

The California Teachers Collaborative for Holocaust and Genocide Education

SCHOOL YEAR 2024-25 LEARNINGS



AUTHOR

Jon R. Norman, PhD
Chief Research and Evaluation Director
Jewish Family and Children's Services
Holocaust Center

HIGHLIGHTS

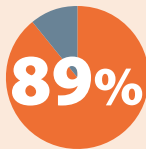
During the 2024-25 school year, the California Teachers Collaborative for Holocaust and Genocide Education continued to exhibit dynamic impact:

2,347
educators

participated in professional development activities with members of the Collaborative.



98% of Collaborative educators used resources from Collaborative partners.



89% of Collaborative educators felt more confident teaching the Holocaust and genocide because of their participation in the Collaborative.

THE COLLABORATIVE

The California Teachers Collaborative for Holocaust and Genocide Education (the Collaborative) is a statewide network of 14 leading organizations focused on Holocaust and genocide education. (See Appendix A for a complete list of organizations.)

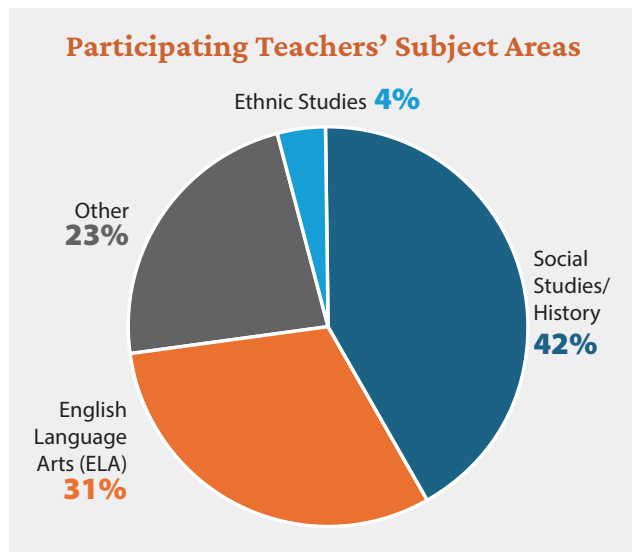
Through standards-aligned lesson plans, expert-led professional development sessions, and a wealth of educational resources, the Collaborative empowers educators in teaching the lessons of history and what happens when bias goes unchecked.

By 2029, the Collaborative aims to:

- Train 8,500 teachers through professional development workshops and institutes.
- Serve all California school districts with students in grades 6-12.
- Educate 1,062,500 California students.

Continued Impact of the Collaborative

During the 2024-25 school year, the Collaborative continued to support educators across the state in teaching about the Holocaust and genocide. This research brief describes how educators taking part in Collaborative activities continue to expand their capacities and capabilities in Holocaust and Genocide education. Participating educators extend the Collaborative’s reach by sharing resources with other educators and experience higher student engagement.



A total of 2,347 educators participated in professional development activities with members of the Collaborative during the 2024-25 school year. This brief shares learnings from the educators who took part in the Summer Institute in June 2024 and dives deeper into the experiences of those who regularly participated in the bimonthly educator cohort meetings that offered learning and collaboration opportunities. (See Appendix B for a description of Collaborative activities). The findings draw on surveys of participating educators about their planning and implementation of lessons on the Holocaust and genocide, focus groups of educators in the cohorts, and classroom observations. (See Appendix C for additional information about research strategies used.)

Educators Are Highly Engaged

Educators shared that participating in the Collaborative was both meaningful and impactful. Many said it helped them become stronger educators and better prepared them to teach about the Holocaust and genocide.

Following the Summer Institute in June 2024, educators quickly put what they learned into practice. By mid-fall—just three to five months later—92% had already taught or were planning to teach about the Holocaust and genocide during the school year.

The Collaborative’s resources are widely used: 98% of participating educators report using its materials in their teaching.



I think [my unit on genocide] went well because it [used] a lot of primary source material. ... the students were actually, like, looking at the sources and getting a lot of information.

- Middle school ELA teacher

Consistent with prior years, teachers on average could not devote a significant portion of time to teaching about the Holocaust and genocide.

- Teachers mostly taught 1-4 lessons on Holocaust and genocide education.
- Over 50% of the teachers surveyed shared materials they learned about at the Summer Institute with other teachers at their sites and/or through departmental meetings.
- Reported teaching strategies emphasized whole group discussion and use of testimony and other visual media.

Inside of classrooms, across middle school and high school courses, teachers and students engaged in diverse instructional activities related to the Holocaust and genocide. In many of the classrooms, students were very engaged, often connecting what they were learning with current events in their own lives. Many teachers drew on primary sources to help students understand the Holocaust and genocide.

However, what became clear through classroom observation was the variation in teachers' abilities to implement high-quality materials in pedagogically robust ways. Some of the teachers observed had challenges integrating a unit on genocide into their courses while others struggled with mastery of basic content as it was new to them. There were also distinct differences in student engagement between classes; some teachers had devised strategies for strong student engagement while other teachers faced greater challenges getting students' interest.

