



KITIA ALTMAN

DEHUMANISATION OF THE HOLOCAUST

Years 7/8

Level 4

3-5 PERIODS

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Watch video: <https://holocaustfoundation.com/kitia>

SOCIAL SCIENCE STRANDS

- **Identity, Culture and Organisation:** Learning is about society and communities and how they function, about the diverse cultures and identities of people within those communities, and about the impact of these on the participation of groups and individuals.
- **Continuity and Change:** Learning is about past events, experiences, and actions, and their changing interpretation over time, to understand about the past, the present, and possible futures.
- **Social Enquiry:** Through social inquiry, learners ask questions, gather information, and examine the background to important societal ideas and events, explore and analyse values and perspectives relating to these ideas and events; and develop understandings about issues and the ways that people (themselves and others) make decisions and participate in social action.

ACHIEVEMENT OBJECTIVES

Through this process, and in a range of settings, learners will:

- Understand how the ways in which leadership of groups is acquired and exercised have consequences for communities and societies.
- Understand how people pass on and sustain culture and heritage for different reasons and that this has consequences for people.
- Understand that events have causes and effects.
- Understand how formal and informal groups make decisions that impact on communities.
- Understand how people participate individually and collectively in response to community challenges.

SPECIFIC LEARNING OUTCOMES

▪ Cultural/Personal Identity ▪ Knowledge ▪ Skills ▪ Participatory ▪ Affective

By the end of this unit, learners may be able to:

- Identify differences and accept or reject them
- Recall a wider range of knowledge about the Shoah
- Better exercise skills of discernment and data analysis
- Be better able to bounce ideas off others to achieve a goal
- Show a deeper personal commitment to helping others and action

Additional Curriculum Areas	English
Setting(s)	New Zealand, Europe
Perspective(s)	▪ The Past (History) ▪ The Present ▪ The Future ▪ Equality ▪ Rights ▪ Multicultural

Key Competencies Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Managing Self ▪ Relating to others ▪ Participating & contributing ▪ Thinking ▪ Using language symbols and texts
Values Focus	<p>Diversity - as found in different cultures, and their responses to hardship and oppression.</p> <p>Equity - which means fairness and social justice; how to achieve this in an unjust situation.</p> <p>Community and Participation - for the common good; respect for ourselves, for others, and for human rights;</p> <p>Integrity - which involves being honest, responsible, and accountable and acting ethically.</p>
Concepts	<p>Annihilation, antisemitism, assembly line efficiency, choiceless choices, concentration camp, culture, cultural interaction, dehumanisation, deportation, ethics, eugenics, extermination camp, Holocaust, human guinea pig, humiliation, impersonal, labour camp, middle class, migration, moments of kindness, Nazism, prejudice, racism, refugee, stereotype.</p>

