale designed to assess teachers' satisfaction with professional development and their sense of their own professional engagement and growth. Evaluations of Facing History professional development seminars and follow-up coaching have consistently shown that teachers report high levels of satisfaction with these services, saying that they increase their sense of professional engagement and expertise in their academic discipline (Romer, 2006b).

Finally, recognizing that self-report inventories provide only one kind of window into teacher development, the team decided to include a measure of teachers' performance of understanding. The measure assesses how teachers think about history, social, and civic learning aims. As no measure existed that focuses on teachers' capacities to integrate the historical, socio-ethical, and civic domains of teaching, Facing History and its research partners created a measure that would provide a window into *how teachers think about their practice* in this area, namely the *Teaching for Informed Civic Engagement in the Humanities: A Measure of Teacher Performance of Understanding* (Lowenstein et al., 2007b). As this measure was used in the exploratory research, we will describe it in a later section.

#### **FIDELITY OF IMPLEMENTATION**

In addition to measures of teacher and student outcomes, data were collected on the extent to which Facing History was implemented, both in terms of the follow-up services they received from Facing History and their classroom implementation, including the number of weeks they taught the program, the parts of the scope and sequence they covered, and the Facing History resources they used. This information is especially important when interpreting student findings. Facing History's theory of change posits that the desired student outcomes measured in the study will occur when students are exposed to a Facing History unit that covers the entire scope and sequence and that lasts a minimum of six weeks.

#### **STUDENT MEASURES**

The student component of the research targeted whether students who participated in Facing History classrooms would be better prepared than students in control classes a) to have stronger civic attitudes and dispositions across a variety of domains, b) to engage in and express deeper social and ethical awareness, and c) to make sounder historical analyses. The three student measurement working groups investigated what each of these components of informed engagement in society might look like in adolescence and the state of the art of measurement in each of these domains.

**Historical understanding** Facing History believes that civic engagement and ethical decision-making should be informed by a rigorous investigation of history, including learning and analyzing factual information, as well as developing skills for critical historical inquiry. International research over the last 25 years on how K-12 students understand and make meaning of history has resulted in a strong consensus that understanding history well requires developing conceptual competencies in five core areas: evidence, causality, agency, significance, and continuity and change (Ashby, Gordon, & Lee, 2005). Facing History's model involves promoting development in student thinking in each of these areas. However, no measurement tools existed that could assess the development of these skills for analyzing history. Therefore, Facing History developed *An Assessment Measure for Students' Historical Understanding* (Stoskopf et al., 2007a and 2007b), which assesses the sophistication of students' understanding of information about past events, specifically in the areas of evidence, causality, and

agency.<sup>23</sup> The measure asks students to interpret and integrate information from seven documents that provide historical information about inter-ethnic conflict in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s and to select items that they believe best explain aspects of what took place during that conflict. This is not an historical period that Facing History addresses in its professional development services and resources, so the measure would not be biased in favor of Facing History students.

**Facing History believes that civic engagement and ethical decision-making should be informed by a rigorous investigation of history, including learning and analyzing factual information, as well as developing skills for critical historical inquiry.**

**Civic learning** The civic learning working group reviewed existing evidence of Facing History’s impact, the organization’s espoused goals with respect to civic learning, and its relation to current field conceptions and debates (Fine, 2004). The team then selected and created scales that would assess dimensions of civic capacity particularly salient to the civic learning field and the Facing History program. The *Civic Learning Survey* (Fine, Bermudez, Barr, & Facing History, 2007) included scales within each of the following civic domains:

- Civic responsibility
- Civic efficacy
- Civic engagement
- Tolerance
- Opportunities for civic learning and engagement in class

Some of the measures used in the student civic learning instrument were pre-existing validated scales in the civic learning field, others were significantly adapted from these pre-existing scales and still others were uniquely created for the NPDEP study. For example, the working group created instruments to measure students’ beliefs about the importance of deliberating with others in class regarding controversial public issues and their actual deliberation in and out of class. Deliberation is central to Facing History’s pedagogy and curriculum and to democratic participation more generally.

**Social and ethical awareness** The social development and ethical awareness working group focused on the assessment of students’ social development and their competencies for reflecting on ethical decision-making in the school context. The measure of social development used in the study is an adaptation of the Relationship Questionnaire (Rel-Q), a developmental theory-driven measure that assesses the maturity of students’ social awareness and relational competencies, including the development of perspective-taking, interpersonal understanding, negotiation, and the awareness of the personal meaning of relationships. The Rel-Q has been validated as a developmental measure and used in other evaluations of programs for middle and high school students, including Facing History (Schultz, Selman, & LaRusso, 2003). Each item in the Rel-Q presents a brief story depicting an interpersonal dilemma with one of six themes relevant to Facing History and the field of social development: identity, social perspective-taking, social conflict resolution, social awareness, friendship and inclusion, and autonomy and respect. In a previous evaluation of Facing History using a quasi-experimental design, 8th grade Facing History students had significantly higher scores on most of the subscales of the Rel-Q (Schultz et al., 2001).