Educators Value Professional Learning

Teachers across all the ways that evidence was collected stated how valuable the professional development opportunities and curricular materials were that are provided by the collaborative partners. They were especially enthusiastic about the use of graphic novels, particularly in the middle grades. Teachers also talked about the ability to use online resources that enabled students to hear testimony and view artifacts.

Teachers also described the positive impact learning about the Holocaust and genocide had on their students. Many shared that students who have been previously less engaged became more so through this compelling material.

“

I've had students who ... all these books touch on all their lives. And then when you think about larger themes of building empathy and understanding... I felt like this was the best approach for me and my class in this moment.

- High school history teacher

“

The most accessible part for me is helping students connect emotionally through personal stories and survivor testimonies. It opens the door for empathy and deeper understanding without needing to force it.

- High school ELA teacher

Many teachers also described how they shared what they had learned through the Collaborative. Teachers talked about emailing materials to colleagues, inviting them to professional development sessions with Collaborative partners, sharing information at department meetings and with educators teaching similar topics, and a small number of teachers even held school- or district-wide presentations.

Educators Want More

Teachers also expressed the continued need for additional supports. Many teachers indicated they could use more short lessons that fit into one or two class periods as opposed to longer curricula that span weeks. Another thing that teachers would find valuable is differentiated instructional materials that they can use.

“

And I kept having these great ideas [of] what I was going to do [but] I have to have 15-minute standalone lessons [because] I'm not meeting with my students often enough to be able to develop [a unit]. I have found it much more helpful to focus on ... short standalone [lessons].

- High school ELA teacher

Looking Forward

The Collaborative continues to expand how it supports educators. In the fall of 2025, the organization SEYFO Center which focuses on education related to the Assyrian genocide of the early 20th century became a member of the Collaborative. The Collaborative additionally keeps adding resources to the Collaborative library. Working together, Collaborative members continue to reach new teachers eager to employ standards-aligned materials for educating their students about the Holocaust and genocide.

Established by the Jewish Family and Children's Services (JFCS) Holocaust Center and funded by the California Department of Education, the Marin County of Education, the State of California, and the Diane and Guilford Glazer Foundation, the Collaborative seeks to ensure that all secondary students in California engage in high-quality learning on topics of the Holocaust and genocide with well-trained teachers.

APPENDIX A

PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS OF THE CALIFORNIA TEACHERS COLLABORATIVE FOR HOLOCAUST AND GENOCIDE EDUCATION

- Avenues for Change
- Cambodian Genocide Resource Center
- Central Valley Holocaust Educators' Network (CVHEN)
- Echoes & Reflections
- Facing History & Ourselves
- The Genocide Education Project: Armenian History and Education
- Holocaust Museum LA
- Jewish Family and Children's Services Holocaust Center
- Jewish Partisan Educational Foundation
- Museum of Tolerance
- Redbud Resource Group: Indigenous History and Education
- TWIGE Project: Teaching about the Genocides in Rwanda and Guatemala
- USC Shoah Foundation for Visual History and Education
- Uyghur Genocide Online Resource Center

APPENDIX B

KEY PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	PARTICIPATION
<p>Summer Institute 2024</p>	<p>Teachers attended a three-and-a-half-day institute with 121 workshops offered by 14 partner organizations. Teachers received digital copies of standards-based lessons and resources on topics of the Holocaust, antisemitism, and genocide; learning was extended through tours and survivor testimony at the USC Shoah Foundation and the Museum of Tolerance.</p>	<p>113</p>
<p>Teacher Implementation Plan</p>	<p>Teachers submitted an Implementation Plan highlighting their commitment and action steps to implement the new curriculum.</p>	<p>104</p>
<p>Online Teacher Cohort Groups</p>	<p>During the 2024-2025 school year, Summer Institute teachers participated in five, 120-minute virtual meetings for continued professional learning, collaboration, and implementation support.</p>	<p>85</p>
<p>Winter Institute 2025</p>	<p>Partnering with the California Department of Education, the Collaborative held a Winter Institute Against Hate with school and district leaders from across the state. The Institute included a plenary session with a Holocaust survivor and breakout sessions with partner organizations and the California Department of Education.</p>	<p>87</p>
<p>Professional Development Sessions with Collaborative Partner Organizations</p>	<p>Teachers attended virtual and in-person professional development sessions offered by Collaborative partners, which featured curriculum resources.</p>	<p>2,347</p>

APPENDIX C

DESCRIPTION OF DATA COLLECTION ACTIVITIES

DATA COLLECTION TOOL/ METHOD	DESCRIPTION	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS/RE- SPONDENTS
Getting Back in Touch Survey	This survey, fielded during the fall of 2024, asked teachers about their plans for teaching Holocaust and genocide education in the upcoming school year.	86
Implementation Survey	This comprehensive survey, fielded in the late winter and early spring of 2025, asked teachers for detailed information about planning and teaching of Holocaust and genocide.	51
Focus Groups	Three focus groups were conducted in spring of 2025 and centered on learning about teachers' experiences planning and implementing Holocaust and genocide education. Interviews were also conducted with teachers who were unable to attend a focus group using the same protocol.	65
Classroom Observations	Research staff observed the Winter Institute and classrooms in Southern California and the San Francisco Bay Area.	3 middle school classrooms 3 high school classrooms