



Original article

## Preparing teachers to address local history content



### La preparación de los docentes para el tratamiento a los contenidos de la historia local

### Preparando professores para abordar conteúdos de história local

Yailyn Hernández López<sup>1</sup>  0000-0002-6929-9827  [yailyn.hernandez@upr.edu.cu](mailto:yailyn.hernandez@upr.edu.cu)

Carlos Alberto Rojas González<sup>1</sup>  0000-0003-2250-1546  [carlos.albertor@upr.edu.cu](mailto:carlos.albertor@upr.edu.cu)

<sup>1</sup> University of Pinar del Río "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca". Pinar del Río, Cuba.

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## ABSTRACT

Teacher training is essential for working with local history, considering the variability within its territory. In response to this problem, a research project was conducted to present a teaching strategy that serves as a guide for teachers teaching Cuban History in addressing local history content. Theoretical methods such as analysis and synthesis, historical-logical methods, and induction-deduction were used in its development. Empirical methods such as documentary analysis, observation, interviews, and surveys were also employed. Mathematical-statistical method were used, employing percentage calculations for data processing and descriptive statistical techniques, which allowed for the interpretation, summary, and presentation of the information. This proposal is part of the training of History teachers of Cuban History and constitutes a means of addressing local history content from the teaching-learning process of this subject. This proposal takes into account the role of teachers in developing activities, their spirit of self-improvement and self-preparation, as well as their ethical commitment to the comprehensive education of students.

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**Keywords:** teachers; teaching strategy; local history; preparation.

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## RESUMEN

La preparación de los docentes constituye una necesidad para el trabajo con la historia local, al tener en cuenta la variabilidad en su territorio. Como respuesta a esta problemática, se realiza la investigación que tiene como objetivo presentar una estrategia didáctica que sirva de guía a los docentes que imparten la asignatura Historia de Cuba para el tratamiento a los contenidos de historia local. En su desarrollo se utilizaron métodos del nivel teórico como el análisis y síntesis, histórico-lógico e inducción-deducción. Se emplearon además métodos del nivel empírico como el análisis documental, la observación, la entrevista y la encuesta; se utilizaron los correspondientes al método matemático-estadístico con el empleo del cálculo porcentual para el procesamiento de la información y la utilización de técnicas estadísticas descriptivas, que permitieron interpretar, resumir y presentar la información. Esta propuesta se inserta en la preparación de los docentes de la disciplina Historia, que imparten la asignatura Historia de Cuba y constituye una vía para el tratamiento a los contenidos de la historia local desde el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje de esta materia. En esta propuesta se tienen en cuenta el papel que le corresponde a los docentes en el desarrollo de las actividades, su espíritu de superación y autopreparación, así como su compromiso ético con la formación integral de los escolares.

**Palabras clave:** docentes; estrategia didáctica; historia local; preparación.

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## RESUMO

A formação de professores é essencial para o trabalho com história local, considerando a variabilidade existente em seu território. Em resposta a essa problemática, esta pesquisa tem como objetivo apresentar uma estratégia de ensino que sirva de guia para professores que ensinam História de Cuba na abordagem de conteúdos de história local. Em seu desenvolvimento, foram utilizados métodos teóricos como análise e síntese, métodos histórico-lógicos e métodos de indução-dedução. Métodos empíricos como análise documental, observação, entrevistas e levantamentos também foram empregados. Utilizaram-se métodos correspondentes ao método matemático-estatístico, empregando cálculos percentuais para o tratamento dos dados, e técnicas de estatística descritiva

para interpretar, sintetizar e apresentar as informações. Esta proposta faz parte da formação de professores de História que ensinam História de Cuba e constitui um meio de abordar conteúdos de história local a partir do processo de ensino-aprendizagem dessa disciplina. Esta proposta leva em consideração o papel dos professores no desenvolvimento das atividades, seu espírito de autoaperfeiçoamento e autopreparação e seu compromisso ético com a formação integral dos alunos.

