

‘We need to remember they died for us’: How young people in New Zealand make meaning of war remembrance and commemoration of the First World War

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Abstract

This article examines the extent to which young people in New Zealand share the dominant beliefs and assumptions that inform contemporary notions of war remembrance concerning the First World War. In particular, it considers how they make meaning of the ANZAC/Gallipoli narrative. Informed by two empirical studies, it questions whether young people uncritically accept the dominant cultural memory messages about the First World War that shape commemorative activities or whether they share a wider range of perspectives on war remembrance. While the purpose of commemorative activities is to convey particular memory messages about appropriate ways to remember the First World War, young people are not passive in this process. Although they typically do not demonstrate a firm grasp of all the relevant historical details about the First World War, when given the opportunity to do so they appear to be engaging critically with the production of cultural memory messages about war remembrance.

Keywords: memory; war remembrance; commemoration; ANZAC; Gallipoli; New Zealand

Introduction

The focus of war remembrance in New Zealand is ANZAC Day (25 April), which commemorates the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) role in the unsuccessful attempt by the Allies to invade the Gallipoli peninsula during the First World War. This effort constituted a nine-month campaign fought against the Ottoman Turks, during which over three-quarters of the New Zealand participants became casualties. Participation in overseas wars, especially the First and Second World Wars, is the focus of war remembrance in New Zealand: the colonial conflicts between indigenous Māori and British/colonial forces in the nineteenth century are largely ignored (Sheehan, 2016; Walker, 2004). Although ANZAC Day is promoted as an opportunity to commemorate all the overseas conflicts in which New Zealand has participated, Gallipoli has special status. It was at Gallipoli (it is claimed) that a sense of national identity emerged, characterized by the ANZAC qualities of ‘mate-ship, courage, equality, self-sacrifice, duty and loyalty’ (e.g. Key, 2014: n.p.).

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The extent to which young New Zealanders share the core beliefs and assumptions that underpin the dominant notions of war remembrance about the Gallipoli/ANZAC narrative is the focus of this article. It questions whether young people uncritically accept the official cultural memory messages about the First World War that characterize war commemoration in New Zealand (and are largely passive in this process) or whether they share a wider range of perspectives on war remembrance.

Young people are a crucial feature of transmitting the memory of the First World War, 'for it is they who have to bear the burden of memory in order to pass it onto subsequent generations' (Pennell, 2016: 38). They play a prominent role in commemorative activities (for example wearing the medals of their great-grandparents at ANZAC Day services) and are encouraged to participate in practices of remembrance that keep the memory of the First World War experience alive (Mosse, 1990; Edkins, 2003; Winter, 2006). For example, a joint project run by the Ministry of Education and the Fields of Remembrance Trust (Fields of Remembrance, 2015) saw eighty thousand white crosses (with the names of local service personnel who had died overseas) being hand-delivered to schools (Ministry of Education, 2016). These were 'laid' in school grounds where, along with poppies and posters, they became the focus of war commemorations, so that 'all young New Zealanders could have the opportunity to honour the service and sacrifice made 100 years ago' (Ministry of Education, 2016: n.p.).

New Zealand, however, stands apart from other nations that prioritize war remembrance, as the extent to which young people learn about the historical details of the First World War in their schooling is variable. History is an optional subject in senior school and studied by a minority of students. Most young people (including those in this study) learn history as part of the integrated subject of social studies, and their engagement with historical ideas in this subject is uneven. The extent to which young people learn about the First World War largely depends on the intellectual confidence and interests of individual teachers and (as schools are self-managing) on the support of their school communities. However, although the ANZAC/Gallipoli narrative is not a concrete feature of the curriculum, when young people engage in commemorative ANZAC Day activities they demonstrate a sanctification of First World War cultural memory messages that is not dissimilar to nations (such as the United Kingdom and Australia) that prioritize the First World War in the curriculum (Pennell and Sheehan, 2016).

