

How Has History Been Taught in Chile? An Analysis of Programmes of Study for Secondary School History

¿Cómo se ha enseñado historia en Chile? Análisis de programas de estudio para enseñanza secundaria

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Abstract

The Chilean educational system has undergone multiple changes since its establishment in the mid-nineteenth century. Several curriculum frameworks have been implemented, which has meant that school subjects have been modified in terms of objectives, content, pedagogy, and assessment. Although a considerable amount of research and policy initiatives have been undertaken relating to curriculum reform in Chile, there has been little research on the teaching of history as a school subject. This study is offered as one contribution to rectifying the deficit. It aims at developing an understanding of the historical background to the teaching of history for secondary school in Chile from the origins of the system of education until recently. The research is located within the interpretivist paradigm and adopts grounded theory approaches to data gathering and analysis. Official historical and contemporary documents that have led to the current curriculum framework for secondary school history, particularly programmes of study, have been collected and analysed. The study demonstrates that the secondary school history curriculum in Chile has been characterised by the pre-eminence of the great tradition approach to teaching history.

Keywords: history teaching, study programmes, secondary school, Chile

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Resumen

El sistema educacional chileno ha experimentado múltiples cambios desde sus inicios, a mediados del siglo XIX. La implementación de diferentes marcos curriculares a lo largo de los años ha significado modificaciones en las asignaturas escolares en términos de objetivos, contenidos, metodologías de enseñanza y evaluaciones. Si bien se han desarrollado numerosos estudios relativos a las reformas curriculares en Chile, pocos estudios se han centrado en los cambios experimentados en la enseñanza de la historia a nivel secundario. El siguiente estudio se presenta como una contribución para reducir ese déficit. Su principal objetivo es analizar los antecedentes históricos de la enseñanza de la historia en Chile a nivel secundario desde los orígenes del sistema educativo hasta la década de 1980. La investigación es de carácter cualitativo y sigue el paradigma interpretativo, adoptando métodos de recolección y análisis de información basados en la teoría fundamentada. Para ello, se han recolectado y analizado documentos históricos y contemporáneos, particularmente programas de estudio, que han fundado las bases de las actuales prácticas de la enseñanza de la historia en el país. La investigación ha demostrado que las prácticas tradicionales de enseñanza de la historia han predominado en las aulas chilenas durante el período estudiado.

Palabras clave: enseñanza de la historia, programas de estudio, educación secundaria, Chile

This study presents an analysis of the various curriculum frameworks that the Chilean Ministry of Education has used for secondary school history teaching, since a national education system was first established in the mid-nineteenth century up through to the curriculum that the Pinochet dictatorship implemented in the 1980s. The analysis reveals that the teaching of history as a school subject has emphasised teacher-centred activities and repetition of content knowledge and is thus part of the great tradition approach to history teaching.

Literature review

Although history has been a school subject in many state and private educational systems since the nineteenth century, there have been differences in what has been taught and how it has been taught around the world (Foster, 2008; Pellens, 1991; Taylor, 2000). In this regard, the objectives pursued in the teaching of history (Sylvester, 1993), curriculum content (Hernández, 2008), classroom activities (Carretero & Voss, 2004), and assessment tasks (Valls, 2008) have varied from country to country. This section provides an overview of the literature on the history curricula in these various areas under four subheadings, namely, objectives, content, pedagogy, and assessment.

Teaching history: Objectives

Notwithstanding diversity across nations, opinions amongst history educators on what the main objectives to pursue through the teaching of history at the school level should be vary widely. One opinion is that teaching history should foster cultural continuity, also called «citizenship transmission» (Marker & Mehlinger, 1992). According to this vision, students must be taught society's rules and norms. This is especially important, because related to it is the notion of history teachers motivating students to actively participate in society (Zajda & Whitehouse, 2009). Another objective is the transmission of facts, concepts, and generalizations from history as an academic discipline (Marker & Mehlinger, 1992). Students should learn historical facts and concepts, since they provide the basic cognitive lens needed to interpret and understand the historical process (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Carretero, 2007). Another objective is the promotion of critical thinking (Carretero & Voss, 2004; Marker & Mehlinger, 1992; Wineburg, 2001). This involves learning history to develop such higher order cognitive skills as analysis, interpretation, and evaluation. This, it is held, is not a natural process in psychological development (Wineburg, 2001). Rather, its achievement has to be promoted through the active participation of students in the learning process (Van Den Brink-Bugden, 2000).