Second, the NPDEP social and ethical awareness working group created a new measure for students based on a tool piloted in previous research (Barr, 2005). The *Choices-in-Context Measure* (Selman, Barr,

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<sup>23</sup> These three competencies were selected as most central to Facing History’s approach, although Facing History does also seek to promote students’ abilities to analyze significance, and continuity and change.



Feigenburg, & Facing History and Ourselves, 2007a) includes four stories involving social and ethical dilemmas students may face in school and a set of questions that elicit students' reflections about potential strategies and justifications for choices in those situations. In addition, the *Choices-in-Context Measure* asks students about the frequency of these kinds of situations in their school, giving the research team an opportunity to examine the relationship between perceptions of social climate and reflections on ethical choices within that context.

## **FINDINGS**

The NPDEP has reached a significant milestone: all of the data for the experimental study have been collected, and we are able to report on initial findings. Additional analyses are taking place, including the analysis of written responses by students and teachers on each measure. These findings will be published as they become available. In addition, we will be carrying out longitudinal student research.<sup>24</sup>

### **OVERVIEW OF TEACHER OUTCOMES**

- Statistically significant and educationally meaningful impacts were found for all areas of teacher self-efficacy.
- Statistically significant and educationally meaningful impacts were found for most variables related to teacher professional development and satisfaction, including personal accomplishment; professional expertise, leadership, and growth; and satisfaction with professional development experiences.
- All outcomes for teachers were sustained over two years.
- All outcomes for teachers were replicated with a second cohort of teachers.

### **TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY**

The initial results of the teacher research demonstrate that Facing History professional development has a statistically significant and educationally meaningful impact on all eight areas of teachers' self-efficacy that were measured (Boulay et al., 2009). Facing History teachers reported a greater sense of their ability to create classroom environments that encouraged thoughtful, respectful deliberation and to use particular teaching practices designed to promote students' historical understanding, civic learning, ethical awareness, and character development than did control group teachers. Specifically, the study demonstrates that Facing History teachers expressed a greater sense of efficacy, in other words, greater confidence that they have the knowledge and skills necessary to promote:

- community-centered classrooms (i.e., the capacity to create classroom environments in which students treat each other with respect)
- learner-centered classrooms (i.e., the ability to make the subject matter personally relevant to students with diverse personal, cultural, and social identities)
- knowledge-centered classrooms (i.e., the ability to teach for understanding by asking questions that engage students with key ideas and concepts in the subject and promote students' curiosity about the world around them)
- student historical understanding (i.e., the ability to foster students' understanding of the key historical concepts of evidence, agency, and causality)
- student civic learning (i.e., the ability to promote students' understanding of key democratic principles and values, including freedom of expression, the protection of vulnerable groups,

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<sup>24</sup> Although the co-investigators read several versions and made suggestions for revisions of this public brief, at the time of its publication they had not co-authored any of the interpretations it contains. The interpretations presented here are entirely those drawn by the authors and Facing History and Ourselves.

equity and justice, and the importance of civic participation)

- student social and ethical awareness (i.e., the ability to promote students' capacity to understand others' points of view and to coordinate them with one's own)
- student character development (i.e., the ability to help students to be more respectful of others)

**Facing History teachers reported a greater sense of their ability to create classroom environments that encouraged thoughtful, respectful deliberation.**

#### **SATISFACTION WITH TEACHING AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH**

**Teacher burnout** The Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach, 1996) consists of three subscales, including personal accomplishment, emotional exhaustion, and depersonalization. Facing History teachers reported significantly greater feelings of personal accomplishment, a factor that has been found to counteract burnout. There were no statistically significant differences between Facing History and control group teachers for the emotional exhaustion or depersonalization subscales.

**Perceptions of the quality of professional development teachers have received and satisfaction with their own professional growth** The study demonstrates that Facing History teachers feel more energized and motivated by their professional development and teaching experiences and feel a greater sense of professional growth and engagement than their control group counterparts who had engaged in routine professional development unrelated to Facing History. For example, the intervention teachers reported the following outcomes to a greater degree than control group teachers:

- Received needed support to engage students in sensitive and difficult moral and civic conversations
- Received professional development experiences that engaged their minds and hearts
- Received professional development experiences that energized and motivated them
- Were interested in having more responsibility and leadership in their discipline
- Felt greater expertise in their subject area

**Facing History teachers feel more energized and motivated by their professional development and teaching experiences and feel a greater sense of professional growth and engagement.**

**High ratings of Facing History professional development follow-up services by the intervention teachers** Both the first (2007) and second (2008) cohorts of teachers that received Facing History professional development reported receiving a wide range of follow-up activities that they overwhelmingly rated as high quality. These services included support in developing a Facing History unit; help finding online, print, video, and other resources; support developing particular lessons; modeling of lessons in the classroom; consultation regarding the management of classroom dynamics; and follow-up workshops and conferences.