This article is informed by an empirical study administered in two phases. In the first, survey-based phase (n=1,453; May/June 2015), we found that while young people (aged 13–14 years) overwhelmingly saw Gallipoli/ANZAC as significant, they did not draw on historical evidence to justify why this was so. Rather, they looked to notions of sacrifice, heroism and a debt of duty to support their views. They appeared to have little knowledge of the relevant historical details and seldom drew on historical evidence to justify their decision-making. While this may indicate the low priority that the historical study of the First World War assumes in their schooling, it also reflects wider public perceptions about the First World War that were evident in a recent national survey (Colmar Brunton, 2013). While Gallipoli was seen as holding a special place in New Zealand's past, most respondents' understanding of the First World War was very limited, and few could demonstrate a firm grasp of the details of New Zealand's involvement (Colmar Brunton, 2013). The second phase of our study (n=343; March 2016) used an elicitation task to examine in detail young people's perceptions of the First World War and explore the extent to which the first survey had captured the range of ways young people made meaning of this event. The task (see Figure 1) allowed for a wider range of perspectives than the first survey. Participants demonstrated that while official notions of ANZAC/Gallipoli were evident in how some young people made meaning of this event, a substantial number demonstrated a range of perspectives that challenged the cultural memory messages of war remembrance in New Zealand in diverse, nuanced and critical ways.




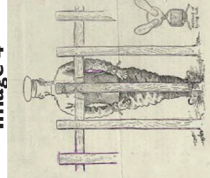

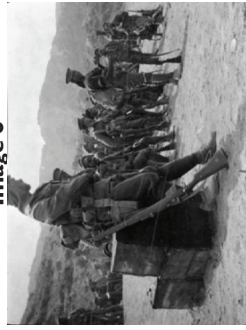
<p>Museum display task Imagine you have been asked to design a display for a museum about the 1915 Gallipoli campaign. Choose THREE of the six images below that you think best represent the meaning of Gallipoli.</p>	<p>Image 1</p>  <p>New Zealand artillery at Gallipoli in May 1915.</p>	<p>Image 2</p>  <p>Student cadets at a New Zealand school, around 1910. By 1912, military training was compulsory for all males over 14.</p>	<p>Image 3</p>  <p>Many New Zealand nurses served on the hospital ship <i>Maheno</i>, which took the wounded off ANZAC Cove, Gallipoli.</p>
<p>Image 4</p>  <p>Archibald Baxter and other conscientious objectors believed war was wrong and refused to take part. One of the results was that he and others endured many hours of Field Punishment No. 1.</p>	<p>Image 5</p>  <p>Wounded soldiers on the beach at ANZAC Cove, Gallipoli in 1915.</p>	<p>Image 6</p>  <p>Māori soldiers at Gallipoli, before an attack, in August 1915.</p>	
<p>Image sources Image 1: 4th New Zealand Howitzer Battery in action at Gallipoli, May 1915. PA1-o-308-22-1. Photograph probably by Laurie C. Mackie. Courtesy of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. Online at http://tinyurl.com/lkacv2v Image 2: Uniformed school cadets in the grounds of the Marist Brothers School at Wanganui. Photograph by Tesla Studios, circa 1910. 1/1-016929-G. Courtesy of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. Online at http://tinyurl.com/l92mwpq Image 3: The hospital ship <i>Maheno</i> during World War I. Photograph by John Dickie, 1869–1942. 1/1-002212-G.) Courtesy of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. Online at http://tinyurl.com/ljqqs34 Image 4: Drawing made around 1916/17 of Field Punishment No.1. War Office, London, 1917. Copyright information unavailable. Online at http://tinyurl.com/yw1z25 Image 5: Australians wounded at Gallipoli. Photo by Charles Atkins. Copyright expired. Online at http://tinyurl.com/yw1z25 Image 6: Māori Contingent soldiers at No.1 Outpost, Gallipoli, 1915. Photograph by James Read. 1/4-058101-F. Courtesy of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. Online at http://tinyurl.com/mmm1mpj</p>			