Teaching history: Content

The question of which historical events are significant enough to be taught has always been asked regarding the teaching of history as a school subject (Van Sledright, 2003). Within this context, choosing what history to teach is a relevant task. According to Taylor (2000), history as a school subject can be both empowering and oppressive at the same time. It can be empowering because, through history, students can find an opportunity to develop a rational capacity for questioning evidence and, as a consequence, comprehend the relationships between individuals, events, ideologies, and historical change. It can also be oppressive because history can promote political and religious self-justification. To summarise, history teachers can encourage students to think critically and to actively participate in society, or they can help the political regime in power through providing justifications for its main ideas (Van Sledright, 2003).

Teaching history: Pedagogy

Two main approaches to the teaching of history at the school level can be identified. The first one is a fact-based approach, also called the great tradition approach (Dickinson, 2000; Sylvester, 1993). The second one sees history as a form of knowledge. This has been called the «new history» and its main feature is the promotion of historical thinking (Booth, 1996; Cooper, 2006; Foster, 2008; Husbands, 1996; Pellens, 1991; Prats, 2000; Taylor, 2000; Van Sledright, 2003; Wineburg, 2001; Zajda & Whitehouse, 2009). Each approach has different objectives and teachers have to use different teaching methods to implement one or the other.

The great tradition. Sylvester (1993) outlined the main characteristics of the fact-based approach through the study of history teaching in England and Wales since 1900. He started his definition of what he called the «great tradition» by explaining the role of teachers and students. Teachers, in this view, play an active role in both transmitting historical facts to their students and ensuring that these facts are learned through short tests. In contrast, students have a rather passive role, learning history as a received subject (Sylvester, 1993). According to this approach, teachers should interpret past events and explain them to students in an understandable way (Husbands, Kitson, & Pendry, 2007). Usually, they give oral descriptions of the main events of the past and write notes on a blackboard (Sylvester, 1993). Then, students copy and repeat the factual knowledge written by their teachers. Also, they are required to assimilate, organise, and reproduce teachers' interpretations. As Husbands (1996) has indicated, only on exceptional occasions would students get to reinterpret the explanation given by teachers.

Knowledge content taught according to this approach, Sylvester (1993) argued, is clearly defined. It usually consists of political facts, with a minor emphasis on economic and social events. On this, Taylor (2000) agrees, indicating that one of the main features of the great tradition is the primacy of factual knowledge. Content is organised on a chronological framework whose main components are political events (Booth, 1996). Also, great emphasis was given to the causes of historical events (Sylvester, 1993).

The new history. The new history approach emphasises a constructivist model of learning through engagement with the past (Carretero, 2007). It encourages students to conceive of history not as a compilation of historical facts, but as a form of knowledge. Students have to develop the historical thinking process of being aware that history represents a continuous investigation that leads to multiple historical truths (Zajda & Whitehouse, 2009).

The purpose of teaching history as a school subject is defined through its contribution to the general process of education (Husbands et al., 2007). This pedagogical approach stresses the importance of preparing students for working life, promoting the development of higher order cognitive skills, and encouraging the development of citizenship attitudes and historical awareness (Husbands et al., 2007). The approach challenges the teaching practices that characterise the great tradition (Foster, 2008). Thus, the teachers do not play an active role in transmitting historical knowledge to students. Instead, they are responsible for managing and monitoring students' learning activities. Students actively participate in the learning process as they are encouraged to build historical knowledge through inquiry and interpretation of historical sources (Husbands et al., 2007).

Teaching history: Assessment

Research conducted in secondary schools in Spain (Trepát & Comes, 2006) showed that history assessment often consists of using tests that measure memorisation and repetition. Although there is a growing trend advocating the use of assessment tasks that promote higher order cognitive skills such as the elaboration of historical maps, use of methods of historical inquiry, and interpretation and analysis of historical sources, it is still unusual for this practice to be adopted (Trepát & Comes, 2006).

Research conducted on assessment and teaching history as a school subject has reported that assessment tasks, especially external examinations, do not contribute positively to the construction of historical knowledge and also are quite often focused on low-level cognitive skills (Mathison & Fragnoli, 2006; Dicksee & Hunt, 2007). Strong criticism of such tests emphasise their failure to measure students' understanding of history and social studies (Alleman & Brophy, 1999). Another problem with these tests is that they generally do not provide teachers or students with evidence on how to improve students' learning (Black & Wiliam, 2005).

