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## THE TEACHING

OF HISTORY, FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE, ON THE WAY TO THE NEW  
MEXICAN SCHOOL

**LA ENSEÑANZA DE LA HISTORIA, DESDE LA PERSPECTIVA COMPARADA INTERNACIONAL, EN CAMI-  
NO HACIA LA NUEVA ESCUELA MEXICANA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The teaching of History has been a topic of interest in the educational training of societies in recent years. This is because, through the narration and study of past events, this company is able to carry out a deep understanding of the cultural, political, social and economic roots of both societies and the individuals who they make them up. However, the way History is approached and taught varies significantly in different countries and educational systems. This essay aims to carry out a comparative analysis of how history is taught in international contexts: the United States and Germany, as well as some Latin American countries, and how this experience is viewed as a starting point for teaching History within the project. current education in Mexico.

### **Keywords:**

Teaching of history, New Mexican School, historical awareness.

## **RESUMEN**

La enseñanza de la Historia ha sido un tema de interés en la formación educativa de las sociedades en los últimos años. Esto se debe a que, a través de la narración y el estudio de los eventos pasados, esta empresa es capaz de llevar a cabo una comprensión profunda de las raíces culturales, políticas, sociales y económicas tanto de las sociedades, como de los individuos que las conforman. Sin embargo, la forma en que se aborda y enseña la Historia varía significativamente en diferentes países y sistemas educativos. Este ensayo tiene como objetivo realizar un análisis comparativo de cómo se enseña la historia en contextos internacionales: Estados Unidos y Alemania, así como algunos países de América Latina y cómo se visualiza esta experiencia como punto de partida para la enseñanza de la Historia dentro del proyecto educativo vigente en México.

### **Palabras clave:**

Enseñanza de la historia, Nueva Escuela Mexicana, conciencia histórica.

## INTRODUCTION

The teaching of history and its objective have different conceptions depending on the author consulted. For example, Carretero & López (2009) call this process “*historical literacy*” and refer to it as the development of three major skills related to historical knowledge: evaluation of evidence in obtaining information, reasoning and problem solving, and the analysis and construction of historical narratives (Arteaga & Camargo, 2012).

For his part, Lombardi (2000), in his text *The Teaching of History. General Considerations*, makes an analytical account of the teaching-learning process of History and emphasizes the question: what should be taught when teaching History?

In this regard, the author mentions that History is presented and taught as an epic, a narrative more linked to literary discourse than to the historiographical work of the vanguard. Therefore, he proposes that current efforts should be directed towards exploring new methods and new ways, integrating different disciplines and developing a necessary revisionism in which historiographic reflection on what has been written and how has history been written, and therefore, how is this reconstruction of the past being taught (Lombardi, 2000).

An important point to note is that history, as a school subject, is presented as the most controversial within the curriculum in some countries, in terms of its function, contents and implicit discourses. This is due to the epistemic beliefs of teachers as to what should be taught and/or developed and the way in which History classes are conducted, which are frequently approached from a positivistic conception of History, that is, in the assimilation of historical data.

This has a strong influence on the development of historical consciousness and the development of historical thinking, which in turn influences the students' inability to assume themselves as protagonists of their own historical and social evolution.

## DEVELOPMENT

History teaching has its own methods, techniques and teaching tools derived from specialized didactics. These also respond to each context where work is being done in order to find their correspondence with the development of skills, according to the graduate profiles of the different educational levels where work is being done. However, and in spite of the efforts made in different academic bodies, through research, there is a lack of reflections on how to integrate the historical method with the development of historical thinking. In this sense, it is recognized that addressing the teaching of history is a complex task since it is necessary to rethink the educational value of

history, the logics that define historical knowledge and what is taught in school contexts (Ibagón & Minte, 2019).

One element to consider, is the gap that exists between the craft of historicizing, that is, the science of reconstructing the past and the craft of teaching History. Both come-and should come-from the same root, i.e. the historical science, based on its theoretical-epistemic perspective. However, even when it is recognized in countries such as Spain and Mexico, that the latter has a complementary link between research / reconstruction of the past and teaching it (Miralles et al., 2011; Ferrari, 2013; Trejo, 2015; Massip et al., 2020), sometimes this relationship is not so clear.

It is considered that both exercises allow the construction of historical knowledge from their own edges, however, historians, at least in Mexico, point to the teaching of history in a dichotomous position: parallel and complementary to the work of the historian, but lagging behind and in a marginal position with respect to research and reconstruction of the past (Trejo, 2015). In this regard, Plá (2012) states that both are constitutive practices of the historian's work and states the need for teaching, making it clear that the historical knowledge that is built in the classroom, also has links with professional historiography, but being outside the school, it has a different logic that also makes it a relevant object of study for the interests of scholars of history.

The gap between historiography and the teaching of history, which allows the development of historical thinking, can be found in the process of evolution of the teaching and learning process of historical science itself, which began to develop in the second half of the 20th century, when the first studies on the subject appeared.

Plá (2012), refers that there are several stages that can summarize this process: at first, at the international level during the 1970s, it was addressed from the teaching of the methodology of historians, i.e. thinking historically, through cognitive development and towards the end of the twentieth century, through the didactics of history with the aim of transmitting the results of historiographical research.

Since the seventies, in the international arena, research on the teaching of history became relevant from different fields. Just to mention a few, work was done on specialized didactics, the cognitive processes generated by the study of history and the historical method as a basis for learning history. However, in Mexico this wave of research is even newer, since it dates from the end of the last decade of the 20th century, when research with emphasis on school texts and teacher training began to appear.