Figure 1: Elicitation task

Context

While First World War centenary anniversaries have seen a new emphasis placed on the conflict in New Zealand, the increasing interest in the collective remembrance of the First World War is an international phenomenon. The focus on the First World War has been an integral feature of the 'memory boom' since the 1980s (Winter, 2006: 152). It has been evident in museum exhibitions, memorialization and popular literature, films and TV dramas over the last thirty years. It also appears to cross national boundaries, as with the widespread international appeal of TV dramas such as *Downton Abbey* (Egner, 2013). The First World War offers opportunities for war heritage-related activities including battlefield tours, re-enactments and gaming (e.g. *Gallipoli in Minecraft*) that can emotionally engage people with the past but seldom encourage them to ask difficult questions. This poses a challenge for government agencies charged with ensuring that an authentic narrative of war remembrance is promoted (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2016), as young people (or the general public) can be exposed to a range of perspectives about the First World War that are historically misleading. For example, the government-funded TV mini-series *When We Go to War* (produced at a cost of NZ\$6 million), which was first shown on ANZAC Day 2015, was seen by historians to be historically inaccurate and melodramatic, and to say more about the values and attitudes of the twenty-first century than about 1915 (Te Papa, 2016).

The increasing interest over the last thirty years in the First World War among countries that fought in this conflict has not seen the development of a shared narrative of war remembrance among all participants (Reynolds, 2015). Although the First World War was an international, global affair, each nation has constructed a distinct narrative about what 'the Great War' means for them, typically one bounded by the experiences, interests and priorities of the nation state. Even Australia and New Zealand (whose war experiences in the First World War were largely similar) have interpreted the meaning of this conflict differently over the last hundred years (Sheehan and Taylor, 2016).

In New Zealand, the Gallipoli/ANZAC dominant narrative is aligned with notions of national identity (for instance, see the New Zealand First World War centenary website at <http://www100.govt.nz>) that are characterized by a strong strand of exceptionalism: the narrative largely ignores other participants and minimizes aspects of the campaign that are controversial, complicated or contested. This is particularly apparent in the museums, memorials and heritage sites that play a major role in shaping memories of war for young people.

Museums have an especially important role in this process: not only do they encourage young people to address moral questions about sacrifice, suffering, courage and heroism (Winter 2012), but their education programmes are seen by teachers (and students) as historically authentic, hence large numbers of young people visit such exhibitions. For example, in Wellington, the national museum of New Zealand's (Te Papa Tongarewa) exhibition *Gallipoli: The scale of our war* (built by Weta workshop, who designed and built the *Lord of the Rings* sets) was visited by almost 32,000 students as part of formal education programmes in its first year. By the end of 2016, a total of one million visitors had seen the exhibition, which makes it the most visited in the museum's history (Te Papa, 2016). The Pukeahu National War Memorial Park nearby, which opened in April 2015 (at a cost of NZ\$120 million), has an extensive education programme and attracted 16,116 visitors in the first month, with a further 50,000 estimated at the ANZAC Day Dawn Service on 25 April (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2017b). In addition, more than 133,000 people viewed Sir Peter Jackson's Great War Exhibition (National Military Heritage Charitable Trust, 2015) in the old Dominion Museum building near the National War Memorial and Tomb of the Unknown Warrior (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2017a).

Methodology

To begin to explore young people's understanding of the Gallipoli campaign, we administered a survey. We asked a large number ($n=1,453$) of young people (aged 13–14 years) about the significance of Gallipoli. Next, we sought to develop a richer grasp of why it was of significance, by administering an elicitation task to a group of young people ($n=343$), again aged 13–14 years.