Research methodology

This study presents an enquiry into the historical background to the teaching of secondary school history curricula in Chile. This called for an investigation that would facilitate the interpretation of social phenomena. To this end, the interpretivist paradigm was chosen because it is aimed at revealing the different meanings constructed by people in a social context (Gubrium & Holstein, 2005). Schwandt (2003) stated that from an interpretivist point of view, human and social actions are inherently meaningful. In order to unearth that meaning, the interpretivist inquirer has to interpret what actors think and what they are doing in a particular way. To put it otherwise, the interpretivist paradigm allows the researcher to comprehend what people understand, and consequently do, about a phenomenon (Litchman, 2010).

The research question in the study reported here is historical in nature (what is the historical background behind the current secondary school history curriculum in Chile?). As a result, data were identified primarily through a review of a wide range of public and private records and documents. These are two common types of documents used in qualitative research (Merriam, 2009). In examining the data, insights from the interpretivist paradigm were applied by the researcher. On this, Greene (1994) explained that document review is a method that offers great consonance with the interpretivist approach to research.

The study focused particularly on such public records as government documents, school textbooks, historical accounts, statistical reports, samples of programmes of study, and former curriculum frameworks. An interpretation of these sources was required to understand official perspectives on programmes, administrative structures and other aspects of organisation (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Data were gathered from public libraries and archives, such as the Chilean National Library and the Library of the National Congress of Chile. Following procedures described by Richards and Morse (2007), the researcher gathered the data and made copies for more detailed analysis.

In accordance with the grounded theory approach, data gathering and analysis were undertaken simultaneously (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). This enabled the researcher to choose participants on the basis of the emergence of concepts and to validate these concepts as they developed (Merriam, 2009; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The first stage in this analytic method involved gathering data, sorting it, and placing it into categories (Flick, 2009). In doing so, the data were read thoroughly and intensely. Analysis began immediately after the reading of the first set of primary source data was collated. Also, appropriate notes, comments, and observations were made and questions were raised (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

As further data were gathered, they were constantly compared for similarities and differences, and were subject to questioning on such matters as, «What might this be an example of?» by constantly comparing and questioning the data, insights emerged (Merriam, 2009). The main purpose was to generate concepts consistent with the data. The activity involved using the «theoretical sensitivity» of the researcher, explained by Corbin and Strauss (2008) as his or her ability to recognise what is important in data and give it meaning.

The process described above is known as *open coding*. In this regard, open coding was aimed at producing concepts and propositions that fitted the data (Strauss, 1987). Also, through the open coding process, assumptions made by the researcher were analysed, questioned, and explored (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Later on, the generated concepts were sorted into categories to describe and integrate the data. Codes, theoretical memos, and diagrams were used by the researcher to illustrate the relationship between concepts and categories as they were generated from the data. Codes, notes, and diagrams became increasingly refined and detailed as the analysis proceeded and the data were reduced (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Rather than proceeding on to the two other steps of the grounded theory approach (axial coding and selective coding), the open-coded data were further analysed using the mode of analysis termed analytic induction. This involved the formulation of propositions in a systematic way. The steps involved are described by Hammersley and Atkinson (1995, p. 234).

Findings

Implementing history as a school subject

In 1843, history was included as a school subject in the curriculum prescribed for secondary schools in Chile (Soto, 2000). Secondary school education was, for the first time, conceived of not only as a foundation for tertiary education, but also as a tool to train erudite people who would make a positive contribution to the country. In particular, it was argued, the teaching of history would prepare people to be patriots and citizens (Sagredo & Serrano, 1996), and thus help in the consolidation of the Chilean state and nation. Also, there was a view that knowledge of the past could assist in making decisions for the present, especially in the political realm (Reyes, 2002). Therefore, it was held, history as a school subject would have a strong influence on the destiny of the nation.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the conception of teaching history in Chile had changed to a notion related to the idea of progress. This progress, in turn, was related to the enlightenment movement and the power of reason. Great importance was attached to storytelling about significant historical events, political history, military history, and the great characters who contributed to the idea of progress (Reyes, 2002; Sagredo & Serrano, 1996). The main focus of content knowledge was the history of Western Europe. In particular, it included the history of Ancient Greece and Rome and medieval and modern history. Attention was also given to Latin American and Chilean history (Campos, 1960; Instituto Nacional, 1846; Universidad de Chile, 1858). Although there was recognition of the history of indigenous people, this was not emphasised as it was not related to the enlightenment movement (Sagredo & Serrano, 1996). The practice of storytelling, which involved students listening, copying, and repeating, was also promoted (Soto, 2000).