SOCIAL INQUIRY PROCESSES	TEACHING AND LEARNING	PEDAGOGY
<p>Ask questions, gather information and background ideas, and examine relevant current issues.</p> <p>Explore and analyse people's values and perspectives.</p> <p>Ask questions, gather information and background ideas, and examine relevant current issues.</p> <p>Explore and analyse people's values and perspectives.</p> <p>Consider the ways in which people make decisions and participate in social action.</p> <p>Reflect on and evaluate the understandings they have developed and the responses that may be required.</p>	<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In groups, brainstorm and mind map what the learners think 'moments of kindness' means in the context of the Holocaust. Report back and make a list of different ways each group and individual's perception of their own and other cultures may have influenced their mind map. In the course of the presentations individuals may tell their stories, and/or do this at the end of the group discussion. Further research before the next lesson – read the resources given or look them up online/moodle/google docs etc. (see the resources/ references below) <p>Possible activities (note - learners may generate their own valid activities) to 'reveal what is hidden deep inside.'</p> <p>Values dilemma</p> <p>This tool helps learners resolve values based dilemmas or conflicts using ethical criteria, which focus on goals and motives, alternatives and consequences and decision making leading to action plans.</p> <p>Learners will ask these questions –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are/were the motives? Why did people act as they did? Are/were the motives ethical? What was right and what was wrong? What alternatives are/were there? Did people always have a choice? What are/were the consequences for each alternative? Did certain choices lead to unwanted results? What is/was the decision? How did most people decide? Who made different decisions? What am I going to do? <p>These questions could be applied to specific situations or in a comparative way by individuals, pairs or groups; e.g.</p> <p>Specific Situations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Imagine you are a prisoner, starving and cold, desperate for food or blankets and tempted to steal or cheat. Imagine you are a guard or supervisor who does not believe Jewish people are subhuman and one of them breaks a rule. Imagine yourself in those situations in a future where our society has broken down. <p>Comparative decisions</p> <p>e.g.</p> <p>questions Victim/ prisoner Guard in the camp Helper in the camp Local citizen</p> <p>Motives? Ethicality? Alternatives? Consequences? Decision?</p> <p>Situations could be thought of that would test each person – e.g. a prisoner is to be publicly punished, a prisoner is falling sick, a prisoner tries to escape on a work detail outside the camp.</p>	<p>Making connections to prior learning and experience</p> <p>Creating a supportive Learning Environment</p> <p>E-learning and pedagogy</p> <p>Encouraging reflective thought and action (metacognition)</p> <p>Enhancing the relevance of new learning</p> <p>Facilitating shared learning</p> <p>Providing sufficient opportunities to learn</p>

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<p>Ask questions, gather information and background ideas, and examine relevant current issues.</p> <p>Explore and analyse people's values and perspectives.</p> <p>Consider the ways in which people make decisions and participate in social action.</p> <p>Reflect on and evaluate the understandings they have developed and the responses that may be required.</p>	<p>Fertile questions – 3-level guide</p> <p>Level 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who was Kitia Altman? • What level of society did she come from? • Where was she before being sent to Auschwitz • What type of camp was Auschwitz? • What happened to the factory owner who tried to help some of the Jewish people in the Labour camp? • What were the Nazi secret police called? • How were the girls humiliated? • Why did one woman steal a blanket from her own sister? • Make a list of things the inmates of Auschwitz lost. • What are the two extreme opposites that all human beings have the capacity for? • Why did Kitia have to leave her nice city home? • Which country did Kitia go to as a refugee? <p>Level 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could Kitia have escaped from the Nazis? • Why did the girls become so grotesque they could not recognise each other? • Make a list of things the inmates of Auschwitz lost. • After the war, how do you think Kitia felt about life? • Give examples of dehumanisation in this story. <p>Level 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you know of a factory owner who helped Jews but survived the war? How did it affect him? (Oskar Schindler) • Why was 'a piece of bread, half an apple, or a small piece of soap' so important? • Would it be true to say that fear was behind the four steps in the system of dehumanisation? • Compare Kitia's life before, during and after the Holocaust when she moved to Australia. • Why is it highly unlikely that such events could occur in New Zealand? Is it impossible? • What are some options when we are confronted with racism and anti-Semitism? 	<p>Encouraging reflective thought and action (metacognition)</p> <p>Enhancing the relevance of new learning</p> <p>Facilitating shared learning</p> <p>Providing sufficient opportunities to learn</p>

RESOURCES & REFERENCES

- *Shadows of Shoah resource* – Kitia Altman – stories <https://shadowsofshoah.com/kitia>
- Various paper resources or transcripts online which can be cut and pasted to make a text and photo resource e.g.
- <https://shalom.kiwi/2017/01/remembering-holocaust-kitia-altman/>
- <https://www.smh.com.au/national/indomitable-voice-of-holocaust-survival-20171205-gzyzmt.html>
- <https://www.jewishnews.net.au/kitia-altman-mourned/71237>
- <https://www.jhc.org.au/storypods/stories/kitia-altman/>
- <http://www.slv.vic.gov.au/immigvic/inter/6528.shtml>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lzwoq3JkreU>
- <https://vimeo.com/246733059>
- Altman, Kitia: *Memories of Ordinary People*, Makor Jewish Community Library, 2003.
- Whitehead, David, *TOP TOOLS for Teaching Thinking*, 2004, Pearson Longman, Auckland
- Whitehead, David, *TOP TOOLS for Literacy and Learning*, 2001, Pearson Longman, Auckland
- Cubitt, Sandra et al, *TOP TOOLS for Social Sciences Teachers*, 1999, Longman, Auckland