The survey was administered in May and June 2015, four to six weeks after ANZAC Day's one hundred-year commemorations. A purposive sample was used to target 13–14-year-olds from 12 secondary schools. The schools included co-educational and single-sex student populations from throughout New Zealand and served communities from small regional centres to diverse urban areas. Teachers from these schools had responded to a request to participate in the study, made by the authors to the New Zealand History Teachers Association (NZHTA), which is the main group that represents the New Zealand history teaching community. Of the survey's 1,453 student participants, 43 per cent self-identified as European/Pākehā (European New Zealanders), 16 per cent as Māori (indigenous), 10 per cent as Pacific Peoples and 22 per cent as Asian. A further 9 per cent of students self-identified with other categories of ethnicity such as South African and South American. This is similar to national distributions of ethnicity for Māori and Pacific Peoples, although the proportion of Asian students is almost twice as high as in the wider population and the proportion of New Zealand European/Pākehā students is lower (Statistics New Zealand, 2015).

The survey asked two questions. First, is Gallipoli a significant event for us to remember? Second, if so, what aspects of Gallipoli are most important for us to remember? In response, 97 per cent of students said that Gallipoli was significant. From reading their responses to the second question, a number of common themes emerged. From these themes, nine codes were devised and subsequently used to categorize student responses (Table 1, see p. 264).

Next, an elicitation task (see Figure 1) was administered at Eastside High School (pseudonym) in Auckland, one of the 12 secondary schools that participated in the survey. The school was selected because its student population is broadly representative of New Zealand's growing diversity (which is particularly apparent in Auckland). Of the 329 Year 9 social studies students who completed the elicitation task, 46 per cent self-identified as New Zealand European/Pākehā, 23 per cent as Asian and 11 per cent as Māori. All the participants were in social studies classes and the teacher administered the task during lesson time (in March 2016). It took no longer than thirty minutes to complete and involved students imagining that they were curating a museum display about the 1915 Gallipoli campaign. The students were provided with six images and asked to select three and to justify their selection.

Findings

The survey respondents overwhelmingly ascribed significance to the 1915 Gallipoli campaign. Ninety-seven per cent of respondents said that Gallipoli is a significant event for New Zealanders to remember. Among the very small number of students who answered 'no', justifications focused on the inappropriateness of remembering soldiers dying and of commemorating a military failure (Turkish forces at Gallipoli defeated the ANZACs). Other students said that events at Gallipoli were simply too long ago: 'It's been a long time and people should move on'. One student took a more moral position, commenting: 'There is no glory and no honour in war'.

Table 1: Codes used to analyse question two in the survey

Code	Description	Examples	Students who gave this answer (%)
A	Loss of life/sacrifice.	<i>They died for us; died for our freedom; courage; lest we forget; and numbers who died.</i>	45.5
B	Gallipoli contributes to our New Zealand identity/nationhood/ANZAC day/today. May have aspects of A, such as sacrifice, but major argument is about identity.	<i>Anzac day is about remembering all wars; dying for our country; remembering our role in World War I; and Gallipoli and Anzac day made us who we are.</i>	32
C	Lessons from the past.	<i>We can learn from the mistakes of Gallipoli.</i>	2.5
D	They know at least one accurate detail of the campaign (e.g. NZers fought the Turks).	<i>The Gallipoli campaign was fought against the Turks.</i>	9.7
E	Several accurate historical details/knowledge.	<i>We are commemorating the one hundredth anniversary of Gallipoli.</i>	2.4
F	No reason/or inadequate reason/detail.		5
G	Critical interpretation of the campaign.	<i>The Anzacs did not go ashore at the intended site; students are critiquing the narrative and/or thinking historically.</i>	1.1
H	Personal connection.	<i>My Great Grand-dad fought at Gallipoli.</i>	1.4
I	I don't know		0.4

When exploring the responses of those students who found Gallipoli significant, they typically said that it was because soldiers had lost or sacrificed their lives for the future and for us. Students connected the loss of life in 1915 to the idea of a debt that present-day New Zealanders owed to historical characters from the past: 'because our New Zealand soldiers went to fight for our freedom, and we have still got that freedom, so I think we should remember'. Soldiers, some students felt, had died in a bid to save future generations: 'many people died to give us freedom', and 'they risked their lives for us'. If soldiers made sacrifices for 'us', they also did so for New Zealand: 'Anzacs died fighting for our country'. As such, they took part in a 'battle that made us a country'. Again, there was a sense of indebtedness, but this time regarding national identity: 'The soldiers went to war and died for our country so we need to repay them'. Commemorating ANZAC Day on 25 April each year is an annual reminder of what is owed.