The 1889 curriculum

The *curriculum concéntrico* (concentric curriculum) was implemented in 1889, with the assistance of German educators. The definition of this concentric curriculum indicated that the teaching of every school subject should gradually involve increasing its depth and complexity from one school year to the next. The associated pedagogical strategies and curriculum organisation promoted by the concentric curriculum were completely different from those promoted previously. Teachers were expected to deal with concrete matters during the early years of schooling and deal with more abstract matters in successive years. Therefore, knowledge of isolated facts was to come first, followed by the establishment of relations, similarities, and differences (Soto, 2000). As this approach was totally unknown to scholars and educators in the country, it was highly criticised from the beginning of its implementation. However, it persisted for many years (Campos, 1960).

The 1915 curriculum

The Counsel of Public Instruction created a new curriculum for history and geography in 1914 and it was implemented in 1915. It also developed history education syllabi for each secondary school year (Universidad de Chile, 1915). It started by describing the general objectives of history teaching for secondary school. The content of this course related to recent events in Chilean history and to people involved in them. The main objectives were to promote virtue among students and appreciate history as a school subject. This was followed by a description of the content to be covered in every school year.

The syllabi also indicated that history had to be taught orally to students. In other words, teachers had to tell a story in order to make them appreciate history. It was believed that knowledge should be memorised through conversation and constant repetition. Therefore, the most important pedagogic strategy was to encourage dialogue among students and to make them repeatedly recite whatever the teacher said. Knowledge was to be acquired, memorised, and then related to new knowledge. Students had to know historical facts and learn national values.

Students were not supposed to take dictation or to write extensively in their notebooks. Textbooks were regarded as tools to help students in their learning process, but they were not deemed to be essential. Although the syllabus did indicate that there should be some progress beyond memorisation of facts (Universidad de Chile, 1915), the few recommendations about comprehension appear not to have been enough to facilitate the development of higher order skills.

The 1935 curriculum

In 1935, the General Ministry of Secondary Schools approved and published new syllabi for secondary schools, including those related to history. The main objectives of history teaching were described as improving students' intellectual and moral features. The document did not elaborate on the type of moral features envisaged, but it did emphasise the educational value of teaching history. In this regard, it gave freedom to teachers to offer interpretations of historical events according to their own values. At the same time, it proposed the use of chronologies to organise content knowledge (Ministerio de Educación Pública, 1935). It was believed that only through an organised memorisation of content knowledge would it be possible for students to interpret, and place value on, historical events.

Although the main objective of history teaching was declared to be the improvement of students' intellectual capacities, the chronological structure of what was outlined in the document and its emphasis on political facts did not facilitate this. At that time, however, such structure and storytelling about great characters and major military events were considered to be part of an excellent teaching approach (Sagredo & Serrano, 1996). History was conceived of as material to be taught orally by the teacher (Lira, 2008), with facts to be related through identifying causation. On the other hand, no attention was given to the importance of classroom assessment.

The 1952 curriculum

The General Ministry of Secondary Schools implemented new syllabi for all school subjects, including history, in 1952 (Ministerio de Educación Pública, 1952). History teachers had to seek out their own strategies to follow the proposed suggestions and teach the content outlined in the document. This represented a big departure from the previous syllabi, because the freedom of teachers to emphasise, or interpret, certain content was no longer an option. Thus, historical knowledge was conceived of as a finished product to be memorised by students.

The overall declared objectives of the teaching of history were the understanding of problems related to mankind's spirituality and historical destiny, the development of students' moral, civic and social features, the shaping of character through the ennoblement of students' personality, and the awareness of duties and human dignity (Ministerio de Educación Pública, 1952). However, there were no indications to teachers as to how to accomplish these objectives with students throughout the school year.

Content knowledge was organised chronologically and emphasised political and military facts. Historical events were listed in a descriptive manner using political events to organise every section. For example, the section related to Chilean history in the nineteenth century was divided into categories organised in terms of the political ideology of the governments in power (Ministerio de Educación Pública, 1952).

The pedagogical approaches outlined in the document emphasised an active role for the teacher in helping students learn historical events. It indicated the topics and issues to be addressed by teachers in order of perceived relevance and detailed the interpretation to be adopted. Suggestions were also made regarding the use of maps, timelines, written documents, and images (Ministerio de Educación Pública, 1952). This was the first time a syllabus of study had been produced that suggested activities, but it was not drawn up in a systematic manner. Once again, the document did not deal with issues related to classroom assessment.