#### **FIDELITY OF TEACHER IMPLEMENTATION OF FACING HISTORY**

Fidelity of implementation in this study, as described earlier, is a measure of the *quantity* of Facing History teaching that the intervention teachers carried out during the first year of the study and not

the *quality* of that teaching. The findings related to fidelity are descriptive and are not treated as outcomes. However, they help to interpret outcomes for students as the program's theory of change assumes that there is a certain threshold of exposure to Facing History that is necessary to impact students in ways that the measures can detect. For this study, high fidelity classroom implementation was defined as teaching the equivalent of six weeks of Facing History and spending at least two hours on most of the components of the scope and sequence.

Data analysis reveals a mixed picture of the fidelity of implementation of the Facing History program. The distribution of teachers' fidelity ratings clearly shows that teachers varied in the level of *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior* implementation in study classrooms. Approximately half (47 percent) of Facing History teachers followed the program's time and resource expectations with high fidelity. The remaining 53 percent did not deliver the program to students with full fidelity.<sup>25</sup> These results reveal a sample of teachers who implemented Facing History to varying degrees in their classrooms and likewise a sample of students who received *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior* units from their teachers with varying levels of fidelity to the Facing History implementation model.

### OVERVIEW OF STUDENT IMPACTS

This section provides an overview of the student outcomes of the Facing History and Ourselves National Professional Development and Evaluation Project in three areas: historical understanding, civic learning, and social and ethical awareness (Boulay et al., 2009).

- The study demonstrates that Facing History had a statistically significant impact on students' overall historical understanding.<sup>26, 27</sup>
- The study demonstrates that Facing History had a statistically significant impact on the following variables of civic learning:
  - civic efficacy
  - respect for the rights of others whose views differ from one's own
  - awareness of the danger of prejudice and, specifically, antisemitism
  - perceptions of the classroom as providing opportunities for civic learning
  - perceptions of the classroom as having an open climate.
- Facing History students scored higher, on average, than control students on 100 percent of the civic and academic outcomes measured, though only some differences were statistically significant.
- These findings were replicated in a second year with a new group of students
- No statistically significant differences were found on measures of students' tolerance for ethnic/racial groups, beliefs about the importance of deliberating with others in class regarding controversial public issues, actual deliberation, social awareness, and the parts of the ethical awareness and decision-making measure that have been analyzed thus far.

### HISTORICAL UNDERSTANDING

<sup>25</sup> Statement is based on comparing the hours respondents reported spending teaching Facing History and 20 hours; 20 hours is equivalent to a few hours less than the time a teacher would have spent if he/she had taught Facing History for 45 minutes a day (typical class period), five days a week, for six weeks.

<sup>26</sup>  $P < .05$

<sup>27</sup> The scores of three sub-scales—skills for interpreting evidence, skills for analyzing what leads people to make ethical choices, and skills for thinking critically about cause and effect—are used to calculate the overall historical understanding score.

The historical understanding measure, developed specifically for the NPDEP, evaluates the degree to which students demonstrate an understanding of past events in a historically-disciplined manner. Rather than focusing on the recall of dates, places, and events from the past, it emphasizes the quality of students' thinking about historical information that was provided about inter-ethnic conflict in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s.<sup>28</sup> This measure of historical understanding focuses on three core aspects of historical understanding, including skills for interpreting evidence, analyzing what leads people to make ethical choices, and skills for thinking critically about cause and effect. At the outset of the study, the Facing History and Ourselves organization hypothesized that students in the control and Facing History groups would learn historical concepts equally well. However, the analysis shows that Facing History students outperformed their control group counterparts on the overall measure of historical understanding.<sup>29</sup>

**The study demonstrates that Facing History had a statistically significant impact on students' historical understanding.**

### **CIVIC LEARNING**

The Civic Learning Survey included scales within five domains of civic learning, including civic efficacy, tolerance, opportunities for civic learning and participation in class, civic engagement, and civic responsibility.

The Civic Self-Efficacy scale examines how efficacious students feel in understanding and/or engaging in civic matters. The scale asks students to rate their agreement with a series of statements, such as whether they feel well-informed and capable of speaking up, and whether they believe their public actions will make a difference. Facing History students outperformed control group students on this measure.

The tolerance domain consisted of four measures which explore different dimensions of tolerance. Facing History students demonstrated more tolerance on two of these measures. First, statistically significant differences were found on a measure of students' tolerance for others who express political views with which the students themselves disagree (Fine, Bermudez, & Facing History and Ourselves, 2007; Avery, 1988; Sullivan, Piereson, & Marcus, 1982). Second, Facing History students demonstrated greater awareness of the experiences of prejudice and discrimination in the past or present of the particular ethnic, racial, or religious groups that they named. Further, Facing History students were more likely to be aware of antisemitism than control group students.

**Facing History students demonstrated more tolerance for others who express political views with which the students themselves disagree and a greater awareness of prejudice and discrimination towards ethnic, racial, and religions groups in the past and present.**

Statistically significant differences were not found for the other two measures within the domain of tolerance, the Modern Racism Scale (McConahay, 1986)—which assesses tolerance for ethnic/racial groups—and The Deliberation Convictions Scale—which examines students' beliefs about the importance of deliberating with others in class about controversial public issues (Fine, Bermudez and Facing History and Ourselves, 2007).