An assumption might be that student responses would also include the idea that lessons can be drawn from Gallipoli. Only a very small proportion of students, however, made the type of comments stated here: 'I believe that honouring the sacrifices that people made and looking into how it damaged our country are important to ensure it doesn't happen again'. Moreover, only a handful of students felt that 'it should be a lesson to not have wars'.

Very few students wrote about the Gallipoli campaign in a way that showed a grasp of accurate historical detail. They saw this event as significant but did not demonstrate that they knew why. Even fewer students (under 2 per cent) were in any way critical of events at Gallipoli: only a handful made a comment that questioned what had happened, noting 'how horribly planned it was [the Gallipoli campaign] which caused a lot of soldiers' deaths'. Finally, we coded a

small number of students who made a personal connection with what had happened at Gallipoli. These students wrote about family members whose stories from the First World War had been passed down to today's generation.

In summary, the survey findings suggest that for the respondents the Gallipoli campaign was a significant event that requires a debt of gratitude for a sacrifice made, but that they have very little knowledge of the exact nature of that sacrifice. Loss and sacrifice are the dominant themes students used in making sense of Gallipoli, yet these are ideas that seem largely to be used without recourse to historical evidence. They are also far removed from the changes in interpretation and the multiple perspectives that inform the work of current historians studying Gallipoli and the First World War (e.g. Pugsley, 1984; Reynolds, 2013; Brown, 2014). Furthermore, it is not obvious where students are drawing from for their views of Gallipoli and the First World War. For example, while it is tempting to think that these young people's ideas reflect the popular media's portrayal of Gallipoli and ANZAC, our reading of national media suggested otherwise. Popular media published around ANZAC Day, while predominantly made up of personal stories of heroism, courage and endurance, offered a more layered and nuanced understanding of Gallipoli than was found in the students' responses to the survey (e.g. Wright, 2015).

The findings from the elicitation task show that the image depicting the wounded at ANZAC Cove (Figure 1, Image 5) was the one most commonly selected first choice for students (see Table 2). Still, it was selected as a first choice by only just under a third of respondents. There was a wide range of images aligned with war remembrance (including nurses, conscientious objectors and school cadets) and these were evenly spread across the answers that were given.

Table 2: Respondents' first choices

Display image	Responses (n)	Responses (%)
1: New Zealand artillery	61	19
2: New Zealand cadets	81	10
3: Hospital ship <i>Maheno</i>	32	10
4: Conscientious objectors	30	9
5: Wounded at ANZAC Cove	96	30
6: Māori soldiers at Gallipoli	23	7

Looking at how many times the images were included within the respondents' three choices, the results show similar levels of popularity across all images (see Table 3). Image 5 is the most frequently selected, while the other images are relatively evenly spread.

Table 3: Aggregate of all three of respondents' choices

Display image	Times chosen	% of responses
1: New Zealand artillery	141	43.7
2: New Zealand cadets	160	49.5
3: Hospital ship <i>Maheno</i>	143	44.3
4: Conscientious objectors	124	38.4
5: Wounded at ANZAC Cove	254	78.6
6: Māori soldiers at Gallipoli	129	39.9

The popularity of Image 5 reflects the findings of the survey as far as students are highlighting loss and sacrifice as significant. The selection of the other images is quite evenly distributed, suggesting that students have a more nuanced understanding of the significance of Gallipoli and ANZAC than was revealed in the survey. In Image 1, Gallipoli is depicted as being about combat and weapons. By selecting this image, respondents are commenting on war as combat. In Image 2, there is an emphasis on how young people were potentially forced to train; complicating the idea of duty and/or sacrifice. The other three images – of conscientious objection, a hospital ship and Māori soldiers – are all examples of other perspectives.