The 1965 curriculum

In 1965, another educational reform took place in the Chilean context. Following the example of the United States, history teaching was integrated with other social sciences. The syllabi of *Ciencias Sociales e Históricas* (social and historical sciences), was the new name given to the school subject that included history, geography, economics, and civics, and concepts drawn from anthropology and sociology (Ministerio de Educación, 1968a). The syllabi were intended to be flexible tools to promote contextualised teaching and learning activities (Ministerio de Educación, 1968a). Teachers would choose and adapt activities according to the skills, interests, and needs of the students.

Regarding history teaching, the declared objectives emphasised intellectual and social developments (Ministerio de Educación, 1968a). One objective was the development of historical awareness. According to the syllabi, students were to be encouraged to think about the universal values of Chilean culture so that they would come to define their own system of values. This would allow them to make informed decisions about their role in Chilean society. History teaching, it was held, also promoted the development of knowledge, skills, and values to participate effectively in a democratic society. Moreover, the subject was offered to help students to understand and propose solutions to the main problems faced by a developing country (Ministerio de Educación, 1968b).

Another main objective was related to the development of the historical method of inquiry. Students were encouraged to work as historians because, as it was put, «the learning of history is not merely storytelling, but something experimental and tangible» (Ministerio de Educación, 1968b, p. 76). In accordance with this view, history teaching was to be concerned with the development of intellectual skills required by the scientific method, such as analysis, comparison, inquiry, and reflection. Although all of these skills would require engaging in memorisation, this was considered to be a first step, not the outcome, of the learning process.

The content to be taught also had new features. In particular, the new syllabus took into account up-to-date historical research and emphasised the use of historical concepts instead of facts (Ministerio de Educación, 1968a). Instead of focusing on a chronological approach based on the memorisation of facts and dates, the learning of knowledge that students could use to explain change and causation throughout time was emphasised. Also, the new syllabus proposed regular integration between history and the social sciences. Accordingly, historical themes were studied from the perspective of different disciplines, including geography, economics, and anthropology. The relevance of social development was highlighted, particularly in relation to the origins and evolution of Chilean society. These years also witnessed an emphasis on the cultural unity and integration of Latin America, praising its spirit, analysing the current circumstances of the continent, and criticising its anachronisms and inequalities.

It was expected that students would play an active role in their learning process (Ministerio de Educación, 1968a). The syllabus indicated that the learning process would be inductive so that students could themselves create concepts and arrive at conclusions. Also, the use and analysis of varied sources of information was promoted.

A large number of classroom activities was suggested (Ministerio de Educación, 1968a). The most common activities were «writing essays,» «drawing historical maps,» «analysing historical concepts and laws,» «drawing a timeline,» «analysing historical sources and documents,» «drawing charts,» and «analysing images» (Ministerio de Educación, 1968a, b, c, d). Also, there was to be progression in the use of activities according to the school year and the time of the year, and content was to be treated in greater depth from year to year. Furthermore, small group work was recommended and teachers were to give time to students to answer questions, helping them to think about what was being asked.

Assessment tasks were supposed to be consistent with classroom activities. Therefore, the use of formative assessment was proposed (Ministerio de Educación, 1968a). Essays and research projects were usually suggested as assessment tasks for students (Ministerio de Educación, 1968a). The emphasis on assessment tasks was explained by the relevance placed on students receiving an integrated education. Thus, skills and values that could be assessed were also promoted. However, this was not done systematically.

In 1970, the first socialist government in the history of the country was elected (De Ramon, 2010). With the support of the Socialist party, the new President of the Republic, Salvador Allende, continued implementing the 1965 educational reforms. He also planned to develop an educational system suitable for a democratic and egalitarian society (Núñez, 1990; Sagredo & Serrano, 1996). However, his plans were not to be implemented, because the country faced a deep social, ideological, and political conflict during the first years of the 1970s. The coup d'état of 1973, organised by a military junta led by General Augusto Pinochet, put an abrupt end to Allende's democratic government. This also meant the end of the educational reform movement. Pinochet's dictatorial government put an end to the reform, modified the syllabi in 1974, and implemented a new curriculum framework in 1981.

The 1974 curriculum

One of the first measures implemented by the military government was to remove from the syllabi all elements that were considered to have the potential to create conflict or were politically-oriented (Núñez, 1997; Valenzuela, Labarrera, & Rodríguez, 2008). This led to the introduction of new temporary syllabi in 1974, which excluded content that, according to the military junta, contained ideologies that were against the values promoted by the government in power.

The new syllabi were implemented in 1974. Much of the social, cultural, and economic objectives and content were removed from the humanities, and particularly history (Reyes, 2002). The military government, by contrast, reinforced objectives and content related to national values and patriotism (Superintendencia de Educación Pública, 1975). Overall, the pedagogical approach did not embrace deep changes.