**Palavras-chave:** professores; estratégia de ensino; história local; preparação.

## INTRODUCTION

The study of local history has been carried out by various educators, and a shift in approach to its teaching is evident. In this regard, De la Torre (1901), declared that "however much cosmopolitanism is recommended in the teaching of history, local and national history should be the focus at all levels, since we should be more interested in our own country than in foreign history" (p. 4).

He added that, for the first grades of primary education, where the subject History was not taught, it was recommended... "to suggest to the students that everything has its history, inclining them to learn about the history of their relatives, neighbors, their house, the town or city where they live, nearby places where memorable events have occurred, patriotic dates" (De la Torre, 1901, p. 48).

Thanks to Guerra's work (1923), local history was included in the curriculum of Cuban schools. He established the content of Cuban history and stated that "the history that forms and strengthens the feeling of patriotic love is not merely political history, dealing with heroes, wars, and revolutions" (Guerra, 1923, p. 21).

The treatment of local history content from the teaching-learning process of Cuban history gives the subject a more enriching character; therefore, it is considered necessary to review the criteria that various authors have proposed regarding local history. In this regard, Guerra (1923) states: "There can be no national history if there is no local history, " thereby confirming the need for their connection (p. 25).

This author also believes that the study of local history offers teachers, in particular, immense advantages. It teaches students to observe, research, and reflect; it prepares them for a better understanding of social life, their country, and how to serve it; it is a source of moral fulfillment; it

connects teachers to the community through a strong sense of sympathy. "Ultimately, it is a school of kindness and devotion to duty" (Guerra, 1923, p. 28). For his part, Addine (1992) states that "the treatment of local history aims to eliminate the abuse of Cuban history textbooks, the centrist approach (...). Knowledge of local history allows us to contemplate historical knowledge and make it more truthful" (Addine, 1992, p. 46).

Acebo (1991) points out that:

Local refers to a locality, and a locality can be considered as: a territory, more or less extensive; with a stable, historically constituted population; with a defined economic, social, political and cultural organization, which is part of and subordinate to a higher, or more complex, structure (Acebo, 1991, p. 21).

The aforementioned author considers, from a pedagogical point of view, Local History "as the study made by students of the singular and local facts, phenomena and processes of the distant or recent past, and of the present, of a given territory, in its relation to the national historical development" (Acebo, 1991, p. 22).

We must recognize the dedication, initiatives, and personal efforts of a significant portion of the Cuban teaching profession, who were aware of the potential of local history as a gateway to forging patriotism and defending Cuban nationality.

With the triumph of the Cuban Revolution and the profound transformations it brought about, the scope and quality of education underwent major changes, based on the Moncada Program. Initial adjustments began, with local history being covered superficially within the curriculum, as the urgency of the moment led to an emphasis on other, more necessary aspects of the time.

Beginning in 1985, the National Education System underwent gradual processes of curriculum transformation and program adjustments. In the 1987-1988 academic year, as a result of the gradual improvement process carried out in the curriculum across the entire educational system, the idea of addressing local history content through the subject of Cuban History was revived. It wasn't until 1989 that the History of Cuba program began to focus on local history. This new design facilitates addressing the elements of local history at the different levels and in different programs.

In the 1989-1999 decade, with Cuban History as a prioritized subject, the use of local museums, small-scale research in archives, and visits to historical sites were intensified. The treatment of local historical events took on greater significance, being included as part of the sequencing of content, which sometimes led to a failure to fully use its potential.

The approach to the study of local history based on the teachings of the History of Cuba subject has intensified in recent years; this responds to a need recognized by the country's educational authorities. Guidelines have been proposed in the various National Seminars for Educators since 2005.

The VI National Seminar for Educators proposes that Cuban History courses taught at the Higher Pedagogical Institutes (ISP) and all their municipal campuses should explicitly integrate the knowledge systems of provincial and municipal history based on the results of research and the collaborative work of ISP professors and historians from each location.