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<sup>28</sup> The measure focuses on historical events that Facing History does not cover in its professional development nor in its print or online resources so that the measure would not be biased in favor of Facing History students.

<sup>29</sup> The overall measure combines the scores for the three subscales relating to evidence, causality, and agency.

Outcomes within the civic classroom opportunities domain broadly examine students' opportunities to engage in civic-related experiences (such as learning about civic issues) in the classroom. Facing History students viewed their classroom as providing greater opportunities for civic learning on two of the three scales, including the Engagement With Civic Matters Scale (Kahne, 2007) and the Classroom Open Climate Scale (teaching practices) (Flanagan, et al., 2007). On the Engaging with Civic Matters Scale, students identify the extent to which they agree that they have had opportunities in class to advocate on civic issues, engage in conversation about civic matters, and participate in civic action. For example, survey items ask students to rate whether they have been given opportunities to learn about people who work to make society better, to talk about ways to improve their community, and to learn about the dangers of prejudice and discrimination.

The Classroom Open Climate Scale measures a variety of dimensions of classroom climate. The first sub-scale (Teacher Practices) focuses on *teacher* practice in creating an open classroom environment, addressing such things as whether teachers encourage discussion among students who hold different opinions, whether they expect students to listen to one another's opinions, and whether they treat students respectfully. Facing History students perceived their teachers as creating more open classroom climates than control students.

The second sub-scale (Student Practices) focuses on *student* practices in creating an open classroom environment, addressing such things as whether students feel they have a voice in what happens, whether they are encouraged to express their opinions, and whether they can disagree with the teacher as long as they are respectful. No statistically significant differences between Facing History and control students were found on this sub-scale.

Two scales were used within the domain of civic engagement. The Civic Discourse Scale asks students to rate the frequency with which they engage in civic discourse in their lives both in and out of school (Haste, 2005). Although the difference between Facing History and control students did not reach the conventional standard of significance ( $p < .05$ ), the differences between the group came very close to statistical significance ( $p = .058$ ) and would be considered a "trend." No statistically significant differences were found for the Deliberation Practice Scale which asks students to rate the frequency with which they engage in a variety of civic-focused deliberative practices, such as discussing social and political problems with others (Fine, Bermudez, & Facing History and Ourselves, 2007).

The overall Civic Responsibility Scale, the only one used in the civic responsibility domain, contains three subscales that identify different dimensions of a student's sense of his or her primary roles and responsibilities as a citizen (Kahne, Middaugh, & Schutjer-Mance, 2005). The research team hypothesized that Facing History students would score higher on justice-oriented citizenship, one of the three subscales of the measure, but no statistically significant differences were found. The team included the two other subscales, participatory and personally responsible citizenship, in the exploratory research.

#### **SOCIAL AND ETHICAL AWARENESS**

The newly developed measure of ethical awareness and decision making, the *Choices-in-Context Measure*, consists of both item-rating and written response questions (Selman et al., 2007a). At present, only the item-rating questions have been analyzed, and no statistically significant differences were found between Facing History and control group students. Similarly, no statistically significant differences were found for the measure of social awareness used in the study, the Relationship Questionnaire (Schultz et al., 2003)

## EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The teacher findings in this study are powerful, with large effect sizes. They demonstrate that quality education—involving rigorous and engaging content and sophisticated pedagogical techniques designed to foster academic and civic growth—is scalable. The high-quality professional development services that Facing History offers enable “ordinary” teachers—including those working in challenging, high-need conditions—to offer high-quality content and learning experiences with a strong sense of efficacy.

The research team aligned the teacher and student outcomes to provide a more comprehensive picture of the impact of Facing History in schools. The team found that Facing History has an impact on teachers’ perceived efficacy in many of the same areas where student outcomes were found. While the program caused these positive outcomes in teachers and students in areas that are theoretically linked, the research does not demonstrate that teacher self-efficacy and satisfaction were the specific causes of the student outcomes in the corresponding areas. Regardless of the exact causal mechanism between teachers and students, the fact that the program caused teacher and student outcomes in areas that are theoretically aligned suggests that the program is addressing critical needs in education including:<sup>30</sup>

1. Creating safer and more engaging learning environments
2. Promoting respect for the rights of others whose views differ from one’s own
3. Fostering awareness of the power and danger of prejudice and discrimination
4. Teaching critical thinking about history and contemporary events
5. Increasing students’ sense of efficacy in making a difference in society

**The need for safer and more engaging learning environments** The overall state of education is sobering. Many students are disengaged or feel unsafe in school. A new Canadian study shows how levels of student engagement tend to decline steadily throughout the middle and secondary school grades (Willms, Friesen, & Milton, 2009). In the United States, 7,000 students drop out every day. Only about 70 percent of students graduate from high school with a regular high school diploma. In the fifty largest cities, only 53 percent of students graduate on time (Committee on Education and Labor Committee, U.S. House of Representatives, May 12, 2009). Schools must use curricula and methods that engage students.