The new objectives of the social and historical sciences were related to the importance attributed to the development of a sense of nationality through the analysis and understanding of Chilean history (Superintendencia de Educación Pública, 1975). This desire was described as follows: «attempt to ensure the understanding of national history, respect for institutions, value of the land and its natural resources» (Superintendencia de Educación Pública, 1975, p. 60). Other objectives were not modified.

Content knowledge referring to social and economic development was replaced with content related to such national emblems as the Chilean flag, the national anthem, and the actions of national heroes, male and female, who contributed to the country's development (Superintendencia de Educación Pública, 1975). The strong Latin American emphasis that had previously prevailed was removed. The focus now was placed on promoting Chilean heritage, and particularly on the contributions made by Spain and the indigenous peoples to that heritage. The development of patriotism was also encouraged, especially through the idea of Chilean nationality as being forged by different institutions, specifically, the Chilean state, the Catholic Church, and the armed forces (Superintendencia de Educación Pública, 1975).

The 1981 curriculum

The new curriculum gave teachers an active role in deciding the methods to use in teaching and learning. They were supposed to implement what they deemed most suitable for their own classrooms (Ministerio de Educación, 1985). By giving them more autonomy, it was expected that they would become responsible for their students' learning. Also, that would allow them to view their occupation in a more creative and efficient manner (Ministerio de Educación, 1985). This concept was completely different from that of the previous curriculum, where teachers were given assistance in their work through suggestions for activities and professional development workshops.

The main objectives of history as a school subject were «to strengthen and expand students' understanding of the social world,» «to develop skills to successfully get immersed into the world,» and «to contribute to human progress» (Ministerio de Educación, 1985, p. 26). There were no indications on how to achieve these objectives within classrooms as there were no suggestions for teaching activities or pedagogical strategies to use. Therefore, teachers had to rely on their previous knowledge and creativity to come up with their own activities.

Interdisciplinary integration through what was known as «social and historical sciences» was abandoned. What was offered now were different and separated disciplines, including world history, general geography, Chilean history, Chilean geography, civics, and economics. The actions of the military forces and their influence throughout Chilean history were emphasised (Ministerio de Educación, 1985). The War of Independence and the military victories of the nineteenth century were praised as indicators of the relevant contribution of the military forces to the country's organisation and stability.

For each school year, every learning unit presented a chronologically-ordered list of content knowledge. It consisted of relevant historical facts, which were mainly political events. The list, it was held, would help students to better understand their own reality (Ministerio de Educación, 1985). The list of content knowledge was very broad and did not indicate what issues would be emphasised when teaching any particular content. However, the history of the nineteenth century was emphasised, along with the history of the Catholic Church (Ministerio de Educación, 1985, p. 123). Content knowledge from social, cultural, and economic history was also included, but it was presented as a complement to political history, while a broader view of Latin American history was no longer included (Ministerio de Educación, 1985).

No pedagogical approaches or classroom activities were suggested. It was held that it was up to teachers themselves to use their creativity in order to find suitable teaching strategies for their students (Ministerio de Educación, 1985). In fact, this meant that teachers returned to what they were used to doing, namely, engaging in teacher-centred practices (Valenzuela et al., 2008).

Discussion and conclusions

The following analysis of the curriculum frameworks for secondary school history prescribed by the Ministry of Education is centred on objectives, content, pedagogy and assessment components of the history curriculum.

Objectives

The objectives of the teaching of history as a school subject changed over the time period considered. During the second half of the twentieth century, the main concern was to provide students with knowledge about the past in order to help them make political decisions. Following the dissemination of ideas regarding the enlightenment movement, the dominant view in Chile of the history of human kind was conceived of as the history of progress. By knowing the events of the past, it was argued, secondary school students would, when they become adults, be able to make the best decisions for the nation's future. This was in line with the notion that secondary school education should be undertaken with the intention of pursuing a university degree, which was only accessible to the ruling class.

During the first half of the twentieth century new objectives were outlined. These were related to the promotion of virtue, patriotism, and national values. Also, it was expected that the history teachers would work to prepare students to understand their society and the world in which they lived. This coincided with the rise and consolidation of the middle class as a politically powerful social group who felt it necessary to break the bonds with their Spanish/European heritage and to promote Chilean values and traditions instead.