The IX National Seminar for Educators emphasized that Cuban History programs across all educational levels should integrate local history knowledge systems, in line with the guidance of the VII and VIII National Seminars for Educators. In preparation for the 2010-2011 academic year, it was clarified that, in the training of teachers and professors, Cuban History programs are developed by author groups at Higher Education institutions, based on the guidelines outlined in the individual discipline programs.

In the teaching- learning process of Cuban History, it was possible to understand, based on the criteria emanating from the methodological meetings of the program, the discipline, and the subject's own collective, as well as from various scientific events, that there are various manifestations that can be considered negative; these are related to:

- Local events are exaggerated, which focuses attention on local issues rather than what the program's objectives deem necessary to study.
- The lack of knowledge regarding local historiography prevents the content from being addressed, and consequently, the methodological approach is not addressed in depth.

The value placed on the treatment of local history content in the teaching-learning process of Cuban history is comprehensive and is reflected in several ways.

In Higher Education, activities that promote reflection, debate, and research, in which points of view and criteria are expressed, should prevail. It is clear that, from all these criteria and reasoning, generalizations can be made that allow for an understanding of this process: the local must be understood in its proper dimension and must correspond to the sense of belonging to a territorial demarcation: municipality and province, in accordance with the political and administrative division of the country.

National history is informed by the facts and events throughout the country that have enriched the nation's history; therefore, the treatment of the national from the local perspective is a theoretical and methodological requirement of the educational system.

The local historical events to be incorporated into the teaching-learning process of Cuban history cannot be left to the teachers' free selection, but must reflect the results of historical research recognized by local authorities, which has enriched the nation's historiographical heritage.

Consequently, in response to this situation, this paper aims to present a teaching strategy that serves as a guide for teachers of Cuban History in addressing local history content.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Four programs from the Faculty of Early Childhood Education at the Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca University of Pinar del Río were selected for the diagnostic study (Primary Education, Special Education, Speech Therapy, and Preschool Education). A total of 75 students taking Cuban History as a subject were selected, in addition to the six teachers who teach it.

In carrying out the study, the general methodological approach was based on the dialectical-materialist method as a general scientific method of the sciences, which became the basis that allowed the selection of the theoretical level methods, among which were: the historical-logical, which allowed to deepen the knowledge of the teaching-learning process of the History of Cuba and the treatment that the contents of the local history have received in it; the analysis and synthesis, used for the study of the specialized bibliography; as well as the results of the existing investigations in this regard and the induction and deduction, necessary for the process of systematization of the central concepts, through the deduction from the general to the particular and also in the processing of the results of the applied instruments to arrive at conclusions, make generalizations or infer

particular aspects of general situations that, subsequently, allowed the elaboration of the didactic strategy.

In addition, empirical methods such as documentary analysis were employed. This research examined the guidelines offered regarding the methodological and preparatory work of the subject "History of Cuba," as well as all the normative documentation for the subject. This was done in order to assess different trends and approaches related to the subject, as well as the transformations taking place in the teaching-learning process of "History of Cuba," where the treatment of local history content is essential. Classroom observation was applied during the teaching-learning process; it was used to observe teachers' behavior in the treatment of local history when addressing the History of Cuba content taught. The interview was conducted to delve deeper into the historical references of local history and their treatment in the teaching-learning process of "History of Cuba," and thereby determine teachers' preferences and limitations regarding the teaching-learning process of "History of Cuba." The survey: to gather criteria and diagnose the current state of the treatment of local history content in the teaching-learning process of Cuban history.

Similarly, it became necessary to conduct a diagnostic study of the treatment of local history content from the teaching-learning process of Cuban history, which allowed for a comprehensive view of its current state.

## RESULTS

Teacher preparation for local history content has achieved significant success; however, shortcomings in the teaching-learning process are evident, limiting its achievement in the desired objectives.