When explaining why they had chosen these images, students were clearly engaged by a number of themes. For some, the role of nurses was significant: 'our nurses were an important part of the war because they kept our soldiers safe if they got shot and wounded'. For others, it was the story of those who resisted conscription: 'Archibald Baxter who was against the war and saw it as wrong'. Points that are more familiar were made about the wounded and those who had died: 'it shows what it was like and there were heaps of wounded soldiers'. Several students identified the role played by Māori at Gallipoli; 'it is important that Māori got involved'. Many students were drawn to the weaponry used: 'the fire power and the soldiers and ... how they applied offence to the enemy'. Those who had chosen the image of cadets were concerned that young people at 14 years might be coerced into fighting: 'people were forced to go to war and how young some of them were' and 'it is interesting that children had to serve in war'. This misconception regarding the age at which young people joined up suggests that images can be read in ways that are detached from the context in which the image was produced.

In summary, the museum display task challenged the homogeneous nature of the young people's responses to the survey. While the majority of students were drawn to the image of the wounded at Gallipoli, they engaged to varying degrees with each of the other five images and their museum display titles were far from solely about loss and sacrifice. Regarding their first choices, it is noteworthy, however, that 10 per cent or fewer chose conscientious objectors, Māori soldiers or those serving aboard the hospital ship *Maheno*.

Discussion

When explaining the motivation for commemorating the centenary of the First World War, the chief historian for the Ministry for Culture of Heritage, Neill Atkinson, began by remembering the casualties of war: 'Just over 100,000 New Zealand troops served overseas from 1914 to 1918, from a population of barely one million. Of those, about 18,000 died and 41,000 were wounded' (Atkinson, 2012). While Atkinson also acknowledges the importance of telling other stories, such as those concerning the role of women and the experience of conscientious objectors, he nevertheless begins with these statistics of loss. In this, Atkinson is reflecting international approaches to war remembrance. In the United Kingdom, David Cameron, when serving as prime minister, claimed that the commemorations were essential to remember 'because of the magnitude of [the war's] impact, not least in terms of its death toll' (Pennell, 2016: 37). The young people who took part in this study's survey also overwhelmingly identified with the dead and wounded. This, the survey demonstrates, is their dominant means of ascribing significance to the Gallipoli campaign. Yet, when prompted with images that were drawn from stories other than loss, a substantial number of students prioritized alternative accounts that complicate official dominant narratives of Gallipoli/ANZAC. When these prompts are missing, however, as in the study's survey, students do not necessarily tell those other stories when writing about the significance of the First World War.

The museum display task illustrates the idea that multiple pieces of evidence, in this case six, undermine a tendency to hold that only one image or a single story or set of beliefs is correct. Barton and Levstik (2004) have made the case for teachers deliberately providing young people with multiple accounts of past events to offset this bias. This would mean balancing the story of sacrifice and loss with other interpretations of the First World War. In doing so, however, it is possible that minority viewpoints – as Baildon and Damico (2011) have argued – are given too much significance. In this sense, the frequency of conscientious objection to the war, for instance, might be overplayed. Still, there would be contexts, and the treatment of conscientious objectors is arguably one of them, wherein it might be desirable for minority perspectives to attain more significance than they might otherwise (Davison, 2014). The prominence of conscientious objectors in the answers in the research may also reflect that a number of students had seen the recently released government-funded TV mini-series (\$2.7 million) *Field Punishment Number 1*, which told the story of Archibald Baxter, New Zealand's most famous conscientious objector (NZ on Air, 2014). Baxter (along with 13 other conscientious objectors) was subjected to this punishment in France during the First World War (*The Press*, 2014) and the film was made available to schools, although whether students had seen this is not known.