Students also need safe spaces in which to learn. Violence is all too frequent in the lives of young people. In one major study, an estimated 30 percent of 6th to 10th graders in the United States were either bullies, targets of bullying, or both (Nansel et al., 2001). Bullying and violence contribute to poor school climate, interfere with student learning, and lower teacher job satisfaction.

As a result of students’ disengagement and feeling unsafe in school, a rising number of youth never have the opportunity to learn the skills they need to think critically and to develop a sense that they are capable of making a positive difference in the world (National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine, 2004). Schools must be equipped to create safe and engaging learning environments if they are to succeed both in persuading students to stay in school and to achieve.

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<sup>30</sup> The results of the statistical tests for each variable are presented in Table 1.

**TABLE 1: STUDY FINDINGS**  
**CORRESPONDENCE OF TEACHER AND STUDENT OUTCOMES**

*In the table below, all the p-values (used to assess the difference in means between intervention and control groups) are statistically significant, and all of the effect sizes (used to gauge the strength of the program's effect) are educationally meaningful. There were 1,371 students and 134 teachers in the study sample.*

Domain	Measure	Scale	Control Mean	FH Mean	P Value	Effect Size
Classroom learning environment	Teacher self-efficacy in creating a safe and engaging classroom learning environment	1–5	3.87	4.24	<.0001	.76
	Students experience a safe and engaging learning environment	1–5	3.96	4.08	.027	.17
Deliberation	Teacher self-efficacy in promoting deliberation	1–5	3.77	4.21	<.001	.85
	Students respect the rights of groups whose views differ from their own	1–5	3.10	3.26	.016	.18
Inter-group awareness	Teacher self-efficacy in promoting student tolerance and psychosocial development	1–5	3.77	4.21	<.0001	.85
	Students' increased awareness of the power and danger of prejudice, discrimination, and antisemitism	0–1	.18	.46	<.0001	.70
Historical understanding	Teacher self-efficacy in promoting students' historical understanding	1–5	3.81	4.20	<.0001	.66
	Student develop historical understanding skills	0–1	.54	.56	.029	.14
Civic efficacy	Teacher self-efficacy in promoting student civic literacy	1–5	3.80	4.11	<.0001	.67
	Student civic efficacy	1–5	3.27	3.41	.019	.20

This experimental study demonstrates that Facing History and Ourselves teachers feel significantly more capable than teachers in the control group of creating safe and engaging classroom climates, environments where students can participate in open and complex conversations and understand each other's perspectives. The findings for students confirm that teachers' positive beliefs about their ability to create safe and engaging learning environments were actualized in their classroom practice. In other words, when compared with students in the control group, students in the Facing History and Ourselves classroom also perceived their teachers as creating safer and more engaging classrooms.

**The need for increased tolerance and respect for the rights of others whose views differ from one's own** A positive learning environment is one in which students feel safe enough to share their views about difficult issues, even if those perspectives are unpopular. In such contexts, students are much more likely to be invested in learning, and they can develop more informed and sophisticated views.

The study demonstrates that Facing History and Ourselves teachers feel significantly more capable of promoting students' critical, but also respectful, engagement with others whose views differ from their own. Again, the teachers' beliefs about their abilities to promote deliberation and tolerance were reflected in effective classroom practices, since the study also demonstrates a corresponding impact on students: Facing History and Ourselves significantly increases students' respect for the rights of others whose views differ from their own.

**The need for increased awareness of the dangers of prejudice and discrimination** With the number of hate groups operating in the United States increasing by 54 percent since 2000 and hate crimes against some groups on the rise (Leadership Conference on Civil Rights Education Fund, 2009), schools must help students develop the awareness, skills, and attitudes they need to live and work productively and safely with others who are different from themselves. This study demonstrates the positive impact of Facing History and Ourselves professional development on teachers' belief in their ability to promote a safe space for students from diverse cultural, racial, religious, and social groups to interact across social and cultural boundaries. Furthermore, the study showed that Facing History and Ourselves helps teachers feel capable of teaching students to understand the importance of protecting vulnerable groups. Teacher self-efficacy in these areas corresponds with student outcomes measured in the study: Facing History and Ourselves students demonstrated greater awareness of the power and danger of prejudice and discrimination in the past and present, and the dynamics of antisemitism in particular.

**The need for critical thinking about complex historical and current events** Today, young people must be prepared to think critically about the flood of information that they are exposed to through the media (social networking, blogs, information on the internet, TV, Twitter, etc.). They need to be able to separate fact from rumor, and they must be able to make sense of complex contemporary events involving intergroup conflict.

This study shows that Facing History and Ourselves prepares teachers to feel more capable of promoting their students' capacity to analyze historical and contemporary events by helping their students acquire skills for interpreting evidence, analyzing what leads people to make ethical choices, and thinking critically about cause and effect.

Facing History teachers not only felt more capable of promoting students' historical understanding, but also the student results demonstrate that they were, indeed, more effective than control teachers in doing so. A test of historical understanding was developed for the study that required students to analyze primary source material, including narratives, public documents, and graphs, related to the conflict in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s. The results of the test show that Facing History and



Ourselves students were able to apply the skills for analyzing history they had learned from their study of *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior* to better understand this new historical case study. Indeed, Facing History and Ourselves students demonstrated a more sophisticated understanding of this history than the control group. Therefore, Facing History and Ourselves teachers not only had a sense of efficacy in promoting students' skills for analyzing history, but also they were actually more effective in doing so with their students than control group teachers.