The historical study of the teaching-learning process of Cuban history and its treatment of local history content revealed how the need to perfect the treatment of local history to ensure teacher training evolved from one stage to the next, as well as the recognition of the work with local history, which is currently of great importance.

It was found that 85% of the teachers interviewed were familiar with local historical events that could be covered in the History of Cuba course; however, they were unable to explain how they could use them in their teaching activities, nor did they mention what independent work activities could be used to adequately address local history content. They were aware that specific activities were

developed for the research component of the History of Cuba course; however, they only mentioned work in museums, busts, and plaques, without providing a clear understanding of how the content was covered.

In the observed classes, it was confirmed that, in 70% of cases, the objectives are sometimes focused on working with local history within the teaching-learning process of Cuban history, although this is not a general rule. Therefore, there are shortcomings in the lack of correspondence between the focus of the objectives and the system of knowledge of local history.

Regarding the programs, content, and objectives of the discipline related to local history, 88% of teachers report that they are at a low level. Their approach depends on the teacher's intentions and interests in teaching the subject; furthermore, teachers' level of knowledge of local history is insufficient.

The survey conducted with teachers and students revealed a common, mechanical, and formal conception of the teaching-learning process of Cuban History and its methodology, in which the student receives information as a passive subject. This is reflected in the results of the respective surveys: 80% of teachers believe that the teaching-learning process for History is designed to ensure that teachers effectively transmit the essential knowledge of the subject, demonstrating mastery of the content; 30% affirm that it is designed to help students expand their skills and become active participants in the process; only 20% believe that the content of local history is barely addressed. Forty-five percent of students stated that in History classes, teachers' narratives, chronicles, and explanations aimed at their development as future professionals are discussed; 54% stated that they specifically engage in diverse and thought-provoking activities; Only 30% express that there are shortcomings when working on local history content.

From the diagnostic process carried out, the following regularities have been determined:

- The objectives are not formulated with the necessary intentionality to promote the treatment of local history from the teaching-learning process of Cuban History.
- Deficiencies in local history content within the structure of the knowledge system.
- The subject's skills system is not based on working with sources of historical knowledge.
- The methods lack intentionality regarding familiarization with the structure and content of local history.
- Low level of knowledge about local historical events.



- There are not enough activities related to these topics planned in the academic, work, and research components, as well as in independent work activities.
- The methodological guidelines do not propose how the teaching-learning process of Cuban history should address the contents of local history.

Based on these results, a teaching strategy was developed to address local history content within the teaching-learning process of Cuban History. The overall objective was to implement a teaching strategy aimed at preparing history teachers who teach Cuban History to address local history content.

The proposed teaching strategy aims to offer teachers a way to address local history content, starting with a diagnosis, a local characterization, and the use of variants for its approach. This allows them to design a set of actions within the Cuban History curriculum that take advantage of the potential the context offers. Its structure includes the general objective, strategic planning with its objective and two actions, implementation with its objective and two stages, and evaluation.

### **Strategic planning**

Objective: to implement a set of actions that, from the program of the subject History of Cuba, contributes to the teachers' preparation of for the treatment of the contents of local history.

Actions:

- To discuss Chapters I and II of the book *"Provincial Historical Synthesis" (Pinar del Río)* among history teachers in a seminar.
- Hold a methodological meeting with the teachers to discuss and approve the proposed course preparation.

### **Instrumentation**

Objective: to execute the different actions designed in the planning of the teaching strategy.

#### **Stage 1. Initial preparation**

Objective: to prepare the preconditions for the implementation of the teaching strategy.

#### Actions:

- Select the events to work on.
- Plan activities to address local history content.
- To assess the potential offered by the topics of the Cuban History program, based on the treatment of local history content.

#### **Stage 2.** Development of activities for the treatment of local history contents

Objective: to develop activities for the treatment of local history contents.

In the instrumentation, the didactic actions are structured for their application in the teaching-learning process, based on the treatment of the contents of local history.

Once the basic elements for dealing with the contents of local history are known, the teacher is prepared to plan lessons, with the student as the main focus.