The second half of the twentieth century witnessed the emergence of new trends. In particular, the mid-1960s saw an attempt to promote historical awareness and active citizenship. Students were encouraged to understand their social context so that they could actively participate in society and contribute to the country's socioeconomic development. Also, the development of higher order skills through the historical method of inquiry was highly promoted. This was similar to the situation in the United States of America (Patrick & White, 1992). History retained its integrity as a distinct discipline in the social studies curriculum, while becoming a tool to achieve the goals of social studies. History teachers in Chile emphasised the relationships between historical events. Student interest was held by asking them to apply historical knowledge to understand current social concerns. In history teaching, education for citizenship seemed to be more urgent than preparing for undergraduate studies.

Following this time, however, the curriculum introduced in the 1980s took a different approach yet again, returning to the promotion of patriotism and national values, and dismissing the historical method of inquiry as being no longer worthy of a preeminent place in teaching and learning. These objectives were to serve national-political aims and to promote morality and responsibility among students. This reflected the social control exerted under the Pinochet dictatorship and the associated desire to stamp out any promotion of critical thinking.

Content

Historically, the content of the secondary school history curriculum in Chile has been linked mainly to knowledge as fact. During the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, in accordance with the objectives that existed at that time, content was outlined by listing organised political and military events chronologically. Generally, study programmes presented a thorough and very extensive list of all historical events deemed worthwhile to teach. While nineteenth century European history was emphasised during this time, Chilean history came to be considered more relevant in the twentieth century. This can be appreciated by noting the additional time allocated to each topic dealing with Chilean history.

In the second half of the twentieth century, there was a general trend towards teaching content from an extensive list of various historical topics. By the 1960s, following international trends, these themes included topics related to social and economic history. The integration of other disciplines,

such as anthropology and economics, was undertaken in relation to the history curriculum. This was in accordance with the objective, mentioned previously, of developing higher order skills. In harmony with this more progressive approach, a strong emphasis on Latin American history was also introduced for the first time. This approach to teaching encouraged students to develop skills characteristic of the social sciences, as well as to learn the specific knowledge and associated values.

However, these changes did not last long, as the 1980s curriculum framework of the Pinochet dictatorship era reintroduced an emphasis on chronologically organised political events, mainly drawn from nineteenth century Chilean history. What was then prescribed was mainly Chilean constitutional history, which was uncontroversial and widely accepted. Interestingly, the Chilean situation has found similarities outside the Latin American context. In England, Prime Minister Thatcher «increasingly trained the education system in her sights, as part of her agenda to reform the economy and society of Great Britain» (Allen, 2004, p. 28). In Dickinson's (2000) words, her government implemented a new history curriculum with «more emphasis upon chronology, British history, historical knowledge and its assessment» (p. 88) than what had gone before. In Chile, just like in England, the interest of the government lay in the opportunity provided by history to accomplish cultural transmission and to attack the new history approach on the grounds that it was influenced by left-wing ideologies.

Pedagogy

The pedagogical orientation of the curriculum frameworks also varied over time, in accordance with the objectives and content prescribed during various periods. In the second half of the nineteenth century, specific details on pedagogy were rarely outlined in detail. The emphasis was simply on indicating that history teaching was supposed to be storytelling of historical events. Teachers were expected to motivate students so that they would care about history, but the practices emphasised were teacher-centred.

In the first half of the twentieth century, directives on pedagogy became more explicit. While the teaching of history was still meant to emphasise storytelling and narration, the learning of history was conceived of as memorisation of historical events through content repetition and dictation. Then, in the mid-twentieth century, again in harmony with the already-noted emphasis on objectives and content in the progressive education tradition, the use of historical sources, such as historical texts, maps, and images was stressed and the teaching of historical concepts for understanding was emphasised.

To support the emphasis on developing the historical method of inquiry, student-centred activities and active learning in the curriculum introduced in the 1960s, professional development programmes were introduced in order to assist teachers. Also, for the first time, study programmes contained suggestions of activities to assist teachers in their lesson planning. Overall, the teaching and learning of history was conceived of as the construction of historical knowledge through the use of historical sources and concepts.

This approach offers an alternative curriculum structure not centred on chronological national history. It divides up learning units so that the focus is on themes and structures, rather than on time divisions (Foster, 2008). Selection of content emphasises world and local history. Also, it includes the experiences of different groups who create multicultural and pluralist societies (Husbands et al., 2007). Accordingly, learning about a wide range of historical events is of paramount significance within the new history.

The implementation of progressive teaching practices, however, did not last long, as the 1980s curriculum of the Pinochet dictatorship era resulted in a return to teacher-centred practices. Teachers were now once again expected to teach the list of content knowledge prescribed in the study programmes. According to what was then prescribed in the curriculum framework, school history teaching was defined as a chronological enumeration of historical events, where political facts and the names of great characters were the main content taught. Emphasis was placed on selecting events that could justify the political organisation set by the dominant political culture, which is a recurring trend in authoritarian governments (Phillips, 1999; Taylor, 2000).