Young people's misconceptions regarding the cadets in Image 2 are likely to reflect McAleavy's (1998) argument that without contextual information it is difficult to make judgements about the meaning of a source or place it within the broader structure of the past. Perhaps unsurprisingly, several students made comments such as that 'it [Image 2] showed how people were forced to go to war and how young some of them were' and 'it is interesting that children had to serve in war'. It may also be that students are using present-day beliefs about child soldiers and assumptions about schooling one hundred years ago to quickly judge this image as evidence that young children served in the First World War.

Exploring young people's responses to the survey, we found very little critical engagement with, or historical knowledge of, what took place at Gallipoli in 1915. Generalized assertions about sacrifices and loss of life were not supported with examples or evidence. To use Lang's (1993) metaphor, students appeared to lack 'a mental map or picture of what was happening' (Lang, 1993: 1). Without such a map it is hard to make sense of another time period. In a recent study of how a small number of Year 8 students understood different interpretations of the First World War, Smith (2016) posited that this type of map or picture is developed through concrete chronological knowledge and a wider appreciation of a period's mentalities and socio-political characteristics. Our previous research (Davison *et al.*, 2014) makes the case for deliberately engaging young people with the tools that historians use to critically interpret the past in order to foster their own historical thinking.

For instance, teachers could begin by asking students a genuinely puzzling question: 'Why, in 1914/15, did young men decide to leave New Zealand and Australia and travel half way around the world to fight in a war?' The inquiry that follows might explore this affectively and cognitively: affectively through students watching Peter Weir's 1981 film *Gallipoli* (Weir, 1981) to aid perspective-taking, developing a sense of care for the film's characters and helping to imaginatively enter into the 1915 era (Davison, 2012); cognitively by building historical contextual knowledge of New Zealand and Australian society and tying interpretations to a wide range of evidence. This might be done in many different ways, for example by giving students a table presenting key statistics, e.g. that the population in New Zealand in 1914 was just over one million and that 98,950 New Zealanders served overseas, of whom 80 per cent were volunteers (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2017a). Teachers could ask students to respond to the question: 'How do statistics like this help us understand the Gallipoli campaign and whom should we count?'

The implications for pedagogy from our findings are that teachers should carefully identify students' prior knowledge of the First World War, think about how content will be made inclusive and use a variety of activities to help make connections with student interest and recall. The survey and visual images used in the elicitation task revealed quite different information about what the students knew, hence the need to use several techniques to identify this prior knowledge. In addition, as Barton and Levstik's (1996) research on visual images highlights, images can be a stimulus for revealing further knowledge and points for discussion. Deliberately including diverse content, so that pacifist, female and other cultural perspectives, among others, are present in content, will help to ensure that 'all students come into contact with learning about issues of relevance to them' (Sinnema and Aitken, 2012: 13). Moreover, as Sinnema and Aitken argue, evidence (Nuthall, 2000) suggests that using a variety of activities helps to make learning memorable. This focus on prior knowledge, making connections to inclusive content and sparking interest by using a variety of activities, aligns with the principles of effective pedagogy in social sciences (Aitken and Sinnema, 2008).

Conclusion

There is a popular view that young people today do not know enough about the past, especially in regard to significant events such as the world wars. It is not only populist papers such as the *Daily Mail* that lament that 'two-thirds of young people don't know when the First World War ended' (Sharma, 2012): prominent First World War historian Professor Margaret MacMillan, too, claims young people don't know enough about the First World War (Moss, 2014). Yet, although in New Zealand the Gallipoli/ANZAC narrative dominates how young people are expected to engage with war remembrance, when they were asked to consider multiple perspectives on the First World War a substantial number demonstrated they were able to adopt a critical response to the dominant cultural memory messages of war. This indicates that young people are far from passive in how they engage with national stories that are aligned with official cultural memory messages about war remembrance and national identity, and that the ways in which they made meaning of such events is potentially complex, nuanced and critical.

Notes on the contributors

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