**The need for young people to know that their thoughtful civic participation matters** Positive civic dispositions and skills for historical analysis are necessary for mature engagement as citizens, but it is also critical that students feel motivated and able to make a difference in their schools, their communities, and the larger society. At a time when many students feel shut down, disengaged, and are apathetic about social, civic, or political issues, can professional development support teachers in helping students feel capable and motivated to make a difference in society?

This study demonstrates that Facing History and Ourselves teachers feel more capable than control group teachers of teaching students that their voice matters and that they can influence social, civic, and political issues. Again, teacher self-efficacy was translated into effective practice: the study shows that Facing History and Ourselves students also feel more capable of making a difference in their classrooms and the larger society than control group students.

**Facing History and Ourselves students feel more capable of making a difference in their classrooms and the larger society than control group students.**

## **PUTTING THE STUDY IN CONTEXT**

The Facing History and Ourselves National Professional Development and Evaluation study is the most rigorous and conservative test of Facing History's effectiveness: a randomized controlled experimental study of the program's lasting impact on teachers and students. Although policymakers are calling for evidence from these kinds of studies, they are still relatively rare in educational evaluation. Further, most such studies have not shown significant effects for students because of the high bar they set for determining success. As one scholar put it, "Without studies using random assignment, programs can look better than they are. With such studies, they can look worse than they are" (Selman et al., 2007b).

It should be emphasized that the teachers chosen for the study were not selected because they were proven Facing History teachers—in fact they had never even expressed interest in the program. The schools they came from were places in which Facing History had never been taught. Sixty-six percent of these schools were underperforming schools<sup>31</sup> based on federal criteria. Most were high poverty schools.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, Facing History is a complex program requiring a wide range of knowledge and skills that take time to develop, yet the teachers in the intervention group were teaching Facing History for the first time.

One of the reasons that experimental studies have only rarely yielded significant findings for students is that programs are often not implemented sufficiently, yet researchers must incorporate all teacher

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<sup>31</sup> Schools that have not met annual yearly progress, based on standardized test scores, for two consecutive years are considered "underperforming."

<sup>32</sup> In one quarter of the schools, 90 percent or more of the students were eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL), making them eligible for school-wide federal Title I funding. In 60 percent of the schools, 40–89 percent of students were eligible for FRPL.

and student data in their analysis. This level of rigor even requires including those teachers who were unable to implement the program at all, and their students, in the data analysis. In our study, only half of the Facing History teachers were able to implement the program with full fidelity. In addition, the study attempted to measure complex aspects of student growth with several measurement tools that were being used in evaluation research for the first time. Would these tools be sensitive to program impacts? Would they be too burdensome for teachers and students to complete? Given all of these factors, it would not have been surprising had the research detected no program effects at all, and especially for student outcomes. These factors provide an important context for interpreting the findings.

Further analyses are needed. The difference between the effect sizes of teacher and student outcomes in the experimental study is common but warrants further analysis to better understand the conditions that maximize the impact of the program on students. Were some of the teachers attempting to implement what they had learned but not yet able to do so as successfully as they wished they could? Does use of particular supports such as Facing History curriculum materials and/or follow-up mentoring and other professional development activities contribute to greater alignment between teachers' self-efficacy and their classroom effectiveness in some areas and not others? Is the threshold for an effective Facing History intervention quantitative (a six-week unit with a certain number of hours spent on each component of the scope and sequence, as posited in the study), qualitative (skillful use of certain practices and approaches), or a combination of the two? What factors, such as overall teaching experience, experience teaching Facing History, and support from colleagues within the school, make the biggest difference? Are teachers of Facing History more effective at promoting historical understanding, civic learning, social development, and ethical awareness when these goals are clearly articulated in the school's mission, and embraced by the school community?

It will also be important to look for latent effects in the longitudinal study. Does experiencing a Facing History course in 9th or 10th grade, even under less than ideal circumstances, have an impact on students' civic commitments, ethical awareness, social maturity, or academic success in their later high school years? Are initial program effects enhanced or attenuated with time?

## **ONGOING DATA ANALYSES OF WRITTEN RESPONSES**

Some questions on the teacher and student surveys were open-ended, asking for written responses. Dennis Barr, Robert Selman, and Ethan Lowenstein are working with doctoral students at the Harvard Graduate School of Education to develop coding frameworks for these items and will use those frameworks to analyze program outcomes. These written response survey questions are briefly described below.<sup>33</sup>

### **TEACHER WRITTEN RESPONSES**

Throughout its history, Facing History has supported and carried out research focused on how teachers who participate in Facing History professional development make meaning of their practice, apply what they are learning in seminars and through follow-up mentoring in their teaching, and think about the quality and rigor of their teaching practices. The NPDEP offered an excellent opportunity to further the organization's learning about its own efforts to promote teacher effectiveness, as well as to contribute knowledge to the field of teacher development more generally. There is a spectrum of measurement approaches focusing on assessing teacher effectiveness that range from self-report of practice at one end of the spectrum to live classroom observations at the

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<sup>33</sup> Some written responses will be analyzed for exploratory research and theory-building, and some as part of the outcome research.

other (Lowenstein et al., 2007a). Each method has its advantages and disadvantages. Self-report measures, such as the self-efficacy scales used in this study, provide a window into teachers' sense of their own teaching competencies, but they cannot reveal information about actual practice without the addition of direct observation. Classroom observations, however, were not practical for this research, given the size of the sample and the location of the schools across eight different geographic regions in the United States.