The latter can be related to the great tradition approach to teaching history. The purposes of the great tradition approach could be characterised as both cultural and political. History teaching is conceived

of as the transmission of knowledge about an «assumed shared national political culture» (Husbands et al., 2007, p. 9). Connections between the content of school history syllabi and the political perspective about democratic development and prosperity are very strong. Following this argument, one of the main concerns of the great tradition approach is to select events that could justify, in a civic manner, the dominant political culture (Taylor, 2000). Also, within the great tradition approach it is possible to find a purpose called «hand-over-your-heart.» This purpose conceives of history mainly as a self-congratulatory compilation of facts whose main objective is to promote values related to nationalism and patriotism (Zajda & Whitehouse, 2009). This approach has also been widely implemented elsewhere (Taylor & Young, 2003). Van Sledright (2003) indicates that in several countries around the world during the twentieth century, school history teaching has been characterised by teachers' storytelling and textbook recitation. The Chilean situation is no exception.

Assessment

Looking at the period under consideration as a whole, assessment in the teaching of history has been given little consideration. It has largely been assumed that what was learned would be assessed by traditional examinations and that the setting of these examinations was a straightforward, non-problematic, unscientific activity. An exception to this trend was the development when the curriculum introduced in the 1960s suggested the use of formative assessment. However, this notion, as with progressive objectives, content, and pedagogy, receded into the background during the Pinochet era.

At end of the period studied, the teaching of history started to be influenced by the implementation of national standardised tests. In order to measure the quality of education offered in the nation's schools, a national standardised test was created in the late 1980s, called *Sistema de Medición de la Calidad de la Educación* or SIMCE (Education Quality Measurement System). The tests focus on the Ministry of Education curriculum as mandated by law (Cox, 2012). Because there is widespread social consensus regarding the reliability of these tests, both schools and parents consider them to be an accurate measure of educational quality in Chile (Meckes & Carrasco, 2010). There are, however, detractors who argue that the tests do not measure the quality of education (Observatorio Chileno de Políticas Educativas, 2009). Rather, they claim that tests generate additional and unhelpful pressure on teachers, who are deemed to be responsible for the scores achieved by their students (Observatorio Chileno de Políticas Educativas, 2009). These opponents say that the tests force teachers to emphasise the acquisition of content knowledge that will be included in the standardised tests, and to conduct multiple choice tests in order to familiarise students with this form of test-taking. In an attempt to cover all content included in standardised tests, which is often an overwhelming amount of information, history teachers focus their attention mostly on teaching events, facts, and dates, neglecting issues related to historical understanding or historical methods of inquiry. This is very similar to the situation in the United States of America (Caron, 2004).

This study has demonstrated that the historical background to the current secondary school history curriculum in Chile has been characterised largely by the adoption of the great tradition school history approach to teaching history (see Table 1). In this regard, the use of teacher-centred practices and the pre-eminence of chronologically organised political events have been distinctive features. However, the new history approach, manifest in student-centred activities and the development of the historical method of enquiry, has also been promoted, although over a much shorter time period.

Table 1
The historical background to the current secondary school history curriculum in Chile

	2 nd half of the nineteenth century	1 st half of the twentieth century	2 nd half of the twentieth century
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotion of knowledge of the past to help make political decisions - Promotion of history as progress, related to the enlightenment movement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparation of students to understand their society - Promotion of virtue, patriotism and national values - Improvement of students' intellectual and moral features 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of historical awareness - Promotion of active citizenship - Promotion of higher order skills: historical method of enquiry - Understanding of students' social context - Promotion of patriotism and national values
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - List of chronologically ordered political and military events - Emphasis on European history - Inclusion of Latin American and Chilean history 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - List of chronologically ordered political events - Emphasis on Chilean history - Inclusion of European history - Vast amount of content knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - List of chronologically ordered political events - Emphasis on Chilean and Latin American history - Inclusion of European history - Integration of other disciplines - Inclusion of social and economic history
Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Storytelling - Teacher-centred practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Storytelling and narration - Memorisation of content through repetition and dictation - Introduction to the use of historical sources - Understanding of historical concepts - Teacher-centred practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Active learning - Construction of historical knowledge - Use of historical sources and concepts - Introduction of suggested activities. - Student-centred practices
Assessment	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teacher-centred practices - Introduction of formative assessment

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