The motivation provided by the classes is a fundamental element in the teaching-learning process, providing opportunities to stimulate feelings, experiences, and their usefulness for future professional work. These lessons are designed to be applied to the various topics in the Cuban History curriculum.

Activities for addressing local history content within the teaching-learning process of Cuban history may be implemented specifically in program topics that correspond to local events.

Given the central role teachers play in leading the teaching-learning process, ensuring adequate preparation in addressing local history content is essential for its success. It is essential to consider all the aspects discussed above and incorporate them as an important part of the preparation.

#### **Assessment**

This stage is related to the evaluation of the teaching strategy and its ongoing redesign. It is developed based on self-assessment by the teachers involved and the evaluation of the students.

#### Actions:

- The evaluation will be carried out through a workshop that will facilitate exchanges between teachers and students, enabling them to provide feedback on the quality of the proposed activities for addressing local history content.
- Assess the impact of the teaching strategy, in order to measure its long-term effectiveness.

## DISCUSSION

The results obtained in the research, with the application of the methods presented and the search for bibliographies on the subject, showed the need to go deeper into it, due to the importance that the treatment of the contents of local history from the teaching-learning process of the History of Cuba has in the teacher's preparation.

The actions proposed in the strategy went beyond existing ones by offering a set of actions aimed at preparing teachers to address local history content from the teaching-learning process of Cuban history.

The starting point for teachers in addressing local history within the teaching-learning process of Cuban history will be, among other things, knowledge of the historical facts and local personalities relevant to the stage of the content to be taught, which entails research and investigation.

The treatment of local events and personalities facilitates the assimilation of the most important processes of national and local events, allows for an approach to research, allows for the linking of theory with practice, teaches students to value human activity at the individual and social levels, and connects them to local history to appreciate its potential for integrating historical content.

Local history should not be treated independently; it should be integrated into the system of knowledge and delivered alongside the content being taught; that is, local history should be integrated organically and coherently into the teaching-learning process of Cuban history.

Teachers are ultimately responsible for incorporating content relevant to their province and municipality according to the topics of the program topics -from indigenous communities to the present day- so that local history is present throughout the teaching-learning process of Cuban history.

<https://mendive.upr.edu.cu/index.php/MendiveUPR/article/view/3679>

The above reasoning leads us to recognize the need to improve the treatment of local history within the teaching-learning process of Cuban history, since it constitutes an essential support and a privileged way to consolidate a love of historical roots within the students' own environment.

In general, the criteria of different authors coincide in highlighting the importance of working with local history. Such is the case of Telles (2020), Echevarría *et al.* (2010), Navarro Lores *et al.* (2023) and Calvas (2020), who emphasize its role in primary school and multigrade teaching. Along the same lines are Samaniego *et al.* (2025), who address the topic by linking it to social memory in basic education, based on a critical examination of current curricular standards and the formative perspective they project.

Likewise, Félix Asencio *et al.* (2023) reveal the importance of local history as an essential component in the education of students; Figueredo (2025) incorporates the value of photography as a fascinating and significant source for the teaching and learning of History; and Utrera *et al.* (2022) postulate the relevance of its treatment as a means of identity reconstruction and development. Although each author approaches the subject from different perspectives, their approaches converge on a common point: local history constitutes an urgent need within the educational system.

The above postulates corroborate the relevance of a pedagogical strategy designed for the treatment of local history, which recognizes its value not only as content but also as a tool for the development of intellectual capacities, such as analyzing, evaluating, comparing, demonstrating, drawing conclusions, and making generalizations. This reinforces the need to systematically incorporate similar proposals. Thus, it is concluded that local history, in addition to reinforcing the sense of belonging, constitutes a strategic tool for building a critical and reflective citizenship with solid patriotic values.

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### Conflict of interest

Authors declare no conflict of interests.

### Authors' contribution

The authors participated in the design and writing of the article, in the search and analysis of the information contained in the consulted bibliography.



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