As described earlier, for this study, Facing History worked with research partners to develop a new teacher performance measure that focuses on teacher awareness of practices related to promoting informed civic engagement using history. Researchers can use the measure, and its coding scheme, to interpret the sophistication of teachers' thinking about their practice, which may be more directly related to actual practice than self-reported efficacy. The first part of the measure asks teachers to respond to a set of questions focused on how they frame the purpose of using historical content related to a time of intergroup strife in history (the war in the former Yugoslavia) and their strategies for doing so. This part of the teacher performance measure will be used to build scholarly knowledge about the different ways that teachers think about using historical documents related to ethnic conflict.

The second part of the teacher performance measure involves a hypothetical incident in which a girl from the former Yugoslavia is teased because of her accent when she speaks English in a classroom in the United States. The coding manual thus far focuses on teachers' thinking about how they would handle the situation and how their strategies reflect their teaching aims (Lowenstein et al., 2009; Hsiao et al., 2010). Coding categories focus on whether and how teachers take into account students' academic learning, ethical reflection, emotional engagement, and their consideration of contextual factors (Lowenstein et al., 2009).

### **STUDENT WRITTEN RESPONSES**

There were two questions on the civic learning survey that asked for written responses. The first question asks students to name any group(s) that they learned about during the past school year in terms of the groups' past or current experiences of prejudice and/or discrimination. The second question asks students to pick one of the groups they named and to describe how their attitudes may have changed towards that group. The data from the former question are included in the experimental outcome study, and the data from the latter question are being used in exploratory research (Mann, Howard, Barr, & Packrone, 2010).

The *Choices-in-Context Measure*, described earlier, includes several written-response questions in addition to the item-rating questions (Selman et al., 2007a). The analysis of students' written responses will be integrated with the analysis of the item rating questions to provide a more complete picture of the impact of Facing History on students' ethical awareness. In addition, students' written responses are being used for exploratory research and theory building about developmental, cultural, and contextual dimensions to adolescents' ethical decision-making. The research team began in 2008 to develop the coding framework for these open-ended questions (Molano, Selman, Barr & Merkle, 2010).

*An Assessment Measure for Students' Historical Understanding* includes a written-response question that is being used to explore the different ways students understand the historical material on the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, presented in the measure (Bellino, Pulido & Selman, 2010). This knowledge will be useful to anyone interested in the different ways that youth make connections between history and their own lives and in the relationship between the growth of historical understanding and social and civic learning.

## CONCLUSION

The Facing History and Ourselves National Professional Development and Evaluation Project responds directly to the urgent need for robust evidence regarding educational approaches that can support the development and retention of effective teachers capable of fostering the academic achievement and civic learning of their students. There is a consensus among policymakers, large foundations, school administrators, and scholars that effective teachers are at the heart of educational success for students. More than thirty years of practice-based research on Facing History’s educational model provided the foundation for this landmark study that uses the toughest standard of evaluation methodology—a randomized controlled experiment—to rigorously examine the model’s impact on teachers and their students.

Facing History’s model addresses teacher and student competencies that are at the heart of education for democracy: skills such as the capacity to deliberate with others over complex, meaningful, social and civic issues using history; attitudes such as respect for differences; and the recognition that as members of a democracy we have rights as well as responsibilities. Too often, these skills and attitudes seem lacking in the public discourse. If we are to work to preserve and even strengthen our democracy, we must invest in educational models that not only promote academic achievement, but marry such achievement to basic qualities necessary to participate thoughtfully and actively to preserve and protect the freedoms we cherish.

**If we are to work to preserve and even strengthen our democracy, we must invest in educational models that not only promote academic achievement, but marry such achievement to basic qualities necessary to participate thoughtfully and actively to preserve and protect the freedoms we cherish.**

Facing History’s civic learning model has been implemented in classrooms throughout the world, and its effectiveness in promoting ethical awareness, deliberative capacity, and academic learning has been thoroughly documented. Its teachers, educated and inspired by their Facing History professional development experiences and supported in multiple ways by the Facing History staff and their school communities, routinely engage their students in intellectually challenging and profoundly meaningful civic learning. What had not been investigated in a large-scale study before the NPDEP, however, was whether “ordinary” teachers who were not seeking the kind of professional development provided by Facing History, could be similarly educated and inspired and whether they could offer similarly high-quality educational experiences with similarly profound effects on their students’ academic, civic, and ethical growth in their first year.