At present, European countries such as Spain and France continue to lead the list of research on history teaching.

For example, Miralles et al. (2011), have contributed to this enterprise from the didactics of social sciences. In the Latin American context, Colombia, Argentina and Brazil are at the forefront with the generation of studies on the development of historical thought, while Mexico and Chile follow them in this purpose (Palacios-Mena et al., 2020).

Likewise, in other countries such as the United States, the teaching of history is approached as a tool for building a national identity and fostering patriotism. However, it has also become a ground for debate due to the selective interpretation of historical events and the omission of certain uncomfortable aspects. In recent decades, there has been a greater emphasis on incorporating more diverse and critical perspectives into the historical curriculum, including the history of ethnic minorities and social movements.

Another example is Germany, where history teaching has focused on direct confrontation with its Nazi past and the Holocaust. The German education system strives to ensure that future generations understand the gravity of Nazi crimes and the role they played in world history. Holocaust education is seen as fundamental to fostering tolerance, diversity and preventing the repetition of similar atrocities. This approach is an example of how a country can take responsibility for its past and use it to build a more conscious and humane society.

However, in Mexico, the teaching of history has been predominant in its tendency to protect the interests of the ruling class. That is to say, through the contents that have been selected to learn said subject and its traditional teaching tendency, only contents that are considered useful to the interests of the oppressors have been prioritized, even functioning as symbolic violence, that is to say, the imposition of hegemonic meanings as legitimate (Bourdieu, 1977).

In the Mexican case, the patriotic and legitimizing approach of the political systems within the national project, throughout history have perpetuated an attempt to validate commemoration, memorialism and nationalism by finding scientific validity in the processes of schooling and memorization of concrete data.

This has been a way of using history in schools as an element of assimilation of historical data, i.e. a patriotic history. However, this type of epistemic beliefs about the contents that are taught-learned in history perpetuate harmful dynamics for educational practice: on the one hand, it supports the disparity between research in history teaching and the evaluation proposals of educational systems and, on the other hand, the very separation between components of the same system: the curriculum and the study plans and evaluations (Plá, 2012; Mexico. Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2022).

Based on the above, different organizations have put on the table the discussion of guaranteeing a quality education that transforms the lives of children, adolescents and young people, with the purpose of reducing existing inequalities. In this regard, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2017) points out that education transforms lives and is consistent in consolidating peace, eradicating poverty and promoting sustainable development. In this sense, the study of History combats ignorance, not because the accumulation of data is taken as synonymous with knowledge, but because its study allows the development of thinking skills that contribute to the reflective work of being, and therefore, promotes transformative practices that help the fulfillment of the three aspects that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization considers a priority: peace, poverty eradication (economic or mental) and sustainable development.

On the other hand, the Sustainable Development Goal of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization for 2030, points within its goals the development of education systems that foster inclusive quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. End poverty: Inclusive quality education for all as a key force in the eradication of poverty, 2. Decent work and economic growth: Strengthen TVET systems to equip youth and adults with the necessary skills related to work, decent employment and entrepreneurship, 3. Reducing inequalities: Strengthening national education systems to ensure access to inclusive quality education and lifelong learning, 4. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: Fostering peaceful and inclusive societies through Global Citizenship Education, which includes peace and human rights education, as well as the provision of education in emergencies.

In other words, the agenda of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization 2030 aims to ensure that all students acquire the necessary theoretical and practical knowledge to promote sustainable development, through knowledge of human rights, gender equality, the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and the appreciation of cultural diversity and the contribution of culture to sustainable development, among other means. In this regard, Carretero & López (2009) state that the study of history, from the cultural sphere, contributes to the construction of identity and the transmission of collective memory for the development of democratic citizenship. Therefore, the meta-competencies that students develop through the study of history will allow them to appropriate knowledge that questions and understands the issues of the priority agenda of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and from them they can also question, deconstruct and project scenarios that allow them to

better develop personally and, in turn, have an impact on society.

Therefore, in the project of the New Mexican School, with respect to the teaching of History, the development of historical consciousness is rescued as an important enterprise. Therefore, a comprehensive and contextualized approach is proposed to generate a historical consciousness that involves the understanding of temporality, historical causality and the diversity of perspectives.

In this sense, it is necessary for students to be able to interpret and analyze primary sources, as well as to question and evaluate different historical interpretations, thus requiring an active pedagogy that promotes research, critical thinking and the collective construction of historical knowledge. This will be essential to move away from rote teaching and encourage reflection and analysis of historical processes in their complexity.

Given that the main foundation of the concept of historical consciousness in the New Mexican School is the recognition and understanding of the past as a living entity, it is also urgent to configure the school as a space in which national unity is articulated from its diversity and where different types of knowledge are discussed in order to reflect and appreciate the diversity of historical perspectives to promote a quality education that aims at the formation of citizens committed to the construction of an informed and conscious future.

## CONCLUSIONS

The teaching of history in different countries reflects their unique values, challenges, and contexts. In the United States, it seeks to balance national identity building with a critical and diverse understanding of the past. Japan faces the task of reconciling its contested history with its neighbors and the world. Germany shows how confronting the past can contribute to building a more tolerant and aware society. These approaches highlight the importance of history education in the formation of informed and engaged citizens in a globalized world. In Mexico, the new project of the New Mexican School seeks to transform the paradigm of teaching and learning of history, with the objective of achieving a practical approach to historical content, that is, that the study of the past be able to generate reflections for the understanding of the present and the projection into the future. In addition to underlining the need to address the challenges of selective omission, political manipulation and the promotion of a balanced and critical understanding of the past.

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