ASSESSMENT SCHEDULE

Summative or formative assessment as determined by teacher or department; would usually be assessed formatively, for example as part of a wider unit on Holocaust, WW2 , cultural interaction, etc.

UNIT EVALUATION

A HOLOCAUST NARRATIVE

In order to understand what happened during the Holocaust, one must consider the events of the 1930's. During this period the Nazi party rose to prominence at time of great instability in the German Republic. Hitler as the leader of the Nazi party was voted into government within a democratic system, whilst propagating an openly antisemitic ideology. The passing of the Enabling Act in March 1933 gave Hitler dictatorial powers and during the first six years of his dictatorship, hundreds of laws were passed restricting the rights of Jewish people in Germany.

These anti-Jewish policies categorised Jews, restricted their civil liberties, and confiscated their property. Jews were isolated from German society. They were forced to wear a 'badge of shame' in the form of a yellow star and forbidden to make use of public facilities. Jews were dispossessed economically through dismissal from civil service jobs, universities and professions. The boycott of Jewish businesses and shops in towns and cities throughout Germany on 1 April, 1933, signalled the beginning of the institutionalised persecution of the Jewish people. It was to intensify in the years leading up to World War Two.

Kitia Altman describes her arrival at Auschwitz, the largest Nazi extermination and concentration camp, where some were selected for hard labour and others condemned, unwittingly, to their deaths.

The Nazis developed an elaborate system of dehumanization, prior to annihilation. There was hunger, torture, loss, humiliation. These things are universal. But what did the Holocaust do? It stripped a person totally - physically, emotionally, spiritually - stripped a person naked and revealed the capacity of a human being to do evil to another human being.

The whole killing process was designed with assembly-line efficiency. Victims were deceived into thinking they were having showers so as to minimize disturbances. The contact between perpetrator and victim was carefully limited making it an impersonal process.

Kitia's story highlights the fact that there was a very real risk for those caught helping Jews. The German who helped Jews by delaying the day of their deportation was eventually arrested and killed. This is an important factor to consider when discussing the role of the bystander. Consider how you would respond in such circumstances, especially when it could bring danger on your own family.

Kitia contrasts the labour camp with Auschwitz. She gives a powerful description of the process of dehumanization that took place and a thought-provoking analysis of human nature.

KITIA ALTMAN – VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Born 1922, Bedzin, Poland

Before being sent to Auschwitz I spent time in a labour camp.

Food was scarce but we were able to wash and wear our own clothes.

There were even moments of kindness.

A German supervisor would leave things in my locker...

...a piece of bread, half an apple, a small piece of soap.

Another German supervisor employed three thousand Jews in his factory.

He was able to delay the day of their deportation.

Eventually he was arrested and hanged by the Gestapo.

Things changed so violently when we arrived at Auschwitz.

We were modest middle class girls. We had to strip naked in view of men.

Our hair was hacked away. We were stripped physically, emotionally, spiritually.

We soon looked so grotesque we couldn't recognize each other.

The Nazis developed an elaborate system of dehumanisation.

Hunger, torture, loss, humiliation.

It revealed the human capacity to do evil to another human being.

I saw a woman wrench a blanket from her own sister, saying "I must survive".

Auschwitz did not change people.

It revealed what was hidden deep inside.

1. What does it mean to be dehumanized? How were Kitia and the other girls dehumanised?
2. How did some Germans try to stop themselves being dehumanised? What were the outcomes?
3. What is your response to Kitia's story? (your emotions/feelings, or questions, or ideas, or desire for action)

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