The NPDEP results are impressive by any standard but especially so given the constraints of an experimental design. Experimental studies set the highest bar possible for demonstrating success and pose daunting challenges for those seeking to carry them out. Other experimental studies of character, moral, or civic education programs have shown very few positive impacts on students. The methodology requires that all data gathered from teachers and students be included in the analysis, even data from treatment group members who fail to implement the “intervention” and students who, therefore, receive limited or no exposure to it.

Moreover, with the NPDEP, Facing History risked measuring multiple outcomes for teachers and students within a range of different academic domains in order to comprehensively test the full set of hypothesized outcomes of its interdisciplinary model in an integrated design. Research with a more narrow focus would have been simpler to carry out and perhaps more likely to demonstrate larger program effects, but such research would have ultimately been less meaningful. Given these and

other factors, it is possible that these statistically significant and educationally meaningful findings may even underestimate the model's impact. Furthermore, the fact that the results for teachers were *sustained over two years* and *replicated with a second cohort of teachers and students* adds even more weight to the evidence from this study of the model's effectiveness and scalability.

Finally, the fact that the study found significant impacts of the program for students in the very same areas where teacher self-efficacy outcomes were found suggest that Facing History is impacting teacher effectiveness in the classroom. The initial findings of the NPDEP, therefore, represent an important step forward in the pursuit of rigorous evidence of educational approaches that promote teacher effectiveness. In summary, the project extends Facing History's tradition of leading research that inspires practitioners and scholars and builds theory and knowledge about effective approaches to educating for democracy.

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## APPENDIX

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### Year One Schools' Demographic Characteristics (N=76)

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	N	%
Facing History and Ourselves vs. Control	38	50%
Facing History and Ourselves	38	50%
Control	38	50%
Region		
Chicago	8	11%
Cleveland	8	11%
Denver	7	9%
Los Angeles	15	20%
Memphis/Nashville	8	11%
New England	7	9%
New York/New Jersey	12	16%
San Francisco	11	14%
School Type		
Public – Regular	52	68%
Public – Other (Charter, Magnet, etc)	16	21%
Private	8	11%
	Average/Median <sup>a</sup>	
School size	1,018/781	

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Notes:

<sup>a</sup> Missing school size data for two schools, therefore average/median based on 74 schools.

Year One Teachers' Demographic Characteristics (N<sup>a</sup>=134)

Panel 1		
	Mean	SD
Years of Teaching Experience	9.25	8.74
Years Teaching at Current School	4.64	4.40
Panel 2		
	N <sup>b</sup>	% <sup>c</sup>
Sample		
<i>Facing History and Ourselves</i>	53	40%
<i>Control</i>	81	60%
Highest Level of Education		
<i>Bachelor's level</i>		
Bachelor's	10	8%
Bachelor's + coursework	39	29%
<i>Master's level or greater</i>		
Master's	30	23%
Master's + coursework	50	38%
Doctorate	4	3%
Race		
<i>White</i>	107	80%
<i>Other</i>	26	20%
Type of Course		
<i>History</i>	86	67%
<i>English</i>	33	26%
<i>Other</i>	9	7%
Type of HHB Course		
<i>History</i>	92	73%
<i>English</i>	26	21%
<i>Other</i>	8	6%

Notes:

<sup>a</sup>This table was computed using all 134 teachers who completed a follow-up survey. Baseline scores were imputed for the 21 teachers who did not complete a baseline survey as we do not expect demographics to change from baseline to follow-up.

<sup>b</sup>N's do not always add up to 134 due to missing data.

<sup>c</sup>Percentages were calculated using the N observations for which data were available as the denominator; therefore, percentages always add up to 100.

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Year One Student Demographic Characteristics (N<sup>a</sup>=1,371)

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	N <sup>b</sup>	% <sup>c</sup>
Study Group		
<i>Control</i>	759	55%
<i>Facing History and Ourselves</i>	612	45%
Grade		
9th	446	33%
10th	925	67%
Sex		
Male	584	43%
Female	787	57%
First Language		
English	966	71%
Other	401	29%
Race		
Hispanic	484	36%
White	432	32%
Black	183	13%
Asian	171	13%
Other	90	7%
Mother's Education Level		
Did not finish high school	284	21%
Finished high school	280	21%
Attended some college	252	19%
Finished college	340	26%
More than college	165	12%
Father's Education Level		
Did not finish high school	321	25%
Finished high school	283	22%
Attended some college	203	16%
Finished college	307	24%
More than college	151	12%

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Notes:

<sup>a</sup>The student sample includes 1,257 9th and 10th grade students who submitted both Book 1 and Book 2, 114 students who submitted only Book 1, and 30 students who submitted only Book 2. Given that the student demographic questions were found in Book 1, we have calculated the demographics in this table from the sample of students (N=1,371) who submitted the first of two survey booklets.

<sup>b</sup>N's do not always add up to 1,371 due to missing data.

<sup>c</sup>Percentages were calculated using the N observations for which data were available as the denominator; therefore, percentages always add up to 100.